*BELIEF IN ANGELS*

QUR’AN

*Sura Nisa/Ayat 136:*

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O you who believe! Believe in God and His Messenger (Muhammad) and the Book He has been sending down on His Messenger in parts, and the (Divine) Books He sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in God, and His angels, and His Books, and His Messengers, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray (1)

*Sura Bakara/Ayat 285:*

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The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers; each one believes in God, and His angels, and His Books, and His Messengers: "We make no distinction between any of His Messengers (in believing in them)." And they say: "We have heard (the call to faith in God) and (unlike some of the people of Moses) obeyed. Our Lord, grant us Your forgiveness, and to You is the homecoming."(2)

(1) 4:136/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal

(2)2:285/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal

HADITH

It is narrated on the authority of Yahya b. Ya'mur that the first man who discussed about Qadr (Divine Decree) in Basra was Ma'bad al-Juhani. I along with Humaid b. 'Abdur-RahmanHimyari set out for prilgrimage or for 'Umrah and said: Should it so happen that we come into contact with one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) we shall ask him a bout what is talked about Taqdir (Division Decree). Accidentally we came across Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattab, while he was entering the mosque. My companion and I surrounded him. One of us (stood) on his right and the other stood on his left. I expected that my companion would authorize me to speak. I therefore said: Abu AbdurRahman! there have appeared some people in our land who recite the Holy Qur'an and pursue knowledge. And then after talking about their affairs, added: They (such people) claim that there is no such thing as Divine Decree and events are not predestined. He (Abdullah ibn Umar) said: When you happen to meet such people tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me. And verily they are in no way responsible for my (belief). Abdullah ibn Umar swore by Him (the Lord) (and said): If any one of them (who does not believe in the Divine Decree) had with him gold equal to the bulk of (the mountain) Uhud and then, it (in the way of Allah), Allah would not accept it unless he affirmed his faith in Divine Decree. He further said: My father, Umar ibn al-Khattab, told me: One day we were sitting in the company of Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None amongst us recognized him. At last he sat with the Apostle (peace be upon him) He knelt before him placed his palms on his thighs and said: Muhammad, inform me about al-Islam. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Al-Islam implies that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay Zakat, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the (House) if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of) the journey. He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: It amazed us that he would put the question and then he would himself verify the truth. He (the inquirer) said: Inform me about Iman (faith). He (the Holy Prophet) replied: That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil. He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (the inquirer) again said: Inform me about al-Ihsan (performance of good deeds). He (the Holy Prophet) said: That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for though you don't see Him, He, verily, sees you. He (the enquirer) again said: Inform me about the hour (of the Doom). He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: One who is asked knows no more than the one who is inquiring (about it). He (the inquirer) said: Tell me some of its indications. He (the Holy Prophet) said: That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and master, that you will find barefooted, destitute goat-herds vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings. He (the narrator, Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: Then he (the inquirer) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Holy Prophet) for a long while. He then, said to me: Umar, do you know who this inquirer was? I replied: Allah and His Apostle knows best. He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: He was Gabriel (the angel). He came to you in order to instruct you in matters of religion. (3)

(3) Sahih Muslim, The Book of Faith, Hadith #0001

(4)

This, the Twenty-Ninth Word, is about the Immortality

of Man’s Spirit, the Angels, and the Resurrection.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*Therein came down the angels and the Spirit by the permission of their Sustainer.1*

*Say: The Spirit [comes] by command of my Sustainer.2*

[This treatise consists of an Introduction and two main Aims]

**Introduction**

It may be said that the existence of the angels and spirit beings is as definite as that of human beings and animals. Indeed, as is explained in the First Step of the Fifteenth Word, reality undoubtedly requires and wisdom certainly demands that like the earth the heavens have inhabitants, and that its inhabitants are intelligent, and suitable for the heavens. In the tongue of the Shari‘a, those inhabitants, of which there are numerous kinds, are called angels and spirit beings.

Reality requires it to be thus. For despite the earth’s smallness and insignificance in relation to the heavens, its being filled with intelligent beings and from time to time being emptied and then refilled with new ones suggests -indeed, states clearly- that the heavens too, with their majestic constellations like adorned palaces, are filled with animate creatures, the light of the light of existence, and conscious and intelligent creatures, the light of animate creatures. Like man and the jinn, those creatures are spectators of the palace of the world, and ponderers over the book of the universe, and heralds of this realm of dominicality. With their universal and comprehensive worship, they represent the glorification of the large and universal beings in the universe.

The nature of the universe surely points to their existence. For since it is embellished and decked out with uncountable numbers of finely adorned works of art and meaningful decorations and wise embroideries, it self-evidently requires the gazes of thoughtful admirers and wondering, appreciative lovers; it demands their existence. Yes, just as beauty requires a lover, so is food is given to the hungry. Thus, the sustenance of spirits and nourishment of hearts in this boundless beauty of art looks to the angels and spirit beings; it points to them. For while this infinite adornment requires an infinite duty of contemplation and worship, man and the jinn can perform only a millionth of that infinite duty, that wise supervision, that extensive worship. This means that boundless varieties of angels and spirit beings are necessary to perform those duties, and to fill and inhabit the mighty mosque of the world with their ranks.

