

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

THE JINN

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Throughout history to the modern day, the existence of separate invisible creations has remained a captivating, yet accepted part of human thought. In the English language alone, many epithets are advanced which not only attempt to describe such a creation, but also allude to the manifestation of such supernatural entities when they seek sentient interaction. Ghosts, genie, ghouls, demons, apparitions, spirits, are accepted by many cultures and occult arts to cause paranormal activity such as knocking, pounding, physical attacks and even possession alluding to the accepted interplay at times between the unseen world and its corporeal counterpart.

From a Quranic perspective, the Arabic word 'Jinn' from its root inherently implies something which remains hidden, covered or concealed from one's senses.

جِن

1. جِنَّهٗ (S, Mgh, K,) aor. ٢, (Mgh, TA,) inf. n. جَنَّ (TA,) *It veiled, concealed, hid, covered, or protected, him;* (S, Mgh, K;) said of the night; (S, K;) as also جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ (S, Mṣb, K,) aor. ٢, (S, Mṣb,) inf. n. جَنَّوْنُ (S,) or جَنَّ (K,) or both; (TA;) so in the Qur vi. 76, meaning *it veiled him, concealed him, or covered him, with its darkness;* (Bḍ;) and اَجْنَهٗ (S, Mṣb, K:) or this last signifies *he, or it, made, or prepared, for him, or gave him, that which should veil him, conceal him, &c.:* accord. to Er-Rāghib, the primary signification of جِن is the *veiling, or concealing, &c., from the sense.* (TA.) And جَنَّ عَنْهُ means *It (anything) was veiled, concealed, or hidden, from him.* (K.)

THEY SEE YOU FROM WHERE YOU CANNOT SEE THEM

Given the core meaning of the term 'Jinn' as noted above, the Quran acknowledges the imperceptible existence of a separate creation which in the main remains unseen.

007:027

"O Children of Adam, do not let the devil tempt you as he drove out your parents from the paradise; stripping from both of them their clothing to show them their shame. **Indeed he and his tribe (wa-qabiluhu) see you from where you do not see them.** Indeed, We have made the devils as allies of those who do not believe."

A CLEAR SEPARATION OF THE TWO CREATIONS

'Al-Naas' (humankind) and 'Al-Jinn' have been clearly distinguished by the Quran as **two separate creations**. Nothing portrays this understanding with more clarity than the duality noted throughout Surah Rahman (Chapter 55).

055.014

"He created **man** from clay like earthen vessels / pottery"

055.015

"And He created **the jinn** from smokeless fire (**Arabic: mariji-min nar**)"

055.016

"Then which of the favours of your Lord will you **both deny** (**Arabic: rabbikuma tukhadhiban**)?"

The Arabic words 'rabbikuma' and 'tukadhiban' inherently imply duality and underscore the existence of two separate creations, created from two distinct ways.

A DIFFERENCE IN CREATION

Whereas the initial creation of man is described in terms of sounding clay (salsalin), black mud (ham'in) altered (masnun) (15:26) and thereafter, extract fluid (semen) 32:8, the Quran describes the creation of the Jinn from '**nare-sumun**' (15:27) and '**mariji-min nar**' (55:15).

Contrary to popular belief, the composition elements of the Jinn do not necessarily allude to a literal understanding of fire. There is indeed some semblance of fire (nar), but it is primarily a description used by the Quran to best describe to a 7th century Arab audience, a substance which they may not be familiar with.

'Sumun' (15:27) gives the reader a sense of ferocity, intensity and 'marij' (55:15) the implication of something which retains an unsteady composition, though flowing freely yet confused and

somewhat impaired. In the context of fire, it is often interpreted as smokeless fire, a flame mixed with the black substance of fire, blast of hot, burning or scorching wind.

Whatever interpretation is accepted, the Quran clearly acknowledges that **this is not the same substance** by which humankind was created (15:26).

CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE IN CREATION

The creation of the Jinn was initiated **before** the creation of humankind.

015.026

And verily, We created humankind of sounding clay from black mud altered"

015.027

"And the jinn We created before (Arabic: min qablu) of intensely hot / scorching fire / fire from a scorching wind"

وَالْجَانَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُومِ
min qablu

Illustration - Joseph Islam

WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW OF THE JINN FROM THE QURAN?

