



## A New Analysis of God's Active Attributes in the Noble Qur'ān Based on Georges Dumezil's Mythology Theory

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### Abstract

One of the important topics in the Islamic theology that is discussed by the scholars of theology and interpretation is God's active attributes like sustenance provision which originates from the relation of Supreme Essence with His creatures. For the first time, based on the theory of Georges Dumezil in the field of comparative mythology, the active attributes of God or gods are studied in the form of a three-fold pattern, and the viewpoint of the Qur'ān is explicated about it. This study shows that the pre-Islam Arabs – being influenced by the beliefs of Indian and European tribes – have categorized the active attributes of gods into three main classes: ruling, war, and production, and have deemed each of the gods possessing one of those attributes. The noble Qur'ān also has employed this three-fold pattern for mentioning the active attributes of God. It is different in that the noble Qur'ān has replaced the many gods of Ignorant Era with the unique God. It also has taken the aforesaid three-fold functions altogether in the unique God, in place of ascribing them to three groups of gods.

**Keywords:** divinity, Islamic theology, divine attributes, Georges Dumezil, comparative mythology.

### 1. Introduction

Muslim theologians in the discussion of divinity recognize the “theoretical Unity” in three general ranks: first, “essential unity” which means the belief in the uniqueness of the Essence of the sublime God; “attributive unity” which means the oneness of the Essence of God with His attributes; and third, “active unity” which means God has no partner in His acts (namely, whatever happens in the world is only the divine act and has no origin other than the unique God (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, 2019: 267-286; Muṭahharī, 2017: 99-103). This three-fold form has also been reflected in another form in the Islamic theology. That is, it is the discussion of divine attributes in which they are divided into two main parts: one is the “essential attributes” like the life, power, and the knowledge which are absolute, unlimited, and eternal as the essence of God. The other is the “active attributes” like creative power and sustenance provision which originates from the relation of God with the creatures (Rabbānī Gulpāyigānī, 2018, vol. 1: 105-106; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2002: 160).

Based on the above classification, the theoretical Unity in the noble Qur'ān can be discussed in three main arenas: a) discussing the divine Essence, like the verses that emphasize the uniqueness of the sublime God. For example, verse 1 of chapter 112 reads,

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“Say: He is God, the One and Only” (Qur’ān 112:1); b) discussing the divine attributes like the verses that recount the attributes of the unique God and ascribe those attributes to the divine Essence. For instance, verse 61 of chapter 8 reads, “[T]rust in God: for He is One that heareth and knoweth (all things)” (Qur’ān 8:61); and c) discussing the divine acts like the verses that talk about the Unity of God in having the power of creation. For example, verse 16 of chapter 13 reads, “Say: ‘God is the Creator of all things’” (Qur’ān 13:16). Accordingly, the divine attributes in the noble Qur’ān can be studied also in two main arenas: first are the verses that describe the sublime God with the attributes of essence like the power and knowledge (q.v. Qur’ān 24:21; 59:6). The second are the verses that describe the sublime God with the attributes of act like generosity and sustenance provision (q.v. Qur’ān 2: 212).

Regarding this introduction, the article at hand (with a focus on the issue of active attributes of the sublime God) tries to study the attributive Unity in the noble Qur’ān with a new approach. To realize this goal, it tries, with relying on the theory of Georges Dumézil in the field of comparative mythology, to study the cultural beliefs of the Ignorance Era Arabs regarding the divine attributes in the form of a three-fold pattern, and to explicate the viewpoint of the noble Qur’ān as to this issue. Although this study cannot completely cover all the dimensions of the active attributes of God in the Qur’ān, it is able to elucidate some angels which have not been explored by the scholars of theology and interpretation in the past.

Finally, it should be said what is meant by “myth” in this article is the same as that which can be found in the West, and it has no relation to the “asāṭīr al-awwālīn” (mostly translated as “tales of the ancient”) which the pagans of the Ignorant Era ascribed to the Qur’ān (Pākatchī, 2013: 402-405). “Comparative mythology” is a discipline that systematically compares the myths of the societies – particularly those which have the common cultural origins. By doing so, it both clarifies the similar religious and social structures of these societies and also restores the ancient beliefs of these tribes (Ringgren, 2005: 1873-1876).

## 2. Mythology theory of Georges Dumézil

Georges Dumézil (1898-1986), famous French Orientalist, is known to be the founder of the new school of comparative mythology (Ewald, 2001: 5; Littleton, 2005: 2518). Nonetheless some decades before him, elaborate research was done about the recognition of ancient tribes’ myths – particularly of the Indian and European tribes – which was mostly indebted to linguistic discussions (especially philology). Of the conspicuous researchers in this arena was Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) who believed that to know the origins, similarities, and differences between the civilizations, one should first study their language, because he believed that language has a deep impact on the thinking and opinions of societies. Therefore, to answer this basic question as to the way of the formation of myths, Müller propounded the theory of “a disease of language,” the theory which deems the formation of myths the result of a historical-linguistic misunderstanding. That is, the early generations of every society used the metaphorical language to explain the natural accidents and humanistic occasions. This is whereas this metaphorical language was thought to be genuine by the later generations and, finally, led to the formation of mythical narrations (Nāmwar Muṭṭlaq, 2016: 2-5).

