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تأليف

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Evil question

A calm discussion between faith and atheism

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The Question

The problem of the existence of evil in the world is one of the most prominent and influential issues in atheistic philosophy. Many atheist and skeptic philosophers throughout history have viewed the existence of evil as a significant challenge or contradiction for believers concerning the existence of God. They argue that this problem cannot be dismissed. David Hume states: "I apologize to the honorable reader for presenting these heinous thoughts about God Almighty, and we seek refuge in God from them."

The ancient question posed by Epicurus remains unanswered: "Does He wish to prevent evil but is unable? Then He is impotent. Is He able but unwilling? Then He is malevolent. Is He both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?"¹

These philosophers argue that it is illogical to reconcile two beliefs: the belief in the existence of Allah and the perfection of His attributes, and the belief in the existence of evil in the world. H.J. McCloskey asserts:

"Evil is a problem for the believer because there is a contradiction between the fact of the existence of evil on the one hand and belief in the perfection and omnipotence of God on the other."²

J.L. Mackie states:

"The problem of evil, as I will use the term here, is a problem only for those who believe in the existence of an omnipotent and

¹ David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, pt.10.

² H. J. McCloskey, God and Evil, Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 39. (Apr., 1960), p. 97.

wholly good God. It is a logical problem of reconciling a number of beliefs, not a scientific problem that can be solved through observation or a practical problem that can be addressed by a decision or practical action."³

Other atheist philosophers employ the same reasoning. From their perspective, belief in the existence of Allah and the existence of evil involves a contradiction, though this contradiction is not direct. It requires a set of premises that can be outlined as follows:

- (1) **God exists.**
- (2) **God is omnipotent.**
- (3) **God is omniscient.**
- (4) **God is omnibenevolent/wholly good.**
- (5) **Evil exists.**

These five premises are consistent with the beliefs held by adherents of various religions. Atheist theorists argue that these premises are contradictory. However, a cursory examination reveals that they are not inherently contradictory. To demonstrate the contradiction, additional premises must be introduced⁴. Any additional premise must meet one of three criteria⁵:

- (1) It must be a fact.**

³ J. L. Mackie, *Evil and Omnipotence*, *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 64, No. 254. (Apr., 1955), p. 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds*, Cornell University Press. (1975), p. 117.

(2) It must be part of the believer's faith, as one cannot argue with the believer based on something they do not accept or believe to be true.

(3) It must be a necessary consequence of the believer's faith, even if the believer does not directly acknowledge it, but it is logically binding.

In this regard, J. L. Mackie proposes two additional premises to highlight the contradiction⁶:

(6) Good is the opposite of evil, such that good eliminates evil whenever it is within its power.

(7) There is nothing that the Omnipotent is unable to do.

Here, the contradiction is evident: if Allah is all-good and eliminates evil by His power, and at the same time, nothing is beyond His capability, then the inevitable result is the nonexistence of evil. This directly contradicts premise (5), which states that evil exists.

However, believers do not accept premises (6) and (7) as Mackie proposes them. Premise (7), which claims that there is nothing Allah is unable to do, does not accurately reflect the believer's understanding. According to believers, the Allah Almighty can do anything that is rationally possible, but rational impossibilities or inherently contradictory things are not within Allah's powers. For example, Allah cannot kill Himself or create a being that is simultaneously alive and dead in the same respect. Such things are impossible not because of a limitation in Allah's power, but because they contain inherent contradictions that make their existence logically inconceivable.

Moreover, premise (6) — that a wholly good person would eliminate all evil whenever possible — does not align with reality. For instance, a good doctor may consider amputating a limb to be an evil act, but he performs it

⁶ J. L. Mackie, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

to achieve a greater good, which is saving the patient's life. A good person committing certain evils to achieve a greater good does not diminish their goodness but rather affirms it, provided the outcome of the good outweighs the evil.

Some may object to comparing Allah to a doctor, arguing that Allah could achieve good without any evil. However, this discussion focuses on the definition of a good person and whether they can commit or allow evil. We aim to demonstrate that a good person, in general, can commit or allow evil to achieve a greater good.

The conclusion is that a good person may perform an act involving both good and evil, provided the good is significantly greater, or there is a causal relationship between the good and the evil, such that the evil leads to a greater good.

An objection may arise suggesting that while an incapable person might only achieve good by causing some necessary evil, Allah Almighty does not have this limitation or compulsion.

This objection relies on combining premises (6) and (7). However, the believer can respond as follows: (i) The good that results from or is accompanied by a small amount of evil is greater and more significant than unalloyed good; (ii) If this minor evil did not occur, much good would be lost that cannot be achieved otherwise; (iii) If it is impossible to separate good and evil in certain processes, whether due to a causal or correlational relationship between them, then the occurrence of evil is justified by a greater purpose, which is the attainment of a greater good.

If atheists argue that Allah's omnipotence should enable the attainment of good without the necessity of evil, the response is **that if this good logically and rationally requires the occurrence of evil, and the former cannot be achieved without the latter, and if Allah's actions must align with reason and logic, then the existence of evil in the world becomes**

justifiable on this basis, provided that the overall good in the world outweighs the evil.

This is a brief outline of the question of evil and its response. We will begin to deconstruct the question and provide detailed answers in the following chapters, so stay with us!

Exploring the Essence of the Question

Every living being possesses a moral instinct that enables them to distinguish between good and evil, between praiseworthy and reprehensible acts, and to assess human behavior, determining whether it aligns with societal norms or deviates from them. This moral instinct serves as a guiding force throughout one's life and in various circumstances and actions. However, it may occasionally diminish due to external pressures, such as societal influences, or internal factors, such as the allure of desires or following personal whims. Nonetheless, even amidst such influences, individuals inherently recognize when they are transgressing their moral compass, deeply rooted within their nature. **Despite any deviations, individuals acknowledge, at their core, an affinity for goodness and a reverence for virtue, even if they struggle to exhibit corresponding behaviors.** It is undeniable that as ordinary humans, we are repulsed by and disdainful of deviant behaviors, although we may occasionally succumb to them. We strive to rectify our personal shortcomings, exerting considerable effort to amend our mistakes, and we experience remorse for any wrongdoing. Often, we attempt to rationalize these behaviors and actions as a form of psychological defense mechanism, recognizing within ourselves a departure from truth, goodness, and righteousness.

This instinct is known in modern philosophy as the Moral Sense, and the movement that embraces it is called the Moral Sense Movement⁷.

⁷ Dr. Tawfiq Al-Tawil, "Falsafat Al-Akhlaq, Nash'atha waa Tatawurha" (The Philosophy of Ethics: Its Origins and Development), 4th ed., Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, 1979, p. 339.

Proponents of this movement assert that the Moral Sense is an inherent force individuals are born with, enabling them to discern whether an act is good or bad and to make judgments about these actions. By its very nature, the Moral Sense differentiates between good and evil, driving individuals to do good and avoid evil without expecting any reward, whether it be a benefit or harm, pleasure or pain, happiness or misery. This sense is intrinsic to human nature; it weakens with neglect but strengthens with practice, thriving in a positive environment and withering in a corrupt one.

Thus, the followers of this movement trace the laws of morality back to this inherent sense. A person who respects this sense acts as an impartial judge when evaluating their actions and the actions of others. Accordingly, the human soul naturally yearns for good and is repelled by evil, making this movement widely embraced by the general public.

The perception of good and evil among the general populace is entirely independent of personal desires, interests, or benefits. Humans inherently perceive good and evil through their nature and inner instinct, and the judgments made by this instinct require no external proof or analysis⁸.

The existence of this moral instinct, or moral sense, presents a compelling argument against atheism. If humans were merely the product of pure matter, blind nature, and random Darwinian processes, there would be no basis for morality within them. Morality is a spiritual, abstract concept that transcends material nature and physical needs, often opposing and even subduing them. Humans may sacrifice themselves, reject certain pleasures, or resist fulfilling their desires for the sake of others, actions that contradict the notion of survival of the fittest and the pursuit of the greatest benefit. This suggests that atheism cannot

⁸ Ibid., p. 340.

adequately explain the existence of morality and the moral instinct, including the awareness of good and evil. These are spiritual, non-material concepts that cannot be justified within an atheistic framework. Their existence implies the presence of a higher power that instilled them in human nature and taught them to humans. This higher power is our Lord, who created humanity and imparted knowledge to them.

My purpose here is not to elaborate on the argument from moral instinct to the existence of the Creator, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), as I have discussed it extensively in my book on atheism⁹. Instead, my aim is to highlight the paradox of those who use the problem of evil to argue against the existence of Allah. Their very awareness of evil necessitates an ontological explanation for this awareness.

In addressing this topic, it is essential to understand that the Prophet's (PBUH) hadith, **[“Every child is born with a true faith of Islam \(i.e., to worship none but Allah Alone\),”](#)**¹⁰ signifies that newborns are born with the innate disposition towards submission to the divine will, often referred to as the fitrah, which inclines them towards the faith of Islam. However, this does not imply that they emerge from the womb with knowledge or recognition of the religion of Islam. As Allah, the Most High and Blessed, states, **[“And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you hearing, sight, and intellect so perhaps you would be thankful.”](#)**¹¹ Rather, the hadith emphasizes that the innate nature (fitrah) of a newborn inclines them towards recognizing

⁹ Dr. Hesham Azmi, “Al-Elhad Lilmubtadein, Dalilak Al-Mukhtasar fi Hiwar bayn Al-Iman waa Al-Elhad” (Atheism for Beginners: Your Brief Guide to the Dialogue between Faith and Atheism), 5th ed., Baraheen Center, 2020, p. 68.

¹⁰ Both Al-Bukhari (1385) and Muslim (2658) recorded this Hadith.

¹¹ Surah An-Nahl, 78.

truth and embracing goodness. This inherent disposition enables the newborn to recognize truth and aspire towards goodness.

Therefore, a sound fitrah serves as evidence for the existence of the Creator, as it leads one to acknowledge His Lordship, since knowing Him is inherently good. The inherent nature then manifest gradually, corresponding to the child's readiness to acquire various types of knowledge. A person is born with a natural inclination to love their Creator, recognizing Him as the source of all goodness, and with an instinct to turn to Him in worship and supplication. If left undisturbed, without external influences that might corrupt or alter their innate nature, a child would remain steadfast in their love for the Creator and in their devotion to Him alone. Just as a child naturally seeks his mother's breast for breastfeeding, driven by an innate instinct, similarly, their inclination towards loving what aligns with their nature and rejecting what is harmful is inherent. This inclination is not learned from a teacher or guide; rather, it is a spontaneous response to the call of their innate instinct, designed by Allah to love and recognize everything that is beneficial. Allah (SWT) elucidates this point, stating, "He answered, 'Our Lord is the One Who has given everything its 'distinctive' form, then guided 'it'.'" ¹² Allah, the Most high, also states, "Who created and 'perfectly' fashioned 'all', * and Who ordained precisely and inspired accordingly," ¹³ Allah, Blessed Is He And Most High, created humans with an inherent knowledge of what is beneficial to them and instilled within them a love for such things. However, the details of this knowledge are gradually acquired by humans as they gain knowledge and information. Similar to how healthy bodies can be corrupted by exposure to diseases and illnesses, innate instincts can also be influenced by external factors that

¹² Surah Taha, 50.

¹³ Surah Al-A'la, 2-3.

divert them from their original state of purity. This occurs when individuals are exposed to influences that detract from the perfection of their innate instincts.

The acceptance of truth and goodness by innate disposition does not depend on external conditions or factors. Instead, it relies on the absence of opposition and corrupt doubts that could compromise it. External reminders or alerts can help if the innate disposition forgets or gets distracted, and they can push it towards beneficial pursuits if it is capable of seeking them. For instance, when a hungry or thirsty person is presented with various types of food and drink, or when an adult is addressed with sexual intercourse, it strongly moves them and awakens their latent desires for food, drink, and intimacy. Addressing these people with such stimuli does not create a desire that was previously nonexistent; it simply activates the existing desire within them. Similarly, external factors that influence or complete the innate disposition do not create the inherent feelings for truth, love, and knowledge of goodness. Rather, they serve to remind the innate disposition of its original nature, push it towards what is beneficial, alert it to potential obstacles, and help remove any impediments. Therefore, Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), described the completion of innate disposition as remembrance¹⁴, mention, and reminder¹⁵, and referred to His Messenger as a reminder¹⁶. This is the role of the divine laws brought by the Messengers: they command good and forbid evil, permit good things and prohibit bad things, establish the truth, and eliminate falsehood. All of these directives are

¹⁴ Surah Az-Zumar: AYAT 21.

¹⁵ Surah Al-Muzzammil: AYAT 19.

¹⁶ Surah Al-Ghashiyah: AYAT 21.

rooted in the innate disposition. The Messengers are tasked with completing their details and clarifying their ambiguities. Similarly, the reward and punishment in the Hereafter do not result solely from the innate disposition. It is necessary to send Messengers as bearers of good tidings and warnings. The reward is for following the Messengers, and the punishment is for denying them, not for the innate disposition alone. The fulfillment of the innate disposition's objective—knowing and acknowledging the Lord—does not depend on a condition, as it exists potentially within. Rather, it depends on the absence of impediments and opposition. For this reason, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) did not mention a condition for the fulfillment of the innate disposition's objective but instead identified what prevents it. He (PBUH) stated: **"... and his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity, or Magianism ..."**. Changing the innate disposition by converting to another religion depends on an external condition, namely the actions of the parents towards their children. However, the innate disposition's objective of knowing and loving Allah does not depend on any condition. When impediments and opposition are absent, the potential within the innate disposition moves to action when the motive is present. This does not contradict the fact that what completes the innate disposition depends on the teachings of the Messengers. They serve as reminders and warnings on one hand, and as sources of clarification and detail on the other hand¹⁷.

The fact that the soul is innately inclined to love goodness and desire truth does not mean it is infallible in determining the meaning of good and evil. Allah has inspired souls to differentiate between right and wrong; however, the success of the soul and its purification, or its lack thereof, is

¹⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, "Darau' Ta'arud Al-Aql waa An-Naql" (Warding off the Conflict of Reason and Transmission), Vol. 4, pp. 94-124; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifa' al-'Aleel*, pp. 381-410.

due to a person's own choice and insight into the consequences of their actions.

While the innate disposition naturally tends toward goodness and truth, it does not compel a person to behave in a certain way, nor does it carry the meaning of compulsion and inevitability. It is crucial to distinguish between the moral aspect of innate disposition and the set of lower instincts in man. The objective of the innate disposition is different from these instincts. The innate disposition pushes a person to elevate their spirit, purify their soul, and develop their good side. In contrast, instincts drive a person to satisfy their material needs. The former elevates a person spiritually and morally, while the latter can lower them to behaviors that may place them among animals, may Allah honor you. This conflict between moral nature and base instincts is a form of trial and testing that Allah has decreed for us in this worldly life. We will discuss this further at the appropriate time later in the book, Allah willing.

It is important to state that proving the existence of the innate disposition does not make it an independent basis for reward and punishment in the afterlife. This is dependent on the messengers delivering the divine message. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims: *"And We would never punish 'a people' until We have sent a messenger 'to warn them'."*¹⁸

We conclude that merely raising the question of the existence of evil requires us to pause and reflect deeply:

Where does the human distinction between good and evil originate?

How did we come to understand the concept of good?

Doesn't this indicate the inherent presence of goodness in our innate disposition,

¹⁸ Surah Al-Isra: AYAT 15.

suggesting that one who has the love of goodness instilled in them cannot be evil?

These reflections and questions address the meaning, significance, and foundations of evil. In the subsequent chapters, we will deconstruct this question into its fundamental elements, examining each aspect step by step.

Between the Existence of Allah and the Existence of Evil

Does the existence of evil negate the existence of the Creator?

This is a question worth pondering. Consider that tanks, bombs, and other weapons are used for evil, killing, and destruction. Does this mean they do not have a creator?

Absolutely not!

Why?

Because the purpose for which something is used is separate from the fact of its creation. The existence of a created thing indicates the existence of its creator. Similarly, the existence of the Creator is affirmed by the existence of His creations, regardless of any signs or evidence that might suggest otherwise, and regardless of the purpose behind their creation.

Let us also ask: **If the existence of evil negates the existence of Allah, does the existence of good prove the existence of Allah?**

Or to rephrase the question:

If, from the atheist's perspective, the existence of evil logically contradicts the existence of Allah, how can we explain the dazzling manifestations of goodness in the universe and creatures? The evidence of divine providence in living beings, and the precise control and creation evident in physical forces and natural laws, attest to the existence of an All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Aware, All-Merciful, and All-Generous Creator. The multiplicity, variety, richness, and abundance of these evidences make their

indication of this great Creator overwhelmingly clear, reaching the highest levels of absolute, decisive, and firm certainty that cannot be disputed. If, after acknowledging this, a problem such as the existence of some evils arises, the rational, cognitive, and methodological approach is to view it as a mere suspicion that needs addressing, not as proof or evidence to deny the existence of the Creator.

The method of the wise is to interpret ambiguous verses in light of the explicit ones, and to understand facts and events based on the strongest evidence and proofs, not the other way around. It is a serious methodological flaw to let the problem become the decisive factor while the certain and definitive origin becomes ambiguous.

Even if the mind cannot solve the problem or answer the question of evil, this inability is not a justification for completely denying the existence of Allah and rejecting what is certain and definitive. Such an approach contradicts rational thinking and denies fundamental truths. Instead, the correct approach is to rely on the explicit foundational verses and suspend judgment on ambiguous or problematic matters. This is why the Qur'an criticizes the infidels for this methodological flaw in thinking. As Allah, the Most High and Blessed, said: "In fact, they 'hastily' rejected the Book without comprehending it and before the fulfilment of its warnings."¹⁹ A person abandoning what is known with certainty, which is supported by the strongest proofs and evidence, in favor of what is problematic and unknown, is essentially fleeing from knowledge and choosing ignorance. They are moving from the explicit to the ambiguous, from truth to misguidance, and from certainty to doubt. Doubt can never replace the truth.

¹⁹ Surah Yunus: AYAT 39.

We all know the distinction between explicit and ambiguous verses in the revelation. In Surah Ali 'Imran: "He is the One Who has revealed to you 'O Prophet' the Book, of which some verses are precise—they are the foundation of the Book—while others are elusive.¹ Those with deviant hearts follow the elusive verses seeking 'to spread' doubt through their 'false' interpretations—but none grasps their 'full' meaning except Allah. As for those well-grounded in knowledge, they say, "We believe in this 'Quran'—it is all from our Lord." But none will be mindful 'of this' except people of reason."²⁰ The Quran contains explicit verses, which are the foundation of the book, and others that are ambiguous. What is meant by explicit and ambiguous? An explicit verse is one that has only one clear meaning, such as "He has never had offspring, nor was He born."²¹ It is known that Allah, the Most High, has no son. Another verse states: "Say, 'O Prophet,' 'If the Most Compassionate 'really' had offspring, I would be the first worshipper.'"²² Does this mean that Allah, the Most High, has a son? This ambiguous verse has two potential meanings: either it asserts that Allah, the Most High, has no son, and thus one should worship none but Allah; or it suggests that if it were proven that Allah had a son, then one would be the first to worship Him. This ambiguity arises because the verse can be interpreted in two ways: one implying He has a son, and the other implying He does not. So, how do we understand the intended meaning of an ambiguous verse? We refer it back to the explicit verse: "He has never had offspring, nor was He born." The explicit verse clearly states that He did not beget, so the matter is settled. The meaning of the verse in Surah Az-Zukhruf is that the Most Gracious, the Most High, has no son, and therefore one should not associate anything with Him. This is understood as a conditional statement expressing an impossibility: if it were possible for Allah to have a son, then one would

²⁰ Surah Ali 'Imran: AYAT 7.

²¹ Surah Al-Ikhlās AYAT 3.

²² Surah Az-Zukhruf AYAT 81.

not worship anyone but Allah, [the Most High](#). At-Tabari, [may Allah have mercy on him](#), explained it as follows:

"Say, O Muhammad, to the polytheists of your people who claim that the angels are daughters of Allah: If the Most Gracious had a son, then I would be the first of you to worship Him. But He has no son, so I worship Him and believe that He has no son, and it is not appropriate for Him to have one."²³

There is another interpretation of the verse, which is that the ["if"](#) signifies negation and denial. Thus, its meaning is: the Most Gracious has no son, and I worship Him and believe that He has no son. This usage is found in the speech of the Arabs. Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir discussed various interpretations, but they favored the interpretation that it expresses a conditional statement and its consequence.

Just as there are explicit and ambiguous verses in the revelation, there are explicit and ambiguous elements in the universe. We have clear signs in the universe that encompass precision, mastery, accuracy, and proof and prove that the universe has a Creator who encompasses and manages it. This is evident in the beautiful design and perfection of the universe, characterized by attributes such as knowledge, wisdom, and power. This is reflected in numerous elements in the universe: the heavens and the earth, land and sea, and in the creation of humans, beasts, animals, birds, and insects. Many of these elements indicate that the universe has a Creator, characterized by perfection and wisdom, who does not act in vain but creates with reason and purpose. On the other hand, there are ambiguous elements in the universe whose intended purposes we do not understand. Why do earthquakes occur? Why does a certain person die? Why are there

²³ Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, "Jami' al-Bayan" (Evidence Collector), Dar al-Hijr, 1st ed., 2001, vol. 20, p. 557.

wars, poverty, hunger, disasters, and floods? Why, why, and why? These are matters for which we do not know the wisdom behind them, leading to two possible interpretations: either they have a purpose we do not know, or they have no purpose at all. The believing mindset interprets the ambiguous based on the explicit. These ambiguous elements in the universe either have a purpose or do not, but we have explicit evidence in the universe indicating that there is a purpose in creation. Therefore, we interpret the ambiguous in light of the explicit. The interpretation of the ambiguous is that it has a purpose, but our limited knowledge and wisdom prevent us from understanding it compared to Allah's absolute knowledge and vast wisdom. The believing mindset interprets the ambiguous based on the explicit and says: [“We believe in this ‘Quran’—it is all from our Lord,”](#) thus maintaining consistency without contradiction or conflict. In contrast, atheists interpret the ambiguous based on their assumptions; They [“follow the elusive verses seeking ‘to spread’ doubt through their ‘false’ interpretations...”](#) Then, they deny the explicit evidence.

