

The Trinity

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1- Definitions and Foundational Terms

Precision in language is the first obligation of honest inquiry. Theologians who traffic in vague terms survive only because vagueness is never forced to answer hard questions. We will not grant that luxury here.

God (Tawhid; the Islamic foundation): One singular, necessary, self-existent being, uncaused, indivisible, without partner, without equal, without internal composition. Not one-of-a-kind. Not one-among-equals. Numerically, absolutely, irreducibly *one*. This is the *Ahad* of Surah Al-Ikhlas, a word so extreme in its singularity that Arabic uses it almost nowhere else. Not *wahid* (one among many) but *Ahad*, the Singular.

Allah said: قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ١ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ٣ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ٤

Say, ʿO Prophet,ʾ "He is Allah—One ʿand Indivisibleʾ; Allah—the Sustainer ʿneeded by allʾ. He has never had offspring, nor was He born. And there is none comparable to Him."[1]

Monotheism: The belief that exactly *one* divine being exists. (قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ)[2] The number is the entire theological point. One divine will. One divine consciousness. One locus of ultimate authority. The moment you pluralize any of these, you have departed monotheism, regardless of what label you apply.

The Trinity (Nicene Formula): The doctrine that God is one *substance* (ousia) in three distinct *persons* (hypostases); Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each fully God, co-equal and co-eternal, yet genuinely distinct from one another in their relations of origin.

Person: This is where the first battle must be fought carefully. Trinitarian theologians, especially in the classical tradition following Augustine and Aquinas, insist that "*person*" in the Trinity does not mean "*an independent center of consciousness and will.*" They claim the three persons share *one* divine intellect and *one* divine will, distinguished only by *relations of origin* (the Father begets, the Son is begotten, the Spirit proceeds).

We will take this definition seriously. And we will show it does not rescue the doctrine, it destroys it from a different direction.

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[1] Al-Furqān (Qur'an), Surah Al-Ikhlāṣ 112:1–4
[2] Al-Furqān (Qur'an), Surah Al-Ikhlāṣ 112:1

2- The Trinity Is Not Monotheism; It Is Polytheism

2.1- The Three Models of the Trinity (and Why All Three Fail)

The "Trinity" is not one doctrine but a contested family of models. This is actually *more* damaging to Trinitarianism than a single refutation, because it means the doctrine has no stable form to defend. Let us examine the three main philosophical models:

Model 1; Social Trinitarianism (Plantinga, Swinburne, Moltmann): The three persons are three distinct centers of consciousness, will, and love, a divine community bound by perfect unity of purpose. This is the most *coherent* model philosophically, but its defenders openly acknowledge the problem: it is **tritheism**. Three divine minds, three divine wills, three divine agents = three Gods. Richard Swinburne himself has been accused of tritheism by his colleagues. Social Trinitarianism is honest about the three-ness and dishonest about the one-ness.

Model 2, Latin/Psychological Trinitarianism (Augustine, Aquinas, Lonerkin): One divine substance, one divine intellect, one divine will, the three persons are *relations* within the divine essence, not independent subjects. Father, Son, and Spirit are distinguished only by their relations of origin. This avoids tritheism but collapses directly into **Modalism**, the heresy the church itself condemned, which holds that Father, Son, and Spirit are merely different modes or expressions of one person, not genuinely distinct. If they share one intellect and one will, in what sense are they three *anything* rather than one God appearing under three descriptions?

Model 3; Relative Identity Trinitarianism (Geach, van Inwagen): The persons are "the same God" but not "the same person." This borrows from relative identity theory, the claim that identity is always identity-*under-a-sortal*. Three persons, same God-stuff. This is the most philosophically sophisticated model, but it requires abandoning the **absolute** Law of Identity, a price almost no logician is willing to pay, and it still cannot explain why three distinct things sharing one nature are not three Gods in the way three humans sharing human nature are three humans.

The conclusion from surveying all three models is: **Trinitarian theologians cannot agree on what the Trinity is.** Two of their three main models are condemned as heresies by their own tradition. The third requires abandoning foundational logic. This is not a doctrine with a strong defense. It is a doctrine in a permanent internal crisis.

