

## **Belief in Evil Eye among People of Antiquity and Divine Religions**

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### **Abstract**

Common culture is the basis of exact identification of nations and the manner of their distinctions from others. Cultural and social beliefs are inseparable parts of human lives as they always lived with human beings right from their creation. In a way that even today a number of beliefs of civilized people, with regard to a chain of appropriate or inappropriate rites and ceremonies, have roots in ancient days. As such, identifying and presenting an exact analysis could be possible only through the investigation of past cultures of different people and nations. A common and deep belief among human being is evil eye that too has an ancient precedence. Documents acquired from cave paintings, medieval historical records and number of repelled witchery stones narrate and confirm the prevalence of this particular belief among people through centuries and ages.

The present paper tries to respond to the question that whether evil eye being one of the ancient cultural beliefs of our people prevailed among other nations around the world, too? In case of its prevalence, whether or not religious sources confirm it? As such, the authors have tried to study ancient people and important world religions in order to reach to conclusion. They finally came to the point that different religious sources—including Islamic ones confirm the prevalence of witchcraft/evil eye among nations and people around the world.

**Keywords:** Evil eye, Antiquity, Religions, Beliefs

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## **Introduction**

A large number of elements forming human culture have unique basis and foundation that have passed through undated meanders to the historical era. Apart, in every period and time, at every place and location, people disintegrated from their own imaginations and beliefs and gave a new manifestation to it. In a way that with the identification and analysis of each of these elements we may trace unified links and attachment of nations and distinction between them. Because, culture is "like a mirror that can reflect the real face, identical characters, spiritual, artistic and mental specialties of people and tribes of the world and can identify legends, beliefs, myths, proverbs, formalities, ballads, and witticism of a nation and tribe, their customs and manners as well as nature and adventures hence, life and adventure they experienced could be studied" [Anjavi, 1974:12]. Thus, accessibility to such identification help social elite in creating unity and integrity between people and nation in the same way as sociologists help identifying "part of hidden historical and philosophical points.....and roots and foundation of different customs and traditions, religions, fictions and beliefs" [Hedayat, 2536:9].

Cultural and social beliefs are inseparable parts of human lives as they accompanied them, right from their creation. In a way, even today a number of beliefs of civilized people, with

regard to a chain of appropriate or inappropriate rites and ceremonies, have profound roots through ages and centuries. Consequently, an exact analysis could be possible only by investigating past cultures of different people and nation. A common and deep belief of human being is witchcraft or evil eye that has an ancient precedence, as well. Documents acquired from caves and stone paintings, medieval inscriptions and historical records, abundance of repelled stones as well as a number of websites on witchcraft are indications of deep prevalence of this particular belief among people and nation through ages.

The question we are dealing upon with is whether the evil eye being one profound belief around the world including our own is an ancient belief with global origin or it is related to a particular nationality and led to the culture of other nations? In addition, how it encountered with various religious tenets, whether it was accepted or considered as superstition? The most importantly, what are the ideas of Islam and holy Prophet as well as religious scholars about this belief, they verified or annulled it?

## **Definition**

Lexically, *evil eye* is usually referred to harm and injury inflicted to a person or thing by the effect of a glimpse mixed with surprise, admiration or jealousy. According to *Dehhoda*

*Dictionary*, evil eye, witchery, envious or resentful eye means a person cast his eyes to a beautiful thing enviously or with amazement. To others, the evil eye necessarily does not have envy; even glimpse of a close friend can inflict the same effects. With this, evil eye therefore is a kind of injury and bad luck affecting a person or a thing through a glance full of love, admiration, jealousy and amazement. Under the title 'evil eye', Encyclopedia Britannica has emphasized on damaging aspects of the same and says "There is a belief that a person, with his own, causes injury to others that can even lead to deaths, hence children, animals are more susceptible to such harm than others" (Britannica, 1973:622). Customarily, the evil eyeing is an ancient global phenomenon that has been prevalent from the early Greek, Roman, Chinese, Egyptian and Iranian civilizations to the present civilized societies. Also, the reference may be found in the religions from Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism to the last religion, Islam.

From damaging point of view, studies show that strangers, handicapped people and old women are often accused, more than others, of having the evil eyes. These accusations are labeled unintentionally. However, it is widely believed that maliciousness and envy to happiness and beauty are the real causes of the evil eyeing. As such, being praised by others or possessing a thing that incurs admiration may

transform into bad luck. It is for the reason that the phrase like "ماشاءالله" (may God preserve you), "may God protect you", "may God bless you" or other similar equivalents are used in different languages to ward off the evil effects.

