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Today's Need for Clarification of Evil in This World

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Abstract

The Purpose of this case study was to advance knowledge on the concept of evil through the Qur'anic perspective, with the support of Twelver Shia sources, and identify practical tools to solve this issue in the believers' and non-believers' lives. This implies identifying this concept in the cosmology of the Qur'an, and the purpose of the creation of its different types. The method adopted was a case study with the help of a thematic approach wherever possible the concept was cited or mentioned in the Shia school of thought primarily. Results: In the worldview of the Qur'an, the phenomenon of evil is the result of human free will through willpower and authority. A complete or very exhaustive definition of Satan was found. Evil is the result of divine creation in a derivative way and through divine wisdom. Response to Moral evil makes it become a trial or suffering. At last, maybe we should keep up our spiritual fitness more than our body fitness in our journey in Islam. This informative abstract is limited to this concept. Other scholars are invited to go deeper to advance more knowledge on certain domains beyond what is covered in this study.

Keywords: Evil's Ontology, Satan's Ontology, Specific Types of Evil Interactions, Evil Personalities in Qur'an.



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Introduction

To start with, generations in the 1900s experimented evil through two world wars, but today's ones have witnessed their highest visible forms and intensity caused by human willpower and authority. A reader can just look at the current headlines of the world Media to be convinced that evil is at everyone's doorsteps, in everyone's cellphones, or in many people's minds. Its propagation and its amplified exposure make it necessary to recognize its nature, clarify its borders, and explain it more to the masses (Michael L., 1983, p.339). Given that, efforts to clarify, specify, and fight evil should not be abandoned. More importantly, scholars must indicate ways to deal with evil on its different manifestations to guide people. This academic inquiry originates from the auspice of the Qur'anic perspective and Islamic narrations because Christian-based civilization seems to come to an end in terms of the explanation of this phenomenon. By doing this, we are assuming our social, spiritual, and religious responsibility.

If one were to ask if we would prefer a world without evil? The answer would be largely "Yes". This indicates that evil, in its different types and forms is largely appreciated as a problem to solve, though its presence since the early beginning (John S., 2004, p.544). The Holy Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Mohammad over a period of twenty-three years describes evil in various verses. Even sometimes, the Qur'an seems to consider an inner thing of a man and the result of God's inspiration for humans (Qur'an 91:8). The language of the Qur'an portrayed these evil forces so powerful that the reader sees them in confrontation with God, even in punishable situations. But every letter and word of the Qur'an is considered sanctified and undoubtful by the followers of Islam (Ahamad et al., 2014, p.20). Regardless of whether the language of the Qur'an is considered symbolic in such stories or allegorical or real, we interrogate:

First, if evil is the result of human free will and he who causes evil with the power of will and authority, how does the Qur'an expose the semantic domains of evil? What is evil in the ontology of the Qur'an? Is it something absolute or relative? What is the Qur'anic explanation for humanity voluntarily inflicting pain, suffering, or hardship on another? What are the vehicles of evil in the light of the Qur'an? How do evil entities interact with human beings and what are Satan's materiality and strategies in the Qur'an?



Second, if evil resulting from divine creation is necessary for human growth and perfection, how does the Qur'an provide the means for growth and perfection?

Whether the Qur'an explains evil as the result of man's own actions, as outside his control, as Satan's deeds or as the result of God's inspiration, or as a result of interactions, our interrogations still remain valid. Accordingly, it seems that the best way to understand the true meaning of evil and its ontology is to refer to the Qur'anic text itself as it is an exposition of all things (Qur'an 16:89).

Primarily, for our theoretical objective, we looked for the concept-related narratives, the semantics, the similarities, and the apparent and technical meanings of evil in the Qur'an (Irfan, 2021, p.15). We also searched for the types of evil, their vehicles, their agents, the purpose of their creation, their interaction styles, and more importantly the Islamic ways and means to grapple with suffering and hardship (John, 1969, p.25). Secondly, our practical objective of this research was to shed some light on the darkness of ignorance in my own country regarding the narratives on the history of Haiti. Satan is believed to be the responsible for Haiti's independence and poverty, as insinuated by an American pastor (Pat Robertson, 2010). We will try to consolidate a complete definition of Satan in the general sense.