Contrary to Müller, Dumézil concluded that myths are not out of the fantasy of the past and not a disease of language, but rather they should be considered a representation of a social reality (Eliade, 1978, vol. 1: 192-195; Panaino, 2002: 100). Therefore, to know the legacy of the ancient Indian and European tribes, linguistic comparisons do not suffice. Rather, by using the social sciences, particularly sociology and anthropology, it should be strived to have a

functional approach to the Indian and European myths and creeds and reach a fundamental three-fold division of their religious and social structures.

After extensive studies about the Indian and European tribes, Dumezil concluded that their social system in the far past –that is, before being separated and scattered around the world – had unique features, which are still present among them after many centuries (Ashraf, 1981: 69-70; Bahār, 2007: 23). First of all, their social system was based on three layers of “royals/clergies,” “corporals/warriors,” and “craftsmen/businessmen.” Moreover, the system overruling the world of gods was considered to be derived from this three-fold social structure (Dumezil, 1988: 13-14; Mujtabā’ī, 1973: 41-44, 47-48). For example, among the Indian and European gods, there were five gods that each of them was a representative of a social class. “Mitra” and “Varuna” were the representatives of royals and clergies, “Indra” was the representative of the class of corporals and warriors, and the pair of “Nasatyau” was the representative of the production class (Bahār, 2007: 135-137; Duchesne-Guillemin, 2001: 120; Dumezil, 1970: 4-5).

One of the outstanding stances of this three-fold system can be found in the following societies:

**a) Three-fold religious and social system in ancient India:** drawing on the studies done, the most ancient and outstanding stance of three-fold social-religious structure among the Indian and European tribes can be traced back to the Indian tradition. From the oldest Vedic era, the Indian society was divided distinctively into three social classes which were: a) Brahman, namely the clergies who had the responsibility of carrying out the religious ceremonies; b) Kshatriya, namely the corporals or warriors who had the duty of protecting the people; and c) Vaishyas, namely those who were busy with agriculture, animal husbandry, and business (Dumezil, 1975: 39; Dumezil, 1988: 22, 65-66;). Dāryūsh Shāyigān elaborately explains that Vedic gods were divided into three groups, based on the aforesaid three-fold ranks: “gods of ruling,” “gods of chivalry,” and “gods of boons” (Shams, 2005: 115; Shāyigān, 2010, vol. 1: 50-54, 72-73; Zurwānī, 1997: 213-214).

**b) Three-fold religious and social system in ancient Iran:** the three-fold structure of classes was also dominant in ancient Iran that its realization can be found in the reliefs left from the Achaemenid era (q.v. Kaywānfar, 2016). Accordingly, three-fold social ranking was also conspicuous in the system of Iranian gods. Of the oldest evidences for this are the stone epigraphs by the Achaemenidian Arses in Hamedan and Shush in which “Ahura Mazda/Ormazd,” “Mitra/Mehr,” and “Anahita/Nahid” are mentioned next to each other as three gods. In this system of religion, “Ahura Mazda” is known to be the supreme god and the commander of the gods, “Mehr” as the god of war, and “Anahita” as the goddess of fertility (Mujtabā’ī, 1973: 15, 48; Zarrīnkūb, 1998: 192).

**c) Three-fold religious and social system in Sassanid Iran:** the thinking of a three-fold religious and social division continued more intensely into Sassanid Iran. Based on Avesta, the three-fold social ranks of that era were: a) Atourbans or Azarbans, namely those who were guards of the holy fire; b) Arteshtars, who were busy with warfare; and c) Vastriyushes, who did farming and animal husbandry (q.v. Zamyād Yasht, sec. 8; Yasht 11, sec. 6; Yasht 13, sec. 3; for more information, q.v. Ashraf, 1981: 70-78). Based on this in Avesta, “Zoroaster” was the grandee of the three groups, i.e., Atourbans, Arteshtars, and Vastriyushes (Yasht 13, Kardeh 24, secs. 88-89). In Bundahishn, three sons of Zoroaster are introduced as this: the first son as the clergy of the clergies, the other son as the grandee of the farmers, and the third son as the commander-in-chief of the warriors (Faranbagh Dādagī, 2016: 152). In the excerpts of Zādisparam, three fire temples of Ādhar Faranbagh, Ādhar Gashnasb, and Ādhar Burzīnmehr were considered to belong to clergies, warriors, and farmers respectively

