

## Critique of Theodicy of Soul Cultivation of John Hick based on Verses from the Holy Quran

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**Abstract:** John Hick Theodicy, in which he was most influenced by Irenaeus, seeks to prove divine justice and dispel human skepticism about the evils of the universe. In this theodicy, John Hick considers the problem of evil, which in modern times has led to many doubts among the theologians, to be perfectly compatible with the existence of a benevolent and wise God but in the meantime, he considered some of the existing evils to be exaggerated and useless, and that this issue and a few other details of Hick's thought mentioned in his Theodicy did not correspond to the teachings of the Holy Quran. Therefore, examining the theodicy of soul cultivation of John Hick and comparing it with the verses of the Holy Quran and also criticizing it according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an can help us to understand the reason for the occurrence of evil in the good system and the weaknesses of the theodicy of John Hick. In this descriptive-analytical research, first the information about the theodicy of soul cultivation is presented, then the subject is continued by defining and expressing the nature of evil and the types of evil from John Hick's point of view, and finally, the issue ends with a critique of the theology of soul cultivation according to the verses of the Holy Quran. In his theodicy, John Hick, while considering evil as a necessity of a good system, has presented ideas contrary to reason and the Qur'an, and has considered some evil as infinite, and believes that man commits sin due to his epistemological distance from God, while the Holy Quran rejects such beliefs.

**Keywords:** Theodicy of Soul Cultivation; John Hick; The Holy Quran; God; Evil

### 1. Introduction

Divine wisdom and providence require that the good system exist with the greatest perfection and charity, but the existence of evil in it is undeniable. Therefore, many philosophers and theologians have studied the problem of evil in the universe. John Hick is one of the sages who, in the theodicy of soul cultivation, which is known in the West as a solution to the problem of evil, has considered the existence of evil necessary in a good system that created by a benevolent God but when the theological solutions of John Hick's soul cultivation theodicy are placed next to the Holy Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims, there are flaws in this theology for which no rational and logical reason has been provided and among these defects, we can point to the exaggerated and endless evil in Hick's view, which according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, no endless thing happens in the world. Therefore, examining and comparing the theodicy of soul cultivation of Hick with the Holy Quran can acquaint man with the ideas of Hick and the teachings of the school of Islam about evil, and by criticizing the theodicy of Hick, an effective step can be taken to remove some doctrinal doubts.

#### 1-1 Research Background

The problem of evil is one of the topics that has been considered in the heavenly book of the divine religions, especially the Holy Quran, and correct and logical reasons for their emergence in the material world have been presented. Also, since the time of Aristotle, various opinions and theories about evil have been presented by various thinkers, among which people such as JL Mackey and William Rowe have used this subject to deny the existence of God and His absolute attributes and of course, on the other hand, theistic philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Arabi, John Hick, etc, have not remained silent, and some, such as John Hick, have developed a theodicy to prove the compatibility of evil with the burden of transcendence, but sometimes they are short-sighted in this way and have not been able to provide a correct reason and solution for the occurrence of some evils.

So far, no research has been written that has comprehensively examined the theodicy of soul cultivation of John Hick and identified its shortcomings with reason and logic, and has made constructive criticisms of it according to the verses of the Holy Quran, which is the holy book of Muslims and this is the first research that rightly criticizes John Hick's theodicy, according to a perfect heavenly book.

Previously, some works have only examined the theodicy of John Hick's or his theology alongside the views of other philosophers, and none has done a thorough analysis and critique of John Hick Theodicy with regard to a credible source such as the Holy Quran. These articles include: "John Hick's theodicy of soul cultivation by Amir Abbas Ali Zamani and Akram Khalili" or "A Study and critique of the metaphysical foundations of John Hick theodicy with a look at the views of Augustine by Leila Roustaei Patpeh and Mohammad Mohammad Rezaei". This article is the first study to examine and critique John Hick's theodicy based on the Holy Quran.

## **2-1 Problem Statement**

The problem of evil is one of the rare cases that has occupied the human mind for a long time and has confronted him with many questions and doubts. Therefore, God has provided a logical reason for the evil of the universe in the Holy Qur'an and has considered all the evils in the universe necessary for man to achieve happiness and perfection. Although the Holy Qur'an has explained and analyzed the issue of evil correctly and logically, Islamic and Western philosophers have also studied this problem due to the spread and abuse of the existence of evil in the material world and have tried to analyze it.

