What Does the Euthyphro Dilemma Reveal about the Nature of Allah?

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Abstract

In their book, *Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality*, David Baggett & Jerry Walls discuss the nature of the God of Christianity by studying the Euthyphro dilemma. This paper shall follow Louise Antony, Walls, and Baggett's model of the Euthyphro dilemma (Divine Command Theory) and uses it as an objective moral standard to study the nature of the theistic concept of divinity in Islam. After explaining the Euthyphro dilemma and making the distinction between voluntarism and extreme voluntarism. I shall argue that morality (what is good, right, bad, wrong, or evil) can easily be compromised on the extreme voluntarist view, unless it is constrained by the good nature of Allah. But, once the voluntarist nature of Allah is combined with some particular names/attributes (i.e., Ad-Ḍar and Al-Muḍil, Al-Mutakkabir, Al-Muntaqim, and Al-Qahar) and moral commands (i.e., Holy war, *mutᶜa* marriage, and adult breastfeeding), the morality of Allah is drastically compromised.

Keywords

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Introduction

The Euthyphro Dilemma is a philosophical concept that deals with the nature and the morality of the deity, which both are reflected in the deity's attributes and commands. It is logically impossible for a good deity to issue a bad/evil command. If morality is defined by the deity, then what is good, bad, or evil is defined according to the deity's discretion as well, and if the nature of the deity is bad/evil, then the definitions of good, bad, and evil have no inherent meaning because it changes according to the divine opinion. This concept has a huge effect on the morality of the people who feel obligated to follow, submit, and obey the divine command. By examining the concept of the Euthyphro Dilemma and applying it as an objective moral standard to the concept of Ashᶜrites' Sunni Islamic divinity, this paper shall study Allah's nature, attributes (the beautiful names of Allah), and overview few commands to argue that the Islamic nature of the deity is not good because Allah is the creator of evil. His evil nature is supported by few attributes that have detestable meanings and by few commands that demonstrate an odious standard of divine morality.

The Euthyphro Dilemma: An Objective Moral Standard

Socrates meets with Euthyphro at the Porch of the King Archon, outside the court of Athens. Socrates has been called to court on charges of impiety by Meletus, and Euthyphro was prosecuting his own father on a charge of homicide. The Greek norms consider an attack on one's father impious conduct; however, Euthyphro claims that prosecuting the wrongdoers is a holy thing, no matter what relation ties the prosecutor to the wrongdoer. The reader might notice that Socrates, from this point onwards, speaks mostly by explaining and asking questions to help Euthyphro clarify his points and reach a definition for the holy. He asks Euthyphro to define piety or holiness. Euthyphro thinks that what is dear to the Gods is what pious. Socrates declines this answer and explains that, according to the ancient Greek religion, the Gods often disagree on what they like or dislike. That makes some things both loved by some Gods and hated by other Gods. It follows that some things are both pious and impious, and that is impossible.

At this point, Euthyphro realizes his weak analysis and defines holy/piety in terms of what is approved by all the Gods. Then Socrates asks his famous questions, "Is the holy loved by the Gods because it is holy? Or is it holy because it is loved?" The next section is going to explain the dilemma in today's words. It shall examine what morality is, how philosophers developed that concept, and why it is relevant to our discussion.

The Euthyphro Dilemma of the 21ˢᵗ Century

The context of the Euthyphro Dilemma introduces a religious element into the discussion of ethics. Disputes of the 21ˢᵗ century as Louise Antony puts it, "translated into contemporary terms, the question Socrates is asking is this: Are morally good actions morally good simply in virtue of God's favoring them? Or does God favor them because they are—independently of his favoring them—morally good?"[1] The modified version of the classic dilemma can be read in this way: Is something moral because God commands it, or does God command what is moral?

However, this dilemma does not concern goodness only because morality is a wide term. It could refer to goodness, or it could refer to rightness. Goodness and rightness are distinct, especially if rightness is associated with moral obligation. Not everything that is good to do is obligatory to do. The first horn of the dilemma is called the pure will theory or voluntarism, and the second horn is called the guided will theory or non-voluntarism. Both, the pure and guided theories can be analyzed according to the good or the right. The pure will theory of the good says: something is good because God commands it, and of the right says: something is right/obligatory because God commands it. In the same sense, the guided will theory of the good says: God commands something because it is good, and of the right says: God commands something because it is right/obligatory.

Voluntarism Concerning the Good

Voluntarists, in general, believe that God rules the world in accordance to his commands, and judges all human beings, whether they have acknowledged God's authority or not, by their obedience to that law.[2] However, voluntarism with respect to the good endorses the view that an act is good in virtue of God commanding it. In other words, if God chooses an action and defines it as good, then that action should be regarded as a good action. This theory is also called the Divine Command Theory (DCT) according to the good. According to Antony "'Good' for the divine command theorist is synonymous with 'commanded by

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[1] Louise Antony, "Atheist as Perfect Piety," in *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?:A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, Robert K. Garcia and Nathan L. King, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 71.

[2] John Hare, *God's Command* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 52.

God.'"[3] This leads to the understanding that there is no goodness or badness apart from God's definitions. If that is the case, then there is nothing inherently good or bad, and thus nothing can explain God's choice of which act to endorse and which act to prohibit. This type of theory requires blind (fideistic) faith in the nature and character of God.

Voluntarism According to the Right

Voluntarism concerning the right (or moral obligation) is tantamount to a divine command theory of moral obligation. In this view, an act is obligatory because it is commanded by God. If the nature of God is good, then God would not order an evil command. So, if the command of God is constrained by the good nature of God, then no act rendered obligatory by a divine command is likely to be irremediably evil.

One of the ways to understand rightness is by defining wrongness. J. S. Mill says, "We do not call anything wrong unless we mean to imply that a person ought to be punished in some way or other for not doing it; if not by law, by the opinion of his fellow-creatures; if not by opinion, by the reproaches of his own conscience."[4] There is a big difference between considering what a rational person might want everyone to do, and what it is required of them to do. What a person is required to do, is supposed or ought to do, implies obligations. Therefore, voluntarism with respect to the right entails that actions are morally obligatory when they are commanded by God. In a nutshell, the theory of the good gives an account of the good, and the theory of the right gives an account for moral obligations.

Non-Voluntarism or The Guided Will Theory

This horn of the dilemma affirms that God commands something because it is good (or because it is right, depending on which variant of the theory is on offer). However, what makes the guided will theory unattractive to many theists in general and to Muslims in particular is that it formulates goodness or rightness on grounds independent of God. Levin explains, "If God wills what he does because it is antecedently right, moral standards become independent of God and in this instance, God's will becomes a function of something beyond itself. If

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[3] Antony, "Atheist as Perfect Piety," 72.

