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A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'

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Abstract:

This paper examines the divergent perspectives of Islam and mainstream Christianity regarding human nature and the doctrine of sin. In Islamic thought, every human being is created upon fitrah (a pure and natural disposition) and thus enters the world free from sin. However, under the influence of environment, the lower self (nafs), and Satan, individuals may transgress, for which the Qur'an prescribes repentance and righteous deeds as the path to forgiveness. By contrast, mainstream Christianity posits that humanity is inherently sinful from birth, and that redemption from this condition required the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Nonetheless, the Bible also reflects another viewpoint—closely aligned with the Islamic conception—where sins are forgiven through repentance and good works. Gordon D. Nickel, however, argues in his book "The Quran with Christian commentary" that both the Qur'an and the Bible affirm the inherent sinfulness of human beings, presenting various supporting arguments. This paper contends that such a conclusion is inaccurate, as both scriptures contain significant teachings that challenge and, in fact, contradict the claim of innate human sinfulness.

Keywords: Innate Human Disposition, Sinfulness, The Quran and the Bible, Gordon D. Nickel, The Quran with Christian Commentary

1. Introduction:

Regarding Innate human disposition, the teachings of Islam and mainstream Christianity diverge significantly. In Islam, human beings are created upon fitrah (a natural disposition), as the Prophet PBUH. said:

“Every child is born upon the natural disposition (fitrah), but it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian — just as an animal gives birth to a perfect animal; do you see any of them born mutilated?”.¹

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A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'

Thus enter the world entirely free from sin. Nevertheless, under the influence of environment, the lower self (nafs), and Satan, a person may commit sins. The means of rectification are repentance and righteous deeds. By contrast, mainstream Christianity holds that human beings are inherently sinful from birth, and that atonement for this condition required the crucifixion of Jesus. However, the Bible also contains another perspective—closer to the Islamic view—namely, that sins can be forgiven through repentance and good works, but Gordon D. Nickel maintains that, according to both the Qur'an and the Bible, human beings are inherently sinful, and he provides various arguments in support of this view. However, his conclusion in this regard is not accurate, since both scriptures contain teachings that, in fact, stand in contrast to such a claim.

1.1.Scope of the study:

The study focuses on a comparative analysis of the teachings of the Qur'an and the Bible regarding the innate disposition of human nature.

It specifically examines the interpretation and views of Gordon D. Nickel concerning the concept of human nature and sin.

The research is limited to textual and theological evidence drawn from the Qur'an and the Bible.

It includes the opinions and interpretations of selected Muslim scholars related to the concept of innate human disposition.

The study primarily aims to analyze and evaluate Gordon D. Nickel's arguments in light of Islamic and Christian scriptural teachings.

The discussion is confined to theological and comparative analysis and does not extend to broader historical or sociological aspects of the topic.

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1.2.Objective of the Study:

The main objectives of this study are to

- To examine the views of Gordon D. Nickel regarding the doctrine of eternal sin as he interprets it from both the Qur'an and the Bible.

- To analyze how Gordon D. Nickel attempts to establish the concept of innate human disposition / original sin through interpretations of the Qur'an alongside the Bible.
- To explore the Christian understanding of innate human disposition as presented in the Bible and in the writings of Christian scholars.
- To investigate the Islamic perspective on human nature and determine whether the concept of eternal or original sin is supported in the Qur'an.
- To critically evaluate the arguments presented by Gordon D. Nickel in support of his interpretation of Qur'anic verses.
- To highlight the theological differences between Islamic and Christian viewpoints regarding human nature and sin.
- To clarify potential misconceptions that may arise from misinterpretations of Islamic teachings.
- To contribute to a clearer academic understanding that may help reduce misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians regarding this theological issue.