Moreover, how does the atheist explain the reason for the existence of goodness in the world? Consider all these blessings and bounties that we enjoy, which are abundant and harnessed for our comfort and happiness—from the composition of the atom to our location within the galaxy. Then look at the millions of blessings in the human body and the precise proportions of glucose, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, iron, zinc, etc., in addition to hundreds of enzymes, hormones, and vital compounds in the blood, tissues, and cells. All of this works in harmony, precision, and perfection. Blessed be Allah, the best of creators!

How can anyone with a sound innate disposition think otherwise, when this entire existence testifies to Allah's wisdom and His perfect care for His creation? The wisdom, interests, benefits, desired goals, and good consequences found in His creations are greater than can be described or

confined by the mind. It is sufficient for a person to contemplate themselves, their creation, their organs and their benefits, their powers, their qualities, and their conditions. Even if one spent their entire life researching, they would not fully comprehend all the wisdom and benefits contained in their creation in detail. Despite the great manifestation and clarity of this divine wisdom, the ungrateful find ways to deny it. This is the way of the unjust and ignorant souls, just as they deny the existence of the Creator, Blessed Is He And Most High, despite the overwhelming evidence of His signs and Lordship encompassing all that exists. Their denial has reached the point of stubborn rejection. This is not surprising, for you may find a person immersed in blessings from every side, yet they complain about their condition and are discontented, perhaps even denying the blessing! The misguidance and error of souls are limitless, especially the unjust and ignorant ones.

Therefore, atheism is in a real existential dilemma in the face of this observed reality. The world is full of goodness and blessings, carrying within its appearance and essence meanings of favor, grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness, and care. Perhaps this is why we are averse to evil incidents, viewing them as departures from the natural order, aversions, and abnormalities. We see goodness as inherent in existence and evil as incidental, accidental, and temporary. We consider the existence of evil a significant violation of the natural state of goodness in the world. Atheism cannot find a rational explanation for this perception.

Between The Knowledge of Allah and the Existence of Evil

Our belief in Allah is that He, [the Most High](#), knew with His eternal, first, and foremost knowledge what His creation would do before He created them. Allah, Blessed Is He And Most High, said, [“Surely Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things,”](#)²⁴ meaning He was and will always be, glory be to Him. The phrase [“has”](#) indicates that His knowledge is not an accident after things have occurred but rather precedes their existence. Allah knew what was, what will be, and what would have been if it had occurred, and how it would be. He knew what had happened, when what would happen would happen, and He knew the matter that had not happened and how it would be if it did happen, including its characteristics and conditions.

Allah knew what was and what will be, but this first knowledge, or the knowledge prior to the occurrence of the actions of the servants, does not hold Allah accountable for the servants. He only holds them accountable for the actions they did by their own choice, and He does not punish them for their actions before they occur. He knew that the disbelievers would disbelieve, kill the believers, and fight the messengers, yet He did not bring down punishment upon them before they disbelieved or before He sent messengers to them. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims, [“And We would never punish ‘a people’ until We have sent a messenger ‘to warn them’.”](#)²⁵ Allah, the

²⁴ Surah An-Nisa: AYAT 32.

²⁵ Surah Al-Isra: AYAT 15.

Most High and Blessed, did not destroy a nation nor punish a people except after they lied, disbelieved, and were unjust, as He says, “Whenever We intend to destroy a society, We command its elite ‘to obey Allah’ but they act rebelliously in it. So the decree ‘of punishment’ is justified, and We destroy it utterly.”²⁶ So when does the decree of punishment become justified? And when did Allah’s prior knowledge come true regarding them?

The answer is: when they act rebelliously in it!

The prior knowledge that someone will disobey, disbelieve, commit sin, or be unjust is not something for which Allah, the Most High and Blessed, will hold anyone accountable. Allah does not punish someone for what they might have done if given certain circumstances, nor does He hold them accountable in advance for hypothetical actions. Thus, Allah does not hold them accountable for what has not happened.

For instance, those who have not received the call of a Messenger—Allah knows what they would have done if the call had come to them. Despite this, He will test them on the Day of Resurrection, and He will not punish them for what He knew they would have done if the Messenger had come to them. The same applies to children: Allah knows best what they would have done, but this does not mean that He holds them accountable for His knowledge of what they would have done if they had grown up. Hence, what we confirm is that Allah knows best what they would have done, not that He will hold them accountable for that prior knowledge.

From the above, we understand Allah’s saying: “We will certainly test you ‘believers’ until We prove those of you who ‘truly’ struggle ‘in Allah’s cause’ and remain steadfast, and reveal how you conduct yourselves,”²⁷ because some people may think that Allah does not know until He tests them. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, knew who would struggle

²⁶ Surah Al-Isra: AYAT 16.

²⁷ Surah Muhammad: AYAT 31.

and who would remain steadfast, but He does not hold them accountable based on this knowledge alone. Rather, scholars interpret His saying: “until We prove,” as: indicating knowledge for which He holds them accountable, meaning He knows that it has occurred after His prior knowledge that it would occur. It moves from knowledge of the unseen to knowledge of testimony. Allah’s knowledge before the existence of a thing and the occurrence of an event is knowledge of the unseen, and His knowledge after its occurrence is knowledge of testimony. As for human beings, their knowledge is limited to what comes after the occurrence; before it occurs, it is conjecture, not knowledge. In contrast, Allah’s knowledge is certain and complete both before and after an event occurs. On which of these two types of knowledge is judgment based? It is based on the knowledge that comes after the occurrence of the action, which is knowledge of testimony.

Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims: “We alternate these days of victory and defeat among people so that Allah may reveal the true believers, choose martyrs from among you—and Allah does not like the wrongdoers.”²⁸ This means that He may reveal and know the true believers, a knowledge based on which He holds them accountable. Ibn Abbas interpreted His saying, “so that Allah may reveal,” as “so that He may see,”²⁹ which aligns with the concept of knowledge of testimony. Allah, glory be to Him, knows what has not yet happened before it happens. However, He says, “until We prove those of you who truly struggle in Allah’s cause and remain steadfast,” meaning: He knows who the believers are, who remain patient, and who struggle, not because He does not know it before it happens, but because He holds the servants accountable for that knowledge after it happens.

²⁸ Surah Ali 'Imran: AYAT 140.

²⁹ Ibn Kathir, “Tafseer Al-Qur’an Al-Azim” (Interpretation of the Great Qur’an), Dar Taybah, 2nd Ed., 1999, Vol. 2, p. 127.

In conclusion, the existence of evil in the world is linked to Allah's knowledge, as He, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), is All-Knowing and All-Aware of both details and generalities. He knows the ultimate outcomes of all things. Therefore, He knows that these evils are outweighed by good and ultimately lead to good. They are not free evil devoid of good; rather, there is more good in them than evil. Based on His absolute, all-encompassing knowledge, He, [Blessed Is He](#), determines what is good and what is evil. This determination is inherently based on His perfect knowledge.

Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims, "[And indeed, We chose the Israelites knowingly above the others,](#)"³⁰ and Allah also says, "[And so` Allah left them to stray knowingly.](#)"³¹ This determination from Him, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), includes both causes and results.

Having discussed the occurrence of evils within the framework of Allah's all-encompassing knowledge, we must ask: Is Allah not capable of preventing evil, removing it, and eradicating it entirely from the world, instead of allowing it to coexist with good? This will be the focus of the next chapter.

³⁰ Surah Ad-Dukhan: AYAT 32.

³¹ Surah Al-Jathiyah: AYAT 23.

Between The Power of Allah and the Existence of Evil

One of the most important aspects of the question of evil is the issue of Allah's power and its relationship to the existence of evil in the world. Allah, Blessed Is He And Most High, is capable of everything, His power is absolute, and nothing is beyond His reach. At the same time, He loves good and does not love evil. How, then, can we reconcile this with the existence of evil in the world, given that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, is able to erase, remove, prevent, and eliminate it entirely?

The traditional answer posits that evil may occur from a lover of good to achieve a greater benefit, similar to how a doctor administers bitter medicine or performs painful procedures to bring about healing and wellness. These limited evils are tolerated to obtain a greater good (bearing in mind that Allah's example is the highest and most perfect).

Here arises a significant atheistic objection: Isn't Allah capable, with His absolute power, of achieving good without any evil occurring?!

We acknowledge Allah's ability to create a world completely devoid of evil, as is the case with the world of angels, which is characterized by free good and no evil. However, there is a greater good that can be achieved, albeit with some incidental evil. To understand this point clearly, we can consider the "Free Will Defense" posited by the Protestant philosopher Alvin Plantinga. According to Plantinga, Allah wanted to create beings with free will, allowing them to establish the fullest types of relationships with Him and with each other. With free will, the deepest aspects of goodness and moral responsibility can exist. Thus, in order for Allah to create a world containing these profound aspects of goodness, it was necessary to endow humans with the ability to choose freely. This freedom, however, entails the possibility

of humans making terrible mistakes and misusing their freedom in destructive ways. The nature of freedom is such that it cannot be compelled to always choose good, nor can it be guaranteed to do so. Therefore, the freedom of these beings is essential to realize great and powerful aspects of goodness that justify Allah's creation, despite the inherent risk of committing evils. In essence, the Free Will Defense argues that it is impossible for Allah to create a world with the aspects of goodness we find without also containing evils³².

This argument from Plantinga is partly consistent with our Islamic belief. Allah, **Blessed is He**, desired to create beings who would worship Him despite the potential for corruption and sin, as expressed in Surah Al-Baqarah: **"Remember when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth.' They asked 'Allah', 'Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?' Allah responded, 'I know what you do not know.'"**³³ The angels, who worshipped Allah, **the Most High and Blessed**, unceasingly, were perplexed by Allah's decision to create a new being capable of causing corruption and bloodshed on earth! **They questioned why Allah would create humans when the angels were already engaged in constant worship, glorification, praise, and sanctification of Him.** The answer revealed to them highlighted the limitations of their knowledge and wisdom compared to Allah's infinite understanding.

Ibn Kathir, in his interpretation of this verse, explained:

"Meaning: I am aware of the greater benefit in creating this type (Man) despite the potential for the corruption you mentioned, which you do not know. I will raise prophets from among them and send messengers to guide them. Among them will be

³² Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press. 1990 Edition, pp. 118-130.

³³ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 30.

the truthful, the martyrs, the righteous, the worshippers, the ascetics, and the saints. There will be the pious, those close to Allah, the diligent scholars, the humble, and those who love Him, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), and follow His messengers, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon them.”³⁴

Those will worship Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), amidst corruption, despite the hardships, evils, trials, challenges, and desires of the soul, resisting and fighting evil, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. Corruption and bloodshed must exist for believers to resist, oppose, and combat it, thereby rising in ranks and degrees before Allah.

Ibn al-Qayyim states,

“When He, be He glorified and exalted, said to the angels, ‘I am going to place a successive ‘human’ authority on earth. They asked ‘Allah’, ‘Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?’ He responded to them by saying, ‘I know what you do not know.’ Then, He, be He glorified and exalted, revealed His knowledge to His servants and angels through the special ones of His creation—His messengers, prophets, saints, and those devoted to His love and pleasure. These individuals resist their desires and whims, forsaking what they adore to draw near to Me, abandoning their desires to seek My pleasure, and sacrificing their blood and soul for My love. I have singled them out with knowledge unknown to you. They glorify Me with praise during the hours of the night and the ends of the day, and worship Me despite the opposition of desires, lust, the self, and the enemy. You (angels) worship Me without any opposition, desire affliction, or enemy to fight against you; your worship is but a breath compared to theirs.”³⁵

³⁴ Ibn Kathir, “Tafseer Al-Qur’an Al-Azim” (Interpretation of the Great Qur’an), Dar Taybah, 2nd Ed., 1999, Vol. 1, p. 216.

³⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim, “Muftah Dar As-Sa’ada” (The Key to the Abode of Happiness), Dar Alam al-Fawa’id ed., Vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

Human worship is different from that of angels; it is higher, greater, and more sublime in the sight of Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#). **Despite their numerous acts of worship and sincerity, angels are not qualified to offer the kind of worship that humans do.** This is why many scholars have concluded that the righteous among humans are better than the angels³⁶. Glory be to Allah, who created us to perform this worship for Him!

In this context, it is very important for us to state that Plantinga's argument revolves around granting humans a will capable of choosing good despite their ability to choose evil. This ability to choose good over evil is undoubtedly greater, better, and higher than the will to good without the ability to choose evil. According to Plantinga, this is the greater good, with the existence of evil being one of its side effects. However, the Islamic argument is not limited to this concept alone—even though it is valid. The Islamic perspective is deeper and richer, **asserting that this greater good also lies in actively resisting evils and combating corruption. Many profound aspects of goodness only manifest through the struggle against evils and challenges, such as patience in the face of affliction, repentance from sins, jihad against the infidels, and courageously speaking the truth in the presence of a tyrannical ruler.**

Ibn al-Qayyim, [may Allah have mercy on him](#), states,

“He, the Most High, desired to select from among humanity prophets, messengers, saints, and martyrs who love Him and whom He loves. To achieve this, He allowed them to face His enemies as a test. When they chose Him over all else and sacrificed their souls and wealth for His pleasure and love, they attained a level of divine love, approval, and closeness to Him that would have been impossible without such trials. The degrees of divine message,

³⁶ Ibn Abi Al-Izz Al-Hanafi, “Sharh Al-Aqidah At-Tahhawiyyah” (Explanation of the Tahawi Doctrine, Dar Ibn Rajab, Cairo, p. 282.

prophethood, martyrdom, love and hatred for the sake of Allah, and loyalty to His saints while enmity towards His enemies are among the highest and most esteemed degrees.”³⁷

Returning to Plantinga’s Free Will Defense, many philosophers regard his response as decisive and conclusive against Mackie’s philosophical argument, which aims to establish a contradiction between belief in Allah and the existence of evil in the world, known as the Logical Problem of Evil. There is a general and widespread consensus among philosophers that Plantinga has successfully and definitively refuted Mackie’s argument, rendering this atheistic challenge no longer tenable³⁸.

Robert Adams states,

“It is fair to say that Plantinga has resolved this issue, compellingly demonstrating the coherence and consistency of the set of hypotheses embraced by believers.”³⁹

As Muslims, we acknowledge that Plantinga's defense correctly argues that achieving the greatest good necessitates the existence of evil in the world. **However, we diverge from his view that this involves creating beings with free will in the libertarian sense, which suggests Allah has no control over human actions.** When atheist philosopher Mackie challenged Plantinga by proposing that Allah could create beings capable of evil but who only choose good, Plantinga argued that this would negate true free

³⁷ Ibn al-Qayyim, “Muftah Dar As-Sa’ada” (The Key to the Abode of Happiness), Dar Alam al-Fawa’id ed., Vol. 1, pp. 6.

³⁸ Daniel Speck, “The Problem of Evil,” translated by: Sara As-Sibai, National Center for Translation, Cairo, 1st ed., 2016.

³⁹ Robert Merrihew Adams, Plantinga on the Problem of Evil. In Alvin Plantinga, ed. Peter van Inwagen and James E. Tomberlin, 1985, p. 226.

will because it implies a will superior to that of humans, thereby restricting their freedom. This aligns with the viewpoint of Qadarites from the Mu'tazilites and the Jahmites, who denied Allah's will in creating the actions of His servants, including their evils, sins, and disbelief, asserting they occur independently of His will! The Free Will Defense posits that all evil in the world stems from the free will of creatures, whether moral evils like lying and killing or natural evils⁴⁰ such as hurricanes and earthquakes!

This response from Plantinga conflicts with our Islamic belief that everything in the universe—its movements, stillness, good, evil, disbelief, faith, and both coerced and voluntary actions of creatures—is governed by the will, power, and decree of Allah, the Most High and Blessed. This leads us to delve into the discussion on the divine will of Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#).

⁴⁰ Plantinga posits that it is theoretically possible that all so-called natural evil results from the actions of supernatural beings possessing supernatural power and free will, a belief shared by many religions that acknowledge entities like jinn, demons, and goblins. Therefore, according to this view, natural evil could be categorized as a form of moral evil because it stems from the bad choices made by these supernatural beings!! Accordingly, does Plantinga, as a Protestant Christian, assert that jinn and demons cause all natural evil? Absolutely not! However, he argues that this scenario is logically possible, and this possibility alone suffices to refute Mackie's argument.

Between The Will of Allah and the Existence of Evil

Among the levels of belief in destiny according to the Sunnites, as indicated by the evidence of the Quran and the Sunnah, is the belief in Allah's effective will and decree. Everything that occurs in the universe—be it movement or stillness, good or evil, disbelief or faith, involuntary or voluntary actions of creatures—happens solely by Allah's will, power, and decree, [the Blessed and Most High](#).

Involuntary actions are those over which humans have no power or will. These actions occur by Allah's will alone, without any intervention from humans. Examples include: the heartbeat, the flow of blood, the digestion of food, birth, and death. Attributing these actions to humans is only metaphorical. For instance, when we say, "So-and-so died," the person is grammatically the subject of the verb "died," but in reality, they did not cause their own death; rather, death happened to them by Allah's will. Therefore, in reality, they are a passive subject, meaning that Allah's action occurred to them. Similarly, when we say, "So-and-so gave birth," the woman merely underwent labor, and the child was born despite her will, as this happened by Allah's creation in her. The truth of involuntary actions is that they happen to a person or thing, making them the object of the action, or more accurately, the recipient of Allah's will without their intervention.

Voluntary actions, on the other hand, include activities like sitting, standing, walking, praying, fasting, drinking alcohol, and committing acts of violence. These actions are carried out by individuals' will but occur because Allah allows them to happen.

The dispute often centers around the famous question: Does man have free will or not? This question pertains only to voluntary actions, as there is no disagreement among rational people that involuntary actions are beyond man's control. This inquiry focuses on whether individuals, whether believers or non-believers, have free will in their voluntary actions, such as attending the mosque, praying, fasting, stealing, or committing adultery. Are humans driven to perform these actions without choice, or do they possess free will, power, and the ability to choose? Is their will absolutely free, or is it constrained in some way?

Some people respond to this question by asserting that humans have free will in voluntary matters but are driven in involuntary matters. While this answer claims to be moderate, it effectively sides with the view that humans possess free will. Rational individuals do not question involuntary actions but focus solely on voluntary actions. Thus, stating that humans have free will regarding voluntary actions implies that man has absolute free will over which Allah has no authority, power, or will! This is the erroneous part of the answer, as it is incorrect to say that humans have absolute free will and choice. Instead, it must be said that humans have choice, will, ability, and desire, but these are governed by Allah's will, desire, and power, as Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, *"But you cannot will 'to do so', except by the Will of Allah, the Lord of all worlds."*⁴¹

Therefore, we see that the common answer to the question "Does man have free will or not?" has a major flaw and leads to a false belief, even if it is subtle. The correct response aligns with the Prophet's (PBUH) answer: **"Carry on doing (good) deeds, for everybody will find easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his**

⁴¹ Surah At-Takwir: AYAT 29.

destined place for which he has been created...”⁴² Man has ability and will, which are governed by the power and will of Allah, the Most High and Blessed. We can assert that man is both driven and has choice simultaneously, meaning he possesses will and choice: **“But you cannot will ‘to do so’,”** but his will is ultimately governed by Allah's will and desire: **“except by the Will of Allah, the Lord of all worlds.”**

When examining the concept of divine will in the Qur'an, we find it presented in two forms: the Universal Will and the Legal Will.

The Universal Will is the will through which things come into existence and occur. This is the will by which Allah decrees events in the universe, even if those events are not inherently beloved. Allah, **the Blessed and Exalted**, wills their existence for a greater benefit and purpose.

Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims, **“All it takes, when He wills something ‘to be’, is simply to say to it: ‘Be!’ And it is!”⁴³** Allah also states, **“Whenever We intend to destroy a society, We command its elite ‘to obey Allah’ but they act rebelliously in it. So the decree ‘of punishment’ is justified, and We destroy it utterly.”⁴⁴** Allah, the Most High and Blessed, also says, **“Yet if Allah had willed, they would not have fought one another. But Allah does what He wills.”⁴⁵**

This Universal Will encompasses all existences—good and evil, what Allah loves and what He hates, what He praises and what He condemns. It includes everything that Allah created and willed. He, glory be to Him, willed the existence of Satan, Abu Lahab, and Pharaoh, as well as the existence of evil in the universe, even though He despises it. Conversely, He also willed the existence of angels, prophets, believers, and all forms of goodness, which He loves. Thus, Allah,

⁴² Both Al-Bukhari (4949) and Muslim (2647) recorded this Hadith.

⁴³ Surah Ya-Sin: AYAT 82.

⁴⁴ Surah Al-Isra: AYAT 16.

⁴⁵ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 253.

the Blessed and Exalted, created both what pleases Him and what displeases Him, what He ordained by law and what He prohibited by law.

