



Unity in Glory and Glory-Based Cultivation from the Viewpoint of the Qur'ān

‘Alī Karīmpūr Qarāmalikī*

Assistant Professor, Department of Qur'ān Sciences, Qur'ān & Ḥadīth College, Al-Mustafa International University, Qom, Iran

(Received: December 28, 2021 ; Revised: January 29, 2022 ; Accepted: April 5, 2022)

© University of Tehran

Abstract

The consideration of Islam based on the division between unity and polytheism eradicates the foundation of the religion. Divine Unity is based on God's Attributes, Actions, and Names. As one of the Divine Attributes, Glory is a manifestation of His Unity. The study at hand aimed to examine Glory-based Unity and the ensuing Glory-based cultivation. To this end, the verses of the noble Qur'ān were inspected using the descriptive-analytical method. An important finding of the study was that describing God as Glorious is due to His enjoyment of issues such as Authority, Lordship, absolute Governance as well as the humble obedience shown to Him by the world of being. Based on the analysis of the qur'ānic concept of Glory and recognition of its principles through a theistic approach, the principle of Glory is taken as the source of the argument for the general Unity. This source indicates new dimensions of the role of Glory-based Unity in the human cultivation.

Keywords: Glory-based Unity, Glory, Authority, cultivation.

Introduction

The topic of Unity has been one of the main qur'ānic and theological discussions among Muslims from the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān and the appointment of the Prophet (s). The reliance of Muslims on this basic motto is because of its high status and positive points in various aspects of human life. Reliance on and reference to Unity in its general meaning as one of the Attributes of God is important due to its objective functions in the human cultivation and development. For instance, the consideration of the exclusive Glory of Allāh has effects on the individual and social cultivation of the human.

Statement of the problem

Inevitably, the verses of the noble Qur'ān and the Islamic traditions are part of the resources and evidences for Unity and its various dimensions. Meanwhile, as one of the Divine Attributes, describing and restricting God to the Glory attribute in various verses of the noble Qur'ān can grab the attention of reflective researchers, because in their view, such a restriction cannot be void of a profound theoretical and practical message. Therefore, we might ask that in addition to guiding Muslims to true glory in their lives through imitating the

* **Email:** karimpoorali@yahoo.com

Divine Glory and staying away from false glory, can God's Glory be used to prove His Unity? If yes, what are the principles of this Glory? Moreover, what are the effects of viewing Unity from the lens of Glory attribute on the human cultivation? This paper is to examine and respond to these questions carefully.

Literature review

The researchers of theology, exegesis, mysticism, and other fields have written worthwhile works – including academic or seminarian books, articles, and treatises – on each of the two issues of Unity and Glory. However, there is not found any exclusive, significant work on the examination of Unity through Glory among the previous studies of these fields. Nonetheless, some clues related to this important discussion can be observed in the seminal works of the late 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī such as *Tafsīr al-mīzān* or the works of Master Jawādī Āmulī (may God save him) such as *Hidāyat dar Qur'ān*, *Shamīmi wilāyat dar Qur'ān*, *Tawḥīd dar Qur'ān*, and *Tafsīr tasnīm*. In this study, an endeavor is made to analyze and investigate the Glory-based Unity and its qur'ānic principles.

Conceptual framework

The word *tawḥīd* (unity) is derived from the root word *waḥada* in the *taf'īl* pattern, and means “deeming something to be one” (Farāhīdī, 1999, vol. 1: 282). The terminological meaning of unity is not to deem any counterpart for the God's Being in its various dimensions, including Essence, Servitude, Creatorship, Lordship, Ownership, Governance, etc. Accordingly, Unity can be divided into Unity in theory and Unity in deeds (Subḥānī, 1992, vol. 2: 44; Id., 2003: 24).

The word *'izzat* (glory) means refusal and prevention, which requires, on the one side, rigor and robustness and, on the other hand, invincibility (Farāhīdī, 1999, vol. 1: 76; Ibn Fāris, 1978, vol. 4: 38; Muṣṭafawī, 1989, vol. 8: 114). In the qur'ānic terminology, it is an impermeability state in the being that prevents it from being conquered by the weak and the insignificant (Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 2: 537).

The qur'ānic status of Unity in theory and deeds

In numerous verses of the noble Qur'ān, God proves His Unity in its general meaning – i.e., Unity in theory and deeds. Some of these are as follows.

