

Selections on Evil

DOES EVIL EXIST

Evil forces do take control of our life, but it is within our power to free ourselves from falling under their subjection. UHJ

We know absence of light is darkness, but no one would assert darkness was not a fact. It exists even though it is only the absence of something else. **So evil exists too, and we cannot close our eyes to it**, even though it is a negative existence. We must seek to supplant it by good, and if we see an evil person is not influenceable by us, then we should shun his company for it is unhealthy. (Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 512)

As to thy question, "That Abdul-Baha hath said to some of the believers that evil never exists, **nay rather, it is a non-existent thing**:" This is but truth, inasmuch as the greatest evil is (man's) going astray and being veiled from Truth. Error is lack of guidance; darkness is absence of light; ignorance is lack of knowledge; falsehood is lack of truthfulness; blindness is lack of sight; and deafness is lack of hearing. Therefore, error, blindness, deafness and ignorance are non-existent things. If we say that according to the text of the bible, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart" that he not believe in Moses, this signifies that, verily, He did not soften his heart. And when we wish to say that God hath not guided a certain one of His servants, this would be interpreted (by people) that God led him astray. The darkness spoken of in the Bible as being created by God, signifieth that, verily, God hath not caused light to shine; inasmuch as where there is no light, there will be darkness; when there is no sight, there will be blindness; when there is no life, there will be death; when there is no riches, there will be poverty; and when there is no knowledge, there will be ignorance. Consequently, it is proven by indisputable argument and clear explanation that, verily, evils are non-existent, but people have not understood the meaning of the verses of the Bible.

SHOULD WE JUDGE OTHERS

Firstly I think we should differentiate between making a sound judgment, and being judgmental. I think there are places where it states in the Writings that we shouldn't judge because we do not know our own end.

O ye beloved ones, guard the Cause of God! Let no sweetness of tongue beguile you – nay, rather **consider the motive of every soul**, and ponder the thought he cherisheth. Be ye straightway mindful and on your guard. Avoid him, yet be not aggressive!" (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 315)

“Those who speak falsehoods, who covet worldly things and seek to accumulate the riches of this earth are not of me. But when you find a person living up to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, following the precepts of the Hidden Words, know that he belongs to Bahá'u'lláh; and, verily, I proclaim that he is of me. If, on the other hand, you see anyone whose deeds and conduct are contrary to and not in conformity with the good pleasure of the Blessed Perfection and against the spirit of the Hidden Words, let that be **your standard and criterion of judgment against him**, for know that I am altogether severed from him no matter who he may be. This is the truth.” (Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 457)

“Do not judge according to appearance, but **judge with righteous judgment**” (John 7:24). Notice the Lord Jesus’s command to judge.

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CAN WE DETECT EVIL OR UNGODLY PEOPLE

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He whose **eyes the Lord hath opened** will **see** the souls of men in the stations they will occupy after their release from the body. He will find the living ones thriving within the precincts of their Lord, and the dead sunk down in the lowest abyss of perdition.

WHO ARE EVIL OR UNGODLY PEOPLE

O YE THAT ARE FOOLISH, YET HAVE A NAME TO BE WISE! Wherefore do ye wear the guise of shepherds, when inwardly ye have become wolves, intent upon My flock? Ye are even as the star, which riseth ere the dawn, and which, though it seem radiant and luminous, leadeth the wayfarers of My city astray into the paths of perdition.

O YE SEEMING FAIR YET INWARDLY FOUL! Ye are like clear but bitter water, which to outward seeming is crystal pure but of which, when tested by the divine Assayer, not a drop is accepted. Yea, the sun beam falls alike upon the dust and the mirror, yet differ they in reflection even as doth the star from the earth: nay, immeasurable is the difference!

The Evil One is he that hindereth the rise and obstructeth the spiritual progress of

the children of men.

The reality underlying this question is that the evil spirit, Satan or whatever is interpreted as evil, refers to the lower nature in man. Abdul-Baha

This **lower nature in humans** is symbolized as Satan — the evil ego within us, not an evil personality outside. Abdul-Baha

“The faithless, however, by day and night, openly and privily do their utmost to shake the foundations of the Cause, to root out the Blessed Tree, to deprive this servant of service, to kindle secret sedition and strife and to annihilate ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Outwardly they appear as sheep, yet inwardly they are naught but ravening **wolves**. Sweet in words, they are but at heart a deadly poison.