Some of the steps taken to ward off the evil eyes effects vary in different cultures. For instance, researchers suggest that the aim of cross-dressing in traditional marriage ceremonies in some part of India is to ward off the evil eye. Likewise, some of the Asians and Africans become anxious while eating or drinking because they believe that human soul cause injury and harm to others more at the time when the mouth is opened. With this reason, they eat alone or with close relatives behind closed doors [Britannica, 1973:622]. It is with the same reason that traditional Asians, often, put a black spot near the eyes of their children to protect them from the evil eye. Burning the seeds of Aspand (harmel), carrying amulets, talisman or spells, stones, hand-bands and necklaces or displaying a particular design and painting at homes are other methods prevalent among people of different nations to ward off the evil eye.

### **Cultural Origin and Divine Basis**

Beliefs and trusts have been inseparable from human beings right from their origin. One can find a chain of formalities and rites among the present day's civilized people and the root of

which goes back to centuries hence; to identify those beliefs, we need to investigate their pasts. Researchers pursue the origin of the concept of the evil eye in the apprehensions of early men. They believe that our predecessors were ignorant to the causes of the natural occurrences around them, they were frightened and were often in pursuit of safe havens that they could first present explanation to this phenomena, second this could take them away from loneliness and assure them with powerful backup and thirdly it showed a window of hope for safeguarding their desires and expectations and bringing them out of despair and loneliness. According to John Bayernas, belief of early men in mysterious and supernatural powers could do away with all of their needs. He says, "Religion was the first thoughtful effort of men for their accessibility to a kind of security in the world"[Bayernas,2006:7]. Religious precedence is as old as the emergence of humanity on earth. The religion is manifestation of human belief or attention toward Unity of Being or supernatural power [Sherbatian, 2004:15]. Sociologists define religion as "a system of belief in supernatural powers, symbols and formalities. An order that is working to make life meaningful and understandable" [Bits and Plug, 1996:79].

The acquired cave paintings and other material remains show that warding off evil or encountering with evil soul that inflicted loss to

human lives and properties has often been one of the serious mental and intellectual engagements of early men. Wading off those vulnerable harms were considered real challenge to the early men.

However, during historical period, right from the formation of social set up, the evil eye has mostly been interpreted as bad intention and envy. With this, people are often frightened from the envious eyes hence; hide their beauties and assets from the sight of others. According to them, the evil eye might endanger their valuable and beautiful things that attract others. As such, children, domestic animals (especially milch animals) and agricultural fields/orchards are counted as the most endangered entities. This belief continues even today because a large number of people do not take their newborn out of the house for at least 40 days.

Phillip Warring in his book "Superstitious Culture" considers the evil eye as an old fallacy that the ancients often linked to magic or related beliefs hence; they convicted the evil eyed people with death. He has pointed that "history is full of trial and execution based on witchcraft and magic during 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. for instance, a person was executed merely on the allegation of putting the evil eye to the plaintiff or his cat that had fallen ill [Warring, 1992:137].

Alan Dundes, a professor at California University in his essay "Wet and Dry: The Evil

Eye" has explored the evil eye factors and relates the belief to the mythological convictions of water and dryness and says that the aged belief of the evil eye leads to dryness of body and finally death. According to his finding, "damages and injuries inflicted by the evil eye lead to dryness of living creatures especially children, milch animals, fruit trees and nursing mothers". The injuries incurring through 'a dazzling look' include sudden emergence of diarrhea and vomiting among children, drying of breasts of nursing mothers or domestic animals, rotting or drying of fruits on trees and sudden lack of sexual power in men [Sedghinejad, 2003:27]. Considering Mesopotamia as the most ancient region with such a belief, Dundes further points, "Belief in the evil eye originated from this land and then spread to the east as far as India; Spain, Portugal, Scandinavia and Britain in the west and from south to north Africa" [Sedghinejad, 1383:27].

In Iraq, archaeologists have found tablets of about five thousand years old that symbolizes the existence of this belief in the Sumerian Civilization. Likewise "amulets in the shape of eyes are seen being put around the neck of a dead buried in the Sumerian cemeteries" that according to archaeologists were most probably "to ward off the evil eye" [Sepahi, *Soroush Javan*: 20].