John Hick is one of the philosophers of Christianity who has studied and analyzed the problem of evil in the theodicy of soul cultivation and has tried to solve this problem to the best of his ability and offer solutions to solve the problem of evil but in this way, although he has been somewhat successful, he has come to the conclusion that the existence of evil in the material world has no contradiction with the existence of God and also the existence of evil is essential for a good system; however, in some details related to evil, such as acknowledging the epistemological distance between God and man, which leads to the commission of sin by man, acknowledging the existence of some exaggerated and aimless evil, has made statements that are not correct according to the verses of the Holy Quran.

This article answers such questions by criticizing the theodicy of soul cultivation of John Hick based on the verses of the Holy Quran;

What does John Hick think of the purpose of evil creation in the theodicy of soul cultivation? What is the philosophy of evil? Are there evils? Who creates evil? Has God's purpose in creating man been to endure suffering? Do all the evils in the universe have a purpose? Can evil benefit humans? How many evils are there from John Hick views? What was the purpose of God's evil creation? Can a person repent after committing a sin?

## **2. The Theodicy of Soul Cultivation**

John Hick has been influenced by St. Irenaeus more than anyone else in his theodicy, but this does not mean that he is a complete imitation of St. Irenaeus, but that he has made new and innovative comments about evil in his theory, and this has caused his thoughts to become different in some aspects from St. Irenaeus. John Hick revived the long-overlooked St. Irenaeus soul cultivation theodicy and with its expansion, he founded his theodicy based on the theodicy of soul cultivation of St. Irenaeus.

In the second century AD, Irenaeus formulated a very crude and primitive theory of the problem of evil, which can be considered a kind of rival to Augustine thought. But it remained in the first centuries until it reappeared in the nineteenth century, and then Hick expanded it in his theodicy to introduce God's purpose for the creation of evil as the transcendence and spiritual and moral growth of man. (Khalili, 2011, 24). Hick begins his theodicy of the soul cultivation by mythologizing the original sin expressed in Christian sources and man's descent from heaven. In his theodicy, he considers evil as the result of man's free will in its misuse, and on the other hand, he states that not all evil is bad, but the existence of some evil is necessary in order to acquire moral virtues. Hick on the extent and severity of evil, the seemingly aimless, exaggerated and endless evil, and some other defects, in addition to the relative reading of that evil, to the issue of resurrection, purgatory, successive lives and reincarnation of their choice, unlimited and compensatory future good of all indicates the types of evil as well as the secret of pollution in some sections. Therefore, in advancing the theory, it resorts to various theological, cosmological, anthropological and otherworldly elements. (Alizamani and Khalili, 2010, 81).

Hick believes that evils are necessary for the development and exaltation of the human soul, and if they were not evil, man would not be able to increase his existential capacities and his spiritual upliftment but when a person faces hardships and difficulties; with patience, endurance and such moral values, he tries to solve the problem and in fact provides the ground for his exaltation, and therefore the evil should be called the nurturer of the human soul and on the other hand, it is in spite of evil that man attains many moral virtues and adorns his soul with them.

Hick states that man is a creature with a tendency to commit sin but at the same time can attain greater levels of perfection in a world mixed with evil. One of the cases that John Hick addresses in his theory is the independence and choice of human beings. In his theory, John Hick seeks to explain that man, in the face of God's infinite existence, must come to the realization that the Creator of the universe has created him free to turn to God. He believes that it is with this self-awareness that human beings can play their real role creatively in the field of life. (Hosseini et al. 2017, 55). And that is why the discussion of human will and free will is one of the main pillars of Hick's theodicy, and he uses this topic to explain the relationship between God and man in order to create evil, and considers human will as the main factor in creating evil. Hick tries to show in his theodicy that God's purpose in creating man was not to immerse him in blessings and happiness and to be constantly immersed

in joy, because if that were the purpose, God had already created the angels and they were always obedient to his orders and had no authority. But God created man with will and authority and placed him in a world outside the world of angels, in contrast to which the world is mixed with evil and good. Placing man in a world steeped in good and evil is to test him, to measure his faith and affection for himself, and finally to give him the opportunity to choose his own path, and man between good and evil, select and finally see the result of his selection.

