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Reading the Lord of the Rings from a Koranic Perspective***

Kuran Perspektifinden Yüzüklerin Efendisi'nin Okunması

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Tolkien'in *Yüzüklerin Efendisi* adlı eserinde kullandığı ve Kur'anı Kerim'e gönderge yapan sembolleri ele almaktadır. Tolkien'in dini geçmişi ve *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'nde Kur'anı Kerim'e gönderme yapan semboller örnekleriyle gösterilmiştir. Tolkien Katoliktir ve almış olduğu dini eğitim ve Katolik yetiştirilme tarzı eserlerinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'ndeki yaratıklar ve karakterler, Kur'anı Kerim'de bahsedilenlerle benzerlikler göstermektedir. *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'ndeki cennet ve cehennem, iyi ve kötü, karanlık ve aydınlık gibi ele alınan kavramlar Kur'anı Kerim'de ele alındığı şekliyle irdelenmiştir. Tolkien'in kullanmış olduğu iki kule, iyi ve kötüye işaret etmektedir. Kur'anı Kerim'de bahsedilen kıyamet günü konuşan ağaçlar ve cinler *Yüzüklerin Efendisi* ile kıyaslanmıştır. Hz. Davut'un demiri işleyerek zırh yapışı ile *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'nde Biblos Mithril'in zırhı karşılaştırılmıştır. Ayrıca Kur'anı Kerim'de Cin suresinde bahsedilen cin krallığı ve askerileri ile *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'nde tasvir edilen cinler (Elves) karşılaştırılmalı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yüzüklerin Efendisi, Tolkien, Kutsal Kitap Kur'anı Kerim, Semboller

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at exhibiting the symbols used in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* from the perspective of the Holy Quran. Tolkien's religious background and the use of the symbols in *The Lord of the Rings* referring to the Holy Quran have been demonstrated by examples. Tolkien was a Catholic so his religious education and upbringing play a significant role in his work. The creatures and characters used in *The Lord of the Rings* are representative of the ones mentioned in the Holy Quran. The concept and philosophy of heaven and hell, good and evil, even darkness and light mentioned in Tolkien's work resemble the concept of heaven and hell mentioned in the Holy Quran. Two towers used by Tolkien refer to heaven and hell, good and evil. The speaking trees or Ents used by Tolkien to help the good ones referring to the Quran have also been dealt with. How Tolkien uses Elves in his work has been compared to Jinns mentioned in the Holy Quran. And the Prophet David's armour making have been compared to Biblos Mithril in *The Lord of the Rings*. In Al Jinn Surah the Almighty describes Jinn as a kingdom with its own king and soldiers as the portrait of Elves depicted in the *Lord of the Rings*.

Keywords: The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien, The Holy Quran, Symbols.

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Introduction

In *The Lord of the Rings* it is clear that J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) does not directly mention a specific religion, church, God and Christ because these concepts are regarded as symbols. Humphrey Carpenter puts it as “Tolkien wrote lovingly of the characters he created speaking on them as though they were real historical figures whose chronicles he dug up from some ancient tome.”¹ Tolkien believes that the whole story with its character revolves around already existing ones, so referring to God's creatures are symbolic. Stan Williams states “To Tolkien, myths are true because they are part of our God created imagination and because they bring us “such joy (that) has the very taste of primary truth to Tolkien the story of Jesus Christ is true myth.”²

Tolkien uses many literary devices to attract the attention of the readers. Those devices and elements are similar to ones used in the Bible so many critics claim that Tolkien is as a Christian writer. In the Bible Jesus puts it as: “not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord 'will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven.”³ Moreover, Tolkien's letters and works, somehow, are about magic, Santa Clause and Norse mythology. What we infer from it is that he believed in myths. According to Errigo and Simpson, Tolkien reveals his faith as following:

“Actually I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic.”⁴ Tolkien's Authorized Biography states the family remained devout Catholics throughout their lives. It is a fact that Tolkien was a religious man and he reflected it in his works directly or indirectly. It exhibits that his work is not a piece of pure fictional writing, on the other hand, it seems that Tolkien might have been inspired by many religious symbols and signs.

As Eagleston states that Tolkien mentions it in his letters: “The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously at first, but consciously in the revision. That's why I have no put in, or have cut out, practically all references to any think like religion, to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.”⁵

We try to depict to what extent *The Lord of the Rings* entails the symbols and signs used in Islam, as well. According to many Arab Historians, there have been old saints and monks who believed in Islam and how Bible mentioned about the Prophet Mohammed. But according to the Surahs, the existence of the prophet, Mohammed, has not been accepted by the Christian clergy even those parts in the Bible mentioning about Mohammed were deleted or omitted. Even the Bible was rewritten to omit those parts on the holy Quran. To the rewritten Bible, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”⁶

¹ Humphrey Carpenter, *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography*, George Allen & Unwin, 1977, p. 117.

