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The Divergent Pathways to the Divine, God: A Comprehensible Research Article on the Convergences and Divergences of the Divine Pathways in the Three Major Religions within the Framework of Religious Diversity

Abstract

The current research article seeks to explore the convergences and divergences in the approaches to reaching God across the three major world religions within the context of religious diversity. The current article implements a review of the existing literature as a research method in order to gather conclusive and evidence-based data with the aim of systematically evaluating these approaches in order to address the research objectives effectively. Throughout history, religions have focused on the concept of God or a divine being, yet the approaches to understanding or reaching this concept have varied dramatically among these three different religions. By comparing the understandings of God or divine reality in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism along with the methods of reaching this understanding, the study reveals the fact that the theological and ritual structures of each religion are uniquely established. Furthermore, the common themes and fundamental differences among the approaches to reaching God in these religions are scrutinized. The findings of the study reveal both similar and different aspects of the roadmaps among the three major religions, and in this context, it is concluded that the cultural, historical and theological backgrounds of each religion shape their respective approaches to the Divine, that is, the ultimate absolute being, God.

Keywords: *The Paths to The Divine, God, The Conception of God in Christianity, The Understanding of God in Judaism, Allah in Islam*

İlâhi Olana, Tanrı'ya Giden Farklı Yollar: Dini Çeşitlilik Bağlamında Tanrı'ya Giden Yolların Ortak ve Farklı Yönleri

Öz

Bu araştırma makalesinin amacı, nitel veri toplama yöntemiyle dini çeşitlilik bağlamında üç büyük dünya dininin İlâhi olana, yani Tanrı'ya ulaşma yollarındaki benzerliklerini ve farklılıklarını incelemektir. Tarihsel süreçte dinler, Tanrı (Allah) veya İlâhi varlık kavramına odaklanmış olmakla birlikte, bu kavramlara ulaşma yolları dinler arasında zamanla önemli ölçüde değişiklik göstermiştir. İslam, Hıristiyanlık ve Yahudilikteki Tanrı veya İlâhi gerçeklik anlayışlarını ve her dindeki bu anlayışa ulaşma yöntemlerini karşılaştırarak, bu araştırma makalesi her dinin teolojik ve ritüel yapılarının benzersiz bir şekilde oluşturulduğunu öne sürmektedir. Ayrıca, bu araştırma makalesinde, bahsi geçen üç büyük dindeki Tanrı'ya ulaşma yolları arasındaki ortak temalar ve temel farklılıklar da incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın verilerinden elde edilen bulgular, dinler arasındaki yol haritalarının hem benzer hem de farklı yönlerini ortaya koymakla birlikte, dini çeşitlilik bağlamında her dinin kültürel, tarihsel ve teolojik geçmişinin İlâhi olana yani Tanrı'ya ulaşma yollarını şekillendirdiği sonucunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlâhi Olana Tanrıya Giden Yollar, İslamiyet'te Allah, Yahudilikte Tanrı Anlayışı, Hıristiyanlıkta Tanrı Anlayışı

Introduction

Kılıç (1999) argues that since the time humans first set foot on Earth, they have always sought and pursued knowledge as beings who investigate their surroundings, strive to get the hang of the world they live in, and aim to grasp the essence of existence. Another phenomenon that humans cannot eradicate from their lives because of a characteristic inherent in their own creation and existence is the most vital concepts such as religion and belief. Religion has existed since the moment humans first set foot on Earth and has played a paramount role in shaping their lives to maintain the peace. The relationship between the creator and the created being is central to this. It is unthinkable that the creator would have left humans alone, even momentarily, after creating them. Throughout human history, it is unlikely to find a society that has lived without religion and its rules. Henceforth, belief in a religion has become the most obvious characteristic of human societies. Religion, regardless of its kind, has consistently been a fundamental institution for maintaining the peace of individuals and society. Thus, it has always been needed and has never been distance from human experience.

In light of the research study conducted by Pailin (2005), it can be argued that the concept of religion, which is as old as human history, has a complex integrity as a concept and its boundaries

are blurry and unclear, and that many varieties have emerged throughout history. Yazoğlu (2002) suggests that, as is known, there are similarities between the principles of belief, forms of worship and moral understandings that these religions find right, good and saving, as well as significant differences. In other words, religions make both similar and different truth claims. This creates very deep-rooted problems.

In the assessment of the scholarly work by Alıcı (2005), it is elaborated that the term pluralism, in other words, religious diversity, which began to be used in the history of philosophy from the end of the 19th century to indicate a metaphysical theory or system leading to the Ultimate Transcendent Being, and was later defended by many thinkers, but as argued by Yazoğlu (2006), it was essentially developed as a global religious theory and movement by John Hick, is, in short, the name of the view that accepts all religions, especially the great living religions, as paths leading to God on an equal level. Kılıç (2004) contends that it is a philosophical problem that refuses to distinguish between religions in terms of truth value and according to Demirci (2005), it arises from the issue of how different religions will relate to each other if they have to live together.

In today's world, Yazoğlu (1995) accentuates that the religious diversity, which refers to the existence of many religious traditions, each representing its own beliefs and practices regarding the 'sacred,' is a subset of the broader issue of 'religious diversity.' In this current research article, the issue of religious diversity can be formulated with two research questions as follows:

1.1. Research Questions

- Is the path to the Divine, God the same in all the three major religions? or are there any divergent pathways to the Divine, God?
- Or do all these three religions hold an equal significance in terms of their ultimate truth, God?

