



The Impact of Belief in the Unity of Divine Actions on the Individual and Social Ethics of Muslims and Christians with Emphasis on the Quran and the Old and New Testaments*



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Abstract

Belief in the principle of monotheism is one of the most vital beliefs influencing human life, particularly human ethics and behavior. One of the branches of monotheism is the belief in the unity of divine actions, which exerts a profound effect on both individual and social ethics. Employing an analytical-comparative method and emphasizing the Holy Quran and the Bible, this study aims to answer the question: What is the impact of the unity of divine actions on the individual and social ethics of Muslims and Christians? Although the Quran contains numerous explicit references to the unity of divine actions, the Bible features fewer explicit allusions to it. The conclusion of this study is that if Muslims and

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Christians thoroughly internalize the belief in the unity of divine actions within themselves, they will become trustful in God, fearless, possessing self-esteem, patient, courageous, and endowed with inner peace. In such a society, unity, cooperation, and empathy will prevail among individuals; people will harbor goodwill toward one another, and through the social interactions fostered within the community, they will establish an exemplary society.

Keywords

Unity of Divine Actions, Individual Ethics, Social Ethics, Islam and Christianity, Holy Quran, The Bible.

Introduction

The methods for achieving moral refinement are not restricted to merely stating the worldly and otherworldly benefits or harms of virtues and vices. One of the methods of moral refinement is attending to religious beliefs, particularly monotheism. Undoubtedly, man's perspective on existence exerts a direct impact on his behavior. If an individual lacks a pure monotheistic belief concerning the attributes of the Almighty God, he will not attain moral refinement; for if he harbors even a particle of polytheistic belief regarding God's attributes—for instance, lacking faith in the absolute power of God and ascribing a share of independent power to others—he will fail, for example, in refining the attribute of fear.

One of the most vital beliefs influencing human life, especially human ethics, is the belief in the principle of the unity of divine actions . This study examines the effects of belief in the unity of divine actions on human ethics. The life and behavior of individuals who believe in this crucial principle differ vastly from the lives of those who do not. The objective of writing this article is to generate an accurate understanding of the unity of divine actions, alongside deepening this knowledge within oneself and acting in accordance with divine teachings, so that by fostering correct cognition and mindsets regarding behavior and interactions in individual and social life, the flow of life can be set upon the right path.

The results of this research and its implementation within oneself and society will yield profound effects on human moral and behavioral transcendence. Findings include the insight that belief in the concept of the unity of divine actions can assist man in forging a correct vision of life, deepening it, and generating concepts such as patience, trust in God , contentment , frugality, and others.

Regarding research background, numerous books and articles have been written concerning monotheism, particularly the unity of divine actions. Concerning the role of monotheism in ethics, two research papers can be cited: "The Role of Monotheism in Moral Refinement" by Asghar Hadi, and "The Principle of Monotheism-Centrism and Its Impact on Individual and Social Ethics in Al-Mizan" by Abbas Hamami and Hamidreza Younesi, from which the present study also benefits. The first article argues that moral refinement is not merely limited to stating the worldly or otherworldly gains and losses of virtues and vices; rather, "monotheism," as the foundation of religion, plays an irreplaceable, more complete, and more fruitful role in this regard. This article presents three elucidations of the role of monotheism (the dominance of monotheism, complete pure monotheism, and the comprehensive monotheism of names and attributes) and emphasizes the gradual replacement of monotheistic ethics in society or at least its presentation alongside other methods. Moral refinement in this approach is considered the necessary consequence of a monotheistic outlook. The second article, relying on *Tafsir al-Mizan*, presents various definitions of ethics and self-refinement from Allameh Tabatabai's perspective, and by emphasizing the principle of monotheism-centrism in ethics, proves that the monotheism-centered ethical system is the most progressive moral system which, by adhering to the method of removing rather than repelling moral vices, considers all individual and social affairs of man in a hierarchical order (*tūlī*) to achieve a common goal, which is monotheism. The distinction of the present study from these two articles lies in its comparative and interfaith nature. However, concerning the unity of divine actions and its impact on the individual and social ethics of Muslims and Christians with an emphasis on the Holy Quran and the Bible, no book, thesis, article, or writing was found.

Employing an analytical-comparative method, this study seeks to answer the question: What is the impact of the unity of divine actions on the individual and social ethics of Muslims and Christians?