To reach the purpose of this case study, we referred to The Holy Qur'an and Islamic electronic sources such as books, articles, and prior academic works about this topic. With the help of the Twelver Shia sources, we discussed the findings by analyzing, and interpreting them in the light of the intellect. In this paper, a thematic approach and the Qur'anic exegesis (*Tafsīr*) of Islamic scholars were used. Necessarily, we referred to the Hadiths of the Ahlulbayt, as they are the qualified teachers of The Qur'an by excellence (Qur'an 39:9) and (Qur'an 4:59).

Historically, the debates related to the concept of evil occurred in the Islamic world a long time ago. At the start of the 9th century, notable schools such as the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites took a stand and gave their intellectual position (Al-Shahrastani, 1932; p.62). For some reasons, these viewpoints were not popularized in the western world. Deep inside the Islamic arena, scholars such as Rumi and Iqbal's explained how evil arises; that is, resulting from the exercise of free choice, from insinuations of

the devil, or as a test or to facilitate spiritual advancement. Al-Ghazali and Rumi argued that God is also the author of evil as a logical necessity and inseparable while not reflecting God's imperfection. Until then, the perplexity of evil was yet to be explained. In particular, scholars like Ibn Sina, al-'Arabi and Mulla Sadra clarified that evil stems from non-existence and is negative in nature.

Recently, Mutahhari, a 20th-century Islamic scholar removed definitely some confusion about this concept in his Islamic philosophical discussion by stating: "That is, everything in itself is good for itself; if it is evil; it is evil for something else."

Islamic scholars in today's discussion such as Sheikh Hassan Mohammad Makki al-Āmili, Shaykh Zoheir Ali Esmail, the concept of evil tends to be replaced in meaning instead by "*hardship*" or "*suffering*", while other scholars reconcile it with God's Justice as a relative matter that does not have an existence by itself (Rouzati, 2018, pp.1-13).

In the 20th century, arguments on evil came from skeptics and restorer (those who revive it) (Hannah, 1973). Evil- restorers such as Russell thought the concept was necessary to categorize and guide legitimate response to it (Garrard 2002, pp. 323–325; Russell 2009, pp.268–269). Whereas evil skeptic promoted its abandonment due to the lack of explanatory power (Clendinnen 1999, pp.79–113). In on the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic, Nietzsche argues that the concept of evil arose from the negative emotions of envy, hatred, and resentment. Other scholars also believe that evil actions are essentially incomprehensible. But there no need to abandon the concept of evil for this reason (Feinberg, 2004, p.15).

In medieval times, Biblical and Jewish texts portrayed evil as a result of Satan's machinations mostly (Morgan, 2011, p.8). Before that, Emmanuel Kant equated evil to the human will in his theory of the stage of corruption in the 18th century. Since then, evil has been used in different debates and contexts, from different backgrounds, and from various perspectives by many scholars. Last but not the least, the various emerged theories, starting from Epicurus's and Manes' Manichaeism, passing through Descartes' determinism did not solve the issue of evil (Descartes, 1637).

The central message we get across is that the Qur'an indicates evil in two categories, referring to moral evil and natural evil. Semantically, The Qur'an shows evil can take many forms, but all negative in nature (Izutsu,

2002, p. 220). We found thirty (30) instances of its roots (*sh-r-r*) in the Qur'an. Literally, The Qur'an indicates Iblis as the chief of evil and the shaytans as evil. In other verses, the Qur'an identifies some personalities as evil with different postures. Finally, we have found some types of evil interactions based on the verses and reliable Islamic narrations.

