

The Essence of Jinn and Satan

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The jinn are another of God's creations that cannot be experienced with the senses under normal circumstances. The existence of jinn is an unequivocal concept in Islamic cosmology since various Qur'anic verses and Hadith clearly confirm this truth. The seventy-second Sūrah of the Qur'an is named Jinn in which a conversation of a group of jinn who had become .Muslim has been recorded

a. The Essence of Jinn:

In contrast to the angels, the Qur'an explicitly speaks of the essence of the jinn's creation: "And He created the jinn of a smokeless fire."¹

However, it is not clear whether the fire that is the essence of the jinn is the result of combustion or if it is essentially different.² What is clear is that the fiery nature of the jinn permits them to traverse vast distances at staggering speeds and perform miraculous deeds that normal humans cannot accomplish without special tools.³

b. The Creational Antecedence of Jinn over Humans

Another item extracted from the Qur'an is that the jinn have been created before humans. In Sūrah ijz it is stated: "And We created the jinn before [humans] of a blazing fire."⁴

c. Reason, Free Will, and Responsibility

Jinn possess reason and free will; therefore, they are responsible [mukallaf] just like humans. Some are believers, righteous, and the elect of God and others shall be condemned to Hell due to their deviation from the path of righteousness: "And surely among us, some have submitted [to Allah] and others have deviated. Those who have submitted seek rectitude. But as for those who have deviated, they shall be firewood for Hell."⁵

Various Qur'anic verses also suggest that God has appointed prophets from among the jinn as well so as to impart divine signs upon them.⁶ Another point of correspondence among humans and jinn is that the purpose of both races is servitude and worship of the One Allah: "And I have not created the jinn and humans but that they worship Me."⁷

d. Communal Life

Various Hadith and Qur'anic verses indicate that like humans, the jinn live in communities. The Qur'an states the fact that nations of jinn existed in the past. The word "ummah" (nation) is an

explicit indicator of the social lives of jinn. Furthermore, the system of marriage and reproduction exists among the jinn as well

e. The Relationship of Jinn and Humans

Even though the jinn are normally intangible, sometimes a unique liaison is created between various jinn and humans. According to the Qur'an, various jinn were among the subordinates and soldiers of Solomon ('a).⁸ On the other hand, at various points in time, groups of humans worshiped jinn and on occasion, some became subservient minions to jinn.⁹

Satan [shaytān] .3

A third intangible entity who has been named in our religious texts is Satan [shaytān] or Iblis. Shaytān is sometimes used as a qualifier—meaning wicked and evil. This usage pertains to both humans and jinn: “And thus We appointed for each prophet an enemy—satans of human and jinn.”¹⁰

In addition, sometimes it is used referring to the object of our discussion.¹¹ However, the name Iblis is a proper noun and thus, it is not used for other entities except metaphorically, allegorically, or innuendo

a. The Nature of Satan

The Qur'an explicitly states that Satan is of the jinn: “Then they [all] bowed save for Iblis who was of the jinn.”¹²

As a rationale for his transgression against the divine order to bow before Adam ('a), Satan emphasized the fact that he was created from fire whereas Adam ('a) was created from clay.

As we have previously stated, the Qur'an attests to the fact that the essence of jinn is fire. Nevertheless, religious texts about Satan reveal the fact that before his insurrection, he worshiped God for a very long time. Due to the exuberance of his worship, he entered the order of angels and as a result, God's command to the angels to bow before Adam ('a) included Satan as well

b. The History of Satan

Satan has a singularly amazing and edifying history that is indicated in various sections of the Qur'an. Here is a short version of the Qur'anic story of Satan: At the beginning, due to the profuseness of his worship, Satan was affiliated with the order of angels. After creating Adam ('a), God commanded the angels—including Satan—to prostrate themselves before Adam ('a).