Disapproving polytheism and praising unity dependent on monotheism, with reference to the comparison of showing obedience to one against several people

God points to this important argument in the Qur'ān 39:29, “Allāh puts forth a Parable: a man belonging to many partners at variance with each other, and a man belonging entirely to one master: are those two equal in comparison? Praise be to Allāh! But most of them have no knowledge.” This noble verse states that a servant with multiple partners has difficulty choosing the one to satisfy his need when all of them need him, as he cannot decide to whom he might refer when he (the servant) has a need himself. The argument style of the verse is as follows. The human does not know if he should serve a unique being or multiple, contradictory beings; however, as serving the contradictory beings is impossible, he should serve the unique being (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 26: 451; Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 1991, vol. 25: 332). The impossibility of serving contradictory beings is because the human cannot put into practice the order to do

something and the order not to do the same thing issued by two *mutashākis* (opposing) beings (Sayyid Quṭb, 1991, vol. 5: 3049). According to the exegetes, the word *mutashākis* is derived from the root word *shakasa* and means a bad-tempered person. Mutashākis also means disagreeing and different people (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 17: 258).

Therefore, since the human cannot meet the contradictory wants of two objects of worship (because it is impossible for a human to do opposing things at the same time), the human's reference to multiple gods is essentially false and contradicts the rational rulings. Therefore, submission and fulfillment requires the unity of the one who is served.

Similarly, in the Qur'ān 12:39, "O my two companions of the prison! (I ask you): are many lords differing among themselves better, or the One Allāh, Supreme and Irresistible?" prophet Joseph prefers choosing the One Allāh as the object of worship over choosing multiple gods; he introduces the One Allāh as the evidently appropriate object of worship (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2001, vol. 11: 174).

The presentation of this type of Unity in the Qur'ān informs the human about the necessity of observing purity and absolute sincerity in the individual and social deeds. Moreover, it states that the human should not adopt position, money, and material attachments as replacements for God or put them at His level.

Proving Unity and rejecting polytheism through simulation of the polytheist to the one who stretches his hand to water but is away from it

The Qur'ān 13:14 reads, "For Him (alone) is prayer in Truth: any others that they call upon besides Him hear them no more than if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouths but it reaches them not: for the prayer of those without Faith is nothing but (futile) wandering (in the mind)." In this verse, Allāh likens idolatry to stretching both hands to distant standing water that does not heed his call (Nahāwandī, 1989, vol. 3: 474). The argument based on this verse is as follows. True invitation is asking from a cognizant and able being that can fulfill the asked need. Thus, the true invitation is exclusive to God. It is clear that in this argument, the nature of invitation is intended. That is to say, invitation is recognized only when the cognizant and able being is addressed, as the quenching of thirst is fulfilled only through the presence of water.

Consequently, as the thirst of the human cannot be satiated by stretching the hands to water and taking them without water toward the mouth, the mere worshiping and praising cannot satiate the related human needs. Since no being other than God is Omnipotent and Omniscient, worshipping non-God is a wrong, futile act. Therefore, the human's object of worship is single and cannot be multiple.

The foregoing noble verse and other ones like it remind the human that having hope in the non-God, asking for help from them, or falling in love with them is wrong even if the goals are merely worldly. The reason is that the Glorious God's will is always victorious due to the essentiality of His Essence, and the non-God cannot overwhelm His will. Thus, in case the purpose of the human in his life is to satisfy God, move in His path, and worship Him in its general meaning, he will certainly receive God's grace and mercy.

Another type of polytheism is polytheism in deeds and worshipping, which afflicts most of the believers (Jawādī Āmulī, 2013: 571). In the Qur'ān 12:106, "And most of them do not believe in Allāh, but they associate others with Him," God warns against the contamination of the people's faith with polytheism at the practice stage with hypocrisy and reliance on others despite their belief in the Unity in theory. Similarly, in the Qur'ān 18:110, "Say: 'I am only a human like you, revealed to me is that your God is One God. Let him who hopes for the

encounter with his Lord do good work, and not associate anyone with the worship of his Lord,” He first refers to the Unity of God and then reminds the necessity of polytheism in worshipping. Suchlike verses indicate that God contradicts polytheism with faith rather than monotheism, and wherever it mentions polytheism, it does not refer to idolatry and leaving monotheists and Muslims; rather, it points to a human with weak faith.

As a result, the harm caused by polytheism is not limited to the disbelievers; rather, it can damage the believers as well and afflict many mischiefs to them. For instance, the Qur’ān 17:22 “Take not with Allāh another object of worship; or thou (O man!) wilt sit in disgrace and destitution” suggests that the result of steering away from God is destitution and disability in life (Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 8: 52; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994, vol. 1: 675; Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 12: 74; Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1996, vol. 13: 70). The other harm is submission to the enemy because of the feeling of weakness. The Qur’ān 47:35 suggests, “Be not weary and faint-hearted, crying for peace, when ye should be uppermost: for Allāh is with you, and will never put you in loss for your (good) deeds,” as this situation will be followed by defeat and humiliation (Mudarrisī, 1998, vol. 13: 274). One of the solutions for overcoming these weaknesses is having belief in Unity in both theory and practice (Karīmpūr Qarāmalikī, 2018: 43).