² Stan Williams, “The Lord of the Rings”, Web. 20 Nov. 2015, (<http://www.catholiceducation.org>).

³ Bible, Matthew 7:21, 10 Nov. 2015, (<http://biblehub.com>).

⁴ Angie Errigo, & Paul Simpson, *The Rough Guide to The Lord of the Rings*, Haymarket Customer Publishing, 2003, p. 227.

⁵ Robert Eagleston, *Reading The Lord of the Rings New Writing on Tolkien Classic*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2006. p. 65.

⁶ “Bible, Matthew”, 7:15, Web. 15 Nov. 2015, (<http://biblehub.com>).

What Tolkien is trying to show us is the deception of the Ring. As human beings, we are all prone to committing sin. Many critics think that *The Lord of the Rings* has religious elements as Tolkien's religious background. The symbols and events such as heaven and hell, creatures, water, the speaking tree, the elephant, good and evil and Armageddon Battle and Al-Mahdee used in *the Lord of the Rings* implicitly or explicitly and their reference to the Holy Quran are to be explored. *The Lord of the Rings* can be analyzed from various perspectives but in order to stick to particular symbols we have limited our paper to those mentioned ones. Many koranic stories have roots in the bible. It is known that Arabs and Hebrews are cousins, descendants of Noah.

There are lots of studies done on *The Lord of the Rings* but it has not been treated from the Quranic point of view. The stories told in the Holy Quran have great resemblances with the those ones in *the Lord of the Rings*. The article is limited to certain major stories and symbols told in the Holy Quran and in Tolkien's work.

1-1- Faith

Faith can be stated as the spiritual element of any religion, according to Islam we can clearly depend on the definition of Maqayis al lughah (measurement of the language) "the root letters -m-n have two closely related root meanings: the firsts faithfulness (amana) that is the opposite of treachery, meaning the hearts assurance; and other is belief. The two meanings are close. AL-Khalil says that al- amana (security) comes from Amn (safety), and that aman means to give safety, whilst amana means the opposite of treachery."⁷

According to Hebrews 11:1, the definition of faith is clearly given as "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". Simply put, the biblical definition of faith is "trusting in something you cannot explicitly prove". This definition of faith contains two aspects: "intellectual assent and trust. Intellectual assent is believing something to be true. Trust is actually relying on the fact that the something is true"⁸.

Tolkien depicts Frodo (the main character) in *The Lord of the Rings* as a great spiritual responsible character full of faith. Frodo has to be faithful (amana) to take the journey to destroy the Ring, and to bring faith (aman) to the Shire again. Tolkien's religious conscious leads to act in that way as Pearce in his *Catholic Literary Giants: Afield Guide to the Catholic Literary Landscape* puts it "the works author, J.R.R. Tolkien was a lifelong devoted Catholic heart in to the writing of the myth that is now captivating a new generation."⁹

It is a fact that monotheist religions call for the same God, the unity of God, the unity of religion, the unity of humankind, as Bahai referred as saying in Lebran "they believe

⁷ Habib Ali Al-Jifri, *The Concept of Faith in Islam*, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan National Library, 2012, p. 11.

⁸ "Definition of Faith", Web. 14 Dec. 2015, (www.westportchristianchurch.com/wp)

⁹ Joseph Pearce, *Catholic Literary Giants: Afield Guide to the Catholic Literary Landscape*, Iguatus Press, 2005, p. 311.

in reality, there is only one religion, the religion of God. This one religion is continually evolving and, each particular religious system represents a stage in the evolution of the whole.”¹⁰

1-2- The Concept of Heaven and Hell in *The Lord of the Rings* and the Holy Quran

It is imperative that we should enlarge the concept of heaven and hell how it is mentioned in the Holy Quran and how it is depicted in Tolkien’s work. Before we further our argument it is necessary to talk about the perception of the hell and heaven according to Islam. We know that there are differing views held by different sects of Islam or Muslim scholars but the general understanding among the Muslims is that the concept of heaven and hell almost always depict, somehow, a material image rather than a spiritual image.

In the Holy Quran, Heaven is depicted as a large garden with beautiful trees casting eternal shadows and the flowing rivers carry milk and honey. The garden produces delicious fruit bearing all tastes. All this is at man’s command and service. The meat would be the meat of all birds. Female companions with amazing beauty are provided to the religious men who deserved to be in the heaven. As many as they can cope with will be their wives. The enjoyment is very sensual. A perfect life is depicted for those pious ones. Eternal bliss is the greatest award.