(Zādisparam, 1987: 47). These are evidences which clearly show the complete establishment of three-fold ranks in Sassanid society.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the studies by Dumézil, the idea of dividing the religious-social classes into three main functions also found its way to the mind of Zoroastrians. To him, although Zoroaster reformed the old religion of Iranians and took Ahura Mazda to the rank of absolute god, he kept the three-fold structure of Indian and Iranian gods for the hierarchy of the favorite angels of Ahura Mazda, known as “Amesha Spenta.” In this system of religion, Manah and Vahishta were the ruling gods and parallel with the class of royals and clergies, Vairya was the god of war and parallel with the class of warriors, and finally Armaiti as well as the pair of Haurvatāt and Ameretāt were the gods of boons and fertility and parallel with the class of producers (Dumézil, 2000: 15-20; Shāyigān, 2010, vol. 1: 54-56).

### 3. Three-fold religious and social system in pre-Islamic Arabia

Dumézil and his like-minded fellows emphasize this point that the three-fold social and religious ranks was a feature of Indian and European tribes, and the effort to find similar models in other tribes and nations is fruitless. And if such a social-religious structure is found in certain tribes, it is only the result of their cultural contact with the Indian and European tribes, borrowing this thinking from them (Dumézil, 2001: 21-22; Levi-Strauss, 2001: 53). Dumézil puts forward the non-Indian and non-European tribes living in the Middle East like Egyptians as an example who were indebted to Indians and Europeans for their three-fold structure. This was the result of the presence of Indians and Europeans in Syria and the Asia Minor in the middle of the second century BCE (Dumézil, 1975: 40-42).

Based on what has been stated, the social-religious three-fold structure in the Arabian Peninsula should also be considered due to the cultural relations of Arabs with the Indian and European tribes, particularly Iranians and the inhabitants of the areas under the influence of Byzantine. These close relations are obvious and recorded in the history of Arabs, and have been manifested in various political, economic, cultural, and social dimensions (q.v. ‘Alī, 1993, vol. 1: 607-628, vol. 2: 5-72).

Talking of the religious and social three-fold structure in pre-Islam Arabia, first the southern Arabs in Yemen should be pointed out. What is known about the social classes of Yemenis is very little, but precise exploration of the Qur’ānic verses as to the Sabaeans (one of the Yemenis tribes) shows the presence of a social three-fold structure in this area. Looking at the context of the verses of 20 to 34 of chapter 27 proves the existence of two social classes. One was royals’ class which comprised of the queen and the chiefs of the tribe. The other was the group of warriors who, according to the chiefs’ talk, were endowed with strength and given to vehement war (q.v. Qur’ān 27:33). Also in chapter 34, there is a mention of fruitful gardens for this tribe which shows there was a class of farmers in that area (q.v. Qur’ān 34:15).

The social three-fold structure also directly influenced the religious system of Yemenis. Based on the historical information, Yemen as the most ancient center of polytheism and

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1. Based on Zoroastrian religious texts, curing approaches of Iranians have also been deeply influenced by their three-fold social structure. In Avesta, physicians are divided into three types: knife-curers, namely those who cured by knives; b) herb-curers, namely those who used the medicinal properties of herbs to cure the patients; and c) charm curers, namely those clergies who controlled the incantations and invocations and by which they healed the patients ((Yasht 3, sec. 6; Vendidad, chapter 7, sec. 44). These three tools of cure – i.e. knife, herb, and incantation – were directly related to the social class of Iranians and corresponded to the warriors, farmers, and clergies, respectively ((Dirakhshān Muqaddam, 2006: 91-93; Dumézil, 2001: 91-104; Kirāmāṭī, 2004: 639).

idolatry in the Arabian Peninsula was the living place of believers in some celestial trinity including the “the Moon, the Sun, and the Venus.” These celestial bodies were known to be the symbol of a small family; “the Moon” was considered and worshipped as the symbol of father, “the Sun” as the symbol of mother, and “the Venus” as the symbol of their child (‘Alī, 1993, vol. 6: 50, 57; Al-‘Ulā, 2000: 40; Birrū, 1996: 97). In the noble Qur’ān, the extensive worship of the Moon and the Sun in the Ignorant Era has been pointed out (q.v. Qur’ān 41:37), and the worship of the Sun by Saba tribe has been mentioned (q.v. Qur’ān 27:24). Moreover, some of the interpretative narrations in the discussion of verses 75 to 79 of chapter 6 have seen criticisms of Abraham (a) as to the worship of stars – along with the Moon and the Sun – related to the Venus. Accordingly, this can be deemed an allusive proposition as to the trinity of Yemenis (q.v. ‘Ayyāshī, 1960, vol. 1: 365; Qumī, 1988, vol. 1: 206-207; Suyūfī, 1983, vol. 3: 25).