Presently, the belief in the evil eye, more than

others, is prevalent among people between Mediterranean coasts and Aden River, in addition to India and Spanish speaking South America. Among the native Latinos, this belief is also widely prevalent. European colonizers later took this belief to North America, Australia and New Zealand. It is said that this belief had never practiced in the African desert before slaves that European colonizers brought from the New World took this belief from their masters

[<http://www.wikipediya.or/evileye.html>].

#### **Beliefs of Antiquity**

As pointed out, belief in the evil eye is an ancient phenomenon hence; the exact date of its initiation is untraceable. Perhaps it is related to the time when script was still unknown and men believed in various spirit i.e. a time that according to Taylor men believed "all exiting things in this nature has spirit...a soul that can help or inflict damages to them. As such, these spirits can be made favorable or furious" [Sharbatian, 2005:30].

According to Will Durant 'once early men developed a world of spirits, they became in pursuit of attracting their happiness and sought their help, without knowing their real essence and inclination,' [Will Durant, 1986:78]. Then they imagined that some of those spirits were good and profitable but a large number dangerous and wicked. Apart, they believed that

a number of evil souls penetrate into human body to torture and torment them and a large number of others are hidden in the corner of a house or orchard in order to intimidate men towards wrongdoing. They believed that 'their cursing and damning have definite effects and the 'evil eye' is harmful undoubtedly [Will Durant, 1986: 82].

Babylonians considered sin not only a spiritual and sensual situation rather a disease. According to them, this disease arises from the domination of Satan over human body that could even cause death. "Prayer was a kind of amulet to take away the evil forces from the body of a person [Will Durant, 1986: 82]. Babylonians imagined that Satan were enemy to human being everywhere and "they could penetrate into a house through an opening, bolt and pivot of door so that if a person commit a crime and if that perpetration he is out of the support of God, becomes the cause of his illness or insanity' [ibid]. Dwarfs, handicapped and the most importantly women, according to the Babylonians possessed powers to penetrate Satan into the body of a person if they did not like him anymore. They could perform this task merely by a single glance.

To prevent Satan from damaging, Babylonians employed charms, amulets and other types of anti-spirit actions. They believed that Satan become afraid and escape if one carries image of gods with him. By another

belief, the most effective talisman was the one when a small stone was tied around neck, with the condition that the stone should be one that brings happiness to its owner and the band should black, white or red color. The best thread was the one that made out of fleece of a virgin goat [Will Durant, 1986:286-7]. Spraying water from one of the holy rivers like Tigris and Euphrates on the body of a person contacted with the evil eye was another rite prevalent among the Babylonians.

"Other actions employed by the Babylonians to ward off the evil effects, were that they made idols of Satan and put them into small boats that slowly vanished in waters. The boat was made in a way that it inverted itself. This step was considered as the most effective measure to ward off the evil effects. Likewise, by chanting spells, they often attempted to expel Satan or evil from a human body and permeated them to an animal such as chicken, pig or more than others a goat" [Will Durant, 1986:286-7].

Majority of Babylonians believed that "world is full of Satan hence; they must put amulets around neck or recite a particular charm to prevent them from damages" [Will Durant, 1986:324].

Ancient Egyptian, too, believed in Satan or evil soul and harms they incurred to human being. As such, one of the obligations of a pious Egyptian was to always utter a particular verse not only to ward off satanic effects but to attract

offerings towards him. For instance, if a mother worried about her child and wanted to keep him away from Satan, he recited the following spell, which also pointed to a tool for warding off the evil eye:

O'! That comes in the darkness and steps in stealthily go out.....aren't you come to kiss this boy? I won't ever allow you to do so.....aren't you come to keep him away from me? I won't allow you to do so. I am protecting him from your effect through the vermin plant that is harming, and an onion that harms you or honey that is sweet for living but bitter for the dead, or parts of filthy fish, and with dorsal vertebra of a thorny fish" [Will Durant, 1986:343-4].

Ancient Indians also believed in the spirit and "were afraid of the evil eye in every period and centuries" [Will Durant, 1986:591], for instance when a mother put baby into her lap or carried on her back, she would place a colored mole between her two eyebrows in order to ward off the evil eye. Or once they had to travel a distance i.e. they were going to another village or to the market, they would tie a little gravel in the corner of their clothes because they believed that lives were surrounded by evils originating from the supernatural factors and hidden soul scattered throughout the earth. According to them, the evil eye like spirit penetrates into the body of men and one must ward it off to live with ease and comfort. An

Indian tribe hit domestic animals with twigs called "nasana" and slowly chanted the following couplet:

"With the name of that woman who sent her evil eye to us, today I am warding off it through nasana and hope we would get better hunt once we enter the jungle and may worst come to those who cast the evil eye to us [Deh Bozorgi, 2002:459-60].