In fact the Holy Quran explicitly mentions the form of existence of the life to come will be so different from all known forms of life here on earth. What we infer from that it is beyond human imagination. The following quote from the Holy Quran explains it well: “We will raise you into a form of which you have not the slightest knowledge.”¹¹

Muslims hope to spend their eternal lives in heaven, but most of them will not be in the heaven because they have not met the requirements for it. According to the Holy Quran, disbelievers and evil-doers face another destination which is hell-fire. The Holy Quran mentions about it many times and it warns us against it. The severity of this eternal punishment is emphasized. The hell is a place in which the worst punishment for disbelievers and wrongdoers will be given. It is somehow a curse by Allah.

The Holy Quran says:

“Those who reject Faith, and die rejecting, - on them is Allah's curse, and the curse of angels, and of all mankind. They will abide therein: Their penalty will not be lightened, nor will they receive respite” (2:161-162).

Furthermore, in another verse the Holy Quran puts it as:

“They are (men) whom Allah hath cursed: And those whom Allah Hath cursed, thou wilt find, have no one to help” (4:52).

¹⁰ Williams S. Hatcher-J. Douglas Martin, *The Emerging Global Religion*, Bahani Publishing, 2002, p. 83.

¹¹ Surah Al-Waqiah, Ch. 56: V. 62.

According to the Holy Quran, Heaven is the home of peace, not even an atom of evil of any kind will exist in it: “For them will be the Home of Peace with their Lord. And He will be their protecting friend because of what they used to do.”¹² In this verse Allah, the Almighty, assures those who believe in Him will be in Heaven. As Yunus Surah mentions “And Allah invites to the Home of Peace and guides whom He wills to a straight path.”¹³

The verses we quoted above explicitly prove that Allah Almighty will reward people who believe in Him with Heaven which is the home of peace. The rewarded ones with Heaven will live in peace and harmony with each other and with Allah Almighty. Once the winners are placed in Heaven, Allah will remove all evil from their hearts and purify them.

After explaining the concept of heaven and hell, we should try to show how the symbol used in *The Lord of the Rings* resemble the ones mentioned in the Holy Quran. The plot of *the Lord of the Rings* circles around the concept of heaven and hell and doomsday. We see lots of ugly, unimaginative and uncommon creatures depicted in the film and book. What is striking is that those uncommon creatures are also mentioned in the Holy Quran as well. When we have a look at the title of Tolkien’s work and two towers used in the novel, we can easily figure it out that it is about two worlds of heaven and hell. Tolkien’s use of the two towers is representing heaven and hell.

The major character Frodo and Sam make a journey to destroy the ring. What we see in this journey is Frodo, Sam and all the hobbits are just living in a small beautiful village called Shire in which they live in peace and harmony. It is like Heaven. On the other hand, Mordor Black Land and the Land of Shadow represent the image of Heaven and Hell. *The Lord of the Rings* is a trilogy about a journey but this big journey consists of many smaller trips and each small journey brings about a bigger one.

Throughout the plot, the individuals and groups are constantly setting off for someplace, or other to pursue a goal of their own, rescue someone, or escape. The journey the characters and people take in the work are similar to our Prophet Mohammed’s journey from Mecca to Medina with his close friend Abo Baker. Frodo and Sam have to make their journey in secret, no one should know it otherwise their lives will be in danger. It is the same our Prophet Mohammed and Abo Baker had to make their journeys secretly. Sam accompanies Frodo in that journey; Abo Baker accompanies the prophet Muhammad in their Hejira or Hegira (journey). Both journeys carry heavy risks and dangers. At the beginning of each journey, Frodo and the prophet Muhammad are ordinary people who may not defeat the terrible and merciless opponents who will block their path.

The prophet Mohammed and Abo Baker had to spend a night in a cave during their Hejira; the entrance of the cave is webbed by a spider. It is quite interesting Tolkien uses a spider rather than any other insect in his work. Now we should pose such a simple

¹² Ayat al-An`am, 6:127.

¹³ Surah Yunus, verse:25.

question: Did Tolkien choose spider randomly and unconsciously? The answer to it is definitely no. When we look at 21st journey to Yathrib, it is obvious that the story is an old story about which Tolkien mentioned to his friends as: "Middle-earth is a modernization of an old word for the inhabited world of Men."¹⁴ In one his letters sent to a fan named Rhona Beare Tolkien poses a series of questions about languages, history and cultures of the Middle-earth.