Concepts

Comprehending the key terms of any research fosters precise understanding and correct movement toward its objectives. Since defining key terms, elucidating their related characteristics, and stating their points of distinction from other terms provide a correct depiction of the subject that remains useful throughout the research process, the fundamental terms of the research—such as the unity of divine actions and ethics—will first be examined here.

Unity of Divine Actions

The unity of divine actions is a branch of theoretical monotheism. It is a religious belief held by all Islamic sects, although they may interpret and understand it differently (cf. Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi, 1986, pp. 78–116). According to this belief, every existence, every movement, and every action in the universe traces back to the sacred Essence of God. In the monotheistic outlook of Islam, the sole true and independent agent in the universe is the holy Essence of God: "There is no effective agent in existence except God". Even the actions that emanate from us belong to Him in a certain sense; He has granted us power, choice, and freedom of will (cf. Mohsen Gharavian et al., 1999, pp. 83 and 95).

The question that arises is: With the acceptance of the unity of divine actions, what must be said regarding the agency of other beings? In response, the term "hierarchical agency" (*fā'iliyyat-e ṭūlī*) is employed. This agency occurs where several agents influence the

performance of an action, but the influence of some is dependent upon others, such that one agent is directly effective in performing the action, yet its agency is the effect of another agent. By scrutinizing the actions issued by beings in the universe, one can conclude that the agency of creatures regarding their actions—and likewise the attribution of these actions to God—is of the hierarchical type. Thus, this explanation clarifies that no contradiction exists between the exclusivity of independent agency in God (the unity of divine actions) and the attribution of certain actions to created beings (cf. Saeedi Mehr, 2012, pp. 100–105).

The unity of divine actions is closely connected with the unity in creation, lordship, sovereignty, legislation, and the like (Tarkashvand, 2015, pp. 31–32; Imam Khomeini, 2010, Vol. 5, pp. 387–388; Imam Khomeini, 1999, p. 360; Mesbah Yazdi, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 387; Rabbani Golpaygani, 2014, Vol. 1, pp. 77 and 85).

Unity in creation means that God has created all beings in the universe with or without intermediaries. Unity in lordship signifies that God is the organizer and administrator of the universe and all its beings.

Unity in worship and reliance upon God have also been articulated as consequences of the unity of divine actions. One who believes in the unity of divine actions deems no being worthy of worship except God, for solely the Creator and Lord of man possesses the competence to be worshipped. Based on the unity of divine actions, God alone is independently effective in the universe, and He alone can be relied upon. In the verse "It is You we worship and You we ask for help" «إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ», these two consequences of the unity of divine actions are expressed (Mesbah Yazdi, 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 134–135).

The Unity of Divine Actions in the Holy Quran

In numerous verses, the Quran restricts creation, administration, creatorhood, and lordship exclusively to God: a) The creation of everything without intermediary: «ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ» "That is Allah, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, Creator of all things" (Al-An'am: 102); «هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ» "Is there any creator other than Allah?" (Fatir: 3); b) The inviolability and certainty of God's will: «إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ» "His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is" (Ya-Sin: 82); «إِنَّ رَبَّكَ» "Indeed, your Lord is an effectuer of what He intends" (Hud: 107); c) The creation of human actions: «وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ» "And you did not throw, when you threw, but it was Allah who threw" (Al-Anfal: 179); «أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ، أَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ... أ...» "Then do you see that which you emit? Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator? ... Then do you see that which you sow? Is it you who make it grow, or are We the grower?" (Al-Waqi'ah: 58–59, 63–64); d) The absolute need of all creatures for God and their submission before Him: «يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمْ» "O mankind, you are those in need of Allah, while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy" (Fatir: 15); «وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ» "And Allah is predominant over His affair" (Yusuf: 21).

These verses and others (Al-Imran: 26 and 189; Ghafir: 6; An-Nisa: 79; Ash-Shu'ara: 8; Luqman: 11; Ar-Rum: 48; Ya-Sin: 83; Hud: 56; Al-Ankabut: 61; Yunus: 31; Al-Baqarah: 165; An-Najm: 50; Hud: 89; Ash-Shu'ara: 81; Ar-Rahman: 30; Al-Hadid: 4) fundamentally restrict creation, administration, creatorhood, and lordship to God.