[4] John S. Mill, *John Stuart Mill's Social and Political Thought: Critical Assessment*, G. W. Smith, ed., vol. 1 (London, UK: Routledge, 1998), 324.

moral standards are as ultimate as God, God loses his unique independence."[5]
God seems irrelevant to something so important and central to the human
condition as morality. In other words, if God commands what is already good or
right apart from him, then goodness and rightness exist independently of his
commands. Morality is supposed already to exist in order for God to command it,
so the guided will theory makes God looks like a promulgator of the truth but not
the source of it. His commands simply convey what is already the case. If God is
the creator of everything, including morality (as the Islamic religion claims), then
ethics should be dependent on Him and not be separable of Him. Therefore, the
non-voluntarist view does not apply to theistic Islam. According to *al-Aqida al-
Tahwiyya* or the fundamentals of Islamic creed, "Everything that occurs is
according to His [Allah's] decree and will. His will is always accomplished. The
will of the servants is only what He [Allah] wills for them. Whatever He wills for
them comes to be, and whatever He does not will for them does not come to be."[6]
Human beings are endowed with the
capacity to choose and perform a course of action. These actions are created by
Allah and they are defined as good or bad by Allah's will only. Human beings are
responsible for their choices (good deeds or sins) on the Day of Judgment, but the
creation (*khalq*) of the acts rests with Allah alone.[7]

Distinction between Voluntarism and Extreme Voluntarism

An important distinction must be made at this point between voluntarism
and extreme voluntarism, for DCT according to the right is different from DCT
according to both the good and the right. As stated earlier, DCT according to the
right is a DCT of moral obligations, whereas the DCT according to the good and
right is an extreme version of voluntarism. For instance, Baggett and Walls are
divine command theorists; however, their view embraces a non-voluntarist
account of the good and a voluntarist account of the right only.[8] Their view is

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[5] Michael Levin, "Understanding the Euthyphro Problem," *International Journal of the
Philosophy of Religion* 25, 1989, 84.

[6] Abu Amina Elias, trans., *al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah in English and Arabic* [The
Fundamentals of Islamic Creed), retrieved from https://abuaminaelias.com/wp-
content/uploads/2018/12/Al-Aqidah-al-Tahawiyyah-in-English_2-and-Arabic.pdf

[7] Jeffry R. Halverson. Theology and Creed in Sunni Islam: The Muslim Brotherhood,
Ashᶜarism, and Political Sunnism (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 17-18.

[8] David Baggett & Jerry L. Walls, *Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality*
(New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 47.

voluntaristic in nature, but it is a DCT of moral obligation. They believe that a person has an obligation to obey what God commands; however, because of the good nature of God, He cannot and would not issue an irremediably evil command. God, on their view, generally commands what is good (with a few exceptions), which rules out God issuing utterly abhorrent commands.[9] Extreme voluntarism, on the other hand, is endorsed by certain philosophers. The most famous one is William of Ockham. His ethical theory has two parts. The first is positive moral knowledge, which "contains human and divine laws that obligate one to pursue or to avoid things that are good or evil only because they are prohibited or commanded by a superior whose role it is to establish the laws."[10] This knowledge contains laws that are similar to governmental laws, which are regulated by reason and enforced by the authorities such as police officers and juries. The second is the non-positive moral knowledge, which directs human actions without any precept from a superior, as principles that are either known *per se* or by experience.[11] Therefore, in Ockham's opinion, ethical theory includes divine command (positive morality) as well as principles (non-positive morality).

There are several interpretations of Ockham's ethical theory. For the purpose of this study, I will follow the predominant view of Ockham, which expresses the extreme voluntarism view, because it seems to be similar to Islamic theology. In the emphasis of radical voluntarism, nothing can restrict God's absolute divine power.[12] God, as the highest power, establishes all truths, including necessary truths.[13] According to the *Macmillan Dictionary of Philosophy*, "a proposition is said to be necessarily true, or to express a logically *necessary truth*, if the denial of that proposition would involve a self-contradiction."[14] The concept of necessary truth seems to be contradictory to Ockham's position. If necessary truth exists, something cannot be true and untrue at the same time and same circumstances (in all possible worlds). A bachelor cannot be married. A cat cannot be a reptile. However, on the extreme

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[9] On their view, God himself is the ultimate standard of goodness, so their non-voluntarism does not make morality independent of God.

[10] Peter King, "Ockham's Ethical Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham, Paul Vincent Spade*, ed., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 227-228.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Simin Rahimi, "A Resolution to the Euthyphro Dilemma," *The Heythrop Journal*, vol. 50, Issue 5, August 12, 2009, 754.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Antony Flew, ed., *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, 3rd edition, Macmillan Publisher, *2002*.

voluntarism view, God, the creator, creates all truths including the necessary truth, which He can change the definition of the truth. He can make what is true (cat is a mammal) and make it untrue (cat is a reptile). Alvin Plantinga calls this concept "Universal Possibilism: the view that everything is possible."[15] In such a view, God can create, order, and define according to his own approvals. If morality, as Ockham and universal possibilism concept seem to affirm, depends entirely on the will of God in Ockhamistic fashion, then it seems that even an act like hating God could have its evil characteristics separated from it and become a good act if God wills it. Extreme voluntarism seems to be similar to Islamic theology, especially the Sunni-Ashᶜarite position. If Allah can do all things and everything, but his morality is bad, then Allah can order human beings to do bad/wrong things and call it good. The next section shall discuss this position in more detail.

Allah: His Nature

The mainstream Sunni scholars affirm that Allah is the creator of the world. He is indeed All-Knowing and All-Powerful, and he created all things, including good and evil. The Qur'an reveals in several places that Allah is capable of imposing either good or evil on anyone he chooses, since no limits or restrictions apply to Him as the author and the creator of all things (Surah 2:55; 4:786:103; 13:16; 18:7; 47:31). However, the Ashᶜarites are not proponents of *jabr* (predestination). Instead, they advocate the middle doctrine of *kasb* (acquisition), which contends that all actions (good and bad) are not Allah's doing, but Allah's creation and the person's doing. Jeffry R. Halverson explains that Ashᶜarites believe that

> Every human being is presented with a finite set of potential actions at every instant in time, as one might imagine forty or seventy or a hundred doors presenting themselves at every step along a long path. Human beings, as God's vicegerent on earth, are endowed with the capacity or power (*qudra*) to choose and perform a course of action, being responsible for those choices (good deeds or sins) on the Day of Judgment, but the creation (*khalq*) of the acts rests with God alone.[16]

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[15] Alvin Plantinga, *Does God have a nature?* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1980), 90.

[16] Halverson, Theology and Creed in Sunni Islam, 18.

Contemporary Sunni scholar Said Nursi believes that "the 'acquisition' (*kasb*) of evil, that is, the desire for evil, is evil, but the creation of evil is not evil."[17] In his view, the cause and the request of evil is coming from the soul (*nafs*), which makes the soul responsible for causing and wanting the evil acts, while Allah who "creates the evils and brings them into existence," is not bad in nature nor his creation is bad in itself because these actions "have other results and fruits which are good, they are good."[18] Human beings are totally responsible for their own evil acts because it is they who want the evils. At the same time, people do not have the right to take pride in good deeds because their part in them is extremely small.[19]

Nursi imputes the nature of evil due to non-existence. He believes that all scholars who have researched this topic agree that

> Existence is pure good and light, while non-existence is pure evil and darkness. The chiefs of the people of reason and the people of the heart have agreed that in the final analysis all instances of good, beauty, and pleasure arise from existence, and that all evils and bad, calamities, suffering, and even sins are attributable to non-existence.[20]

Nursi's analysis could be summarized in the following way: evil is not inherently bad, if it is instrumentally good. However, this analysis suffers from three major problems: 1) when Nursi says that non-existence is evil, he has to define non-existence of what? For if Allah created evil, then he has created something (an entity or an act), and the non-existence of this "something" is pure evil. For instance, if honoring the person's father and mother is good, the absence of honoring (not honoring) the person's father and mother is not necessarily bad. A person might not honor them because they are deceased, which makes not honoring them not bad/evil, but impossible. 2) If creating evil, which results in evil act, is not inherently evil—but only desiring and doing evil is evil—then murder or torturing children for fun are not inherently bad/evil, but they become bad/evil when a person desires or does them. In fact, it is not necessarily true that the non-existence of torturing children for fun is pure good. For if the existence of

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[17] Said Nursi, *The Words,* accessed July 29, 2020, retrieved from*: http://www.erisale.com/?locale=en&bookId=201&pageNo=478#content.en.201.478*.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Said Nursi, *The Rays*, accessed July 30, 2020, retrieved from http://www.erisale.com/?locale=en&bookId=201&pageNo=478#content.en.204.89.

