

1819 - Jinn Entering Human Bodies

the question

In the last few days a controversy has arisen concerning the matter of jinn entering human bodies. Some say that this is rationally impossible, because of the difference in the essences from which they were created, as man was created from clay and the jinn from fire. It has also been said that the shayateen (devils) have no power other than waswas (insinuating whispers) and that Allah has not given them any power over man. And it is said that the recorded tapes that are in circulation (recordings of jinn supposedly speaking through people) are no proof of anything. What is your response to all this?

Detailed answer

The fact that jinn can enter human bodies is proven in the Quran and Sunnah (prophetic teachings), and by the consensus of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah (main body of Muslims who are united upon the sunnah), and by real-life events. No one disputes this apart from the M'utazilah (a deviant sect) who give priority to their own rational analysis over the evidence of the Quran and Sunnah. We will mention a little about this below:

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those who eat riba (interest) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaytan leading him to insanity. That is because they say: ‘Trading is only like Riba’...” [2:275]

Al-Qurtubi said in his Tafseer (exegesis): “This ayah (verse) is proof that those people are wrong who deny that epilepsy is caused by the jinn and claim that its causes are only physical, and that the Shaytan does not enter people or cause madness.”

Ibn Katheer said in his Tafseer, after mentioning the ayah quoted above: “They will not rise from their graves on the Day of Resurrection except like the way in which the epileptic rises during his seizure, when he is beaten by the Shaytan. This is because they will rise in a very bad state.

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: the one who consumes riba will rise on the Day of Resurrection crazy and choking.”

According to a saheeh hadeeth (authentic report) narrated by al-Nasai from Abu’l-Yusr, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to pray: “Allahumma innnee a’oodhu bika min al-taraddi wa’l-haram wa’l-gharaq wa’l-harq, wa a’oodhu bika an yatakhbatani al-shaytan ‘ind al-mawt (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from being thrown from a high place, old age, drowning and burning; and I seek refuge with You from being beaten by the Shaytan at the time of death).” Commenting on this hadeeth in Al-Fayd, al-Manawi said: “[The phrase] ‘and I seek refuge with You from being beaten by the Shaytan at the time of death’ means, lest he should wrestle with me and play with me, and damage my religious commitment or mental state (at the time of death) by means of his insinuating whispers which cause people to slip or lose their minds. The Shaytan could take control of a person when he is about to depart this world, and misguide him or stop him from repenting...”

Ibn Taymiyah said: “The fact that jinn can enter human bodies is proven by the consensus of Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaah. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

‘Those who eat riba will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaytan leading him to insanity. That is because they say: ‘Trading is only like riba’...’ [2:275].

And in as-Saheeh it is narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Shaytan flows through the son of Adam as the blood flows through his veins.”

‘Abd-Allah ibn al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: “I said to my father, ‘There are some people who say that the jinn do not enter the body of the epileptic.’ He said: ‘O my son, they are lying; the jinn could speak through this person.’” Commenting on this, Ibn Qudamah said: “What he said is well known, because a person may suffer an epileptic seizure and speak in a language that no one understands, and his body may be beaten with blows that would fell a camel, but the epileptic does not feel them at all, and he is also unaware of the words he is saying. The epileptic and others may be dragged about, or the carpet on which he is sitting may be pulled, and

utensils may be moved about from place to place, and other things may happen. Anyone who witnesses such a thing will know for sure that the one who is speaking through the person and moving these things is not human.” And he said, may Allah have mercy on him: “There is no one among the imams (religious leaders/scholars) of the Muslims who denies that jinn may enter the body of the epileptic and others. Anyone who denies this and claims that Islam denies it is lying about Islam. There is nothing in the proofs of sharee’ah (Islamic law) to show that it does not happen.”

So the fact that jinn may enter human bodies is proven in the Quran and Sunnah, and by the consensus of Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jama’ah, some of whose comments we have quoted above.

As regards the ayah (interpretation of the meaning): “but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah’s Leave” [2:102], this is undoubtedly a clear indication that the jinn cannot harm anyone through witchcraft or epilepsy or through any other kind of disturbance or misguidance, except with the permission of Allah. As al-Hasan al-Basri said: “Whomever Allah wills, He gives them power over him, and whomever He does not will, He does not give them power over him, and they cannot do anything to anyone except with the permission of Allah.” The Shaytan (who is the disbelieving jinn) may gain power over the believers by making them sin and by making them neglect the remembrance and Tawheed of Allah (maintaining Allah’s Oneness) and sincerity in worshipping Him. But he has no power over the righteous slaves of Allah, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“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.” [17:65]

During the Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic days of ignorance) the Arabs were well aware of this and mentioned it in their poetry. For example, the poet al-A’asha likened his she-camel’s energy to that of one who was touched by the jinn, and said that it was the jinn who was giving her energy.

As regards the causes of epilepsy, Ibn Taymiyah explained the causes. He said: “When the jinn touch a person with epilepsy, it may be because of desire or love, just as happens between one

human and another... or it may – as is usually the case – be because of hatred and punishment, such as when a person has harmed them or they think that he has harmed them deliberately, either by urinating on them or pouring hot water on them or killing them, even if the person did that unknowingly. There are ignorant and wrongdoing ones among the jinn who may punish a person more than he deserves, or they may be playing with him and mistreating him, like foolish people among mankind.”

And I say: the way to save oneself from this is to remember Allah and speak His Name at the beginning of all things, as it was reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to mention Allah in many cases, such as when eating, drinking, mounting his riding-beast, taking off his clothes for any reason, having intercourse and so on...

As regards treatment (of one whose body has been entered by the jinn), Ibn Taymiyah said (Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, 19/42): “When the jinn attack a person, they should be told of the rulings of Allah and His Messenger, proof should be established against them, and they should be commanded to do what is good and told not to do what is evil, just as should be done in the case of people, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): ‘And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning)’ [al-Israa’ 17:15].” Then he said: “If the jinn does not leave after being addressed in this manner, then it is permissible to rebuke him, tell him off, threaten him and curse him, as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did with the Shaytaan when he came with a falling star to throw it in his face, and the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I seek refuge with Allah from you and I curse you with the curse of Allah” – three times. (Narrated by al-Bukhaari).

We may also seek help against the jinn by remembering Allah (dhikr) and reciting Qur’an, especially Aayat al-Kursiy. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites it will remain under the protection of Allah and no Shaytaan (devil) will be able to approach him until the morning.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari). And al-Mi’wadhatayn (the last two soorahs of the Qur’an) may also be recited.

As for psychiatrists who do not treat the epileptic in the manner described, they cannot do him any good at all.

This issue may be discussed in much more detail, but what we have said here is sufficient for those who want to know a little about this matter, Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.