Ethics

The word *akhlāq* is the plural of *khalq* or *khulq*, and linguistically it

means inherent characteristic, natural state, disposition, innate nature (*fiṭrah*), and core essence (Azarnoush, 2017). The terms *khalq* and nature are also used (Ibn Manzur, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 373; Al-Turihi, 1995, Vol. 5, p. 156). Some have considered *khalq* to be cognate with *khulq* (Fairuzabadi, 2007, p. 391; Al-Zabidi, 1994, Vol. 6, p. 337; Ibn Manzur, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 194), with the difference that *khalq* refers to the outer appearance, whereas *khulq* refers to the inner reality (Raghib Isfahani, 1991). The *khulq* aspect of ethics is not easily altered except through rigorous planning under the guidance of a moral mentor. Therefore, ethics refers to a stable faculty (*malakah*) anchored in the human soul that spontaneously prompts actions without requiring deliberate reflection (Anis et al., 2010, Vol. 2). Islamic moral philosophers likewise emphasize that ethics is a faculty (Ibn Adi, 1992, p. 36) and a specific state firmly rooted in the human soul (Fyz Kashani, 2014, p. 9) that serves as the origin for the emission of behavior (Ubayd Zakani, 2008, p. 62). The most prevalent usage of ethics among Islamic scholars is those entrenched psychological traits that cause actions consistent with those traits to emanate from a person without the need for deliberation (Ibn Miskawayh, n.d., p. 51; Naraqī, n.d., p. 26). Martyr Motahhari draws attention in this regard to both "how one acts"—namely, human deeds—and "how one is"—namely, psychological faculties (Motahhari, n.d., p. 22). Some believe that the word *akhlāq* is sometimes applied to psychological faculties and sometimes to moral behavior itself, with the second usage being more common (Mesbah Yazdi, 1994, p. 9).

Individual and Social Ethics

Some reject individual ethics, claiming that the context for the formation of ethics is exclusively within society, thus considering ethics to be entirely social. Others define a broader scope for ethics, speaking of various types including individual, social, servitude, and family ethics (Ahmadpour et al., 2006, p. 22). Social ethics comprises the

values and anti-values governing an individual's relationship with other human beings, such as good companionship, justice, benevolence, envy, and arrogance. Many moral virtues and vices depend on human social life, yet some moral issues possess a strictly individual dimension—such as patience, courage, diligence or laziness in pursuing a goal, and gratitude or ingratitude toward divine blessings (Makarem Shirazi, 2015, p. 24). Of course, the indirect impact of individual ethics on social matters is also undeniable (Makarem Shirazi, 1998, p. 77). Naturally, social ethics occupies a broader position relative to individual ethics within the discussions of the science of ethics.

The Impact of Belief in the Unity of Divine Actions on the Individual Ethics of Muslims with Emphasis on the Verses of the Holy Quran

Belief in the unity of generative and legislative lordship, as well as generative and legislative guidance, exerts a profound influence on the human spirit, human ethics, and behavior. Phenomena such as trust in God, the banishment of fear and grief, self-esteem, and the like are the logical consequences of belief in the unity of divine actions. Rationality dictates that anyone who believes that everything in the universe rests in the hands of God will develop these moral dispositions; nevertheless, in alignment with the focus of this study, Quranic evidence for them is also articulated:

Trusting in God

The Quran states: "And rely upon the Ever-Living who does not die" (Al-Furqan: 58); "And rely upon Allah; and sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs" (Al-Ahzab: 3 and 48); "[He is] Lord of the East and the West; there is no deity except Him, so take Him as Disposer of affairs" (Al-Muzzammil: 9); "And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is

sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent" (At-Talaq: 3); "And my success is not but through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return" (Hud: 88). Among the logical corollaries and consequences of belief in the unity of divine actions is that since God manages all affairs in the universe, one must place one's trust in Him alone.

If an individual succeeds in becoming truly God-worshipping and God-believing, they acquire the capacity to attain perfection across all dimensions of existence, view naught besides God, refrain from leaning upon others, ask nothing of anyone else, exercise "patience" in the face of adversities and hardships, remain unattached to worldly chattel, and—in a single phrase—rely solely upon Him (Du'ai, 2013, p. 284). A person who believes in divine lordship perceives everything as originating from God, viewing all else merely as intermediary means. Consequently, in all affairs, they lean upon Him and place their trust in God alone.

Being Grateful (*Shākir*)

The Quran declares: "And it is He who subjected the sea for you... that you may be grateful" (An-Nahl: 14; Al-Jathiyah: 12); "Then have you seen that which you emit? Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator? ... And have you seen that which you sow? Is it you who make it grow, or are We the grower? ... Then why do you not give thanks?" (Al-Waqi'ah: 58–64; note: the textual citation aligns with verses 68–70 regarding water as well). If anyone reflects upon the fact that God alone administers their life and provides for them, they will be deeply grateful to the Almighty God. Therefore, an individual who believes in the unity of divine actions naturally becomes a thankful and grateful person.