If someone asks, “Why did Allah create evils even though He does not love them?”

we respond by saying, “He created these evils and brought them into existence for a purpose that He knows. He may inform some of His creation about some of His purposes, as He has informed us of some of them in His Book.” For instance, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, “If you have suffered injuries ‘at Uḥud’, they suffered similarly ‘at Badr’. We alternate these days ‘of victory and defeat’ among people so that Allah may reveal the ‘true’ believers, choose martyrs from among you—and Allah does not like the wrongdoers— * and distinguish the ‘true’ believers and destroy the disbelievers.”⁴⁶ He, Blessed Is He And Most High, explained why He allowed Muslims to be killed in their fight with the infidels, as occurred in the Battle of Uhud, which prompted the revelation of the previous verses. He says, “so that Allah may reveal the ‘true’ believers,” meaning He knows with knowledge for which He will hold them accountable. He also says, “... choose martyrs from among you ...” Allah loves for lives and wealth to be sacrificed for His sake and loves that there would be people who sacrifice what they cherish for Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, until they become martyrs. This can only happen if infidels fight the Muslims and Allah enables them to kill the Muslims, so that the latter become martyrs before Allah. Moreover, He, Blessed Is He And Most High, tests His believing servants by allowing infidels to overpower them at times, serving as a test for the believers and a means to end the infidels, as the verse says, “and distinguish the ‘true’ believers and destroy the disbelievers.”

The Prophet (PBUH) explained the purpose behind the existence of sins, which are disliked by Allah, Blessed Is He And Most High, saying, **“If you were not to commit sin, Allah would sweep you out of existence and He would replace (you by) those people who would commit sin and seek forgiveness from Allah, and**

⁴⁶ Surah Ali 'Imran: 140-141.

He would have pardoned them.”⁴⁷ By committing sins and then repenting, the effects of Allah's beautiful names and supreme attributes become manifest. Allah, **the Most High and Blessed**, loves to forgive, so how can He forgive someone who has not sinned? Therefore, the existence of sins serves a divine purpose. This principle is reflected in various aspects, such as the manifestation of mercy, the display of severe punishment, the demonstration of His glory, and His role as the Lord of Retribution. Allah, **blessed and exalted**, only enacts retribution on the criminals, not on the believers who obey Him.

These insights are some of the pearls of His wisdom, **glorified and exalted be He**, and they are numerous in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet **(PBUH)**. The explanations of universal wisdom are abundant, as are the explanations of legal wisdom, but only He, **may He be glorified and exalted**, encompasses all wisdom.

As for the **Legal Will**, it is what Allah willed to exist legally, which is beloved to Him, **the Most High and Blessed**, and it includes everything that Allah has legislated for His servants, including commands for acts of obedience and prohibitions against sins and transgressions. This Legal Will does not necessarily have to occur, as it may manifest in some and not in others. For example, the verse, **“Allah wants to accept your repentance ...”⁴⁸** refers to His Legal Will. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, also says, **“It is not Allah’s Will to burden you, but to purify you and complete His favour upon you ...”⁴⁹** Allah, the Most High and Blessed, also says, **“Allah intends ease for you, not hardship ...”⁵⁰**

This Legal Will is related to everything that Allah loves and is pleased with, whether it happens or not. The will in the verse, **“Allah wants to accept**

⁴⁷ Muslim (2749) recorded this Hadith.

⁴⁸ Surah An-Nisa: AYAT 27.

⁴⁹ Surah Al-Ma'idah: AYAT 6.

⁵⁰ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 185.

your repentance...” is a Legal Will. It differs from the universal decree, as in the saying, “All it takes, when He wills something ‘to be’, is simply to say to it: ‘Be!’ And it is!” If it were of the same type as “Be! And it is!”, then all people, believers and unbelievers, obedient and disobedient, would repent at every moment. However, it is a Legal Will, so some people repent and some do not. Allah wants repentance from everyone legally, but He does not will it universally except for some of them. The repentance that occurs from some individuals aligns with Allah’s Universal Will, which encompasses everything that exists, whether He loves it or not. The will to repent—which is an act that Allah loves—is a Legal Will, which may occur in part or in full. Some disobedient believers repent, and some do not. It includes everything that Allah loves and is pleased with from everyone, believers and disbelievers alike.

Good in the world aligns with both Allah’s Universal Will and Legal Will, whereas evil is contrary to Allah’s Legal Will but not His Universal Will. Whatever aligns with Allah’s Legal Will is good, and whatever is contrary to it is evil. Thus, it becomes clear that the Legal Will and Universal Will coincide in the existence of good in the world because it exists by Allah’s universal decree and is loved and legally willed by Him. Good in the world is desired both universally and legally. However, these two wills differ in the case of evil: it aligns with Allah’s Universal Will in its existence but is contrary to His Legal Will as He does not love or accept it. Therefore, the existence of evil in the world is desired universally but not legally, and its absence is desired legally but not universally.

Before concluding this chapter, two important issues must be addressed:

First: There is no correlation between Allah’s Universal Will and love and satisfaction. Failing to differentiate between these has led some to erroneously call for accepting and even loving evil simply because it is Allah’s will! This is a clear misguidance! Allah, the Most High and Blessed, does not love evil nor is He pleased with it, even if He wills it to exist. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, “... nor does He approve of disbelief from His

servants.”⁵¹ Similarly, we do not love evil nor are we satisfied with it. How could we be satisfied with what Allah is not satisfied with?! The fact that Allah willed its existence does not mean we should love or accept it. Rather, we are content with Allah’s decree and destiny. However, we do not love or accept the evil that results from this will. On the contrary, we strive to remove it as much as we can. This is the essence of understanding the distinction between the Universal Will and love and satisfaction.

Second: Evils are decrees from Allah that we are commanded to change and strive to remove. If Allah decrees evil upon us, we are pleased with Allah’s decree, understanding that He does so for greater reasons. However, we do not take pleasure in the evil itself or the one who commits it. Those who commit evil are sinful, and Allah is not pleased with their actions. The evils decreed by Allah upon us can be categorized into two types: (i) Some evils are ordained for us to surrender to in some way while maintaining a reasonable measure of taking possible means to repel it. For example, we should not leave a country during an epidemic; (ii) Other evils are ordained for us to resist, fight, and remove. This includes seeking medical treatment when ill, eating and drinking when hungry and thirsty, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, engaging in jihad against the infidel, repelling any kind of transgression, and more. Additionally, this encompasses repelling personal disobedience and failure through acts of obedience, repentance, and supplication to Allah. We seek the guidance of Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), asking Him not to leave us to our own devices even for a moment, and to steer us towards what He loves and is pleased with.

⁵¹ Surah Az-Zumar: AYAT 7.

Between The Creation of Allah and the Existence of Evil

Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), is the Creator of everything. He is the Creator of every worker and his work, every moving thing and its movement, every still thing and its stillness. Every atom in the heavens and on the earth, along with its movement and stillness, is created by Allah. There is no creator other than Him and no Lord besides Him.

Allah, the Most High, created the servants and their actions, their abilities and their wills, good and evil. This encompasses Allah's determination of evil. The relation of evil to Allah's decree and destiny is in His creation of the servant's action of evil, its effect, the servant's ability to do evil, and the will to commit evil. However, this creation and bringing into existence by Allah is not itself evil, for there is no evil in Allah's actions. Allah's actions are one of His attributes, and all good is in His hands, [be He glorified and exalted](#); evil does not come from Him. Therefore, there is no evil in His actions or attributes, and His creation of evil is not evil. The act of Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), is the creation of evil, not the commission of it.

To illustrate this, consider the act of theft. Who commits the theft?

The servant is the one who steals, and Allah, [the Most High and Blessed](#), cannot be described with this act. However, Allah created the act itself, enabling the servant to steal by providing him with the ability, will, body, tool, and the act of theft. Allah's action is to create, while the servant's action is to steal. Similarly, when a servant establishes prayer, it is Allah

who created the ability and means for the servant to pray, but it is the servant who performs the act of prayer. Thus, Allah's act is distinct from the servant's act. This distinction is highlighted by Abraham (PBUH), who said in the Quranic verse, “My Lord, make me an establi^{sh}er of prayer ...”⁵² Abraham sought Allah’s help for his own actions, recognizing that it is Allah who makes it possible for the servant to act.

The question that arises in this context is:

If evil is created by Allah,
why does this not characterize Him with evil?

To answer this question, we must clarify that evil is defined in several ways:

First, in terms of the doer: The intention, purpose, and goal of the one committing the act. A thief, adulterer, or murderer commits acts that they know are evil intentionally, deliberately, and with prior intention. This is an evil doer who intends and seeks evil, even if unable to commit the crime for one reason or another.

Second, in terms of the object: The one harmed or hurt perceives what happened to them as evil. For example, someone who falls ill, gets injured in an accident, or is punished at work. There is no requirement for the evil doer and the object to be connected. The perpetrator of the accident may not have intended harm, so they are not considered to have intended evil. Likewise, a manager imposing a punishment on an employee may aim for justice, adhering to rules of reward and punishment. The harm to the employee is not from an evil intention but is perceived as evil by the affected party.

⁵² Surah Ibrahim: AYAT 40.

Third, in terms of the final result: Such as a student who fails an exam due to difficulty studying, exhaustion, and inability to concentrate. All these factors combine to produce a negative outcome for the student. This evil is in the final result, even though the student did their best in studying and during the exam.

Therefore, the fact that evil is created by Allah does not imply that Allah is characterized by evil, because created evil is based on Allah's actions, not His intention. When Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), willed the existence of evil, it was not for the sake of achieving evil, but for a noble goal and lofty objective consistent with His perfection. The evil in the effect is merely a means to achieve goals that are all good and blessed, making the final result - Allah's goal and intention - good, not evil. To illustrate this, consider a doctor performing major surgery on a patient with a malignant tumor. The doctor, as the doer, intends good, not evil. However, the act of surgery—cutting open the abdomen, causing bleeding, and removing part of the intestines—is painful, harmful, and seemingly evil at the time. The final result, though, is the patient's recovery and survival, which is good. This example helps conceptualize the distinction between the doer, the deed, and the final result (bearing in mind that Allah's example is the highest and most perfect).

Evil, then, occurs based on the actions Allah, [the Most High and Blessed](#), allows, not His own actions. This is reflected in the words of the Prophet (PBUH) who said, [“... All good is in Your hands, and evil is not attributed to You ...”](#)⁵³ Allah wants good for its own sake and loves it, and all His actions are inherently good. The outcomes of Allah's actions are also good. However, evil may be decreed to occur as a means to achieve

⁵³ Muslim (771) recorded this Hadith.

good. In this case, it is not Allah's action because Allah, as the subject and creator, does not desire evil for its own sake, but rather allows it for a reason. Evil is not found in the final result that Allah has decreed, because the final result is good. Instead, evil occurs in the process as part of the decree of Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), which ultimately aims for good.

This brings us to another important question:

Does Allah's creation of the ability, will, and actions of the servants contradict their responsibility for their actions?

This is a crucial question and has led to the misguidance of many religions, sects, groups, and philosophies throughout history. The answer, Allah willing, is in the following points:

First: Proving the will of Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), and His Universal Will, without which nothing happens in the world, and affirming His creation of the actions of His servants, does not negate the responsibility of the servants for their actions or cancel their will. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, [“But you cannot will ‘to do so’ unless Allah wills.”](#)⁵⁴ This affirms that the servants have a will, but it is governed by and subordinate to the will of Allah, be He glorified and exalted.

Likewise, proving the effect of the servants' will in the existence of actions, without independence in its creation, does not negate their will. The servants possess an existing created will, and Allah's will is implemented through what they do by themselves and by their own will. The will of the servants has a real effect on their actions, and through it, these actions occur. This is reflected in the concept of “earning and

⁵⁴ Surah Al-Insan: AYAT 30.

committing” in Allah’s saying, “Everyone will enjoy the fruit of the good that one has earned and shall suffer for the evil that one has committed.”⁵⁵

There is a true will and true desire in the servants created by Allah, upon which lies accountability and responsibility. Some people mistakenly believe that for the servant to be responsible for his actions, his will and desire must be completely free and absolute. This is the source of the error! For some, the will is either a formal, metaphorical, and symbolic one that has no effect on the actions of the servant and is not real. For others, it is completely free and absolute, and Allah has no power or authority over it. Both schools of thought are wrong. The truth lies in the middle. It is a real will that has a real effect, but it is created by Allah, governed by His will and desire, and is limited, not absolute. Accountability and responsibility for actions are according to what Allah has given to this will in terms of effect and effectiveness. Responsibility is also limited, not absolute. Allah is just and wise, and He holds His servants accountable within the limits of what He has given them in terms of choice and action. He does not hold them accountable for what goes beyond their created will. The human will may be affected by circumstances such as young age, insanity, coercion, or not receiving the divine message. Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), holds people accountable according to the extent of the sin and within the limits of what He has given them in terms of will and choice. In short, a person's responsibility for his actions does not require him to have an absolute free will. Rather, what Allah has created in terms of will, choice, and desire is completely sufficient for man to reach the level of responsibility for his actions and behaviors.

⁵⁵ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 286.

Second: Man acts by his own will and ability. To illustrate this, we ask the atheist: Did you find a force outside of yourself that compelled you to embrace atheism, or did you come to this belief through your own will? If man were entirely compelled and had no will, there would be no difference between a person being physically carried into a church or a tavern and someone acting according to their own beliefs and choices. Every rational person understands the difference between a hand moving to steal and a heart choosing to beat. Thus, it is paradoxical for an atheist to reject faith and sees himself as oppressed and yet blame oppression on the All-Wise, All-Knowing Creator!

Third: Just as the servants did not bring themselves into existence, they did not bring their actions into existence either. Their ability, will, desire, and actions are all created by Allah, the Most High, who is the Creator of their very being and their capacity to act. The servants' will and desire are not the same as Allah's will and desire, just as they are not identical to Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), Himself! Rather, their actions, which are created by Allah, are based on their capacities, befitting them, and attributed to them in reality. They are the effects of Allah's actions, the Most High, which are based on Him, befitting Him, and attributed to Him in reality. Thus, Allah is truly the ultimate actor, while the servant is both an actor and an object. This means that the servants act by their own will, yet they are also acted upon by Allah's will, with the Lord's action encompassing them. So, Allah's will and desire are what ultimately cause the servant's action, while the servant's will and desire are a cause or part of the cause for their own actions.

Allah, the Most High and Blessed, truly guides, and the servant is guided. Therefore, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, attributed each of these actions to the one who performed it, saying, ["Whoever Allah guides is truly](#)

guided.”⁵⁶ Thus, attributing the act of guiding to Allah, the Most High and Blessed, is accurate, and attributing being guided to the servant is equally accurate. Just as the Guide, the Most High and Blessed, is distinct from the one who is guided, so too the act of guiding is distinct from being guided. Likewise, Allah misguides whomever He wills in reality, and that servant is truly misguided. Allah is the Creator of both the believer and his faith, and the disbeliever and his disbelief, as Allah, *the Most High and Blessed*, says, “He is the One Who created you, yet some of you are disbelievers while some are believers. And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.”⁵⁷ This means He created you in this state, and He intended this for you universally, not legally, so there must be both believers and disbelievers. He is All-Seeing of who deserves guidance and who deserves misguidance, witnessing the deeds of His servants, and rewarding them accordingly with the most complete recompense. For this reason, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims, “And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.” He attributed the act of creation, which is His own action, to Himself in reality. Allah, *the Most High and Blessed*, created people in this state, and they acted by their own choice, ability, and will—attributes that Allah granted and created within them. He commanded and forbade them based on these attributes.

The actions of the servants occur by their will, and human ability and will have an effect on the existence of these actions. However, this effect does not equate to the creation and bringing into existence of the action, because the Creator of ability, will, and action is Allah, *be He glorified and exalted*. This created action occurs through His created ability and created will.

⁵⁶ Surah Al-Isra: AYAT 97.

⁵⁷ Surah At-Taghabun: AYAT 2.

An example of this: A young child has a father and a mother, who both contribute to the existence of the child. Their role is necessary for the child to come into being, but this effect is not the same as creating the child. Rather, Allah, [the Most High and Blessed](#), is the One who created the child and also created the father and mother. It would be unreasonable to claim that, because Allah is the Creator of the child, the father and mother are unnecessary or irrelevant! This is false because both parents are essential, and their involvement is required because the Creator willed that the child be born from these specific parents. He wanted to create the child through them. If someone were to argue that Allah could create a child without the need for parents to prove their irrelevance, we would respond by saying that this is a true statement with a false intention. The existence of the parents is necessary for the child's existence because the Creator, in His wisdom, decreed it so.

Similarly, if someone were to say, "If Allah wanted to guide me, He would have guided me," to absolve themselves of responsibility for their misguidance, the answer would be that this is another true statement with an evil intention. The person's actions are done through their own will and ability, so they cannot use this argument to escape responsibility. This is akin to claiming that there is no need for parents to give birth to a child

or parents abandoning their child in the street, saying, "We did not create him, and the One who created him will provide for him!" Such parents are nothing but criminals. This argument, although superficially true, is intended to shirk responsibility and is false in its implications. The truth is that Allah will provide for the child, but He has decreed that this provision will come through the parents, as they are the means for the child's sustenance. This flawed reasoning is similar to the argument of the polytheists who said, ["Why should we feed those whom Allah could have fed if](#)

He wanted to?”⁵⁸ meaning, if Allah, the Most High and Blessed, wanted to feed these poor people, He would have done so, and thus they should be left hungry!

Similarly, the one who steals, commits adultery, or kills, and then evades responsibility by saying, “All of this was created in me by Allah,” is speaking a partial truth. While it is true that Allah is the Creator of all things, including the individual's capacity for action, this does not absolve the person of responsibility. The person carried out these actions with the ability, will, and intellect given to them, and they understood the commands and prohibitions of Shariah. The Shariah instructed them to obey Allah and avoid disobedience, yet they chose to turn away.

In summary, the ability and will of a person are like the father and mother, while a person's actions are like the child. Just as the presence of parents is necessary for the existence of a child, so too the ability and will of a person affect the existence of their actions. It is not acceptable for parents to deny their role in the existence of their child, just as it is not acceptable for a person to deny their responsibility for their sins, which occurred through their own will and desire. Additionally, just as Allah's will is necessary for the existence of a child (since a couple may marry and yet not have a child), so too is Allah's will necessary and supreme over the will and desire of the individual.

This is the doctrine of the Sunnites regarding “earning and committing,” which posits that human actions occur through human will and ability, but that Allah, the Most High, is ultimately the Creator of all.

⁵⁸ Surah Ya-Sin: AYAT 47.

Between The Wisdom of Allah and the Existence of Evil

One of the greatest attributes of Allah that has effects on the world is His attribute of wisdom, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#). This attribute is fundamental to His actions, just as are His knowledge, power, and will. All of Allah's actions, creations, and commands stem from this wisdom, making it one of His most comprehensive and defining attributes.

Consequently, everything in the world operates according to divine wisdom. Allah's universal actions and all His legal commands are executed with supreme perfection and precision, devoid of flaws, defects, or discrepancies. The entire world, even in its minutest details, manifests His wisdom, perfectly aligned with the purpose that Allah, the Most High, intends. Hence, all of Allah's actions embody wisdom, correctness, and truth. He does not enact anything that involves injustice, futility, or ugliness—qualities from which Allah, [the Most High](#), is wholly free in essence, description, and action.

All of Allah's actions, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), are imbued with wisdom, purpose, and goal. The purposes behind Allah's actions are of two types: those that return to Him and those that benefit His creation.

Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ([may Allah have mercy upon him](#)) asserts:

“Wisdom encompasses two primary aspects.

The first aspect is the wisdom that returns to Allah, the Most High, reflecting what He loves and is pleased with.

The second aspect pertains to His servants, manifesting as a

blessing upon them, bringing them joy and benefit. This wisdom is evident in both Allah's commands and creations...”⁵⁹

Regarding the first type of wisdom that pertains to Allah, the Most High and Blessed, it encompasses all that He loves and is pleased with. This includes His love for being praised and thanked, and His love for those who embody justice, kindness, generosity, mercy, righteousness, gratitude, benevolence, truthfulness, piety, modesty, forgiveness, and pardon. The second type of wisdom involves the benefits and interests that return to the creatures, providing them with what is beneficial and useful. This type of wisdom is essential and intrinsically linked to the first type. Affirming that Allah acts for purposes that relate to Him inherently requires acknowledging the purposes that benefit His creation. This includes their mercy, interests, benefits, and universal guidance.

By establishing this great principle, an important question arises regarding the purpose behind the existence of evil. This question is especially significant since the existence of evil is one of the most prominent reasons for the misguidance of many of the sons of Adam. Why were evils, sins, and transgressions created? Why was Satan created? Why do disbelief and disbelievers exist? Why are animals harmed? Why are Muslims sometimes defeated and their enemies allowed to dominate them? These and other questions naturally arise.

We have previously established that Allah is the Creator of both good and evil, and that nothing happens in His kingdom except by His will. However, not everything He wills is something He loves or is pleased with; He loves only what is good and does only what is good. Nothing originates

⁵⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Majmu’ Al-Fatawa” (Collection of Fatwas), Vol. 8, pp. 35-36.

from Him except what is good. As for evil, it is not inherent in the attributes of Allah or in His actions. Thus, evil never directly emanates from Him, and all His actions are inherently good, with evil never entering into them. Evil is a consequence of His actions, not the actions themselves.

Given that Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), is the Wise, and all His actions are in accordance with perfect wisdom, and that this entire world, with all its intricacies and details, is a result of this wisdom, then what is the purpose behind the existence of evil? Why does it exist? The answer to this profound question can be approached from several aspects:

First: Calamities and pains are evils immersed in great goodness. Without them, certain forms of goodness would not exist. Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), created the world with a mix of good and evil, and it is not fitting according to divine wisdom to eliminate the causes of great goodness and benefits because of the partial evils and pains within it. Goodness is the foundation, and evil is relative and additional. Whoever contemplates this world will find that goodness predominates. Although diseases are numerous, health is more abundant. Though pains are significant, wellness is greater. Despite the many instances of drowning, burning, and destruction, safety is more prevalent. Severe cold, burning, drowning, and similar events that harm animals and plants undoubtedly represent existential evils caused by existential factors. However, these are relative and additional evils. From another perspective, their good outweighs their evil. The existence of heat and cold results in comprehensive benefits and goodness, making the associated evils partial. Similarly, fire, which provides warmth, benefits, and light, has many advantages despite its potential harms. If we compare its benefits and harms, the harms are minor relative to the benefits. If this creation, predominantly good, did not exist because of the evils within it, the overarching good would be lost. The loss of predominant good is itself a predominant evil.