1. Moral evil and Natural evil as major types of evil

In one hand, moral evil in the form of personal moral evil is commonly associated with the word. Major narratives of evil in the Qur'an reflected this type while indicating the Self (*nafs*) as a vehicle (Qur'an 7:23); (Qur'an 12:53); (Qur'an 79:40-41); (Qur'an 2:109) and (Qur'an 25:21), the free will as a connection to it (Qur'an 12:53), and the Devil as its possible internal agent (Qur'an 4:117); (Qur'an 43:62); (Qur'an 22:53); (Qur'an 16:63) and (Qur'an, 6:43). The Qur'an indicated the moral evil in the form of Iblis' disobedience to God (Qur'an 7:12-18), Satan's whisper (Qur'an 7:23) and (Qur'an 114:4-5), killing the righteous (Qur'an 5:27-31), by committing evil acts to a prophet (Qur'an 12:51-53), practicing sodomy and homosexuality (Qur'an 29:28-29), a feature of the resting place for disbelievers (Qur'an 18:29), adversity, distress, and suffering inflicted by Satan's touch (Qur'an 21:83-84); (Qur'an 38:41-44) and (Qur'an 6:84), self-destruction (Qur'an 85:4-8) and fighting against Allah's message (Qur'an 2:114).

In the other, natural evil in the form of impersonal natural evil (as in the case of natural disasters or illnesses) as a test (Qur'an 21:35) and (Qur'an 2:155). or trial for the believers (through fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives, and crops or through evil and good) or as a warning or punishment for people who commit major sins. The Qur'an indicates these two types of evil in many verses as follows: Qur'an 7:91; Qur'an 54:19-21; Qur'an 15:74-75; Qur'an 54: 33-36; Qur'an 11; Qur'an 54; Qur'an 69:6-8; Qur'an 7:130-132; Qur'an 9:70; Qur'an 7:73; Qur'an 11:61,68,95; Qur'an 14:9; Qur'an 17:59; Qur'an 22:42; Qur'an 25:38; Qur'an 26:141; Qur'an 27:45; Qur'an 29:38; Qur'an 38:13; Qur'an 40:31; Qur'an 41:13,17; Qur'an 50:12; Qur'an 51:43; Qur'an 53:51; Qur'an 54:23; Qur'an 69:4,5 and Qur'an 85:18.

Semantically, the root word for evil is *sharr* (*sh-r-r*) and it is mentioned in thirty different verses of the Qur'an. The respective terms that have been found in the Qur'an are parsimony (*b-kh-l*), going astray (*d-l-l*), rejecting

God (*k-f-r*), idolatry (*sh-r-k*), violating a covenant or treaty (*n-q-d*), turning away, aversion from God (*'-r-d*), slander (*'-f-k*) and transgression (*t-by-y*). The found related verses show the following main acts or deeds falling into its semantic field: transgression (Qur'an 38:55), defamation/Slander (Qur'an 24:11), Breaking the treaties/Failing to keep promises (Qur'an 8:55-56), Miserliness (Qur'an 3:180), to err or go astray (Qur'an 5:60), disbelieving in God (Qur'an 22:72), associating partners with God (*Shirk*) (Qur'an 98:6), turning away (Qur'an 8:22-23). These are some technical meanings of evil.

2. Iblis, Satans, Jinn and Spirit in Relation to Evil

In our research, we come to an established argument in the Qur'an that *Iblis* (the Satan) is the Devil and the chief of evil. This entity is androgynous. This is the definite literal identity of evil. The devil is known under two designations in the Qur'an: *Iblis*, used always as a proper name, and *al-shaytan* (the Satan) used as the Islamic generic designation (Ahamad et al., 2014, p.543). The Holy Qur'an indicates that the word *Iblis* appears 11 times. But it was used 9 times in the storytelling of the creation of Adam as a proper name. *Iblis*, or the chief of evil is an ascetic Jinn that has their features, but incapable of good and limited to evil as the Surah Al-Jinn, revealed in Mecca, confirms (Ahamad et al., 2014, p.542). In the school of Ahlulbayt, there is also this hadith from Imam Ridā (as) that states: The real name of Iblis was Harith (Harth) who was called Azazel, meaning the beloved of God, due to his long worship. After his arrogance and pride, he was called Iblis, and after refusing to prostrate and being expelled from God, he was called Satan. These indicate three core literal identities of evil: *Azazel*, *Iblis*, and *Shaytān*.