"playing with children for fun" is pure good, which is the opposition of torturing children for fun, then it should be advocated all the time. However, good parents do not agree that playing with children for fun all the time is pure good, especially when they want to teach their children responsibility and independence. 3) Nursi does not take into consideration the distinction between desiring and doing what is evil. He mixes the two categories together by considering them both pure evil.

Nursi's analysis suggests that good and bad/evil are created and defined by Allah. They are not independent of him because Allah created them, and he is the One who defines what is good and what is bad according to his own discretion. The act itself is not inherently good or bad, but it acquires its characteristic by Allah. By applying this analysis on Islamic law, prohibited acts in Shari'a law, such as drinking wine or eating pork products, are not inherently bad/evil, but they became bad after Allah's prohibition.

The claim that Allah created evil, but he is still good in nature because the same acts could be used for the good is not justified. Nursi does not take into consideration the creation of Satan. Muslims believe that Allah created Satan, however, there seems to be no good use for Satan, except for misleading believers. Ascribing the creation of evil to Allah affects his good nature. If Allah is the creator of evil, then his nature knew, experienced, and is tempted with evil regardless if he can commit or does not commit evil. The next section of the paper shall discuss in more detail how the concept of the nature of God, his attributes, and some of his commands support the idea that the concept of Islamic deity does not have a good nature.

The essentialist view of Islam shows that God is the source of both good and bad. The act itself is neutral, for it is not defined as good or bad unless Allah defines it. Goodness itself has no fixed definition; it relies completely on Allah's wisdom, and its content can always be changed and altered according to his approbation. The only way to know good from evil is through the revelation of Allah. Baggett and Walls note that such theology is drawing a radical distinction between any given act and its moral characteristics.[21] They contend that it is possible to separate those characteristics from the act. Thus, an act such as hating God "could have its evil characteristics separated from it and become a good act if God willed it."[22] That is to say, the act itself is neutral in nature. God could have commanded either this action or its opposite; however, Muslims are supposed to wait until Allah gives its characteristics.

Similar to Ockham and his model of voluntarism, Ashᶜarites' scholars

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[21] Baggett and Walls, *Good God*, 86.

[22] Ibid.

believe that people are not bound to know everything willed by Allah because of their finite nature. Human beings are limited in their awareness, especially their knowledge about the future. Therefore morality is totally dependent on the will of Allah, and if human beings know something, it is because Allah wills them to know it, in other words, because He declares it to them.[23]

Allah: His Names

The names of Allah have a very significant place in the whole system of Islam because they designate divine perfection, they tell people about the character of Allah, and they allow people, if they follow them, to go to heaven. Muhammad says, "Allah has ninety-nine names, i.e. one-hundred minus one, and whoever knows them will go to Paradise."[24] If God has the best names, then, logically speaking, he should possess the best divine nature and characteristics as well. This is to emphasize that the names of Allah are not merely arbitrary names; they are reflective of their bearer's essential traits.

It is worth mentioning that different Islamic schools have different opinions on the matter of Allah's attributes. Because of the limited space of this paper, the writer shall follow the Ashᶜarite's position on the matter of Allah's essence and attributes. Ashᶜarites argue that God's words about God, as manifested in the Qur'an, "set up the directives by virtue of which reasoned judgments about the essence–attributes question are to be measured. The affirmation of God's attributes should be coupled with the negation of implied anthropomorphic determinations."[25] They established this principle to avoid *mushabbiha* (anthropomorphism) and *mujassima* (corporealism). Ashᶜarism established a refined nuance between *sifat al-fiᶜl* (attributes of action) which come to be when God intends something and acts, and those of *sifat al-dhat* (attributes of essence), which are related to his essence. The contraries of the attributes of action are permissibly attributable to God, whereas the attributes of essence are not. This idea shall be clarified more when certain names of Allah, such as *Ad-*

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[23] Peter King, "Ockham's Ethical Theory," 238.

[24] Abi Abdullah Muhammad al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith no. 2736, (Damascus, Syria: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002), 675. "لله تسعة وتسعين اسما، مئة إلا واحدة، من أحصاها دخل الجنة" it is also mentioned in Hadith no. 6410, 1597.

[25] Nader al-Bizri, "God: Essence and Attributes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 128.

Ḍar and *al-Muntaqim* (the ones that have detestable meaning) are discussed.

Ad-Ḍar

The first name to discuss is *Ad-Ḍar*. It means "the harmful," and it is not mentioned in the Quran in the form of a name, but as an act that Allah is performing. The dictionary of the Quran explains the root of the word *Ad-Ḍar*, which is *Ad-Ḍarar* (harming) as the opposite of profiting. It also means drought and distress.[26] In Surah 6:17, Muhammad teaches his followers that "if Allah touches you with harm, none can remove it but He, and if He touches you with good, then He is able to do all things." Al-Qurtubi mentions in his commentary that the word "touches" is metaphorical, however, it means that "if a calamity strikes you Muhammad, whether poverty or illness, there is no one can lift it up except he [Allah], and if heath, prosperity, and Grace hit you (he is al-mighty) of good and harm."[27] This verse affirms that Allah is baleful and beneficial at the same time because there is no harm or benefit that befall on Muhammad and his followers that Allah did not cause. Ibn-Katheer echoes al-Qurtubi in his commentary explaining that "the utterance of God informing that he is the owner of harm and benefit, and he is the administrator in his creation as he wills, no pursuer for his rule, and no reversioner to his decree… as he says in Surah 35:2."[28] Ibn-Katheer's analysis makes Allah the owner of the harm and the sole administrator of the creation. His decree final and no one can change it.

Al-Tabari agrees with both Ibn-Katheer and al-Qurtubi that Allah is the source of *al-khair* and *Ad-Darar*.

> Allah says to his prophet Muhammad: oh! Muhammad, if Allah touches you. With 'harm,' he says: with adversity of this world, hardship in your living, and trouble, no one will reveal this to you except for Allah who ordered you to be the first who submit to his order and prohibition… 'He

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[26] " الضرر," *al-Mujam^c al-Ishtiqaqi al-Muwasel Lil Quran al-Karim* (Cairo, Egypt: al-Addab Library, 2010), 1277.

