

What is Quranic term “Enjoin good and Forbid Evil” means and its Application:

The Quranic principle of “enjoining good and forbidding evil” (Arabic: ^ا, al-amr bil-ma'ruf wa an-nahi 'an al-munkar) is a significant ^الْيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

Obligation in Islam, derived from several verses in the Quran, such as Surah Al-Imran (3:104):

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong...”

and Surah Al-Tawbah (9:71).

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

The true believer, both men and women, are protectors of one another. They enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil: They establish Salah , pay Zakah and obey Allah and His Rasool. It is they on whom Allah will have His Mercy , surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.

Whether this duty is Fard Ayn (an individual obligation on every Muslim) or Fard Kifayah (a collective obligation fulfilled by some on behalf of the community) depends on the context, the nature of

the act, and scholarly interpretations. Below is a detailed explanation:

1. General Ruling: Fard Kifayah in Most Cases

- Fard Kifayah (Collective Obligation):
- The majority of Islamic scholars, across various schools of thought (e.g., Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali), consider “enjoining good and forbidding evil” to be a Fard Kifayah in its broader sense. This means that if a sufficient number of qualified individuals in the Muslim community undertake this duty, the obligation is lifted from the rest of the community.
- The reasoning is based on verses like Surah Al-Imran (3:104),

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Let there arise from among you a band of people who should invite to righteousness, enjoin good and forbid evil, such are the ones, who shall be successful.

Which mentions “a group of people” tasked with this responsibility, suggesting it is not incumbent on every individual but rather on the community as a whole.

- Examples of Fard Kifayah in this context include addressing societal issues (e.g., establishing institutions to promote good or combat corruption) or correcting widespread wrongs that require collective effort, expertise, or authority.
- Conditions for Fard Kifayah:
- The act must be performed by those with the necessary knowledge, wisdom, and authority to address the specific issue effectively.
- If no one in the community fulfills this duty, the entire community

is considered sinful for neglecting it.

2. Exceptions: Fard Ayn in Specific Cases

- Fard Ayn (Individual Obligation):

- In certain situations, “enjoining good and forbidding evil” becomes a Fard Ayn, an obligation on every capable Muslim. This applies when:

1. The wrong (munkar) is occurring in one’s immediate presence or sphere of influence (e.g., within one’s family, workplace, or personal interactions).

2. The individual has the ability to address it effectively without causing greater harm.

3. The issue is clear-cut, and the person has sufficient knowledge to distinguish between right and wrong.

- For example, a parent correcting their child’s behavior, a teacher addressing misconduct in the classroom, or an individual speaking out against an injustice they witness directly (e.g., stopping someone from stealing) is considered Fard Ayn.

- The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized this in a hadith: “Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then with his heart, and that is the weakest of faith.” (Sahih Muslim, 49). This hadith indicates a personal responsibility to act according to one’s capacity.

3. Conditions for Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Scholars outline conditions for this duty to ensure it is performed correctly and does not lead to harm:

- Knowledge: The person must know what is good (ma’ruf) and evil (munkar) according to Islamic teachings.

- Likelihood of Benefit: The action should have a reasonable chance of success in promoting good or preventing evil.

- **Avoiding Greater Harm:** The act of enjoining or forbidding should not lead to worse consequences (e.g., violence, division, or greater sin).
- **Proper Means:** The approach should be wise, gentle, and in accordance with Islamic etiquette, starting with advice and persuasion rather than force or harshness.
- **Authority:** In cases requiring legal or societal enforcement (e.g., punishing crimes), this duty is restricted to those with legitimate authority, such as scholars or rulers, making it Fard Kifayah.

4. Practical Examples

- **Fard Ayn:**
 - Advising a family member to pray or avoid lying.
 - Correcting a friend who is engaging in gossip or backbiting.
 - Stopping an act of injustice you witness personally, if safe and feasible.
- **Fard Kifayah:**
 - Establishing organizations or institutions to promote Islamic education or combat social vices (e.g., corruption, drug abuse).
 - Scholars issuing fatwas or public guidance to address widespread issues.
 - Authorities enforcing Islamic laws or regulations in a Muslim-majority society.

5. Scholarly Opinions

- **Hanafi School:** Emphasizes that it is Fard Kifayah in most cases, but Fard Ayn when the evil is immediate and the individual is capable of addressing it.
- **Shafi'i School:** Similar to the Hanafi view but stresses the importance of wisdom and avoiding harm. It becomes Fard Ayn in personal contexts.
- **Maliki School:** Views it as Fard Kifayah for societal issues but

Fard Ayn for personal responsibilities, with a strong emphasis on proper methodology.

- Hanbali School: Strongly emphasizes this duty and may consider it Fard Ayn in more situations, particularly when the evil is blatant and the person is capable.
- Contemporary Scholars: Many modern scholars, like Yusuf al-Qaradawi, clarify that while it is generally Fard Kifayah, every Muslim should strive to fulfill it within their capacity, especially in personal and family settings.

6. Conclusion

- Default Status: “Enjoining good and forbidding evil” is primarily a Fard Kifayah, meaning it is a collective duty fulfilled by some members of the community, such as scholars, leaders, or institutions.
- Individual Obligation: It becomes Fard Ayn for every Muslim in specific situations where they witness an evil directly, have the ability to act, and can do so without causing greater harm.
- Practical Application: Muslims are encouraged to act within their capacity—whether by direct action, speech, or at least disapproving of evil in their hearts—while adhering to the conditions of knowledge, wisdom, and avoiding harm.