In the analysis of the scholarly work of Kılıç (2004), it is obviously presented and elucidated that the answers to these research questions can be explored through the lens of the religious diversity approach. Phenomenologically, it is obvious that the history of religions shows the diversity of traditions and the differences within each; philosophically, it is known that the pluralistic approach points to a specific theory of the relationship among traditions with their different and competing claims (Demirci, 2005). Aslan (1998) asserts and discusses that there is an absolute and divine truth and religions are different paths that reach this absolute truth and represent it equally. Therefore, whichever of these paths is followed, salvation will ultimately be achieved.

Considering the articulation by Aydın (2005), it can be accentuated that pluralism or religious diversity, is a model that seeks to transcend both exclusivism and inclusivism by positing that each religious tradition or belief can lead its adherents to salvation independently of others. Rather than emphasizing a single absolute true religion or belief or making this absolute true religion or belief inclusive of adherents of other traditions, religious diversity views the major world religions as different responses to the same Ultimate Transcendent Being beyond our human faculties. According to this perspective, each world religion represents a distinct answer to the Ultimate Transcendent Being, expressed through its unique historical structures, holy books, spiritual practices, forms of religious experience, belief systems, founders, and cultural styles. According to this understanding, the fundamental goal of all religions is the same: to guide their adherents from self-centeredness to God-centeredness or reality-centeredness. In this context, all religions are seen as different paths leading to the Ultimate Transcendent Being.

As it is noted, the theory of the religious pluralism or religious diversity does not accommodate Yahweh, Jesus, and Allah, who are viewed as a 'Self' in theistic religions, nor does it include Brahman, Nirvana, Sunyata, etc., which lack personal attributes in non-theistic religions. Instead, it focuses on a concept of a 'simple Ultimate and Divine Truth' that underlies all these perspectives and possesses no attributes. This approach highlights a 'higher point' and a 'higher concept' that no single religion or religious tradition can fully comprehend or represent. Consequently, since no tradition can assert, 'the only correct understanding and perception is mine,' the understanding and perception of each religious tradition, despite their differences, are seen as equally valid in terms of truth and justification. It is posited that every religious tradition, whether revealed or not, is correct in its own way in grasping this 'Ultimate Truth,' suggesting that they all reflect the truth at comparable levels despite their differences (Özcan, 1995). Hick (1983) asserts that the issue of conflicting truth claims, which arises from the interaction of different religious traditions due to large-scale diffusion movements, presents a significant challenge to the pluralistic hypothesis. He asserts that all religions authentically experience the Real. However, each tradition upholds beliefs that contradict those of other traditions. Thus, as is asked and put forward by Yazoğlu (2006), the fundamental question that should be questioned is: Do these different belief systems and conflicting truth claims undermine the validity of the pluralistic hypothesis?

As it is elucidated by Topçu (2001), in the realm of logic, if one proposition is affirmed as true in the context of its counterpropositions, then the other must necessarily be false. It is evident

that both propositions cannot simultaneously hold true. Indeed, all matters of truth are inherently bound by the principle of contradiction. Consequently, any assertion of truth must adhere to the binary of being either true or false, in accordance with the principle that a third option is logically untenable.

In the analysis offered by Kılıç (2004), the religious pluralism/religious diversity in a certain sense, endeavours to address the issue of competing truth claims among various religions through a framework akin to 'democracy.' Nevertheless, the fundamental challenge within the paradigm of the religious diversity lies in the inherent difficulties posed by the conflicting truth claims of disparate religious traditions.

Therefore, this research article seeks to address a pivotal question emerging from the preceding discussions. If there is not a singular, absolute true religion but rather a multitude of potentially valid religions, or conversely, if each religious tradition holds equal legitimacy in guiding its adherents towards the Divine Being, can it be posited that all these traditions ultimately converge upon the same truth? In other words, as formulated with two research questions above, the fundamental question that arises from them is that do the divergent paths leading to the Divine despite the conflicting beliefs about God, a central element in all three major religions ultimately lead to the same destination or differ across the three major world religions?

In order to find answers to these questions, it is of great importance to first determine the understanding of God revealed in the "Holy Texts" of religions, which they accept as absolute truth. Therefore, it would be appropriate to reveal the understanding of God of the Abrahamic religions, which will be discussed respectively in this research article.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This research article aims to examine the convergences and divergences in the approaches for attaining divine connection across the three major world religions within the framework of religious diversity. To accomplish such an aim, the study employs a descriptive study method, that is to say, a comprehensive literature review as its primary research method by systematically analysing the existing scholarly sources to gather conclusive, evidence-based data in the context of two research questions formulated above. The objective is to rigorously evaluate these approaches in order to effectively address the research goals. Another objective of this study is to elucidate the conceptualizations of the divine as presented in the literature and how the sacred texts of the three major religions define and attribute qualities to God. Due to these compelling reasons, this research article is of high significance as it investigates the divergent pathways to God across the three major

religions such as Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, and seeks to illuminate the field for the future studies, thereby addressing the existing gaps in the relevant literature.

2. Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis of the Study

This study aims to explore the approaches to reaching God within the framework of the religious diversity and is structured around two primary and pivotal research questions as formulated above under the Research Questions section. To address and elaborate these research questions, a descriptive study method, a review of the literature as a research method is employed in this research article because as is detailed by Webster and Watson (2002), this method is used for its capacity to gather conclusive, scientific, and compelling evidence, and to analyse them, thereby enriching the understanding of pluralism/religious diversity and advancing the research findings. Given the nature of the study, the literature review is used to systematically gather data, critically analyse, and synthesize data from the existing scholarly works in the field and to interpret them to find the necessary answers to the research questions in the article to shed light on the gaps in the relevant literature regarding the understanding of God in the three major world religions.