The word *Shaytan* is derived from the roots (شطن) and شاطن means "impure and base" while its root *sh/t/n* literally means "to become distant". Its roots appear 88 times in the Qur'an. It appears 70 times in its singular form in some places and 18 times in plural form in other instances.

The word Jinn الجن is mentioned 32 times in Qur'an in 31 verses. The evidence are: Qur'an 6:100; Qur'an 6:112; Qur'an 6:128; Qur'an 6:130; Qur'an 7:38; Qur'an 7:179; Qur'an 11:119; Qur'an 15:27; Qur'an 17:88; Qur'an 18:50; Qur'an 27:17; Qur'an 27:39; Qur'an 32:13; The Qur'an 34:12; Qur'an 34:14; Qur'an 34:41; Qur'an 37:158; Qur'an 41:25; Qur'an 41:29; Qur'an 46:18; Qur'an 46:29; Qur'an 51:56; Qur'an 55:15; Qur'an

55:33; Qur'an 55:39; Qur'an 55:56; Qur'an 55:74; Qur'an 72:1; Qur'an 72:5; Qur'an 72:6; and Qur'an 114:6. There are degrees of strength and specific land destined for the Jinn too. A hadith narrated by al-Hakim and al-Baghawi, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "There are 3 types of Jinn; one type flies through the air, another type consists of snakes and dogs. A third is based in one place but travels about".¹ Al-Shibli said among the places commonly used by the jinn to stay are the village, mountains and the bay². While the usual places visited by them, and sometimes used to as residence are toilet, ocean, market, roofs, landfills and graves.³ Apart from these places, they also liked the quiet place, such as valleys, deserts, soil and rock. Also, according to the narrations, the word Shaytan has been employed to refer to microbes too: For example, the Commander of the Faithful (as) has said: "Do not drink water from the broken portion of the vessel nor from the portion of the handle, for surely, the Shaytan sits upon the handle and the broken portion."⁴

In contrast, spirit is a general literal meaning of Satan and of other unseen entities (Ahamad et al., 2014, p.544). Among the *spirit* which is informed by the Islamic sources are *jinn*, devil and Satan. All evil entities among the jinns are considered as shaytans.

Other entities that relate to evil are also found in reliable Islamic narratives: *Harth*, *Azazil*, *Abū al-Shayātīn*, *Abu al-Jann*, *Shaytān* (faithless, male), *Shaytana* (female demons), *Shayatin* (group of male demons), *Marid* (rebel), *Abkari* (very powerful demons), *'Ifrīt* (very strong). In Islamic sources, the original name of devil is *Azazil*.

3. Evil personalities in the Qur'an, and other postures of evil.

In the Qur'an, some people are illustrated as evil personalities due to their actions and behaviors such as Qabil, the Father of Abraham, Pharaoh, Goliath, Korah, Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, As-Samiri. Beyond in the Qur'an, evil is seen in some other postures as wicked entities (Qur'an 38: 62), as a position (Qur'an 19:75), as an action (Qur'an 99:8), accumulation of large

1. Al-Baghawi, H. M. (1993). *Sharh al-Sunnah*. Vol. 12. Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami.

2. Al-Masruri, Muhammad & al. (2015). The Jinn, Devil and Satan: A Review on Qur'anic Concept. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 6, No 5, p.543.