THE ABILITY OF POSSESSION

Arabic speakers will be familiar with the term 'majnun' which in general parlance, alludes to someone who is bereft of reason, of unsound mind or intellect. However, this is **not** the primary meaning of the term nor is it used in the Quran in this sense as a primary rendition. The Quranic meaning of 'majnun' is **'possession by the Jinn'** from where majnun takes its root meaning from the word 'Jinn'.

and † تَجَانَّ (ك) ; He (a man, †) was, or became, مَجْنُونٌ [originally signifying possessed by a جِنِّي, or by جِنّ ; possessed by a devil or demon ; (see Bḍ li. 39 ;) and hence meaning bereft of reason ; or mad, insane, unsound in mind or intellect, or wanting therein : the verbs may generally be rendered he was, or became, possessed ; or mad, or insane]. (‡, Mṣb, ك.) —

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [2]

The concept of 'possession' is tacitly acknowledged by the Quran as an understanding that existed at time of the Prophet's ministry. The Prophet's accusers often referred to him as 'majnun', someone possessed by imperceptible entities such as the jinn.

015.006

"And they say: "O you to whom the Message is being revealed! Indeed, you are truly possessed!
(Arabic: majnun)"

037.036

"And they say: "What! shall we give up our gods for the sake of a possessed (Arabic: majnun) poet?"

Such charges of possession / seizure of human faculties by imperceptible entities are also noted against other messengers. With respect to the messenger Hud, ^(pbuh) we note his community to assert:

011:054 (part)

"We say nothing except that one of our gods has seized / possessed / afflicted you in an evil way...."

The prevalence of occult arts which at times may make use of unseen forces for evil means is well attested by the Quran for which a specific prayer is advanced in Surah Falaq (Chapter 113).

113.004

"And from the evil of the blowers in knots (Arabic: nafathati fil-uqad)"

The Arabic phrase 'nafathati fil-uqad' (blowers in knots) is clearly a reference to those that practice malignant witchcraft and secret arts.

Please see a related video below with regards possible human possession. The veracity of the content is left for the **reader's judgment**. The video alludes to the presence of the Jinn during a conversation in a live talk show, therefore viewer discretion is advised.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MR3pNUT81o>

RAPID MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT PARTS OF THE UNIVERSE

The Quran clearly recognises a 'heavenly exalted assembly' ('mala-i-l-ala' (37:08)) who are also possibly tasked with certain decrees (97:4). The Quran also acknowledges, that the Jinn given their capacity of rapid movement throughout space, have been inclined at times to eavesdrop, attempting to steal insights from remote parts of the Universe.

072.008

"And that we sought to reach the heaven (**Arabic: samaa**), but we found it filled with strong guards and flaming fires"

072.009

"And that we used, indeed, to sit there in (hidden) stations / positions, to (steal) a hearing; but any who listens now will find a flaming fire waiting"

OTHER TRAITS OF THE JINN

- The Jinn have free will, volition and therefore subject to appropriate answerability. (7:179, 55:39, 6:128).
- They have the ability to discern truth (72:2) from falsehood (72:4) and understand that they will be judged (72:14-15).
- Interaction between the two creations (man and jinn) is recognised by the Quran. Despite providing useful benefits as in the case of Prophet Solomon (34:13, 27:39-40), a negative connotation to the interaction seems to attract more prominent emphasis (6:128).
- Each creation (humankind and jinn) has been sent its own guidance (rusulun minkum - 6:130). Therefore, there is no warrant for the understanding that human messengers were also sent for the Jinn's guidance. Although the Quran acknowledges an incident (72:1, 46:29) where the Jinn listened to (istama'a) a recitation of the Quran, this incident consisting of a mere group (nafarun 72:1) seems to be **narrated as an exception** rather than a rule. Certainly the Prophet had no expectation that any such creation would be privy to his recitation until he was informed after the event (uhiya ilayya - It has been revealed to me, 72:1).
- The ability of the Jinn to continue their progeny (dhurriyati - 18:50) has also been acknowledged by the Quran. This need not be restrictively understood in a human

procreative sense. Different creations (42:29) throughout the Universe can implicitly have their own manner of reproduction.

- The Jinn live and die (46:18).
- They are a separate creation from mankind (15:26-27) and the angels (34:40-41).
- There exists good and evil amongst them and they abide in divergent sects / ways (72:11).
- They have no knowledge of the future (72:10).

FINAL THOUGHTS

The existence of the 'Jinn' as a separate, largely imperceptible creation remains a fundamental reality and a central teaching of the Quran.

REFERENCES

[1] LANE. E.W, Edward Lanes Lexicon, Williams and Norgate 1863; Librairie du Liban Beirut-Lebanon 1968, Volume 2, Page 462

[2] Ibid.

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