Ibn al-Qayyim, [may Allah have mercy on him](#), states,

“Disabling those causes to prevent these partial evils would entail a greater loss—the deprivation of the numerous goods that stem from them. The benefits derived from the sun, wind, rain, snow, heat, and cold far outweigh the minor harms they cause. Even if these elements have negative effects, those effects are minuscule compared to the benefits they provide, akin to a drop in the ocean. This holds true even when these elements may appear to be predominantly harmful on the surface, as they often possess hidden benefits that many people may not recognize. Allah, in His wisdom, did not decree their existence in vain nor create them without purpose.”⁶⁰

Everything that Allah, glory be to Him, created, even the evils, are partial and additional in nature because they encompass a far greater amount of general good, wisdom, and mercy.

For instance, the messengers sent to their people faced denial and deceit, leading to the destruction of those nations. While this might seem like an evil outcome, it was a necessary evil that brought about a tremendous general benefit for creation until the Day of Resurrection. The lessons and admonitions derived from the destruction of the denying nations served as a greater good for others. Consider the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH): although a group of Arab polytheists and the disbelievers among the People of the Book were made miserable by his message due to their denial, a significantly larger number of people were brought happiness and guidance through him. Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) reflects on this, stating,

⁶⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim, “Shifa’ Al-’Aleel fee Masa’el Al-Qada’a Waa Al-Qadar Waa Al-Hikmah Waa At-Ta’alil” (Healing the Sick in Matters of Fate, Destiny, Wisdom and Reasoning), Tawfiqiya Library Ed., p. 359.

“The benefit of sending him, honoring him, and making his religion manifest encompasses a mercy that far outweighs the partial and additional evils experienced by some. This is because the inherent goodness and wisdom in Allah’s creation far surpasses any relative harm. Indeed, nothing that Allah, the Most High, created is free evil; rather, it is only considered evil in a relative or additional sense.”⁶¹

Even the evil that Allah created is considered in terms of destinies and actions, not in terms of creation itself, which is Allah’s creation and action. An action deemed evil may be intrinsically evil, but it can also be good from another perspective, as previously mentioned. Consequently, the evil in this context is a relative, additional evil, and thus not truly evil in essence.

The conclusion is that the evil Allah, the Most High and Blessed, has destined is evil in relation to the destined, but Allah’s decree is wholly good. Similarly, the evil found within the destined is not free evil; rather, it leads to the emergence of good things. Therefore, evil is a partial, additional matter.

Second: Evil in the world is partial and outweighed by good. The things that Allah Almighty wants can be divided into two types:

Things wanted for themselves: These are the desired and beloved things, the good that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, loves for its own sake.

Things wanted for something else: These are not beloved in themselves but are wanted by Allah as means to achieve the beloved things. The true object of Allah's desire is the ultimate goal for which these means are used, not the means themselves.

⁶¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Majmu’ Al-Fatawa” (Collection of Fatwas), Vol. 14, pp. 154.

Therefore, the first type is loved by Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), and He acts upon it because of His love for it. The second type is not loved by Allah in itself but is wanted for a beloved purpose. For instance, Allah created harmful creatures such as snakes and scorpions and actions that are evil only because of the beloved good that results from them. He did not create them merely for the sake of evil without any ensuing good; this is utterly impossible for Allah, the Most High and Blessed. Good is inherently pursued for its own sake, whereas evil is permitted or created as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. The evils that occur in this world exist for a greater reason that Allah loves and desires. Thus, these evils are partial and are outweighed by good, serving as a means to bring about a greater good or to repel a greater evil.

Just as good was created with a great purpose, so too evil was created with a greater purpose than its own creation. Something that is necessary cannot exist without that which makes it necessary. Therefore, evil exists only in some respects; in others, it is outweighed by good. Thus, in terms of its purpose, it falls into the category of good.

Most evils serve not just one significant good but multiple ones. Therefore, the good resulting from the presence of evil differs qualitatively from the good that would result from its absence. For instance, consider a street cleaner who works on the street. Allah has made his livelihood in this work, so it is necessary for him to sweep the streets and collect garbage. People benefit from the cleanliness, and he benefits from his salary and wage. This good would not have been achieved if the worker received his livelihood without working and striving. His work brings goodness to people, goodness to himself, and additional goodness to municipal employees and workers in waste recycling plants, among others. Thus, one action thus generates multiple benefits for different parties.

Perhaps the intended purpose and good is to prevent corruption or reduce it as much as possible, as Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says,

“Had Allah not repelled [the aggression of] some people by means of others, destruction would have surely claimed monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah’s Name is often mentioned.”⁶² The outcomes resulting from evil contain many good things from various aspects. Just as it relates to bringing benefits, it also relates to warding off corruption or reducing it. The harm that occurs is outweighed by the resulting good outcomes and benefits for which it was allowed. This is similar to the rain, which has many benefits but also some harms to houses or people walking in the streets.

Moreover, the existence of some harm is beneficial when compared to the greater harm that would result from its absence. The purpose here is to mitigate a greater harm by allowing a lesser one. For example, sins can break a person's conceit and self-admiration, prompting him to recognize his human weakness and his true need before his Creator. By seeing his own shortcomings and failings, a person becomes aware of his negligence in fulfilling his duties towards Allah. This awareness can prevent him from becoming conceited and overly proud of his good deeds. Conceit is undoubtedly more dangerous than apparent sin, so allowing the lesser harm of sin serves to ward off the greater harm of arrogance and self-righteousness. Allah knows best.

Third: Evil is relative and additional. We have established that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, acts for the sake of greater interest and public benefit. This does not negate the occurrence of some harm to parts of creation. This harm is considered additional, meaning it is harmful to specific creatures but not universally harmful. In a broader context, only interest and benefit prevail.

This type of evil is termed "additional" because it affects specific entities, making it relative in nature.

⁶² Surah Al-Hajj: AYAT 40.

In relation to its Creator, it is only considered good when viewed through the lens of divine wisdom and purpose. Allah only places things according to His wisdom. In relation to the entirety of creation, it is also good, as it serves the general interest.

An example of this is the application of laws and legal punishments. These are among the greatest goods for all of creation, even though they may cause harm to specific individuals. This harm is considered evil only in an additional or relative sense. For instance, cutting off the hand of a thief is harmful to the thief, but for society, it is a means of ensuring justice, deterrence, and wisdom. Furthermore, this punishment can be good for the thief in other respects, such as serving as an expiation for his sin, leading to forgiveness, and encouraging repentance and cessation of theft.

Thus, any evil that occurs is only evil in relation to the specific place where it occurs and typically from one aspect rather than multiple aspects. It is not total or general evil. Ultimately, Allah knows best.

Fourth: Evil in the world can be seen as a necessity of existence, a requirement for the presence of good, or a side effect of the existence of good. Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), created creatures and brought various entities into existence for profound and significant purposes. These purposes can only be achieved by these creatures and entities having specific forms and attributes that fulfill these purposes. Consequently, some forms and attributes may inherently include aspects that are evil, but they are necessary for achieving the intended purpose.

For example, the sun was created by Allah, the Most High, and subjected to the benefit of His servants, providing light and heat that all creatures on planet Earth benefit from. Despite this, it may cause harm through its heat and intense light, such as causing harm to travelers or making them thirsty. This harm is a necessary consequence of its existence and is hardly worth mentioning compared to the essential interests, benefits, and goodness it brings. It was from the purpose of Allah, the Most High, to create the sun,

even if some of His creation were harmed by it, with our certainty that even that harm for some creatures includes good in other aspects and considerations, and it may result in greater and greater good in the future. Allah knows best. Hence, the harm caused by the sun is a necessary consequence of its existence and a side effect of the good that emanates from it.

Similarly, rain is created to nourish and revive the land, sustaining people, animals, trees, crops, and plants. However, rain can also cause harm, such as stranding travelers, demolishing buildings, or obstructing activities. This harm is a necessary consequence of the rain's existence and its natural properties. These side effects cannot be eliminated without eliminating the rain itself. If it were stopped, these great benefits would be stopped, which are greater than those harms. In fact, those harms are nothing compared to the benefits.

One of the greatest examples that come to mind in this context is the human will. The soul wants and demands, and this will inevitably contains evil, as it was created with a desire for food, drink, money, prestige, and other things. This is part of the essence of the will, its reality, and its creation. The corrupt and evil wills are a consequence of the creation of the human will. We have previously explained some of this when discussing Plantinga's Free Will Defense in response to the logical problem of evil, and that the occurrence of human evils, or what is known as Moral Evil, is a result of the creation of the human will and desire. Therefore, man must have wills: some of which are good, and some of which are evil. This is a consequence of this human will.

Regarding this, Ibn al-Qayyim tells us of a dialogue that took place between him and Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah about this issue:

“I said to Sheikh al-Islam: ‘It was possible to create these matters devoid of corruption and containing pure interest.’

He replied: ‘The creation of this nature without its necessities is impossible, because the existence of the necessary without its necessities is impossible. If it were created in a way other than this, it would be other than this world, and it would be another world altogether.’

He continued: ‘There are things whose essence entails certain aspects that are inseparable from them — such as movement, for instance, which necessitates change and transition.

If someone asks why this specific movement was not made eternal,

the answer lies in the essence of movement itself, which inherently involves shifting from one place to another and transforming from one state to another. Therefore, anything contrary to this nature would not be considered movement.’ He continued: ‘The human soul, in its essence, is ignorant, helpless, and in need, as Allah, the Most High, has mentioned, [‘And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing ...’](#) Knowledge, ability, and wealth come to it from Allah through His grace and mercy. Thus, whatever perfection and goodness it attains is from Allah, whereas its helplessness, poverty, and ignorance, which lead to injustice and evil, stem from its own reality.”⁶³

Ibn Taymiyyah further elaborates:

“And He, glory be to Him, created man and endowed his soul with a natural inclination towards movement, a movement in which evil is inevitable, for a profound purpose and abundant mercy.

If someone asks why He did not create it in a different manner,

⁶³ Ibn al-Qayyim, “Tariq Al-Hijratayn Waa Bab As-Sa’adatain” (The Path of the Two Migrations and the Gate of the Two Felicities), p. 100.

the answer is that such a creation would not have been human, and the purpose intended by creating man would not have been fulfilled. This echoes the question posed by the angels when they said in the Qur'anic verse, 'Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood ... ?'⁶⁴ What the angels did not comprehend, how could mankind comprehend? The human soul was created as Allah, the Most High, decreed, 'Indeed, humankind was created impatient: * distressed when touched with evil, * and withholding when touched with good ...',⁶⁵ and Allah, the Most High, states, 'Humankind is made of haste.'⁶⁶ It was fashioned in a manner that necessitates the existence of what it encounters for a profound purpose and universal mercy, which is inherently good and merciful, despite the incidental evil as discussed previously."⁶⁷

Accordingly, evils are inherent necessities of goodness, as they are requirements or side effects of existence itself. Existence is either inherently good or serves a greater purpose, thus evil becomes a necessary component or consequence. We firmly believe that even these incidental evils contain purpose and goodness in other aspects, and are not devoid of purpose. This sets us apart from some Western philosophers who view such secondary evils as devoid of purpose beyond the regularity and application of natural and universal laws. In contrast, we hold that even these secondary evils in certain creatures serve a purpose and have goals, with

⁶⁴ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 30.

⁶⁵ Surah Al-Ma'arij: AYAT 19-21.

⁶⁶ Surah Al-Anbya: AYAT 37.

⁶⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, "Al-Hasanah Waa As-Saiyi'ah" (The Good and the Bad), p. 110.

aspects of goodness that outweigh them, independent of the regularity of natural laws. For example, if rain prevents someone from pursuing their interests or going out for important matters, it may serve as a trial from Allah to test their patience, or as an expiation for sins, or even as a redirection towards a better interest predestined by Allah. Allah knows best and is the Most Wise.

Fifth: The diversity of creatures in this universe, encompassing both good and evil, serves as a means to establish servitude to Allah, the Most High and Blessed. True servitude to Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, against evil and corruption could not be established without this diversity, as the creation of evils is intrinsic to this type of servitude. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, created beings, causes, actions, morals, and natures, some of which are beloved to the soul and some of which are detested by it. He made the path to His Paradise and the reward contingent upon following His commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. This path may diverge from what the soul desires and what pleases the eye, for reasons known only to Allah, the Most High and Blessed. Here, the true love of the servant of Allah is realized. Everyone naturally loves comfort, ease, and pleasure. When a servant forsakes these—avoiding what Allah has forbidden—in pursuit of pleasing his Lord and hoping for His reward, his true servitude to Allah is manifested, revealing the sincerity and depth of his love for his Lord.

Similarly, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, has permitted Satan and his followers to have influence over the children of Adam so that He may distinguish those who are patient and who strive against their own selves. Through this struggle, they attain the pleasure of their Lord and are granted victory in His Paradise. Without these trials and temptations, many benefits for the servants would be disrupted, including jihad, the defense of Allah's religion, and other acts of worship that require overcoming desires. The various acts of obedience to Allah, as well as the abandonment and avoidance of His

prohibitions, only occur through this inner struggle against the self, desires, and Satan. Thus, the servant's true servitude to his Lord, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), is fully realized.

Ibn al-Qayyim states,

“If Allah had not created opposites, empowered His enemies, and tested His friends through them, His servants would not have achieved pure servitude to Him. They would not have attained the depths of servitude involving love and hatred for His sake, giving to Him and withholding from Him, sacrificing lives, wealth, children, and strength in jihad against His enemies, nor supporting His cause. They would not experience the servitude of forsaking people when they most need them, for the sake and pleasure of Allah, despite loving them and knowing that their refuge lies in their hands. They would not have learned to content themselves with abandoning them and even opposing them in preference for supporting the Truth for the sake of Allah. Without these opposites and the reasons that necessitate them, such profound effects of servitude would not manifest among His servants.”⁶⁸

Ibn al-Qayyim further elaborates in another book:

“For it is part of the perfection of wisdom and power to reveal the honor of excellent things through their opposites. Without the night, the excellence of the day, its light, and its value would not be evident. Without pain, the excellence of pleasure, its honor, and its worth would not be appreciated. Without illness, the excellence of health would not be recognized. Without the existence of ugliness, the

⁶⁸ Ibn al-Qayyim, “Tariq Al-Hijratain Waa Bab As-Sa’adatain” (The Path of the Two Migrations and the Gate of the Two Felicities), p. 130.

excellence of beauty and handsomeness would not be appreciated.”⁶⁹

Allah, [be He glorified and exalted](#), loves to be worshipped through all forms of servitude, with the highest and most sublime being the servitude of friendship and enmity for His sake, love and hatred for His sake, jihad in His cause, and sacrificing one's soul to please Him and oppose His enemies. This type of servitude is the pinnacle and highest rank, and it is the most beloved to Him. It depends on what cannot be achieved without it, such as the creation of souls and spirits that are loyal to Him, thank Him, and believe in Him, and those that are hostile to Him and disbelieve in Him. He grants some power over others so that His love and pleasure are achieved in the most perfect ways. His allies draw near to Him through jihad against His enemies, opposing them for His sake, humiliating them, suppressing them, and rejecting their path, so that His word and call are elevated above the word and call of falsehood. If falsehood, disbelief, and polytheism did not exist, then on what basis would His word and call be elevated? Elevation requires something to be elevated above, and the elevation of something above itself is logically impossible. The elevation of religion and its banner cannot be achieved without being raised above the doctrines of disbelief and falsehood.

Because of the existence of disbelievers, the servitude of jihad, loyalty, and disavowal appeared. Many people attained the status of martyrdom in the path of Allah, sacrificing blood, wealth, and souls for the sake of Allah, [the Most High and Blessed](#), and other sublime wisdoms.

Just like the servitude of jihad, the servitude of charity, altruism, and sympathy are acts of worship that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, loves to be worshipped with. These acts of worship must be obtained, and they cannot be obtained without their prerequisites. Hence, people must differ

⁶⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim, “Mukhtasar As-Sawa’iq Al-Mursalah” (A Summary of Thunderbolts), p. 207.

in their sustenance, leading to the existence of both the rich and the poor, as this disparity is the basis for those acts of worship. If Allah, the Most High and Blessed, made sustenance equal among His servants, these acts of worship would cease to exist.

Similarly, the servitude of patience and striving against oneself is beloved to Allah and must occur for reasons to manifest. Evil must exist so that souls can exhibit patience in pursuing goodness and obedience to Allah. Without the creation of devils, desires, and the impulse towards evil, the acts of patience, self-struggle against evil inclinations, and the steadfast opposition to them, forsaking personal desires in favor of Allah's pleasure, would not come into being.

Likewise, patience through hardships for the sake of Allah in calling to Him and engaging in jihad cannot arise without these challenges and the adversaries, including the helpers of the devils among disbelievers and others.

Allah, the Most High and Blessed, loves and indeed finds joy in the repentance of His servants to Him, and repentance only arises in the presence of what necessitates it—the actions and conditions that require repentance. Without these, repentance would not occur at all.

Similarly, the worship of seeking forgiveness does not exist without the actions and circumstances for which forgiveness is sought. This is illustrated in the hadith of the Prophet (PBUH): **“If you were not to commit sin, Allah would sweep you out of existence and He would replace (you by) those people who would commit sin and seek forgiveness from Allah, and He would have pardoned them.”**⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Muslim (2749) recorded this Hadith.

Therefore, it is established that various acts of worship to Allah must occur, as they are among the greatest deeds beloved to Him. These acts are necessary and can only manifest through their causes and prerequisites, which may include aspects that are not inherently beloved. However, since they are essential for the manifestation of servitude and its extraction from His servants, their existence becomes necessary. This is because the fulfillment of these requirements is indispensable for achieving their intended outcomes, as is well known.

Sixth: The evils created by Allah, the Most High and Blessed, serve as tests and trials for His servants. These tests require the existence of causes through which they occur, thus these causes must be created. For this reason, Allah created desires and what entices and beautifies them. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, alludes to this trial and test in the creation of the heavens and the earth: “He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days—and His Throne was upon the waters—in order to test which of you is best in deeds.”⁷¹

The existence of desires, evils, diverse creatures, and wills contrary to servitude highlights the perfection of servitude, love, and obedience. It reveals the truth of faith through opposition and testing, distinguishing the truthful from the deceitful. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims, “Alif-Lām-Mīm. * Do people think once they say, “We believe,” that they will be left without being put to the test? * We certainly tested those before them. And ‘in this way’ Allah will clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars.”⁷²

Allah also says: “Now, whenever a human being is tested by their Lord through ‘His’ generosity and blessings, they boast, ‘My Lord has ‘deservedly’ honoured me!’ * But when He tests them by limiting their provision, they protest, ‘My Lord has ‘undeservedly’ humiliated

⁷¹ Surah Hud: AYAT 7.

⁷² Surah Al-'Ankabut: 1-3.

me!”⁷³ Allah, be He glorified and exalted, emphasizes that not everyone tested in this world is disgraced; rather, He tests His servants with ease and hardship. He, be He glorified and exalted, makes it clear that blessings are a form of test and trials are tests. Therefore, the servant must exhibit patience and gratitude in all circumstances, whether in times of ease or calamity. This attitude is beneficial for the servant, as through patience and gratitude, calamities and pains become blessings that expiate sins for the believing servant⁷⁴.

Seventh: Some calamities and pains, though appearing as evils, are actually beneficial for the servant. They serve to expiate the servant's sins and reward them for their patience. Additionally, these trials often contain hidden purpose and benefits that the servant may not immediately recognize. Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), says in the Quran, “Fighting has been made obligatory upon you ‘believers’, though you dislike it. Perhaps you dislike something which is good for you and like something which is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know.”⁷⁵

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, [“Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks \(God\), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation \(and endures it patiently\), there is a good for him in it.”](#)⁷⁶ Therefore, both blessings and calamities are indeed blessings for the believer. They require both gratitude and patience. Patience during hardships is evident, but gratitude during such times may be hidden. Yet, for those who

⁷³ Surah Al-Fajr: 15-16.

⁷⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Majmu’ Al-Fatawa” (Collection of Fatwas), Vol. 8, pp. 48.

⁷⁵ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 216.

⁷⁶ Muslim (2999) recorded this Hadith.

reflect on its outcomes, knowing that their Lord has wisdom in it, it becomes a blessing that warrants gratitude to their Lord, [the Blessed and Exalted](#). Conversely, blessings that bring joy to the soul have apparent gratitude, while hidden within them is the need for patience.

Ibn Taymiyyah, [may Allah have mercy on him](#), states,

“In times of blessings, people naturally express gratitude, while in times of hardships, patience is emphasized. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, proclaims, [“If We give people a taste of Our mercy then take it away from them, they become utterly desperate, ungrateful. * But if We give them a taste of prosperity after being touched with adversity, they say, “My ills are gone,” and become totally prideful and boastful, * except those who patiently endure and do good. It is they who will have forgiveness and a mighty reward.”](#)⁷⁷ Furthermore, the one experiencing prosperity is more obligated to show gratitude, whereas the one facing adversity is required to demonstrate patience. Patience in times of ease may be commendable, and gratitude during hardships may also be commendable. Showing both gratitude and patience simultaneously transpires when oneself is in pain and joy at the same time—a challenge many encounter. It is crucial to recognize that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, orchestrates all aspects of life, even those not immediately apparent to most. He knows what we do not. Sins committed by individuals originate from within themselves, yet even these can lead to blessings with positive outcomes, serving as lessons for others.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Surah Hud: 9-11.

⁷⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Majmu’ Al-Fatawa” (Collection of Fatwas), Vol. 8, pp. 127.

