

WHO IS SATAN? WHAT WAS THE AIM OF HIS CREATION?

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Abstract: the present article deals about a basic question of who is Satan and why was he created. We tries to answer this question from various aspects.

Key words: satan, creation , satan's arrogance

N When people ask about the aim of creating Satan, it is like they are asking about the aim of their own creation. Once most people get the answer to their question about Satan, the fundamental question still stands - what is the aim of creation of the Universe. But till the basic question is not clear, talking about the other questions is useless.

Let's say someone comes to a party and asks, "Why are you serving tea?" People will ask him, "Was the purpose of everything else clear that you are only asking about the tea? Or are you really asking about the purpose of the party?" He would say that he wants to inquire about the entire party but has started by asking about the tea. Thus, we need to understand the purpose of the party before asking why tea was served in the party.

When someone asks about the aim of creation of humans or Satan, they want to know why Allah (swt) created creatures which includes both humans and Satan. So, we will take this question a bit further.

Since the questioner has asked about the aim of creation, the query implies that they believe in God. If a person does not believe in

a creator, how can they ask about the purpose of creation? Of course, the aim of creation is not specific to the Shiite and concerns all religions because every religion and religious priest needs to answer question the fundamental question of the aim of creation – that is if they know the answer. While all religions are responsible of answering the question, they pull aside and portray that the onus is on us to answer it.

If we want to reply to the question, we can say that *purpose* can mean motivation or goal. Most scholar and philosophers like Late Muhammad Taqi Jaffari have taken purpose to mean goal not motivation. In other words, they say that the goal of creation is perfection but have not spoken about motivation.

However, if a being does an action due its very essence, we do not need to discuss the purpose or

goal of the action. For example, the bite of the scorpion is not of animosity rather it is just the scorpion's nature. Similarly, the saltiness of salt is due the salt's essence.

Furthermore, when you ask someone about the purpose of their action, it implies that they are free and have power to choose. Usually, free beings do actions out of two motivations: to prevent harm or acquire benefit. And if none of these motivations are present, an action is said to be aimless. But creating beings does not harm or benefit Allah (swt). So, has He created things aimlessly? If we can find an example of a purposeful action which is done by choice but does not cause benefit to or prevent harm from its doer, we can understand this situation.

As an example, let's say that an atheist is driving on a deserted road on a cold winter night. He sees a shivering, hungry blind person and a dog who has just given birth to puppies who were howling out of hunger. This person goes home and brings food, clothes and a stick for the blind man and bones for the dogs. He says to the blind man, "Eat your food, wear your coat, hold this stick, wear your shoes and give your hand to me so I can take you to my house."

What benefit did this atheist get by doing this action? Neither the dogs nor the blind man can reward or help him in any material way. Since the action was done at midnight in a deserted place, he didn't do it out of show-off either. And if he didn't do the action, the dog and the blind man could not have harmed him. So, we

see that this man did not do this deed to prevent harm or acquire benefit.

This person did this out the perfections he posses not because he wanted to get to perfection. Similarly, this person did the action out of his generosity not to increase his generosity. This is because he is capable of being more generous to the dog and the blind man. This help was very little compared to his capability. Thus, the goal of his actions wasn't to reach perfection either

This person did not need the greetings and humbleness of the blind man. Then why did he invite the blind man to his house? We can say that he wants to the blind man to get acquainted with himself. He asked blind manto wear the clothes, take the stick in his hand and come to his home. If this blind man considers doing these actions and

following these orders as a burden and is lazy, he is being ignorant and ungrateful. The blind man needs to realize that this person is asking him to his orders out of grace and doing these actions will lead him to salvation.

We can compare this example with our reaction to Allah's (swt) commands. Commands like wearing Hijab, giving religious dues, and praying namaaz cannot be considered as a burden from Allah (swt). Rather these commands and responsibilities are a grace from Allah (swt). Instead of considering them as a burden, we need to thank Allah (swt) for showing the way to salvation. That is why we recite in Dua e Ifitiah, "O Lord, you have granted me permission to call upon you and ask you. Then O All-hearing, listen to my praise."

Just like mercy is part of us and we can be merciful when we like, generosity is the essence of Allah (swt) and He is free to exercise this generosity when He wishes. Allah (swt) has absolute freedom to give and to restrain. That is why the Holy Quran says, “Say, ‘O Allah, Master of all kingdom! You give kingdom to whomever You wish, and take away kingdom from whomever You wish; You make honor whomever You wish, and You degrade whomever You wish...” [3:26].