However, Satan was too proud to prostrate himself and refused.¹³

In order to vindicate himself of this defiance, Satan resorted to a fallacious argument. Due to

his fiery essence, Satan considered himself superior to Adam ('a) who was created of clay.¹⁴ This was a great test and Satan failed it in disgrace. Because of this blatant rebellion, Satan fell from his lofty station and he was cast out of the divine court.¹⁵ Thus, Satan was cursed by God until the Day of Judgment.¹⁰⁰ Thereupon, Satan professed his enmity with Adam ('a) and in order to seduce and corrupt Adam ('a) and his children, he asked God to respite him until the Resurrection.¹⁶ Consequently, in His divine wisdom, God gave Satan amnesty for a fixed period—the duration of which is unclear to us.¹⁷

c. Satan's Campaign

Satan employs various methods to corrupt humans. One of these methods is instigating evil whispers [waswasah] or suggestions within humans. The Qur'an attests that by evil whispers [waswasah], Satan tempted Adam ('a) and Eve ('a) to eat from the forbidden tree and deceived them through perjury.¹⁸ Another of his methods is beautifying and glamorizing evil deeds.¹⁹ Satan illustrates the pleasures of sins more ardently than they truly are so as to trap humans in the snare of vices.

Additionally, Satan makes promises to his followers; promises that shall never be realized.²⁰ In order to prevent benevolence or charity [infāq] he discourages people with the threat of poverty and destitution.²¹ He induces humans to forget God.²² In précis, Satan is humanity's most significant external motivator of evil and wicked deeds.²³

It must be noted that none of the seductive and deceptive methods of Satan can overrule free will. In fact, ultimately, humans themselves consent to Satan's dominance over them. They themselves put on the collar of Satan's discipleship and say labbayk ²⁴ to his call. The Qur'an depicts a scene from the Hereafter in which Satan addresses the souls of the damned and says: "And I had no dominance over you except that I called to you and you answered me; so do not reproach me but reproach yourselves."²⁵

Hence, the existence of Satan and his schemes and tricks do not contradict our free will or responsibilities toward ourselves. We are ultimately accountable for our own actions in the .end—no excuses whatsoever

Notes:

1. - Sūrah Ra mān 55:15.
2. - It has been surmised that fire signifies a type of energy that cannot be evaluated using contemporary instruments and that can transmute into matter by concentration. Through this speculation, the fact that the jinn have been seen on occasion can be rationalized.
3. - In the story of the conjuration of the throne of the Queen of Sheba [saba'], the Qur'an

attests to the fact that one of the jinn, an afreet [ifrīt], in the service of Solomon (‘a) declared that he could present her throne, before Solomon (‘a) could rise from his seat. (See: Sūrah Naml 27:38-39)

4. - Sūrah ijz 15:27.

5. - Sūrah Jinn 72:14-15.

6. - Sūrah An‘ām 6:130.

7. - Sūrah āriāt 51:56.

8. - Sūrah Naml 27:17, 27:39; and Sūrah Saba’ 34:14.

9. - Sūrah Saba’ 34:41; and Sūrah An‘ām 6:100, 6:128.

10. - Sūrah An‘ām 6:112.

indicating it as a proper ,”ال” 11. - In the Qur’an, Shaytān is used both with the definite article noun and without the definite article, denoting it as a qualifier.

12. - Sūrah Kahf 18:50.

13. - Sūrah ijz 15:28-31.

14. - Sūrah A’rāf 7:12; and Sūrah ijz 15:33.

15. - Sūrah ijz 15:34.

16. - Sūrah ijz 15:35.

17. - Sūrah A’rāf 7:14; and Sūrah ijz 15:36.

18. - Sūrah ijz 15:37-38. It is self-evident that Satan’s amnesty and means for temptation is a part of God’s tradition of trialing humans. The existential philosophy of Satan is indicated in :’Sūrah Saba

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لَنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِالْآخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ

And he [Satan] had no sovereignty over them save that We might differentiate those who” believe in the Hereafter from those who doubt it.” (Sūrah Saba’ 34:21)

18. - Sūrah A’rāf 7:20-22.

19. - Sūrah ijz 15:39.

20. - Sūrah Ibrāhīm 14:22.

21. - Sūrah Baqarah 2:268.

22. - Sūrah An‘ām 6:68.

23. - Sūrah Nūr 24:21.

24. - This means, at your service. [trans.]

.25. - Sūrah Ibrāhīm 14:22