Ibn al-Qayyim⁷⁹ elucidated on the purpose behind the sins that a servant falls into, revealing that they can serve as a blessing that prompts the servant to return to his Lord in repentance. Beyond our understanding, Allah, be He glorified and exalted, has countless other purposes that are not known to His servants. Below are some of these purposes that humans have comprehended, while Allah has many others that remain beyond our knowledge:

Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), loves those who repent and is pleased with their repentance. Due to His love for repentance, He decreed that His servants will commit a sin, and if a servant is among those whom He cares for, Allah decrees that he will repent.

The servant's essence lies in Allah's glory in His judgment, the efficacy of His will, and the unfolding of His decree. If the servant could, he would have protected himself from committing sin. However, his will is ultimately subordinate to that of his Lord.

The servant's definition includes his dependence on his Lord for preservation and protection. Without Allah's safeguarding, the servant would inevitably perish.

Allah defines Himself to His servant through His expansive patience and generosity in pardoning him.

His generosity manifests in accepting the servant's repentance and forgiving him for his injustices and wrongdoings.

These are just a few of the purposes behind Allah's actions that no creature can fully comprehend.

The point here is not to condone sin or be complacent about it, but rather to understand that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, has profound

⁷⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim, "Tariq Al-Hijratain Waa Bab As-Sa'adatain" (The Path of the Two Migrations and the Gate of the Two Felicities), p. 180.

purpose in all His actions, including the calamities, evils, and pains that befall a servant. For those who are patient in the face of afflictions and calamities, these trials can turn into blessings because of the positive consequences that patience brings.

Eighth: These calamities, evils, and pains may be a punishment for the sins, transgressions, and disbelief of the servants. Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), does not withhold His grace from the servant because of his need for it. He loves generosity, giving, and kindness. He loves forgiveness and mercy, and His mercy precedes His wrath and punishment. When a servant is afflicted with a calamity, pain, or evil, it is often due to his own actions. This is indicated in the Qur'an by Allah's saying: ["Whatever affliction befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed. And He pardons much."](#)⁸⁰ Also, He says: ["Why is it when you suffered casualties 'at Uḥud'—although you had made your enemy suffer twice as much 'at Badr'—you protested, 'How could this be?'? Say, 'O Prophet,' 'It is because of your disobedience.'"](#)⁸¹

Hence, the servant is afflicted with evil because of his sin. As mentioned in the hadith: ["No calamity occurs except due to a sin, and it is not lifted except through repentance."](#)⁸²

Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ([may Allah have mercy upon him](#)) asserts:

"And He, the Most High, does not punish anyone except for their sin, acting according to wisdom and justice. In His punishment, there are various aspects of wisdom and mercy. This is evident in the

⁸⁰ Surah Ash-Shuraa: AYAT 30.

⁸¹ Surah Ali 'Imran: AYAT 165.

⁸² Ibn al-Qayyim attributed this statement in "al-Da' wa al-Dawa'" (The Disease and the Cure), (p. 157), to Ali ibn Abi Talib. A similar statement was also attributed to al-Abbas. It was also narrated by Ibn Asakir in "Tarikh Dimashq" (The History of Damascus), Vol. 26, pp. 358-395.

calamities He afflicts upon believers in this world, which serve as recompense for their bad deeds. Indeed, within these trials, there is wisdom, mercy, and justice that become clear to those who reflect. He does not punish anyone except for their sin.”⁸³

What is certain is that Allah, [be He glorified and exalted](#), is independent of the worlds. The disbelief of the disbelievers does not harm Him, nor does their punishment benefit Him. He, the Most High, does not punish them out of vengeance, nor does He need to, nor does He punish them in vain without reason. However, when the servant abandons gratitude and faith, and replaces them with disbelief, polytheism, and tyranny, the recompense and punishment from his Lord befall him. Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), says, “What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And ever is Allah Appreciative and Knowing.”⁸⁴ This punishment is the requirement of divine justice and wisdom for the disobedient servants of Allah. Therefore, Allah denied injustice from Himself and attributed it to the servants, saying: “And We did not wrong them [thereby], but they were wronging themselves.”⁸⁵

The purpose of all the above is:

to emphasize that the pains and calamities Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), created and placed in this world are not acts of injustice towards the servants. Rather, all of them are manifestations of His justice, in view of the great wisdom, good consequences, and desired goals within these pains. All the evils that occur are placed appropriately and in ways that creation cannot be upright without. Whoever contemplates the wisdom of Allah, the Most High, in His creation will know that everything in the universe aligns with His justice, wisdom, and management, [the Blessed and Exalted](#).

⁸³ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Jame’a al-Rasa’el” (Collection of Letters), Vol. 1, p. 134.

⁸⁴ Surah An-Nisa: AYAT 147.

⁸⁵ Surah An-Nahl, AYAT 118.

Free Evil

Let's consider a scenario: Imagine a young child playing alone in a park where his father is seemingly absent from sight. It is plausible that the father might be present but obscured by a crowd or beyond our limited field of vision. Now, picture this child climbing a tree, falling, injuring his head, and crying out in pain and distress, with blood running down his face and tears streaming. Despite this, the father doesn't appear, nor does he rush to help. From this, one might conclude that the father does not exist.

This example encapsulates the argument against the existence of Allah based on the presence of "free evil." It rests on two premises and a conclusion:

Sensory Premise: In the world, there are instances of free evils that involve severe suffering, seemingly without any glimpse of good or any conceivable positive outcome. God, being omnipotent, could prevent or eliminate these evils without forfeiting a greater good. In essence, there exists free evil that doesn't result in a greater good.

Rational Premise: God does not desire or will the existence of free evil that does not lead to a greater good, and He would prevent or remove it unless doing so would result in the loss of a greater good.

Conclusion: Therefore, God does not exist.

This summarizes what is known as the Evidential Argument from Evil, famously articulated by atheist philosopher William Rowe to challenge the existence of Allah⁸⁶. It derives from the argument of free evil and is termed

⁸⁶ William Rowe, The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism, American Philosophical Quarterly 16/4, 1979, 335-41.

"Evidential" because it relies on observable evidence—specifically, the existence of free, unjustified evil in the world. This argument hinges on the premise that while many forms of evil in the world can be reconciled with the existence of a greater good or as a means to prevent greater evils, there are instances of suffering so severe and unjustifiable that they defy justification in light of any conceivable greater good. In such cases, proponents argue, it suggests the absence of a Creator characterized by attributes of perfect knowledge, power, wisdom, mercy, care, and governance. Examples often cited include the tragic fate of a deer trapped in a forest fire, enduring prolonged suffering until its death, or the heartbreaking case of a five-year-old girl in Michigan, USA, raped, brutally beaten, and murdered by her mother's boyfriend on New Year's Day, 1986.

Examples abound, including the widespread suffering and famine endured by entire populations, such as the persecution and atrocities against the people of Bosnia—torture, rape, brutal killings including pregnant women, and genocide. Similar horrors afflict people in regions like Syria, Palestine, Kashmir, and beyond. These are instances where immense suffering and profound pain seem to represent what some might perceive as “free evil” devoid of any discernible good.

I ask forgiveness from my esteemed reader for the length of this argument, as it stands as one of the most compelling reasons put forth by some to deny the existence of Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#). It warrants clear elucidation and a thorough response to address its shortcomings.

The response to this argument lies in rejecting its sensory premise while fully accepting its rational premise..

Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), does not create evil that is free from any good whatsoever, nor does He create a situation where evil outweighs good, or where good and evil are equal.

This is because He, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), neither loves nor approves of evil, and He only permits it when it is outweighed or accompanied by a greater good. If the good resulting from an action is less than the evil, or if they are equal, Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), does not create it; such a scenario does not exist in His creation, [the Blessed and Exalted](#). It is inconceivable that He would create evil that is devoid of any good.

“There is no such thing as ‘free evil’ in what Allah, be He glorified and exalted, has created; rather, evil exists as an addition.”⁸⁷

As for the sensory premise regarding the existence of free evil, we do not accept or concede it for several reasons:

First: Describing something as free evil with no good in it requires absolute and comprehensive knowledge to judge it as completely devoid of all possible good. Since human knowledge is limited, so are our minds, insight, and wisdom. It is a form of cognitive arrogance to assert that any matter is entirely devoid of good and that no good could ever result from it! Man's knowledge is finite, and he cannot judge an action as evil without considering its potential future outcomes, which may lead to greater good. Given that these outcomes are ongoing and their end or time of expiration is indeterminate, a person with limited knowledge cannot definitively classify something as evil without comprehensive knowledge of everything.

We do not need to prove that every evil in the world has aspects of goodness or that their existence has benefits and interests justifying their occurrence. On the contrary, the atheist bears the burden of proving that it

⁸⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Majmu’ Al-Fatawa” (Collection of Fatwas), Vol. 14, pp. 154.

is impossible to rationally explain all these evils, a task that is nearly impossible! In fact, no atheist has proven, or even attempted to prove, that there are evils in the world that are impossible to explain. One might question the nature of the proof an atheist could present to substantiate such a claim! Consequently, their best effort is to admit that this argument is essentially probabilistic, not conclusive or decisive, as William Rowe himself acknowledges. He argues that this evidence supports atheism and denies the existence of Allah, but this does not negate the existence of other arguments that prove Allah's existence. If these arguments are stronger and more cogently superior to the Evidential Argument from Evil, we should submit to them. The Evidential Argument from Evil is ultimately just a conclusion that may be flawed or correct and does not necessarily necessitate the denial of the Creator's existence or provide absolute certainty. Rowe's aim is to suggest that, when set against any arguments, evidence, or proofs supporting Allah's existence, the Evidential Argument from Evil offers a good reason to believe that Allah does not exist⁸⁸. At its best, it remains a mere suspicion in the face of conclusive rational proofs of Allah's existence, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), and is, in fact, an Argument from Ignorance. We are ignorant of the purpose behind these specific evils, and utilizing this argument against Allah's existence is ignorance. The accumulation of ignorance, its multiplication, and its crowding cannot generate knowledge or outweigh the strength of the evidence and definitive proofs of Allah's existence, [the Blessed and Exalted](#).

Second: The knowledge and wisdom of Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), are absolute, while human knowledge and wisdom are limited. This vast difference necessitates the existence of many things that humans do not know or comprehend. Therefore, the existence of things from which no apparent good can be seen does not

⁸⁸ Howard-Snyder, Daniel and Paul Moses, *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 136.

mean that they lack good in Allah's knowledge and wisdom. Rather, there is good in them that humans are unable to imagine and estimate with their limited knowledge and understanding.

Reason and human instinct dictate that if someone who is superior in knowledge, wisdom, and experience does something that appears to suggest ignorance or error, one should wait, think, and carefully consider before judging that action as wrong or ignorant. For example, if a beginner plays chess against a world champion and sees the champion sacrifice a pawn, the beginner's ignorance of the long-term consequences of this move does not mean there is no benefit, purpose, or intended interest behind it.

Therefore, if we have established that Allah is All-Knowing and All-Wise, and that everything with Him is measured, then when we encounter something in the world that suggests otherwise, we must refer it to Allah's vast and absolute wisdom. We should be certain that it has a purpose that transcends our limited knowledge and understanding. The rational approach is to refer ambiguous matters to explicit matters, conjectures to certainties, branches to roots, and particulars to generalities. When we see severe pain or torment that a creature endures, and we cannot understand the precise purpose behind it, we have no right to abandon the firm principle established by reason and instinct in favor of a conclusion that contradicts it. This principle applies to all branches of knowledge.

To illustrate, imagine a four-year-old child with cancer, whose father takes him to the hospital for multiple surgeries, chemotherapy sessions with painful needles, and radiotherapy that causes hair loss and skin peeling. The child suffers immensely from the treatment. Can this young child comprehend the calculations and balances of evil and good that his father makes between the harshness of the treatment, its exorbitant costs, and the resulting benefits of recovery, health, and wellness?

Some have responded to this argument by turning it upside down, as the British philosopher George Edward Moore did in what is known as “Moore's Shift.” This method inverts the argument by proving the opposite of its result, as follows:

Premise One: God exists.

Premise Two: God does not love nor want free evil.

Conclusion: There is no free evil.

For a believer who sees the existence of Allah as a clear and evident reality, the existence of free evil is considered completely impossible. All the examples or models presented as evidence for free evil are assumptions and analogies that do not rise to the level of certainty found in the proofs of Allah's existence and His attributes of perfection in knowledge, power, wisdom, mercy, care, and management. Even William Rowe, the author of the Evidential Argument from Evil, was aware of this weakness in his argument, as we indicated above. True free evil from every aspect does not enter into existence, and if it did, it would not be free evil⁸⁹.

Allah, [be He glorified and exalted](#), does not create free evil from all aspects and considerations because His wisdom forbids it. Rather, a creature may be perceived as evil and corrupt by some considerations, but in its creation, there are interests, benefits, and purpose from other considerations that are more significant and greater than its perceived corruptions. Reality is limited to this framework. It is impossible for Allah, the Most High, to will something that is corrupt from every aspect and consideration, with no benefit in its creation in any way. This is the most obvious impossibility! For He, [be He glorified and exalted](#), holds all goodness, and evil does not come from Him; rather, everything that comes from Him is good.

⁸⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah, “Jame’a al-Rasa’el” (Collection of Letters), Vol. 1, p. 139.

We hold that predominant evil, let alone free evil, never occurs. Whatever evil does occur is not free nor predominant but rather partial and relative.

Incorrect Responses

Daniel Speck, a philosophy professor, recounts the story of one of his outstanding students⁹⁰ who came to him one day to discuss her personal encounter with the problem of evil through her father's affliction with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Her father, once an active man and a wonderful father and husband, lost the ability to control his body's muscles. As his motor neurons deteriorated, he became imprisoned inside his own body, unable to use or control it, interact with his environment, feed himself, or even express himself to those around him. Faced with this tragedy, the student wondered: Why did he get this disease? Why did he become unable to feed himself? Why did he become unable to express himself to those around him? And why did his family, including herself, have to suffer because of his condition?

This student did not need a set of strict philosophical arguments to help her think through the ongoing battle between believers and deniers of creation regarding the existence of evil. Instead, she needed sympathy, moral support, and understanding of her tragedy and her family's ordeal, along with a focus on the meanings of patience, steadfastness, and enduring hardships. Here, Speck warns us not to confuse the philosophical problem of evil with what he calls the personal problem of evil. The philosophical problem poses a mental challenge and questions related to reconciling the existence of Allah with the existence of evil. In contrast, the personal problem deals with how to handle trials, tribulations, and hardships, and how to continue living despite evils and difficulties.

⁹⁰ Daniel Speck, "The Problem of Evil," translated by: Sara As-Sibai, National Center for Translation, Cairo, 1st ed., 2016, p. 30.

Philosophy will not solve or address the personal problem of evil; rather, it will be the wrong approach in this context! The correct response is to listen, sympathize, offer advice, and help resolve the issue if possible. Additionally, sharing our experiences with evils and citing the stories of others can be helpful, while emphasizing the importance of resorting to Allah, supplication, remembrance, perseverance in obedience, and avoiding sins.

Without distinguishing between the philosophical and personal problems, we unfortunately fall into the trap of providing incorrect responses! Sometimes, the issue lies not in rational logic but in the need for emotional and moral support, and perhaps the initiative to help and assist the person facing the problem. On the other hand, we may treat some cases as if they are personal problems, thus neglecting the rational and logical arguments and focusing solely on the emotional aspect, which can lead to failure and disappointment.

The above represents an example of providing the incorrect response based on the context that created the problem, even though it might be the correct response in a different context. However, in this chapter, we aim to discuss another type of incorrect responses—those that are entirely incorrect, regardless of the context. These responses are not permissible by Sharia or belief, no matter the circumstances.

[Free Will Defense:](#)

The American philosopher Alvin Plantinga's Free Will Defense in response to the problem of evil is based on the notion that the existence of evil in the world results from the evil actions of creatures, which stem from their complete free will. He then argues about the purpose of Allah's creation of free will for creatures. What concerns us here is that the basis of this defense denies that Allah creates evil. According to Plantinga, Allah does not create or bring evil into existence; rather, creatures with free will

are the ones who create it. This view is similar to the belief of the Mu'tazila among Muslims, who assert that Allah does not create the actions of His servants; rather, they are the ones who create and bring these actions into existence independently of Allah! There is no doubt that this response removes Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), from the problem of the existence of evil in the world and denies His role in the creation and will of evil. It might serve as a response to the problem of free evil, aimless evil, or evil with no purpose. According to this view, such evil results solely from the wrong and evil actions of creatures and has no specific purpose or intended goal, except for the general purpose related to the existence of free will. Contrary to the Islamic belief that evils have particular purpose or detailed goals that we may not understand.

This contradicts our belief as Muslims that Allah is the One who creates evil, even though He does not love or accept it. He creates it because it results in the good that Allah, the [Most High](#), loves and accepts. We, as Muslims, hold the certainty that all evils in the world, whether caused by the will of creatures or not, carry within them or result in a greater good. **We believe that everything that happens in the world—good or evil, small or large, minute or great—has a wisdom and purpose, whether we know it or not. There is no evil without a purpose. Allah manages this world in its most minute and deepest details; nothing is outside of His rule, will, and desire, [Blessed is He and Most High](#).** Our hearts do not cling to anyone during trials, hardships, and evils except to Allah, [the Most High](#). We do not depend on any creature, whoever they may be, because everything is created for Allah alone, with no partner. He is the One who benefits and harms, the One who honors and humiliates, the One who raises and lowers. He manages the entire world, and no one shares with Him even an atom's weight of it.

If Allah had no relation to the evils in the world, and they were merely the result of the actions of free creatures, there would be no point in asking Allah during trials and tribulations. There would be no meaning in praying to Him, seeking His help, and seeking His protection from any evils!

The difference between us and Plantinga is that we affirm that Allah created the actions of creatures. While we agree on the existence of a

general purpose in the created will, we also believe that there is detailed purpose for every action and every evil, not just the general overall purpose in the creation of the will and choice of creatures.

Moreover, we have reservations about describing the will as "free" in the libertarian philosophical sense, which conflicts with divine predestination. The libertarian concept asserts that if a person's action is predetermined by something or someone other than themselves, it does not come from a free will. In other words, if there is an external guarantee that a person will perform a certain action instead of another, then it is not considered free will. This, of course, contradicts our belief in fate and destiny and in the creation of the actions, will, and desire of the servants by Allah. **Therefore, it is not correct to describe the will of creatures as free in order to avoid misunderstanding and problematic terminology.** Instead, it should be described as a limited, created will that has a real effect on actions. There is a real will and a real desire of the servants, created by Allah, upon which reckoning and responsibility lie.

The problem for some is that they imagine in order for a servant to be responsible for their actions, their will and desire must be completely free and absolute. This is the source of the problem!

For some, the will is either a formal, metaphorical, and symbolic one that has no effect on the actions of the servant and is not real. For others, it is completely free and absolute, and Allah has no power or authority over it. Both schools of thought are wrong. The truth lies in the middle. It is a real will that has a real effect, but it is created by Allah, governed by His will and desire, and is limited, not absolute. Accountability and responsibility for actions are according to what Allah has given to this will in terms of effect and effectiveness. Responsibility is also limited, not absolute. Allah is just and wise, and He holds His servants accountable within the limits of

what He has given them in terms of choice and action. He does not hold them accountable for what goes beyond their created will.

In short, a person's responsibility for his actions does not require him to have an absolute free will. Rather, what Allah has created in terms of will, choice, and desire is completely sufficient for man to reach the level of responsibility for his actions and behaviors.

[Open Theism and Divine Providence:](#)

In the early 1990s, the Open Theism movement emerged among a group of Christian scholars and philosophers in the West. This movement aimed to introduce new and philosophically nuanced perspectives within Christian theology, particularly concerning theological problems such as the problem of evil⁹¹. Proponents of Open Theism argue that God does not manage every detail and particle of the created world. Instead, they believe that God has established a general framework by creating free will and enacting natural laws, but does not micromanage the specifics of every action and event. This view mirrors a notion previously expressed by some Muslims, who argued that Allah's power and will are general rather than detailed. According to this perspective, Allah's will encompasses the existence of good and evil in a broad sense and grants power and will to His servants without necessitating His will in every specific action. An analogy often used

⁹¹ Hasker, W. 2008. *The Triumph of God over Evil*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Pinnock, C., R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, and D. Basinger. 1994. *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Pinnock, C. 2001. *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Sanders, J. 1998. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of God's Openness*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

In *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism, The Problem of Evil*, Michael L. Peterson. Online Publication in Dec 2013. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199644650.013.032.

is that of a flowing river: Allah's will caused the river to flow, but He does not will each drop of water individually. This concept is flawed and contradicted by the teachings of the Quran. For instance, ["But you cannot will 'to do so', except by the Will of Allah, the Lord of all worlds"](#)⁹² illustrates that there is no will of the servant, even a minor one, except by the will of Allah, and no action is taken without His decree. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) affirmed this in a hadith, stating: ["And do not leave me to myself for a blink of an eye."](#)⁹³ This indicates that every movement, stillness, heartbeat, breath, and even the blink of an eye is sustained by the power and will of Allah, the Most High and Blessed!

Proponents of Open Theism argue that the existence of evil does not contradict the existence of God, positing that God did not will or create evil directly. Instead, they believe that evil arises solely from the free will of creatures and the flow of natural laws. Consequently, they assert that the presence of free evils—those without apparent justification or purpose—is not problematic within their framework. This view, however, undermines the notion of Allah's comprehensive power, will, and management over creation. In reality, Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), is the sovereign manager of the entire universe, possessing absolute power and will over both the essence and actions of His creatures, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#). Nothing exists outside of His dominion, and everything in creation is subject to His will and control. While Allah has granted beings the capacity to act with true will and desire, these abilities operate within the framework He has established. Allah created the natural laws and causes, and these laws operate with His permission. For example, fire burns and causes harm, but this effect occurs because Allah has willed it. Similarly, cosmic causes and laws affect outcomes, yet these effects and their results

⁹² Surah At-Takwir: AYAT 29.