1.3. Introduction to Godon D. Nickel:

Gordon D. Nickel was born in 1953 in the United Kingdom. He done his M.A. degree in 1987 from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, and later got his doctorate in 2004 on the subject of the Qur'an from the University of Calgary, Canada. He is a Christian scholar and writer, who alongside Christianity, has also written extensively on Islam. He has delivered numerous lectures on the Qur'an in Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Canada, and the United States. In addition, he authored several books on Islam and Muslims, among which three gained particular recognition, namely:

1. Peaceable Witness among the Muslims
2. The Gentle Answer to the Muslim Accusation of Biblical Falsification
3. The Qur'an with Christian Commentary. ²

The book mentioned last is basically a Christian commentary of the Quarn as clear from its name, in which Nickel discussed about the different aspects of Islam. In this regard, he has also compared the views of the Quran and the Bible on many topics, one of which is the above-mentioned topic.

2.1. Introduction to the topic:

Allah Almighty has sent human beings into this world for the implementation of His commandments. The first human to be granted this position of responsibility was Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). Both humans and jinn were commanded to obey only one Creator and not to follow the path of Satan.

In this regard, Allah Almighty revealed detailed instructions in the Qur'an and other Divine Books, stating that whoever obeys the divine commandments

**A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective
of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'**

will be admitted into the blessings of Paradise, while those who choose the path of disobedience and rebellion will be cast into Hell — and Hell will indeed be filled with them.

The concept presented in the Bible regarding this matter is distinct from that of the Qur'an. According to the Bible, human beings are born inherently sinful because Adam and Eve (peace be upon them) disobeyed the divine command while residing in Paradise. As a punishment for this act, they were sent to this world to endure its hardships. To atone for this original sin, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was crucified. However, according to the Bible, this sin remains with humanity until death.

Since Gordon D. Nickel is a Christian scholar and considers the teachings of the Bible to be true and authentic, he wishes to promote and establish that same perspective. With this mindset, he studied the Qur'an as well. Consequently, he believes that just as, according to the Bible, human beings are inherently sinful, so too—according to him—the Qur'an conveys the same idea. As evidence, he refers to those Qur'anic verses in which Allah Almighty declares that He will fill Hell with those human beings who were led astray by Satan. In another instance, Allah promises that He will fill Hell with both jinn and humans. Allah will ask Hell, “Are you full?” The Qur'an, according to his interpretation, suggests that everyone will initially enter Hell. Nickel has expressed various opinions on this matter; however, his concluding point is that he seeks to present the concept of eternal sin from the Qur'an as well. The key points of the ideas he has expressed in this regard are as follows:

Another dimension of this theme is the Quran assertion that, Allah at the biggening of human history, forecasts that he will fill Hell with all those whom Satan will beguile (7.18; 38.85), Twice Allah promises to “fill Gehenna with jinn and people all (of them)!” (11.119; 32.13), and at 50.30 Allah asks hell “Are you filled?” The Quran even seems to say that everyone will initially go to hell. (19.71). Why would hell be filled with humanity if human nature is basically good..... A reader could reasonably conclude from many Quranic passages that the symptoms of human sinfulness are visible, but that there is no deeper diagnosis or proposed Cure. ³

2.2. Analysis of the Author's Views:

According to the author, since the Qur'an states that Allah Almighty will fill Hell with both jinn and humans, and in the beginning, everyone will pass over Hell, this implies that human nature is inherently evil — because if human nature were good, then humans would not be sent to Hell. Furthermore he said that the Quran does not suggest any cure for this sinfulness.

In this regard, Gordon D. Nickel has cited different verses from the Qur'an — one from *Surah Al-A'raf*, another from *Surah Saad*, one from *Hud*, one from *Al. Sajdah*, one from *Surah Qaf*, and one from *Surah Maryam*. Since he places

greater emphasis on the verse from *Surah Maryam*, most of the discussion revolves around that particular verse.

2.3. Quranic view regarding Human Nature:

The verses from the Qur'an that Gordon D. Nickel has cited in support of his claim indicate that he either did not properly reflect upon their meaning or misinterpreted their true context, because the Qur'anic viewpoint on this matter is absolutely clear. And different from that what Nickels understood from the Quran. Below is the interpretation of these verses. The first verse is from *Surah Al-A'raf*, in which Allah Almighty declares:

قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْذُومًا مَّدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ⁴

Allah said to Iblis: 'Get out of it — disgraced and expelled.
And whoever of them follows you, then I will surely fill Hell
with you all.