Allah said: بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِٱلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِىٓ أَمْرٍ مَّرِيجٍ

In fact, they reject the truth when it has come to them, so they are in a confused state.[3]

[3] Al-Furqān (Qur'an), Surah Qāf 50:5

2.2- The Relational-Person

It says: *the persons are not three minds but three relations of origin within one divine essence*. Let us engage it precisely.

If the persons are purely relational distinctions — not distinct wills, not distinct consciousnesses, not distinct agents — then several catastrophic problems follow:

First, prayer becomes incoherent. In Gethsemane, Jesus prays: "*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*"[4]

If Father and Son share one will, this sentence has no meaning. There is no *"my will"* distinct from *"your will."* The scene is either theatrical fiction or evidence of two wills, which means two volitional agents, which means two beings.

Second, the Incarnation becomes incoherent. If the Son *"becomes flesh"* while the Father does not, and the Spirit does not, and if they share one essence, one will, one intellect, then what exactly became flesh? Not the shared essence (the Father and Spirit did not become incarnate). Not a distinct will (there is only one). The relational model cannot coherently explain what the Incarnation *is*, because there is nothing distinct enough in the Son to become human without the Father and Spirit becoming human simultaneously.

Third, it concedes the Modalist problem. If the only distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit is their relations of origin, and they share everything else, then they are functionally *one being with three self-descriptions*. This is precisely Modalism, which Trinitarian orthodoxy anathematized at the Council of Constantinople (381 AD). You cannot escape tritheism by collapsing the persons together without landing in Modalism. The doctrine oscillates permanently between two condemned positions with no stable ground between them.

2.3- The Substance Argument

It says: *God's essence is numerically singular, not a universal shared by instances* unlike human nature, which is a universal instantiated in many humans. God's essence, on this view, is one concrete thing, not a type.

This is a real philosophical distinction. We grant it fully. And it makes the problem **worse**, not better.

If the divine essence is a single, concrete, numerically identical thing and the Father fully possesses it, the Son fully possesses it, and the Spirit fully possesses it, then by the

[4] Luke 22:42
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2022%3A42&version=NIV

logic of concrete identity, **Father, Son, and Spirit are identical to each other.** You cannot have three things each fully identical to one numerically singular concrete entity without those three things being identical to each other.

This is the transitivity of identity: if A = X and B = X and X is a numerically unique concrete thing, then A = B. But Trinitarian orthodoxy insists that A ≠ B. The doctrine requires what logic prohibits.

To escape this, they say: *"they are identical in essence but distinct in person"*. Than we ask: *In virtue of what* are they distinct? They say: "*Relations of origin.*" But relations of origin are properties (Meaning attributes). And a being whose properties distinguish it from another being is a different being. The Father's eternality is a property the Son does not have. By Leibniz's Law (*the Indiscernibility of Identicals*), two things that differ in any property are not the same thing. Father and Son differ in at least one property. Therefore Father and Son are not the same being. Therefore there are at least two divine beings. Therefore this is not monotheism.

Allah said: يَـٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبِ لَا تَغۡلُواْ فِى دِينِكُمۡ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡحَقَّۚ إِنَّمَا ٱلۡمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُۥٓ أَلۡقَىٰهَآ إِلَىٰ مَرۡيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنۡهُۖ فَـَٔامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦۖ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ ثَلَـٰثَةٌۚ ٱنتَهُواْ خَيۡرًا لَّكُمۡۚ إِنَّمَا ٱللَّهُ إِلَـٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌۖ سُبۡحَـٰنَهُۥٓ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌۘ لَّهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

O People of the Book! Do not go to extremes regarding your faith; say nothing about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger of Allah and the fulfilment of His Word through Mary and a spirit ˹created by a command˺ from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers and do not say, "Trinity." Stop!—for your own good. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him! He is far above having a son! To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And Allah is sufficient as a Trustee of Affairs.[5]

2.4- Why This Is Polytheism

Polytheism is not merely the belief in many Gods defined loosely, it is specifically the belief in **multiple beings that possess divine nature**.[6] You do not need temples to Zeus and Apollo to be a polytheist. You need only hold that more than one being possesses ultimate divinity.