[27] Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami^c li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, accessed July 30, 2020, retrieved from https://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=5&tSoraNo=6&tAyahNo=17&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1 the original Arabic renders as: " إن تنزل بك يا محمد شدّة من فقر أو مرض فلا رافع وصارف له إلاَّ هو، وإن يصِبك بعافية ورخاءٍ ونعمة { فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ } من الخير والضر"

[28] Abi al-Fida' Ibn-Katheer al-Dimashqi, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-^cazīm* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Ibn Ḥazm, 2000), 678. The original Arabic renders as : " قول تعالى مخبرا أنه مالك الضر والنفع ، وأنه المتصرف في خلقه بما يشاء ، لا معقب لحكمه ، ولا راد لقضائه"

is able to do all things' says who is exalted: Allah who touches you with this, is able to do all things. He is able to benefit you and harm you, and he is able to do all things that he wills, nothing can incapacitate him, and refrain from something he has ordered …[29]

Al-Tabari repeats several times that Allah is able to do all things according to his will. Allah is the source of benefit and harm, especially that he is the creator of good and evil. He is the one who is responsible for benefit and *Ḍarar* because he is all-able to do whatever he wills. Some scholars might disagree with this analysis because they insist that the word "يُصِب" means touch in a metaphorical sense; however, the *Qur'anic dictionary* explains that the meaning of the root verb *aṣaba* is *arada*: "he willed (the will toward something and desire to obtain it) whether it is good or bad… (*aṣaba*) *arada,* the event that *tanzel* (descends or happen) to mankind, whether good or bad."[30] The present verb yoṣīb means in the Arabic language to make something happen, to descend on, to hit the target, and according to the *Qur'anic dictionary* to will. All these meanings are applicable to the verse and there is no need to understand the word in a metaphorical sense. When Allah wills something, he makes it happen, and there is nothing that can prevent it from happening. When Allah wills *Ḍarar* on a certain person, *Ḍarar* will be accomplished because Allah wants, wills, and can do all things. This verse does not take human free will into consideration. Even if it does, the idea that Allah is capable of causing *Ḍarar* reveals a malevolent aspect of his nature. Al-Qurtubi affirms this meaning in his book about the beautiful names of Allah, stating that "adding these two names together, ascribes to God the ability to benefit and harm people, and who is not able to benefit or harm, then he does not exist nor be fearful."[31] In other words, Allah being harmful is essential to his nature and thereby his existence, so people may fear him and the harm he can do.

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[29] Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Jameᶜ al-Bayan An Ta'weel Ay Quran*, Bashar Maᶜroof & Issam al-Herstani eds., vol. 3, (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Risallah Publisher, 1994), 230. The original Arabic renders as: يقول تعالى لنبيه محمد: يا محمد ان يصبك الله. بضر يقول: بشدة في دنياك، وشظف في عيشك وضيق " تعالى . "فهو على كل شيء قدير"، يقول ...فيه فلن يكشف ذلك عنك الا الله الذي أمرك ان تكون اول من اسلم لامره ونهية، ذكره: والله الذي اصابك بذلك، فهو على كل شيء قدير، هو القادر على نفعك وضرك، وهو على كل شيء يريده قادر، لا يعجزه "شيء يريده، ولا يمتنع منه شيء طلبه.

[30] "aṣaba," *al-Mujamᶜ al-Ishtiqaqi al-Muwasel Lil Quran al-Karim* (Cairo, Egypt: al-Addab Library, 2010), 1186.

[31] Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *al-Asna fi Sahreh Asma' Allah al-Ḥusna*. Vol. 1. (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Sahabeh Lilturath, 1995), 353. The Arabic translation is: " وفي اجتماع هذين الاسمين وصف لله تعالى بالقدرة على نفع من شاء وضر من شاء؛ وذلك ان من لم يكن على النفع والضر قادراً لم يكن موجوداً او "مخوفاً.

Otherwise, he just does not exist.

The word *Ad-Ḍar* in Arabic means the one who causes harm. This theme is repeated in the Quran in several verses. For instance, the reader of the Quran sees Allah as the one who curses people: "Verily, those who annoy Allah and His Messenger Allah has cursed them in this world, and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating torment" (Surah 33:57). Contemporary scholar Rateb al-Nabulsi agrees with al-Qurtubi that the name *Ad-Ḍar* by itself might cause confusion because of its negative connotation. Therefore, it is advisable by the consensus of the imams to use the composite form The Beneficial-The Harmful (*al-Nafiᶜ—Ad-Ḍar*) since God causes harm for the benefit of the believers.[32]

Al-Muḍil

The literal meaning of this word is "the person who leads other people astray from the truth."[33] *Al-Mujamᶜ al-Ishtiqaqi al-Muwasel Lil Quran al-Karim* explains that the gerund of the word "al-Muḍil" comes from *Ḍalala*, which is the opposite of going in the right direction or being guided by the truth.[34] It is important to note that the word *al-Muḍil* is similar to the name *Ad-Ḍar*, which has been discussed earlier. They both do not appear in the name form of the word in the Qur'an, but in the gerund form. However, the verb *Ḍarra* (ضرَّ), which is the root of the name *Ad-Ḍar*, is mentioned in several places in the Quran (Surah 6:39, 74, 140; 4:88).

Al-Nabulsi notes that these two names should not stand by themselves; they should be mentioned with their opposite names. *Ad-Ḍar* with *al-Nafe'* (the harmful and the Beneficial), and *al-Muḍil* with *al-Muhdi* (the misleader and who leads to truth).[35] Al-Nabulsi stresses the composite names because the names *al-Muḍil* and *Ad-Ḍar* by themselves have aberrant connotations that cannot be

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[32] Al-Nabulsi, "al-Aqida al-Islamiya: Asma' Allah al-Ḥusna," accessed October 10, 2016, URL: http://www.nabulsi.com/blue/ar/art.php?art=3596&id=55&sid=600&ssid=601&sssid=603 ; Saeed al-Qahtani, *Asma' Allah Al-Ḥusna Fi Dawe'd al-Kitab Wa al-Sunnah*, Abdullah al-Jabrin,ed., (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: al-Juraissi Publishers).

[33] "Ḍalala," *Lissan al-Arab Dictionary*, Vol. 11, (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Sadir, 2003), 390. The root of the word Muḍil is *Ḍalala*.

[34] "Ḍalala," al-Mujamᶜ al-Ishtiqaqi al-Muwasel Lil Quran al-Karim (Cairo, Egypt: al-Adab Library, 2010), 1297.

[35] Al-Muhdi is the opposite of the al-Muḍil. It means the one who lead others to the truth.

ascribed to God.[36]

The compound names imply contradiction to the nature of Allah for how is it a good thing for the people to believe in a harmful and misleading concept of divine being? Some Muslims might defend this concept by saying that Allah is harmful to the *kfar* (infidels) and the *ḍalinīn* (disbelievers) only, he does not harm believers. My problem with this attribute is not who is receiving *ad-Ḍarar* (harm), but my problem is by making *ad-Ḍarar* part of Allah's essence. When Muslims call Allah *Ad-Ḍar*—say that he created *ad-Ḍarar*, causes it, and inflicts on unbelievers—they attribute a lesser standard of perfection to his essence making him sounds like a harmful and malevolent god.

