

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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PARTS OF OBSERVANCE AND ORDINARY VICE (Questions [103]-109)

OF DULIA (FOUR ARTICLES)

We must now consider the parts of observance. We shall consider (1) dulia, whereby we pay honor and other things pertaining thereto to those who are in a higher position; (2) obedience, whereby we obey their commands.

Under the first head there are four points of inquiry:

(1) Whether honor is a spiritual or a corporal thing?

(2) Whether honor is due to those only who are in a higher position?

(3) Whether dulia, which pays honor and worship to those who are above us, is a special virtue, distinct from latria?

(4) Whether it contains several species?

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Whether honor denotes something corporal?

Objection 1: It seems that honor does not denote something corporal. For honor is showing reverence in acknowledgment of virtue, as may be gathered from the Philosopher (Ethic. i, 5). Now showing reverence is something spiritual, since to revere is an act of fear, as stated above ([Question \[81\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#), ad 1). Therefore honor is something spiritual.

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virtue." Now, since virtue consists chiefly of spiritual things, its reward is not something corporal, for the reward is more excellent than the merit. Therefore honor does not consist of corporal things.

Objection 3: Further, honor is distinct from praise, as also from glory. Now praise and glory consist of external things. Therefore honor consists of things internal and spiritual.

On the contrary, Jerome in his exposition of 1 Tim. 5:3, "Honor widows that are widows indeed," and ([1 Tim. 5:17](#)), "let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor" etc. says (Ep. ad Ageruch.): "Honor here stands either for almsgiving or for remuneration." Now both of these pertain to spiritual things. Therefore honor consists of corporal things.

I answer that, Honor denotes a witnessing to a person's excellence. Therefore men who wish to be honored seek a witnessing to their excellence, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. i, 5; viii, 8). Now witness is borne either before God or before man. Before God, Who is the searcher of hearts, the witness of one's conscience suffices. wherefore honor, so far as God is concerned, may consist of the mere internal movement of the heart, for instance when a man acknowledges either God's excellence or another man's excellence before God. But, as regards men, one cannot bear witness, save by means of signs, either by words, as when one proclaims another's excellence by word of mouth, or by deeds, for instance by bowing, saluting, and so forth, or by external things, as by offering gifts, erecting statues, and the like. Accordingly honor consists of signs, external and corporal.

Reply to Objection 1: Reverence is not the same as honor: but on the one hand it is the primary motive for showing honor, in so far as one man honors another out of the reverence he has for him; and on the other hand, it is the end of honor, in so far as a person is honored in order that he may be held in reverence by others.

Reply to Objection 2: According to the Philosopher (Ethic. iv, 3), honor is not a sufficient reward of virtue: yet nothing in human and corporal things can be greater than honor, since these corporal things themselves are employed as signs in acknowledgment of excelling virtue. It is, however, due to the good and the beautiful, that they may be made known, according to Mt. 5:15, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house." In this sense honor is said to be the reward of virtue.

Reply to Objection 3: Praise is distinguished from honor in two ways. First, because praise consists only of verbal signs, whereas honor consists of any external signs, so that praise is included in honor. Secondly, because by paying honor to a person we bear witness to a person's excelling goodness absolutely, whereas by praising him we bear witness to his goodness in reference to an end: thus we praise one that works well for an end. On the other hand, honor is given even to the best, which is not referred to an end, but has already arrived at the end, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. i, 5).

Glory is the effect of honor and praise, since the result of our bearing witness to a person's goodness is that his goodness becomes clear to the knowledge of many. The word "glory" signifies this, for "glory" is the same as {kleria}, wherefore a gloss of Augustine on Rm. 16:27 observes that glory is "clear knowledge together with praise."

Whether honor is properly due to those who are above us?

Objection 1: It seems that honor is not properly due to those who are above us. For an angel is above any human wayfarer, according to Mt. 11:11, "He that is lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist." Yet an angel forbade John when the latter wished to honor him ([Apoc. 22:10](#)). Therefore honor is not due to those who are above us.

