

Sūrat al-Anbiya Verse 82

وَمِنَ الشَّيَاطِينِ مَنْ يَغُوصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ ۗ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَافِظِينَ

21:82 - Among the *Shayatin* were some who dived for him and performed tasks other than that, and We were watchful over them

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Who were these Shayatin that worked for Prophet Sulaymān? (The Jinn)
- 2) Why did Allah give him the Jinn as workers? (It was a sign of his power given to him by God)
- 3) What was the purpose of diving for the Prophet?

Commentary

This verse talks of yet another blessing granted to Prophet Sulaymān. The *Shayatin* worked for him, the term being used to refer to the Jinn. In Sura Saba the same blessing is mentioned but the word Jinn is used (34:12-13). The Jinn are a creation of Allah who have intellect, awareness, and responsibility. They are not visible to the human beings. Just like the human beings they too have two groups; the good and virtuous Jinn and the disobedient and evil ones. The Quran gives some detail about them in Sura Jinn. Other verses of the Quran also mention their existence (see verses 6:130, 17:88, 51:56, among others).

The Jinn who worked for Prophet Sulaymān were skilled in their work. According to hadith, Allah made their spirit-like bodies take on material form for the Prophet, so they could work for him. He made some of them to dive into the sea and bring up pearls and other treasures of the sea. Others worked on buildings. They constructed beautiful places of worship and sculptures of trees, huge bowls and cauldrons (metal pots for cooking over an open fire). The Quran mentions their work in another place - *and every builder and diver from the demons, and others bound together in chains* (38:37-38).

Some of these Jinn could be rebellious and hence the mention that Allah was watchful over them. His authority and control over them prevented them from running away, undoing the work that the Prophet's other workers did, and from disobeying the orders of the Prophet.

Allah saw the sincerity of Prophet Sulaymān's desire to serve him and to spread His word among people. He also saw how tirelessly the Prophet worked and how hard he was on himself. So he gave him unique gifts that would enable him to rule over a large kingdom for the sake of Allah. Hadith tells us that Prophet Sulaymān was given a ring with the inscription – *Glory be to the One by whose words the Jinn were controlled.*

When God wishes to help His representative establish His kingdom on earth, He makes many unique gifts available to him. We see this in the story of Prophet Sulaymān. This will also be evident at the end of time when Imam al-Mahdi (a) establishes the rule of Allah on earth. The services of human beings, angels, Jinn, all forms of technology etc. will be part of the group that will work with the Imam.

Prophet Sulaymān was never proud or boastful of the gifts he was given. He considered himself a poor servant of Allah. As a king he would go to his people and be with them. He would exchange pleasantries with the rich, but he would sit down and spend time with the poor saying ‘*Miskin*’ with the *Masakin*’, showing acute awareness of his inner poverty and complete reliance on Allah.

Lessons

- 1) One of the unique features of the kingdom of Prophet Sulaymān was its army of Jinn. They worked for him on various things.
- 2) The Jinn are a created being who have responsibility and accountability, just like the human beings. They can be good or evil.
- 3) Unless there is protection and firm authority in a group, there can be rebellion as seen even in a kingdom as unique as that of Prophet Sulaymān.

Connecting verses

- 1) Prophet Sulaymān had control over humans and Jinn – 27:17
- 2) The Jinn;
 - a) Partnered with the human being in the command to be grateful – 55: 13, 16, 18 . . .
 - b) They listen to the Quran and glorified Allah – 72:1-3

Connecting Topics

- 1) Difference between Shaytan and Iblis
<https://www.al-islam.org/faith-and-reason/question-18-power-satan-and-jinn>
<https://www.al-islam.org/180-questions-enquiries-about-islam-volume-two-various-issues/7-what-meant-shaytan-noble-quran>
- 2) Who are the Jinn?
<https://www.al-islam.org/180-questions-enquiries-about-islam-volume-two-various-issues/8-what-reality-jinn>