The name, the attribute, and the act reflect the essence and the traits of its bearer. This is a general principle and a necessary anthropomorphism. In the same manner, Allah's attributes as the harmful and the misleader reflect a direct contradiction to his goodness. To sum up, extreme voluntarism, which defines goodness according to the will and commands of Allah, combined with a bad nature, cannot produce a moral concept of God.

Al-Mutakabbir

Along with other names, this name is mentioned in Surah 59:23. The literal Arabic meaning of this attribute is "the arrogant." However, the English translation of the Quran that is being used in this study uses "the Supreme." The word supreme means in Arabic *al-Ali* (the top or superior to all others). Bearing this meaning in mind, al-Tabari comments that Allah elevated himself above all evil.[37] He is above all things, including evil. Similarly, Bawa Muhaiyaddeen explains this word as "the Self-expanding, the Majestic, Dignified, and the Great one."[38] Abdu-r-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'di echoes the same theme by stating that Allah is "the one who is above any evil, defect and deficiency due to His greatness and grandeur."[39] The best way to settle this issue is to survey how this word appeared in the Qur'an and the Hadith according to its context, and whether

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[36] Rateb al-Nabulsi, "al-Aqida al-Islamiya: Asma' Allah al-Ḥusna," *al-Nabulsi Encyclopedia*, 1995, accessed November 7, 2016, URL: http://www.nabulsi.com/blue/ar/art.php?art=3596&id=55&sid=600&ssid=601&sssid=603.

[37] al-Tabari, Jameᶜ al-Bayan An Ta'weel Ay Quran, 268.

[38] M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, *Al-Asma'ul-Ḥusna: The 99 Beautiful Names of Allah*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Fellowship Press, 1997), 10.

[39] Abdu-r-Rahman Nasir As-Saᶜdi, *Explanation to the Beautiful Names of Allah*, trans. Abu Rumaysah, (Birmingham, UK: Daar Us-Sunnah Publishers, 1956), 56.

it has favorable connotations.[40]

The word *takabor* (تَكَبَّر),[41] which is one of the several derivatives of the word *Mutakabbir*, is mentioned in several places in the Qur'an (40:59, 76; 46:10; 63:5). It is worth noting that it has negative and unfavorable connotations in all these places. According to the *Sahih International Translation of the Quran*, Surah 16:29 says, "So enter the gates of Hell to abide eternally therein, and how wretched is the residence of the arrogant."[42] That is to say, hell is the place of the arrogant. If this emphasis is true, then the "arrogant" interpretation does not indicate "the supreme" meaning. On the contrary, it implies the "*kafer* (non-believer)" meaning of the word. When Muslim scholars describe Allah with *Mutakabbir* attribute, they always use it with the definite article, such as *al-Mutakabbir*. However, they are not consistent in their usage with the definite article when it comes to some other names (such as *Muntaqim*), as this paper shall explain later.[43]

Here, it is necessary to mention that in Surah 2:34, Satan is called "proud." Allah said, "'Prostate yourself before Adam.' And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan), he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers." This verse uses the same Arabic verb *Istakbara* to describe Satan. This point arguably gets straight to the heart of the matter, namely, that Satan and Allah were called the same name in the Arabic language—Allah with the definite article and Satan without the definite article. Muslims change the meaning of the word from bad to good based on who is described by this word (Allah or Satan), and based on the definite article. If they add the definite article and ascribe it to Allah, then the

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[40] Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari are the second major official books in Islamic literature after the Quran, according to the Sunni sect of Islam. Any Hadith (collective talks based on Prophet Muhammad's words and acts) is treated as authentic and authoritative as the Quran.

[41] Mutakabbir describes the person, Takabor or Kebriya' is the attribute, and Istabara is past tense and the root of the word.

[42] English Meanings of the Quran, *Sahih International*, (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Abul-Qasim Publishings, 2004). This translation provides a clearer meaning to this verse.

[43] In non-Arabic Islamic countries, like Indonesia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan…etc., Muslims call their children Qadir, Rahman, Rahim, Shafi …etc. These are names of God as well, however, they do not use "al" the definite article, so it does not appear as if their children have godly attributes. But, in Arabic Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt…etc., no one calls his children with such names because they understand it as God's names/attributes whether it has "al" or do not have it. In Arabic Islamic countries, no one calls his son Rahman or Rahim, but they use "abd" (servant) instead to connote that this child is the servant of Rahman, Rahim…etc. These names still indicate the names of Allah despite the fact that they do not have "al."

word connotes a different/reverent meaning. Whereas, if they ascribe it to Satan, the word connotes bad/negative meaning. This use of the word *mutabbir* in my opinion is not consistent, for the word "*mutakabbir*-arrogant" is either inherently good or bad. It cannot be good when it is ascribed to God and bad when it is ascribed to anyone else. Allah can still be the supreme without the need to be called *al-mutakabbir*, and the Arabic language is filled with words that connote the supremacy of Allah, so *al-mutakabbi* is not the only choice.

Ironically, *Sahih Muslim* mentions a Hadith by Muhammad forbidding people from being proud because Allah hates it. He states, "He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise. A person (amongst his hearers) said: Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine. He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdaining the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people." As a matter of fact, if pride is out of self-conceit and not from Allah, who is the supreme in pride, does not this idea contradict that Allah is the source of everything, including pride?

This analysis raises several other questions and objections. For instance, it is a contradiction when Muslim scholars say Allah is proud and yet hates pride at the same time. If pride is something good (because it is part of the divine essence), why does Allah despise it? Actually, if God loves it and there is nothing wrong with it, then logically speaking, Allah should allow, cherish, and encourage it.

Al-Muntaqim

This name comes from Surah 3:4: "Allah is All-Mighty, All-Able of Retribution." The name and its concept are also mentioned in several other verses such as Surah 5:95, 32:22, 43:41, and 44:16. It is worth mentioning that *al-Muntaqim* name is not mentioned in this form in the Qur'an or in the Hadith. The attribute appears as *thou-intiqam* or *muntaqimoun* (in plural). Al-Ghazali explains in footnote no. 132 in his book, *Ninety-nine Names of God in Islam*, that "in each instance, this concept appears [in] plural form, though obvious that God is speaking only of Himself."[44] This name goes against the definite attribute principle that some scholars follow about forming the names of Allah, as being explained in the name of *al-Mutakabbir*.[45]

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[44] Imam al-Ghazali, *Ninety-Nine Names of God In Islam* [al-Maqsad al-Asna], Trans. Robert Charles Stade, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1970), 114.

[45] Review the footnote in page 18.

The literal meaning of this word is "the avenger, vengeful, and revenger." However, every time this word and its forms are mentioned, Muslim scholars translate it as "the able of retribution." The word retribution, however, is a very superficial translation, for it does not capture the whole meaning. According to al-Qurtubi, *al-Muntaqim* is coming from *Naqma* (indignation) and it has four nuanced meanings: aggression, censure, vituperation (or renunciation of bad acts), and penalty reward.[46]

In this emphasis, al-Ghazali adds to this explanation that *al-Muntaqim* is "the One who breaks the back of the arrogant, the One who severely punishes the perpetrators and presses punishment upon the tyrants. He does that after excusing them."[47] In other words, the retribution that Allah exacts is related to the evildoers, after Allah gives them several chances, warnings, and genuine opportunities for repentance.