The arguments of the Unity in Glory

We stated that the word *‘izzat* (glory) means absolute and infinite invincibility, which is an essential, non-acquisitive, and exclusive attribute of God. Since this attribute is all-inclusive and infinite, we might extract His general and absolute Unity from it, as well. The reason is that among all levels of being, no level has such an extensive glory as God’s level. Therefore, the existence of such a glory requires His absolute Unity at all levels of essence, action, agency, worship, etc., as God’s Unity can be derived from His reality of existence and Being-itself. In the noble Qur’ān, there are some verses that imply this claim. Some are given in the following lines.

Exclusive Authority of God

The Qur’ān 4:139 says, “Yea, to those who take for friends unbelievers rather than believers: is it honour they seek among them? Nay, all honour is with Allāh.” In this verse, the word *al-‘izza* (honor, glory) is used twice. The argument can have two opposing sides, with the first emphasizing the word *jamī’an* and the second putting emphasis on the words *jamī’an* and *inna*. The use of the word *jamī’an* along with the word *inna* in the verse (Jawādī Āmulī, 2014, vol. 6: 398) in this verse indicates that the first *‘izza* refers to the honor and the second one points to the essential invincibility and impermeability. The reason is that if we take the second to mean *honor*, neither the outward reputation attribution can be correct (because the polytheists had outward honor, as well) nor the inward reputation attribution can be implied (because noble creatures such as the prophets, saints, and angels have inward and spiritual honor, similar to God). Therefore, the meaning of the second *‘izza* should be the essential invincibility, which entails both inward and outward honor. Then, two important points can be made here.

- a) This stance does not mean the acceptance of homonymy in *‘izza*. That is to say, we might not say that *‘izza* has one meaning when attributed to God and another meaning when attributed to the non-God. Rather, similar to the concept of existence, *‘izza* is used as an instance of content participation that can be attributed to its instances in a non-equal form, e.g., the attribution of the concept of light to its various stances. The reason

is that among the instances of existence (*wujūd*) or glory (*'izza*), there exists a unity axis to which multiplicity also refers, though with this reference the aforementioned multiplicity does not disappear (Jawādī Āmulī, 2007, vol. 1: 257; Mullā Ṣadrā, 2007, vol. 1: 37; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2001: 24).

- b) Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī maintains that the glory of the non-God is virtual. He believes that the true glory is exclusive to God, though it can be attributed to God's saints who are related to Him, as they believe in the individual Unity of Existence. Moreover, the mystic viewpoint does not tolerate any other being when paying attention to God and takes removing multiplicity as its own realm. Since multiplicity as the gradation of being is a type of real multiplicity, it takes multiplicities as realizations of God's distributed grace. Consequently, mysticism takes any existence and glory to be virtual when compared to God's Existence and Glory (Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, 2015, vol. 7: 219; Id., 1993, vol. 1: 13 onward).

However, the present author thinks that based on the adaptation of Ṣadrā's stance to the existence discussion – who relies on the existential gradation to argue for unity in multiplicity (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2007, vol. 1: 37) – it can be claimed that glory has similar meanings in its various instances, although due to the differences among different levels, the meaning exclusive to God is at the absolute and all-inclusive level, and others entail real glory but at different levels. In other words, although the multiplicity in the existential gradation is real, since this multiplicity is among the poor and needy beings that rely on the same original Being, it is congruent with the Unity principle. That is to say, as the existence of creatures is real, like the existence of God, then the glory of the non-God is real like God's Glory (Karīmpūr Qarāmalikī, 2021: 79-98).

At any rate, in this noble verse, God wants to state that the disbelievers' authority does not lead to a stable invincibility, although it might bring about an outward glory. The reason is that any glorification other than true glory is merely one that results from committing sins and distancing from the divine vicinity, and there is no solution other than drinking from the repentance spring and river of penitence as the opening of God's ocean of authority, because the false glory that derives from the wrongdoer's whims (When it is said to him: 'Fear Allāh,' egotism takes him in his sin [Qur'ān 2:206]) is like the false dawn that follows the dark night. Therefore, it is doomed to the same that the night dark is doomed to. [On the other hand] as the sentence "Glorify God's order so that He makes you glorious" indicates, the true glory that derives from the righteous person's right-orientedness is the opening of the light day, so it is doomed to what the bright day is doomed to (Jawādī Āmulī, 2009, vol. 2: 216).

For the late Mughnīyya, too, the glory of God in this verse is the essential glory, and the glory of the righteous people – such as God's saints – accompanies God's glory and is acquired (Mughnīyya, 2003, vol. 6: 281).