### **3. Definition and Nature of Evil**

According to Hick: "Instead of trying to define evil based on the type of theological theory, for example, as something that is against the will of God, it is better to define it without veiling, that is, by showing what these words mean; evil means suffering, this suffering refers to physical pain, mental pain and moral evil" (Hick, 1993, 89). He also states: "The word evil, if used in a comprehensive sense, can be distinguished in two ways; 1. Moral evil caused by human evil 2. Immoral or natural evil such as disease and natural disaster. Moral evil is created by human beings; it is cruel, unjust, vicious, and misguided thoughts and actions, or in other words, moral evil refers to those evils in which the human factor has a direct role in its emergence. But natural evil arises independently of human actions such as disease, flood, earthquake, storm, drought, tornado, etc." (Hick, 2007, 265).

Hick defines an example of evil and says: "Instead of trying to define evil based on some kind of theological theory, it is better to define it without arguing, by showing what the word means. Evil refers to physical and mental suffering as well as moral evil" (Hick, 1990, 39).

Unlike Augustine, Hick believes that although evils are non-existent, their existence in the world of creation cannot be denied. He considers the non-existence of evil and on the other hand offers solutions to solve the problem to be contradictory and believes that providing solutions to solve the problem is contradictory; he believes that providing a solution to solve the problem of evil is one of the reasons for proving the existence of evil in the universe because no rational human being for a non-existent assumption states a solution to solve the problem, and if the solution is expressed, it means that the problem already existed that the solution to the problem is now stated (HosseiniEskandian and Rajabnezhadian, 2020, 108).

From Hick's point of view, the existence of evil in the universe has no contradiction with the attributes of God's benevolence, wisdom, and absolute justice; because God is absolute good and no good is issued except good, and evil cannot be attributed to God because it is contrary to the divine attributes and God cannot be considered as the creator of evil. On the other hand, he believes that the existence of evil is necessary to achieve charity, and their minimal existence in the world can be identified, and obtaining knowledge about charity is obvious.

From Hick's point of view, the existence of evil in the world has no contradiction with the goodness of this world, because the existence of evil in this world is an integral part of it, and without them, this good system of the world cannot be imagined; despite this evil, the world is called as the creation of the best system.

#### **1-3 The Relation of Evil to God**

Hick, with a great deal of influence from St. Irenaeus, connects this concept with the existence of God by expressing moral evil, and he believes that man, although he has many limitations physically and mentally, is ultimately adorned with an ornament that God has only adorned him among His creatures, and that is the power of "will and free will".

Hick's view is based on three stages. In the first stage, he examines and negatively defines the concept of absolute power: absolute omnipotence does not mean that God can create everything, even contradictory things. Hick believes that it is possible for God to create things that are possible and not impossible, and that in no way implies a limitation of divine power; triangles, squares or circles, rectangles can never be formed, because they do not fit in the range of possible things (Hick, 2010, 265). In the second stage, he emphasizes the direct relationship between authority and human identity and personality. Man needs free will to establish a clear relationship with his Creator. Having a human identity is fundamentally dependent on having authority and freedom, which is a fundamental and important factor in the formation of human personality. In other words, the will and authority of the existing essence is distinct. These two stages in Hick's thought are a kind of defense of the argument of non-contradiction between the existence of God and man, which shows that the relationship between the existence of God and the existence of evil is not contradictory. The third stage indicates that because no authority other than man directs and supervises the gift of authority, it includes two sides and two forms of action (Parsa et al, 2009, 51).

Hick is trying to attribute evil to man, and the source of his inspiration in this theory should be considered Augustine, because Augustine also believes that moral evil is created by man and natural evil is the result of

human punishment and punishment in the direction of creating moral evil. Moral evil, then, goes directly to the human will, and natural evil indirectly to it. Hick also considers man's will and free will as the main factor in creating evil and believes that if a person acquires the necessary knowledge and reduces the distance of knowledge between himself and God; as a result, he suffers less from moral evil. From Hick's point of view, God is pure and absolute good and nothing but good is issued from pure good; therefore, God cannot be considered the creator of evil, and since God cannot be the creator of evil, then this is the person who commits sin by not using his will and authority properly and causes evil in the world.

Hick's goal in his theodicy is to establish man's relationship with God and the main point of reliance is establishing a personal relationship with God and the wisdom of human creation in the evolutionary process, it is necessary to create the necessary conditions to achieve the divine goal of soul cultivation and to achieve soul cultivation, humans must have sufficient freedom to communicate with God (Vahidi, 2012, 111).