#### 4. Typology of common religious systems in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān

Those who have studied the history and culture of pre-Islam Arabs believe that the religious systems set in the Ignorance Era are many and various which can be briefly recognized in three general categories.

##### 4.1. Religious systems based on polytheism in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān

Some of the tribes and nations in the world have established their religious systems based on worshipping many gods, which is called “polytheism” in the study of religions. Polytheism is comprised of two main types which are as follows:

**a) The first type:** sometimes the religious systems of polytheism are made in a three-fold form, like what can be seen in the trinity of the ancient Babylon which includes Anu (god of skies), Enlil (god of earth and air), and Ea (god of waters) (Garvie, 1919: 113-114). In the ancient Indian and European religions, another instance of such a system can be seen, which has already been mentioned (refer to part 2 of the present article).

Talking of Arab tribes, first the settlers of the southern parts of the Peninsula should be mentioned, who worshipped the three-fold gods of “the Moon, the Sun, and the Venus.” However, when talking of the settlers of Hijaz region, it should be pointed out that, based on the findings of Aḥmad Pākatchī – Iranian theologian and linguist – the religious system of these people was a pattern similar to that of Indians and Europeans. In this pattern, “Al-Lāt” was known to be the goddess of ruling, “Al-‘Uzzā” the goddess of warfare and victory, and “Manāt” the goddess of blessing and fertility. This is a pattern which is stated in the verses of 19 and 20 of chapter 53 of Qur’ān where it reads, “Have ye seen Lāt and ‘Uzzā, And another, the third (goddess), Manāt?” (Qur’ān 53: 19-20).<sup>1</sup>

Also, this type of three-fold system can be pursued in Christianity. Historical evidences show that some of the Christian sects in the Arabian Peninsula believed in a type of trinity which was dramatically different from the formal type of Christianity (as to the various sects of Christianity and its different origins in the Peninsula, q.v. O’Leary, 1927: 125 ff; Haykal, 1935: 86-87). As it is stated in the verses of the Qur’ān, a group of Christians in the Peninsula worshipped the three-fold form of “Allah, Jesus, and Mary,” which is discussed explicitly in the verse 116 of chapter 5 where it reads: And when Allah will say, “O Jesus son of Mary!

1. Aḥmad Pākatchī put forward this view for the first time in a series of meetings with the title of “the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān with a religious anthropological approach” in the Islamic humanities research center of Imam Sadiq University in the second semester in 2013.

Was it you who said to the people, ‘Take me and my mother for gods besides Allah?’” (Qur’ān 5:116). This religious pattern is criticized in some of the Qur’ānic verses (q.v. Qur’ān 4:171; 5:73).

**b) The second type:** sometimes religious systems based on polytheism are formed as a collection of gods managed under the superiority of one god. One outstanding instance of this type of religious system can be found in the culture of ancient Greece. Based on Greek myths, before “Zeus” becoming the king of Olympus gods, his father “Cronus” was the ruler of Titans. Titans were immortal and powerful gods who –before the Olympians – collectively ruled the world under the supervision of Cronus. The children of Cronus, under the commandment of Zeus, rebelled against their father and Titans, and defeated them. Then, a new era of gods’ ruling over the world began. In this period, eleven Olympian gods, under the supervision of Zeus, settled in the Mount of Olympia and managed the world (Burn, 1996: 15-17; Grimal, 1968, vol. 1: 217-218; Rouse, 2006: 25-27).

It should be said that some type of this religious belief can be found among the Arabs living at the time of Qur’ān’s revelation, which is pointed out as “shirk” (polytheism). To the Arabs of Ignorance Era, “Allah” was regarded as the god of gods, being in the sky. He gave the control of affairs to the masters of species and abandoned his divinity as to the trivial matters. Therefore, Arabs worshipped many gods and goddesses as the intermediaries for the approximation to Allah (q.v. Qur’ān 39:3), and for each affair – based on its type –referred to one of them. Idols also were the manifestation of gods’ essences and the medium for connecting with them (‘Alī, 1993, vol. 6: 44, 103-104, 118-121; Al-‘Ulā, 2000: 227; Birrū, 1996: 308-309; Mughniyya, 1994: 136-137). This belief of Ignorance Era is mentioned in many Qur’ānic verses and is criticized intensely (for example, q.v. Qur’ān 17:42; 21:21-22; 23:91; 39:43-45).

#### *4.2. Religious systems based on dualism in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān*

Dualism is the belief in the existence of two causal principles beyond the phenomena of the world in which two Gods or two series of gods and demons, confronting each other, manage the world (Bianchi, 2005: 2504-2505; Lājawardī, 2009: 118; Taliaferro, 2003: 229). In this religious system, the origin of goodness and benevolence is attributed to one of the causal principles and the origin of sufferings and evil to the other causal principle.