Thus, helpless men always employed amulets and spells in their efforts to ward off those evil threats. During the course, remedial thought appeared in new form and with more perfection. With the evolution of human social apparatus and knowledge, spirit also took different shapes equivalent to men and manifested with new grouping. For instance, in pre-Islamic Iran, those spirits manifested with a new group called 'Dev' (demon). Demons exhibited a new image in the Iranian culture and belief. Amulets that had also taken a new form carried images of the same demons.

However, with the advancement of society, growth of knowledge and belief patterns, people found answers to what their predecessors were unknown. Bad spirit and gods descended from inhuman domain to the human body that had penetrating eyes.

Belief in the evil eye is still prominent in the thought of a large number of people around the globe. Even today, people often relate damages to agricultural product or animal husbandry or

loss of a close relative, to the evil-eye. As a matter of fact, there are abundance of amulets, charm and tools to ward off those evil affects in proportion to different culture. There are amulets, spells or a symbol tied around neck, arm, clothe, in front of orchards, properties or gardens. Likewise, use of colored stamps such as blue, white and black, a piece of wood from some trees, breaking egg on the surface, burning seeds of Aspand (harmel) and distancing from a person with blue or grey eyes and blonde hair are some of methods prevalent for warding off the evil eye.

### **Sumerians and Babylonians**

Sumerians worshipped their masters. "The first collection of gods emerged during the Sumerians" [Bayernas, 2006:66]. To them, "earth is full of spirit, where some good spirits try to protect people but the evil ones and Satan always keep the good spirit away and controlling the body and soul of Sumerian men" [Will Durant, 1986:154]. Babylonians alike believed that Satan always sit inside the lurking place of men and a sin expels men from supporting the domain of pious gods and encounter with a number of misfortunes. Under these kinds of beliefs, magic, prayers and sanctity of things and body with magical power that were common before, became widespread. The Mesopotamian region is considered to be the base and fountain of the evil eye. As

mentioned before, archeologists have found tablets and cemetery in Iraq that indicate the prevalence of this belief in the Sumerian civilization. Likewise, a body in a Sumerian cemetery has been found with a talisman hanging around the neck in the shape of a dangling eye that probably used to ward off the evil eye effects.

Against the attacks of demons or evil spirit, Babylonians even covered their deceased with various ornaments. For instance, some times they painted the face of their dead with the belief that he affected by a similar magic [The Great Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.11: Nullifying Magic].

### **Elamite**

The exact information of the Elamite religion is not known yet, but a little available resource can shed light on the role of religion in that civilization.

The Elamite religion was probably individualistic and possessed its own particularities. Part of this individuality includes unusual respect for mothers and eulogy for snakes that indicate roots in charms and magic. Even on the vessels of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> millennium, snakes are visible abundantly. The snake figures on the head of pitchers and dish-covers employed protection from the evil eye and Satan and on widows and doors were counted as protection for cities. We also see

snakes in royal masons and sculptural works i.e. these are encircled on the perimeter of altar, on the handle of large axe or royal stick, probably a symbol of protection. Likewise, image of snakes have also been found around the royal thrones [Behzadi, 2004:136].

From the antiquity “snake images shown in jungle life in Elam and their manifestation through two snakes in mating condition also continued at the later stage until Egyptian civilization. Image of snake with human head indicates that they believed this reptile as godly entity, a concept unknown to Mesopotamia [Ibid].

## Great Revealed Religions

### a) Jews and Christians

The land of Palestine has been the origin of different revealed religions—including Judaism and Christianity. Beliefs in the evil eye, the traces of which, have been found in Mesopotamia, were permeated through the Sumerians to different nations and religions. Jews, as such, gave importance to such a belief more than others. In Judaism, the evil eye is more than a belief and it is partially counted as one of their religious beliefs “Talmud that is a holy book of Judaism considers Yousef (Joseph) immune from the evil eye and its reason being a verse from the holy Torah that says Yagub (Jacob) considered him sacrosanct on top of the eyes [Safar Afrinish 49:22].

