10034 - Is Iblees still alive?

the question

If Jinns live and die, would that mean Iblis died or is still alive?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is the way of Allah in His creation of man to test him and try him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“that Allah might test what is in your breasts; and to purify that which was in your hearts (sins), and Allah is All-Knower of what is in (your) breasts”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:154]

One of the things with which Allah tests us is Iblees (may Allah curse him). Allah has made him one of those who are given respite, blocking the way of good and commanding evil, forbidding what is good and enjoining what is evil. There are those who believe him; many people among the sons of Adam follow him; he is misled and he misleads others. Iblees vowed to do that, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) when We said to the angels: ‘Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.’ They prostrated themselves except Iblees (Satan). He said: ‘Shall I prostrate myself to one whom You created from clay?’

[Iblees (Satan)] said: ‘See this one whom You have honoured above me, if You give me respite (keep me alive) to the Day of Resurrection, I will surely, seize and mislead his offspring (by sending them astray) all but a few!’

(Allah) said: ‘Go, and whosoever of them follows you, surely, Hell will be the recompense of you (all) an ample recompense.

And befool them gradually those whom you can among them with your voice (i.e. songs, music, and any other call for Allah’s disobedience), make assaults on them with your cavalry and your infantry, share with them wealth and children (by tempting them to earn money by illegal ways usury, or by committing illegal sexual intercourse), and make promises to them.” But Satan promises them nothing but deceit.

Verily, My slaves (i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism) — you have no authority over them. And All-Sufficient is your Lord as a Guardian.’”

[al-Israa’ 17:60-65]

“And surely, We created you (your father Adam) and then gave you shape (the noble shape of a human being); then We told the angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves to Adam’, and they prostrated themselves, except Iblees (Satan), he refused to be of those who prostrated themselves.

(Allah) said: ‘What prevented you (O Iblees) that you did not prostrate yourself, when I commanded you?’ Iblees said: ‘I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay.’

(Allah) said: ‘(O Iblees) get down from this (Paradise), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced.’

(Iblees) said: ‘Allow me respite till the Day they are raised up (i.e. the Day of Resurrection).’

(Allah) said: ‘You are of those respited.’

(Iblees) said: ‘Because You have sent me astray, surely, I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your straight path.

Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).’

(Allah) said (to Iblees): ‘Get out from this (Paradise), disgraced and expelled. Whoever of them (mankind) will follow you, then surely, I will fill Hell with you all.’”

[al-A’raaf 7:11-18]

From the apparent meaning of these aayaat and others, it is clear that Allah has delayed the death of Iblees (may Allah curse him) until an appointed time. Allah has postponed his death until a day that is known to Him, which no one else knows. Iblees asked Allah to give him respite, as Allah said (interpretation of the meaning):

“[Iblees (Satan)] said: ‘My Lord! Give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are resurrected.’

(Allah) said: ‘Verily, you are of those allowed respite

Till the Day of the time appointed.’” [Saad 38:79-81]

The scholars differed concerning the phrase “Till the Day of the time appointed”:

·Some said that this means the Day of Resurrection, at the second blast of the Trumpet.

·Some said that it means the decreed lifespan of Iblees.

Most of the scholars said that what is meant by “the Day of the time appointed” is the day when all creatures will die, at the time of the first blast of the Trumpet, not the second blast. They said: because after the Resurrection – at the second blast of the Trumpet – there will be no more death. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time, and behold they will be standing, looking on (waiting)”

[al-Zumar 39:68]

Al-Baydaawi said in his Tafseer:

“Till the Day of the time appointed” means, the time appointed for you with Allah, or when all people will die, which is at the first blast of the Trumpet, according to the majority.

(Tafseer al-Baydaawi, 3/370)

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his tafseer of this aayah:

Ibn ‘Abbaas said: What He meant by this is the first blast of the Trumpet, i.e., when all creatures will die. Or it was said, the appointed time, the knowledge of which Allah has kept to Himself and which Iblees does not know. So Iblees will die and then be resurrected. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish”

[al-Rahmaan 55:26]

(Tafseer al-Qurtubi,10/27)

Al-Tabari narrated in his Tafseer from al-Suddi:

“[Iblees (Satan)] said: ‘My Lord! Give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are resurrected.’

(Allah) said: ‘Verily, you are of those allowed respite

Till the Day of the time appointed.’”

[Saad 38:79-81 – interpretation of the meaning]

He did not give him respite until the Day of Resurrection, but rather until the day of the time appointed, which is the day when the first blast of the Trumpet will be given and everyone who is in the heavens and on earth will swoon and then die. (8/132)

Imaam al-Shawkaani said in his tafseer of this aayah:

Till the Day of the time appointed.’”