The one below is from *Surah Maryam*:

وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا.⁵

And there is none among you but will pass over it (Hell); this is
a decree which your Lord has made absolutely binding.

3.1. Analysis of Nickel view regarding the mentioned verse

Concerning this verse of *Surah Maryam*, Gordon D. Nickel's primary mistake lies in interpreting the word 'ورود' as 'entrance.' This is a fundamental error, for in Arabic, a word seldom carries only one meaning; rather, its precise sense is determined by the context in which it occurs. The same applies to this word as well. Below are the opinions of scholars regarding its meaning, which will make the matter completely clear. The origin of this word is "ورد", which has different meanings as described by the Arabic experts, i.e. Ibn e Manzoor Afriqi writes:

وَوَرَدَ الْمَاءُ وَغَيْرُهُ وَرِدًا وَوُرُودًا وَوَرَدَ عَلَيْهِ: أَشْرَفَ عَلَيْهِ ، دَخَلَهُ أَوْ لَمْ يَدْخُلْهُ ، قَالَ زُهَيْرٌ: فَلَمَّا وَرَدَنَ الْمَاءَ رُزِقًا جَمَامُهُ وَضَعَنَ عَصِيَّ الْحَاضِرِ الْمُتَخَيِّمِ؛ مَعْنَاهُ لَمَّا بَلَغَنَ الْمَاءُ أَقْمَنَ عَلَيْهِ. وَرَجُلٌ وَارِدٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ وَوَرَادٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ وَوَرَادِيْنٌ ، وَكُلٌّ مِنْ أَتَى مَكَانًا مِنْهُلًا أَوْ غَيْرَهُ ، فَقَدْ وَرَدَهُ. وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ، فَسَرَّهُ تَغْلِبُ فَقَالَ: يَرِدُونَهَا مَعَ الْكُفَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا الْكُفَّارُ وَلَا يَدْخُلُهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ، وَالذَّلِيلُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ -: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَى أُولَئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ، وَقَالَ الرَّجَّاجُ: هَذِهِ آيَةٌ كَثُرَ اخْتِلَافُ الْمُفَسِّرِينَ فِيهَا ، وَحَكَى كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ أَنَّ الْخَلْقَ جَمِيعًا يَرِدُونَ النَّارَ فَيَنْجُو الْمُتَّقِي وَيُتْرِكُ الظَّالِمُ ، وَكُلُّهُمْ يَدْخُلُهَا. وَالْوُرُودُ: خِلَافُ الصَّدْرِ. وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: قَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْوُرُودَ وَلَمْ نَعْلَمِ الصُّدُورَ ، وَذَلِيلٌ مَنْ قَالَ هَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا. وَقَالَ قَوْمٌ: الْخَلْقُ يَرِدُونَهَا فَتَكُونُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا، وَقَالَ ابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ وَالْحَسَنُ وَقَتَادَةُ: إِنَّ وَرُودَهَا لَيْسَ دُخُولَهَا ، وَحُجَّتُهُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ جِدًّا، لِأَنَّ الْعَرَبَ تَقُولُ وَرَدْنَا مَاءً كَذَا وَلَمْ يَدْخُلُوهُ. قَالَ اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ -: وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ. وَيُقَالُ إِذَا بَلَغَتْ إِلَى الْبَلَدِ وَلَمْ تَدْخُلْهُ: قَدْ وَرَدَتْ بَلَدًا كَذَا وَكَذَا. قَالَ أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ: وَالْحُجَّةُ قَاطِعَةٌ عِنْدِي فِي هَذَا مَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَى أُولَئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا، قَالَ: فَهَذَا ، وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ ، ذَلِيلٌ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْحُسْنَى

A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'

لَا يَدْخُلُونَ النَّارَ. وَفِي اللَّعْنَةِ: وَرَدَ بَلَدًا كَمَا وَمَاءَ كَذَا إِذَا أَشْرَفَ عَلَيْهِ ، دَخَلَهُ أَوْ لَمْ يَدْخُلْهُ ، قَالَ: فَأَلْوَرُودُ بِالْإِجْمَاعِ ، لَيْسَ بِدُخُولٍ.⁶