The religious systems based on dualism can be seen in some of the tribes and nations in the world here and there. For example, dualism in the ancient Iran can be cited passing three distinct stages in the course of its transformation: first, the aforesaid dualism exists in the oldest part of Avesta, i.e. Gatha in which Ahura Mazda is at the top as the exalted god and his creatures “Sepantā Mainyu” (Holy Spirit) and “Angra Mainyu” (Destructive Spirit) – confronting each other –are placed at a lower rank. Second, there is Zurvanite dualism in which Zurvan is set at the top as the absolute god, and Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu are engendered from him who are twins but seriously opposite to each other. Finally, there is dualism in Pahlavi texts in which Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu (Ahriman) are depicted as equal but opposite (Lājawardī, 2009: 123).

As to the religious systems of dualism in the Arabian Peninsula, two religious groups of Zoroastrians (termed as Magians in the Qur’ān) and Sabaeans should be pointed out whose mention in the Qur’ānic verses (q.v. Qur’ān 2:62; 5:69; 22:17) shows their effective presence in the interfaith dialogues of the revelation context (for more information, q.v. ‘Alī, 1993, vol. 6: 691-704). What is important about the religious systems of these spiritual groups is the dominance of dualist thinking in them. Regarding this point, it is possible that the verse 51 of

chapter 16 of the Qur'ān is revealed for debating with the Sabaeans and Magians and has criticized the dualism where it reads<sup>1</sup>, “God has said: ‘Take not (for worship) two gods: for He is just One God: then fear Me (and Me alone)’” (Qur’ān 16:51).

#### *4.3. Religious systems based on monotheism in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān*

In the systems based on monotheism, unique god is worshipped who has the absolute power, and no force is imagined to be his parallel. Of the obvious instances of monotheism in Abrahamic religions – which also is conspicuously present in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān – is worshipping “Jehovah” by the Jews. Monotheism in Judaism has led to the formation of a fundamental metaphor in the Old Testament. That metaphor is the relation of Jehovah with the Israelites in the form of the relation of a husband with his wives. It should be said briefly that in the Divine Law of Judaism, like Islam, only men have the right of polygamy, and every sexual relation of a woman with any man other than her husband is deemed fornication. Based on this, in the Book of Jeremiah, Jehovah calls himself the husband of Israelites and through this image of Jews as his wives, he deems the worship of any god other than himself as their fornication with strange men which deserves many punishments (q.v. Book of Jeremiah, 3: 6-20).

Apart from the People of the Book, monotheism can limitedly be recognized among the unlettered of the Peninsula. As to this, a group should be mentioned that was called “Ḥunafā” (deists) in the revelation era. One of the main beliefs of this group was worshipping the unique god (Al-‘Ulā, 2000: 322-328; Birrū, 1996: 312-314). The noble Qur’ān traces back the record of Ḥanafism (deism) to the time of Abraham (a) and sees “Ḥanīf” (pure in faith) as one of the traits of his Holiness (for example, q.v. Qur’ān 2:135; 3:67; 16:120). At the end, the idea of “monotheism” should be mentioned which is one of the most fundamental teachings of the true religion of Islam, and a great number of Qur’ānic verses have been allocated to discuss it.

### **5. Three functions of god(s) in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān**

Regardless of the form of worshipping god(s) – polytheism, dualism, or monotheism – in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān, the role of them in the life of humans (or in other words, their active attributes) can be studied from three different perspectives, in the light of the mythology research by Georges Dumezil: ruling, war, and production (to know about this three-fold pattern for the procurement of security, q.v. Shīrzād, 2019: 218-224).

#### *5.1. Function of ruling and organizing by god(s) in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān*

Talking of the ancient gods of Arabs whose role was eminent regarding the ruling, first “Al-Lāt” should be mentioned who – based on historical evidences – had the ruling over the entire world. Briefly it should be said the word “Al-Lāt” traces back to the ancient word “El” who was the god of gods, the father of gods, and the master of skies in the Semitic languages (Ādharnūsh, 2001: 77). Apart from this background, “Al-Lāt” was undoubtedly one of the

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1. Some of the interpreters hold that the aforesaid verse is not only to negate the dualism, but rather it wants to criticize every type of non-monotheism thinking including the dualism and polytheism (Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 7: 401; Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 11: 259-260; Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1996, vol. 12: 269). This is whereas, considering the indications of the language, the main intent of this noble verse is the negation of dualism. The emphasis on “two gods” with the word “ithnayn” makes it clearer that the focus in this verse is on dualism.

most famous goddesses of Arabs in the northern Arabia. This was in a way that she was known as the supreme goddess to them, as it can be understood from the Safaitic inscriptions. This goddess was also worshipped by the Nabataeans as their greatest god (Ādharnūsh, 2001: 78; Fahd, 1986: 692).