Any human in whom the lower nature is not balanced and controlled by the spiritual nature becomes the embodiment of evil. It is this, Baha'is believe, that the scriptures of other religions have referred to as the Devil or Satan. [Taken from a Baha'i Site]

For if the spiritual qualities of the soul, open to the breath of the Divine Spirit, are never used, they become atrophied, enfeebled, and at last incapable; whilst the soul's material qualities alone being exercised, they become terribly powerful—and the unhappy, misguided man becomes more savage, more unjust, more vile, more cruel, more malevolent than the lower animals themselves. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks 97)

WHO CREATED EVIL

Isaiah 45:7 in the King James Version reads, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.” [The word translated “evil” is from a Hebrew word that means “adversity, affliction, calamity, distress, misery.”]

And certainly, We have created for hell many of the jinn and the men...QORAN

There are these four types of people to be found existing in the world. (1) **One in darkness who is headed for darkness**, (2) One in darkness who is headed for light, (3) One in light who is headed for darkness, and (4) One in light who is headed for light Buddha (Source: Badáyi‘u’l-Áthár, vol. 2, p. 303.)

You **cannot help a man if God seeks to confound him**. Those whose hearts God does not please to purify shall earn disgrace in this world and grievous punishment in the hereafter. Koran.

Indeed, there existeth in man a faculty which deterreth him from, and guardeth him

against, whatever is unworthy and unseemly, and which is known as his sense of shame. **This, however, is confined to but a few; all have not possessed and do not possess it.**” Baha’u’llah

Ignorant did they arrive, ignorant did they linger and ignorant did they retire to their abodes. Baha’u’llah

He whose **eyes the Lord hath opened** will **see** the souls of men in the stations they will occupy **after their release from the body**. He will find the living ones thriving within the precincts of their Lord, and the dead sunk down in the lowest abyss of perdition.

Know thou that immortality belongeth to those souls in whom hath been breathed the spirit of life from God. All save these are **lifeless—they are the dead**.

It is from the bounty of God that man is selected for the highest degree; and the differences that exist between men in regard to spiritual progress and heavenly perfections are also due to **the choice of the Compassionate One**. For faith which is life eternal is the **sign of bounty and not the result of justice**.

The difference and distinction will naturally become **realized** between all men **after their departure from this mortal world**. But this (distinction) is not in respect to place, but it is in respect to the soul and conscience.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

All might and power belong to God alone, and man’s exaltation and abasement **depend on the will and purpose of the Most High**.

From the beginning of time God chose you to find salvation in the spirit.

CAN AN UNGODLY PERSON BECOME GOOD

If a soul remains far from the manifestation, he may yet be awakened; for he did not recognize the manifestation of the divine perfections. But if he loathe the divine perfections themselves—in other words, the Holy Spirit—it is evident that he is like a bat which hates the light.

This detestation of the light has no remedy and cannot be forgiven—that is to say, it is impossible for him to come near unto God. This lamp is a lamp because of its light; without the light it would not be a lamp. Now if a soul has an aversion for the light of the lamp, he is, as it were, blind, and cannot comprehend the light; and blindness is the cause of everlasting banishment from God.

“For no matter how much you may polish a shell, it will not turn into a gleaming

pearl, nor can you change a dull pebble into a gem whose pure rays will light the world. Never, through training and cultivation, will the colocynth and the bitter tree [1] change into the Tree of Blessedness.[2] That is to say, education cannot alter the inner essence of a man, but it doth exert tremendous influence, and with this power it can bring forth from the individual whatever perfections and capacities are deposited within him. " 'Abdu'l-Baha

He that acteth treacherously towards God will, also, act treacherously towards his king. Nothing whatever can deter such a man from evil, nothing can hinder him from betraying his neighbour, nothing can induce him to walk uprightly.

It is extremely difficult to teach the individual and refine his character once puberty is passed. By then, as experience hath shown, even if every effort be exerted to modify some tendency of his, it all availeth nothing. He may, perhaps, improve somewhat today; but let a few days pass and he forgetteth, and turneth backward to his habitual condition and accustomed ways. Therefore it is in early childhood that a firm foundation must be laid. While the branch is green and tender it can easily be made straight.

One in darkness who is headed for darkness, Buddha

IF WE FEEL SOMEONE IS EVIL OR UNGODLY...HOW SHOULD WE ACT?

"O SON OF DUST! "Beware! **Walk not with the ungodly and seek not fellowship with him**, for such companionship turneth the radiance of the heart into infernal fire."

Treasure the companionship of the righteous and **eschew all fellowship with the ungodly**.