To Carpenter, Tolkien furthers his talk about Middle-earth as:

Middle-earth is our own world, and the tales told in *The Lord of the Rings* are in some sense connected to our own history. Now Tolkien acknowledges in this letter that the geology of Middle-earth doesn't match in details with the geology of our world. As he tells Miss Beare, he considered trying to make these details fit with greater verisimilitude. Before he thought of attempting this, however, the story had already progressed too far. It would have taken too much time and too much work to rewrite his story in order to make Middle-earth more closely tied physically to our world¹⁵.

1-3- The Creatures Helping the Men

According to the Holy Quran, a human being can be the best and the most perfect creature. We recognize and identify these beings according to given norms. If we compare man to any form of matter or living things such as plants and animals and so on, we will immediately draw an important conclusion that human beings are better, more intelligent and perfect. If man can cultivate a field and make use of the produce for his own and others' benefit, capture animals, make use of them and extract natural resources for upgrading his life and that of the society, naturally, we definitely come to this result that man is a higher being. For instance, an elephant is much bigger than a human, but man trains it and controls it to do some work for him¹⁶.

What we could infer is, thanks to his talents, physical abilities, mental powers, and the indomitable spirit, Almighty Allah has bestowed upon man, his life has adjusted according to the needs of his time and place. We know that many animal species have already become extinct due to the environmental changes but human beings have shown their capability to survive by modifying themselves to the environment to fit their basic needs. Consequently, we can claim that man is more perfect than animals. It would not be a wrong argument if we claimed that man is the best creature.

Since the Gracious Allah has honoured man with the highest position on the earth and has bestowed upon him the highest respect, "the Creator provided man with the means to excel many but not all of His other creatures. It is possible that man can rise to the rank of supremacy if he makes use of his God-given possibilities. Man can progress on the ladders to supremacy according to his possibilities."¹⁷

¹⁴ Humphrey Carpenter, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2000, p. 283.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 284.

¹⁶ "Man's Status in Islam", Web. 06 Sept. 2015, (www.al-islam.org)

¹⁷ Mohammad Ali Shomali, *Self-knowledge*, Lulu Press Inc., 2014, p. 209.

As the man has been given the honor to be “above all creatures” by Islam, therefore we can see that certain creatures help the men to complete their mission of finishing the devil. The Holy Quran mentions:

“We have certainly created man in the best of stature;”¹⁸ And to complete this mission Allah the Almighty ordered his soldiers do his wishes, his soldiers are one of His signs, He created everything in this world for a purpose: “It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith. And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth, and ever is Allah Knowing and Wise.”¹⁹

Now we should answer that question: Who are God’s soldiers? the Holy Quran describes two kinds of soldiers: the first kind are in the Heaven, who are the angels which made of lights and responsible of delivering Allah's message (Revelation) to the Prophets and so many other duties, the second kind are His soldiers on the earth and they are His Prophets and messengers and all loyal warships who rise His name and invite people to Imaan (faith) , beside these two kinds we have His object soldiers as wind and water, storms, mountains, rivers, birds, rocks,etc.. Tolkien uses soldiers and angels and nature in his work.

1-4- Water

The Holy Quran mentions water’s magnificence in forming all creation and making life in every living thing in the following passages: “Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and we separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?” He describes the water as living creature in these verses: “And Allah has created from water every living creature”²⁰ In these two verses Allah, the Almighty, compares the living characteristic to the water and any living object has to obey His commands as His faithful soldier.

The water mentioned in the Holy Quran has taken many forms to punish those who disobey His Almighty. For example the rain is mentioned in two ways: The first one as a way of punishment for those disbelievers by making them have drought. Another form is to destroy those disbelievers by sending floods. According to one hadith, once the prophet Mohammed was asked how to overcome these God-send disasters and what to do as Muslims, his answer was:

“Ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance.”²¹ The second form is the rain of evil destroying all disbelievers as what happened to the folk of Noah when they refused the prophet’s saying and God’s orders. It was a lesson to all disbelievers. The Almighty says: “So we inspired him (with this message):

¹⁸ Surah Al-Tin, verse: 4.

¹⁹ Surah al -Fath, verse: 4.

²⁰ Surah Al-Anbiya, verse: 45.

²¹ Surah Nuh, verses: 10-11.