The Trinitarian confession explicitly states:

"The Father is fully God. The Son is fully God. The Spirit is fully God. Yet they are not the same person. "

[5] Al-Furqān (Qur'an), Surah An-Nisā' 4:171
[6] https://www.britannica.com/topic/polytheism

Three non-identical beings each fully possessing divine nature is the formal definition of polytheism. The label "*Trinity*" and the formula "*one substance*" do not change the underlying ontology. They dress polytheism in monotheistic language.

Allah identifies this with surgical precision and said: لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَٰثَةٍۘ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّآ إِلَٰهٞ وَٰحِدٞۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُواْ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Those who say, "Allah is one in a Trinity," have certainly fallen into disbelief. There is only One God. If they do not stop saying this, those who disbelieve among them will be afflicted with a painful punishment.[7]

This is a precise ontological diagnosis. The charge is not that Christians are careless monotheists. The charge is that the doctrine, when examined without the protection of its institutional vocabulary, describes **three divine beings**, which is what polytheism has always meant.

3- The Trinity Is Not in the Bible

3.1- The Hebrew Foundation Is Explicitly Unitarian

The entire theological architecture of the Hebrew scriptures rests on *Shema Yisrael*:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."[8]

Trinitarian apologists argue that אֶחָד (*echad*, meaning one) can mean a compound unity, they cite "*one flesh*" in marriage as evidence. But this argument proves too much and too little. *Echad* simply means "one", its meaning is determined by context, and in the Shema, the context is a thunderous declaration of Israel's God against the polytheism of surrounding nations. The *point* of the Shema is numerical singularity against plurality. Reading a compound plurality *into* the definitive anti-polytheism statement of the Hebrew Bible is nothing more than coping.

3.2- Jesus's Own Words Contradict Co-Equality

They say that the two-nature Christology (Chalcedon, 451 AD) is the standard response to Jesus's subordinationist statements. According to this doctrine, Jesus has a divine nature and a human nature, ignorance and submission belong to his human nature, not his divine. We must engage this directly.

[7] Al-Furqān (Qur'an), Surah Al-Mā'idah 5:73
[8] Deuteronomy 6:4

The two-nature response generates a more serious problem than it solves: **if Jesus's human nature can say "*the Father is greater than I*,"[9] "I do not know the hour,"[10] and "I can do nothing on my own"[11], all without implicating his divine nature, then his divine nature contributed nothing observable to his earthly ministry.** The divine nature becomes an inert, hidden metaphysical add-on that explains everything doctrinally and nothing historically.

Moreover, the Council of Chalcedon itself acknowledged that Christ's two natures exist "*without confusion*, *without change*, *without division*, *without separation*." Without confusion means the natures don't mix. But then the person of Jesus cannot simultaneously pray with his human will and possess the divine will because the natures don't mix. This leaves one person with two wills making one prayer that belongs to only one of them. The metaphysics does not survive careful examination. Chalcedon did not resolve the Christological problem. It gave it a Greek vocabulary and called the mystery solved.

4- The Trinity Is Logically Incoherent

4.1- The Predication Problem

The Trinitarian response to the Law of Identity argument: *"is God" is predication, not identity.* The Father has the divine nature; the Son has the divine nature; they are not therefore identical to each other, just as Socrates and Plato both having human nature does not make them identical.

We granted this distinction above. Now we use it to close the trap.

If "is God" is predication (having the divine nature) rather than identity, then Trinitarian theology has **three beings that possess divinity**, not one God. This is straightforward polytheism by the same logic that gives us multiple humans: Socrates is human, Plato is human, Socrates ≠ Plato, therefore there are two humans. Father is God, Son is God, Father ≠ Son, therefore there are two Gods. The predication move escapes the identity contradiction only by landing directly in polytheism.

Trinitarians cannot have it both ways. Either:

- "Is God" means strict identity → Law of Identity violated (contradiction).
- "Is God" means predication → three divine beings (polytheism).

There is no third option. The logical space between these two positions is empty.

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[9] John 14:28
[10] Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32
[11] John 5:30

4.2- Divine Simplicity

Classical theism, the very tradition that produced Trinitarian theology insists on **divine simplicity**: God has no parts, no internal composition, no real distinctions within himself. God does not *have* goodness; God *is* goodness. God does not *have* existence; God *is* existence.

The Trinity requires real internal distinctions: Father-ness, Son-ness, Spirit-ness, relations of origin. These are, by the Trinitarian account, genuinely distinct from one another within the divine being.

A being with genuine internal distinctions is not simple. Divine simplicity and the Trinity are **formally incompatible doctrines** held simultaneously by the same theological tradition. Augustine held both. Aquinas held both. Neither resolved the contradiction, they subordinated it to authority.

Islam resolves this with philosophical elegance: A*had*, the Singular admits no internal composition, no persons, no relations of origin, no distinctions whatsoever. Tawhid and divine simplicity are not in tension. They are the same truth stated in two vocabularies.

4.3- The Mystery Escape

The final defense is always: "*It transcends human reason. It is a mystery.*"

This is not a theological position. It is the dissolution of theology. If the rules of logic, identity, non-contradiction, transitivity do not apply to God, then:

We cannot say God is "one" because one and many might be identical beyond logic. We cannot say God "exists" because existence and non-existence might be identical beyond logic. We cannot say God is "good" because good and evil might be identical beyond logic.

The appeal to mystery, taken to its conclusion, destroys every theological claim including the Trinity itself. You cannot use reason to construct a doctrine (as the councils explicitly did, in Greek philosophical language) and then declare reason incompetent to evaluate it.

The God of pure reason, pure unity, and pure transcendence, the God described in Surah Al-Ikhlas in four verses that contain more precise theology than volumes of Nicene commentary does not require mystery to defend himself. He requires only honest thought.

Allah said: قُلۡهُوَٱللَّهُأَحَدٌ ١ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ٢لَمۡ يَلِدۡ وَلَمۡ يُولَدۡ ٣وَلَمۡ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدُۢ ٤

Say, ˹O Prophet,˺ "He is Allah—One ˹and Indivisible˺; Allah—the Sustainer ˹needed by all˺. He has never had offspring, nor was He born. And there is none comparable to Him."[12]

5- Conclusion

The Trinity fails on every front by which a doctrine can be honestly evaluated.

Ontologically, it describes three non-identical beings each fully possessing divine nature, which is the definition of polytheism, regardless of the vocabulary used to package it. The Nicene formula does not resolve this. It obscures it.

Logically, it is caught in an inescapable dilemma: either "is God" means identity (violating the Law of Identity) or predication (producing polytheism). It violates Leibniz's Law through the distinct properties of the persons. It collapses divine simplicity. It requires two of its own three philosophical models to be heresies and the third to abandon foundational logic.

Scripturally, it is absent from the Hebrew Bible, contradicted by the plain words of Jesus, dependent on a demonstrably interpolated proof text (1 John 5:7), and the product of councils operating under imperial pressure centuries after the prophetic period closed.

The doctrine of Tawhid, the absolute, uncomposed, unpartnered singularity of God is the only logical answer to our problem.

The Trinity is not a revealed truth that reason cannot reach. It is a philosophical construction that reason, when applied with sufficient rigor, dismantles.

W'Allahu Alam, Allah knows best

[12] Al-Furqān (Qur'an), Surah Al-Ikhlāṣ 112:1–4

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[13] https://www.tiktok.com/@iftiratarihutansin?_t=ZN-8uM21ZWsBmQ&_r=1

[14] https://www.instagram.com/iftiratarihutansin_/

[15] https://x.com/iftiratarihutan

[16] https://hayatimanvecihad8.wordpress.com/