Al-Qurtubi in his book on the beautiful names of Allah explains how revenge works in Islam:

> Revenge is by symptoms, utterance, and by actions and all this was defined in the law based on the one who the revenge is being applied to, on him and his felony. If that is true, then He, glory to him, is the avenger in his utterance in condemning the non-believers and cursing them, He is the avenger in his sentence, for sometimes it is by the qualities of the self, and sometimes it is by the qualities of the mind, as we stated.[48]

Al-Qurtubi writes a lengthy explanation on this verse, explaining thirty different issues related to this topic. He goes through each harm and its different legislation, and how Muslim scholars differed in their readings and applications. For example, he explains that "life for life" means that the life of a Muslim should be compensated for the life of another Muslim (in case of killing), and not for the life of *kafer* or *ḍhimi*.[49] This is to confirm that there is nothing wrong with revenge in Islam as long as the revenge is directed towards evildoers and the ones

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[46] Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Asna fi Sahreh Asma' Allah al-Ḥusna*, 488.

[47] Al-Gazali, *Ninety-nine names of God in Islam*, 113- 114.

[48] Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Asna fi Sahreh Asma' Allah al-Ḥusna*, 489. The Arabic Translation is: الانتقام يكون بالأعراض بالأقوال وبالأفعال وكل ذلك بين في الشرع بحسب المنتقم منه وجنايته. واذا كان هذا فهو سبحانه منتقم بكلامه في ذم الكفار ولعنه لهم، وهو منتقم منهم بعقوبته، فتارة يكون من صفات الذات، وتارة يكون من صفات الفعل على ما ذكرنا.

[49] Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *al-Jameᶜ Liahkam al-Quran,* vol. 8, (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Resalah, 2006), 5-33.

who do not obey Allah. Since revenge is not regarded as a bad thing, the attribute "*al-Muntaqim*" can be ascribed to Allah and to his actions if he decides to punish wrongdoers. This concept should consequently come as no surprise because Islam believes in the right of retaliation. Allah says, "And We ordained therein for them: 'Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal'" (Surah 5:45).

In a recent study, Abdullah al-Ghissin (who follows the Salafi position) opposes the earlier elucidations, and claims that this name is not from the established names of Allah for two reasons: first, it does not appear as a noun in the Quran. Second, it has a negative connotation.[50] Al-Ghissin completely ignores the several verses that are mentioned earlier (Surah 5:95, 32:22, 43:41, and 44:16).[51] Additionally, he overrides the reality that Allah called himself in the Qur'an with the expression "*muntaqimoun*."

In like manner, Abdu-r-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'di (died 1957),[52] Omar al-Ashqar,[53] echo al-Ghissin and do not include this name in their list either. Their omission to this name implies the negative connotation of it. It does not seem logical to attribute a hatful name to Allah, otherwise, his nature will be compromised. Their rejection of this attributes implies that the name is not a beautiful name, therefore, it should be excluded from the list of Allah's beautiful names.

Al-Qahhar

The literal Arabic meaning of this word means "the subduer." However, this name has two forms that have the same meaning, *al-Qahhir* and *al-Qahhar*, which are ascribed to God in several places in the Quran (6:18, 61; 12:24; 14:48; 39:4 40:16), and it appears in the form of a name.

According to the *Quranic Dictionary*, the root of the word *al-Qahhar* is *Qahara* قهر; it means "to conquer and to defeat a person," or "to take him/her from above (to subjugate)." Concerning Allah, the dictionary explains that he

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[50] Abdullah al-Ghissin, *Asma' Allah al-Ḥusna* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar al-Watan, 2015), 173.

[51] Most Hanbali's followers (such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya) believe that attributes of Allah should not be extracted from evil action. View Omar Sulaiman al-Ashqar, *Asma' Allah wa Sifatuh* (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Nafaes, 2008), 58.

[52] As-Saᶜdi, Explanation to the Beautiful Names of Allah, ii-ix.

[53] Omar Sulaiman al-Ashqar, *Asma' Allah wa Sifatuh* (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Nafaes, 2008), 58.

"subdues people with his dominion and ability to will whatever he wants, whether people like it or not."[54] In other words, the person who is described as a subduer does not give a chance or a choice to the one who defeats. Nevertheless, among all names, Islamic scholars use this name and ascribes it to Allah.

According to al-Ghazali, *al-Qahhar* "is the One who breaks the backs of His powerful enemies. He dominates them by killing and humiliating them."[55] Like the previous name, the initial, literal, and Qur'anic meaning (given by Qur'anic dictionary) agree that this name has a detestable connotation. The best way to get clarity on this meaning is by examining Surah 7:127. According to the Islamic version of the Exodus story, Pharaoh does not allow Moses and his people to believe in Allah. "The chiefs of Fir'aun's (Pharaoh) people said: 'Will you leave Musa (Moses) and his people to spread mischief in the land, and to abandon you and your gods?' He said: 'We will kill their sons, and let live their women, and we have indeed irresistible power over them.'" It is not the purpose of this study to examine the historical authenticity of the Qur'anic version of this story, nor whether did Moses believe in Allah or Elohim. The emphasis of this verse lies in the phrase "irresistible power over them." This phrase is placed in the English translation to clarify the Qur'anic meaning of the word *quahirun* (plural of *qahir*), the one who exercises irresistible power over others. That is to say, the same word (but plural form) is ascribed to Pharaoh (*qahirun*) when he refused to let the Jewish people go. In a similar fashion to the other beautiful names of Allah, this name is simultaneously a dreadful act of Pharaoh and a beautiful name of Allah. This is another occasion when the same word is considered good and beautiful when it is ascribed to Allah, and baleful and malefic when it is used to describe someone else other than Allah. The meaning of the word changes according to the *faᶜel* (the subject of the action or the doer); if the *faᶜel* is Allah, the attribute is good and beautiful, and if the *faᶜel* is someone else, the attribute is detestable and malefic. It is true that Allah is entitled to some acts that human beings are not. For example, murder vs. ending life. If a person kills someone, his/her action is perceived as a murder, but when God kills someone, his action is perceived as ending life. It is not a murder or an evil act when God ends someone's life because God is the source of life, and since he is the life-giver, he has the right to take it back. This paper acknowledges the fact that God is entitled to some actions and human beings are not; however, human beings are not justified in calling God "The Murderer," in case of ending life. "The Murderer" has a detestable

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[54] "قهر," *Al-Muᶜjam al-Ishtiqaqi al-Muwasel Lil Quran al-Karim* (Cairo, Egypt: al-Addab Library, 2010), 1854.

[55] Al-Ghazali, Ninety-Nine Names of God In Islam, 37.

connotation and does not give a satisfying meaning to the title of God. This linguistic inconsistency in Islamic literature creates great confusion for the readers and makes the meaning of the Qur'anic concepts occult and obscure.

Allah: His Commands

If Allah is a good God, then his commands are supposed to be good for humanity. For logically speaking, a good God should not issue an evil command. For instance, a good God cannot and would not issue a decree allowing tutoring children for fun because God is good and tutoring children for fun is evil. In a similar fashion, in religion, God does not issue a biased, unjust, and harmful command, unless his nature is not good, and it includes these attributes. The next section shall discuss three major putative commands of Allah that are mentioned primarily in the Qur'an and Hadiths, which give the impression that goodness is not included in the concept of divinity in Islam. The immoral commands of Allah are not limited to these three; however, the length of this paper allows only three.

