

## Quranic Concepts GOOD AND BAD

To understand the Quran it is important to understand the meanings that are implied in the Arabic according to grammar, context, general usage and word origins. The deeper one goes into language the clearer the Quran becomes. Below we discuss two of the commonest Quranic concepts from a linguistic point of view.

### Good and Bad (KHAIR WA SHAR)

As in English, bad can not be fully understood unless it is contrasted with good. The two are usually discussed together.

IBN JUZAY says in his Tafsir the word good (KHAIR), is “the opposite of bad (SHAR) and has four meanings :

- 1) good actions (AMAL AL SALIH),
- 2) possessions,
- 3) a good thing (KHAIR), or preference from among two things”.

SAMIH ATIF EL ZEIN, a modern Lebanese scholar, defines KHAIR as “That which everybody desires, for example, intelligence, justice, benefit, are useful things and its opposite is bad (SHAR)”. He goes on further to divide good into two types. The first is "general good" which is the good that is desired for by every individual, in every situation as Ali (May Allah enable his face) said, it is the paradise.

"He said there is no good after the fire and no bad after the garden."

And then there is the good and the bad which are limited. A thing could be good to one but bad for another. An example might be money.

Allah uses it to mean possessions when he said: "WHEN ANY OF YOU IS VISITED BY DEATH, AND HE LEAVES BEHIND SOME GOODS".

But in another verse he contrasts possessions with superior 'goods' He, The Exalted said "DO THEY THINK THAT BECAUSE WE HAVE GRANTED THEM ABUNDANCE OF WEALTH AND SONS THAT WOULD HASTEN THERE ON IN EVERY GOOD".

SABUNI, a leading commentator, says the meaning of this question is "Do these unbelievers imagine that the one who gave them such greatness in terms of wealth and sons would increase them in excellence? On the contrary, it merely increases them in sin. "He Also says that this is a refutation of their supposition that wealth and sons were signs that God was pleased with them". Linguists and commentator of Quran (MUFASIREEN) agree that KHAIR is not used for money except when it is large amounts which is meant in the verse. “Surely he is passionate in his love for good things”.

This shows how possessions can be good and bad in different contexts. The above is used as a noun. It is also used as a noun in that “LET THERE BE ONE NATION OF YOU CALLING TO GOOD”.

The good here is “calling to Allah”, or changing the forbidden by means of actions, words or feelings according to the state of the individual or groups or it is the enjoining of right and forbidding of evil.

KHARIR is also used as an adjective meaning better, for example "NONE OF OUR REVELATION DO WE ABROGATE OR CAUSE TO BE FORGOTTEN BUT WE SUBSTITUTE SOMETHING BETTER", and "The best provision is taqwa" and many other verses.

SHAR is usually translated as bad or evil. It is the opposite of KHAIR. It can therefore be defined as "That which everyone dislikes". This is what is meant when YUSUF said "YOU ARE THE

WORST SITUATED" or "YOU ARE IN THE WORST CASE". BAIDAWI: says it means worse "in position as regards theft on account of you having stolen your brother" or alternatively worse in position as regards behaviour. Another example is the ayat:

"THE WORST OF BEASTS IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH ARE THOSE WHO REJECT HIM, THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE".

IBN KATHIR says:

"The exalted informs us that the worst thing that moves on the face of the earth are those that deny the existence of God as they do not believe. Every time they make a covenant they break it and every time they assure one of their faith they break it".

And He, The Exalted said:

"FOR THE WORST OF BEASTS IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH ARE THE DEAF AND THE DUMB THOSE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND".

IBN KATHIR says the deaf are the worst in terms of "hearing the truth" and blind to "understanding it" and therefore he said "those that do not know" because these are the worst thing He made as every other creature without exception are in obedience to Allah in what they were created for as these were created for worship and (these few) denied Him, and therefore He compares them to cattle "the like of them are cattle but they are more misguided, they are the forgetful".

It said that those mentioned here are a group from among the clan of Abdul Dar of Quraysh. And Allah, The Exalted goes on to explain that they do not understand correctly and they do intend sincerely - even if understanding was imposed on them and He said. 'IF ALLAH HAD FOUND IN THEM ANY GOOD, HE WOULD INDEED HAVE MADE THEM LISTEN'. Meaning that we would have made them understand and determine speech but there is no good in them and they do not understand. He knows that 'had he made them listen'. Meaning made them understand that 'they would have turned back' deliberately; and purposefully after their understanding that and "they declined" it.

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