In explaining the relationship between God and evil, human free will is an essential element and it is based on this free will that no one deprives God of creating evil and attributes it to man because from his point of view, man has free will and it is he who, by choosing evil, causes evil in the world, and the existence of God must be considered free from the creation of evil.

### **2-3 Pain Is the Cause of Suffering**

John Hick, in justifying natural evil and proving that it is not inconsistent with God, has taken the approach of evil, what effect does suffering have on the lives of living beings? According to John Hick, functional suffering is from a human point of view, for limited example, very severe pain is possible, so Hick points to the importance of the biological value of pain to justify the natural evil that is one of its symbols and he considers it as a factor for the survival of the generation because pain is like a teacher who teaches us the way to deal with the short causes of life (Noushabadi 2016, 135).

John Hick believes that most of the evils of the universe are the result of the intrusion of the human will and his actions in evil; because our world is a good world, and this is the person who, by exercising his authority in evil deeds, causes evil and causes hardship for himself and others and evil is in fact nothing but the product of human action. Hick believes that for some, the pain that animals suffer is the most confusing aspect of the problem of evil, because the assumptions that may clarify the problem of evil are the positive value of moral freedom in the face of its dangers and the need for a world that should be the scene of the creation of the soul, which includes real challenges, hardships and mysteries, does not apply to lowly animals.

Hick states that there is no moral character who can take advantage of the dangers of freedom or the challenges of a harsh environment, so why should we ask whether the Almighty, the Merciful Creator, has allowed pain and killing in the lives of animals? Of course, the issue of pain in animals must remain a ground for reflection and theoretical change. We cannot enter into the consciousness of an animal or even prove that they are conscious (Hick, 2010, 319).

Hick believes that all the evil that is realized in the universe is in fact the result of our own actions, and that we are the ones who create evil by creating evil and oppression in this world, and this evil is either the punishment of our own deeds or the sins of our parents that are taken from us by the forces of evil.

Hick believes that human vulnerability is the cause of culture and civilization, which is due to pain and suffering, and believes that the existence of pain is an environment that encourages human beings to prosperity and happiness. In this way, if a person is overwhelmed with joy and happiness, he no longer sees the need to strive for happiness and gives up trying, but the pain caused by evil causes him to strive for happiness and peace. Therefore, he considers the existence of pain and suffering in life as the beginning of human endeavor to obtain charity. As for the natural evil, Hick believes that the pain and suffering caused by it will lead to the progress and advancement of man in the field of science and technology, and if it were not for diseases and physical pain, we would never have witnessed the progress of medical sciences and if natural disasters such as droughts, earthquakes and floods did not occur; dam construction and water optimization activities or other related improvements never took place.

### **3-3 Excessive and Endless Suffering**

Sometimes it happens that some religious thinkers and sages have stated that one of the ways to solve the evil problem is the result of human rewards and sins in the past, but what about an innocent baby who is born with a defective temperament or suffers from incurable diseases? Should this suffering be considered as evidence of his sins and rewards? Obviously, this suffering is not because of the sins of these infants who are now suffering, but because it has another prejudice, and John Hick has referred to these types of evils as excessive suffering and he finds it mysterious and vague, not all aspects of which are clear to comment on. Hick mentions in his theodicy excessive suffering, which means suffering that accidentally and meaninglessly, seemingly unjustly destroys human life, and may be due to one's sins or the reward of one's sins due to the existence of demonic forces.

Misbah Yazdi states: "From the point of view of the Qur'an and the intellect, there is no exaggerated evil and wisdom. When it is proved by conclusive proofs of the existence of God and His attributes that if in some cases we could not understand the wisdom of some things, it is not wise and logical to give up a rational reason and we must try to understand its wisdom or leave its action to its people; on the other hand, we know that the influence of material beings on each other and change and conflict are inherent features of the material world, in such a way that if these characteristics did not exist, the material world would not exist; so either the material world must come into being with the same system or it does not come into being at all, while the divine bounty requires its creation, and leaving it is against wisdom, because the good of the world is more than evil but only the existential perfections of perfect human beings are superior to all evils" (Misbah Yazdi, 2010, Vol2, 456 -457).