3. Shihab, M. Q. (2002). *Jin, Iblis, Syaitan, dan Malaikat yang tersembunyi*. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

4. al-Kafi, vol. 6, *Kitab al-Ati'mah wa al-Ashribah*, Chapter Bab al-Awani.

quantities beyond necessity (Qur'an 3:180), as ingratitude (Qur'an 8:55), as opposite of reason (Qur'an 8:22), as a trial (Qur'an 21:35), as a consequence (Qur'an 70:20) and (Qur'an 12:77), as despair (Qur'an 17:83) and (Qur'an 41:49-51), as hastiness (Qur'an 10:11) and (Qur'an 10:11), as a position (Qur'an 19:75) and (Qur'an 17:11). In other verses of The Holy Qur'an, evil equates the hell fire as bad resting-place (Qur'an 22:72) or a deserving punishment (Qur'an 5:60) or disbelief (Qur'an 98:6). In Islamic narratives too, there are individuals and a group of individuals that are labeled as evil personalities too such as Hind, Muawiyah, Yazid son of Mu'awiyah, the descendants of Mu'awiyah, Abu Sufyan, the family of Ziyad, the family of Marwan, the son of Marjanah, the killers of the imams (as), 'Umar the son of Sa'd, and Shimr. By those indications, Allah wants to develop our spiritual personality or spiritual mindset by giving some clear examples to warn us not to become having this kind of personality (Mohsen, 2020).

Also, in this case study, we found that Mutahhari's philosophical definition of evil as Non-existential (*'adami*) and relative can be interpreted as Qur'anic, because all the semantic terms of evil show relativity and relational interpretation. All found terms are evil in relation to something else. All mentioned types of evils portray a connection, a relationship or an interaction sometimes between man and himself, sometimes between man and other human beings, or man and nature, or man and society. Thus, Mutahhari has the right to argue that if evil is evil, (...) *it is in its relational being*.

The Islamic philosophers are right in discovering that evil is evil stems from nonexistence and is understood as the absence of good (*Ozgur, 2017, p.293*). Therefore, the following interactions with evil can be cited:

- 1) Jinn-styled interactions. The key verses are: Qur'an 17:88; Qur'an 18:50; Qur'an 41:29; Qur'an 46:18; Qur'an 34:41; Qur'an 55:33; Qur'an 55:39 and Qur'an 72:6.
- 2) Human-style¹ interactions such the indicated evil personalities or people and *sihr*.



1. Note: The magic of the magician (*wa sehru saheera*) falls into this category.

- 3) Speech-style interactions. The verses are: Qur'an 6:112, 121; Qur'an 7:20; Qur'an 8:11; Qur'an 19:98; Qur'an 20:103, 120; Qur'an 50:16; Qur'an 68:23 and Qur'an 114:4–5.
- 4) Thought-style interactions such as evil eye. The verses are: (Qur'an 68:51-52) and (Qur'an 12:67) as scholars' exegesis (*Tafsīr*) about this verse.
- 5) Behavior-style interactions such as worshippers of Taghut.
- 6) Transaction-style interactions. The verses are: (Qur'an 5:90) and (Qur'an 2:102, 219).
- 7) Environment-style interactions as indicated in Hadith.
- 8) Mindset-style interactions. The verses are: (Qur'an 5:104); (Qur'an 5:105) and (Qur'an 58:19).
- 9) Impurity-style interactions. The verses are: (Qur'an 16:115) and (Qur'an 8:11).
- 10) Dream-style interactions as indicated in in *Tafsīr* (Tabatabai, 1972, discourse 18).
- 11) Demon-style interactions as indicated (Shibli, 1985).