3. A Review of the Literature

3.1. The Conception of the Divine, God Across the Three Major World Religions

As is widely acknowledged, there exists no religious tradition on earth devoid of a conception of God or a belief in an Absolute Being. Likewise, it would be accurate to assert that no philosopher is without some notion of an Absolute Being. The existence of God, along with related metaphysical issues, remains a central concern in the realm of philosophy (Başçı, 1989). In the assessment established by Aydın (2001), it is obviously accentuated that while God has been defined in myriad ways across various philosophical doctrines, leading to the development of numerous philosophical movements; therefore, this discussion will refrain from delving into these diverse approaches. Such philosophical terminologies and their ramifications lie beyond the scope of this current research article examination.

3.2. The Theological Portrayal, the Interpretation of the Divine (Allah) within the framework of Islamic Conceptualisation

As it is clearly articulated and presented by Güler (2000), a profound belief in, knowledge of, awareness of and comprehension of Allah are undoubtedly central focuses in most religions, particularly the Abrahamic faiths, and they serve as a foundational concept that shapes religious life in the minds of their adherents. In Islam, as in other Abrahamic religions, this belief is regarded

as fundamental to the faith. Havva (1980) asserts that any work or practice devoid of belief in Allah is considered to have no substantive value within the Islamic tradition. This fundamental aspect is clearly reflected in the "Kelime-i Shahadat" (Declaration of Faith) and the "Kelime-i Tawhid" (Testimony of Unity), which are core tenets of the Islamic belief and represent the initial step in accepting the religion.

In the scholarly work carried out by Topaloğlu (1989), it is emphasized that in the Islamic tradition, when defining God, His attributes and names are emphasized. In the Quran, the term "name" is associated with "Allah" or the pronoun that substitutes it, as well as with the term "Rabb." Additionally, the plural form "Esma" is used four times in conjunction with "el-Husna," forming the phrase "el-Esmaü'l Hüсна," which translates to "the most beautiful names." According to the Islamic belief, the definitive name of the supreme creator is "Allah," which is unique and does not have a dictionary definition. In the Islamic thought, it is emphasized that the entire universe reflects the interplay of Allah's divine names and attributes. The names of Cemal and Rahmet, as well as the names of Celal and Adalet, are manifested to humans in a balanced and harmonious way. In examining the sources related to the Esmâül'l Hüсна (the Most Beautiful Names of Allah), we observe that the names of Cemal—such as Rahmet, Merhamet, and Sevgi are more prominent. The Quran highlights Allah's forgiveness, compassion, and mercy much more frequently than His justice and punishment.

Attas (2016) posits that, in the Islamic thought, Allah is understood differently from the ancient Greek philosophical traditions. For instance, Allah is not analogous to Aristotle's First Mover. Unlike Aristotle's unmoved mover, Allah acts with free will, without undergoing any change, formation, or decay. Allah cannot be conceptualized as a philosophical agent in the sense of a static, unmoved mover because His act of creation transcends the Aristotelian dualism of matter and form. Similarly, Allah's creation cannot be explained through Plotinian metaphysics. Instead, Allah's creation represents the manifestation of universal truths from His knowledge into the external world through His will and power. Allah is the ultimate cause of all these truths. Creation by Allah is an ongoing process, marked by a continuous yet varied expression of existence as long as He wills. Thus, Allah is not envisioned as a being who disengages from His creations; rather, He is perpetually involved in the act of creation, where repetition and innovation are seamlessly intertwined.

As it is mentioned in the assessment offered by Bilsel (1970), in the Islamic belief, God, whose true name is Allah, is defined in the following manner: Allah is singular; He neither begets

nor is begotten. He has no physical form, and there is no deity besides Him. He hears all that crosses a person's mind, yet He does not have ears. He perceives the most distant and hidden matters, though He does not have eyes. He has the attribute of speech, but He does not possess a tongue. Allah is all-knowing and all-powerful. He is unlike anything conceivable to the human mind. Everything in the universe is transient, while Allah is eternal and unchanging. Our understanding cannot fully grasp the Almighty, who encompasses all. Despite Allah's attempts to define and explain Himself to humanity, His essence remains beyond complete comprehension. He is the Great Creator whose reality eludes both reason and sight. Only His existence can be affirmed, not what He is. These definitions of God in the Islamic thought system are completely derived from the Quran. Because the Quran also defines God as the one and only, the owner of life, the eternal and everlasting, the creator, the all-powerful, the all-knowing, the all-seeing, the doer of what he wills, the absolute power, the one and only being, the unbegotten and unborn, and the only being worthy of worship.

It is pertinent to highlight that the system and the Quran contain many additional expressions used to define God. However, the definitions presented in this study encompass nearly all the fundamental attributes ascribed to God within the Islamic thought. Since the purpose of this article is to compare the conceptions of God across the three major Abrahamic religions based on their respective holy texts, and to identify both their congruent and divergent aspects, the study will be confined to these definitions.