Allah commands Muhammad (in the Qur'an and Hadiths) to encourage and urge the Muslims to fight and kill the unbelievers for the purpose of spreading Islam (Surah 8:39, 65; 9:5, 29; 2:191, 216; 4:74, 89 … etc.). Because of the limited space of this paper, two verses will be discussed. The first one is Surah 8:65. Some scholars say that this command was given during Badr's battle, but it is abrogated. However, al-Qurtubi quotes Ibn Arabi, explaining that whoever takes this position is "wrong. It was never delivered that non-believers made peace with Muslims, but the creator—exalted be—imposed this on them first, and commented that 'you know what you are fighting for, which is reward. They do not know what they are fighting for. Ibn Abbas' Hadith shows that this is a decree."[56] This analysis indicates that the command of fighting non-believers is still intact for Muslims because it is a divine decree. While it is not abrogated, it is not canceled, and therefore, it is still applied.

Surah 9:29 echoes the same commands that Allah gave to Muhammad to fight, especially against the Jews and the Christians. Muhammad commands his followers to "Fight against those who believe not in (1) Allah, (2) nor the last day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jew and Christians), until they pay

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[56] Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *al-Jameᶜ Liahkam al-Quran,* vol. 10, (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Resalah, 2006), 70. The original Arabic renders as: " وقال ابن العربيّ: قال قوم إن هذا كان يوم بدر ونُسخ. وهذا خطأ من قائله. ولم يُنقل قطّ أن المشركين صافوا المسلمين عليها، ولكن الباري جلّ وعزّ فرض ذلك عليهم أوّلاً، وعلق ذلك بأنكم تفقهون ما تقاتلون عليه، وهو الثواب. وهم لا يعلمون ما يقاتلون عليه. قلت: وحديث ابن عباس يدلّ على أن ذلك فرض"

the *Jizyah* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." The apparent meaning of this verse states that Muslims should fight all those who do not believe in the Islamic conception of Allah and his commends, even if they are Jews and Christians. Al-Tabari follows the literal meaning of this verse explaining further some of its phrases:

> "'Fight against' oh believers 'those who believe not in Allah, nor in the last day.' He says: and do not believe in heaven or hell, 'and do not forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth.' He says: and they do not obey Allah in a true way, which means they do not obey the way Muslims obey, 'among the people of the Scripture' those are the Jews and the Christians …[57]

In his commentary, al-Tabari agrees with the literal meaning of this verse and concludes that Muslims should fight anyone who does not believe in Islam; however, Jews and Christians can be exempted if they pay *Jiziah*. So, those who were not killed by Muhammad in the Arabic Peninsula are the ones who paid *Jizhiah* or converted to Islam.

Finally, there is a Hadith, which supports the previous verses, and it is repeated in several books to show its exigency. Muhammad asserts, "I have been commanded that I should fight against people till they declare that there is no God but Allah, and when they profess it that there is no God but Allah, their blood and riches are guaranteed protection on my behalf."[58] This Hadith is very comprehensive, for it is a divine command issued through Muhammad to fight all people who do not believe in Allah. It does not specify a certain group of people; instead, it includes all those who do not believe in the God of Islam. Some scholars object to this conclusion and raise the following question: if this Hadith

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[57] The Arabic version of this commentary, which was published by al-Risallah Publisher, 1994 does not include the commentary of verse 9. The author obtained this tafsir from: al-Tabari, *Jame‘ al-Bayan an Ta'weel Ay Quran*, accessed August 1, 2020. https://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=1&tSoraNo=9&tAyahNo=29&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1 The original Arabic renders as: " قَاتِلُوا } أَيها المؤمنون } القوم { الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلا بِالْيَوْمِ الآخِر } يقول: ولا يصدّقون بجنة ولا نار، { وَلا يُحَرِّمُونَ ما حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلا يَدِينونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ } يقول: ولا يطيعون الله طاعة الحقّ، يعني: أنهم لا يطيعون طاعة أهل الإسلام { مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوثُوا الْكِتابَ } وهم اليهود والنصارى،"

[58] Abi Hussai Muslim al-Nisabouri, *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith no. 35, (al-Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar Tiba, 2006), 32. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Bukhari*, Hadith no. 392, 108. Abi Issa al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami‘ al-Kabeer*, vol. 3, ed. Bashar Ma‘loof, Hadith 3341, (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1996), 365.

is true, then why did Muhammad keep some groups and did not fight all the people in the Arabic peninsula. In fact, Muhammad fought as many people as he could. His followers took the torch after him and expanded to the Levant, Egypt, and Europe.[59] As stated earlier, many of those who survived were the ones who paid *jiziah*.

There is another detestable command that Muhammad asked his followers to do during wartime. The Hadith says, "We used to participate in the holy battles led by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and we had nothing (no wives) with us. So we said, 'Shall we get ourselves castrated?' He forbade us that and then allowed us to marry women with a temporary contract."[60] This Hadith is interesting because it shows that the people around Muhammad were worried about their sexual desires and they did not want to commit adultery; they were even willing to castrate themselves so they do not commit a sin. However, Muhammad lowers the standards of his fighters and commands them to marry temporarily—according to the law of Allah and himself—to avoid adultery.

The temporary marriage that Muhammad allowed his fighters to practice is called later on *mut\u1e63a* (pleasure) marriage. *Mut\u1e63a* marriage is derived from the fact of its purpose, which is to enable a man to enjoy the pleasures of sex for a fixed time. According to Khalid Sindawi, "When such a temporary marriage is contracted, the parties stipulate the time when it will expire. It is usually contracted in secret, without the knowledge of the families. The stipulated time can vary from minutes to one-hundred years, and may develop into a permanent marriage." [61] This marriage was practiced in pre-Islamic and post-Islamic period, especially among traveling merchants and men who went on raids with the prophets. To some people, a temporary marriage license seems like an act of adultery because the goal of such marriage is not to make a family but to fulfill the sexual desire of the man. In such a marriage, the man is not responsible for his wife's needs nor for his future child if she gets pregnant. He marries for a short

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[59] Please review Khalid Ibn Al-Walid biography [https://www.britannica.com/biography/Khalid-ibn-al-Walid] and the history of Futuhat. See also Ali Mohammad al-Ṣalabi, *Ghazawat al-Rasoul: Dorus, Fwa'ed, wa ᶜibar [The Messenger's Incursion: Lessons, Benefits, and Examples]* (Cairo, Egypt: IqraaKotob, 2007).

[60] Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Bukhari,* Hadith no. 5073, 1294. Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith no. 1404, 632.

[61] Khalid Sindawi, *Temporary Marriage in Sunni and Shiite Islam: A Comparative Study*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 33.

period of time in exchange for money.[62] This type of marriage looks like *ḥalal* (legal) prostitution, for marriage does not become legal just because it happened in the Islamic way (according to the law of Allah and his prophet), nor because of a paper or contract between both parties. Marriage is created for the sake of the family, for the woman to feel safe and for the children to have security. But when the virtue of marriage becomes all about sexual relationship and the satisfaction of the man, it should not be called marriage. A higher standard of virtue is observed when a person represses his wrong desires for the sake of pleasing God, while taking good care of his family.