Banishment of Fear and Grief from Man

Numerous verses of the Quran affirm that upon the believers and friends of God rests no fear nor grief: "Yes, whoever submits his face in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve" (Al-Baqarah: 112); and "Unquestionably, for the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve" (Yunus: 62). When a person holds faith in divine lordship and recognizes all blessings as originating from Him, they admit no fear or grief into their heart.

Contentment and Self-Esteem

Quranic verses state that God is the sole Sustainer and Administrator of His creatures' affairs: "And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision" (Hud: 6); "And how many a creature carries not its provision? Allah provides for it and for you. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Al-Ankabut: 60); "And that it is He who enriches and bestows wealth" (An-Najm: 48). The necessary implication of this belief is trusting in God in all matters, including sustenance. Whoever grasps this monotheistic truth becomes content, recognizing that the enjoyment of blessings has a measured limit. In this state, they fulfill solely their duty and remain detached from greed and avarice (Hadi, 2007, p. 44). Contentment and the lack of yearning for what exceeds one's needs engender self-esteem, which is the direct outcome of genuine faith in divine lordship regarding human sustenance. Accordingly, in two separate verses, God advises against casting envious glances at the possessions of others (Al-Hijr: 88; Taha: 131).

Being Charitable and Generous (*Infāq*)

Given that everything belongs to God (Al-Baqarah: 255), that sovereignty

and the right of disposition therein rest solely with Him (Al-Ma'idah: 120), and that no one is capable of disposition except by His permission (Al-Imran: 26), the monotheistic believer—who believes in divine lordship and views all affairs under His administration—does not consider himself the owner of anything, not even his own self, nor does he claim any right of disposition except by His leave. Consequently, from what God has bestowed upon him, he grants to others, performs charity, shares with his fellows, and distances himself from stinginess (Hadi, 2007, p. 45). The believer possesses absolute certainty that divine management is flawless, and on the other hand, the Quran teaches that God's administrative tradition is such that whoever gives in charity, the Generous God will replenish it (Saba: 39). Furthermore, alongside ensuring that human wealth is not diminished, the Almighty God has promised multiple-fold multiplication thereof (Al-Baqarah: 261). Thus, the person whose faith is rooted in the unity of divine actions will be generous and magnanimous.

Patience, Fortitude, and Courage

Believing that all power belongs to God and operates under His lordship, and that both their own strength and that of others belong to Him and are at His disposal (Al-An'am: 17; Yusuf: 21; Hud: 56; Al-Baqarah: 165), the believer arrives at another monotheistic conviction: that no good or benefit reaches a human being except by His permission. This belief fosters fortitude and inner tranquility. Inner tranquility brings forth the virtue of courage. Fortitude and courage inspire high aspirations. Moreover, they heighten human endurance through hardships, which entails patience, clemency, steadfastness, zeal, and protective honor. Having attained the virtue of patience, the believer is cleansed of its opposite—impatience and fretfulness—and by adopting clemency and forbearance, achieves mastery over anger. The

virtue of steadfastness rescues them from anxiety and instability, while the acquisition of zeal purifies them of apathy (Hadi, 1999, p. 46). All these traits flow directly from heartfelt faith in divine lordship.

Possessing Inner Peace

In Surah Al-Fath, God identifies true faith as the source of inner peace: "It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would add faith to their faith. And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth; and ever is Allah Knowing and Wise" (Al-Fath: 4). In his commentary on this verse, Allameh Tabatabai explains that the tranquility mentioned refers to the calmness, poise, and steadfastness of the soul regarding the doctrines it has embraced; hence, the cause for the descent of tranquility is stated as enabling them to add new faith to their prior faith (Tabatabai, 1970, Vol. 18, p. 258). The "soldiers of the heavens and the earth" denote the means and instruments deployed by God throughout the universe to advance His affairs. The phrase "And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth" conveys that all means belong to God for the realization of His will, with no obstacle standing in the way, which in turn instills deep peace within the hearts of the believers. The two attributes of might and wisdom (*'aziz* and *hakim*) at the conclusion of the verse further emphasize and rationalize this reality (Tabatabai, 1970, Vol. 18, p. 262).