Another verse similar to the foregoing one is the Qur'ān 19:81, which reads, "And they have taken (for worship) gods other than Allāh, to give them power and glory!" Once again, the word *'izza* used in it means glory rather than truly absolute and stable invincibility. The reason is that in the next verse, God announces their defeat on the Resurrection Day and says that "gods" will reject the polytheists' worshipping and will turn against them (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 14: 107). Similarly, the clause "They have left us in the lurch" in the Qur'ān 7:37 is the idolater's confession about the uselessness of the idols on the Resurrection Day (Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 2: 102).

It might be claimed that the reason for mentioning *jamī'an* in the Qur'ān 4:139 is to reject the delusion of the possibility of obtaining glory from the non-God. That is to say, the noble

verse suggests that everyone who seeks glory should attach himself to the Divine Glory so as to reach it, and it is a true glory rather than a fake, virtual, or perishable one.

At any rate, the noble verse suggests that since the stable glory belongs to God and every other type of glory originates from Him, we can achieve His Unity through the reality of His absolute, infinite Glory. Moreover, the worldly and otherworldly glory can be attained if the human manifests and proves it in his life that he is the representative of God, i.e., he puts into practice whatever He orders and refrains from doing anything that He prohibits. Thus, it can be claimed that in order for the human to achieve true growth and development, he must bound himself throughout his life to the authority of God in theory and practice. Therefore, the human cultivation and purification can be fulfilled only in the light of observing God's Glory by following His authority.

As a result, we can see that it is via this glory-driven monotheistic view that Islam cultivates figures such as Imām Ḥusayn and his loyal companions who reject following the authority of anyone other than God and announce the priority of a glorious death over a dishonoring life (q.v. Karīmpūr Qarāmalikī, 2018: 102). On the other hand, since the human has originated from God and will return to Him, obeying the authority of any non-God – which will put him against his innate disposition to obey God – will decrease his feeling of self-worth. On the other contrary, any instance of obeying God's authority – which tunes him with the essence of his creation – will disclose the feeling of self-worth in him. Therefore, the human glory depends on serving God. Imām 'Alī (a) says, "O Allāh! This glory is enough for me to be your servant, and this honor is enough for me that you are my Lord" (Ṣadūq, 1983, vol. 2: 420).

Exclusive Lordship of God

God in the Qur'ān 10:65, "Let not their speech grieve thee: for all power and honour belong to God: It is He Who heareth and knoweth (all things)," after recommending the Prophet for that he be not upset due to pagans' pomposity, sees the honor exclusive to Himself and then talks about Himself who hears and knows everything. God's hearing and knowledge of everything means God knows all which can be heard and known and that the absolute, divine knowledge also is a benchmark of divine Lordship and Governance. Then, he informs us of the polytheism and idol worshipping by the idolaters as suspicion and delusion.

Via three important and noteworthy points, different aspects of the argument in this noble verse can become obvious:

First, the word *jamī'an* which has an indefinite form can be used for all the glories.

Second, the word *al-'izzat* is mentioned with *al* which indicates the glory is exclusive to God, like the Compassionate the Merciful, and the other Attributes. God sees it exclusive to Himself.

Third, two attributes *Hearer* and *Knower* are mentioned at the end of the noble verse. Since God is the only Being who possesses the two mentioned attributes, it is not appropriate for the Prophet of Islam to be upset after knowing these facts. These indications prove the inherent and unlimited invincibility as the meaning for the word *'izzat*, as a result of which the Unity of God can be ascertained. This is because such an attribute cannot be seen in and is not attainable by any creature of the universe (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 10: 93).

So far, it has been proved that the Glory of God is inherent, absolute, and unique. That said, the basis of this claim can be mentioned in the Word of God, which is stated in the next verse (Qur'ān 10:66), "Behold! Verily to God belong all creatures, in the heavens and on earth. What do they follow who worship as His "partners" other than God? They follow

nothing but fancy, and they do nothing but lie.” The word *mā* (what) in the expression “*Wa ma yattabi’u al-ladhīna*” (What do they follow) is a rhetorical or negative question “which” or a connector (Husaynī Shāh ‘Abd al-’Azīmī, 1984, vol. 5: 358). Based on the content of the noble verse, God is the only being who is the owner of the heavens and the earth. Because He is the owner, He has Lordship over it. Therefore, all the inclinations of the polytheists toward the idols are futile and vain. The origin of real glory is Ownership and Lordship. The real glory is here, not that glory which is at the level of delusion and, as a result, is a lie and hypocrisy (Mudarrisī, 1998, vol. 1: 419).

Now that it has become clear God knows everything about the earth and the heavens and has Governance and Lordship over them, glory also can be proved for God in an infinite and absolute way; it is the glory which also leads to the Unity of God, regarding its generalization and infiniteness. Thus, both the noble verses show this that the glory is not to attribute false offenses to the Prophet like him being a magician and insane, but rather it lies in one’s being attentive to the facts of the universe like the truth of God’s Unity, prophethood, and the hereafter. This is because by being attentive to the mentioned facts, one can be linked to the infinite ocean of truth, and out of this can attain the glory (Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 5: 182).