Objection 2: Further, honor is due to a person in acknowledgment of his virtue, as stated above ([Article \[1\]](#); [Question \[63\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)). But sometimes those who are above us are not virtuous. Therefore honor is not due to them, as neither is it due to the demons, who nevertheless are above us in the order of nature.

Objection 3: Further, the Apostle says ([Rm. 12:10](#)): "With honor preventing one another," and we read ([1 Pt. 2:17](#)): "Honor all men." But this would not be so if honor were due to those alone who are above us. Therefore honor is not due properly to those who are above us.

Objection 4: Further, it is written (Tob. 1:16) that Tobias "had ten talents of silver of that which he had been honored by the king": and we read (Esther 6:11) that Assuerus honored Mardocheus, and ordered it to be proclaimed in his presence: "This honor is he worthy of whom the king hath a mind to honor." Therefore honor is paid to those also who are beneath us, and it seems, in consequence, that honor is not due properly to those who are above us.

On the contrary, The Philosopher says (Ethic. i, 12) that "honor is due to the best."

I answer that, As stated above ([Article \[1\]](#)), honor is nothing but an acknowledgment of a person's excelling goodness. Now a person's excellence may be considered, not only in relation to those who honor him, in the point of his being more excellent than they, but also in itself, or in relation to other persons, and in this way honor is always due to a person, on account of some excellence or superiority.

For the person honored has no need to be more excellent than those who honor him; it may suffice for him to be more excellent than some others, or again he may be more excellent than those who honor him in some respect and not simply.

Reply to Objection 1: The angel forbade John to pay him, not any kind of honor, but the honor of adoration and latria, which is due to God. Or again, he forbade him to pay the honor of dulia, in order to indicate the dignity of John himself, for which Christ equaled him to the angels "according to the hope of glory of the children of God": wherefore he refused to be honored by him as though he were superior to him.

Reply to Objection 2: A wicked superior is honored for the excellence, not of his virtue but of his dignity, as being God's minister, and because the honor paid to him is paid to the whole community over which he presides. As for the demons, they are wicked beyond recall, and should be looked upon as enemies, rather than treated with honor.

Reply to Objection 3: In every man is to be found something that makes it possible to deem him better than ourselves, according to Phil. 2:3, "In humility, let each esteem others better

Reply to Objection 4: Private individuals are sometimes honored by kings, not that they are above them in the order of dignity but on account of some excellence of their virtue: and in this way Tobias and Mardocheus were honored by kings.

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Whether dulia is a special virtue distinct from latria? Objection 1. It seems that dulia is not a special virtue distinct from latria. For a gloss on Ps. 7:1, "O Lord my God, in Thee have I put my trust," says: "Lord of all by His power, to Whom dulia is due; God by creation, to Whom we owe latria." Now the virtue directed to God as Lord is not distinct from that which is directed to Him as God. Therefore dulia is not a distinct virtue from latria.

Objection 2: Further, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. viii, 8), "to be loved is like being honored." Now the charity with which we love God is the same as that whereby we love our neighbor. Therefore dulia whereby we honor our neighbor is not a distinct virtue from latria with which we honor God.

Objection 3: Further, the movement whereby one is moved towards an image is the same as the movement whereby one is moved towards the thing represented by the image. Now by dulia we honor a man as being made to the image of God. For it is written of the wicked (Wis. 2:22,23) that "they esteemed not the honor of holy souls, for God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him." Therefore dulia is not a distinct virtue from latria whereby God is honored.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Civ. Dei x), that "the homage due to man, of which the Apostle spoke when he commanded servants to obey their masters and which in Greek is called dulia, is distinct from latria which denotes the homage that consists in the worship of God."

I answer that, According to what has been stated above ([Question \[101\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)), where there are different aspects of that which is due, there must needs be different virtues to render those dues. Now servitude is due to God and to man under different aspects: even as lordship is competent to God and to man under different aspects. For God has absolute and paramount lordship over the creature wholly and singly, which is entirely subject to His power: whereas man partakes of a certain likeness to the divine lordship, forasmuch as he exercises a particular power over some man or creature. Wherefore dulia, which pays due service to a human lord, is a distinct virtue from latria, which pays due service to the lordship of God. It is, moreover, a species of observance, because by observance we honor all those who excel in dignity, while dulia properly speaking is the reverence of servants for their master, dulia being the Greek for servitude.