“Construct the Ark within Our sight and under Our guidance: then when comes Our Command, and the fountains of the earth gush forth, take thou on board pairs of every species, male and female, and the family- except those of them against whom the Word has already gone forth: And address Me not in favour of the wrong-doers; for they shall be drowned (in the Flood).”²²

Another punishment given to those unbelievers mentioned in the Holy Quran is that when the prophet Moses and his folk tried to escape from the Pharaoh and his soldiers and Allah, the Almighty, drowned them and the story is mentioned as: “then when they displeased us, we inflicted a retribution on them, so we drowned them all together.”²³

Almost the similar scene is given in *The Lord of the Rings*. Water is used as a way of punishment as Daven Hiskey explains it. In *the Lord of the Rings, the Fellowship of the Ring*, when Arwen defeats the Ring wraiths after crossing the river, the words she speaks in that scene can be translated into English as: “Waters of the Misty Mountains, hear the word of power, rush, waters of Bruinen (Loudwater), against the Ringwraith's!”²⁴

1-5- The Speaking Tree

Before doomsday, the end of the world and evil (false Christian – maseeh al dajal) and its army will lose the battle and what remained of them will try to escape and hide. And those disbelievers will hide behind the trees, even the tress will help the God’s soldiers and they will cry out “there is one hiding behind me”. All objects in the nature will act as if they were God’s soldiers to reveal those fidels.

We, as Muslims, know that the story was told by the prophet Mohammed. The hadith is narrated by Abdullah bin Umar. Umar puts it as Allah’s messenger said: “You (i.e. Muslims) will fight against the Jews till some of them will hide behind trees and stones. The trees will (betray them) saying, ‘O Abdallah (i.e. slave of Allah)! There is a disbeliever hiding behind me; so kill him.’ In another quotation: ‘The hour will not come until you fight against Jews.’”²⁵

It is a fact that all Muslims are aware that all living creatures and objects are His obedient and loyal servants as mentioned in the Holy Quran: “We were made to speak by Allah, who has made everything speak; and He created you the first time, and to Him you are returned.”²⁶

In *the Lord of the Rings* Tolkien uses the speaking trees as it is mentioned in the Holy Quran. Tolkien uses the speaking trees to help the good ones and goodness. Another striking element that Tolkien uses is the Ents who are the most ancient people and living creatures surviving the third age. The Ents are depicted as the shepherds of the trees and

²² Surah Al-Muminun, verse: 27.

²³ Az-Zukhruf, verse: 55.

²⁴ Daven Hiskey, “Lord of The Rings Facts”, Today I found That, June 20, 2012. (<http://www.todayifoundout.com>)

²⁵ Imam Muhammed Bin Ismail Al-Buhary, *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. IV, e-book, 1998, p.126.

²⁶ Surah Fussilat, verse: 24.

their major duty is to protect the forests from Orcs, Dwarves and other perils. The plot progresses to exhibit these missions. The Ents are assisting Merry and Pippin in their attempt to escape from the Uruks. They also destroy Isengard at the battle of Helm's Deep. The Ents seem to have skirmish mood. They seem to have the 'magic' power of all free people and they act as permanent units of the Rohan faction.

1-6- The Elephant in the Battle

In the Holy Quran there is a Surah called Al Feel about an attack happened years ago to destroy the Ka'aba. It is a story illustrating the fate of those who tried to attack the Ka'ba. The incident is supposed to have taken place just before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The verse explains it as following:

Have you (O Muhammad (pbuh)) not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? [The Elephant army which came from Yemen under the command of Abraha Al-Ashram intending to destroy the Ka'bah at Makkah]. Did He not make their plot go astray? And He sent against them birds, (Ababil) in flocks. Striking them with stones of Sijjil (baked clay). And He made them like (an empty field of) stalks (of which the corn has been eaten up by cattle)²⁷.

The governor of Abyssinia, Abraha Al-Ashram, had built a place of worship and asked all Arabs to worship there. This site was richly decorated With treasures from the collection of Bilquis, Queen of Saba. He erected gold and silver crosses, built ebony and ivory pulpits, and raised the site's stature and expanded its width. But the Arabs refused to bow down.

Their loyalty lay with the Ka'aba, built by Ibrahim (pbuh). An Arab, in defiance and mockery of Abraha's command, desecrated at the place of worship. It made him go mad and he swore to destroy the Ka'aba. During that time it is known that the Abyssnians had tamed elephants that they used in wars as their most powerful war tools.

What is striking is Tolkien uses the Oliphanuts (archaic name of the gigantic beasts, also known as Elephants) in the scene at the battle of pelennor fields. The oliphanuts are mounted with towers and decorated with them. They have frightening deadly spikes on their multiple tusks. Frighten deadly spikes on their multiple tusks. We see several oliphaunts were killed during the battle. This scene resembles the story that mentioned in historical books on Islam and the Holy Quran. What we observe is the evil loses the good wins. The good is the victor.

