223525 - Questions about the jinn, their whispers, and their behaviour and attitude

the question

Do the jinn have devil companions who whisper to them, as they are of the same race? How come some of them believe in Allah, when their father, the accursed Iblis, is still alive? Do they seek refuge with Allah from him, like other Muslims, and do they recite Surat al-Baqarah in their houses?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

The jinn are one of the creations of Allah, may He be Exalted, and they are accountable slaves of Allah who are enjoined to follow the commands and prohibitions, like humans. Some of them are believers, and some are disbelievers and evildoers. Those of them who do good will enter paradise, and those of them who do evil are deserving of punishment. Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me} [Adh-Dhariyat 51:56].

Allah, may He be Exalted, tells us that some the jinn said: {And among us are the righteous, and among us are [others] not so; we were [of] divided ways} [Al-Jinn 72:11].

The world of the jinn is part of the world of the unseen, and we do not know anything about them except what Allah, may He be Exalted, has told us in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

We cannot say anything about them except on the basis of what is mentioned in the religious texts. Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.

Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned} [Al-Isra’ 17:36].

See also the answer to question no. 20666.

II.

What is narrated in the religious texts says that Allah, may He be Exalted, has created for humans companions from among the jinn, who whisper to them, tell them to disobey Allah, and incite them to do evil. There is no text that suggests that the jinn have companions from among the jinn.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{We assigned to them [evil] close companions who made fair-seeming to them their conduct in this world and their denial of the hereafter, and the punishment became inevitable for them, as had happened to nations of jinn and men who came before them, for indeed they are [all] losers} [Fussilat 41:25].

In other words, we appointed for these wrongdoers who denied the truth companions from among the devils, as Allah, may He be Exalted, says elsewhere: {Do you not see that We have sent the devils upon the disbelievers, inciting them [to evil] with [constant] incitement?} [Maryam 19:83] – that is, they prompt them and urge them to do evil and commit sin.

End quote from *Tafsir as-Sa`di*, p. 747.

And Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{Whoever turns away from the reminder of the Most Gracious [the Quran], We will assign to him a devil to be his constant companion.

Verily, they [the devils] bar them from the [right] path, but they think that they are rightly guided.

Then when [such a one] comes to Us, he will say [to his devil companion]: Would that there was between me and you the distance between east and west. What a wretched companion!} [Az-

Zukhruf 43:36-38].

That is, We assign to this one who pays no heed to guidance one of the devils, who misguides him and shows him the path to Hell. Then when he meets Allah on the Day of Resurrection, he will blame the devil who was assigned to him, and express his resentment towards him.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 7/228.

Muslim (2814) narrated that `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: ""There is no one among you but Allah has appointed a companion for him from among the jinn." They said: Even you, O Messenger of Allah? He said: "Even me, but Allah helped me with him and he became Muslim, so he only tells me to do good."

But the efforts of this devil companion do not go beyond tempting and misguiding. The stronger a person's faith is, the weaker the schemes of the devil companion will be.

III.

The texts, some of which are quoted above, indicate that some of the jinn believe in Allah, may He be Exalted, and some of them disbelieve in Him. Their case is similar to that of the sons of Adam.

As for Iblis and whether he is the father of all the jinn,

there is a difference of opinion among the scholars regarding that, as has been discussed previously in the answer to question no. 102373.

Shaykh `Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar (mam him) said:

We have no clear texts to indicate that the Shaytan is the father of the jinn or is one of them, even though the latter is more likely to be the case, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {… except for Iblis. He was of the jinn…} [Al-Kahf 18:50].

End quote from *`Alam al-Jinn wash-Shayatin*, 18.

If it is true that Iblis, the leader of disbelief, is the father of the jinn, both the Muslims and the disbelievers among them, then this is possible. Iblis was obliged to believe in Allah and obey Him, and he will be brought to account for not doing that. If he refused to do all of that himself, that does not necessarily mean that his offspring would refuse to do that too, whether during his lifetime or after his death, for he has no power over his followers or offspring; all that he can do is call them to the path that he is on, strive to misguide them and whisper to them.

Such an issue is something that belongs to Allah, may He be Exalted, and is subject to His knowledge, wisdom and power, as He, may He be Exalted and Glorified, says: {He brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living} [Ar-Rum 30:19].

That includes bringing forth the believer from the disbeliever, and the disbeliever from the believer.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 6/308.

IV.

What appears to be the case is that the Muslim jinn seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan, as the Muslim humans do, because the message of Islam is addressed to them too, and they read and recite the Quran and believe in it. Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {When you recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan} [An-Nahl 16:98].