And “he approached the water” and other such things — “wirdan” and “wurūdan.” And “warada ‘alayhi” means: he looked upon it, approached it, whether he entered it or not. Zuhayr said: “When they came to the water, clear and full, they laid down the staffs of the encamped tribe.” The meaning is: When they reached the water, they stopped there. A man who comes to the water is called “wārid,” and his people are “wurrād,” or “warrādīn.” And everyone who comes to a place — whether a watering place or otherwise — is said to have “waradah.” As for the saying of Allah the Exalted: “And there is none of you but will come to it (Hell)” [Qur’an 19:71] Tha‘lab explained: They will come to it along with the disbelievers; the disbelievers will enter it, but the Muslims will not. The proof for this is Allah’s saying: “Indeed, those for whom the best [reward] has preceded from Us – they will be kept far removed from it.” [Qur’an 21:101] Az-Zajjāj said: This is a verse about which the commentators have greatly differed. Many people have reported that all creatures will come to the Fire: the righteous will be saved and the wrongdoers will be left in it, and all of them will come to it. “Al-wird” (coming) is the opposite of “as-Sadr” (returning). Some said: We know of the coming (wurūd) but not of the departing (sudūr). The proof for those who say this is Allah’s saying: Then We will save those who feared Allah, and We will leave the wrongdoers therein, kneeling.” [Qur’an 19:72] Some said: All creation will come to it (Hell), but for the believers it will be cool and safe (bardan wa Salaman). Ibn Mas‘ūd, al-Hasan, and Qatada said: Its “coming” does not mean “entering.” Their argument is very strong, because the Arabs say: “We came to (waradnā) such-and-such a water,” even though they did not enter it. Allah the Exalted said: “And when he came to (warada) the water of Madyan.” [Qur’an 28:23] And it is said: If you reach a town but do not enter it, it is said, ‘You have come to (waradta) such-and-such a town.’ Abū Ishāq said: The decisive proof, in my view, is Allah’s saying: “Indeed, those for whom the best [reward] has preceded from Us – they will be kept far removed from it; they will not hear its sound.” [Qur’an 21:101–102]. He said: This, by Allah’s knowledge, is evidence that the people of the Divine favor (ahl al-ḥusnā) will not enter the Fire. And in the language (of the Arabs): “He came to such-and-such a town or such-and-such a water” means he looked upon it or approached it, whether he entered it or not. Thus, wurūd (coming) — by unanimous linguistic usage — does not necessarily mean entering.

To explain the word furthermore the opinions of the exegesis are needed, which is described as below.

3.2. View of Muslim Exegesis regarding the verse:

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated the opinion of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him). When he was asked about the word “Wurood”, he replied:

وَيُعْطَى كُلُّ انْسَانٍ مَنَافِقٍ اَوْ مُؤْمِنٍ نَوْرًا، ثُمَّ يَتَّبِعُوْنَهُ، عَلٰى جِسْرِ جَهَنَّمَ ----- ثُمَّ يُطْفِئُ نَوْرَ
الْمَنَافِقِ، ثُمَّ يَنْجُو الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ.⁷

“Every person, whether a hypocrite or a believer, will be given a light... then Allah will take away the light of the hypocrites and will grant salvation to the believers.”

This narration also makes it clear that the believers will attain salvation while still upon the bridge (Sirat) — there is no mention here of their entering Hell.

Allāmah Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī has provided comprehensive details on this subject, which later became the foundational reference for subsequent exegetes.

According to Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him), there is a difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the meaning of the word “wurūd” (passing over). Some scholars hold the view that it signifies “entry” (dukhūl) into Hell.

The summary of this discussion is as follows: Ibn ‘Uyaynah narrates from ‘Amr (may Allah have mercy on him), who said: Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) supported his view by citing verses from the Qur’an as evidence.

انكم وما تعبدون من دون الله حصب جهنم انتم لها واردون) اورود هو ام لا؟ (يقدم قومه
فاروردهم النار وبئس الوردالمورود-⁸

We both will enter it (Hell). As for me, I will come out of it, but because of your falsehood, Allah may not bring you out.’ Upon hearing this, Nāfi‘ laughed.