4. How should we understand evil?

This study allows us to clarify that *Iblis*'s materiality or its composition is the same as the jinn, though not all *Jinns* are *Shaytans* or demons. The reality of Satan's body is a suprasensitive materiality which is beyond the reality of the senses, but subject to be burnt in Hell (Qur'an 18:50). The Qur'an also states that Satan is man's enemy in many verses: (Qur'an 28:15); (Qur'an 35:6); (Qur'an 36:60); (Qur'an 43:62); (Qur'an 2:168); (Qur'an 2:208); (Qur'an 6:142); (Qur'an 7:22); (Qur'an 12:5); (Qur'an 17:53); (Qur'an 18:50); and (Qur'an 89:15-16). According to Sayyid *Shirazi's Tafsīr* of surah Yasin, Satan's instigation is accompanied by heart's inclination.

In the Qur'an, The Almighty teaches us about its strategies. Satan (all-shaytans included) hypnotizes and whispers to the heart, in Jinn form and in human form (Qur'an 114:4-6). Satan also causes to forget (Qur'an 12:42), speaks (Qur'an 14:22) and (Qur'an 59:16), makes deeds appear alluring (Qur'an 16:63), sows discord (Qur'an 17:53), interferes (Qur'an 22:52), calls on man (Qur'an 31:21), and uses words (Qur'an 81:25), afflicts hardship and pain (Qur'an 38:41), diverts (Qur'an 43:62), entices (Qur'an 47:25), deceives Qur'an 17:63) and promises delusion, or makes

false promises (Qur'an 2:268) and (Qur'an 4:119-120). Satan or Iblis is not alone. It has allies and an army (Qur'an 4:76).

For instance, if we were to provide an exhaustive definition of Satan, it would look like this: "A Shaytan is an invisible, material, and evil Being in nature among the evil Jinn made of smokeless flames of fire; or can be any beings among mankind that is partisan of Iblis; or can be an entity among animal, that is distant from Allah, impure, arrogant, and corrupt; who is able to take human forms or penetrate their mind and their body in the forms of harmful microbes and penetrate their minds or their hearts in the forms of sounds as to tempt and lead them astray, to transgress, to disbelieve or to despair".

5. Islamic ways to cope with evil

In the Qur'an, Allah states that He made everything which He created most good (Qur'an 32:7). Allah has not created evil. Also, sometimes what is perceived as evil for us can be interpreted as having sub-layers of goodness. That is why Allah says: "Perhaps you dislike something which is good for you and like something which is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know". (Qur'an 2:216). In chapters 113 and 114 of the Holy Qur'an, it is found some practical forms of evil originating from the creatures, from the darkness when it is intense, from witchcraft, from the envier, or from the whisperer. Therefore, evil results from human free choice. It takes the general form of suffering or hardship. However, *suffering and hardship* as explained by Muslim theologians can be mostly interpreted as regards the posture of believers and the interactional situations. An interactional situation can be a testing one, or an evil situation or a suffering situation.

According to the Qur'an, the purpose of evil in terms of moral and natural evil is, mainly for testing or as a warning. Therefore, testing or trial occur to make us understand the judgment of Allah (Qur'an 76:3), or for the sake of guiding (Qur'an 16:53), as a reminder (Qur'an 30:41), or to ward off greater harm later (Qur'an 18:65–82), as a blessing in disguise (Qur'an 2:216), or to reveal peoples' true colors or faith (Qur'an 29:2-3), and to learn lessons from the mistakes of prior nations and people (Qur'an 10:92). To be in a testing situation, one must be capable of either passing the test, failing it or being on equal parity. In numerous verses in the Qur'an, Allah says that our creation is a test, death and life are a test for us, our

possessions and our children are a test (Qur'an 64:15). The Qur'an states: "We have created man from a mixed sperm-drop to put him to a test, then We made him able to hear, able to see". (Qur'an, 76:2). "We have indeed made whatever is on earth as an adornment for it, in order to test which of them is best in deeds." (Qur'an, 18:7). "Everyone has to taste death, and We test you through bad and good (situations) with a trial and to Us, you will be returned". (Qur'an, 21:35) "And among men, there is one who worships Allah (standing) on the verge: so, if some good thing happens to him, he is satisfied with it, and if a trial befalls him, he turns his face back. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the manifest loss". (Qur'an, 22:11) "Do people think that they will be left (at ease) only on there saying, 'We believe and will not be put to any test?' Indeed, We have tested those who were before them. So, Allah will surely know the ones who are truthful, and He will surely know the liars". (Qur'an 29:2-3) Our reactions are a test and others are a test (Qur'an 47:31) and (Qur'an 47:4). Each test comes when we reach a stage according to our capacity. This is the logical base Human beings and the jinn endowed with free will (Qur'an 91:8).