[Saad 38:79-81 – interpretation of the meaning]

The day which Allah has decreed for the death of all creatures, which is when the last blast of the Trumpet will be sounded, or it was said the first blast. It was said that Iblees asked to be given a respite until the Day of Resurrection so that he might avoid death, because if he were given respite until the Day of Resurrection, he would not die before the resurrection; when the resurrection came, he would thus have avoided death. But Allah responded in a manner that denied him his desire and thwarted his aims, which was by giving him respite until the day of the time appointed, which is known only to Allah, and no one else knows it.

(Fath al-Qadeer, 4/446)

This indicates that Iblees (may Allah curse him) is still alive and that he is still spreading mischief on earth and misguiding people away from the path of Allah. But he is not immortal and will not live until the Day of Resurrection, rather there is an appointed time when he will die – and Allah knows best when that appointed time will be. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Everyone shall taste death”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:185]

“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.

And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will remain forever”

[al-Rahmaan 55:26-27]

There are also reports which indicate that Iblees (may Allah curse him) was alive at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

·Iblees appeared on the day of Badr in the form of Suraaqah ibn Maalik. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) when Shaytaan (Satan) made their (evil) deeds seem fair to them and said, ‘No

one of mankind can overcome you this day (of the battle of Badr) and verily, I am your neighbour (for each and every help).' But when the two forces came in sight of each other, he ran away and said 'Verily, I have nothing to do with you. Verily, I see what you see not. Verily, I fear Allah for Allah is Severe in punishment'"

[al-Anfaal 8:48]

Ibn Katheer said in his tafseer of this aayah:

He (may Allah curse him) made attractive to them the reason why they came and what they wanted to do. He raised their hopes that they would not be overwhelmed by anybody on that day, and calmed their fears that their homes might be attacked by their enemies Banu Bakr. He said, "and verily, I am your neighbour (for each and every help)" – because he appeared in the form of Suraaqah ibn Maalik ibn Ja'sham, the leader of Banu Mudlij and the leader of that region. All of that came from him, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"He (the Shaytaan) makes promises to them, and arouses in them false desires; and Shaytaan's promises are nothing but deceptions." [al-Nisaa' 4:120]

Ibn Juraij said: Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) said concerning this aayah: When the day of Badr came, Iblees marched with his flags and his troops alongside the mushrikeen, and gave the mushrikeen the notion that no one would defeat them and that he was their neighbour. But when the (enemies) met in battle, and the Shaytaan saw the angelic reinforcements (on the Muslims' side), he ran away, i.e., he turned on his heels and fled, saying, Verily, I see what you see not… (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 2/318)

·He also (may Allah curse him) appeared on the day of Uhud. It was reported in a saheeh hadeeth that 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: On the day of Uhud, the mushrikeen were defeated. Then Iblees shouted out, 'O slaves of Allah! Beware the ones behind you!' So the front ranks attacked the ones behind. Hudhayfah looked and saw his father al-Yamaan. He cried out, 'O slaves of Allah, my father, my father!' By Allah, they did not stop until they killed him [al-Yamaan]. Hudhayfah said, 'May Allah forgive you.' 'Urwah [one of the narrators] said: By Allah, because of

this, Hudhayfah remained in a good state until he met Allah [i.e., died]. (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, no. 3047)

·It was narrated in the saheeh ahaadeeth that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw Iblees. It was narrated in a saheeh hadeeth that Abu'l-Dardaa' (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stood up, and we heard him say: "I seek refuge in Allah from you." Then he said: "I curse you with the curse of Allah" three times, and he spread out his hand as if reaching for something. When the prayer was over, we said, "O Messenger of Allah, we heard you saying something in the prayer that we have never heard you say before, and we saw you stretching out your hand." He said, "The enemy of Allah Iblees came with a flame of fire to throw in my face, and I said, 'I seek refuge with Allah from you' three times. Then I said, 'I curse you with the complete curse of Allah' three times, but he did not retreat. Then I wanted to seize him. By Allah, were it not for the prayer of our brother Sulaymaan, he would have been tied up this morning and the children of the people of Madeenah would have played with him." (Narrated by Muslim, no. 843; al-Nasaa'i, no. 1200)

It was narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed Subh (Fajr) prayer and he [Abu Sa'eed] was behind him. He recited and got confused in his recitation. When the prayer was over, he said, 'If only you could have seen me and Iblees. I grabbed him and kept on trying to strangle him until I felt the coldness of his saliva on these two fingers, the thumb and the one next to it. Were it not for the prayer of my brother Sulaymaan, he would have been tied to one of the pillars of the mosque this morning, and the children of Madeenah would have played with him. Whoever among you can prevent him from coming between him and the qiblah, let him do that." (Narrated by Ahmad, no. 11354).

·It was narrated that Jaabir (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "The throne of Iblees is on the sea and he sends out his troops to spread mischief (fitnah) among the people. The greatest of them in his sight is the one who causes the most fitnah." (Narrated by Muslim, 5031; Ahmad, no. 1427)

So Iblees (may the curse of Allah be upon him) is still alive, and he will die on the Day of the time

appointed, until which Allah has given him a respite, which according to the most correct scholarly view is the Day of the first blast on the Trumpet. And Allah knows best.