1-7- The Battle of Good and Evil

Good and evil are two fundamentals of religion and literature. Traditionally, religion is thought as a battle between God who represents the side of good ones versus the devil or Satan which represents the forces of evil and it influences human beings to act evil like deeds. We can categorize evil in two different categories: the moral and natural evil. Moral evil could be described as examples of pain and suffering. But not all pain and

²⁷ Surah Al-Feel, verse: 5.

suffering can be defined as morally evil. On the other hand, natural evils are regarded as an act of God rather than man.

To creationists, God was involved in the world's creation and the Almighty is still interested in the world matters. Some scholars say that natural evil is a way of punishing human beings for their morally wrong deeds.

The Bible says: "For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place, all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again."²⁸ Throughout the existence of the world and mankind evil has played a significant role in human life, literature and society. Evil exists in *Beowulf* when a monster named Grendel devours everybody. In *Harry Potter*, the battle of good versus evil, when Harry faces Lord Voldemort. In *The Lord of the Rings* freedom loving good hearted boys turn into beasts and murderers.

Good and evil have been one of the most frequently used themes in world literatures since the creation of life on this earth. English literature would not be what it is today without the evil characters and evil doings. Evil has been dealt with in literature since the start of time. Almost all of the characters in English literature and human beings in society have had evil temptations to make them evil. As Eagleton puts it: "The Devil, so they say, has all the best tunes, and this seems to be the case when it comes to literature as well as mankind."²⁹

God is the master and creator of all things. With the driving force of good, the evil will be sent back to the hell from which it came. It is a known fact that God controls the fate of those evil doers and creations. God is to recompense all that is evil on this planet with the help of good people. Every time good wins over evil. It seems that Tolkien had a very clear mind in the stories of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In those works the struggle between good and evil seems to be never-ending. When the Valar vanquishes Melkor, Sauron emerges in the Middle-earth and forges the Rings of Power to bring it all under his control and command. Provided that history in the first Three Ages are an indication, one can assume that the heroes of the Lord of the Rings vanquish Sauron at the end of the Third Age. In the Fourth Age evil arises³⁰.

It is known that Tolkien used the word shadow in relation to evil and evil like characters. Even Sauron is referred as the Shadow. Darkness created by an object hindering the light. Shadow may also mean a faint representation in the sense of 'he is only a shadow of his former self.' When Aragorn tells Celeborn and Galadriel that Gandalf has fallen into Shadow in Moria.

Tolkien's calling Sauron the Shadow is an effective way of getting across his dark, evil aspect while reinforcing the insubstantiality of his evil. Same goes for Sauron's good

²⁸ Ecclesiastes 3: 19-20.

²⁹ Terry Eagleton, "The Nature of Evil", *Tikkun Magazine*, Winter 2011.

³⁰ Greg Harvey, *The Origins of Tolkien's Middle-earth for Dummies*, Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indiana 2003, Ch. 1.

buddies, the Ringwraiths, or Nazgûl. The Ringwraiths, too, are just dark shapes that instill great fear, even though they seem to lack any substance. Consider that when Merry stabs the Lord of the Nazgûl, his hauberk (coat of mail) gives the only indication of where to try to wound him³¹.

What we see is the seeds of evil continue to sprout and grow in Middle-earth, but the dark conditions in which they flourish continue to spread. As the sources of light diminish over the different Ages of Middle-earth, it becomes easier to deny the power of light and tout that of darkness. This expansion has fostered a loss of hope and a lack of faith that helped defeat the various Elven kingdoms in Beleriand, and later Númenor. After that, it sapped the strength from the exiled kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor³².

Binary operations are at work in Tolkien's work as well. In other words the opposites are in clash. The war between good and evil in the *The Lord of the Rings* is a classic struggle. This universal theme is obvious as Frodo seeks to destroy evil, and evil seeks to destroy Frodo. There are many pairs of characters representing good and evil: Saruman and Gandalf, and Sauron and Tom Bombadil. There are also characters whose very selves are split between good and evil: Boromir, Gollum, and Denethor. In the end of the novel, evil is not defeated for good because Morgoth still lives.

But evil has been defeated by good; that is the most important battle in the novel. The oldest war between good and evil takes place in the heaven when Satan tries to seduce Eve and Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. It is clear that curiosity and jealous made Eve and Adam eat that forbidden apple. Allah says: "And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat there from in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."³³

Allah, the Almighty, created Al JIN before He created man. Satan was one of the JINNS, so when God created Adam, He asked all the angels to pray for ma. All the angels obeyed their creator's command but for Satan. The Satan refused to obey God's command by claiming that man is inferior to him because he was created from fire but man from mud, so Allah gave punishment to the Satan.