The Impact of Belief in the Unity of Divine Actions on the Social Ethics of Muslims with Emphasis on the Verses of the Holy Quran

Man is a social being—termed "political by nature" (*madanī bi-al-ṭabʿ*) (Farabi, 1991, pp. 161–162; Ibn Sina, 1993, Vol. 4, pp. 60–61; Motahhari, 1993, Vol. 2, p. 336) or, according to Allameh Tabatabai's perspective, "utilizer by nature" (*mustakhdim bi-al-ṭabʿ*) (Tabatabai, 1970, Vol. 2, pp.

116–117)—securing the passage of his life alongside his fellow human beings. Furthermore, through the exchange of thoughts with others, he achieves spiritual perfection. All the dimensions articulated in the section on individual ethics apply equally to social ethics. That is, individuals who believe in the unity of divine actions forge a society characterized by trust in God, gratitude, absence of fear, self-esteem, patience, courage, and inner peace, and this community is disposed toward charity, generosity, and assisting others. The Quranic evidence and rational corollaries presented in the previous section do not restrict these virtues to individual conduct; hence, they exert the identical impact within the social sphere. Nevertheless, certain specific aspects linked to social ethics are addressed below.

Unity, Harmony, and Intimacy within Society

The unity of the *ummah* is a form of solidarity transcending personal, group, and tribal interests. The foundation of societal cohesion may rest upon gender, age, race, tribe, territory, or shared beliefs. In Islam, the foundation of social solidarity is belief and ethics (Nasr Esfahani and Hosseini, 2006, p. 185). The Quran explicitly references the unified *ummah* on two occasions (Al-Anbiya: 92; Al-Mu'minun: 52). In both verses, reference is made to divine lordship, with one enjoining the worship of God and the other advising divine piety. These expressions indicate that servitude, piety, and attentiveness to divine lordship enable a society to attain unity. Consequently, if belief in divine lordship permeates society, it naturally gravitates toward unity. Such fellowship cannot be forged through financial expenditures, for God declares: "O Prophet! Had you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together" (Al-Anfal: 63); and in another verse He states: "And hold fast to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you—when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you

became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, and He saved you from it" (Al-Imran: 103).

Had that initial belief and piety been sustained, the solidarity of early Islam would have endured, but according to the Quranic verses, the Muslims failed to appreciate this blessing and fell into discord and division. Some scholars maintain that the sole possible means to unite societal members, establish intimacy among them, and eradicate envy and other moral vices is belief in monotheism and ethics centered around this belief (Nasr Esfahani and Hosseini, 2006, p. 146). Allameh Tabatabai likewise introduces religion as the only correct path to resolving human conflict, stating that the Glorious God has established the foundation of divine laws, ethics, doctrines, and human behaviors upon monotheism (Tabatabai, 1970, Vol. 2, p. 120).

Cooperation and Social Interaction within Society

From the viewpoint of *Tafsir al-Mizan*, an individual who believes in the reality of monotheism and acknowledges God's lordship over all existence is nurtured within the monotheism-centered ethical school. Having refined their soul on the basis of altruism, love, and self-sacrifice, when such a person encounters a social matter that runs counter to their personal interests, yet recognizes it as a divine matter and—relying on legitimate legal proofs—perceive the community's expediency within it, they readily turn to social cooperation. This submission to law has no underlying motivation save a monotheistic outlook (Hamami and Younesi, 2011, p. 19). It is proven that no law bears fruit except through a faith preserved by noble ethics, which ethics are in turn guaranteed by monotheism. Monotheism is the fundamental principle that nourishes the tree of human felicity, causes noble character to sprout within it, brings it to fruition, and enables human society to partake of its precious fruits (Hamami and Younesi, 2011, p. 19).

For this very reason, the Quran commands believers to assist one another in righteousness and piety (Al-Ma'idah: 2) and not abandon societal leadership during social affairs (An-Nur: 62).

Propagation of Charity and Benevolence (*Infāq*) in Society

One of the commendable traits possessed by believers, springing directly from belief in divine lordship, is the virtue of charity and benevolence. God rebukes Muslims, asking: "And what is [the matter] with you that you do not spend in the cause of Allah, while to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth?" (Al-Hadid: 10). In the following verse, He clarifies that whoever grants a goodly loan, God will repay it to them manifold. These verses demonstrate that what obstructs charity and benevolence among members of society is precisely the lack of belief in the unity of divine actions, divine lordship, and divine sustenance.

Possessing Honor

It was stated that another trait which grows in man as a result of true faith in the unity of divine actions is honor (*'izzah*). The Quran states: "Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent'" (Al-Imran: 26). This monotheistic belief impacts individual ethics; nonetheless, it exerts the exact same effect within society—meaning that if a nation recognizes that bestowing honor is the work of God, it seeks honor from Him alone.