Therefore, whenever one pays attention to the Glory of God and intuitively sees it via His exclusive Lordship over the universe, he would let God manage his life both in personal and social dimensions. He would make his life version compatible with the Qur’ānic and Prophetic versions because he would find such a nectar in the universe matchless. By this, it becomes clear that the root and basis of ethics in Islam is divinity and the ensuing glory and self-knowledge (q.v.: Muṭahharī, 2008, vol. 22: 817). According to the statements of the researchers, dignity affects all aspects of one’s life. Psychological studies indicate that those who have good feelings also usually have a good feeling toward life, and can confidently cope with the problems and duties of life in the future. One who has dignity acts independently, is responsible, is proud of achievements, and can control the others (Jawādī Āmulī, 1999: vol. 3: 19-20).

Absolute Governance of God

God is the absolute goodness and possesses all the beautiful attributes. His Essence is away from any mischief and all mean attributes. Regarding His unique station, He is the only Being who can have governance as to acceptance and refusal of beliefs and doings. Therefore, with His governing right, He only accepts the pure words which have an outward dress of righteous deeds. With the acceptance of belief together with the righteous deed, He is the only who bestows the heaven upon the benevolent person. Also, He does not accept the improper belief and righteous deed and entangles the agent of that belief and deed in the fire of the hell.

It is clear that if this Being possesses such a trait, then all glories are amassed in Him, which flows from Him to the others. That said, it becomes clear that the verse 10 of the Qur’ān, “If any do seek for glory and power, to God belong all glory and power. To Him mount up (all) Words of Purity: It is He Who exalts each Deed of Righteousness. Those that lay Plots of Evil, for them is a Penalty terrible; and the plotting of such will be void (of result),” can be seen as one of the bases of Glory-based Unity. This is because:

- a) This noble verse indirectly points to the absolute, divine Governance because God in this noble verse, for those who seek glory, talks about the exaltation of the seeker toward Himself. It turns out that one cannot reach the infinite glory which exclusively belongs to the Essence of God. Hence, the way left for the attainment of dignity and exaltation of station is resorting to the faith and doing the righteous acts.

- b) By allocating all the glory to God in an explicit way, it can be found out that the Glory of God is at a level that none of the creatures can reach it. Also, regarding the existence, no creature has the capacity to reach the existential level of God. It is clear that this type of glory can only be found within one existence and instance.

In this regard, Master Jawādī Āmulī says, “At the beginning, it might seem that the meaning of the verse is whoever wants glory should ask it from God because all glories are by God. He can glorify whomever He wants and can belittle whoever He wants (*Tu’izu man tashā’ wa tudhillu man tashā*).

However, if one pays more attention to the sentence “*Falillāh al-’izzatu jamī’an*,” a more precise meaning can be attained: all people should give up hope to be really glorifying because when all the glory belongs to God, it is impossible for the others to be really glorifying. His infinite glory leaves no place for the glory of the others (Jawādī Āmulī, 2013: 372).

Of course, here one might question the Master: is not the verdict of glory the same as the verdict of existence? To the Islamic philosophers, as for the inner truth of the existence, the meaning of existence is the same both in the divine Essence as well as non-divine essence. They only differ in their gradation, based on which existence is considered of content participation type, and not of homonymy type. According to this, it can be said that the inner truth of glory is the same both in divine Essence and non-divine essence. Their only difference is that the Glory of God is at an unlimited, infinite, and absolute level, but the glory existing in a non-divine essence is at a limited and finite level. Nonetheless, it is possible for the opinion of Master Jawādī Āmulī to be related to the mystic view, and here homonymy is not what he meant. Despite this, what concerns the writer of the present article is that, even in this generalization, Glory of God as well as glory of non-God – like prophets and divine saints – is in the form of truth, and not in a virtual form.

Therefore, it seems as Unity can be derived from the principle of existence, Unity can also be taken from the inner truth of glory. Glory, thus, is real and true in the non-divine as it is in the divine. The Glory of God is at a superb and infinite level, but the glory within the non-divine is at a weak and fracture level.

- c) Reason citation has replaced effect citation. That is, mentioning that all glories belong to God in place of asking for glory from God shows this important point that absolute and comprehensive glory is not separable from God, like the attributes of “the Compassionate and the Merciful.” Thus, this replacement proves that theistic glory is exclusive to the divine Essence which cannot be found in the others (Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 3: 603).

What can be concluded is that the view toward the verse “All glory is with God” or the verse “To God belong all glory and power” is different from the view toward the previous verses. Namely, the forgoing verse is considered as a reason for the verses before or after itself so that it could pave the way for the attainment of glory by the others. This is because if God is dependent regarding His glory, then there is no possibility for the glory of others. Therefore, these verses lead to this that Glory within the Being of God is one of His essential attributes, and the other glories are nothing except acquired glories. This Glory-based Unity leads the human to have an inclination toward God.