Indeed, a species of the spirit beings and angels is present in every aspect, in every sphere, of the universe, each charged with a duty of worship. It may be said according to both the narrations of Hadiths and the wisdom in the order of the world that from lifeless planets and stars to raindrops, all are ships or vehicles for a kind of angel. The angels mount these vehicles with Divine permission and travel observing the Manifest World; they represent their praise and glorification.

It also may be said that certain sorts of living bodies act as aeroplanes for different kinds of spirits. From the birds of Paradise, called the Green Birds in a Hadith which says: "The spirits of the people of Paradise enter into Green Birds in the Intermediate Realm and travel around Paradise in them,"3 to flies, each is a vehicle for a sort of spirit. The spirits enter into them at a Divine command, and through the faculties and senses of those living bodies like the eyes and ears, observe the miracles of creation in the corporeal world. They perform the particular glorification of each.

Just as reality necessitates it to be thus, so does wisdom. For, with an intense activity, the All-Wise Maker continuously creates subtle life and luminous intelligent beings from dense earth, which has little connection with spirit, and from turbid water, which has small relation with the light of life. He surely then creates certain sorts of intelligent beings from the seas of light and even from the oceans of darkness, from the air, electricity, and other subtle matter suitable for spirit and appropriate for life. And surely these creatures are exceedingly numerous.

(4)The Risale-iNur Collection/The Words/The Twenty Nineth Word.

**Angels and Jinn In This World (5)**

Angels and jinn can assume any form or shape and appear in this world. Here, we observe movement from the visible to the invisible: water evaporates and disappears into the atmosphere, solid matter becomes a liquid or a gas (steam), and matter becomes energy (nuclear fission). Likewise, we observe movement from the invisible to the visible: gases become fluids, evaporated water becomes rain (as well as snow or hail), and energy becomes matter. Similarly, intangible thoughts and meanings in our minds can appear in the tangible form of letters and words in essays and books.

In an analogous way, such invisible beings as angels, jinn, and other spirit entities are clothed in some material substance, such as air or ether, and then become visible. According to Imam Shibli, God may allow them to assume a form when they utter any of His Names, for this functions like a key or a visa enabling them to assume a form and become visible in this world. If they try to do so without God's permission, by relying on their own abilities, they are torn into pieces and perish.

We read in Qur'an 19:17 that the spirit God sent to Mary (the mother of Jesus), and whom Muslim scholars say is Archangel Gabriel, appeared before her as a man. When Gabriel came to Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, with Revelation or God's Messages, he usually came as a warrior, a traveler, or a Companion named Dihya. For example, he came as a warrior on horseback following the end of the Battle of the Trench and told the Prophet, upon him be peace: "O Messenger of God, you have taken off your armor but we, the angels, have not yet done so. God orders you to march upon the BanuQurayza." Once he came as a traveler dressed in white and, in order to instruct the Companions in religion, asked the Prophet such questions as: What is belief? What is Islam? What is ihsan (excellence or perfection of virtue)? When is the Day of Judgment?

Like angels and jinn, Satan (who is a jinn) can appear in different forms. It is narrated that before the Battle of Badr, he appeared to the Qurayshi leaders as an old man from Najd and advised them. Likewise, a Companion guarding the spoils of war caught a disguised Satan trying to steal some items. Satan entreated the Companion to release him, which he did—twice. On the third time, the Companion tried to take him to God's Messenger. But Satan appealed: "Release me, and I'll tell you how you can secure yourself against me." The Companion asked what that was, and Satan replied that it was the Verse of the Throne (2:255). When informed of this, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, commented: "That wicked one is a liar, but on that occasion he told the truth." [1]

The Qur'an relates that a group of jinn listened to God's Messenger recite the Qur'an and, when they returned to their people, said: "O people! Surely we listened to a Book that has been revealed after Moses, affirms what precedes it, and guides to right and the Straight Path" (46:30). The sura continues with what they thought about what they had heard. Some Traditions tell us that the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, recited parts of the Qur'an and preached his Message to the jinn.

Jinn can also appear as snakes, scorpions, cattle, donkeys, birds, and other animals. When our Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, accepted the jinn's oath of allegiance in the valley of Batn al-Nakhla, he wanted them to appear to his community either in their own form or in other agreeable forms, not as such harmful animals as dogs and scorpions. He warned his community: "When you see any vermin in your house, tell it three times: 'For God's sake, leave this place' for it may be a friendly jinn. If it does not leave, it is not a jinn. If it is harmful, you may kill it."

The jinn who gave allegiance to God's Messenger promised him: "If your community recites the basmala (In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate) before anything they do and cover their dishes, we will not touch their food or their drink." Another Tradition says: [When you have relieved yourselves] do not clean yourselves with bones and dried pieces of dung, for they are among the foods of your jinn brothers.

[1] The Companion did not know that the man was Satan

(5)byFethullahGülen on 14 September 2001. Posted in [Essentials of the Islamic Faith](http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/faith/essentials-of-the-islamic-faith)