Some Muslims claim that Muhammad acted according to the Arabic customs of *Jahiliah*, therefore, it is wrong to blame him, especially that the revelation of Allah came down gradually, and marriage laws were decreed later. However, there is another position, which is explained in *Fateḥ al-Barī fi Shariḥ Sahih Bukhari* that loathes the acts of castration. Al-ᶜasqalanī states that castration is detestable because

> It includes the abuse of torturing the self, and the deformation of the body with causing damage that might lead to death. It repeals the man's manhood and changes the creation of Allah. It includes rejection of Allah's grace because creating a person as a man is a great gift from Allah, and if a person removes his manhood, then he is imitating woman and choosing the less over the perfection.[63]

This position seems to be morally worse than the previous one because it is sexist; presupposing that woman is a minor creation of Allah to man, and by castrating a man himself would become like a woman. Even if this idea is what Muhammad was thinking of at that moment, there is nothing in the text that presupposes these reasons.

Mutᶜa marriage is controversial because Muslims are in disagreement about whether it should be legalized or not. However, it is widely practiced in several Arabic countries today like Egypt and Saudi Arabia without the need for a legal declaration. It is also accepted and practiced among Shi'ites. According to Sindawi, "The Prophet Muhammad allowed his men to contract *mutᶜa* marriages

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[62] Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *al-Jameᶜ Liahkam al-Quran,* vol. 6, (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Resalah, 2006), 219.

[63] Aḥmeh Bin Ḥajar al-ᶜasqalanī, *Fateḥ al-Barī fi Shariḥ Sahih Bukhari*, vol. 15, (Damascus, Syria: Dar al-Risaleh al-A'lamiah, 2013), 234-235. The original Arabic renders as:
وفيه من المفاسد تعذيب النفس والتشويه مع ادخال الضرر الذي قد يفضي الى الهلال. وفيه ابطال معنى الرجولية، وتغيير خلق '' ''الله، وكفر النعمة، لأن خلق الشخص رجلاً من النعم العظيمة، فإذا أزال ذلك فقد تَشْبَّه بالمرأة واختار النقص على الكمال.

after his emigration to al-Madīna, during the raids that they conducted. However, in the Sunnī view, the Prophet forbade temporary marriage in the year 7 AH."[64] Some scholars see no ethical problem with Muhammad allowing *mutᶜa* marriage and later on forbidding it. In my view, this act includes a major problem related to the morality of Mohammad, which is connected directly to the morality of Allah. While Allah does not give Mohammad a revelation at that particular moment (when his fighters came to him asking whether they should sterilize themselves), Muhammad should have not spoken on behalf of Allah when he is silent. The people came to him with a higher ethical standard than his, but Muhammad lowered it for them. This is inconsistent with idea that Muhammad is "on an exalted standard of character" (Surah 68:4), the seal and the last of the prophets, and, most importantly, the one who was given a special relationship and authority with Allah. Giving an authoritative command that includes a lower ethical standard than his peers goes against his claimed moral character.

The last immoral command is very interesting because it breaks all moral standards. During Muhammad's days, it was known that the mother who cannot breast-feed her child could ask a special strong woman in her tribe to feed him/her. The child will be known as son/daughter in suckling to the feeding mother, and she should treat him/her as her own child. He/she also will be a brother/sister to her children; therefore, these children were not allowed to marry from their suckling mother's children. Muhammad took advantage of this custom when a lady came to him complaining that a man called Salim is entering her house and her husband is not happy about it. The solution that the messenger of Allah gave was: "Suckle him. She said: How can I suckle him as he is a grown-up man? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) smiled and said: I already know that he is a young man Muslim."[65] This command is very inappropriate by all standards. I remember an Egyptian TV anchor, whose name was Hala Sarhan, who invited an Islamic scholar Dr. Abed al-Muhdi from al-Azhar University to ask him about the meaning and authenticity of this Hadith. Her words were, "I am confused, tell me what to do with the cameramen and directors that I meet every day." Dr. Abed al-Muhdi asked, "What to do? Do what it is written in the Hadith." His answer was an honest Islamic prescription to Hala's problem because he was imitating Muhammad and applying his commands without any twist or change to the original meaning.

Allah's commands seem to be immoral, and these commands reflect the concept of the nature of the Islamic God who forbids adultery but allows adult

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[64] Sindawi, *Temporary Marriage in Sunni and Shiite Islam*, 34.

[65] Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, book 17, Hadith no. 1453, 664.

breast-feeding. Islamic scholars are not able to disagree with these commands nor ignore them because it is originated from the will of Allah.

Conclusion

The Qur'an places much emphasis upon the dependence of all human beings on divine guidance and the dependence of morality upon the divine definition. The theme that runs throughout the Qur'an is that Allah is the creator of everything; therefore, he is the creator of evil. Muslims are encouraged to surrender their wills and submit to Allah's will because Allah is the only one who deserves to be worshiped, and the only one who knows what is good, bad, right, and wrong. This absolute guidance requires a fideistic type of faith in the nature and the character of Allah.

Extreme voluntarism forms a major problem in Islamic thoughts because the morality of Allah is compromised. Allah defines what is good and what is bad/evil because he is the creator of both and everything else. People are obligated to pursue or to avoid things that are good or evil only because they are prohibited or commanded by Allah. Moreover, universal possibilism and extreme voluntarism in Islam changes the definition of necessary truth by making it totally dependent on Allah. Consequently, what is perceived as good could be converted to bad if Allah wills such a thing. There is no danger lies behind this idea if Allah is a good God (then he would not and could not intend, determine, or issue a bad command (e.g. tutoring children for fun)), but it is a great danger if he has a bad nature because he will use it to command immoral commands. The previous analysis shows that the nature of Allah—according to the mainstream of Sunni Muslim scholars—includes several negative attributes, such as *Ad-Ḍar*, *al-Muḍil*, *al-Mutakkabir*, *al-Muntaqim*, and *al-Qahhar*, which compromises the morality of Allah and makes him capable of issuing evil commands and inflicting non-believers with harm.

Extreme voluntarism according to the right endorses the view that an act is obligatory because it is commanded by God. The danger of such a theory in Islam lies in the fact that extreme voluntarism makes even the worst commands of God obligatory because they are commanded by Him. This view makes the person required to follow and obey an evil deity that decrees evil instructions. The person would feel obligated to harm others because of Allah's commands. The harm itself is not considered bad if Allah says it is good, and it is not considered sinful either because the person who applies it follows a divine purpose. This theory makes the doctrine of militant Jihad, temporary or *mutᶜa* marriage during war, and the adult breastfeeding commands obligatory. These acts become the duties of Muhammad and all Muslims after him, which if it is to be applied today, it would

result in deleterious consequences. The voluntarist version of divine command theory is not tenable if it is paired with the nature of Allah and the attributes that are discussed above, therefore, advocates of divine command theory need to work on a major reform of the doctrine of Allah. The names that have bad/evil connotations should be substituted so they do not create confusion, especially to the Arab readers. Additionally, the commands of Allah in Islamic literature should be reviewed to make sure they do not contradict the good nature of Allah.

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