Talking of the emergence time of Islam, “Al-Lāt” still played the role of god of gods (overruling the gods and the universe) for some Arabs. As to this, particularly, the tribe of Thaqīf should be mentioned who deemed a matchless station for “Al-Lāt,” and made a temple named “Bayt al-RRabba” for her as their greatest god (Ibn Kalbī, 2000: 16-17; Yāqūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 4: 16, 118, vol. 5: 4).

Also, “Allah” was a god who had somehow the station of “god of gods” to the pre-Islamic Arabs. As it was already mentioned, the Arabs of Ignorance Era considered “Allah” the god of gods, and saw worshipping other lords and goddesses a reason to approximate “Allah.” However, the function of ruling and organizing by “Allah” can be obviously found in the Qur’ānic teachings. For example, the noble Qur’ān considers mayhem and disorder the result of the world’s sovereignty by many gods, and introduces “Allah” as the guarantee for maintaining the order of the world. It reads, “Or have they taken (for worship) gods from the earth who can raise (the dead)? If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both!” (Qur’ān 21:21-22). Furthermore, that “Allah” is described to be “Rabb al-‘ālamīn” – which means “Lord of all the worlds” – in many verses of the Qur’ān indicates the function of the ruling by “Allah” in the revelation context because this description shows the god of Islam at the beginning of the preaching was the very unseen, unique, and eternal God who was worshipped by the Bedouins in the deserts of Arabia, that God who was deemed to be the owner of time and the one who determined the fate for everybody’s life and ruled all the creatures (Mihrwash, 2017: 72-73).

### *5.2. Military and warfare function of god(s) in the revelation time of the noble Qur’ān*

The evidences left from the culture of Arabs in the Ignorance Era show that one of the most important goals of Arabs in worshipping gods and leaving them sacrifices was asking help from these supernatural powers against the enemies and receiving occulted aid for being triumphant in wars (Dallaw, 1989, vol. 2: 31, 176, 247).

When discussing the ancient gods of Arabs whose role was eminent in warfare, first “Wadd” and “Yaghūth” should be pointed out. Although the names of these gods were mentioned in the story of the Prophet Noah (a) in the noble Qur’ān (q.v. Qur’ān 71:23), the evidences which are left show that these gods were known to and worshipped by the Arabs of Ignorance Era from the distant past. This was in a way that the names of “Abd Wadd” and “Abd Yaghūth” were somehow common at that time which was about the emergence of Islam, showing their being worshipped by the groups of Arabs of that period (for example, q.v. Balādthurī, 1996, vol. 1: 131, vol. 2: 303, vol. 4: 313, vol. 11: 15, 363; Ibn Ḥazm, 2003, vol. 1: 128-129, 166, vol. 2: 308, 417, 441).

The function of “Wadd” in warfare can be obviously seen in a figure made for him, a figure in the form of a robust man with a sword, some arrows, and a spearhead (Ibn Kalbī, 2000: 56). Burhān al-Dīn Dallaw believes making such a figure of Wadd shows that Arabs knew him as the “god of war” (ilāh al-ḥarb), and this, per se, indicates that war had an important role in the ordinary life of Arabs (Dallaw, 1989, vol. 2: 183).

Discussing the military function of “Yaghūth,” attention, first, should be paid to his name, a name made from the root of “gh-ū-th” which means “helping.” Because it is in present tense, it indicates the persistence of this god of Ignorance Era in helping his worshippers



(Fīrūzābādī, 2005: 173; Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, vol. 2: 175; Yāghūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 5: 439). Moreover, attention should be paid to the figure made for Yaghūth, depicting the form of a lion. Choosing the lion which is the very symbol of power and bravery (q.v. Chevalier, 1990: 575-577) shows the manifestation of these features in the god Yaghūth in the belief of the Ignorant Arab (Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 10: 548). What makes the function of Yaghūth in warfare more clear is the presence of its figure in the wars of Arabs at the Ignorance Era. Based on the historical evidences, for example, in the war between Banī An‘um and Ghaṭīf, those worshipping Yaghūth took this idol to the battle of war and asked for its support and help (Ibn Kalbī, 2000: 10; Yāghūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 5: 439).

Of the other gods of Ignorant Arabs whose function, particularly in the military affairs, in the occasions of the beginning of Islam can be investigated are “Al-Lāt” and “Al-‘Uzzā.” As it is recorded in the historical sources, Qurayshians, participating in the battle of Uḥud, took Al-Lāt and Al-‘Uzzā with them to the battlefield and considered their victory in this battle indebted to the aid of these gods (Ṭabarī, 1986, vol. 2: 62). Besides, the name “‘Uzzā” which has the root of “‘Izz” and means “honor and power” also points to the ability of this god of Ignorance Era in the military arenas (Yāghūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 4: 116). One of the religious habits of Arabs should be added to what has already been stated to the effect that they hung their swords on “Al-Lāt,” “Al-‘Uzzā,” and “Wadd.” Hanging the war arms from the figures of these gods which is also reflected in the poems of Ignorance Era shows the military function of these gods in the revelation context (q.v. Ibn Hishām, 1990, vol. 1: 204, vol. 5: 152).