Accordingly, in social arenas and under any circumstances, the believer preserves his personal dignity, lives honorably, and permits no one to humiliate him or disregard his sublime values, even if such

resistance brings an end to his material life (Ilhaminia, 2010, p. 111). The Quran states that the hypocrites seek honor and prestige among the disbelievers, whereas all honor and prestige belong entirely to God (An-Nisa: 139). This expression—that all honor belongs to God—is reiterated in other verses as well (Yunus: 65; Fatir: 10; Al-Munafiqun: 8). In Surah Al-Munafiqun, in addition to God, honor is also affirmed for His Messenger and the believers.

The Impact of Belief in the Unity of Divine Actions on the Individual and Social Ethics of Christians with Emphasis on the Holy Bible

As seen in the section on Islam, an explication of Christian ethics, its sources, and the unity of divine actions in Christianity will first be provided, following which the main discussion will be entered.

Christian Ethics

Christian ethics, or moral theology, is a branch of Christian theology that relies on divine inspiration and revelation to define and determine virtues and vices from a Christian perspective. Moral theology draws upon multiple sources: (1) the Holy Bible and Christian tradition; (2) philosophical principles and methods; (3) empirical sciences and other human knowledge; and (4) general human experience. Among these, the Bible occupies the paramount position, such that it can be affirmed: "There is no Christian ethics that denies the authority of the Bible, for Christianity possesses no enduring identity apart from the Bible." Christians consistently regard the Bible as part of their sermons, rebukes, corrections, and exercises for righteousness, finding it profitable for these tasks. In addition to the vital role the Bible plays in defining the overall goal and orientation of Christian ethics, many biblical stories and texts also play a decisive role in shaping Christian

moral teachings—such as the Seven Laws of Noah (which Christians generally reduce to three: abstaining from illicit sexual relations, murder, and idolatry) or the laws set forth in the Old Testament. Although Christians do not consider themselves bound to observe all 613 commandments found in the Old Testament, the "Ten Commandments" hold a prominent place in Christian ethics (cf. Haghani Fazl, 2015).

The Torah prescribes principles of social life. The purpose of these principles is to set apart the children of Israel as a distinct community devoted to God, serving as an exemplar of justice and mercy for the entire world. Dietary laws and laws of ritual purity remind Torah-abiding Jews that all dimensions of life are under God's guidance, and that He desires life, health, and the unity of body and soul. Laws concerning sacrifices and festivals outline the proper method of relating to God—a method of reverence, thanksgiving, and joy—wherein the affluent individual must share their possessions with the poor and resident aliens. Laws concerning the remission of debts and the freeing of slaves remind us that our possessions are merely trusts entrusted to us by God and must be utilized to serve others. Laws concerning justice and the punishment of crimes instill respect for human life, emphasizing honesty, fairness, and fidelity to covenants. Laws concerning philanthropy and compassion declare that all life is bestowed by God and must be respected as a divine gift. Consequently, the Torah is not a set of burdensome laws; rather, it outlines the appropriate response to a God who delivers humanity from bondage and desires life and felicity for all His creatures. Jesus and the apostles adhered to the Torah. Nevertheless, the reality is that the Christian Church set aside the practice of the Torah. Nonetheless, many Christians seek to harmonize their moral decisions with biblical teachings and derive their ethical principles from the Bible to the greatest extent possible (Ward, 2002, pp. 124–125).

The Unity of Divine Actions in Christianity

Despite the belief in the Trinity in Christianity, the doctrine of monotheism is affirmed, and trinitarian monotheism is articulated (Thiessen, n.d., pp. 87–88; McGrath, 2011, p. 466). Setting aside the philosophical difficulty of reconciling essential monotheism with the Trinity, the unity of divine attributes and the unity of divine actions are defensible in Christianity, for whichever hypostasis (*aqānīm thalāthah*) of the Trinity one considers, it possesses all attributes of perfection. Therefore, bypassing the critique of the Trinity in this study and accepting the divine attributes maintained in Christianity, the belief in the unity of divine actions is likewise present therein.

In Christianity, aseity (being self-existent), infinitude, eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability are counted among the divine attributes (Thiessen, n.d., pp. 76–81). Thiessen elaborates extensively on divine creation and absolute divine sovereignty, within which providence and administration are also discussed (Thiessen, n.d., pp. 109–126).