Similarly, Abū Rāshid al-Ḥarūrī (may Allah have mercy on him) also discussed this issue and said:

لا يسمعون حسيبها-

Then Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Have you lost your senses? Then what about the saying of Allah Almighty:”

(يقدم قومه فاروردهم النار وبئس الوردالمورود)، (ونسوق المجرمين الا جهنم ورداً)، (وان
منكم الا واردها)-⁹

By reciting these verses, Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) intended to convey that people will initially enter Hell, according to his interpretation.

Ibn Jurayj (may Allah have mercy on him) said: In the Qur’an, the term ‘wurūd’ (passing over) means ‘entry’ — that is, every

**A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective
of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'**

righteous and wicked person will enter it. Moreover, the Qur'an mentions *four instances* of 'wurūd' (entry or approach).

فاوردهم النار، حسب جهنم انتم لها واردون، و نسوق المجرمين الى جهنم ورداً، و ان منكم الا
واردها.

Similarly, al-Suddī (may Allah have mercy on him), while mentioning Murrah al-Hamdānī (may Allah have mercy on him), reports from Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the phrase “And there is none among you but will pass over it” وَإِنْ مِّنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا refers to entering (Hell).

It is most likely on the basis of these narrations that Gordon D. Nickel formed the idea that all human beings will enter Hell, and that this implies human nature is inherently evil, since — according to his reasoning — only those of evil nature would be made to enter Hell.

However, a considerable number of Qur'anic exegetes hold a different view, maintaining that the verse refers merely to passing over (Hell) and not entering it. Therefore, the opinion suggesting literal entry for all is considered a rare (shādh) interpretation, one that carries little scholarly weight and, in such cases, is dismissed in favor of the stronger and more contextually supported interpretation.

The First Opinion Regarding “Wurūd” (Passing Over):

It is narrated from Qatada (may Allah have mercy on him) regarding the verse “*And there is none among you but will pass over it*” وَإِنْ مِّنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا

It refers to Hell, over which all people will pass.¹⁰

:another tradition says that it means that the path to Hell will be like a sword, and one group will pass over it like lightning, another group like the wind, a third group like a herd of horses, and a fourth group like a herd of cattle, and the angels will say, "Peace be upon you, peace be upon you."¹¹

3.3. Second opinion:

Abdullah bin As-Sa'ib narrated from "a man" that Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: This means the disbelievers, and the believers will not enter Hell. Similarly, 'Ikrimah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It means the disbelievers.¹²

Another narration is also reported from Ibn Abbas regarding this matter, but it goes against the general spirit of Islam. The correct and authentic view is the one mentioned above.

4.1. Third Opinion:

Some commentators are of the opinion that the sufferings that a person experiences in this world are actually the same as entry, meaning that on the Day of Judgment, they will not be admitted to Hell, but they will face suffering in this world, especially in the form of illnesses, especially fever, as Ibn Jarir narrated the saying of Mujahid that “

Under the heading "The arrival of a believer is worldly troubles and fever", Mujahid has been quoted a saying that fever is a part of the believer from the Fire, then this verse was recited (Similarly, it was narrated from Abu Hurairah, that the Messenger of Allah pbuh went out to visit a companion and I was with him. The Messenger of Allah said:

ان الله يقول هي نارى اسلطها على عبد المؤمن لتكون حظه من النار فى الآخرة.¹³

Allah says, "This is the fire which I have imposed upon the believing servant so that he may become a part of the fire of the Hereafter.

4.2. Fourth Opinion:

In this regard Suddhi narrated from Abu Murrah and he narrated from Abdullah that this verse means that all humans will be entered to the Hell at first and then will be delivered according to their deeds.¹⁴

In short, there is a great deal of disagreement among commentators on this subject, however, Gordon D. Nickel's statement is not proven correct by any commentator, because according to those commentators who have taken the meaning of entering, Hell will remain cool and peaceful for the believer in this case, so he will not suffer any pain.