This belief also continued among Christians. According to them, Satan exist like angels; they “are small entities enslaved by devil (Eblis) which are not only similar to common people; they are real entity whose existence lead to the unending damages. These entities can incite sense of hate and despair from a woman towards a man...and make feasible a number of magic.....they are able to reflect their opinions by affecting man’s imagination or appear before people and speaking to them. Or possibly they may ally with sorceress women and help them in harming children through her evil eye [Will Durant, 1986:343-4].

### B) Zoroastrians

In ancient Iran too---as has been pointed earlier—people had intense belief in spirit and their society was full of pious and profitable or evil and dangerous spirits. They believed that some of the evil spirits permeate into human bodies to disturb and torture them or they hide in some corners to inflict harm. The ancient literatures based on Zoroastrian principles, point to ‘divine and demon’ as opposite to each other. Those wicked spirits of previous era, appeared in ancient Iranian culture, with new grouping known as ‘*divan*’ or *drujan*’ (demon). According to the Zoroastrian principle, *agas* or *agasi* or envious eye are from this group. *Aighas* or *Agas* means evil or envious eye. In *Avesta*, ‘*Agasi*’ is compound of ‘*ageh*’ or ‘*akeh*’ and ‘*ashi*’ where the first part denotes bad or

sin, and the second part stands for the eye. In Vendidad 20/3, 6, 7, 9 too it has the same meaning of bad eye, envious eye and casting evil eye [Vendidad 1376:Vol.2: Memoir 94]. It mentions that “*Rashk Daruj Dev* is vindictive and evil eyeing.....*Agas dev* is an envious eye that casts the evil eye on people.....and *Shurcheshmi dev* is the one that people look at a thing and do not utter the name of *Izad* and take away it [Farnabgh Dadgi, 1380:120-21].

“With each of them, thus Dev and Druj was companion....Those demons possessed destruction, pain, difficulty, and torment and are armed with black egg, bearer of fetidness, decay and evil. Share of all of them are intermixed in men and their signs are highlighted among people [Vendidad, 1376:1304-5].

*Bandehish* gives a narrative about a person known as Zen Gav that had poison in his eye and to whomever he cast his eye is being killed. By this way, Iranians urged King Afrasiyan to kill Zen Gav and take himself the reign of Iranshehr [Farnabgh Dadgi, 2001:140].

The ancient Iranians applied various tools and methods to do away with the effect of an envious eye. “By offering suitable and timely ransom to the godly men, using precautionary talismans, eating some meals on the fixed days like drinking fresh and pure milk with red or white avalanche at the first day of the month of Bahman (January), they tried to protect himself

and his properties” [Deh Bozorgi, 2001:459].

In Zoroastrianism, the evil eye or the evil look that is known as *agasi* is also remembered as a disease [Oshedri, 2004:114]. It says *Anger Minoo* created that disease and *Ahura Mazda* came out with its cure and prayed to ward off that disease [Vendidad, 1997:21].

Apart, Zoroastrian texts also give other features of demons. Some of the texts mention that there are three types of people who were not given sustenance by *Indra Gity*. They include *darayan jos* (those who talk while masticating or eating), *ashgahan* (evil eyed) and *dush cheshm* (envious eyed) .....the last was one who did not tolerate a pious person [Vendidad, 1997 Vol. 2: Fardger 7:792-3].

Likewise, the texts including Avesta give references like ‘aks’, duj, dayiser for evil and envious eyes. In Avesta, for instance, ‘duj-dayiser’ has also been employed for evil and envious eyes [Vendidad, 1997 Vol. 2: Fardger 7:792-3]. These references and distinction for the evil eye thus point to the depth of this belief in Zoroastrianism.

### **C. Islam and Muslims**

The belief in the evil eye is also prevalent in the Islamic culture as Qur’anic researchers and commentators have repeatedly pointed to this phenomenon. Part of this aspect, according to them, is true hence; they believe that “scientifically the belief of magnetic rays coming out of eyes is justifiable [Tafsir e-

*Namuneh*, Vol.10:1995:30]. Allameh Tabatabaei in the commentary of the verses 51 and 52 of Chapter *Al-Qalam* highlights this aspect. The verse reads:

....And indeed it seems the disbelievers almost make thee stumble with their looks...that is, the disbelievers almost make you fall on the ground so that you cannot stand up to deliver the message.

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

To most of the commentators, *azlaq to absar* in the verse means casting evil eye that itself a kind of sensual effect and no reason to negate it rather, the incidence was seen that is related to the evil eyeing. And a tradition also comes accordingly hence; there is no reason one can deny saying that the belief is superstitious [Tabatabaei, Vol. 19: 1995:648].