This is addressed to all of those who are accountable.

V.

The scholars differed regarding the question: can a jinni whisper to a another jinni as he whispers to a human? There are two views:

The first view is that the devils whisper in the hearts of the jinn, as they whisper in the hearts of humans.

Imam Abu Ja`far ibn Jarir at-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What is referred to in the verse {Who whispers [evil] into the hearts of people (an-nas)} [An-Nas 114:5] is the whispering devil, who whispers into the hearts of an-nas (people), both jinn and humans. If someone were to ask: Are the jinn included in the word an-nas (people), the answer is: {Who whispers [evil] into the hearts of an-nas, From among the jinn and an-nas}. It was said: Here Allah calls them (the jinn) an-nas, as elsewhere He called them rijal (men), as He says: {And there were men (rijal) from mankind who sought refuge in men (rijal) from the jinn, so they [only] increased them in burden [i.e., sin]} [al-Jinn 72:6]. Thus He described the jinn as men, and also described some of them as an-nas. It was narrated from one of the Arabs that he said when talking: When a group of the jinn came and stood, and it was said: Who are you? They said: We are nas from among the jinn. Thus he described some of them as nas, similar to what is said in the Quran of that.

End quote from *Tafsir at-Tabari*, 24/756.

Abul-Layth Nasr ibn Muhammad as-Samarqandi (d. 375 AH) said: {Who whispers [evil] into the hearts of an-nas, From among the jinn and an-nas} [An-Nas 114:5-6] means: They enter the hearts of the jinn just as they enter the hearts of humans, and whisper to them. And it was said that the word an-nas here is applicable to both jinn and humans, and if it refers to jinn, then what is meant is whispering in the hearts of the believers who are jinn. *Bahr al-'Ulum*, 3/528.

Al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

{From among the jinn and an-nas} [An-Nas 114:6] means that he (the whisperer) enters the heart of the jinni just as he enters the heart of the human, and he whispers to the jinni just as he whispers to the human. This was stated by al-Kalbi.

End quote from *Tafsir al-Baghawi*, 8/597.

See: ath-Tha`labi: *Al-Kashfu wal-Bayan*, 10/341; *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, 20/264; al-Fayruzabadi: *Tanwir al-Miqbas*, p. 522; al-Khatib ash-Sharbini: *As-Siraj al-Munir*, 4/617.

But this view was refuted by Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him), who favoured the view

that the jinn are not affected by that, and that the whispers only affect the hearts of humans, not the hearts of the jinn.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The commentators differed regarding the verse {From among the jinn and an-nas} [An-Nas 114:6] and what is referred to by the preposition and genitive phrase.

Al-Farra' and a number of others said that it is explaining what is meant by an-nas who are subjected to the whispering in their hearts, and what it means is that he whispers into the hearts of an-nas who are jinn and human. In other words, those who subjected to the whispering in their hearts are of two categories: human and jinn, so the whisperer whispers to the jinni as he whispers to the human…

This view is very weak for several reasons:

Firstly: there is no evidence that the jinni whispers to the hearts of other jinn, and introduces into the heart of the jinni what he introduces into the heart of the human, and he flows through him (the jinni) as he flows through the human. What evidence is there to support this view, so that the interpretation of the verse may be based on it?

Secondly: this view is invalid in terms of its wording also, because the verse says {Who whispers [evil] into the hearts of an-nas}, so how can he say that what is meant by an-nas is an-nas? According to that view, what the verse {Who whispers [evil] into the hearts of an-nas} means is: whispering into the hearts of an-nas, who are from among the jinn and an-nas. Is it valid to say "into the hearts of an-nas, who are from among an-nas and others"? This cannot be valid, and it is not proper usage of language.

Thirdly: this view divides an-nas into two categories: jinn and an-nas, and that is not correct, because a thing cannot be half of itself.

Fourthly: the jinn cannot be called an-nas at all, whether linguistically, or by derivation, or by usage. The linguistic meaning of both words makes that clear. The jinn are only called jinn

because of their being hidden (ijtinan) and covered. Thus they are hidden from the eyes of humans, and that is why they are called jinn. … As for the connection between the words an-nas and ins (human), it is quite clear in terms of both structure and meaning...

He elaborated on that at length, then he said:

The point is that the word an-nas refers to the sons of Adam, and it does not include the jinn. Therefore it is not correct to say that both the jinn and an-nas are included in the words “into the hearts of an-nas.” This is clear and there is nothing ambiguous about it.