Throughout history, millions of people have died from malnutrition or unknown diseases, and many have been brutally murdered in war or massacre. Hick considers these kinds of sufferings to be exaggerated and endless, and while still using the idea of cultivating the soul to rationally justify them; he also admits that they are secretive. Hick does not explain the secret of contamination of this evil. Perhaps it is his belief in the mystery of pollution that keeps him from explaining further, and it seems that his response in this regard reflects his faith-based approach. Of course, considering this aspect of evil as mysterious is not against rational efforts to justify them, and basically presenting the theodicy of soul cultivation is also an effort in this direction (Noshabadi, 2016, 21). In examining such evils, he first refers to the answer of traditional Christianity and considers this answer as a descent from the garden and does not accept it; then, after denying this answer, he tries to apply the idea of cultivating the soul to such evil people and eliminates the mentioned problem from a theological point of view. (Hick, 2010, 128) but according to him, the secret of excessive and endless suffering is real and with rational and logical analysis, no way can be opened to it. (Mohammad Rezaei and Roustaei Patpeh, 2018, 178-179).

Traditional theories based on the reward of a person's sins and the reward of his parents' sins with the presence of demonic forces and their malice and evil domination over the world can not be a reasonable and acceptable justification for the existence and necessity of these sufferings; for example, the suffering that some sick children or infants suffer, while these children are not at the age when suffering and illness cause them to grow and excel. It is also about people who have spent their whole lives with hard work and effort to live life and have faced exhausting hardships to go through every stage of life and finally die in the form of pain and suffering caused by a severe disease. Also, sometimes natural events such as severe earthquakes and severe storms not only do not lead to any construction, but also cause the loss of faith and the loss of superior human and moral characteristics (Vahidi et al, 2012, 105).

Hick believes that God's goal is the salvation of all human beings, and that these vast and endless evils, with their mysterious nature, will finally be answered by God with a great goodness in another world and what is important is that man try to reduce his knowledge distance from God and always obey His command so that he can successfully get out of the clutches of this evil.

It should be noted that many of these evil hands also occur due to human misconduct, of which mass murder is an example. On the other hand, by harming and manipulating nature, man has disrupted environmental cycles and caused its disruption.

#### **4. Evil Division**

Hick considers evil to be unique in both moral and natural forms. Moral evil is the result of man's evil and his evil will create evil, and natural evil includes natural things in the universe, such as floods and earthquakes. About this category, he states: "Moral evil is created by human beings. Oppressive, unjust, and misguided thoughts and actions, or in other words, moral evil is the kind of evil that the human factor has a direct role in its emergence but natural evil is independent of human will and human will does not play a role in its creation" (Hick, 2010, 265).

Hick considers moral evil to be the result of human will and will be caused by the human factor. Hick considers human selfishness as one of the factors that cause moral evil. In other words, it has been the selfishness and superiority of human beings throughout history that has led to wars and killings, because as long as there is no greed for the land and capitalism of another land, no war would have taken place and blood has not been shed for no reason. Hick considers that another factor causing moral evil is the ignorance of a person who suffers from evil in knowing good and evil, which leads him to choose evil since he is unable to distinguish between good and evil. Accepting and surrendering to fleeting desires and committing moral vices stem from human ignorance in committing and creating evil.

Hick says: "There is a deep connection between moral evil and human free will, and human free will plays a major role in creating moral evil" (Ibid 263). When Hick confronted with the question of why God, the absolute

benefactor, does not prevent the creation of moral evil, he pointed to man's free will and stated that if God prevented man from creating moral evil, then man's free will would not be valid, then, man would become like the creatures that God had already created; one of the differences between man and the angels is man's freedom to do good deeds and sins.

Hick believes that if a person realizes that God, the Holy Father, is always watching him and wants him to give up evil and walks towards him, he will then never commit moral evil. But since man's tint is occupied with passion and lust, and he does not consider God as he deserves; he suffers from evil and evil creation.

In the case of natural evil, Hick also considers suffering as one of its symbols. John Hick mentioned natural evil to be one of the tools of human progress in science and technology and believes that if it were not for natural evil, many of today's inventions, tools, and instruments that play an important role in human life would not have been created. Hick, however, believes that natural evil can sometimes cause great harm to humans and animals, but he considers the charity resulting from this evil to be much greater than its losses, and he considers the losses resulting from natural evil to be insignificant in comparison to its charity.