But why did Allah allow Satan to test human beings? Because He wants us to remind ourselves constantly that this existence is not what He intends for us. These tests serve as an instrument to assess the true character or faith of humans. The assumption underlying this perspective is that true human nature is revealed during times of suffering. We were created for a better place. Adam was a test for Satan and the angels. Satan has been a test for Adam and is now a test for his descendants. Consequently, we are always in a testing situation in this world. The Lord says: "We are always testing" (Qur'an 23:30). In view of that, the existence of Satan is a testing tool or a testing period that we can overcome by the grace of Allah in many ways. Therefore, our creation and its purpose, the creation of this world and its end, and the hereafter are interrelated to the explanation of the role of Satan in our lives. Thus, God allows trials into the lives of believers to test their resolve and strengthen their faith (Musharraf, 2017, p.35).

In different places, the Qur'an sheds light on the role or purpose of these tests and trials in human life, but by stages. Allah says that we were also created in stages (Qur'an 71:14). We were guided by stages (Qur'an 25:32) and that we shall travel from stage to stage (Qur'an 4:101) and

(Qur'an 84:19). Allah is certainly assisting us through each stage and on every dimension of our spiritual personality too, because the help of Allah is near (Qur'an 2:214) and He is indeed near (Qur'an 2:186).

From this perspective, we understand that man is on a journey whether he believes it or not. Evil, suffering, hardship, testing or trials are encounters on the road of this peregrination that often derive from his freewill and sometimes from God's system of accountability.

Iblis is the chief of evil but is not unbeatable according to the Qur'an (Qur'an 17: 65) and (Qur'an 15: 40). This entity is not the most ardent enemy either, but the most disguised. Our self is the most ardent enemy. That is why evil is manifested more as human-provoked actions through the domination of his lower self. The greater the battle, the greater the reward. Allah gave us the Holy Qur'an and the infallibles to guide us in this battle so we don't lose our soul. These are the peak of guidance and they provide us with numerous supplications to ward off all types of evil. They are found both from the Qur'an and from the *A'imma* (imams) infinite knowledge of Allah. To overcome Satan in every situation, we should always use our intellect while keeping our horizon on the Qur'an and the infallibles statements to verify where Satan is positioned.

6. Levels of protection from evil in Islamic sources

If evil appears as suffering, then The Qur'an tells us that we must take refuge in Allah. If evil appears as hardship, then The Qur'an also tells us to look for ease, as stated in the verses:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

So, surely with hardship comes ease.

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Surely with that hardship comes more ease (Qur'an 94:5-6)

For an evil situation, the believers should seek refuge in Allah (Qur'an 7:200). And in every testing situation, we should adopt the best behavior to do the best actions based on piety (*taqwá*), on knowledge through independent judgment, and on the ways of the prophet and his progeny.

We summarized three levels of protection from evil in this study: individual, community, and society.

On the individual level, we point out the key Qur'anic supplications such as keep praying on time because delaying it make a believer become Satan's ally according to hadith. There is fasting, giving charity, doing good

deeds, and seeking forgiveness (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 96, Verse 256). We can recite specific verses and chapters of the Qur'an named al-Mu'awadhatayn in particular, according to the narrations of the Imams.

Moreover, we must know our self and fight it as a greater enemy. As the Holy Prophet (pbuh) says: Your greatest enemy is yourself, which is located between your two sides.