4.3. Traditions of the Prophet PBUH regarding the above issue:

In this regard, there are some traditions of the Messenger of Allah (in which the above issue is pointed out, for example:

عن حفصة قالت قال رسول الله ﷺ انى لارجوا ان لا يدخل النار ان شاء الله احد شهيد بدرأ والحديبية - قالت: فقلت: اليس الله عز وجل يقول (وان منكم الا واردها) - قالت فسمعته يقول : ثم ننجى الذين اتقوا و نذر الظالمين فيها جثيا)-¹⁵

It is narrated from Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: I hope that Allah will not let those who participated in Badr and Hdaybiyah enter the Fire." Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) said: I said: Did not Allah, the Almighty, say: (Every one of you will enter it)? I heard him say: Allah will save the righteous and leave the wrongdoers in it on their faces.

The same subject is also mentioned in another narration with this addition.

فمه، ثم ننجى الذين اتقوا-¹⁶

Allah will give salvation to the pious.

قال السدى: قوله فمه ، ثم ننجى الذين اتقوا حاصل الجواب - ان المراد من الناجين من النار ، لا من المتروكين فيها ، وليس فى هذا الحديث تصريح بان المراد بالورود الدخول فيها مع كونها برداً وسلاماً على المومنين او على المرور على الصراط ، وهى تحته-¹⁷

Al-Sudi said that the answer to the Prophet's saying, "Famah, Allah will save the righteous" is that he means those who will

A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'

be saved from the Fire, not those who will be left in it, and this hadith also states that entry means entering with peace and coolness or passing on the Sirat, and that is below.

Qazi Abu'l-Izz Damashki (may Allah have mercy on him) writes in this regard:

واشار ان ورود النار لا يستلزم دخولها ، وان النجاة من الشر لا يستلزم حصوله ، بل يستلزم انعقاد سببه فمن طلبه عدوه ليُهلكوه ولم يتمكنوا منه ، يقال : نجاه الله منه ، ولهذا قال تعالى : ولما جاء امرنا نجينا هوداً ، فلما جاء امرنا جينا صالحا ، ولما جاء امرنا نجينا شعيبا ، ولم يكن العذاب اصابهم ، ولكن اصاب غيرهم-----وكذلك واردان النار ، يمرون فوقها على الصراط ، ثم ننجي الذين اتقوا ، ونذر الظالمين فيها جثيا ، فقد بين في حديث جابر المذكور ، ان الورد هو المرور على الصراط-¹⁸

This hadith indicates that the word “wurūd” (coming to) does not necessarily mean entering. In the same way, deliverance from evil does not require that the evil must have actually reached a person; rather, it is sufficient that there was a potential cause for it.

For example, if someone seeks refuge from his enemy, and he dies before the enemy overcomes him, it is said that Allah saved him from his enemy, even though the enemy had not yet reached him.

Similarly, Allah says that when His command came, He saved Hūd, Ṣālīḥ, and Shu‘ayb, even though the punishment had not yet reached them — it had reached others.

In the same manner, the phrase “wāridīn an-nār” (those who come to the Fire) means passing over the bridge (Sirat) above Hell. Thereafter, Allah will save the God-fearing and cause the wrongdoers to fall into it headlong.

This very point is clearly expressed in the hadith of Jabir, where “murūr” (passing) is explained as crossing over.

Allama Sabuni States in this regard

قال ابن مسعود وقتادة: الورد المرور عليها حين اجتيا الصراط، ولعل هذا القول اصح-¹⁹

Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud (RA) and Qatadah (RA) say: “ Wurud” means passing over it... and this view may be the correct one.

Ashraf Ali Thanvi stated:

The existence of Hell is so certain that all, believers and disbelievers alike, will be made to behold it — though the manner and purpose of this beholding will differ. The disbelievers will encounter it by way of entry and eternal punishment, while the believers will encounter it by way of crossing the Bridge (Sirat), leading to an increase in gratitude and joy. For when they see it and then arrive in Paradise, they will be all the more thankful and delighted. ‘There is none

among you but will pass over it — some by way of entry, and some by way of crossing.²⁰

From the above discussion of the commentators, it becomes evident that although differences of opinion exist among Muslim scholars in this matter, the scholars of Islam have clearly distinguished between the weaker and the sounder views. Owing to this clarification, the issue becomes clear and no ambiguity remains.