These attributes are likewise discussed in works on the philosophy of religion. For example, *Reason and Religious Belief* introduces God in its fourth chapter as the absolute perfection, necessary being, self-subsistent, omnipotent, omniscient, purely good, and everlasting. These descriptions rationally entail the unity of divine actions. This is precisely the unity of divine actions. In the subsequent discussion of this book, the compatibility of this concept with human free will is explored, with the response being that human free will operates in a hierarchical order subordinate to God's will (Peterson et al., 1991, p. 117).

The Unity of Divine Actions in the Holy Bible

According to the definition of the unity of divine actions—that every

existence, every movement, and every action in the universe returns to the pure essence of God—few passages in the Holy Bible explicitly state this matter. These three passages explicitly affirm the unity of divine actions: "O LORD, you will establish peace for us, for you have also done all our works for us" (Isaiah 26:12); "These all wait upon you, that you may give them their food in due season. What you give them they gather; you open your hand, they are filled with good" (Psalm 104:27–28); "My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). However, since the unity in creation and the unity in lordship are in reality the very same unity of divine actions, the unity of divine actions is found implicitly in abundance throughout the passages of the Holy Bible, some of which are pointed out as follows: "Dominion and fear belong to Him" (Job 25:2); "God is the King of all the earth" (Psalm 47:7); "His kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19); "Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'" (Job 9:12); "With Him are strength and prudence" (Job 12:16); "Power belongs to God" (Psalm 62:11); "He has done whatever He pleased" (Psalm 115:3); "Whatever the LORD pleased He did" (Psalm 135:6); "I am the first and I am the last" (Isaiah 48:12; note: verse 12 standard citation); and "With God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

The passages referred to were merely examples of hundreds of passages that exist in this regard within the Holy Bible. The Bible attributes not only the creation of the heavens and the earth and extraordinary events to God, but also simple and ordinary daily matters. It regards not only causing death and giving life, but also feeding, giving drink, causing laughter, and causing weeping as the action of God. Thus, the appearances of these passages support the theory of the unity of divine actions and the principle that "there is no effective agent in existence save God" (Kakai, 1994, pp. 64–65).

The Impact of Belief in the Unity of Divine Actions on the Individual Ethics of Christians with Emphasis on the Holy Bible

Considering the content of the Holy Bible, all individual fruits of believing in the unity of divine actions ought to be crystallized within the existence of a Christian individual. These effects are the rational necessities of belief in the unity of divine actions; nonetheless, some biblical passages in this regard will be pointed out below. Similar to the section on Islam, certain effects such as trusting in God, gratitude, the banishment of fear and grief from man, contentment and self-esteem, charity and generosity, and possessing patience, fortitude, and courage are manifested in Christian sources as well.

Trusting in God

"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in Him I will trust" (2 Samuel 22:2–3); "My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge" (Psalm 18:2); "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped" (Psalm 28:7); "In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 56:11); "I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust'" (Psalm 91:2); "O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the LORD, both small and great. May the LORD give you increase more and more, you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth. The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; but the earth He has given to the children of men" (Psalm 115:9–16); "Blessed be the LORD, my Rock, who trains my hands for

war, and my fingers for battle—my lovingkindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I trust, who subdues my people under me" (Psalm 144:1–2); "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2); "Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is an everlasting rock" (Isaiah 26:4); "And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!'" (Mark 10:23; note: verse 23 standard numbering); "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us" (2 Corinthians 1:9–10).

Being Grateful

"What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). This passage indicates that divine blessings are so abundant that man lacks the capacity to render adequate gratitude for them. On the other hand, it points to the fact that given that everything man possesses comes from God, he must be grateful.

Banishment of Fear and Grief from Man

"God has power to help and to overthrow" (2 Chronicles 25:8); "Because he trusted in his God, no injury whatever was found on him" (Daniel 6:23; note: verse 23 standard numbering); "And it shall come to pass, that as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, let your hands be strong.' For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Just as I determined to punish you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath,' says the LORD of hosts, 'And I would not relent, so again in these days I am determined to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of

Judah. Do not fear" (Zechariah 8:13–15); "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward'" (Genesis 15:1); "And He said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?'" (Matthew 8:26); "But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?'" (Mark 4:40); "Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:7); "And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do" (1 Corinthians 16:10); "And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God" (Philippians 1:28); "So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:6); "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror" (1 Peter 3:6); "And He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last'" (Revelation 1:17). These passages clearly convey that whoever trusts in God and has God as their supporter should harbor neither fear nor grief.

