



Core Curriculum

2 Foundations of Islam - Theology

2.10 Satan, Jinns and Angels: Their Influence in the World

INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel!

This will be the last lesson of our section. Among other things, we have so far looked at the shahāda, the usul al-din as well as the concept of the evil nafs.

In today’s lesson, we will do a quick overview of the connection between humans, Satan and jinns. Furthermore, we will be looking into the psychological effects of demonic influences on the human mind and their relationship to the evil nafs.

BODY OF TEXT

[Allah] said: Descend from Paradise, for it is not for you to be arrogant here. Go then, among the debased shall you be. [Satan] said: Grant me respite until the Day where we will be resurrected. [Allah] said: Indeed you will be among those who will be granted respite. [Satan] said: now that you have thwarted me, I will surely ambush [mankind] along your Straight Path and shall most certainly fall upon them openly and secretly, from their right and from their left, you will surely find most of them to become ungrateful. (Chapter 7, verses 13-17 of the Holy Qur’an)

Physical life is not the only kind of life that exists in the world. In addition to physical beings like humans, Allah also created spiritual beings who are alive, and like humans, are highly intelligent. Among them, two of them stand out, namely Angels and Jinns. First, we have angels. Angels in Islam are made out of light and unlike other beings, they cannot sin.

There are different reasons as to why this might be, some traditions say that they have no free will whereas others say they don't sin because they have no desires. Whatever the case may be, we know that they cannot sin.

Furthermore, archangels, that is, the highest ranking angels, cannot make mistakes either. Mistakes may be possible for lower ranking angels such as the angels of the earth (*malā'ikat al-arḍ*) since we have no evidence in our religious sources stating or implying that they are infallible from mistakes.

Angels are part of God's legions, they not only manage the universe, but they also play a role in managing our guidance. For example, we have angels on each of our sides, one registering our good deeds, and the other registering our bad deeds. We also have angels that whisper or encourage good deeds. Other angels play the role of protecting our lives (in the West we often call them "Guardian Angels") and we die when Allah commands them to cease protecting us.

The higher realm angels are responsible for bringing down divine revelation on earth. For example the Archangel Gabriel is the angel that brings down revelation. Others are responsible for bringing about the Day of Judgment, like the Archangel Isrāfīl.

We also have another race of spiritual beings called the Jinn. The Jinn are intelligent beings who are made out of smokeless fire. Unlike angels, Jinns can commit sins as they have desires and free will. Although some are good, many are also evil.

The leader of the evil Jinn is called Iblīs, commonly known as Satan or

the Devil. He is the worst of the Jinn. When Adam (as) was created, God asked Satan to bow down to Adam. Satan, in his conceit and pride refused to obey Allah's order.

Satan thought that he was far superior than a being that was made out of clay since he as a Jinn was made out of smokeless fire. Why prostrate to an inferior being Satan asked himself!

Until that point, Satan had been a Jinn who was ranked on the same level, if not higher, than the angels. On a side note, you can see that Islam does not believe that Satan was an angel, but a Jinn given that angels cannot sin.

As a form of revenge against humankind, Satan promised that he would spend his whole life trying to deviate humankind from God. He gathered innumerable other Jinns and put them to task. The way Jinns work is that most often, they cannot influence us physically. However, what they may do is whisper evil thoughts into our hearts. The intention behind these whispers is to get people to act upon them. By acting on them, Satan wants us to become sinful and ungrateful towards God.

The Qur'an says:

Truly, Shaytān is an open enemy to mankind (Chapter 12, verse 5 of the Holy Qur'an)

Shaytān and his legions want the destruction of humankind. He encourages immorality, sinful pleasure, and pointless fun. Worst of all, he and his legions push people into despair and depression by suggesting all sorts of depressing and evil thoughts in their minds.

Humans are free to reject these demonic suggestions, but the Jinns, particularly Satan, has a lot of experience in countering our resistance. He often does not ask a person to sin outright, but he does try to get a person to slowly take the necessary steps that will eventually lead to sin. For example, Satan may tempt a man to associate with an unrelated woman, thinking that what he's doing is for the greater good or that he's

just being "friends" with her.

Often enough, this is how the path to fornication begins, that is, it is through good, permissible intentions that Satan whispers in people. Eventually, step by step, Satan will influence such a person to fornicate.

Our inner selves and the spiritual battles that take place in them are therefore not empty of outside influences. As we battle our evil inclinations, Jinns, that is, demons, attempt to whisper thoughts in our minds so as to entice us to evil. On the opposite spectrum, the Prophets and Imams of God, in addition to angels, try to do keep us from evil and entice us to the good. Whichever one we choose however, is entirely up to us.