According to Alif, Ram, Ra and Al-Hijr (15:25), the Holy Quran mentions it as:

And We did certainly create man out of clay from an altered black mud. And the jinn We created before from scorching fire. And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration." So the angels prostrated - all of them entirely, Except Iblees, he refused to be with those who prostrated. [Allah] said, O Iblees, what is [the matter] with you that you are not with those who prostrate?" He said, "Never would I prostrate to a human whom You created out of clay from an altered black mud." [Allah] said,

³¹ Ibid., Ch. 1.

³² Ibid., Ch. 1.

³³ Surah, Al-bagarah, verse: 2:35.

“Then get out of it, for indeed, you are expelled. And indeed, upon you is the curse until the Day of Recompense.

It is clear that Saruman rhetorical cheatings can be compared to those of Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Gandalf offers him a chance to repent and leave, Orthanc, and forsake his ruinous path; like Milton’s Satan, Saruman is shown in brief moment of doubt, ‘loathing to stay and dreading to leave its refuge’. Saruman rejects the offer and like Satan, is conquered by pride and hatred³⁴.

1-7- Har-magdon (Armageddon) Battle

The first thing that we, as an audience or reader, come cross in *the Lord of the Rings* is the Armageddon Battle. It means dragon war. The word Armageddon consists of two parts (Har-Magedon) that means Mountain of Megiddo. It was an ancient city in Palestine. According to holy books and some religious sources we know that a big battle will take place at the end of the universe. It will be the beginning of the end. It is expected that Al-Mahdee will appear.

The battle between Gandalf the grey and balrog at the bridge of Khazaddum Tolkien exhibits a battle that very similar to Armageddon. Tolkien uses the creature balrog like a dragon as shown in dragon war. This battle will encompass the whole earth as it is in the battle of Armageddon. It is believed that at this battle a heavenly army will be led by Jesus Christ and the battle is thought to take place in the Middle – East. It is strongly believed that it will be the last war fought in this world. According to the Apostle John at this war all the countries, cities and nations would be destroyed. That is exactly what happens in *the Lord of the Rings*. The great battle between good and evil (Gandalf and Saruman, includes all creatures. The war resembles the war which is to be fought between Al-Maseeh and Al-Dajjal at the end of the world.

1-8- Magic and Supernatural

Tolkien once asserted that *The Lord of the Rings* is “an allegory..... of power (exerted for domination) strictly speaking such power is not magical but miraculous.”³⁵ We could state that a miracle is defined as a “marvelous” event due to some supernatural power of God, it is not magical but miraculous, it is the supernatural power of his angels and saints. In *The Lord of the Rings* magic and supernatural appear in different forms.

The magic used by Tolkien is mentioned in the Holy Quran several times. Albagarah verse mentions about the magic as follows:

“And they followed what the devils used to recite in the reign of Suleiman (Solomon) -- it was not Suleiman who became an infidel, but the devils did become infidels, teaching people magic, and what had been sent down to the two angels, Harut and Marut,

³⁴ Michael D. C. Drout (Ed.), *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, Routledge, 2007, p. 590.

³⁵ Josef Pearce, *Frodo’s Journey: Discover the Hidden Meaning of the Lord of the Rings*, TAN Books, 2015, p. 55.

in Babylon. And these two did not teach anyone without having said, We are nothing but a trial, so do not go infidel.”³⁶

Those infidels by using magic and doing magic learned to separate man from his wife and wife from her man.

They used to learn from them that with which they could separate man from his wife. But they were not to bring harm through it to anyone, without the will of Allah. And they used to learn what harmed them and did no good to them. And they certainly knew that he who buys it has no share in the Hereafter. And, indeed, vile is the thing for which they sold themselves away. Only if they knew! And had they accepted the faith, and been God-fearing, the reward from Allah would have always been far better. Only if they knew³⁷.

The Prophet King Solomon knew all the magic. That’s why he controlled all the Jinns. There is a story about two angels. The angles come to Babylon and warn people against the danger and harms of doing magic. The angles remind people that if they do magic or believe magicians then they will lose their Emaan (faith).

When doing black magic became common and widespread in Babylon some people did not hesitate to learn it but some avoided it. The ignorant people were keen on being tricked by the magicians after seeing magic’s astonishing efficacy and they thought the miracles done by the prophets were also magic and trick. In the time when black magic had grown very popular in the world, particularly in Babylon, so the good ones didn’t wane learn it but others did. Seeing its astonishing efficacy, ignorant people began to confuse its effects with the miracles of prophets, and to suppose that the two were identical in nature. “Some even looked upon magicians as being holy men, and worthy of being obeyed; still others actually started learning and practicing black magic as if it were a good deed bearing a divine sanction.”³⁸ In short, this extraordinary adoration for magic and magicians became a source of misguidance.