Considering what was said about the gods of the Ignorance Era, one of the functions of the sublime God in the Qur’ānic and Islamic culture is also helping out the faithful people in war and military realm. The obvious instance of this matter can be seen in verses stating the events of Badr battle and the victory of the true believers over the pagans. These verses mention the true believers asked for help from God and He sent off one thousand angels. They talk about God who assured the hearts and steps of true believers and made the hearts of pagans full of fear (q.v. Qur’ān 8: 9-12). Later, these verses make the role of divine help so bold that they introduce the sublime God the slaughterer of pagans and thrower of arrows at them. They read, “It is not ye who slew them; it was God: when thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but God’s” (Qur’ān 8:17; q.v. Qur’ān 3: 123-126).

The noble Qur’ān gives news about the divine help in the war with the Jews, in addition to the pagans. Once this was when it states the events of Banī Qurayẓa battle in the year 5 AH in which the sublime God made the true believers needless of war, put fear in the hearts of the Jews, and gave their houses, possessions, and pieces of lands to Muslims (q.v. Qur’ān 33:25-27). The other time was in stating the events of Banī Naḍīr in the year 4 AH in which the sublime God frightened the Jews so much that they themselves ruined their houses and fled (q.v. Qur’ān 59:2).

### *5.3. Productive and economic role of god(s) in the revelation context of the noble Qur’ān*

The role of gods in fertility as well as the increase of produces of animals and agriculture is so noticeable that, in the study of religions, the title of “Fertility Deities” is used for the gods who are designated for these acts. These gods who are widespread throughout the world have many types, including the godhood of water and rain to the godhood of the land, grains, and beans. One instance of such gods in the myths of ancient Greece is “Demeter” (goddess of grains and fertility) who is considered to be opposite to “Limos” (the goddess of famine and drought). It is the god, to Greeks, who taught humans how to sow and reap so that they could end immigration and choose civilization (Burn, 1996: 9; Grimal, 1968, vol. 1: 245; Hamilton, 1997: 69).

Evidences left from the Ignorance Era show that Arabs also, like the other human tribes and races, expected their gods to bless their business in exchange for donations and sacrifices, and to help them attain economic security, regarding the unfavorable conditions of climate in Hijaz region (Dallaw, 1989, vol. 2: 31, 247). On one hand, those who were busy with gardening and agriculture (like the people of Yathrib and Ṭā'if) asked for the fertility of the land, productivity of agricultural crops, and the increase of springs and water wells. On the other hand, those whose economics was reliant on animal husbandry, hunting, and gathering food (like Bedouins) were asking for sufficient pastures for livestock and the increase of plant and animal species for the provision of their daily food.

Based on historical reports, Arabs of Ignorance Era asked some of their gods the increase of wealth and blessing in business that the most important of them are as follows:

**a) Manāt:** “Manāt” was the most ancient idol of Arabs which was set up next to the sea – in an area named “Qudayd” which was between Mecca and Yathrib. It was esteemed by all the Arabs and sacrifices were made to its name, even tribes like Aws and Khazraj finished their hajj before this idol and shaved their heads there (Azraqī, 1982, vol. 1: 124-125; Ibn Hishām, 1990, vol. 1: 210; Ibn Kalbī, 2000: 13-15; Yāqūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 5: 204-205). Also, the prevalence of names like “‘Abd Manāt,” “S‘ad Manāt,” “Zayd Manāt,” and “‘Awz Manāt” at a time around the emergence of Islam (q.v. Ibn Ḥazm, 2003, vol. 1: 180, 213, 245, vol. 2: 300, 317, 377, 442) as well as the consideration of this idol as one of the daughters of God (q.v. Qur’ān 53:19-22) indicate the high station of Manāt before the Arabs of Ignorance Era.

Researchers believe that the prevalence of worshipping Manāt in the Peninsula for which no parallel can be found is rooted in this idea that Arabs deemed this idol to have an important role in the penetration of rain (Yāqūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 5: 204). It is because of this that they put sacrifices before this idol in the hope of rain penetration (Bayḍāwī, 1997, vol. 5: 159). Moreover, Manāt being set up next to the sea is a sign showing that Arabs saw a connection between this idol and water and considered it effective for the blow of winds which caused rain (Dallaw, 1989, vol. 2: 190).

