

God's Flaming Glory – Allah's Glory, According to the Quran

Introduction

There are approximately 70 references to the glory of Allah in the Qur'an. Well over half of those references center around a single fact about him: Allah is not begotten, and does not beget. In other words, "In no sense is he a Father ('he begets not'), and in no sense does he have a Son ('nor is he begotten'). He is one person, and not three."¹ Allah is one unto himself. The Qur'an teaches that he owes nothing to anything or anyone – not to creation, and not to another god. Allah's glory is essentially two things: inward focused, and negative in its nature.

An Inward Focused Glory

According to Islam, Allah has been alone for all eternity. The only thing that he has had with him in eternity is the book of the Qur'an. "At a glance, that seems to make Allah look less eternally lonely. But what is so significant is the fact that Allah's word is a *book*, not a true companion for him. And it is a book that is only *about* him."² Being alone, Allah *knows* nothing but himself, and must therefore *love* nothing but himself.

What possible reason could there be that would motivate Allah to create? Based on the above, isn't it a reasonable assumption that, just like the Qur'an, creation is also about him? Of course, the Qur'an speaks about Allah loving and being merciful to his creation. But why is he loving his creation? Why is he merciful to some? All of these kinds of questions can be summarized in the one question: What do people mean to Allah?

¹ Michael Reeves. (2012). *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. InterVarsity Press. Downers Grove, IL. p. 17.

² Michael Reeves. (2012). *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. InterVarsity Press. Downers Grove, IL. p. 80.

The Qur'an answers this question precisely. People are primarily worshipers of Allah. People are his glorifiers. And there is a specific reason why people should worship him. People should worship Allah, says the Qur'an, because he is the Creator of and responsible for all things:

Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god except He, the Creator of all things; so worship Him. He is responsible for everything.³

To Allah, people are an audience. And creation is his stage. The only reason a single person god who has been alone for all eternity would create anybody is because he wants an audience. And the only reason he would create a universe is to make a stage. The single person god does things on the stage, and people glorify him because he looks impressive.

Why, then, would such a god like Allah love people, or be merciful to them? He would love them only like he loves his book. Allah has had the Qur'an for all eternity and loves it, for it is a book about him. Therefore, just as with his book, he loves himself through the people he creates. The only reason he would be merciful to people is to preserve them so that they might glorify him, as will be shown later.

The Qur'an is also very clear on what Allah is not so that he cannot be worshiped for what he is not:

Yet they attributed to Allah partners – the sprites – although He created them. And they invented for Him sons and daughters, without any knowledge. Glory be to Him. He is exalted, beyond what they describe.

³ Surah 6.102.

Originator of the heavens and the earth – how can He have a son when He never had a companion? He created all things, and He has knowledge of all things.⁴

In this, three things can be observed.

First, that Allah does not have partners.

Second, he does not have sons or daughters.

Third, he does not obtain children through creation (“If Allah wanted to have a son, he could have selected from his creation at will. Glory be to him. he is Allah, the One, the Prevailing”⁵).

That is perfectly logical and straightforward: The creator, who is without any partner, does not create children for himself. Human beings were created by Allah to worship Allah as their creator, and only as creator. Allah is a creator who does not have sons or daughters. And Allah is creator who doesn’t want to gain sons or daughters through his creation.

A Negative Natured Glory

Allah is only glorified by what is outside of himself. He is not glorified in relationships, but by servants. And his glory only finds definition from what he is not – from what is outside of himself and what he is the opposite of. In other words, his glory is a negative glory.

Allah is *not* father. Allah is *not* son. Such a glory is an empty glory defined by negation – such is the glory of all false idols. Allah’s glory is defined as the opposite of companionship, and

⁴ Surah 6.100-101.

⁵ Surah 39.4.

diminished if he had a companion.⁶ As the Qur'an says, "It is not for Allah to have a child – glory be to Him."⁷ This is central in the teaching of the Qur'an...

say, "Praise be to Allah, who has not begotten a son, nor has he a partner in sovereignty, nor has he an ally out of weakness, and glorify him constantly."⁸

Allah's glory, by its nature, is not relational, it is not sharing. It is brightest when it is alone, and darkest when he is not constantly praised. And if there were any doubt, throughout the Qur'an the same cry reverberates: "Glory be to Allah, high above what they associate."⁹ In other words: Glory be to Allah; he is alone!