⁹³ Both Ahmad (27898) and Abu Dawoud (5090) recorded this Hadith, and was authenticated by Al-Albani in "Sahih Al-Jami'" (3388).

are part of Allah's divine plan. If Allah had chosen to prevent an effect, He would have done so, as seen when He protected Abraham (PBUH) from the fire and Moses (PBUH) and the Children of Israel from drowning. Causes do not operate independently of Allah; rather, Allah is the ultimate source of all effects. While He did not create the world devoid of natural cosmic laws and principles, these laws and causes function with His permission. Allah is both the Creator of these laws and the instigator of their effects. We affirm the divine creation of both the laws and their effects, recognizing cosmic causality as a fundamental reality. This understanding aligns with both reason and Sharia. To deny cosmic causality is to reject reason and empirical evidence, while to deny Allah's role as the Creator of these laws contradicts Sharia. Similarly, when considering the actions of human beings, denying their true will contradicts reason, sense, and nature. At the same time, denying Allah's creation of both voluntary and involuntary actions also contradicts Sharia.

[Open Theism and Divine Knowledge:](#)

The open theism movement in Christian theology not only denies God's management of the world's details but also rejects the idea that God has knowledge of the future. According to their view, in a world where creatures possess complete free will, predicting their future actions is deemed both impossible and unknowable.

They argue that this limitation on God's knowledge does not detract from the perfection of divine knowledge, as future actions of free creatures are considered beyond the scope of rational possibility, much like logical contradictions such as creating a triangular circle or a being that is both alive and dead simultaneously. These are seen as inherent contradictions that do not undermine Allah's omnipotence, and similarly, God's inability to know the future actions of free creatures does not compromise His divine knowledge from their perspective!

This argument is consistent with their libertarian concept of complete free will, which leads them to deny God's ability to know the outcomes of such free will. This position parallels the extreme views of the Qadarites, whom earlier scholars considered misguided and disbelievers. The Qadarites claimed that Allah does not know the actions of His servants until they are performed, and that these actions were neither known, written, nor decreed by Allah beforehand. Such statements are universally rejected by the teachings of all prophets and the revealed scriptures. The divine knowledge of Allah, as confirmed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and supported by the scriptures, encompasses all things, and Allah's knowledge is not shared or limited by His creation. Allah knows everything, including what He wills to reveal and teach⁹⁴.

To understand how this thesis is employed in response to the problem of evil, consider the following example: Suppose Allah, the Most High and Blessed, afflicts a person with leukemia, intending, based on His divine wisdom, for this person to face the disease with greater faith, turning to Allah in prayer and supplication. However, the afflicted individual responds with discontent, despair, substance abuse, and other forms of rebellion. In this scenario, the affliction of leukemia appears as free evil without any good outcome, despite Allah's intention for it to lead to a greater good. According to this view, the person's response to the affliction nullified the intended good, transforming it into free evil. Therefore, from this perspective, Allah is not seen as the cause of this evil, since His intention was good, not evil!

This reasoning is flawed. Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), possesses eternal and comprehensive knowledge of all that has happened, is happening, and will happen. His

⁹⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim, "Shifa' Al-'Aleel fee Masa'el Al-Qada'a Waa Al-Qadar Waa Al-Hikmah Waa At-Ta'alil" (Healing the Sick in Matters of Fate, Destiny, Wisdom and Reasoning), p. 372.

knowledge encompasses every possible outcome and eventuality. Allah knew everything from eternity, and this knowledge was inscribed in the Preserved Tablet fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth. As stated in the Quran: “No calamity or blessing occurs on earth or in yourselves without being written in a Record before We bring it into being. This is certainly easy for Allah.”⁹⁵ Thus, denying Allah's knowledge of the future as a response to the problem of evil contradicts our belief in Allah's attributes and perfection, as well as our understanding of fate and destiny. There is no doubt that the misguided beliefs arise from an attempt to absolve Allah of the responsibility for wanting or creating evil, moving away from the guidance of revelation. “Whoever Allah does not bless with light will have no light!”

⁹⁵ Surah Al-Hadid: AYAT 22.

Is Evil a Problem or a Manifestation of Divine Law?

In the Holy Quran, we read the words of Allah, the Most High and Blessed: “He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days—and His Throne was upon the waters—in order to test which of you is best in deeds.”⁹⁶ In this verse, Allah, be He glorified and exalted, reveals the purpose behind the creation of the heavens, the earth, and the entire universe: “... in order to test which of you is best in deeds.” The purpose of all creation is to test humanity, making it clear that this test is a cosmic law embedded in the very fabric of the heavens and the earth, intertwined with the system of the universe, its laws, and its principles. This understanding should lead people to recognize the significance of this cosmic law, to revere it, and to take it with the seriousness it demands.

This theme is echoed in other parts of the Quran within various significant contexts, such as in the words of Allah, the Most High and Blessed: “We have indeed made whatever is on earth as an adornment for it, in order to test which of them is best in deeds,”⁹⁷ and again in His saying: “He is the One Who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds.”⁹⁸ These verses establish that the testing of humankind is a fundamental law of the universe and of life on earth. It is not a random occurrence without intent, nor is it a trivial act without wisdom, nor is it arbitrary without purpose. Rather, the trials and tribulations are deliberate, designed to expose what lies hidden within the

⁹⁶ Surah Hud: AYAT 7.

⁹⁷ Surah Al-Kahf: AYAT 7.

⁹⁸ Surah Al-Mulk: AYAT 2.

souls of the children of Adam in the form of deeds and behaviors, for which there is reward and punishment.

The internalization of this truth keeps a person constantly vigilant, cautious, and conscious, attentive to both the smallest and largest matters, whether they concern inner intentions or outward actions. It prevents one from becoming negligent or indulgent, from seeking comfort at the expense of duty, or from being deceived by the transient pleasures of worldly life. For every individual has a purpose in this world that must be fulfilled, and a mission that must be accomplished.

This truth is further affirmed by the words of Allah, the Most High and Blessed: “Every soul will taste death. And We test you ‘O humanity’ with good and evil as a trial, then to Us you will ‘all’ be returned.”⁹⁹ We are in a state of test and examination in this world, and this test concludes with death, after which we all return to Allah, and then the reckoning will take place. This test manifests in various forms, some of which we will now explore:

First: The Test of Blessings and Goodness Allah tests humanity with the blessings, abilities, talents, and resources He bestows. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, “... His Will is to test you with what He has given ‘each of’ you.”¹⁰⁰ For example, a scholar is tested with the knowledge Allah has granted him—does he act upon it, or does he withhold it from others? Does he remain humble, or does he become arrogant?

A person with power is tested by how they wield it. One with influence is tested by how they use their prestige.

⁹⁹ Surah Al-Anbya: AYAT 35.

¹⁰⁰ Surah Al-Ma'idah: AYAT 48.

Someone with a beautiful voice is tested in how they choose to use it—do they recite the Quran, pleasing Allah, or do they engage in singing, music, and spreading corruption?

A person with physical beauty is tested by their appearance—do they fear Allah and act modestly, or do they use their beauty to seduce and mislead others?

In this way, people are tested through the energies, talents, and capabilities that Allah has given them.

Second: The Trial of Wealth One of the most challenging trials a person can face is the test of wealth. This trial may come in various forms, such as financial need, loss in business, depletion of assets, or the obligation to spend money on zakat and other responsibilities Allah has imposed.

Third: The Trial of Calamities Calamities such as diseases, poverty, forced migration, imprisonment, and the death of loved ones are severe trials that test a person's patience and faith. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, *“We will certainly test you with a touch of fear and famine and loss of property, life, and crops. Give good news to those who patiently endure.”*¹⁰¹

Fourth: The Trial in Calling to Allah Engaging in the call to Allah (da'wah) brings its own set of trials, including forced migration, legitimate jihad, imprisonment, and the ongoing struggle against counter-media propaganda. These trials serve as a test for those who dedicate themselves to spreading the message of Islam. They also include financial sacrifices, charitable giving, fulfilling the needs of others, and enduring the losses encountered during warfare and legitimate jihad. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, *“You ‘believers’ will surely be tested in your wealth and yourselves, and you will certainly hear many hurtful words from those who were given the Scripture before you and*

¹⁰¹ Surah Al-Baqarah: AYAT 155.

‘from’ the polytheists. But if you are patient and mindful ‘of Allah’—surely this is a resolve to aspire to.”¹⁰²

Fifth: The Test of Disparity in Creation Allah, the Most High and Blessed, has created people with varying levels of physical strength, mental abilities, and socio-economic conditions. There are rich and poor, strong and weak, intelligent and less so. This diversity serves to fulfill the divine law of testing. Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says, “He is the One Who ... elevated some of you in rank over others, so He may test you with what He has given you.”¹⁰³ Allah, the Most high, also states, “... but His Will is to test you with what He has given ‘each of’ you.”¹⁰⁴ The rich are tested by the poor, the leaders by those in their care, and the wise by the unaware. “We have made some of you a trial for others. Will you ‘not then’ be patient?”¹⁰⁵ The strong are tested by the weak, and the healthy by the sick. Each serves as a test for the other, requiring patience, empathy, and humility. The rich must console and give to the poor, avoiding arrogance or mockery, while the poor must resist envy and refrain from wishing ill upon the rich. Both are called to exercise patience and adhere to the truth.

Sixth: The Trial of Authority The affliction of kingship—encompassing authority, prestige, and influence—is a significant test.

Seventh: The Trial of Satan, Corrupt Environments, and Bad Company

The affliction of evils is not limited to specific individuals but rather extends to all of the children of Adam, encompassing both believers and disbelievers alike.

This universal law applies to the entire human race without distinction between a believer and a disbeliever, or between an Arab and a non-Arab.

¹⁰² Surah Ali 'Imran: AYAT 186.

¹⁰³ Surah Al-An'am: AYAT 165.

¹⁰⁴ Surah Al-Ma'idah: AYAT 48.

¹⁰⁵ Surah Al-Furqan: AYAT 20.

However, the severity and nature of these afflictions vary from person to person. Allah, **Blessed Is He And Most High**, in His infinite justice and wisdom, decrees everything in a balanced measure. As narrated by Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas (RA): Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked: “O Messenger of Allah, which people are most severely tested?” He said: **‘The Prophets, then the next best and the next best. A person is tested according to his religious commitment. If he is steadfast in his religious commitment, he will be tested more severely, and if he is frail in his religious commitment, his test will be according to his commitment. Trials will continue to afflict a person until they leave him walking on the earth with no sin on him.’”**¹⁰⁶

The key point here is that affliction with evils is a universal divine law affecting all people without exception. It begins at birth and continues through childhood, youth, old age, and ultimately ends at death. Allah, the Most High, says, **“Indeed, We have created humankind in ‘constant’ struggle.”**¹⁰⁷ meaning that: life is filled with toil, hardship, and pain. No person is exempt from affliction; whether it be illness in oneself or in loved ones, such as a spouse or children, or through poverty, financial loss, the death of loved ones, or difficult relationships with a spouse or neighbor. These are but a few of the manifestations of worldly afflictions that we witness daily. We see many examples in our daily lives: a man laboring from morning until night to provide for his family, a sick person enduring the suffering of illness while shuttling between the hospital and the pharmacy, a mourner visiting the grave of a beloved, or a once-wealthy individual who has become poor, a once-strong person who has become weak, or a once-respected individual

¹⁰⁶ Ahmad (1494), Tirmidhi (3289), and al-Durami (2783) recorded this Hadith, and was authenticated by al-Arna’ut.

¹⁰⁷ Surah Al-Balad: AYAT 4.

who is now humiliated. This is the reality of life, as the poet wisely observes:

**The world was born from sorrow's deep embrace,
Yet you seek to rid it of every trace.
To wish for life free from pain's cruel art,
Is like seeking fire in waters' heart.**

If this understanding is established, we can categorize people's responses to trials as follows:

First: Those who are deprived of goodness, facing trials with discontent, suspicion, and accusations against fate, and possibly even disbelief and atheism.

Second: Those who are successful, facing trials with patience and a positive outlook on Allah.

Third: Those who are content, meeting trials with gratitude and a level of satisfaction that surpasses mere patience.

When a trial befalls you, two actions are essential:

First: Fear Allah and hold fast to Him. Among the greatest and most crucial means to repel a trial and find salvation from the evils of this world and the hereafter is sincere fear of Allah, [the Most High and Blessed](#), and steadfast adherence to Him. This includes turning to Him with intention, love, fear, hope, trust, repentance, and submission to Allah and His Messenger ([PBUH](#)). It is vital to earnestly strive in ways pleasing to Allah and His Messenger, for this is the path to happiness, the hallmark of success, and the route to salvation.

Fearing Allah, the Most High and Blessed, and holding fast to Him offers profound protection and security. It safeguards one's religion, shields against fears, guarantees safety from dangers, and provides deliverance from calamities. It ensures victory over adversaries and acts as a powerful talisman against enemies. This steadfastness is the impenetrable fortress and the ultimate barrier, serving as the foundation of safety in both this

world and the hereafter, and the path to salvation, security, honor, and triumph.

Obedying Allah leads to honor, sufficiency, and victory, just as it brings guidance, success, and salvation. Allah has made the happiness of both worlds contingent upon obedience to Him, while disobedience leads to misery in both realms. For those who are devoted to Him, there is guidance, security, success, honor, sufficiency, victory, guardianship, and support, ensuring a good life in this world and the next. Conversely, His opponents face humiliation, smallness, fear, misguidance, disappointment, and suffering in both worlds.

Second: Repel calamity through supplication. It is a crucial remedy and a powerful tool for believers. Supplication acts as a shield against calamities, with the prophets demonstrating its importance. As Allah, *be He glorified and exalted*, says, “And ‘remember’ when Job cried out to his Lord, ‘I have been touched with adversity, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful.’ * So We answered his prayer and removed his adversity, and gave him back his family, twice as many, as a mercy from Us and a lesson for the ‘devoted’ worshippers.”¹⁰⁸ Allah, the Most High and Blessed, also says, “And ‘remember’ when the Man of the Whale stormed off ‘from his city’ in a rage, thinking We would not restrain him. Then in the ‘veils of’ darkness he cried out, ‘There is no god ‘worthy of worship’ except You. Glory be to You! I have certainly done wrong.’”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Surah Al-Anbya: AYAT 83-84.

¹⁰⁹ Surah Al-Anbya: AYAT 87.

Supplication is a potent medicine, countering calamities and providing relief. It can prevent calamities from descending, alleviate them if they do occur, and is a believer's weapon against misfortune. As the hadith states: **“Nothing turns back the Decree except supplication.”**¹¹⁰ Supplication has different effects on calamity:

When it is **stronger than the calamity**, it repels it entirely.

When it is **weaker than the calamity**, the calamity may still prevail, but supplication can mitigate its impact.

When **they oppose each other**, they struggle, as stated in the hadith: **“The dua meets the calamity that has been decreed and wrestles with it, until the Day of Resurrection.”**¹¹¹

Supplication remains an open avenue for the servant to reach out to their Lord at any time, day or night, in both prosperity and adversity, with the certainty of an answer. This raises an important question: **Why might Allah not answer our dua?** This will be addressed in the next chapter.

¹¹⁰ Ahmad (5/277), ibn Majah (90), and Tirmidhi (139) recorded this Hadith, and was authenticated by Al-Albani in “Sahih Al-Jami” (7687) and “al-Sahihah” (145).

¹¹¹ Tabarani (2/800) (33) recorded this Hadith, and was authenticated by Al-Albani in “Sahih Al-Jami” (7739).

Why Did Allah Not Answer My Dua?

People are naturally inclined to seek means to fulfill their needs. When thirsty, one asks for water; when hungry, for food; when seeking a job, one applies; and when desiring to trade, one strives to achieve it, and so on. This pursuit of means is not confined to material causes but extends to the unseen as well. Among the most significant of these unseen causes—and perhaps the greatest—is supplication (dua). Supplication is the weapon of the believer, the provision of the patient, the oppressed, the weak, and the poor.

However, despite this, there may be instances where Allah does not answer the supplication. **It is essential to understand that the answering of supplication is ultimately an act of Allah, the Most High and Blessed, contingent upon His will. It is not an automatic or mechanical process where one merely prays, and the response is immediate.** Instead, it is subject to the will of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, and is deeply intertwined with His wisdom, Blessed Is He And Most High. Every act of Allah is rooted in wisdom, justice, and truth. Even when a supplication meets all the conditions for being answered and faces no apparent obstacles, it does not guarantee that the response will align exactly with the supplicant's desires.

Thus, when Allah does not answer a specific supplication, it is due to reasons, wisdom, and meanings that are often beyond our understanding. The obstacles to an answered supplication are numerous and can stem from the individual, the nature of the supplication, or the overarching wisdom of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. Here are some of these obstacles:

First: One of the significant barriers to having a supplication answered is indulgence in what is forbidden, whether in food, drink, clothing, or nourishment¹¹². The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) narrated the story of a man who traveled a long distance, disheveled and dusty, stretching his hands to the sky, calling out, “O Lord! O Lord!” Yet, his food was unlawful, his drink was unlawful, his clothing was unlawful, and he was nourished by what is unlawful. The Prophet then posed the rhetorical question: “How can that be answered?!”¹¹³ This example illustrates that the man had four reasons that typically would make his supplication likely to be answered:

1. Traveling a Long Distance.

2. A Humble and Disheveled Appearance; The Prophet (PBUH) said, **“Many a person with disheveled hair and covered with dust is turned away from the doors (whereas he is held in such a high esteem by Allah) that if he were to adjure in the name of Allah (about anything) Allah would fulfil that.”**¹¹⁴

3. Raising Hands to the Sky; The Prophet (PBUH) said, **“Your Lord is munificent and generous, and is ashamed to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him.”**¹¹⁵

4. Repeatedly Calling on Allah’s Lordship, “O Lord! O Lord!”

¹¹² Ibn Rajab, “Jami’ al-Ulum waa’ al-Hikam” (Collection of Sciences and Wisdom), Vol. 1, p. 277.

¹¹³ Muslim (1015) recorded this Hadith.

¹¹⁴ Muslim (2622) recorded this Hadith.

¹¹⁵ Abu Dawoud (1488) recorded this Hadith, and was authenticated by Al-Albani.

Despite all these factors, the Prophet (PBUH) questioned, **“How can that be answered?!”** This question was one of astonishment, rejection, and denunciation.

Therefore, a Muslim must repent to Allah, the Most High and Blessed, and ensure that his food, drink, and clothing are lawful, so he can be free from this significant obstacle that prevents his supplication from being answered.

Second: Another significant obstacle to having supplications answered is impatience—when a person hastens due to a perceived delay in the response and ultimately abandons the supplication altogether. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) warned against this impatience, emphasizing that it can prevent a supplication from being answered. He advised that one should never lose hope in having their supplication answered, even if the wait seems long, as Allah, **be He glorified and exalted**, loves those who persist in their prayers. In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **“A person’s supplication will be answered as long as he does not rush and say: ‘I supplicated, but my supplication was not answered.’”**¹¹⁶ He also said, **“A person’s supplication will continue to be answered as long as he does not ask for something sinful or for the severing of family ties, and as long as he is not impatient.”** When asked what impatience entails, he explained: **“It is when one says: ‘I supplicated, I supplicated, but I did not see that my supplication was answered,’ and then he becomes frustrated and stops supplicating.”**¹¹⁷

A person should not rush to have their supplication answered, for Allah may delay the response for various reasons: perhaps the conditions for acceptance have not been met, or committing an act preventing supplication from being answered, or there might be reasons that are in the

¹¹⁶ Both Al-Bukhari (6340) and Muslim (2735) recorded this Hadith.

¹¹⁷ Muslim (2735) recorded this Hadith.

person's best interest, though they may not be immediately apparent. If a supplication seems unanswered, it is essential for the individual to reflect, repent from all sins, and trust in the goodness of what Allah has decreed for them in both this world and the hereafter. As long as one continues to supplicate with hope and without interruption, they are close to receiving an answer. Just as someone who persistently knocks on a door is likely to have it opened, so too is the persistent supplicant likely to have their prayer answered.

The answer may be delayed for a long time, much like how Allah, be He glorified and exalted, delayed the response to Jacob's plea for the return of his son Joseph, who was a noble prophet, or how He delayed the relief of His prophet Job (PBUH) from his suffering. Sometimes, Allah may give the supplicant something better than what they asked for, or He may protect them from a greater harm. Truly, Allah is All-Wise, All-Aware, and Allah knows what is best, even when we do not understand!

Third: Committing sins and transgressions can be a significant obstacle to having supplications answered. As some of the righteous predecessors (Salaf) wisely advised: [Do not be impatient for the answer when you have blocked its path with sins.](#)

Fourth: Abandoning obligatory acts of worship can also hinder the acceptance of supplications. Conversely, performing acts of obedience is a means to ensure that prayers are answered. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) warned, [“By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you must enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him and He will not answer you.”](#)¹¹⁸

Fifth: Sometimes, the issue lies not with the person making the supplication but with the nature of the supplication itself. For instance, if

¹¹⁸ Both Ahmad (23327) and Tirmidhi (2169) recorded this Hadith, and was authenticated by Al-Albani.

someone supplicates for something sinful or for the severing of family ties, such prayers will not be answered.

Sixth: There are times when, according to Divine Wisdom, a specific supplication is not answered in the way the supplicant desires. Instead, Allah may grant something far better than what was asked for. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **“There is no Muslim who supplicates to Allah with a supplication that does not contain sin or severing of family ties, except that Allah will give him one of three things: Either He will quickly fulfill his supplication, or He will store it up for him in the Hereafter, or He will divert from him an equivalent amount of evil.”** Upon hearing this, the companions remarked: “Then we should increase our supplications.” The Prophet responded: **“Allah has even more.”**¹¹⁹ This highlights that even when a supplication seems unanswered, it may be fulfilled in a way that is even more beneficial, whether in this world or the Hereafter.