In any case, Gordon D. Nickel's argument does not hold in any way, because even those who interpret "*wurūd*" as "*entry*" are of the view that true believers will not suffer any harm there; rather, such an entry will only be a cause of greater joy for them. Therefore, it is by no means correct to claim that human beings are inherently evil, for if they were inherently evil, then all human beings, without distinction, would be cast into Hell and punished. In reality, however, the matter is quite the opposite.

5.1. Important Note:

According to many commentators, the narrations of those exegetes who interpreted *wurūd* as "*entry*" are not strong or reliable. On the contrary, the stronger and more reliable opinion is that *wurūd* means "*passing over*." Moreover, the interpretation of *wurūd* as "*entry*" also goes against the general perspective of Islam. As Abu al-Izz al-Dimashqi (RA) writes:

والاظهر والاقوى انه المرور على الصراط.²¹

The most apparent and strongest opinion is that it refers to passing over the Sirat.

In this regard, the summary of Maulana Maududi's opinion is as follows:

Some commentators have explained *wurūd* to mean "*entering*," but none of the chains of transmission for this interpretation reach the Prophet pbuh through reliable sources. Moreover, this view contradicts the Qur'an and the numerous hadiths in which it is clearly stated that righteous believers will not enter Hell. In addition, in the Arabic language the word "*wurūd*" does not inherently mean "*entering*." Therefore, the correct meaning is that although all people will pass by Hell, the God-fearing will be saved, while the wrongdoers will be cast into it.²²

Similarly, Maulana Abd al-Rahman Kilani (RA) has also written:

"In some narrations, the word *wurūd* has been interpreted to mean entry, implying that every individual will first be made to enter Hell. However, this view is not correct, because firstly, the chains of transmission of these narrations are not reliable; secondly, this opinion is contrary to the Qur'an and numerous aḥādīth; and thirdly, from a linguistic perspective as well, this interpretation is not valid.²³

5.2. Bible's View regarding Human Nature:

A study of the Bible shows that man was born inherently sinful, and it was Jesus (AS) who atoned for this sin, thereby cleansing humanity of its burden. Christians believe that Jesus (AS) sacrificed himself on the cross for the salvation of mankind and was then resurrected.²⁴

Indications of man's being inherently sinful are found throughout the Bible, thus, from the very beginning the Bible mentions that Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Eve, and she in turn tempted Adam. As a result, both of them committed sin, and God sent them down to the world as punishment. Along with mankind, the serpent was also punished, being condemned to crawl on its belly and eat dust. The woman was told that she would endure the pain of childbirth in this world and live under the rule of man. The man's punishment was decreed to be labor and toil, earning his sustenance through hard work.²⁵

Genesis chapter 8 verse 21 says:

And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.²⁶

Similarly stated in the Psalm:

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.²⁷

Romans' states:

.... for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under the sin as it is written there is none righteous no not one.²⁸

King James explains the verse as:

As for Jews so actually testifies the universal sinfulness.²⁹

Romans further says:

Where fore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.³⁰

It is explained as:

Paul's linking of sin with Adam (one man).³¹

According to Saint Paul, because Adam sinned, his sin was also passed on to his descendants.

It is written further:

That you were the servants of sin.³²

Similarly, Job stated:

What is a man that he should be clean? And that he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous?³³

Says: Ephesians

And you hath he quickened who were dead in the trespass and sins.³⁴

Ecclesiastes describes:

This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.³⁵

These are a few examples of this belief found in the Bible. Thus, for the forgiveness of this sin, Jesus (peace be upon him) was sent, as is evident from the following passages.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.³⁶

Similarly, when Jesus (peace be upon him) heals a paralyzed man, He also says:

Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, *take heart, son; your sins are forgiven*. At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home."³⁷

Likewise, at the time of the Last Supper, Jesus (peace be upon him) offered the cup to his disciples, saying:

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."³⁸

The Gospel of Luke states:

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.³⁹

5.3. Commonalities between the Qur'an and the Bible about the Issue:

Regarding the mentioned issue, the Bible also contains another view as well, according to which human sins are forgiven through repentance and righteous deeds — which is exactly in accordance with Islam and the Qur'an. Observe the following verses. In Jeremiah, God says to the wayward Israelites:

And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim

**A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective
of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'**

these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. ⁴⁰

Further said:

..... say to them that thus saith the Lord shall they fall and not arise? Shall he turn away and he not return?⁴¹

If that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil and I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them.⁴²

Luke says:

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. ⁴³

Islam has also presented these teachings, according to which, if a person commits some sins due to the influence of the environment or due to the seduction of the self (nafs) and the devil, then Allah Almighty has kept the door of repentance open for him. Whenever he enters this door with sincerity before his death, his sins will be forgiven. This aspect of the Quran and the Bible is similar; however, the popular belief of Christians is the opposite.

6.1. Difference between the Qur'an and the Bible regarding the issue:

From the above discussion, it becomes evident that regarding the matter of "the nature of man," there exists a clear difference between the Qur'an and the Bible.

1: According to the Qur'an, the lapse committed by Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was eating from the tree that Allah had forbidden, whereas according to the Bible, it was Eve who committed the sin.

2: According to the Qur'an, Allah forgave the lapse of Adam and Eve (peace be upon them), whereas according to the Bible, they were punished for it.

3: In the Qur'anic perspective, mankind was not sent into this world as a punishment but as a vicegerent (representative of Allah), whereas according to the Bible, man was sent here as a punishment. According to the Qur'an, if a human being commits sins in this world, it is not necessary that those sins remain with him after death; rather, if he repents, Allah forgives all his sins, and he reaches the presence of Allah purified and cleansed. In contrast, according to the Bible, these original sins remain with man even after death.

4: According to the Qur'an, man continues to commit various sins in this world, but when he repents sincerely, all his sins are forgiven. In contrast, according to the Bible, in order for these sins to be forgiven, Jesus (peace be upon him) had to be crucified.

5: According to the Qur'an, both good and evil tendencies have been created within human beings; however, man's creation is fundamentally based upon

goodness. In contrast, the Bible holds that there is no inherent goodness in man at all, since he is the offspring of a woman — a notion that also implies the degradation of womanhood. The Qur'an, however, does not regard woman as inferior.

6.2. Cure for the sin's removal:

According to Nickel, the Qur'an does not prescribe any cure for the eradication of sin — a view that either reflects his lack of understanding or a deliberate disregard of the truth. This is because the Qur'an explicitly declares that whoever repents, Allah will forgive his sins in this very world, and even transform his misdeeds into good deeds. Moreover, such a person will have no fear on the Day of Resurrection. The following verses bear witness to this fact.

Allah says in Surah Furqan:

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا. ⁴⁴

And whoever repents, believes, and does righteous deeds — those are the ones whose evil deeds Allah will replace with good ones. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

In another place He said:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ. وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۚ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ. ⁴⁵

Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful. And turn in repentance to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُم مِّنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ ۚ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَتَهَا ۚ وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ. ⁴⁶

Indeed, those for whom the best [reward] has already gone forth from Us — they will be kept far removed from it (the Hellfire). They will not hear even its slightest sound, and they will abide forever in what their souls desire.

This is the very remedy for sins that Allah has prescribed in this world. Whoever follows these principles to purify himself will appear before Allah cleansed and purified. Such people will not only be kept far away from Hell but will not even hear its sound.

6.3. Summary:

In conclusion, the Qur'an and the Bible present fundamentally different views of human nature, sin, and salvation. While the Bible emphasizes inherited sin and the necessity of atonement through Jesus, the Qur'an affirms human beings as morally accountable yet not inherently sinful, with Adam's error forgiven and his earthly role divinely ordained. Islam stresses personal

A Study of Innate Human Disposition in Quran and Bible from the Perspective of Gordon D. Nickel's book 'The Quran with Christian Commentary'

responsibility, free will, and God's boundless mercy through repentance. Claims that the Qur'an supports inherited sin overlook its broader theological framework, which distinguishes between those who follow Satan and those who obey God. Ultimately, the Qur'anic perspective underscores hope, accountability, and divine forgiveness.

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