If someone were to say: There is nothing wrong with saying that, because the word rijal (men) is used to refer to the jinn, as in the verse: {And there were men from mankind who sought refuge in men from the jinn, so they [only] increased them in burden [i.e., sin]} [Al-Jinn 72:6], so if they can be called rijal, there is no reason why they cannot be called an-nas,

I say: this is what deceived those who said that the word an-nas refers to both jinn and humans in this verse.

The response to that is that they were referred to as men only to balance the mention of men from among humankind, and this is specific to the context of this verse only; it does not necessarily mean that the words an-nas and rijal (men) may be used for both races without qualification.

If you were to say “a human of stone” or “a man of wood,” and the like, that would not necessarily mean that the word man or human can be used without restriction to refer to stone and wood.

Similarly, if we use the word man to refer to a jinni, that does not necessarily mean that we can call him a human, because humans and jinn are separate and counterparts.

Similarly, Allah, may He be Glorified, mentions the two words, humans and jinn, together, as in the verse: {O jinn and humans} [Al-An`am 6:130]. This appears often in the Quran.

Similarly, the phrase {From among the jinn and an-nas} [An-Nas 114:6] Implies that they are opposite and counterparts, so one of them cannot be included with the other.

In contrast, the words rijal (men) and jinn are not used separately as counterparts, so we cannot say “al-jinnu war-rijal (jinn and men)” as we say “al-jinnu wal-ins (jinn and humankind).”

Therefore this verse offers the clearest proof against them that the jinn are not included in the word an-nas, because the verse mentions the jinn as a counterpart to an-nas, and thus it is known that the one word does not include the other.

The correct view is the second one, which says that the phrase {From among the jinn and an-nas} refers to those who do the whispering, who are of two types: human and jinn. Thus the jinni whispers into the hearts of humans, and humans also whisper to other humans.

Thus those who do the whispering are of two types: human and jinn. What is meant by whispering is casting thoughts into hearts in a subtle manner, and this is something that is common to both jinn and humans, even though the casting of thoughts and whispers on the part of a human is done through the ear, whereas the jinni does not need that means, because he enters the son of Adam and flows through him like blood.

But the jinni may appear to the human in physical form and whisper into his ear like a human, as it is narrated in *Sahih al-Bukhari* from `Urwah, from `A’ishah, from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said: “When the angels talk amidst the clouds about things that are going to happen on earth, the devils hear a word of what they say and pour it into the ear of a soothsayer as one pours something into a bottle, and they add to it one hundred lies of their own.”

Thus the devil may whisper and cast thoughts into the heart through the ear.

So the devil whispers his falsehood to the human, and the human whispers it to another human like himself; thus the devils among humankind and the jinn both take part in this devilish whispering.

Based on the above, all the confusion and wrong arguments presented by those who hold the first view are dispelled. The verse refers to seeking refuge with Allah from the evil of both types of devils, namely the devils among humankind and the jinn.

According to the first view, refuge is to be sought with Allah from the evil of devils among the jinn only. So think about that; it offers further proof that their view is wrong.

End quote from *Bada'i` al-Fawa'id*, 2/803-809, `Alam al-Fawa'id edn.

This is also the view that was favoured by his shaykh, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him), as in *Minhaj as-Sunnah*, 5/188 and *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 17/509.

VI.

The above refers to the whispers in the hearts (of humans only). As for the efforts of the devils among the jinn to misguide and tempt their fellow jinn, that is possible. Hence Allah has told us that the accursed Iblis will disown his followers among the people of Hell, and that includes both the humans and the jinn among them:

{And Shaytan will say, when the matter is decided: Verily, Allah gave you a true promise; I also gave you promises, but I betrayed you. I had no power over you, except that I called you and you responded to me. So do not blame me; blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I disavow your erstwhile association of me with Allah. Verily, for the wrongdoers there will be a painful punishment} [Ibrahim 14:22].

Ibn Abi Hatim narrated in his *Tafsir* (4/1372) that Ibn `Abbas said: The jinn have devils who misguide them, just as the devils among humankind misguide their fellow humans. Its isnad is weak.

However, after all of that, it may be said that hairsplitting and discussing such issues in detail, and going to extremes in researching and studying such matters in detail is something that has no practical implications for the individual; learning about it is of no benefit in either religious or worldly terms, and knowing nothing about it does not lead to any shortcoming or harm a person. Rather the individual is required to know his enemies, namely the devils among humankind and the jinn, who strive to confuse and mislead him, so that he may be aware of their tricks and their methods. So let the person who sincerely cares about himself seek that which could save him and

protect him from the path of temptation and misguidance, and that which could benefit him before the Lord of the Worlds.

And Allah knows best.