### **5.Critique of the Theodicy of Soul Cultivation According to the Verses of The Holy Quran**

In justifying evil, Hick is confronted with a confusion called "excessive and infinite suffering".Excessive suffering means suffering that has accidentally and meaninglessly and seemingly unjustly destroyed the lives of some people, is beyond conceivable and traditional theories based on the reward of parents' sins or the presence of demonic forces and their malice and evil domination over the world can not be a reasonable and acceptable justification for their existence and necessity;for example, the suffering that some sick children or infants suffer, while these children are not at the age when suffering and illness cause them to grow and excel,or people who have spent their whole lives with hardships and difficulties and have faced exhausting difficulties to go through the stages of life and finally, enduring the pain and suffering of a serious illness, they die and leave the world;also, sometimes natural events such as severe earthquakes and severe storms not only do not lead to any construction, but also cause the loss of faith and the loss of superior human and moral characteristics(Mohammad Rezaei and Roustaei Patapeh,2018,332 ;Hick,2007,322).

But from the point of view of the Qur'an and the intellect, there is no exaggerated evil.When it is proved by conclusive proofs of the existence of God and His attributes that if in some cases we could not understand the wisdom of some things, it is not wise and logical to give up the definite reason and we must try to understand the divine wisdom or leave its action to its people; on the other hand, we know that the influence of material beings on each other and change and conflict and contradiction are inherent features of the material world that without this feature,there was no material world;so either the material world should come into being with the same characteristics or it should not come into being at all, while the divine bounty requires its creation and leaving it is against the divine wisdom because the good of the world is more than its evil(Misbah Yazdi,2010,Vol2,456-459).

In many divisions made by thinkers about evil, we always come across a kind of evil that is called "moral evil" or "human evil" and is made and paid for by human will and action.Many evils are in fact the result of the system of human domination over each other and their oppression of each other, and wars, killings, massacres and ethnic and religious conflicts, etc, are examples of this.In some cases, humans even produce diseases by viruses and microbes in laboratories and kill each other to make huge profits for the drug and these and thousands of other cases indicate that many of the evils realized in the universe are an estimate of this act and human will.

Hick considers these sufferings to be exaggerated and endless, and while still using the idea of cultivating the soul to rationally justify them, he also acknowledges their mystery.He does not comment on the mystery of these matters. Perhaps it is his belief in mystery that prevents him from further explaining it, and it seems that his response to this indicates his faith-oriented tendencies;of course, considering these matters as mysterious is not against the rational effort to justify them, and basically presenting the theodicy of soul cultivation is an effort in this direction (Noushabadi, 2016,170).

According to John Hick, suffering is a symbol of human beings and these things are necessary for human life, but it should be noted that although suffering exists in human life and life is mixed with hardship and misery, but these hardships, no matter how great , cannot be a symbol of human life and in fact, these hardships and pains are a kind of means for man to be afflicted and tested by God and to measure his faith and belief in God.As God in the Holy Quran says:"He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed"(Mulk2).

Thus, in a radical view, Hick only pays attention to the pain and suffering of human life, while there are many blessings and joys in life that man is unaware of it.Only when he loses those blessings does he realize their spoils and existential value, he does not pay attention and considers suffering as a symbol of human life, but he is

unaware that the symbol and purpose of human life is striving for divine satisfaction and following divine commands.

The important point in Hick's theodicy of soul cultivation is that not only does he not believe in the principle of life after death, but he considers consecutive lives necessary for all human beings to achieve the promised good. Of course, he discusses successive lives in a very general way and does not elaborate on it. In describing the natural evil, Hick states that if God's purpose in creation is to nurture the soul, then this purpose will naturally determine the type of world he has created (Vahidi, 2012, 102). While in the view of Islam, reincarnation and all that is called successive life is unacceptable and many verses and hadiths indicate the rejection of this view and instead discusses the resurrection and the hereafter. Therefore, Hick's view to express reincarnation to solve the problem of evil is an unreasonable solution that the intellect does not accept and can not be attributed to man consecutive lives, including human, animal and plant life, and reincarnation itself in this situation is contrary to divine justice and the goal of the world is creation and the system is good.

In order to explain and solve the problem of moral evil, Hick uses a solution called epistemic distance, which links the creation of moral evil by man to his distance from God, who will be less able because he is far from God, who is absolute good, he will no longer be able to earn good and will inevitably suffer evil. Hick in the definition of epistemological distance states: "the distance of knowledge refers to the distance that exists between God and man and provides the possibility of human freedom and independence from God" (Hick, 2007, 281).