Contentment and Self-Esteem

"The LORD makes poor and makes rich" (1 Samuel 2:7); "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Timothy 6:6–8); "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5). The fact that these passages state God will never forsake man implies that whatever sustenance has been ordained for man aligns with his ultimate well-being; naturally, an individual who

believes in the unity of divine actions remains content with what God has decreed for him. Consequently, he will possess self-esteem and will ask nothing of anyone.

Charity and Generosity

Belief that God makes poor and makes rich (1 Samuel 2:7) and that generosity yields abundant harvest shapes the believer's approach to giving. Because God supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, He multiplies resources so believers can abound in every good work and show extreme generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6–15). Recognizing that all things originate from God trains the Christian to be charitable and open-handed.

Patience, Fortitude, and Courage

Enduring hatred for the name of Christ while retaining inner strength requires steadfast patience (Luke 21:17–19). Believers demonstrate ministry through great endurance, afflictions, hardships, and purity, remaining sorrowful yet always rejoicing, having nothing yet possessing everything (2 Corinthians 6:3–10; Colossians 1:11–12). Remembering eternal rewards enables believers to accept the plundering of their property with joy, recognizing that patience is necessary to receive the divine promise (Hebrews 10:34–37; James 5:11).

The Impact of Belief in the Unity of Divine Actions on Christian Social Ethics

Social ethics within Christian sources reflect the communal manifestations of monotheistic belief, fostering harmony, cooperation, widespread charity, and societal honor.

Unity, Harmony, and Intimacy within Society

Believers are urged to maintain unity of mind, shared sympathy, and brotherly love while avoiding selfishness or conceit (Philippians 2:1–4). Recognizing God as the ultimate source of all action removes human arrogance, aligning actions with divine will and fostering deep societal harmony.

Cooperation and Social Interaction within Society

The greatest commandments—loving God with all one's heart and loving one's neighbor as oneself—form the foundation of the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:36–40; Mark 12:28–31; Luke 10:25–28). Purifying souls through obedience to the truth produces sincere fraternal love, which sustains enduring community interaction grounded in the enduring word of God (1 Peter 1:22–25).

Propagation of Charity and Benevolence in Society

A person who possesses worldly means yet closes their heart to a needy brother calls into question the presence of God's love within them (1 John 3:17–19). Recognizing God's omnipresence and that divine love inspires generosity encourages believers to express compassion through practical deeds rather than words alone.

Societal Honor

Wealth and glory come from God, who rules over all and holds the power to exalt or humble (1 Chronicles 29:2; 1 Samuel 2:7). This realization teaches the Christian community that true honor belongs exclusively to God, preventing reliance on earthly powers and establishing enduring collective dignity.

Conclusion

Although the Quran features numerous explicit references to the unity of divine actions (*tawhīd-i af'ālī*), the Holy Bible contains fewer explicit allusions to it. Moreover, while theological foundations diverge between the two faiths—such as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity contrasted with Islamic pure monotheism—striking similarities emerge at the level of moral functionality. Based on the preceding discussion, we conclude that the impact of the unity of divine actions on the individual and social ethics of Muslims and Christians, as viewed through their respective scriptures, is profound, rendering the lives of those who embrace this principle distinct from those who do not.

In the domain of individual ethics, belief in the unity of divine actions molds both Muslim and Christian individuals into persons committed to moral principles, whose actions are colored by divine orientation. Such a person is trusting in God, free from fear, possesses self-esteem, is patient and courageous, holds inner peace, and is adorned with virtuous traits such as charity, generosity, and the like.

Regarding social ethics, a community whose members tread the path of belief in the One God progresses toward excellence, experiencing fewer moral challenges when ethical guidelines are upheld. In such a society, unity, cooperation, and empathy prevail among individuals who harbor goodwill toward one another; through social interaction, they establish an exemplary community.

Overall, when human beings—both individually and socially—believe in all dimensions of the principle of the unity of divine actions and apply it to their lives, they tread the straight path in both private and public spheres. Both systems introduce the unity of divine actions as the primary root of moral transformation and the prerequisite for an

ideal society grounded in justice, love, and human dignity. Consequently, interfaith dialogue in this area can foster a shared understanding of God-centered ethics and reinforce moral coexistence in contemporary societies.

Exploring why these rational and traditional implications of the unity of divine actions have not fully crystallized among Muslims and Christians requires a pathology-oriented analysis—assessing the role of various factors and obstacles—which calls for separate research beyond the scope of this study.

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