Allah (swt) can take back everything He has gifted Rasulallah (s) so there is no compulsion on Him. Allah (swt) possess this perfection but has absolute freedom to give or not give his creature. He does things for our good and these actions give Him no benefit. If the blind man asks Him if you created

me to shower me with your grace, why did you create me blind? The answer is that the very existence and creation of a creature is a big favour from Allah (swt).

Thus, the first and most important grace of Allah (swt) is existence. Even if a person commits suicide still wants to exist – just in a world without difficulties and grief. After our existence, Allah (swt) has made is responsible for obligatory and recommended actions so we can enter Heaven. And Hell is a consequence of Allah’s (swt) justice (Adl).

But Allah (swt) has not created any creature who is 100% harmful for itself or for beings around it. Among His creations, Allah (swt) has given free will, intellect, and knowledge to some creatures. And if a creature goes

astray and harms others out of its free will despite having intellect and knowledge, we cannot say that Allah (swt) has created an evil creature. Rather Allah (swt) created a perfect, strong, knowledgeable and aware creature and has given it free will. Now if this creature does evil, we can only blame the creature not Allah (swt).

We see this paradigm in the case of Satan. The essence and creation of Satan is not bad or evil. He is a clever, tactful creature who knows all the sciences. As one of my teachers put it, Satan has more knowledge of philosophy, jurisprudence, etc. than any other scholar. He can go wherever he likes and has the recognition of Allah (swt). That is why we say that the words “من طلبني وجدني...” are not correct. Recognition of Allah (swt) doesn't always lead to His love. Sometimes you might know a person

very well, but due to impiety that recognition might lead you to jealousy instead of love. Satan recognizes Allah (swt) more than any mystic but does not love Him. This recognition allowed him to ascend to the ranks of the angels. But this recognition did not lead Satan to obey Allah (swt).

Did Allah (swt) make Satan evil or create an evil creature? No, on the contrary, Satan used to prostrate and bow in worship for thousands of years to the extent that angels were envious of the rank of Satan. After these thousands of years of worship Allah (swt) wanted to test him just like He tests anyone who claims to have believed in Him. He says in the Holy Quran, “Do the people suppose that they will be let off because they say, ‘We have faith,’ and they will not be tested?” [29:2].

When Allah created Hazrat Adam (a) from mud and asked angels (Satan was with them) to prostrate to him. As Allah (swt) quotes Satan in the Quran, here Satan objected and said that he can prostrate to anyone Allah (swt) commands except Adam because Adam is created from mud while he was created from fire [7:12]. As a matter of fact, people had a similar reaction to the appointment of Imam Ali (as) after Rasulallah (saw). They were ready to accept the Rasulallah (saw) but used to say that we are older than Imam Ali (as) so he cannot lead us. This act of considering themselves greater than Imam Ali (as) is the same arrogance and pride that we see in the case of Satan. Satan believed that mud was from dust and that dust is lower than water and air but fire is higher than them. That is why he considered

Nabi Adam (a) in a lower rank than himself.

Due to Satan's arrogance, Allah (swt) threw him out as we see in the Holy Quran at several instances like Surah A'raf verse 13 and Surah Sad verse 75. Here it is not Allah (swt) who created something evil or imperfect. Rather it was Satan who after getting thrown out asked for a reward for his years of worship. Upon being asked by Allah (swt) what he wants, Satan said that he wanted to live till the Day of Judgement. Allah (swt) responded, "So surely you are of the respited ones till the period of the time made known" [15:37-8]. After being granted respite, Satan promised that he "will certainly cause them all to deviate" [15:39]. But Allah (swt) has told all of mankind that if they seek refuge from Satan in Him, He will save

them from misguidance. Allah (swt) has commanded us that, “So when you recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaitan” [16:98].

Whenever we reach a stage in our life where we are faced with the choice of obeying Allah (swt) or disobeying Him and Satan is tempting us to make the wrong decision, we can recite Surah Nass to be safe from the temptations of Satan.

Allah (swt) has kept us away from so many deviations and given us the best protection against Satan – Imam Mahdi (atfs). He (as) is “كهف الحصين” and we can rely on him to give us safety and protection. The very essence of faith is that we rely on Imam Zaman (as) and go under his refuge because Allah (swt) has selected him.