On the question whether or not the concept of the evil eye has reality in Islam and other exiting scientific knowledge? *Tafsir-e-Namuneh* mentions: "A large number of people have belief that some eyes have particular effect i.e. when they amaze about a thing that might harm or make chaos and if there is a human being, it could make him ill or insane. This matter is also not absurd logically as number of intellectuals today consider that some eyes have particular magnetic power with much efficiency that can even be developed through training and

practices. For instances, one may also put forward laser rays and its invisible performance which is ahead of the most destructive weapons. Accepting the existence of power in some eyes that put reciprocal effects through a particular wave, therefore, would not be a surprising thing. Some give eyewitness accounts that they saw people with mysterious eye who disabled a person, an animal or a thing simply by a glance. As such, one should not insist in denying rather must accept possibility of its existence through intellectual and scientific reasoning [*Tafsir e- Namuneh*, Vol. 24, 1995:427-28].

In the case of revelation of this chapter, the commentaries say that the short-sighted Koreyshite authorized a group from Bani Asad tribe who were famous for jealous and envious eyes and promised support for inflicting damage and harm upon Prophet Mohammed. The eyes of the group were evil to the extent that if one of them intended for meat, he simply asked his slave girl to take a basket and follow him. Wherever he saw a fat camel or cow or a goat he would say: "(how good it is, there doesn't exist better than this or he has not seen like this before). In the meantime, animal dissolved, and killed by its owner and gave a quantity of meat to him. In short, they come to the Prophet and stood while he was reciting Qur'an. They looked at him and said "there isn't exist more eloquent and excellent than

him". But, Allah protected the prophet from those evil eyes [Majma –ul Bayan Vol25: 249; Tafsir-e Kashaf Vol.7: 399; Tafsir-e Surabadi Vol.4:2670].

Commentators also point to effects of the evil eye in verses 66 & 67 of Chapter Yousef, Chapter al-Falaq and Chapter al-Naas. They emphasize that when an envious person casts his eyes to an amazing and excellent thing, he becomes jealous hence; he spit poison from his eyes.

Quoting from *Kitab al-Dar al-Mansur*, Allameh Tabatabaei says "Abd bin Hamid narrates from Zayd bin Aslam saying that a Jew inflicted his spell upon Prophet Muhammad and resultantly he fell ill. Gabriel came with Chapters Maozatin and revealed that a Jew bewitched him and threw the charm in a well by tying knots. Prophet sent Ali (AS) to bring that charm and asked him to open the knot. For each knot Prophet recited one verse and Ali (AS) repeated the same while releasing the knot. When all knots were opened these two chapters finished and the prophet got up seeming a fetter unclogged from his feet [Trans. *Al-Mizan*, Vol. 20: 1995:682].

### Hadith and Islamic Tradition

Evil eyes and their effects have sequentially been narrated by Hadith and traditions of Prophet Muhammad and Imams and perhaps it can be said that these generally confirm this

aspect. "In *Kitab al-Dar al-Mansur*, Bukhari has quoted from Ibn Abbas as saying: While commenting on verse يكاد الذين كفروا the Prophet said that the evil eye is a truth. Similarly, Abu Naeem in the book *al-Halyeh* has narrated Jaber as saying: Prophet Muhammad said evil eye sends a healthy man into grave and a healthy camel into a boiler [Trans. *Al-Mizan*, Vol. 19:651]. *Bahar al-Anwar* also narrates the saying of Prophet Muhammad:

رَوَى عَنْ النَّبِيِّ (ص): إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّهَا تَدْخُلُ الْجَمْلُ وَالتَّوْر  
التَّنُور

In one of the Hadiths, Ali (AS) says: Prophet got talisman for Hassan and Hussein and recited: I entrust you to all words and names of Allah from evil and dangerous animals and all evil and envious eyes, then prophet looked at us and said: Abraham gave same talisman to Ismael and Isaac [*Nur al-Saqlain*, Vol.5: 400].

أَعِيدُ كَمَا بِكَلِمَاتِ التَّامَّةِ وَ لِسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ الْخُسْنَى كُلِّهَا عَامَّةً ، مِنْ  
شَرِّ السَّامَةِ وَالْهَامَةِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَامَةٌ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا  
حَسَدَ

Prophet Muhammad once said an envious eye brings down a person from the peak of a mountain due to enough power and intensity [*Bahar al-Anwar* Vol.6].