**b) Hubal:** “Hubal” was the most important and the biggest idol which was set in Ka‘ba by Arabs, and called by them the “grand idol” (Ibn Kalbī, 2000: 27-28; Yāqūt Ḥimawī, 1995, vol. 5: 391). Based on historical narrations, Amru b. Luḥayy set up this idol on the well of “Akhsaf” or “Akhshaf” which was dug within the Ka‘ba (Azraqī, 1982, vol. 1: 65, 117). Hubal being set up on this well caused Arabs to see this idol as the “god of productivity and rain” and consider it as the master of gods (sayyad al-āliha” (Dallaw, 1989, vol. 2: 201; Zaydān, 2012: 54).

Besides the gods of Ignorance Era, one of the roles of the sublime God in Islamic culture also was causing productivity, growth, and increase in economics. Many stances of this can be seen in the Qur’ānic verses. That said, the key concept of “blessing” should be first mentioned. Blessing is one of the religious-economic concepts that is used in the earlier heavenly books, in addition to the noble Qur’ān. The Hebrew word “Birākhāh” which means “blessing” has been used many times in the Old Testament and is semantically very similar to its Qur’ānic parallel (q.v. Gesenius, 1939: 138-139; Mashkūr, 1978, vol. 1: 62-63). As to this, it should be noted the first section of the first part of Mishnah and Talmud –which is called “Zeraim” (seeds) and is about agriculture and its related religious deeds – is named Birākhūt (the plural form of Birākhāh). It is comprised of religious rites for the increase and productivity of agricultural produces (Friedländer, 1902: 47-48). A true believer of Judaism sees Jehovah as the main origin of blessing (q.v. Book of Genesis, 1:22-28, 9:1, KJV), and expects Him to increase agriculture in exchange for the religious deeds he performs. Also, the

noble Qur'ān always uses the word “tabārak” (blessed) for the Holy Essence of the sublime God (q.v. Qur'ān 7: 54; 23:14; 25:1, 10, 61; 40:64; 43:85; 55:78; 67:1).

Moreover, the Qur'ānic verses introduce faith and piety as the factors for the attainment of earthly and heavenly blessings. In this way, they see the worship of the sublime God as the way for the increase of water and food sources (q.v. Qur'ān 7:96). In addition to some verses in which sending rain is ascribed to the sublime God (for example, q.v. Qur'ān 6:99; 14:32; 16:10, 65; 25:48; 45:5; 78:14-16; 80:24-32), repentance is also considered to be the cause of sending rain (q.v. Qur'ān 11:52; 71:10-11). Moreover, the noble Qur'ān in chapter 106 ascribes the provision of Meccans' food and security to God of Ka'ba (Qur'ān 106:3-4). Talking of Saba tribe, it also describes expressing gratitude the reason for the increase of agricultural crops and turning away from God the cause of endangering the food security (Qur'ān 34:15-17).

## Conclusion

With a focus on the active attributes of the sublime God, the present article attempted to study the attributive Unity in the noble Qur'ān with a new approach. To achieve this goal, it was tried, with reliance on the theory of Georges Dumezil in the field of comparative mythology, to explore the cultural beliefs of Ignorance Era Arabs in the form of a three-fold pattern and to explicate the viewpoint of the noble Qur'ān as to this. This research showed:

1. Based on the research by Georges Dumezil, the perception of Indian and European societies of the divine world follows some three-fold worldview. Based upon it, some gods were responsible for maintaining the cosmos system and implementing justice, some others were related to warfare and victory, and the third group of them was related to land productivity, fertility, and the prosperity of the society.
2. The aforesaid belief found its way to the Arabian Peninsula due to the cultural contact of Arabs with the Indian and European tribes. This was in a way that Arabs living in the southern parts of the Peninsula like Yemen, those living in the northern parts like Hijaz region, those who were from the People of the Book, and those who were part of the unlettered all configured the active attributes of gods in this form. Worshipping “the Moon, the Sun, and the Venus” by Yemini, worshipping “Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzzā, and Manāt” by the unlettered of Hijaz region, and worshipping “Allah, Jesus, and Mary” by some Christian sects in this area are beliefs left from this long-lasting religious thinking in Arabia.
3. The unlettered people in Hijaz region who were the first audience of the noble Qur'ān categorized the active attributes of gods into three main ranks: first, gods who had the role of ruling in the world; second, gods who were the helper of their followers in fighting with the other tribes; and finally, gods who guaranteed the economic prosperity in realms of agriculture, animal husbandry, and business. Pre-Islamic Arabs categorized Allah and AL-Lāt in the first group, Wadd and Yaghūth and AL-'Uzzā in the second group, and Manāt and Hubal in the third group.
4. Reviewing the Qur'ānic verses indicate that the noble Qur'ān uses the aforesaid three-fold pattern for talking about the active attributes of the sublime God, in addition to the centralization of the Unity teaching. It differs in that it gathers the aforesaid three-fold functions altogether in unique God, in place of ascribing them to three different groups of gods. Unique God has a great many names and attributes which can be generally classified into three main groups: ruling, war, and production.

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