Ultimately, the Quran, as the primary and fundamental source of understanding and conveying the concept of God in Islam, is thoroughly examined and an exploration of how Allah (God) is depicted in the Quran reveals that the concept of Allah's absolute unity is fundamental in the Islamic theology, asserting that no entity shares even the slightest measure of His power and might. Allah is the sole possessor of divine attributes, and as the singular divine being, the notion of associating any partner with Him is considered both a sin and an act of denial. Islam unequivocally states that Allah has no offspring, no father, no brother, no sister, no spouse, nor any other human-like associates. In the pre-Islamic era, known as the Age of Ignorance, the Arabs practiced polytheism. They revered female deities such as Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat, and male deities like Hebel and Zilhalin. The Kaaba housed idols representing the gods of various tribes, serving as a sort of Pantheon. The term "ilah," which is a phonetic variant of "Allah," was used as a proper name during this period, reflecting a view of God not as an abstract entity but as a concrete,

personal being. The pre-Islamic practice of worshipping idols, believed to be daughters of Allah, was explicitly condemned by the Holy Quran. The Quran emphasizes that Allah is unlike any person or concept conceivable by the human mind and unequivocally states that He has no partners:

“It emphasizes that Allah created the universe and everything within it, including all known and unknown entities. Therefore, nothing that Allah has created can be compared to Him, and belief in this fact is commanded” (Shura, 42, p. 11).

The Quran underscores the absolute oneness of the Creator: *“God is the One God; there is no deity except Him”* (Aal-i Imran 3/2; Al-Baqarah 2/163; As-Saffat 37/5-6; An-Nahl 16/51). It further asserts, *“If there were any gods in the heavens or the earth other than Him, both would be in a state of corruption”* (Anbiya 21/22-23; Al-Isra 17/42). Additionally, the Quran declares, *“He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in truth and wisdom”* (An’am 6/73).

According to the Islamic belief, Allah is present and omnipresent; His omnipresence means that while He encompasses the entire universe, the universe cannot encompass Him. The prophet Joshua (Eshiya), who is believed to have lived in the 6th century BCE, declared that God is one: *“The first is I, and the last is I, and there is no god but me”* (Torah, Eshiya, XLIV, 6; XLII, 5, 8). This declaration is consistent with the Islamic belief. The Quran also describes Allah with attributes such as the first, last, apparent, and hidden (Al-Hadid 57:3). The Talmud offers a perspective on the existence of God, suggesting that it is more a matter of moral obligation than intellectual approval. Talmudic interpretation of the verse from the prophet Joshua/Eshiya is as follows: *“The first is I, meaning I am the first, for I have no father; I am the end, for I have no brother; I am the end, for I have no son.”* This interpretation is clearly related to the message of Surah Ikhlas. Additionally, another verse attributed to Ash’iya states: *“Before me there was no God, nor will there be after me”* (Ash’iya, XL, 4).

The Quran addresses the mystical yearning to find, see, and reach Allah with the following verses: *“We (Allah) are closer to man than his lifeblood”* (Qaf 50:17) and *“Know that Allah moves between man and his feelings”* (Anfal 8/24). Although Allah transcends spatial limitations and is present and aware everywhere, many mystics believe that His dwelling is within the heart. They hope to perceive the Creator, whom they see as encompassing everything, in this world. Conversely, believers maintain that seeing Allah is a privilege reserved for the hereafter. The Quran further elucidates this concept: *“No vision can grasp Him, but He grasps all vision. He is Subtle, All-Aware”* (An’am 6/103).

"To Allah belong the East and the West. Wherever you turn, there is the presence of Allah. For every place is within the scope of Allah's knowledge" (Al-Baqarah 2/115). The verse you're referring to highlights the use of "Maşrik" (east) and "Mağrib" (west) to convey more than just their literal meanings. Instead of merely denoting directions, these terms signify *"the places where the sun rises and sets."* This interpretation emphasizes Allah's omnipresence and dominion over the entire cosmos. In the Islamic commentary, this nuanced understanding avoids any implication that Allah's presence is limited to just the east and west. It clarifies that Allah is indeed the Lord of all directions, and His presence encompasses all places, not excluding the north or south. The verse from Surah Al-Baqarah (2/115) reinforces this idea by stating, *"To Allah belong the east and the west. Wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is vast and knows all things."* This verse assures that Allah's presence is not confined to specific locations, but is omnipresent, indicating that His essence is beyond the constraints of any particular direction.

In the Quran, Allah is described as the Lord of all worlds and creatures and the provider of sustenance. For example, in Surah Al-Mu'min (40/64-65), it is stated: *"It is Allah who made the earth suitable for you to live in, and constructed the sky, and provided you with the best of forms and provided you with wholesome food. 'The Lord of the worlds' is the source of all goodness."*

The attribute the "Lord of the worlds" is central to the Islamic theology. Although the Quran often addresses specific groups, such as "O people!" or "O you who believe!" directly addressing the communities around Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) scholars interpret "Lord of the worlds" as encompassing all of creation, including all living and non-living entities, as well as polytheists and non-believers. This broad interpretation underscores that Allah's lordship is universal and inclusive. The concept of "Lord of the Worlds" is affirmed in several Quranic verses, including Surah Al-Fatiha (1/1), Surah Al-Mu'min (40/64-66), and Surah Al-Ahqaf (46/35). Similarly, in the New Testament, Saint Paul emphasizes the unity of God and His universal lordship in First Corinthians (8/5-6): *"For although there are so-called gods in heaven and on earth—as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'—for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things come and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live."*

The creative power of Allah and His other attributes are described in various surahs of the Quran. For instance:

- **An-Nisa 4/1:** *"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women..."*
- **Al-Ma'idah 5/19:** *"O people of the Scripture, there has come to you our Messenger to make clear to you the religion after a period of suspension of Messengers..."*
- **Ibrahim 14/20:** *"But they did not do justice to Allah, the mighty and wise."*
- **Al-Furqan 25/6:** *"Say, 'It [the Quran] is from the Lord of the worlds.'"*
- **Ar-Rum 30/40:** *"Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs."*
- **An-Najm 53/42-58:** *"These verses describe Allah's power in various aspects, including His dominion and creative ability"*

Additionally, Surah Al-Ala (87/1-5) accentuates Allah's creative power and the natural process of transformation: *"Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who creates and proportions, Who measures and guides, Who brings forth the pasture, Then makes it black stubble."* Surah Qaf (50/15) addresses doubts about resurrection and new creation: *"Did We fail in the first creation? No, they are in doubt about a new creation."*

3.3. The Judaic Understanding and the Portrayal of God

In the examination of the Jewish religious beliefs and their sacred texts, it is essential to acknowledge the historical context that has influenced these texts. Given that the evolution of religious beliefs and practices often intersects with historical developments, an examination of Judaism must include an understanding of its historical trajectory. As Aydın (2004) contends that Judaism, recognized as the oldest among the Semitic religions, exhibits a distinctive characteristic in its theological framework: a fundamental ontological distinction between God and humanity. This attribute is shared among the Semitic religions, including Christianity and Islam, where the existence of God is accepted a priori. This theological stance is clearly reflected in the sacred texts of these faith traditions. To provide a comprehensive analysis, it is therefore meaningful to consider historical and scholarly sources alongside the examination of these sacred texts. This approach will enrich our understanding of how historical contexts have shaped and transformed religious doctrines and practices over time.

Örs (2000) elucidates that the Old Testament, particularly the Torah (the first five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), was traditionally viewed by both Jews and Christians as the text that God directly dictated to Moses. However, the research studies conducted over the past two centuries have revealed that these texts were written more recently

than previously thought and were subject to numerous revisions for various purposes. The authors of the Torah can be categorized into different groups based on their references to God: the Yahwists, Elohimists, Deuteronomists, and Priests. Each group had its own perspective and focus, with the Priests primarily concerned with legal matters.

In the assessment of the research article investigated by Aydın (2004), it is evident that although various beliefs have existed within Jewish tradition, the core Jewish belief about God is His unity. This belief is reflected in one of the oldest parts of the Bible, the Ten Commandments, specifically in the second commandment: *"You shall have no other gods before Me."* As mentioned earlier, Jewish beliefs have evolved over time. Although earlier texts from the pre-Mosaic period suggest an anthropomorphic understanding of God, the core belief of post-Mosaic and contemporary Judaism is the transcendence and oneness of God. This belief is foundational in Judaism and is vividly expressed in the Shema prayer: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."* For devout Jews, expressing this faith on their deathbeds is a profound and cherished aspiration. In Judaism, as in Islam, multiple names are used to refer to God. While these names may convey different aspects or attributes, the name YHVH (often rendered as Yahweh) is considered His unique and most sacred name. Additionally, names such as Adonai, Elohim, El Elyon, El Olam, and El Shaddai are also used to describe God, each reflecting different facets of His nature.

In the analysis presented by Demirci (2005), in the Torah, various names are used to refer to God, but in the most general sense, He is defined as eternal and everlasting. God possesses complete knowledge, the power to accomplish anything, and the ability to create all things. He is entirely distinct from creation, yet very close to humanity. Despite the fundamental belief in God's singularity, Jewish tradition has incorporated many anthropomorphic elements into this understanding. Over time, descriptions of God began to reflect human characteristics: He walks in the garden like a person, is unable to see those hiding behind trees, wrestles with humans, sleeps, can cause harm with arrows, becomes angry and hurt, remembers, and sits down.

Consequently, when analysing the Judaic portrayal of God in the Old Testament, as the primary source of comprehending and conveying the concept of God, it becomes evident that in both the Torah and the Quran, it is emphasized that God is the creator of everything in the universe. God, who is central to the realm of existence, is portrayed as the creator of the universe we live in and as a unique being who actively intervenes in the created world. In these sacred texts, God is

depicted as the ultimate reason for the universe's existence and the only being who provides answers to all questions about it. Both the Torah and the Quran make a clear distinction between God and His creations, highlighting that everything created is dependent on God. Creation is depicted in various ways in Jewish holy scriptures. In the Torah, specifically in the book of Genesis, there are two distinct stories about the creation of the world and humanity. The first story is found in Genesis 1/1 to 2/4 while the second story is in Genesis 2/4 to 2/25. The first story is known as the Elohist text, and the second as the Yahwist text. These stories offer different perspectives on both the creation of the universe (cosmogony) and the creation of humans (anthropogony). In the Elohist text, God is referred to as Elohim, and humanity is created in the image of God, with both male and female being created last. In contrast, the Yahwist text uses the name Yahweh for God and describes humanity as the first being created. In the Elohist text, humans are created from nothing, while in the Yahwist text, humans are formed from clay. Additionally, the Yahwist text places the creation of Eve at the end of the process, whereas the Elohist text describes the creation of both Adam and Eve at the end. The Elohist text describes a creation process over six days, but the Yahwist text does not specify a time frame for creation (Hooke, 2002, Genesis, 1/ 1-2 /25).

In the creation stories of the Torah, God is depicted as creating the universe and everything in it over six days. On the seventh day, He rests and inspects His creation. In these narratives, there are anthropomorphic elements, such as God appearing like an angry gardener searching for Adam, who has disobeyed by becoming aware of his nakedness. Despite these anthropomorphic features, the Torah generally presents a vision of God as a singular, all-powerful Creator who reveals Himself and administers justice. In various texts, especially in the Apocryphal works and the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Torah), efforts have been made to mitigate these anthropomorphic descriptions. These texts interpret such expressions in ways that convey different meanings. After the destruction of the Second Temple, Jewish rabbis also emphasized God's unity and transcendence, using superlative adjectives to describe Him. Thus, in Jewish tradition, God is portrayed as one, the Creator, all-knowing, just, and merciful (Armstrong, 2008).

In the Quranic creation story, there is no anthropomorphic depiction of God. While some passages in the Quran use anthropomorphic language, the text emphasizes that Allah is all-knowing and that nothing is hidden from Him. For instance, it is stated that not even a leaf falls to the ground without Allah's knowledge (Saba, 34 / 1-3; Al-An'am, 6/59). The Quran does not provide detailed accounts of how the world and humanity were created. Unlike Genesis, the Quran does not focus on the specific sequence of creation. Instead, it highlights the purpose of creation and why the

world and humanity were created rather than how (An-Naml, 27/8; Al-Hashr, 59/23; Juma, 62/1). Therefore, the Quranic passages address the origin and destiny of humanity, presenting a vision of a creative God while also incorporating an eschatological perspective.

In summary, belief in God in Judaism is discussed in detail in the Torah, particularly in the book of Genesis. According to Genesis, God is a single and unique being. Genesis 1/1 states, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* This verse emphasizes that God is the creator of all things and expresses His absolute power. God's creative role demonstrates that all beings originate from Him. In Genesis 1:26, it is noted that God created man in His own image: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This statement highlights that man is created in God's image and that God's act of creation is perfect. Moreover, God is depicted not only as a creator but also as a moral and ethical authority. In Genesis 2/16-17, God permits Adam to eat from any tree in the garden except for one: *"You may eat freely from every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* This commandment illustrates God's authority to establish moral boundaries and underscores the significance of these boundaries for human life. In Judaism, God is also associated with justice and mercy. These attributes are emphasized in Genesis, showing that God is not only a creator but also an ethical ruler (Torah, Genesis 1/1-2/25).

3.4. The Portrayal of God in the context of Christian Conceptualisation

As it is evident in the scholarly work carried out by Michel (1992), the fundamental belief shared by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam is the oneness and unity of God. Christians hold that the God worshipped by Abraham, Moses, and the followers of Judaism and Islam is the same. In other words, Christians view themselves as part of a broader religious tradition, alongside Judaism and Islam, all of which are based on the worship of the one, singular God revealed to Abraham. Christians believe that God is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, the creator of the universe and everything within it, omnipresent, the source of life, merciful and forgiving, transcendent yet immanent, the supreme Lord of all, and the just judge of humanity on the Day of Judgment. He is also seen as the sole being who grants eternal reward or punishment.

Michel (1992) articulates that, in the New Testament, the depiction of God closely aligns with the general Jewish understanding. God embodies goodness, truth, and wisdom. His heavenly realm is His throne, and He is eternally holy, sovereign over all things on earth. As the creator, He

possesses absolute knowledge, and although He is distinct from creation, He is immanent within it. While Christianity shares the belief in one God, it also encompasses doctrines that may seem to contradict this belief. One such doctrine is the belief in the “Incarnation.” According to this central Christian tenet, the eternal and uncreated Word of God became flesh in the person of Jesus and lived among humanity. In other words, Jesus is seen as the embodiment of God's Word, entering the world in human form.

In the scholarly work of Aydın (2005), he posits that Jesus is regarded both as the Son of God and as the incarnation of the Word of God. Christians refer to Jesus as the Son of God to signify a unique and profound relationship between Jesus and God. This belief asserts that God's eternal and uncreated message is embodied in Jesus. The title “Son of God” reflects a deep, personal connection (with Jesus having an intimate knowledge of the Father) and a commitment to unity (with Jesus acting solely in accordance with God’s will). However, for Christians, this title does not imply that God physically adopted Jesus as His child.

It is pertinent to point out that although the Bible does not explicitly outline the principles that constitute the Christian profession of faith, it is widely believed that these principles began to take shape with the first Council of the Apostles and were finalized in the 4th and 5th centuries. These doctrines, established in the ecumenical councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, are as follows: We believe in one God, the Almighty Father, creator of heaven and earth, of all that is visible and invisible; in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, who is God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were made. He came down from heaven for our salvation; He was incarnated by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary and became man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered, was buried, and on the third day rose again according to the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who is worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son, who spoke through the prophets; in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church; in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; in the resurrection of the dead; and in the life of the world to come (Erbaş, 2004).

Yıldırım (2005) makes it clear that the teachings that are currently considered fundamental to Christian belief originated from the distortion of the Gospels and their transformation under the influence of Neoplatonism, which became prominent when Paul and his followers, who were

pagans, assumed influence in the 50s. The original monotheistic belief was altered into a pantheistic concept under this philosophical influence, leading to the depiction of God as three distinct beings. Consequently, the doctrine of the Trinity, which contrasts with the widely accepted idea of a singular God in Christianity, emerged as a core tenet of Christian faith. The following verses are cited as evidence of the Trinity in the Gospels: *“And Jesus was baptized, and immediately He came up from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’”* Another verse states: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”*

As is elucidated by Erbaş (2004), according to the traditional doctrine, the trinity consists of three elements: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father’s role is to create humanity through His love, the Son’s role is to provide salvation, and the Holy Spirit’s role is to bestow grace upon people. These three elements, working in harmony, constitute a single Godhead. It is important to note that the Son is identified as Jesus. The doctrine of the Trinity can be summarized as follows: Although the essence of God is manifested as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, He remains one. This essence is indivisible and singular, akin to a substance that cannot be separated. Thus, God is one, described as a holy Trinity. Additionally, the Christian dogma of the Trinity has been elucidated using the attributes of Body, Knowledge, and Life, and its metaphysical dimensions have been interpreted in relation to the concept of the Trinity.

Finally, examining the concept of God as presented in the Bible, as the fundamental source of understanding the concept of God, reveals that belief in God is extensively explored in the Bible, which discusses God's nature, characteristics, and relationship with humanity in various ways. The Bible underscores that God is a singular and unique entity: *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one”* (Deuteronomy, 6/4). This verse highlights God's unity and absolute authority. This concept of God's unity and uniqueness is also reinforced in the New Testament: *“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”* (John 4/24). Furthermore, God's creative power is a significant theme in the Bible. Genesis 1/1 asserts, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* This verse establishes God as the creator of the universe, indicating that everything came into existence through His will. Genesis 1/3 elaborates on this creative power: *“God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light,”* demonstrating that this creation was realized

by God's command. The New Testament places particular emphasis on God's relationship with humans. God's love and compassion are vividly expressed in John 3/16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son."* Additionally, God provides teachings to guide humanity: *"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him"* (Proverbs, 30/5). God's moral and ethical authority is another important theme in the Bible. He sets moral boundaries for humanity and underscores their significance: *"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly"* (Leviticus, 19/15). The New Testament further emphasizes the necessity of adhering to God's commands: *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (John, 14/15). Finally, God's justice and mercy are prominently featured in the Bible. His justice is demonstrated through His responses to human actions: *"The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does"* (Psalm, 145/17). Similarly, God's mercy and forgiveness are emphasized in the New Testament: *"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful"* (Luke, 6/36). These attributes collectively define God's central role in Christian faith and His impact on human life.

4.The Divergent Pathways to the Divine Being, God in the context of Islam, Christianity and Judaism within the Framework of Religious Diversity

4.1. Do These Three World Major Religions Converge on the Same Ultimate Absolute Divine Being, God?

As it is discussed and revealed in the article, the issue of conflicting religious truths represents a significant challenge to the paradigm of the religious diversity, namely pluralism. This is due to the fundamental logical principle that if two claims about the same subject are mutually contradictory, then at least one of them must be false.

In the comprehensive analysis offered by Yazoğlu (1995), it is outlined that according to John Hick, who argues that all religious traditions are genuine manifestations of the same ultimate reality, seemingly conflicting concepts of personal and impersonal truth are actually complementary. Hick illustrates this point with the analogy of three blind people touching an elephant. In this analogy, one blind person touches the elephant's leg and describes the elephant as resembling the trunk of a large tree. Another touches the elephant's trunk and asserts that the elephant is like a snake. The third touches the elephant's side and claims that the elephant is like a wall. Although all three are interacting with the same elephant, their descriptions are contradictory, each believing their own perception to be correct and the others' to be mistaken. Hick uses this analogy to argue that, similarly, all religions are related to the same Ultimate Reality, though they

describe it in incomplete and varying ways. He contends that Ultimate Reality cannot be fully encapsulated by any single religious perspective and that all religions authentically reflect aspects of this Ultimate Reality.

In light of this information, a thorough examination of the understanding of God within the three major monotheistic religions reveals a fundamental concept of God as "one and only" across all these faiths. Indeed, it can be asserted that these religions are essentially grounded in the belief in "One God." Furthermore, an analysis of the attributes ascribed to this One God shows that there are significant commonalities among them. In other words, these three major religions share substantial similarities and consistencies in the characteristics they attribute to their deity. These shared attributes can be enumerated as follows:

In the assessment of the scholarly work conducted by Yıldırım (2005), it is highly accentuated that God is described and portrayed as one, unique, omniscient, omnipresent, the creator of all things, absolutely good, omnipotent, sovereign, just, both manifest and hidden, loving, merciful, capable of judgment, reward, and punishment, and worthy of worship while being self-sufficient. Despite these common attributes found in the three Holy Books, there are also contradictory statements. These contradictions primarily involve attributing human characteristics to God, and they appear in various sections of the Torah and the Bible. For instance, verses suggesting that God sleeps, walks in the garden, becomes angry, shoots arrows, or has a son are examples of such anthropomorphic descriptions. A careful examination reveals that the concept of the Son is present in both Judaism and Christianity, with the holy texts of these religions asserting that God has a son. In Christianity, this belief is central to the faith. However, this notion is incompatible with Islamic teachings. In Islam, the claims made by Jews and Christians are explicitly rejected in numerous verses of the Quran, and those who hold such beliefs are described as disbelievers. Furthermore, Islam categorically rejects the attribution of human characteristics to God, as mentioned in Judaism and Christianity. According to the Islamic belief, it is inconceivable for God to walk in a garden, inflict harm by shooting arrows, or engage in wrestling with a person. Similarly, both Islam and Christianity reject the notion of a "National God" prevalent in Judaism. Both religions assert that their divine message is universal and meant for all of humanity. The doctrine of the Trinity, which is central to Christian faith, is also unacceptable to both Islam and Judaism. This doctrine, which posits that God exists as three distinct persons the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit contradicts the fundamental monotheistic understanding of God and introduces

internal inconsistencies. Nevertheless, Christians interpret this doctrine to mean that while God is one, He exists in a mysterious trinity comprising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This belief does not imply the existence of three separate gods but rather one God expressed in three aspects. These conflicting claims regarding the nature of God, a fundamental concept in all religions, challenge the assertion that these religions are merely different paths leading to the same absolute truth. In the Holy Texts of the three major Abrahamic religions under study, God reveals Himself in ways that are mutually exclusive. Each religion presents a depiction of God that fundamentally contradicts the others, making it impossible for one depiction to be accepted while simultaneously accepting another. Given these mutually negating contradictions, it would contravene basic logical principles to assert that all these religions ultimately lead to the same ultimate goal.