Hick believes that the starting point of man's epistemological distance from God is when God blew his spirit into man and then man turned away from God, widening this distance by immersing himself in the concerns of material and worldly life and this epistemological distance causes man to commit sin, because man is far from God; that is, it is far from good and all that is good, and as a result, man suffer from evil. However, it should be noted that the distance of knowledge that Hick has expressed does not correspond to the Islamic discourse, because in Islam, the principle of "repentance" has always been emphasized and that a person should repent no matter how much he has sinned, denied and forbidden and if he repents of his deeds and seeks to atone for those sins, God will forgive him and there is no distance of knowledge. Islam emphasizes the principle that God is with man at all times, and this companionship is not only for the virtuous and good human beings, but also for the sinful and criminal human beings and God is always aware of their condition so that they may return to God and God will open the doors of His mercy and forgiveness on them.

From John Hick's point of view, evil is not non-existent and exists, and in a minimal sense, even if we consider, the existence of evil from the universe can not be denied, and this view of Hick is contrary to Islamic thought and discourse; because according to the Islamic principles expressed by Islamic theologians and philosophers, evil is non-existent and does not exist, and what one thinks is evil is not in the true sense of the word evil, but is either good or is the prelude to achieving good. Such as enduring hardships to achieve career or academic success, which is not evil to endure these hardships, but these hardships are necessary to achieve success, otherwise everyone could have achieved success easily and these hardships can not be considered evil.

Hick believes that God's because of His infinite and indescribable love for human beings; the soul nurtures them with its will to eventually bring all human beings to the ultimate perfection, and in this case there is no question of human will and free will. At the same time, he believes that most of the evil realized in the world is the product of man's evil will and sin, and that only a small amount of evil is realized by nature. In fact, this duality, on the one hand, and attributing everything to the divine will for the love he has for man in order to perfect him, and on the other hand, the evils removed from man's will and action, are contradictory points in Hick's theodicy. According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, while a person is introduced as free and possessed of free will, in some other verses, compulsion is mentioned, and this has led to the expression of the theory of the rulers among Islamic philosophers and theologians. However, in terms of doing ugly and good deeds, it should be said that according to the verses of the Qur'an, man is responsible for his actions and words, and he will be accountable to God on the Day of Judgment and will be held accountable and there is no compulsion on man in the area of doing action by God, and contrary to Hick's view, it is not that God wills man to do only good in order to reach perfection, but God has given man the authority to consciously do good in the light of his will and authority and reach perfection, and this perfection and happiness is superior to perfection and happiness, forced and unconscious.

Hick believes that evil contributes to human progress and happiness, and that whatever is thought evil is not only harmful but can also lead to charity. The same thing is stated in the verses of the Holy Quran that many things that a person thinks are good, are in fact harmful and bad, and many things that he thinks are evil, are good for him and a factor in achieving perfection. (Al-Baqara 216).

It should be said that John Hick is one of the thinkers who, although influenced by the ideas of Christianity and Christian thinkers, especially Augustine and Irenaeus, nevertheless paid attention to the issue of evil with a logical and reasoning look and did not pay attention to this issue only with a Christian approach. An example of this is the rejection of the original sin and the attribution of an evil generation to man, which he considers a myth, which is contrary to logic as well as divine justice and wisdom. Despite the criticisms of the theodicy of cultivating the soul of Hick according to the verses of the Qur'an as well as Islamic views on the subject of evil, but it should be noted that his views on doing evil by man and that evil is necessary to achieve happiness and perfection are also confirmed by the verses of the Holy Quran and this is evidence of John Hick's ingenuity in explaining the problem of evil, although some of the ambiguous and critical points in his theory, such as the exaggerated evil, should not be overlooked.

## **6. Conclusion**

The problem of evil is one of the most important philosophical theological cases that has been considered in the heavenly book of all divine religions and theologians and philosophers have studied it with a new and analytical view so that all theologians and philosophers have tried to provide a rational and logical analysis of this case. According to the teachings of the divine religions and the careful study of the problem of evil, many philosophers developed in these schools believe that the evil of the universe has no contradiction with the burden of transcendence and these evils are necessary for human beings to achieve happiness and perfection. John Hick is also one of the theistic philosophers who has studied and explained the problem of evil comprehensively in the theodicy of soul cultivation and has considered it compatible with the divine attributes and the necessity of a good system.