و فِيهِ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ (ص): الْعَيْنُ تَنْزِلُ الْحَاقِ - وَ هُوَ ذِرْوَةُ الْجَبَلِ - مِنْ  
قُوَّةِ اخْذِهَا وَ شِدَّةِ بَطْشِهَا

According to one narrative, Asma bint Amees once asked Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that son of Jaafar often suffers from the evil eye...if she could get amulets for them. Prophet replied: yes, there isn't any hindrance to it (*Majma ul-Bayan*, Vol.12]. There is another narrative that says Gabriel insured Prophet Muhammad from the evil eye and revealed a verse to him (*Bahar ul Anwar*, Vol 7, p.7] :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَرْقِيكَ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ حَاسِدٍ، اللَّهُ يَشْفِيكَ

Abdel Karim Muhammed bin Jaafar Sam'ani in his book quotes that once Gabriel descended to Muhammad (PBUH) and found him sad. Upon his query, prophet said Hasnain (AS) has an effect of the evil eye. Gabriel said: O' messenger, eye is truth, protect them with this amulet [*Bahar ul Anwar* Vol.6].

اللهم ذا السلطان العظيم و المن القديم و الوجه الكريم ذا الكلمات التامات و الدعوات المستجابات عاف فلاناً من انفس الجن و اعين الانس

This is the amulet prophet recited for Hasnain and then asked his companions to follow the same in order to save their children [Ghomi, p. 559-80].

In Nahj ul Balagha, Ali (AS) also says: eye is the truth; amulet is the truth, witchery is the truth, good soothsaying is the truth but portent has no reality and so is the bad luck; perfume, honey, riding and looking to green are hindrance to [evil eye] and elements of

happiness [Nahj ul- Balagha]:

الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ وَ الرُّقْيُ حَقٌّ وَ الْفَأَلُ حَقٌّ وَ الطَّيْرَةُ لَيْسَتْ بِحَقٍّ وَ  
الغدوى لَيْسَتْ بِحَقٍّ وَ الطَّيْبُ نُشْرَةٌ وَ الْعَسَلُ نُشْرَةٌ وَ الرُّكُوبُ  
نُشْرَةٌ وَ النَّظْرُ إِلَى الْخَضِرَةِ نُشْرَةٌ

Imam Sadiq once said if graves are to split, one will see that most of the deaths were caused by evil eyes because eyes are the reality. Likewise, Prophet Muhammad once said: Eye is the truth; anyone who amazed to a thing belonging to his brother should remember Allah to ward off any evil effect [*al-Teb*: 121].

Narrating a story about Sahal bin Hanif who was one of the companions of the prophet, Imam Sadiq says: whoever wonders about a particular thing belonging to their brother of faith must withdraw their eye from that thing because eye is the truth [*al-Teb*: 121]:

مَا يَمْنَعُ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا رَأَى مِنْ أَخِيهِ مَا يَعْجَبُهُ فِي نَفْسِهِ أَوْ فِي مَالِهِ  
فَلْيَبْرِكْ عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ الْعَيْنَ حَقٌّ

Makaram al-Akhlaq has quoted Imam Sadiq as saying that eye has reality, neither you are safe from it nor others from you; if you are afraid repeat three times: ماشاء الله ، لا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ [Makaram al-Akhlaq: 445].

Moamer bin Khallad says that he was deputed for expenditure of Imam Reza in Khorasan. Imam once asked him to fetch some perfume. When he collected the perfume Imam amazed and then looked at him and said: Moamer! Eye is prerogative, write praise for

Allah and holy verse on a piece of paper and wrap the bottle [*Makaram al-Akhlaq*: 445].

In authentic sources and some other Islamic texts from religious scholars emphasized on prayers, amulets and talisman for warding off the evil eye effects, some are: *Masha Allah*, *La Ghuwwat Illa Billa Hil-Aliyol Azim* or recitation of verses *al-Naas*, and *al-Falaq*.

As a whole, the belief in the evil eye has not been interpreted as a superstitious in the Islamic civilization and scholars and thinkers such as Ibn Sina, Ghazzali, Mulla Sadra, Fakhr Razi and others have considered it a reality. Philosophers like Ibn Khaldun has also accepted the truth of evil eye and quotes some of the instances [*Introduction of Ibn Khaldun Vol. 2: 1047-52*].