In other words, as the concomitance of Creatorship and Servitude, of Lordship and Servitude, and of Ownership of life and death and Servitude can be enumerated as some instances for proving the worshipping Unity (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, 2014: 59), concomitance of Invincibility and Glory, All-hearing and Glory, and also Omnipotent and Glory can be mentioned as some reasons to prove the Glory-based Unity, using the content of the above verses.

It is with this governing view toward glory that a true believer in his life – with the belief in the invincibility of God – attains cultivation in the light of Glory-based Unity. For example, a true believer in the dimension of ethical cultivation eschews ethical vice because every kind of mischievous traits including backbiting, freeloading, feebleness, distrust, and the like is considered incapability by him. As an instance, Imām ‘Alī (s) says, “Backbiting is the ultimate effort of an incapable person (Nahj al-balāgha, 1993: saying 453); a strong person does not let himself backbite the people.

Moreover, it is narrated in other traditions, “seek sustenance, but your seeking should be above those who waste themselves” or “Deem yourself higher than mingling with the feeble people” (Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, 1988, vol. 12: 30). It says that one should go after his own sustenance. Here, the issue of seeking sustenance is considered a matter of power from an ethical aspect, and not seeking sustenance – which is refuted and condemned – is deemed as weakness and incapability (Muṭahharī, 2008, vol. 22: 820).

Ownership of the universe

The right to interfere in the universe independently, whether in a real and tangible form or in a relative and legislative form, belongs to the divine Essence, due to the Ownership of God. Therefore, He can create a phenomenon or destroy a thing and create something else in place of it. Or, He can create the same thing in a different way, as He can command or prohibit; He can interfere in the life of the phenomena of the natural world, including the humans, via His commands and prohibitions (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, 2013: 239-241).

Based on many verses of the Qur’ān, like 4:59 where it reads, “O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you,” and 3:49 where it reads, “And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): ‘I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God’s leave’” one of the signs for God’s Ownership is the right of giving both types of existential and legislative authorities to the others – like the prophets, Infallible Imāms, and divine saints – with divine permission and power. This is as God – based on the Qur’ān 3:26, “Say: ‘O God! Lord of Power (And Rule), Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power’” – can destroy the ownership of a creature or deprives that creature from any right to command and prohibit the others because absolute power is within His helm. He is the Being who can bestow upon everyone whom He deems entitled to this power-based ownership (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 8: 187; Mughnīyya, 2003, vol. 2: 36).

Based on the verdict of intellect, that Being who owns every kind of interference in His creatures – due to his Creatorship and Power – can accept no belittlement and disdain. As a result, according to the content of the Qur’ān 2:116, “They say: “God hath begotten a son”: Glory be to Him. Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him,” as well as the Qur’ān 30:26, all creatures are humbly obedient of Him, whether in legislative form or existential form (Jawādī Āmulī, 1999, vol. 6: 292). God cannot accept partnership in His reign and give the permission of idolatry. This is because, first of all, the obedient does not have the same level as the essential Necessary Being. Second, His reign is not of relative and contractual type so that it can be shared with the others, as it is impossible for two persons to possess the same human organs at the same time. Though with the intellectual precision, it can be seen that one’s ownership to his organs –

regarding their imperishability – is of relative ownership type and also that it can be possessed by another person via sorcery and magic (Jawādī Āmulī, 1999, vol. 6: 297; Qumī Mashhadī, 1989, vol. 2: 128).

Thus, because God's Ownership is of real type and the forgoing Ownership leads to His infinite and absolute Honesty, so God's Ownership results in His Unity via creating interminable Honesty. This is the process that, if being paid attention, can lead one from analyzing the Glory existent in God to His Unity.

Here it becomes clear that cultivation of an ideal and divine human can be done when one, in his attitude toward God, pays attention to His Attributes and Names, because every being, especially God with His Attributes, can be known in a better, more precise, and deeper way. Therefore, whenever one in his life looks at God's Ownership regarding its existential and legislative aspects, he would accept His range of Ownership for all the realms of the universe, like political, economic, social, and other aspects as well as human life. It is obvious that the human who is cultivated in such an intellectual ambiance would show tender sensations and behaviors favored by God and that which are not harmful both in personal and social lives. This is the very feeling of pride, magnanimity, and honesty which is cited as *dignity* in many Islamic interpretations. Based on the opinion of Master Muṭahharī, the glory which can be extracted from the noble verse, "...But honour belongs to God and His Apostle, and to the Believers..." (Qur'ān 63:8), is exclusive to true believers. Namely, true believers should know that glory exclusively belongs to them and that they should be glorified. Glory fits them and they fit glory. This is in some way paying attention to the self (Muṭahharī, 2008, vol. 22: 817).