In Summary:

Supplication is one of the most powerful means to achieve one’s desires and to ward off calamity. However, the effect of supplication may be delayed due to various reasons. These include: a weakened heart that is not fully turning to Allah during supplication, a flaw in the supplication itself (such as asking for something that Allah does not love), or the presence of obstacles like consuming unlawful food, wearing unlawful clothing, immersing oneself in sins, or hastening and then abandoning the supplication. Additionally, Allah may choose not to answer a supplication in this world in order to grant something better in the Hereafter, to avert a greater harm, or to give something even better in this world. Ultimately,

¹¹⁹ Ahmad (11133) recorded this Hadith, and al-Arna’ut stated that: its chain is authentic. It was authenticated by Al-Albani in “Al-Adab Al-Mufrad” (547).

Allah's wisdom is perfect, and His plan is always in the best interest of His servants.

What is the Purpose Behind the Creation of Iblis?

We have previously established that free evil, which contains no trace of good, does not truly exist, nor is it created by Allah. Such "free evil" is, in essence, free nothingness.

However, this raises a common objection: If Allah created Iblis, and Iblis appears to be entirely evil, then how can we reconcile this with the idea that free evil does not exist?

[In response to this objection,](#)

it is important to recognize that the creation of Iblis serves profound purposes, contains inherent wisdom, and results in benefits that only Allah fully understands. Allah, [be He glorified and exalted](#), did not create Iblis in vain, nor did He intend to bring harm or destruction to His servants through Iblis's existence. Indeed, the creation of Iblis, like all of Allah's creations, is marked by divine wisdom, overwhelming evidence, clear signs, and abundant blessings. To draw an analogy, if Iblis is to faith and religion what poison is to the body, then just as the existence of poisons can have beneficial purposes and wisdom, so too can the existence of Iblis.¹²⁰ Before delving deeper into this, it is crucial to understand some foundational principles:

First: Allah's knowledge is all-encompassing and complete. The minds, understanding, knowledge, and wisdom of created beings are inherently

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim, "Shifa' Al-'Aleel fee Masa'el Al-Qada'a Waa Al-Qadar Waa Al-Hikmah Waa At-Ta'alil" (Healing the Sick in Matters of Fate, Destiny, Wisdom and Reasoning), p. 372.

limited and fall short of grasping the full extent of the wisdom of Allah, the Most High and Blessed, even in the smallest of His creations.

Second: Nothing in Allah's creation or dominion exists outside His will, desire, and power. Everything that occurs within His kingdom happens according to His will and divine choice. Therefore, to deny that any action or event is within Allah's will is to deny the very existence of a sovereign Lord and Creator.

Third: Allah, be He glorified and exalted, has intricately connected causes with their effects, both in terms of divine law (Shari'ah) and predestined fate (Qadar). Causes are the focus of His wisdom, both in His religious commandments and in His cosmic decrees. Everything within His dominion operates according to these causes, which govern the worldly and otherworldly interests of His servants, their livelihood, and their ultimate destiny—whether it be reward or punishment, lawful or unlawful. All existence is a chain of causes and effects, and this principle permeates both the law and destiny. The Qur'an frequently reinforces the concept of causality in both cosmic and legal contexts. If we were to catalog the instances in the Qur'an and Sunnah that illustrate this principle, they would number in the tens of thousands¹²¹.

Fourth: Allah, be He glorified and exalted, is infinitely wise and does nothing in vain. Every action He takes is infused with meaning, purpose, and wisdom, each serving as the intended goal of that action. His actions are not arbitrary; they stem from profound wisdom and are executed through causes that He has determined. Both His words and the words of

¹²¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, "Shifa' Al-'Aleel fee Masa'el Al-Qada'a Waa Al-Qadar Waa Al-Hikmah Waa At-Ta'alil" (Healing the Sick in Matters of Fate, Destiny, Wisdom and Reasoning), p. 378.

His Messenger (PBUH) confirm this reality in countless instances, making it impossible to fully enumerate them¹²².

With these fundamental principles in mind, we can begin to explore the purpose behind the creation of Iblis, the existence of disbelievers, and the presence of evil individuals throughout time and in every place. These are profound and multifaceted wisdoms, beyond the full grasp of human understanding, but we can attempt to highlight some aspects of this divine wisdom:

For instance, One of the reasons for the creation of Iblis is that He, the Most High, desired to select from among humanity prophets, messengers, saints, and martyrs who love Him and whom He loves. To achieve this, He allowed them to face His enemies as a test. When they chose Him over all else and sacrificed their souls and wealth for His pleasure and love, they attained a level of divine love, approval, and closeness to Him that would have been impossible without such trials. The degrees of divine message, prophethood, martyrdom, love and hatred for the sake of Allah, and loyalty to His saints while enmity towards His enemies are among the highest and most esteemed degrees. These degrees could not have been achieved without the existence of Iblis, his soldiers, his allies and his supporters from among both humans and jinn.

Moreover, true love for Allah is the ultimate perfection and happiness for a servant. Without this love, there is neither perfection nor true happiness. Genuine love for Allah is proven when a person chooses Allah over all other desires and endures the greatest hardships in obeying Him and seeking His pleasure. This love is not just professed but is deeply rooted in the heart, strengthened through trials and tribulations. Allah's wisdom

¹²² Same as previous source, p. 380.

requires the existence of severe challenges, the taking of risks, and the endurance of blame, as well as patience against the temptations and misguidance. It is through these struggles that the authority of Allah's love is solidified in the heart. True and lasting love is that which persists despite many obstacles, while love that is contingent on ease, comfort, pleasure, and the fulfillment of desires is neither true nor stable. Such conditional love fades when the conditions are no longer met. There is a profound difference between one who worships Allah only in times of ease and comfort and one who remains steadfast in worship through both ease and hardship, prosperity and difficulty, well-being, and affliction.¹²³

Additionally, Allah loves certain qualities in His servants, which only manifest when the causes for them are present. These qualities include patience, gratitude, steadfastness in battle, repentance, and purity. The realization of these beloved attributes is impossible without the existence of their corresponding challenges such as Iblis and his followers. There is no effect without a cause¹²⁴. Thus, the creation of Iblis, disbelievers, hypocrites, and evildoers is necessary for these acts of worship to be manifested by Allah's servants.

In Conclusion:

Allah, **be He glorified and exalted**, has decreed that the attainment of certain desired goals cannot occur without the causes He has established to lead to them.

Among these goals are the highest and most sublime forms of bliss, which can only be reached through specific means that He has ordained.

¹²³ Ibn al-Qayyim, "Muftah Dar As-Sa'ada" (The Key to the Abode of Happiness), pp. 13-14.

¹²⁴ Same as previous source, p. 18.

These means, in turn, often involve the presence of Iblis, his followers, and the enemies of Allah—those who ally themselves with the devils, whether they be disbelievers, hypocrites, or evildoers. Their existence in this world becomes a catalyst that propels the servants of Allah and His allies toward the highest stations in Paradise. This is, in fact, a manifestation of Allah’s complete grace and favor upon them¹²⁵.

However, some may object to the notion that Allah created Iblis, the disbelievers, the hypocrites, and the wicked merely as instruments through which the believers and righteous people attain the highest levels of Paradise and eternal bliss, while they themselves are condemned to Hell. To some, this might seem contrary to justice and mercy. The response to this objection is clear: Those who go astray do so only because of their own choices, and those who enter Hell do so solely because of their own actions, sins, and misguidance. Their entry into Hell is a just and deserved consequence, not an act of injustice or oppression. It is the ultimate expression of divine justice, which arranges reward and punishment according to a person’s deeds, behavior, and choices—actions taken freely, without compulsion or coercion. Just as the people of Paradise enter it because of their prior faith, obedience, and righteous deeds, the people of Hell enter it because of their previous disbelief, immorality, and disobedience. This is the very essence of divine justice.

If it is said: “Why did Allah not guide these wicked people as He guides His righteous servants? Why did He not place guidance in their hearts as He did in the hearts of His friends?”

¹²⁵ Same as previous source, p. 24-25.

We respond: Misguidance is a just punishment for these individuals because they did not seek Allah's guidance with the same sincerity as those who were guided. They did not follow the path of righteousness as the righteous did. While the servants of Allah were earnestly and sincerely asking Him to guide them to the straight path, striving in obedience, and competing in good deeds, these people remained entrenched in their misguidance and error. Consequently, the sealing of their hearts and their immersion in misguidance was a direct consequence of their heedlessness and willful turning away from the truth. Sins beget other sins, and each sin becomes a punishment for the sins that preceded it and distancing one from Allah and the straight path. It is akin to a father who instructs his son to enter the house through a particular door. If the son repeatedly disobeys and refuses to enter through that door, eventually, the father, in his wisdom, closes the door entirely. Thus, if the son later wishes to enter, he finds the door shut. This act of sealing or locking the hearts of disbelievers and the disobedient is a punishment for their prior disbelief and rebellion. The father's decision to close the door is driven by wisdom and justice—if the son continually ignores the door, leaving it open serves no purpose. Therefore, closing it is the prudent action when it has no further benefit.

Similarly, Allah's sealing of the hearts of disbelievers is an act of divine justice and wisdom. Every sin leads to another, just as the reward for obedience fosters further obedience. Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise, while lying leads to immorality, and immorality leads to Hell. These are interconnected causes, decreed by Allah and governed by His divine wisdom and command.

The roots of sin can often be traced back to the fundamental nature and upbringing of an individual. Those whose nature is aligned with guidance and righteousness will turn their hearts towards Allah, who in turn inspires and guides them, instilling the causes of goodness and success within them.

Conversely, those whose nature is not receptive to guidance may distance themselves from the truth, leading to Allah sealing their hearts as a result. It is part of Allah's mercy that He does not punish a servant for their initial sin except in this world, where they are tested with actions that could lead to repentance or fail to be a direct proof against them. In the Hereafter, punishment only follows when the prophetic message has reached the individual and has been knowingly rejected. This is akin to a child who, until reaching puberty, is not held accountable for their actions. Once they come of age, however, they are responsible for their deeds, and their first sin is recorded from which they could have repented. Regarding the creation of individuals with varying natures—some inclined towards guidance and others not—the wisdom of Allah's Lordship and Divinity is evident. Allah, be He glorified and exalted, the Creator of all things, including their opposites, embodies perfection through the manifestation of His names and attributes. His justice, wisdom, and omniscience are reflected in His creation. Allah, [Blessed Is He And Most High](#), sets the scales with perfect equity and does not wrong even an atom's weight. Everything with Him is measured with precision, and this is the extent of human understanding. We are limited in our ability to comprehend beyond this divine measure.

Divine Compensation in the Hereafter

We believe that Allah, **Blessed Is He And Most High**, compensates the believing servant in the Hereafter for the calamities and pains that befall them in this world. This belief is rooted in our understanding that these trials and sufferings arise from the wisdom of the Lord, **the Blessed and Exalted**, who has full knowledge of His creation. Our evidence for this is found in both the Quran and the Sunnah. For instance, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, says in the Quran: **“And ‘they are’ those who endure patiently, seeking their Lord’s pleasure, establish prayer, donate from what We have provided for them—secretly and openly—and respond to evil with good. It is they who will have the ultimate abode ...”**¹²⁶

Additionally, in a hadith, a black woman came to the Prophet (PBUH) and said: “I suffer from epilepsy and I uncover myself, so invoke Allah for me.” The Prophet replied, **“If you wish, be patient and you will have Paradise, and if you wish, I will pray to Allah to heal you.”** She chose patience and said, “I will be patient.” She added, “But I uncover myself, so pray to Allah that I do not uncover myself.” So the Prophet invoked Allah for her¹²⁷.

Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **“There is no calamity that befalls a Muslim except that Allah expiates their sins because of it, even the prick from a thorn.”**¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Surah Ar-Ra'd: AYAT 22.

¹²⁷ Both Al-Bukhari (5352) and Muslim (4801) recorded this Hadith.

¹²⁸ Both Al-Bukhari (5640) and Muslim (2572) recorded this Hadith.

This understanding is why the Sunnis affirm that Allah compensates the patient believer for enduring calamities. However, they differ from others, such as the Mu'tazila, on two key points:

First: Proving compensation does not imply that it is obligatory on Allah, the Most High and Blessed. The Sunnis maintain that compensation for calamities and trials is a manifestation of Allah's favor and grace towards His creation, not an obligation upon Him. Allah is only bound by what He has bound Himself to, according to His generosity and mercy. If Allah, the Most High and Blessed, has promised the patient a great reward, it is solely due to His grace and mercy, granted to whomever He wills among His servants. It is not something that can be categorized as a mandatory obligation upon the Creator or a right that the creature can demand.

Second: The compensation that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, provides for calamities and suffering is fundamentally different from the compensation that might occur between two creatures, such as a payment or a quid pro quo for enduring trials and hardships. Such a concept is inconceivable in the context of the relationship between the Creator and His creation. The rewards and compensation that Allah grants His servants are purely out of His grace and generosity. No servant has any inherent right over Allah, except for what Allah Himself has decreed out of His own will and mercy. As the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **“No one’s deeds will admit him to Paradise.”** The Companions asked, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, **“Not even me, unless Allah envelops me with His grace and mercy. So be moderate in your religious deeds and do the deeds that are within your ability.”**¹²⁹

Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah commented on this hadith:

“He refuted the misconception that Allah's reward is akin to the compensation and recompense seen among people in this world. In worldly terms, a worker is hired by an employer and is paid a wage commensurate with the work done; if the worker

¹²⁹ Both Al-Bukhari (5673) and Muslim (2816) recorded this Hadith.

increases his effort, his wage increases, and if he decreases his effort, his wage decreases. The worker is entitled to his wage just as a seller is entitled to the price of the goods sold. However, the Prophet (PBUH) clarified that Allah's reward and recompense do not operate on the basis of compensation, recompense, or equivalence as understood in human transactions."¹³⁰

This statement is indeed true **because the blessings and favors Allah, the Most High, has bestowed upon His servants are immense and unparalleled. These divine blessings, such as life, existence, and sustenance, far outweigh any relative or partial evil that may befall a person.** It is inconceivable that a servant could claim a necessary compensation from Allah when it is Allah Himself who created, nurtured, and sustained them.

Even if the trials and misfortunes a servant faces are severe, they are not comparable to the magnitude of Allah's reward.

The notion of compensation implies an equivalence between the calamities endured and the reward given, but this is not the case. The smallest portion of Allah's reward is worth many times more than the greatest trials faced by His servants. For instance, a single dip in Paradise will erase all the suffering experienced by the most wretched person in this world. Furthermore, a servant may experience a level of comfort in this worldly life that far exceeds the hardships they endure, especially if one applies the notions of compensation, recompense, or equivalence. Such a situation would be beyond the servant's capacity to manage or deserve.

Moreover, humans are fallible and prone to sin. Without Allah's forgiveness and His acceptance of their best deeds, they would not be entitled to any reward at all. For this reason,

¹³⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah, "Jame'a al-Rasa'el" (Collection of Letters), Vol. 1, p. 147.

the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **“Whoever is called to account will be punished (i.e. go to Hell).”** Aisha asked, “Does not Allah, the Most High and Blessed, say, ‘they will have an easy reckoning’?” He replied, **“That is merely the presentation, but whoever is called to account will perish.”**¹³¹

Allah, the Most High and Blessed, accepts from His servants their best and most sincere deeds while forgiving many shortcomings. Allah, the Most High, says, “It is from these ‘people’ that We will accept the good they did, and overlook their misdeeds—along with the residents of Paradise, ‘in fulfilment of’ the true promise they have been given.”¹³² Allah, the Most High and Blessed, also says, “As such, Allah will absolve them of ‘even’ the worst of what they did and reward them according to the best of what they used to do.”¹³³ ...

If our belief is in the compensation from Allah for both good deeds and the trials faced, it is important to clarify that this compensation is not an obligatory right owed to servants. Instead, it is a reward that stems from the deeds performed or the calamities endured, and it represents Allah's grace and favor upon His creation. The relationship between worldly evils and compensatory rewards in the Hereafter is one of cause and effect, rather than a strict quid pro quo or deserved payment.

This divine compensation in the Hereafter is reserved exclusively for the believers. The disbelievers, on the other hand, do not receive such compensation. The hardships and pains they experience in this world serve as punishment for their sins. Allah has purposes behind these trials that we may not fully comprehend. For some, this punishment may be severe, as

¹³¹ Both Al-Bukhari (6198) and Muslim (5254) recorded this Hadith.

¹³² Surah Al-Ahqaf: AYAT 16.

¹³³ Surah Az-Zumar: AYAT 35.

demonstrated by the fate of the people of 'Aad, Thamud, and Pharaoh's army. Their suffering is a part of their immediate punishment in this world, followed by further punishment in the Hereafter. Their disbelief and rejection of faith render their deeds futile, leaving them without any compensation.

Regarding those who are not accountable, there are two primary categories to consider:

1. Children. They will enter Paradise because they are born in a state of natural purity and innocence as per the fitrah, the intrinsic nature Allah created humans with. Any suffering or pain they experienced in this world will be compensated for in Paradise. Their trials will seem minor and transient compared to the immense joy and eternal bliss they will receive.

2. Animals and beasts. They experience pleasure, such as in their food, drink, sleep, and other comforts, which far outweigh any pain they might endure. Thus, their overall experience of pleasure is significantly greater than their suffering.

Authentic hadiths indicate that animals will seek justice on the Day of Resurrection, which reflects Allah's complete and perfect justice. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **"Rights will certainly be restored to those entitled to them on the Day of Resurrection, (to the point that) even the hornless sheep will lay claim upon the horned one."**¹³⁴ This statement highlights the extent of divine justice and the breadth of Allah's mercy towards all of His creation.

¹³⁴ Muslim (2582) recorded this Hadith.

Everyone is Afflicted with Evil, But...

It is an undeniable fact that all people, regardless of their status—whether they are chosen prophets of Allah or the most disbelieving and atheistic individuals—are afflicted with various forms of evil, calamities, and pains. Throughout history, no one, whether a believer or disbeliever, Arab or non-Arab, from the East or West, North or South, has ever claimed that their life proceeds exactly according to their will, free from evils, trials, difficulties, or pains.

However, the believer differs significantly from the atheist when confronting the evils of the world. The believer draws moral strength and positive energy from their faith, sensing the presence and companionship of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. This sense of divine company becomes a refuge and shelter, protecting them from despair, frustration, and hopelessness. The believer understands that every evil and every trial carries wisdom and purpose and that ultimately, these challenges are beneficial. This understanding fosters optimism—the belief that with hardship comes ease, that after difficulty comes relief, and that Allah will grant good in this world and the hereafter. Trials are seen as means to elevate one's rank and erase sins. This unique perspective is exclusive to the believer, providing them with moral strength and spiritual fortitude that empowers them to face the world's trials and evils with determination, positivity, and steadfastness.

On the other hand, **how can an atheist endure the bitterness of life without any purpose, believing themselves to be merely the plaything of blind, absurd coincidences?** For them, life has no ultimate end other than becoming a decaying corpse in a barren land, decomposing until almost nothing remains. Without the hope of accountability, punishment, or any

form of afterlife, how can one find meaning in a life filled with illness and hardship? What motivates an atheist to cling desperately to each passing hour, when those hours offer nothing but fleeting pleasures overshadowed by life's inherent struggles? How can they fill the void in their soul with bodily pleasures that are swiftly erased by the oblivion of death, leaving behind nothing but memories overshadowed by life's ongoing miseries? This is a profound misery for the soul and a torment for the body.

In 2004, *The American Journal of Psychiatry* published a study titled "Religious Affiliation and Suicide Attempt,"¹³⁵ which established a significant correlation between atheism and suicide attempts.

¹³⁵ <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp.161.12.2303>

The study revealed several key findings:

The suicide rate among atheists was the highest of all groups studied.

Unmarried individuals had a higher suicide rate.

Those with more children had a lower suicide rate.

Atheists were more aggressive compared to others.

Believers were less prone to anger, aggression, and impulsiveness.

Religion provided a buffer against life's burdens and stresses, reducing the likelihood of developing various psychological disorders.

Atheists were often the most socially disintegrated, lacking meaningful social connections, which made suicide an easier choice for them.

The study concluded with a significant recommendation:

Religious culture serves as an effective treatment for the phenomenon of suicide.

This is a reality observable both among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. For instance, in 2014, a study published in the ***Nursing & Health Sciences*** journal titled: "Religious and spiritual beliefs, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression among nursing students." examined students in Cyprus. The study found that over 98% of the participants acknowledged a direct relationship between religious and spiritual beliefs and higher self-esteem, as well as an inverse relationship between those beliefs and levels of stress, anxiety, and depression¹³⁶. Supporting this, another study conducted on medical and nursing students at a Brazilian university confirmed that students benefit from religious and spiritual support when facing the

¹³⁶ Papazisis G, Nicolaou P, Tsiga E, Christoforou T, Sapountzi-Krepia D. Religious and spiritual beliefs, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression among nursing students. *Nurs Health Sci.* 2014 Jun;16(2):232-8. doi: 10.1111/nhs. 12093. Epub 2013 Sep 16. PMID: 24102942. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24102942/>

difficulties and challenges of academic life¹³⁷. A third study, conducted in 2018, focused on nursing and social work students, and it indicated that strong religious and spiritual beliefs were inversely proportional to rates of depression¹³⁸.