"Kindness cannot be shown the tyrant, the deceiver, or the thief, because, far from awakening them to the error of their ways, it maketh them to continue in their perversity as before. No matter how much kindliness ye may expend upon the liar, he will but lie the more, for he believeth you to be deceived, while ye understand him but too well, and only remain silent out of your extreme compassion."
(Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá)

"He should treasure the companionship of them that have renounced the world, and regard **avoidance** of boastful and worldly people a precious benefit."
(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán)

Watch over yourselves, for the Evil One is lying in wait, ready to entrap you. **Gird yourselves against his wicked devices**, and, led by the light of the name of the All-Seeing God, **make your escape** from the **darkness** that surroundeth you.

To be the enemy of the enemies of God is a good characteristic. We are not against them personally, just as any intelligent man is not personally against a man who has a dangerous contagious disease. But he carefully isolates the sick individual so that the contagion will not spread. So **we shun the spiritually sick, wishing for their cure, but keeping clear of them.**

These people, however, have turned aside from all this and placed instead their affections upon that which accordeth with their own corrupt inclinations. Thus do they roam in the wilderness of arrogance and pride. I bear witness at this moment that **God is wholly quit of them, and likewise are We.** We beseech God to suffer Us **not to associate with them either in this life or in the life to come.**

"Hence, the beloved of the Lord must entirely shun them, (Covenant breakers) avoid them, foil their machinations and evil whisperings, guard the Law of God and His religion, engage one and all in diffusing widely the sweet savors of God and to the best of their endeavor proclaim His Teachings." (Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá)

You must not see evil as evil and then compromise with your opinion, for **to treat in a smooth, kindly way one whom you consider evil or an enemy is hypocrisy, and this is not worthy or allowable.** Abdul-Baha

Strive ye then with all your heart to treat compassionately all humankind, **except for those who have some selfish, private motive, or some disease of the soul.** **Kindness cannot be shown the tyrant, the deceiver, or the thief,** because, far from awakening them to the error of their ways, it maketh them to continue in their perversity as before. No matter how much kindliness ye may expend upon the liar, he will but lie the more, for he believeth you to be deceived, while ye understand him but too well, and only remain silent out of your extreme compassion.

Expect not that they who violate the ordinances of God will be trustworthy or sincere in the faith they profess. **Avoid them, and preserve strict guard over thyself,** lest their devices and mischief hurt thee. Turn away from them, and fix thy gaze upon God, thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. He that giveth up himself wholly to God, God shall, assuredly, be with him; and he that placeth his complete trust in God, God shall, verily, protect him from whatsoever may harm him, and shield him from the wickedness of every evil plotter.

When we come across "minds that are closed and hearts that are darkened by evident malice" we are urged to "leave such persons to God" because "continued exposure to such insincerity" is "spiritually corrosive." We are to just **"leave these people alone"** because their influence can be "negative and destructive."UHJ

When ‘Abdu'l-Bahá was in Paris in May 1913, He was asked how one should deal with people who are impolite and immoral. In the untranslated second volume of his diary, Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání has recorded ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s response to this question, in which He distinguishes between three kinds of people who fall under this category, and gives counsel on how to deal with each: (1) There are those whose degree of defilement is so great that associating with them would not only be devoid of benefit, but would in fact **prove harmful**. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says that we must certainly **avoid** the company of such people. (2) There are those whose immorality and misbehavior can be reformed. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says these people should not be overly shunned, but one’s association with them must be limited to making them vigilant and heedful. (3) Lastly, there are those who are just impatient or unforgiving. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says these people are well-intentioned, but simply fail to show it in their demeanor. “These people,” ‘Abdu'l-Bahá remarks, “are not to be abhorred, for they are truthful, not deceitful, and because they are trustworthy, not treacherous” (provisional translation mine). NOTE: Not to be considered as authenticated but very interesting!

The public should be protected from such harmful conduct by the institutions which administer justice. Thus, in the Tablets of the Blessed Beauty, although He commends association with people of all religions and races, He also forbids fellowship with the wicked, admonishing us to shun the people of negation and denial.

Now associate with good people. You must try to associate with those who will do you good and who will be the cause of your being more awakened... ..try to be with those who are purified and sanctified souls. Man must always associate with those from whom he can get light, or be with those to whom he can give light. He must either receive or give instructions. Otherwise, being with people without these two intentions, he is spending his time for nothing...

O ye beloved ones, guard the Cause of God! Let no sweetness of tongue beguile you—nay, rather consider the motive of every soul, and ponder the thought he cherisheth. **Be ye straightway mindful and on your guard. Avoid him**, yet be not aggressive! Refrain from censure and from slander, and leave him in the Hand of God. Upon you rest the Glory of Glories.” (Selections from the Writings of Abdu’l-Bahá)

If he **exercises his anger and wrath against the bloodthirsty tyrants** who are like ferocious beasts, it is very praiseworthy; but if he does not use these qualities in a right way, they are blameworthy.