It was out of this attitude that the Prophet of Islam (s) said, "Ask your requests with dignity" (Pāyanda, 2003: 4, tradition 325). If you have a request from the others, ask them for it, but with dignity. Namely, do not disparage yourself before the others for your request. Keep your honor; and while you keep it, put your need and request forward. Do not meet your need for the expense of losing your honor.

There is a well-known sentence in Nahj al-balāgha by which Imām 'Alī (a), during a sermon, says to his companions, "Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying as subjugators (Nahj al-balāgha, 1993: sermon 51).

Moreover, there is a famous tradition which says, "Honesty is glory and lying is impotence" (Ya'qūbī, 2010, vol. 2: 246). It introduces glory to be in honesty and incapability in lying, which this fact is related to the inner truth of glory. That is, the human, like God, should be dressed with perfections and be away from nastiness.

Universe's humble obedience

Basically, the entire universe's humble obedience of God also inherently can be enumerated as another firm foundation for proving the Glory of God in an unlimited and infinite form, the Glory which in this form, due to such obedience, would be itself a confirmation for the Unity of God. This is because there would remain no other obeyed being among all creatures of the universe other than God. Therefore, in the Qur'ān 13:15, "Whatever beings there are in the heavens and the earth do prostrate themselves to God (Acknowledging subjection), with good-will or in spite of themselves: so do their shadows in the morning and evenings," God informs us of the prostration of all creatures of the universe with their entire existence. This is because in this noble verse, there are the expressions "man fī al-samāwāt..." as well as the expression "wa zilāluhum." Therefore, the subject of the verb *yasjudu* (prostrate) is *man*, which is a conjunction, as well as *zilāluhum* with the conjunctive *wa*. The word *zilāl* literally means shadow. That is, God says that the creatures with their shadows prostrate to God

permanently. However, the explication of the word *zilāl* is controversial among interpreters. Some have said it is possible that what is meant by conjunctive *man* is true believers, and what is meant by *zilāl* is disbelievers. Also, it is possible that the soul of humans is meant by the conjunctive *man* and their bodies by the word *zilāl* (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994, vol. 3: 62). It is also possible that what is meant is the shadow itself; that is, all creatures have shadows and that shadow, short or long and present or absent, prostrates to God (Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 2: 521). Prostration of all creatures and their shadows is a metaphor for their submission to, humility to, and obedience of existential and legislative directions.

Considering obedience of God exclusive and its ensuing Glory also exclusive conveys this message that if the human, like the other creatures, follows the wishes of God, he would be guided to the real blissfulness and perfection. It is apparent that blissfulness resultant from this view saves one from seeing the world in vain and being entangled in depression and various types of anxieties. It also can fill his life with kindness and honesty because relying on knowledge which is void of spirituality has incurred much harm to the life of the human. Therefore, every kind of spiritual growth along with the materialistic prosperity is possible only through this way. Real training and cultivation of an ideal human is possible only with having a theistic view, regarding its different aspects. This is because the human can attain real glory when he feels the presence of God in his life and, in order to achieve His content, he fulfills the wishes of God to reach serenity and meaning in his life. This is stated in some traditions like, “Other than God, any glorified person is denigrated” (Ray Shahrī, 1990, vol. 6: 289). Or, “Other than God, whoever seeks glory would face perdition due to that very glory” (Ibid). By these traditions, it becomes clear that the worldly glory is nothing but a mirage. It is like a fire whose light is the same as its burn, though humans’ ignorance is an obstacle to paying attention to this matter.

Conclusion

That said it becomes clear:

1. Description of Glory, which is one of the conspicuous Attributes of God, can be a confirmation for the Unity of God – due to its interminability – in its general sense.
2. The Attribute of Glory is based on foundations like Lordship, Authority, Ownership, and so on. Each of these, in turn, shows a specific feature of God’s Glory.
3. The existence of Glory in God not only is a confirmation for Unity, but also having a glorified view toward God by the human causes him, first of all, to have a proper and logical definition and interpretation of life. Second, it prepares him for an ascending line as for spiritual stations. Third, he would not sell his existential value for this perishable world; he would set this world a tool for doing acts which are favored by God. Finally, in the light of looking at the divine Glory and being annihilated in it, he would attain the necessary reverence and validity.