¹³⁷ Gonçalves JRL, Jorge AP, Zanetti GC, Amaro EA, Tócoli RT, Lucchetti G. Religiousness is associated with lower levels of anxiety, but not depression, in medical and nursing students. *Rev Assoc Med Bras* (1992). 2018 Jun;64(6):537-542. doi: 10.1590/1806-9282.64.06.537. PMID: 30304312.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30304312/>

¹³⁸ Sakellari E, Psychogiou M, Georgiou A, Papanidi M, Vlachou V, Sapountzi-Krepia D. Exploring Religiosity, Self-Esteem, Stress, and Depression Among Students of a Cypriot University. *J Relig Health*. 2018 Feb;57(1):

136-145. doi: 10.1007/s10943-017-0410-4. PMID: 28484933.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28484933/>

The underlying point is that confronting life's vicissitudes and challenges requires strength, steadfastness, determination, and readiness—all of which are often lacking in those who adopt atheism as their worldview. In contrast, belief in Allah, even within the framework of distorted religions, provides individuals with spiritual resilience and fortitude to withstand life's harshest storms. **A Muslim, however, is uniquely positioned, for he has the support, victory, and guardianship of his Lord and Creator. Allah is the best Master and the best Supporter. Those who are loyal to Him are not humiliated, nor are those who oppose Him honored.** If all of humanity were to come together to benefit a person, they would only be able to do so if Allah had already decreed it. Conversely, if they conspired to harm someone, they could only do so if it was within Allah's will. This belief in divine decree and destiny makes a Muslim unshakeable, no matter how overwhelming the trials and tribulations may be. For a Muslim, refuge is found in the strongest of fortresses, and security is held fast by the firmest of ropes. All matters are in the hands of Allah, and to Him, all things return. He alone is the ultimate Disposer of affairs.

Appendix: Dialogue with "Hiro"

The following is a dialogue that took place in a private, confidential section of the Tawheed Forum over ten years ago with a young man who was in college at the time. The conversation revolves around the trials, tribulations, and evils present in this worldly life, as well as the purpose and wisdom behind them. I will refrain from adding commentary or introducing it, allowing the dialogue to speak for itself. I pray that it proves beneficial and enlightening.

Hiro

Hello, and welcome to my topic.

I want to start by wishing my Muslim brothers (with the best of intentions) a Happy Ramadan.

I hesitated before deciding to write this topic and share it in this section, especially since I have nearly lost hope in matters of faith.

I used to be a devout Muslim, committed to following the teachings of Islam, seeking knowledge, and memorizing the Quran. I lived this way from my early youth until about a year ago (I'm currently about to graduate from university). I've always had a passion for reading, especially books with intriguing titles that pique my curiosity. Among the many books and articles I've read, I encountered sections discussing the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin. While I personally wasn't convinced by it, it did open my mind and heart,

clearing away the veil that had formed due to what I now realize was inherited and superficial Islam.

Now, I declare with full conviction:

“There is no God because of the presence of injustice and the absence of justice. And if He does exist, then He is unjust.”

Allow me to explain what led me to this conclusion...

I was born with congenital defects in my heart and lungs, and I have to visit the hospital monthly, not to mention the numerous surgeries I've undergone. This means that God did not give me what He gave to the rest of my peers, friends, cousins, and everyone I know.

- When I was six years old, I was sexually assaulted by my brother—yes, my own brother. From the time the abuse started until not long ago, I wet the bed every night. This traumatic experience left me with deep psychological scars, including introversion, stuttering, a fear of meeting and interacting with others, and doubts about my masculinity. I don't feel any desire towards women, which means I can't marry or start a family like other people.

Where was the just God in all of this, allowing a child to grow up with such feelings? This is ugly!

- After the death of an elder in my family, I discovered that my father is not my biological father, and my mother is not my biological mother. My real parents abandoned me when I was two years old and left no trace of themselves. When I confronted my current parents, they didn't deny it. So, in plain language, I'm either a bastard or someone with no known origins.

- Your God didn't compensate me with anything—not a talent, not a beautiful voice, not even an acceptable appearance. In fact, many people have told me that I have the ugliest face they have ever seen.

Can anyone tell me where your God is in all of this?

Why has He left me in this hell for so long? Where is the justice in this?

I truly don't see it.

I can almost hear the response now: *"Be patient and seek reward, for God wants you to reach a status that you can only achieve through this suffering."*

To that, I say: Don't you also say that if God forgives us all, it won't increase or decrease anything from His kingdom? So why the torment, then? Couldn't He at least give us peace of mind without it diminishing anything from Him? Or does He enjoy seeing people like me suffer? Personally, I lean towards the second option.

I am not convinced at all by this concept of divine justice. I cannot believe in a God who allows such things to happen.

[Dr. Hesham Azmi](#)

Welcome, esteemed friend Hiro,

I read your post with great care and attention, and I have come away with several impressions.

First:

You might not need to discuss the evidence for the existence of Allah—the Creator, the Fashioner—

because the evidence for the existence of Allah is inherent in the existence of the creation itself.

For instance, how did you come into being? Who created you, shaped you, and caused you to grow?

You cannot argue that your parents were the ones who created you and brought you into existence.

The mother, within whose womb the fetus forms, has no control over its creation, let alone its formation, composition, and growth.

The fetus grows and develops, its characteristics and organs taking shape, all without her intervention.

Even if this mother wanted to influence her child's traits or appearance, she would not be able to.

You were born without your own will, your mother's will, or even your father's.

You continue to grow and develop without any influence from yourself.

So, who is causing you to grow and develop in this way?

All of this occurs along a predetermined path that you cannot control.

You cannot choose the color of your hair or skin, or any other of your characteristics.

More importantly, even in the prime of your youth, health, and full growth, you cannot change a single hair on your head.

You cannot prevent yourself from going bald, for example, or stop the onset of gray hair and the signs of aging.

In the face of all this, you are powerless, unable to do anything.

You might argue that all of this happens automatically through processes like cell proliferation or the secretion of growth hormones.

However, these are merely tools, not the true causes—

just as it would be misleading to say that a bullet was responsible for a murder, without acknowledging the person who fired it.

Now, consider the knowledge and will that Allah has placed in a child...

So tell me, respected friend, who guided the newborn to instinctively find his mother's breast and suckle?

Who taught him this just seconds after he was born?

This is an established medical fact, undisputed and unquestionable.

It is well-known that a newborn is born with pre-programmed reflexes.

For example, the Moro reflex, where if you stroke the child's cheek, he turns his face towards that cheek and opens his mouth.

Then there is the Suckling reflex, where if you place something—like your finger—in his mouth, he will instinctively close his mouth around it and start sucking.

These are well-documented facts in the recognized and authoritative sources on Neonatology.

This aligns with the words of Allah, the Most High and Blessed: "He answered, 'Our Lord is the One Who has given everything its 'distinctive' form, then guided 'it'.'" ¹³⁹

In this context, "given everything its form" refers to the act of bringing it into existence,

and "guided" means teaching it and showing it the path to survival and preservation.

The discussion on this topic is extensive and could go on much further.

¹³⁹ Surah Taha, 50.

Second Impression:

You seem to view what Allah has given you in this world with a lens clouded by pessimism, ingratitude, and denial of blessings.

However, I have no doubt that your life is better than that of many others.

As you mentioned, you are in your final year of university, which means you have received a higher education and are nearing its completion.

You also mentioned being of unknown lineage, yet someone took you in, cared for you, and ensured you were not left on the streets.

Furthermore, you spoke of your illness, yet you found someone who treated you, healed you, and performed multiple surgeries to help you.

These are all blessings from Allah, for which one should be grateful to their Lord and Master.

It is a natural human tendency that when one focuses on a particular issue, they often cannot grasp the entirety of it.

Instead, one aspect tends to capture their attention more than others, drawing them in.

When they fixate on this aspect, they may become blind to the rest or consciously choose to ignore them.

This inherent human weakness is present in all matters, both large and small.

There is no doubt that Allah has honored humanity with the gift of reason and thought.

However, a person cannot find the ultimate truth using reason alone, as it is often swayed by emotions and feelings.

These emotions can pull a person towards a specific viewpoint, overshadowing others.

When one leans towards a particular perspective, they may then use their reasoning to justify and prove it,

even if their rationality and intellect reveal other aspects. Yet, they may refuse to acknowledge their mistake or accept the truth.

Instead, they force their reasoning to produce arguments and interpretations that justify their inclinations.

Undoubtedly, Allah has blessed you with many favors that you cannot deny.

Take, for example, the blessing of sight—a gift beyond all others.

Where would you be without it?

Without sight, you wouldn't have developed a love for reading and books, nor would you have discovered the wonders of the internet.

In this regard, I recall the story of a devout worshipper from the Children of Israel who dedicated decades to worshipping Allah without interruption.

When the time of reckoning came and his spotless record was presented before Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), he was told: **"Enter Paradise by My mercy."**

The worshipper objected, insisting, "No, but by my deeds!"

Once again, Allah said, **"Enter Paradise through My mercy,"** but the worshipper argued, "No, by my deeds!"

This was because he mistakenly believed that Allah's mercy was of lesser value than His justice.

So Allah held him accountable according to strict justice, and it was found that all his deeds over those years did not equal the blessing of sight alone!

Glory be to Allah!

Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), is All-Knowing and All-Wise. He gives and takes, bestows and withholds, and everything with Him is measured and balanced.



So why did Allah decree this torment upon us?

And what is the divine purpose behind this suffering and struggle?

Let me share with you, my respected friend, that Allah, [the Most High and Blessed](#), has subjected Adam and his descendants to various kinds of calamities and tribulations.

However, in return, He granted them an unbreakable covenant, as stated in His words: [“Allah said, ‘Descend, both of you, from here together ‘with Satan’ as enemies to each other. Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray ‘in this life’ nor suffer ‘in the next’. * But whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life ...”](#)¹⁴⁰

This covenant was given in exchange for the trials and tribulations we endure.

For those who follow Allah's guidance, they will neither go astray nor suffer—referring here to spiritual, not material, suffering.

Conversely, those who turn away from Allah’s verses will face a difficult life, and this hardship is likewise spiritual and moral, not material.

This guidance, when it penetrates the heart, brings such joy and peace that those who possess it are relieved of all worries.

To the extent that one might be struck by a spear and still exclaim, ["I have won, by the Lord of the Kaaba!"](#)

¹⁴⁰ Surah Taha: AYAT 123-124.

Another, nearing the end of his life, might throw away food, saying, "It is a long life if I must wait to eat it," approaching death with happiness and contentment.

One may even say in poverty, "If the kings and sons of kings knew what we are in, they would fight us for it with swords!"

Another might declare, "There are moments when the heart dances with joy."

What the Muslim speaks of regarding faith in Allah and accepting His decree is not merely a painkiller;

rather, it is a genuine pleasure that the Muslim feels in their heart and witnesses in their own life.

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Allah, the Most High and Blessed, even wanted to test you to see whether you would be grateful or ungrateful and deny His blessings.

Allah tests His devoted servants with various trials to elevate them to lofty and sublime ranks that they could not attain otherwise.

He tests His sincere servants through challenges from His enemies; when they choose Him, follow His path, and sacrifice themselves and their resources in obedience to His commands, they gain His love, approval, and closeness—blessings that would be unattainable without such trials.

Allah, [be He glorified and exalted](#), loves those who are patient, repentant, do good deeds, fight for His sake, and remain grateful.

Hence, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, wanted to test His servants so that the patient among them would be patient, the doers of good would do good, the repentant would repent, etc.

Through these actions, His servants attain His love, proximity, and approval. They would not reach this elevated status without enduring trials.

It is known that the perfection of servitude cannot be achieved in a world free of trials and afflictions.

Therefore, Allah has subjected us to desires, calamities, enemies, hardships, dangers, etc.

The discussion on this topic is extensive and could go on much further.

The conclusion is that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, desires from His servants qualities that arise from enduring trials.

These qualities can only manifest in a context of affliction and testing. Since it is impossible for these desired qualities to occur without their corresponding trials, Allah created these reasons to lead to these beloved outcomes.

For example, Allah rejoices in the repentance of His believing servant. Repentance occurs only after a sin.

If there were no sin to repent from, Allah would not experience the joy of repentance.

Therefore, the occurrence of sin followed by repentance is better than their absence because Allah's joy is preferable to its absence.

Consequently, Allah's love for His servant necessitates creating reasons that lead to sin and subsequent repentance, enabling Him to rejoice and grant high ranks in His pleasure.

The affliction, torment, ordeal, and suffering of the servant are not desirable in themselves.

Rather, they are means to achieve the beloved outcomes, and these trials are not the objects of divine love but rather the paths leading to it.

Hero

Thank you very much, my dear Dr. Hisham. I would like to inquire about several points:

Isn't it a belief among Muslims that if all the people of the world were as pious as the most pious among them, it would not affect Allah's kingdom in any way? Conversely, if all were as wicked as the most wicked among them, it would not alter Allah's kingdom either. Given this, why are these tests necessary? Isn't it sufficient for Allah to know that His servant has regretted their actions and intends not to repeat them? After all, Allah is the Creator and knows the truth of our hearts. Why isn't that regret and remorse enough for Him? Why must we endure life's suffering and misfortunes merely because they are a test?

I don't mean to be obstinate, but I struggle to understand this concept, or perhaps it needs some effort from your part to explain it to me.

Why does God, who created me by His will, subject me to a test that I did not request or desire?

And who determined that I should live in the first place?

I arrived in this life without my consent and am now faced with these calamities. I did not even ask for any of the pleasures of paradise, so why must I undergo this test?

I hope my questions are clear.

Dr. Hesham Azmi

Hello, my respected friend.

From your comments, it seems you believe that Allah, the Most High and Blessed, should act out of need or necessity.

Since He is self-sufficient and does not need creation or their rewards and punishments, it might seem that His actions would be unreasonable.

This line of reasoning, however, is flawed.

Allah's actions are not driven by need or necessity because if that were the case, it would conflict with His absolute will and desire, wouldn't it?

but by His own attributes of perfection and absolute will.

For example, generosity is an inherent quality of a generous person. A generous individual gives and bestows not out of necessity but because it is their nature.

Similarly, a just ruler acts justly not out of necessity but because justice is an intrinsic quality of their character.

The sun rises and shines not out of need but because it is its inherent nature.

In the same way, Allah, the Most High and Blessed, creates, originates, and designs because it is His nature to do so.

When creation disobeys Him, does it harm Him in any way? Absolutely not.

Allah is self-sufficient and does not need our worship or prayers; rather, it is we who need them.

This leads us to the second point...

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All the trials and tribulations in this world serve to elevate Allah's servants to stations they could not reach without them.

For instance, how can a martyr achieve the highest station in Paradise without enemies to fight, thus sacrificing his life?

How can a Muslim attain the station of disavowing disbelievers and harboring enmity toward them if such adversaries do not exist?

Similarly, how can a fasting person achieve a high status without forgoing food, drink, and worldly desires?

Allah, [the Blessed and Exalted](#), desires to bring forth from among His servants prophets, messengers, saints, and martyrs whom He loves and who love Him.

For this reason, He tests them with His enemies, allowing them to prove their commitment by sacrificing their souls and wealth for His pleasure.

Through this, they gain His love, approval, and nearness—blessings they would not have achieved otherwise.



Your objection to your creation, as it was not by your own will or desire, is misplaced.

All of us are created without our consent, yet some are destined for Paradise and its eternal joys, just as you could be.

Why not strive to be among the successful ones?

In this life, suffering and struggle are inevitable.

Let your hardships be endured for the sake of Allah rather than against Him.

Reflect on the fate of the disbelievers who, when faced with torment, beg the angels of Hell for relief.

The angels' response is: "Did not the messages and prophecies reach you, and did you not disbelieve in them?"

Taste the torment, and pray, for the prayer of the disbelievers is only in vain."

Oh Allah, what a fate indeed!

There is a popular proverb in Egypt: "He fasts and fasts, then breaks his fast with an onion."

How tragic it would be to endure all this hardship in this world only to face painful torment in the Hereafter.

Hiro

Thank you, dear.

I would like to request further discussion on the topic of the unseen because I feel I am beginning to find acceptance within myself. Specifically, I am seeking evidence which is not from the Quran and Sunnah. For someone who does not initially believe in the unseen, I need solid proof and evidence to ensure that my faith is built on a firm foundation rather than a shaky one.

[Dr. Hesham Azmi](#)

Hello, esteemed friend Hiro,

I apologize for the delay in my response due to my fluctuating work schedule.

Earlier, I mentioned that when the mind accepts the truth, it conveys it to the heart,

allowing it to settle and bring reassurance.

In our case, this truth is the existence of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH).

Once this truth settles in the heart, it brings reassurance and faith.

The first outcome of this reassurance is a mental submission to all aspects of faith, including the unseen and the rulings whose purpose may not be immediately apparent.

In this process, the mind has two roles:

Conviction, which is necessary at the beginning.

Submission, which follows once conviction is established.

While conviction is essential at the beginning, it is not necessary to understand every detail or purpose at the end.

To accept the unseen, you must be convinced of the existence of Allah and the truthfulness of His Prophet and Messenger (PBUH).

However, it is not required to fully comprehend every aspect of the unseen or the rationale behind every legislative ruling.

We often practice this concept in everyday life.

For example, a child obeys a parent's instruction even if they don't fully understand the reason,

because they trust that the parent has their best interests at heart.

Thus, they obey the instruction even if they do not understand the purpose or reason behind them.

Similarly, a soldier on the battlefield follows orders from his superiors without question or hesitation.

In such circumstances, it is not practical or feasible for him to understand the rationale behind every command during combat.

The obedience in these cases is not due to a lack of insight but rather because of a foundational trust in the authority of the father or leader.

This trust provides reassurance and confidence that the decisions being made are in his best interest, even if the full reasoning is not immediately clear.

In this rational submission, there are two considerations that I will mention now and extensively explain later:

1. The principles established by Sharia do not contradict reason. Therefore, there is no inherent conflict between reason and Sharia.
2. Rational submission pertains to adhering to fixed Sharia texts rather than merely accepting human opinions or intellectual theories.

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If there seems to be a delusion of a conflict between Sharia and reason, Sharia must take precedence¹⁴¹. Why?

Because reason confirms the truth of everything Sharia has revealed, while Sharia does not necessarily confirm everything reason concludes.

This means reason supports the truthfulness of the Messenger in all that he has conveyed.

For example, if a layperson recognizes that a lawyer, doctor, or engineer is skilled in their field,

and then they disagree on an issue, whose opinion should be considered correct?

¹⁴¹ By "Sharia" here, we mean the clear, established, and decisive texts found in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Clearly, the specialist's opinion is the one that the layperson must accept.

This analogy is valid even though specialists might occasionally make mistakes, whereas the Messenger (PBUH) is infallible and cannot err in conveying Allah's message.

Furthermore, the Messenger's revelations from Allah are fundamentally different from a specialist's opinions.

The specialist's knowledge is acquired and can be comprehended and mastered by others,

while the Messenger's (PBUH) teachings cannot be acquired through study or reasoning alone; they must be received directly from him.

Accordingly, if a person acknowledges that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is indeed a true messenger and accepts his reports,

any mental objections to these reports should be addressed by deferring to someone with greater knowledge, rather than placing personal opinions above his teachings.

One should recognize that their own understanding is limited compared to the Messenger's knowledge of Allah, the Most High and Blessed, His names, attributes, and the unseen.

The disparity in knowledge between the Messenger and an individual is far greater than the gap between the general public and specialists.

For instance, if you trust a Jewish or Christian doctor's expertise on diet, medicine, and treatment,

despite the costs, discomfort, and potential mistakes, and follow their advice diligently,

you do so because you believe they possess superior knowledge in their field.

This belief persists even though doctors often make errors and not everyone is cured by their prescriptions.

You choose to accept and follow his instructions, even if your assumption and research contradict what the doctor orders you to do.

Given this, how should one approach the teachings of the messengers, peace and blessings be upon them?

The messengers are truthful and trustworthy, and their reports are always in accordance with the truth. It is inconceivable for their messages to contradict the truth.

Those who challenge the teachings of the messengers with their own reasoning display a level of ignorance and misguidance that only Allah can fully account for.

How can it be permissible for the ignorant and misguided to oppose the one who is infallible and always truthful?

If we were to prioritize human reasoning over the reports of the Messenger (PBUH), we would be relying on something inherently uncertain and subject to differing, conflicting opinions.

Reason alone is not a singular, established entity; it is fraught with differences and contradictions.

To favor reason over the divine guidance of the Messenger would mean directing people towards something unreliable and divisive.

In contrast, Sharia is the word of the Truthful and Trusted One (PBUH).

It is inherently consistent and unaffected by the varying opinions of people.

Thus, in the event of a dispute, it is both appropriate and necessary to refer to Sharia as the ultimate authority.

If people were to rely on human reasoning, opinions, and subjective standards, it would only lead to greater confusion and disagreement.

This is part of Allah's mercy towards His creation.

The only way to adjudicate disputes and disagreements is through divine guidance sent from heaven.



When contemplating issues of the unseen—such as monotheism, attributes, destiny, prophethood, and resurrection—you will find that Sharia is never contradicted by reason.

It is crucial to highlight this point:

authentic teachings in Sharia are never at odds with clear reason.

The messengers did not address what the mind deems impossible but rather the complexities that the mind may struggle to comprehend.

Meaning: They do not report on what the mind knows to be impossible, but on what the mind cannot understand.

Meaning: They do not report on what the mind knows to be untrue, but on what the mind cannot fully grasp.

If you examine the common disputes, you will find that genuine contradictions to authentic texts are merely doubts that reason itself judges as invalid and flawed.

The authentic texts in the Qur'an and Sunnah are never contradicted by clear reasoning.

Instead, they are often challenged by ambiguous and confusing arguments.

What is known to be true cannot be undermined by what is ambiguous.

In general, **the authentic texts in the Qur'an and Sunnah have never been contradicted by clear reason,**

nor should reason be given precedence over them.

Instead, what contradicts them are doubts and misconceptions based on ambiguous interpretations and general statements.

Upon closer inquiry and clarification, it becomes evident that these contradictions are sophistic arguments rather than genuine rational proofs.

The key point here is that if it were permissible to reject the Book and the Sunnah in favor of personal opinions and rational arguments, there would be no definitive source of knowledge or guidance.

This is the essence of the matter.

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End of the dialogue