John Hick, in the theodicy of soul cultivation, examines evil in an argumentative and logical way, and in many cases offers a correct explanation of the evil of the universe and he considers the evil in the world to be very small in comparison with its many good deeds, which of course he believes are necessary for a person to achieve many good deeds. However, in some cases, he has suffered short-sightedness and considered the existence of some evils as exaggerated and endless, while according to the teachings of Islam and the knowledge that all followers of the divine religions have of God, it is impossible in the endless world that God has created something to happen in vain. Also, from the point of view of the Qur'an and the intellect, there is no exaggerated evil, and everything that happens in the universe, whether it is good or evil, has a purpose and end, and if a person in some cases could not understand the wisdom of those things, it is not wise and logical to give up for a definite reason and he should try to understand the divine wisdom or leave his action to the wise. Also, the evil that occurs in the world is much less than the good deeds contained in it, and in addition, there are many things that man consider evil because of one's superficiality, while the same things are good for them and there is a lot of goodness in them. Also, from the point of view of the Holy Quran, many things that happen in the world and man think of them as evil, seek human happiness and guide people to acquire more and better virtues and in the absence of these things, man will not be able to achieve the happiness resulting from that seemingly evil thing. Therefore, in the case of evil, which Hick considered exaggerated and found no reason for its occurrence; man should reflect and find a reason in accordance with the teachings of perfect religions such as Islam, in accordance with divine knowledge and wisdom.

John Hick also believes that enduring pain and suffering is a part of human life and that man has not come into this world to be full of joy and happiness, but must endure hardships and thus be tested and tested by God and from the point of view of the Holy Quran, man has entered this world to enjoy and gain divine pleasure and to approach the Almighty God, and if he encounters a problem or evil, he is tempted to achieve perfection and happiness, as well as, as Hick said, to use the discretion to choose the path that he recognizes more correctly. Therefore, perhaps the reason for this view of John Hick is the difficulty in enduring hardships; because when a person is faced with a problem, he feels the weight of it in his life a lot, but charities do not show it so much because of his presence in his life and man only realizes the presence of charity in his daily life when he has lost it.

John Hick, in his theodicy of soul cultivation, divides the evil in the universe into two categories: natural evil and moral evil. He considers natural evil to come from nature and moral evil, which is the largest category of evil in the world, to be the result of human will and he believes that man, due to the misuse of his will and authority, leads to the emergence of many evils in the material world. Of course, in the case of natural evil, he did not ignore human manipulations in nature and believes that by manipulating natural affairs, man causes many disorders in it, which leads to the emergence of natural evil in the material world. John Hick, in response to some natural evils in which human manipulation of nature has not been effective, as well as the exaggerated evil, believes that if God's purpose in creation is to nurture the soul, then this goal will naturally determine the kind of world he has created and God will answer the tolerance of such aimless evil by man in other lives. While in the view of Islam, reincarnation and all that is called successive life is unacceptable and instead the resurrection and the hereafter are discussed. Therefore, Hick's view on the expression of reincarnation to solve the problem of evil is an irrational solution that the intellect does not accept and can not be given to man consecutive lives, including



human, animal and vegetable life and reincarnation itself is in contradiction with divine justice and the ultimate goal of the world of creation and the good system. And to solve moral evil, he uses a solution called the epistemological distance, which links the creation of moral evil by man to his distance from God and he believes that since man is far from God, who is absolute good, he will be less able to obtain good and will inevitably suffer from evil but the epistemological distance expressed by Hick does not correspond much to Islamic discourse; because in Islam, the principle of "repentance" has always been emphasized and that no matter how much a person has committed a sin, denial or haram, but if he repents and regrets what he has done and seeks to atone for those sins, God will forgive him and there is no epistemic distance between God and the servant.

In Islam, the principle is emphasized that God is with man at all times, and this companionship is not only for the virtuous and good human beings, but also for sinful and criminal human beings, and God is always aware of their condition and whoever turns to God, God will open the doors of His mercy and forgiveness on them. Finally, it should be noted that although John Hick has not given a correct interpretation in explaining some details about the evil, but in the final conclusion, he has considered the evil in the world as a necessity of a good system and he believes that these evils have no contradiction with the existence of God, which is in accordance with the teachings and verses of the Holy Quran.

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