To enter into the quixotic tournament of **demolishing one by one the evils in the world is, to a Bahá’í, a vain waste of time** and effort. His whole life is directed towards proclaiming the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, reviving the spiritual life of his fellowmen, uniting them in a divinely created World Order, and then, as the Order

grows in strength and influence, he will see the power of that Message transforming the whole human society and progressively solving the problems and removing the injustices which have so long bedevilled the world. (The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 284)

THE UNGODLY ARE UNHEALTHY

The company of **the ungodly increaseth sorrow**, whilst fellowship with the righteous cleanseth the rust from off the heart.

“for as diseases in the world of bodies are extremely contagious, so, in the same way, **qualities of spirit and heart are extremely contagious.**” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Some Answered Questions (p.214)

Abdul-Baha: You must always be happy. You must associate with joyous and happy people and be adorned with divine morals. Happiness has a direct influence in preserving our health while **being upset causes illness.**

ARE WE ALL ALIVE AND HAVE A SOUL

O servants! This nether world is the abode of demons: Guard yourselves from approaching them. By demons is meant those wayward souls who, with the burden of their evil deeds, slumber in the chambers of oblivion. Their sleep is preferable to their wakefulness, and their death is better than their life. O servants! **Not every mortal frame hath a spirit or is imbued with life.** Baha'u'llah Tabernacle of Unity

As to thy question, doth every soul without exception achieve life everlasting? Know thou that immortality belongeth to those souls in whom hath been breathed the spirit of life from God. All save these are lifeless—they are the dead, even as Christ hath explained in the Gospel text. He whose eyes the Lord hath opened will see the souls of men in the stations they will occupy after their release from the body. He will find the living ones thriving within the precincts of their Lord, and the dead sunk down in the lowest abyss of perdition.

The difference and distinction will naturally become realized between all men after their departure from this mortal world. But this (distinction) is not in respect to place, but it is in respect to the soul and conscience.

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The fourth degree of spirit is the heavenly spirit; it is the spirit of faith and the bounty of God; it comes from the breath of the Holy Spirit, and by the divine power

it becomes the cause of eternal life. It is the power which makes the earthly man heavenly, and the imperfect man perfect. It makes the impure to be pure, the silent eloquent; it purifies and sanctifies those made captive by carnal desires; it makes the ignorant wise.

All might and power belong to God alone, and man's exaltation and abasement depend on the will and purpose of the Most High.

ARE WE ALL EQUAL

Let no one imagine that by Our assertion that all created things are the signs of the revelation of God is meant that—**God forbid—all men, be they good or evil, pious or infidel, are equal in the sight of God.** Bahau'llah.

"Your nails and eyes are both parts of your bodies. Do ye regard them of equal rank and value? If ye say, yea; say, then: ye have indeed charged with imposture, the Lord, my God, the All-Glorious, inasmuch as ye pare the one, and cherish the other as dearly as your own life. To transgress the limits of one's own rank and station is, in no wise, permissible. The integrity of every rank and station must needs be preserved. By this is meant that every created thing should be viewed in the light of the station it hath been ordained to occupy."

"In the same way, purity of blood has a great effect; for the pure germ is like the superior stock which exists in plants and animals. For example, you see that children born from a weak and feeble father and mother will naturally have a feeble constitution and weak nerves; they will be afflicted and will have neither patience, nor endurance, nor resolution, nor perseverance, and will be hasty; for the children inherit the weakness and debility of their parents."

"For no matter how much you may polish a shell, it will not turn into a gleaming pearl, nor can you change a dull pebble into a gem whose pure rays will light the world. Never, through training and cultivation, will the colocynth and the bitter tree [1] change into the Tree of Blessedness.[2] That is to say, education cannot alter the inner essence of a man, but it doth exert tremendous influence, and with this power it can bring forth from the individual whatever perfections and capacities are deposited within him."

WHAT HAPPENS TO EVIL SOULS

There are no earth-bound souls. When the souls that are not good die they go entirely away from this earth and so cannot influence anyone. They are spiritually dead. Their thoughts can have influence only when they are alive on the earth. But

the good souls are given eternal life and sometimes God permits their thoughts to reach the earth to help the people.

There is no power exercised over the people by those evil souls that have passed away. Good is stronger than evil and even when alive they had very little power. How much less have they after they are dead, and besides they are nowhere near this planet.