In *Rasael Ikhwan ul Safa*, an autonomous treatise entitled 'essence of magic, conjuring evil spirits and eyes' notes: We saw a large number of evil-eyed who took out an animal or a person less than an hour by casting their eyes [*Rasael Ikhwan ul Safa Vol. 4: 309-10*].

According to Ibn Sina, the evil eye possibly is a manner that begins in particular sensual condition where amazement affects a thing and person. One considers this aspect far from understanding that a mere contact is the cause of effect in the bodies [Gohari, 1999:24].

Ibn Arabi considers the evil eye as an outcome of the effect of other senses and thus says 'to philosophers, the evil eye arises from the effect

of sensual power of others, a sense that initially affect itself and then to others' [Gohari, 1378:234].

Ghazzali also believes that 'all of them (possession of heart, ambition and their overview) are possibly based on mental reasoning and experiences and that evil eye or witchery are also part of it. As an example, sensual effect of a person remains in the body of others until the sense that is envious and treacherous imagines i.e. it sees an excellent horse and kills it out of envy. Evil eye is a truth; it sends a person to grave and a camel to oven. Thus, this is also one of the miracles of heart powers [Ghazzali Vol.1:34].

As a whole, it must be said that accepting evil eye effects summarily doesn't mean that destructive works and vulgar actions be given shelter that is not only against the religious principles rather causes doubt and rejection by uninformed people about the real aspect, in a way that infecting realities with superstitions have put undesirable effects on the minds [*Tafsir e-Namuneh Vol.24:427-28*].

### **Conclusion**

With respect to precedence and expansion of belief in evil eye among nations and religions as well as chronologies, tablets and things acquired from early men and civilizations, it can be concluded that the belief in the evil eye—relinquishing some of the traditions and

peripheral rites---must be considered a worldly phenomenon, outside the superstitious domain. Perhaps, it can be said that some of the beliefs have ancient and global patters and the evil eye is included in it. Traces and samples of this belief not only from early societies and civilizations like Greek, Roman, Chinese, and Egyptian and Iranian, rather their imprints have been found in all ancient religions. The truth of evil eye has been emphasized and presented by different religions and Islam, too, confirms it.

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## باور چشم زخم در نزد اقوام باستانی و ادیان الهی

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فرهنگ عامه اساس درست شناخت ملتها و وجه تمایز قومی از قوم دیگر است. باورهای فرهنگی و اجتماعی فصل جدایی ناپذیر زندگی بشوند و از ابتدای خلقت همواره با او بوده‌اند به گونه‌ای که حتی بسیاری از باورهای مردم متمدن امروزی نسبت به یک سلسله مناسک و مراسم و شایست و ناشایستهای کنونی او، ریشه در ژرفای قرون و اعصار گذشته دارد؛ بنابر این شناخت و ارائه تحلیل درستی از آنها فقط با کاوش در گذشته‌های فرهنگی اقوام و ملل، امکان‌پذیر تواند بود. یکی از این اعتقادات عمومی و عمیق بشر، اعتقاد به چشم‌زخم است که در فرهنگ ملل سابقه‌ای دیرینه دارد. اسناد به دست آمده از نقاشیهای انسانهای نخستین در درون غارها، سنگ نوشته‌ها و آثار مکتوب قرون وسطی، اوراد و سنگهای فراوان دفع چشم‌زخم، حکایتگر و تأیید کننده رواج این اعتقاد در بین اقوام و ملل گوناگون در قرون و اعصار مختلف است.

نگارندگان در این مقاله درصدد هستند به این سؤال پاسخ دهند که چشم زخم به منزله یکی از باورهای فرهنگی باستانی و قدیمی مردم ما، آیا در بین سایر اقوام و ملل جهان نیز از دیرباز رواج داشته است یا نه؟ و در صورت رایج بودن آیا منابع دینی و اعتقادی آن را تأیید کرده‌اند یا خیر؟ بنابر این نگارندگان در این مقاله برای دست‌یابی به پاسخ این پرسش، به بررسی این باور در میان اقوام باستانی و ادیان مهم جهان پرداخته‌اند و نشان داده‌اند که گذشته از رواج باور چشم‌زخم آن در بین همه اقوام و ملل جهان، منابع متعدد دینی و از جمله منابع اسلامی نیز آن را تأیید کرده‌اند.

واژگان کلیدی: چشم زخم، اقوام کهن، ادیان، باورها

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