For this reason, Allah is extremely jealous and protective over his creation. His chief desire concerning his creation is to maintain supremacy over it. He must do so, if he is going to retain his glory. The Qur'an will not allow any thought of there being another god or companion with Allah, or any rival to his divine dictatorship. To even imagine such an association would

⁶ Commentating on al-Kahf (Surah 18.4-5), 'Abdur-Rasheed, an Islamic commentator, writes that Allah doesn't need a child, nor does he have any need for one. And that to speak of Allah in such a way would diminish Allah's glory ('Ali 'Abdur-Rasheed. (2009, August 1). *Commentary on Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave)*. <https://www.al-islam.org/sites/default/files/singles/631-kahf.pdf>, p. 9).

⁷ Surah 19.35.

⁸ Surah 17.111.

⁹ The Qur'an is very specific about who the "they" are: "The Jews said, 'Ezra is the son of Allah,' and the Christians said, 'The Messiah is the son of Allah.' These are their statements, out of their mouths. They emulate the statements of those who blasphemed before. May Allah assail them! How deceived they are! They have taken their rabbis and their priests as lords instead of Allah, as well as the Messiah son of Mary. Although they were commanded to worship none but The One God. There is no god except He. *Glory be to Him; High above what they associate with Him*" (Surah 9.30-31, emphasis mine).

"And they worship, besides Allah, what neither harms them nor benefits them. And they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah.' Say, 'Are you informing Allah about what He does not know in the heavens or on earth?' *Glorified be He, High above the associations they make*" (Surah 10.18, emphasis mine).

"The command of Allah has come, so do not rush it. *Glory be to Him; exalted above what they associate*. He sends down the angels with the Spirit by His command, upon whom He wills of His servants: "Give warning that there is no god but Me, and fear Me." He created the heavens and the earth with justice. *He is exalted above the associations they attribute*. (Surah 16.1-3, emphasis mine).

"The Knower of the hidden and the manifest. *He is exalted, far above what they associate*" (Surah 16.92, emphasis mine).

"Your Lord creates whatever He wills, and He chooses. The choice is not theirs. *Glory be to Allah, and exalted be He above the associations they make*" (Surah 28.68, emphasis mine).

"*Glorified is He, and Exalted above what they associate*" (Surah 30.40, emphasis mine).

detract from Allah's supremacy over his creation, and subtract from his glory which he obtains from it.

Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him. Otherwise, each god would have taken away what it has created, and *some of them would have gained supremacy over others*. Glory be to Allah, far beyond what they describe.¹⁰

Allah's Glory in Life

How is such a god as Allah glorified? By three things: by being obeyed;¹¹ by being served;¹² and by being submitted to.¹³

And they say, "Allah has begotten a son." Be He glorified. Rather, His is everything in the heavens and the earth; all are *obedient* to Him.¹⁴

And

...they say, "The Most Merciful has taken to himself a son." Be He glorified; *they are but honored servants*.¹⁵

And

So proclaim openly what you are commanded, and turn away from the polytheists.

Those who set up another god with Allah. They will come to know.

So glorify the praise of your Lord, and be among *those who bow down*.¹⁶

¹⁰ Surah 23.91, emphasis mine.

¹¹ Surah 2.116.

¹² Surah 21.26.

¹³ Surah 15.94.

¹⁴ Surah 2.116, emphasis mine.

¹⁵ Surah 21.26, emphasis mine.

¹⁶ Surah 15.94, 96, & 98, emphasis mine.

Because that is how Allah is glorified, for human beings to fulfill their purpose and glorify Allah they need to be his righteous ones.¹⁷ Being righteous in the Qur'an is defined essentially by three things: by being "believing servants";¹⁸ by honoring the "Best of creators";¹⁹ and by not associating Allah with another, especially the Son of Christian theology.²⁰

On into eternity, this is the purpose for every human being and created thing according to Islam: the glory of Allah by domination. "So glory be to Him in whose hand is the dominion of everything, and to Him you will be returned."²¹ According to the Qur'an, human beings exist to be dominated. And one way or another, that will be their final end.

Allah's glory is to be a divine tyrannical celebrity. His aim in creation is to have an audience to praise him, servants to obey him, and a dominion for himself. Creation is a stage. Human beings are his audience. He is the creator. He is not a Father with sons, nor is he a Son loving a Father with brothers. He is not a Lover. He is a creator, and creator alone. Allah is so primarily creator that he is completely creator. It is his identity.

But not so with the Christian God...

¹⁷ Surah 37.121: "Thus We reward the righteous."

¹⁸ Surah 37.122: "They were of Our believing servants."

¹⁹ Surah 37.125: "'Do you call on Baal, and forsake the Best of creators?'"

²⁰ Surah 37.152, 159, 180: "'Allah has begotten.' They are indeed lying . . . Allah be glorified, far above what they allege . . . Exalted be your Lord, the Lord of Glory, beyond their allegations."

²¹ Surah 36.83.