Conclusion

Given that the research study reveals, the article evaluated whether Islam, Judaism, and Christianity converge on the same ultimate absolute divine truth in their understandings and conceptions of God. It is discovered that, despite the fundamental belief in a singular supreme being shared by these three major world religions, a set of human elements introduced into their sacred texts due to the historical, cultural, ritualistic, and theological developments have led to significant conflicts. Christianity and Judaism, in particular, have incorporated human characteristics into their conceptions, interpretations and portrayals of God, resulting in the divergent understandings and conceptions. If these human elements and additions are removed from the analysis, it becomes evident that all these three major world religions ultimately worship the same One God, the Divine, who originates from a common source and shares the same essential characteristics across all of the three faiths and their pathways to God converge on the same point. In other words, in Judaism and Christianity, God is understood as an infinite, eternal, and self-existent being who created everything that exists. God is revealed to humanity as both holy and loving.

Although the concepts of God in the Torah and the Quran share a common emphasis on monotheism, they differ in aspects such as creativity, closeness, mercy, and justice. The variations in the creation stories between the Torah and the Quran suggest that the Jews were influenced by and interacted with the surrounding cultures throughout their extensive history. In the Elohist and Yahwist texts, the stages of the creation of the universe and humanity are attributed to God. According to these texts, God is the sole cause of existence; everything came into being through a

divine act and achieved its perfect form because it originated from God. Evil elements are not part of the creation process described in these texts. Similarly, in the Quran, the entire existence is ascribed to God. The heavens, the earth, and everything between them are depicted as God's creation. Everything created is described as flawless. When the creation of the universe and humanity is discussed, the stages of creation in the Quran align in some ways with the descriptions found in Genesis.

However, this study focuses on evaluating the currently accepted understandings, conceptions, interpretations, and portrayals of God as expressed in the Holy Texts of these three major world religions. As previously discussed, the diverse perspective aims to reconcile different religions on a common ground. This reconciliation appears challenging when considering the prevailing interpretations and portrayals of God within these fundamental faiths. In accordance with the findings drawn from this research paper, it can be stated that, Islam and its followers, adherents cannot accept the anthropomorphic conceptions or understanding of God found in Jewish and Christian traditions. According to the Islamic belief, it is inconceivable for God to walk, sleep, rest, become angry, act unjustly, shoot arrows, or be part of a trinity. Such characteristics are considered incompatible with the nature of God, who is perceived as transcending these attributes. Additionally, the idea of God having a child is deemed unacceptable in Islam, as it implies a deficiency or the need for completion, which is believed that Islam firmly rejects. This view is also regarded as incompatible with the conceptions of reason and logic. The Holy Quran critiques these human elements in the other religions, asserting that they reflect erroneous beliefs about God and characterizes the attribution of the human traits to the Divine Being, God as fabrications.

Similarly, the findings of this paper demonstrate that nearly all the historical conceptions of God (the ultimate Absolute Being) are characterized by a transcendence that is free from any human traits and are defined as supreme entities with the attributes beyond the human comprehension. Consequently, the findings suggest that the anthropomorphic understanding of God is generally regarded as unreasonable and unaccepted by philosophical thought and philosophers. In light of the findings of this research paper, it is certain that it is implausible for the three major religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Judaism to find common ground and engage in meaningful dialogue based on their current conceptions and comprehension of God. Islam, for example, cannot accept the anthropomorphic attributes of God found in Christianity and Judaism. Conversely, based on the findings of this research study, Christianity cannot reconcile with the Islamic and Jewish

views that regard Jesus as a prophet rather than divine, and Judaism cannot accept the Islamic and Christian rejections of a nationalistic understanding of God. In this context, when the findings of the current research study are taken into consideration, it can be argued that religious diversity and dialogue among these three religions will remain unfeasible as long as their current understandings and portrayals of God persist. Furthermore, the findings reveal that although these religions share a common origin and worship the same Almighty God, the human elements introduced into the conception of God in Christianity and Judaism have led to profound and opposing divergences due to historical, cultural, and theological developments. The distorted beliefs found in Christianity and Judaism are not acceptable to Islam and the Holy Book, the Quran. However, as a consequence of this research study, as accentuated earlier, it can be re-stated by considering the findings drawn from this research paper that when the afore-mentioned human elements and additions are not taken into account, it becomes clear that these three major religions fundamentally accept God (Allah) and regard Him as the only ultimate divine goal, and they converge on the same ultimate absolute Divine Power.

Ethical Text

On the grounds of the fact that the current research article is produced with the employment of a review of the literature and the document analysis as a research method to gather and interpret the necessary data, an approval from any ethics committee is not required. Furthermore, this study does not contain any studies with any human participants and/or animals performed by the author.

Declaration of Interest

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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