We know that the Almighty Allah sent two angles called Harut and Marut to make people find the true path. The angles informed people about magic and miracles. And the angles told people keep away from magicians not to be cursed by Allah. “Just as the prophethood of prophets is divinely confirmed through miracles, signs and rational or other arguments, in the same way the angelical nature of Harut and Marut was confirmed on the basis of different signs and arguments, so that people should listen attentively to them and follow their guidance.”³⁹

The use of ring as a symbol in *The Lord of the Rings* makes us to pose that simple question. Is the ring a magic? The answer to it, yes, as the ring is used to ‘rule them all’. It is a reference made by Gandalf. It is magic rings. It seems that the magic concept was adopted by Tolkien too. The ring is known as the Ruling Ring, the Master Ring and

³⁶ Albagarah verse: 2: 102.

³⁷ Surah Al-Baqarah, verse: 102.

³⁸ Al-Baqarah Ayaat: 102-103.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 102-103.

Isildurus Bana. The temptation of the ring is the motivating force behind every action in *The Lord of the Rings*.

In *Lord of the Rings*, the characters are depicted as fighting the temptation of magic, nurturing it, denying it, or preventing someone else from surrendering to it. It is clear that characters of every race pursue the Ring. The ringwraiths and Sauron seek it constantly. What we observe is Gollum attacks Frodo several times to take it from him. The sons of Denethor, Boromir and Faramir, both try to take it from Frodo. The ring tempts Gandalf and Galadriel, each of them drawn to the thought of the immense power it could give them. Even pure-hearted Sam briefly wonders how it would be to possess the ring⁴⁰.

It is clear that no one is immune to its temptation, and Frodo is not an exception, too. Although he is chosen as ring-bearer due to his strong resistance to the ring's lure, Frodo has to constantly fight his desire for it. Sometimes he seems to be tempted to hand it over to his more powerful friends, while at other times he wants to keep it for himself. Once he arrives at Mount Doom, Frodo decides to keep the ring, even though the tremendous anguish it has caused him. At no other moment in the trilogy is Frodo more tempted by the ring's power. "Frodo gives up the ring only because Gollum appears and fights him for it. It leads to its destruction. The ring that has possessed so many and that has served as a kind of connective tissue among all the races of Middle-earth is ultimately destroyed by its own power."⁴¹

1-7- Mithril and David's Armour

The Prophet David (Dawud) is mentioned in Holy Quran as "And We certainly gave David from Us bounty. [We said], "O mountains, repeat [Our] praises with him, and the birds [as well]." And We made pliable for him iron, [Commanding him], "Make full coats of mail and calculate [precisely] the links, and work [all of you] righteousness. Indeed I, of what you do, am Seeing."⁴²

The Islamic belief tells us that Allah taught David how to make an armour. The Holy Quran says: "iron was made soft for him, through which David could make instruments for protection against enemies."⁴³ However, the rule here is to use weapons for defense only in true war fought for independence and faith and not to simply use weapons for degenerate violence. To Holy Quran, concerning the Prophet David's abilities, we are informed that the Prophet David was the first man who made such a strong and unbreakable shield from a precious metal. The shield resembles one which Biblos Mithril gave Frodo to protect himself during his journey in the dark. It should be stated that according to Holy Books' description the Prophet David was short man with clear hair, and blue eyes. What is striking is Tolkien's Frodo has the very similar features as the Prophet David.

⁴⁰ "George Orwell's 1984 & J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings Trilogy", (e-book) Web. 01 Dec. 2015, (<https://flogan13.wordpress.com>)

⁴¹ "The Lord of the Rings: Themes, Motifs, and Symbols", Web. 20 Sep. 2015, (<http://tolkien.center/>)

⁴² Surah Saba, 34:4-16.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 34:4-16.

Conclusion

What we have tried to exhibit is the elements and symbol, direct and indirect, used in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and the Holy Quran. The symbols and characters used in it referring to the Holy Quran have been examined. The creatures mentioned in the Holy Quran are similar to those characters drawn by Tolkien. The philosophy of heaven and hell, or good and evil, even darkness and light have explored in *The Lord of the Rings* as in line with the Holy Quran. Elves, Orcs, elephants and a host of other things used in Tolkien's work resemble the ones mentioned in the Holy Quran. Biblos Mithril' armour is similar to one done by the Prophet David as Allah instructed him how to do it. This paper is the first of its kind as it is the first time we have assessed it from different perspective even though there are many studies on it but none has studied it from the Koranic perspective. The paper will make further researcher approach to *The Lord of the Rings* from different perspectives.

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