[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [SS](#) » [SS103.html](#) is our Father by way of excellence, so again latria is called dulia by way of excellence, inasmuch as God is our Lord by way of excellence. Now the creature does not partake of the power to create by reason of which latria is due to God: and so this gloss drew a distinction, by ascribing latria to God in respect of creation, which is not communicated to a creature, but dulia in respect of lordship, which is communicated to a creature.

Reply to Objection 2: The reason why we love our neighbor is God, since that which we love in our neighbor through charity is God alone. Wherefore the charity with which we love God is the same as that with which we love our neighbor. Yet there are other friendships distinct from charity, in respect of the other reasons for which a man is loved. In like manner, since there is one reason for serving God and another for serving man, and for honoring the one or the other, latria and dulia are not the same virtue.

Reply to Objection 3: Movement towards an image as such is referred to the thing represented by the image: yet not every movement towards an image is referred to the image as such, and consequently sometimes the movement to the image differs specifically from the movement to the thing. Accordingly we must reply that the honor or subjection of dulia regards some dignity of a man absolutely. For though, in respect of that dignity, man is made to the image or likeness of God, yet in showing reverence to a person, one does not always refer this to God actually.

Or we may reply that the movement towards an image is, after a fashion, towards the thing, yet the movement towards the thing need not be towards its image. Wherefore reverence paid to a person as the image of God redounds somewhat to God: and yet this differs from the reverence that is paid to God Himself, for this in no way refers to His image.

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Whether dulia has various species?

Objection 1: It seems that dulia has various species. For by dulia we show honor to our neighbor. Now different neighbors are honored under different aspects, for instance king, father and master, as the Philosopher states (Ethic. ix, 2). Since this difference of aspect in the object differentiates the species of virtue, it seems that dulia is divided into specifically different virtues.

Objection 2: Further, the mean differs specifically from the extremes, as pale differs from white and black. Now hyperdulia is apparently a mean between latria and dulia: for it is shown towards creatures having a special affinity to God, for instance to the Blessed Virgin as being the mother of God. Therefore it seems that there are different species of dulia, one being simply dulia, the other hyperdulia.

Objection 3: Further, just as in the rational creature we find the image of God, for which reason it is honored, so too in the irrational creature we find the trace of God. Now the aspect

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must distinguish a corresponding difference of dulia: and all the more since honor is shown to certain irrational creatures, as, for instance, to the wood of the Holy Cross.

On the contrary, Dulia is condivided with latria. But latria is not divided into different species. Neither therefore is dulia.

I answer that, Dulia may be taken in two ways. In one way it may be taken in a wide sense as denoting reverence paid to anyone on account of any kind of excellence, and thus it comprises piety and observance, and any similar virtue whereby reverence is shown towards a man. Taken in this sense it will have parts differing specifically from one another. In another way it may be taken in a strict sense as denoting the reverence of a servant for his lord, for dulia signifies servitude, as stated above ([Article \[3\]](#)). Taken in this sense it is not divided into different species, but is one of the species of observance, mentioned by Tully (De Invent. Rhet. ii), for the reason that a servant reveres his lord under one aspect, a soldier his commanding officer under another, the disciple his master under another, and so on in similar cases.

Reply to Objection 1: This argument takes dulia in a wide sense.

Reply to Objection 2: Hyperdulia is the highest species of dulia taken in a wide sense, since the greatest reverence is that which is due to a man by reason of his having an affinity to God.

Reply to Objection 3: Man owes neither subjection nor honor to an irrational creature considered in itself, indeed all such creatures are naturally subject to man. As to the Cross of Christ, the honor we pay to it is the same as that which we pay to Christ, just as the king's robe receives the same honor as the king himself, according to Damascene (De Fide Orth. iv).