



Research Paper

Good and Evil and Human Understanding (Criticism of human knowledge in understanding good and evil based on the Quran and Sunnah)

Ali Alahbedashti*¹ 

¹ Professor of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Department of Theology, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

*Corresponding Author: Ali Alahbedashti

Address: Department of Theology, University of Qom, Qom, Iran Email: alibedashti@gmail.com


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Abstract

We humans encounter various issues daily, many of which we describe as good or evil. Sometimes, one matter is considered good by some and evil by others, raising a fundamental question: on what rational or ethical basis are these judgments made? Is the foundation of our judgment human nature? While all humans share a common nature and agree on condemning vices like oppression and lying, as well as praising virtues like justice and truth, disagreements still arise, especially in cases like war. Some view war as good, while others see it as evil. This contradiction suggests that human reason alone may not accurately determine good and evil. In complex and contentious matters, a higher form of reason is needed—one beyond individual human reason. Such reason and knowledge are universal, originating from a divine source. The Qur'an also highlights this issue, urging believers to reconsider the sources and methods of recognizing good and evil, which has been a point of contention between atheistic philosophers and theists. It advises not to rely solely on human reason, which often associates good and evil with worldly benefit or harm. The author argues that based on a monotheistic worldview; some matters are beyond human capacity to fully discern. Human reason, influenced by personal desires, can deviate from justice. Hence, to distinguish true good and evil, divine guidance is required. The divine prophets, whose knowledge comes from revelation, are the only ones who can accurately define the truth of good and evil.

Extended Abstract

We humans encounter various issues daily, many of which we judge and categorize as good or evil. Often, one matter is considered good by some and evil by others. The fundamental question is: on what basis or standard is our judgment built, leading to disagreements in our understanding of good and evil? Is our judgment based on human nature and reason? While we all share a common nature and reason, it is this very shared nature and human reason that enables us to have common ground in recognizing the good or evil and the beauty or ugliness of many natural and ethical matters. We all consider floods, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes as evil, and in ethical matters, we regard oppression, lying, and betrayal as evil and ugly, while justice, truth, and fairness are seen as good

and virtuous. However, in certain issues like war and peace, the development of life, and the pursuit of personal or national interests, we disagree. Some view these actions as good, while others, if they harm others, consider them evil and ugly; yet both groups consider themselves wise and intelligent. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider the method and source of recognizing good and evil, which has been the subject of dispute between atheistic philosophers and theologians. We should not rely solely on human reason, which bases the concept of good and evil on worldly benefit or harm. The author, in this article, based on a monotheistic worldview and using both rational and narrational methods (drawing on Qur'anic and prophetic evidence), argues that in matters of dispute, the ruling reason must be a higher and more complete reason than individual reasoning, so that judgments are made based on more scholarly and just criteria. This understanding will help us realize that human comprehension of good and evil is not complete on its own. Hence, we must turn to a higher reason and knowledge, which comes from the Almighty God and His prophets, whose knowledge is derived from divine revelation.