In the same vein, Imam Ali (as) teaches the believers by saying: "Self commands you continuously to indulge into evil deeds, therefore, whoever trusted his self -he will deceit him, whoever believed his self -he will destroy him; and whoever is satisfied with his self -he will lead him to face worst kind of disasters.

Watching the self can lead to salvation to the same extent that if we trust it, it will lead us to the fire. Trusting the self provides the most dependable opportunities for devil's entrance.

To do so, Islamic Shia sources provide us with supplications for specific needs:

- a) as to protect from the evil eye;
- b) steps for self-purification and self-refinement;
- c) Du'a Khumayl on Thursday nights, du'a Tawassul on Tuesday nights, *ziyarat 'Ashurā* every day and *ziyārat* Imam Husain (as), *Du'a 'Arafa*, *Du'a Makārim al-Akhlāq* is prescribed.
- d) Practice *Irfān* by understanding the embedded subtle mystical points and spiritual states indicated by the Imams, usage of *Adhan* And *Iqamah*, and Reject being negative or pessimistic.

To protect ourselves from evil in the community, start developing good relationship with our parents and our neighbors. Take care of our families through a pious partner and stick attachment to the Islamic Community (*ummah*) (Qur'an 30: 21), (Kāfi, vol.2, p.146); and (Qur'an, 49:10).

To protect ourselves from evil at the society level, we should fight according to our capacity against bad moral traits in society, by enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong (*Amr bil Ma'rūf wa Nahy an al Munkar*). It is considered an important branch of social education in Islamic teachings. It is highly relevant to society, as interactions and relations between individuals and society will define the future of morals as the basis of religion. This determines the spirit of a nation, either good or bad. A very

common narration from the Holy Prophet urges believers to apply this important branch with our tongue, our strength, and our hearts.

Finally, in this case study, we grasped a significant body of knowledge about evil concepts from one end to the other. This effort (*jihād*) permits us to modify some theories of evil, add more clarification, and find ways to cope with some situations.

First, this study allowed us to re-confirm that evil is not in contradiction with the existence of God. One may interpret good as evil and one may use evil tactics to fight against the virtuous (good). This study has clarified this concept in the ontological and theological fields. The philosophical aspect was already clarified in the Shia school of thought.

Moreover, we identified the semantic field of evil in the Qur'an. We differentiated many types of evil and their vehicles of interaction. We came across evil as entities, as personalities, their characteristics, their forms, and their locations. For instance, as the Qur'anic perspective clearly and correctly identifies the reality of the chief of the Devil, its materiality, and its strategies. This is a unique contribution to the recognition of Islam as a revealed and divine religion. This must be publicized more.

In the worldview of the Qur'an, it is confirmed that evil is the result of human free will through willpower and authority. Evil must be interpreted as the absence of good in the general sense, and as suffering or trial in a practical sense, or as personal (moral evil) or impersonal (natural evil). Evil can not be Islamically interpreted as a test.

It appears from the analysis that a response to moral evil is necessary for human growth and perfection because it tests us to unleash our perfection potential in all areas. Accepting evil as a possible consequence of human actions and thoughts, it becomes a part of our trial.

As we have been given free choice, evil may arise as a result of its exercise consciously. It may arise from false suggestions or insinuations of the devil, as we are permeable to those suggestions. Evil may also appear as an instrument for testing the believers, its form is related to our mind's interpretation. Finally, when it appears to facilitate our spiritual advancement, it challenges our discipline and our consistency in this journey.

To deal with it, the prophet (pbuh) and the Imams (as) provided us with the hint and the means for good morals and for directing our goal spiritual

to be the witness of the utmost presence and manifestations of Allah the Almighty in an infinite and always-renewed way in paradise.

At last, maybe we should care of our spiritual fitness more than our body fitness. Because in the light of the knowledge we have found, spiritual fitness brings certainty to the fate of our body in the holistic sense while the contrary is only a possibility.

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