References

The noble Qur'an

- Nahj al-balāgha* (1993), Beirut, Dār al-Hijra.
- Ālūsī, M. (1994), *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*. Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya.
- Fakhr Rāzī, M. (1999), *Maḥāṣin al-ghayb*. Beirut, Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Farāhīdī, Kh. (1999), *Kitāb al-'ayn*. Qom, Uswa.
- Fayḍ Kāshānī, M. (1994), *Tafsīr al-ṣāfi*. Tehran, Intishārāti Ṣadr.
- Ḥurr 'Āmilī, M. (1988), *Wasā'il al-Shī'āi*. Qom, Mu'assisa Āl al-Bayt (a).
- Ḥusaynī Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīmī, Ḥ. (1984), *Tafsīr Ithnā 'Asharī*. Tehran, Miqāt Publications.
- Ibn Fāris, A. (1978), *Mu'jam maqā'is al-lughā*. Beirut, Dār al-Fikr.
- Jawādī Āmulī, A. (1999), *Tafsīr muḍū'iyi Qur'an karīm*. Qom, Markazi Nashri Farhangīyi Rajā'.
- Id. (1993), *Tahrīr tamhīd al-qawā'id*. Qom, Isrā'.
- Id. (2007) *Raḥīqi makhtūm*. Qom, Isrā'.
- Id. (2009), *Surūshi hidāyat*. Qom, Isrā'.
- Id. (2013), *Tawḥīd dar Qur'an*. Qom, Isrā'.
- Id. (2013), *Shamīmi hidāyat*. Qom, Isrā'.
- Id. (2014), *Adabi fanāyi muqarrabān*. Qom, Isrā'.
- Karîmpür Qarâmalikî, A. (2018), *Darsnāmiyi tawḥīd wa shirk az manẓari Qur'an wa Ḥadīth*. Qom, Nashri Udabā'.
- Id. (2021), "Taḥlīli tawḥīdi 'izzat bunyān." *Miskāt*, No. 151, 79-98.
- Makārim Shīrāzī, N. (1995), *Tafsīr nimūna*. Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyya.
- Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, M. T. (2014), *Khudā shināsī*. Qom, Mu'assisiyi Amūzishī wa Pazhūhishīyi Imām Khumaynī.
- Id. (2013), *Sīyāsāt wa ḥuqūq dar Qur'an*. Qom, Mu'assisiyi Amūzishī wa Pazhūhishīyi Imām Khumaynī.
- Mudarrisī, M. T. (1998), *Min hudā al-Qur'an*. Tehran, Dār Muḥbbi al-Ḥusayn.
- Mughnīyya, M. (2003), *Tafsīr al-kāshif*. Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyya.
- Mullā Ṣadrā, M. (2007), *Al-Ḥikma al-muta'ālīyya*. Qom, Muṣṭafawī.
- Muṣṭafawī, Ḥ. (1989), *Al-taḥqīq fī kalimāt al-Qur'an al-karīm*. Tehran, Wizārati Farhang wa Irshādi Islāmī.
- Muṭahharī, M. (2008), *Collection of works*. Qom, Ṣadrā.
- Nahāwandī, M. (1989), *Nafahāt al-Raḥmān fī tafsīr al-Qur'an*. Qom, Mu'assisa al-Bi'tha.
- Pāyanda, A. (2003), *Nahj al-faṣāḥa*. Tehran, Duniyāyi Dānish.
- Qumī Mashhadī, M. R. (1989), *Tafsīr kanz al-daqa'iq*. Tehran, Wizārati Farhang wa Irshādi Islāmī.
- Ray Shahrī, M. (1990), *Mizān al-ḥikma*. Qom, Maktab al-'Ilm al-Islāmī.
- Ṣādiqī Tihriyānī, M. (1991), *Tafsīr al-furqān*. Qom, Intishārāti Farhangi Islāmī.
- Ṣadūq, M. (1983), *Kitāb al-khiṣāl*. Edited by A. A. Ghaffārī, Qom Daftari Intishārāti Islāmī.
- Sayyid Quṭb, A. (1991), *Fī zilāl al-Qur'an*. Beirut, Dār al-Shurūq.
- Subḥānī, J. (1992), *Al-Ilāhīyyāt 'alā huda al-kitāb wa al-sunna wa al-'aql*. Qom, Al-Markaz al-'Ālamī lil-Dirāsāt al-Islaamiyya.
- Id. (2003), *Buḥūth Qur'anīyya fī al-tawḥīd wa al-shirk*. Qom, Mu'assisa Imām al-Ṣādiq (a).
- Ṭabāṭabā'ī, M. Ḥ. (1996), *Al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'an*. Qom, Daftari Intishārāti Islāmīyi Jāmi'iyyi Mudarrisīni Ḥuziyyi 'Ilmiyyi.
- Id. (2001), *Nahāya al-ḥikma*. Edited by A. Zāri'ī, Qom, Mu'assisa al-Nashr al-Islāmī.
- Ṭabrisī, F. (1993), *Majma' al-bayān li-'ulūm al-Qur'an*. Tehran, Nāṣir Khusru.
- Ya'qūbī, A. (2010), *Tārīkh Ya'qūbī*. Tehran, Shirkati Intishārāti 'Ilmī wa Farhangī.
- Zamakhsharī, M. (1986), *Al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl*, Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī.