

Section 1: Humanity Exhorted to Hold Satan as its Enemy

Surah Al-Fatir – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَثْنِي وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

1. “(All) praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who appointed the angels messengers having wings two, three, and four. He adds to creation what He pleases; verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing.”

The Qur'anic word */fatir/* means: ‘Originator’, and the Arabic word */ajnihah/* in the sense of ‘wing’ is derived from */jinaḥ* which allusively means power. In Persian it is also said ‘the wing of so and so is burnt or broken’ which indicates he has no power.

Similar to Suras: Al-Hamd, Saba, and Al-Kahf, this Surah begins with the praise of Allah, too. His praise is for the sake of the creation of the vast world of existence.

Concerning the fact that all bounties and merits of existence originate from His Exalted Being, the Qur'an says:

“(All) praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth...”

The Qur’anic word ***Ifatir*** is derived from /futur/ originally means ‘to cleave’ and since the creation of creatures is like cleaving the darkness of nothingness and it is the appearance of the light of existence, this meaning has been used in relation to creation particularly in regarding to the modern science which says that at the beginning the totality of the world of existence had been a single mass which has gradually split and some parts have separated from it.

The application of the word Fatir for the Pure Essence of Allah produces a new and clearer concept.

Yes, we do praise Him for His creative Power, because whatever exists is from His side and none has anything from him except Allah.

And in view of the fact that the management of this world, because of the fact that this world is the world of means, has been given to the angels, the verse immediately speaks about their creation and the considerable power that Allah, the Almighty, has bestowed on them.

It says:

“...Who appointed the angels messengers having wings two, three, and four...”

Then the verse continues saying:

“...He adds to creation what He pleases; verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing.”

Allah (s.w.t.) adds to the creation whatever His Will and His Wisdom require including wings and other things.

In this regard, the verse is absolute and it contains any kind of adding, irrespective of tallness of the body, moderation in face and bodily power and good intellect, and other merits. Some of the commentators say that the purpose of ‘adding to creation’ is: beautiful face, nice voice, and fair hair.

Note

There are many verses in the Qur’an that are about the angels’ attributes, specialties, missions, and duties. Even the Qur’an has considered the faith in angels in the row of the faith in Allah, prophets, and heavenly Books, and this is evidence upon the fundamental importance of this subject.

The Holy Qur’an says:

“The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. (They) all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His messengers...”¹

No doubt the angels are among the Unseen things for proving which by these attributes and specialties

there is no way save the traditional proofs, and because of belief in Unseen, we must accept them.

On the whole, the Qur'an explains the specialties of the angels as follows:

1- The angels are some wise and intellectual beings of the honourable servants of Allah.

"...but (angels) are (His) honoured servants."²

2. They obey Allah (s.w.t.) and never commit sin.

"They do not precede Him in speech, and (only) according to His commandment do they act."³

3. They have been given many important and various duties from the side of Allah:

Some of them bear the 'Arsh (throne):

"...bear the throne of Your Lord above them."⁴

A group of them manage the affair:

"And those who manage the affair."⁵

A group of them are the angels of taking souls:

"...until when Our messengers came to them to take them away..."⁶

A group of them are the recorders of the deeds of men:

"And surely there are Watchers over you,"

"Honourable scribes:"

"They know (and understand) whatever you do."⁷

A group of them are the protectors of man from dangers and evil events:

"...and He sends guardians (to watch) over you until when death comes to one of you..."⁸

A group of them are ordered to punish the disobedient people:

"And when Our messengers (the angels) came to Lot, he was grieved for them and felt straitened to protect them. He said: 'This is a distressful day'."⁹

A group of them are Divine helpers to the believers in battles:

"O you who believe! Remember Allah's blessing upon you when hosts came against you, so We sent upon them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah sees what you do."¹⁰

And, finally, a group of them are the bringers of revelation and heavenly Books from Allah for Divine prophets:

“He sends down the angels with the inspiration of His commandment upon whomever of His servants He wills...”¹¹

4– They are always busy glorifying Allah, as Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 5 says:

“...and the angels celebrate the Praise of their Lord and seek forgiveness for those who are on the earth...”

Yes, because of talent and potentials of development that man has, he is higher than and superior to the angels so much so that all angels, with no exception, once for the sake of the creation of Adam fell in prostration and Adam became their teacher.¹²

6– Some angels appear for prophets and even other than the prophets in the form of human beings, as we recite in Surah Maryam that the great angel of Allah came to Mary as a handsome man:

“...Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Holy Spirit) that presented himself to her a perfect man”.

In other occurrences of the Qur'an we recite that angels appeared in the form of some men before Abraham and Lot¹³. It is understood from the verses of this Surah that the people of Lot, too, saw them in the form of some handsome men.¹⁴

Is the appearance in the form of man a concrete fact? Or is it in the form of presentation and interfering in the perceptive faculty? The outward of the verses of the Qur'an implies to the first meaning, though some great commentators have chosen the second meaning.

7– It is understood from Islamic narrations that the number of angels is so large that they can never be compared with all human beings.

Once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked whether the number of the angels is larger or that of the human beings, he said:

“By Allah in whose hand is my soul! the angels in heavens are more than the (number of) whole atoms of the dust of the earth, and there is no place in heaven but an angel is busy glorifying and praising Him therein.”¹⁵

8– They neither eat nor drink nor marry. Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

“Verily the angels neither eat, nor drink, nor marry, and they do live only by the breeze of the (Divine) 'Arsh!’”¹⁶

9– They have neither sleep nor negligence, nor laziness.

Ali (as) in a tradition said:

*“There is no cessation between them, nor there is negligence with them, nor there is sin among them... sleep does not overtake them, their wisdom never involves in mistake and forgetfulness, their bodies do not tend to laziness, and they do not lie in the loins of fathers and in the wombs of mothers.”*¹⁷

10– They have different proper positions and ranks. Some of them are always in the state of ‘bowing’ while some others are in the state of prostration.

The Qur’an, from the tongue of the angels, says:

“There is not (any one) of us but for his is an assigned place.”

“And verily we are they who range ourselves in order;” “And verily we are they who celebrate His glory!”¹⁸

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

*“Verily Allah has some angels who are (in the state of) bowing until the Day of Hereafter, and verily Allah has some angels who are (always in the state of) prostration until the Day of Hereafter.”*¹⁹

For more information about the specialties of the angels and their classes, you may refer to the books entitled: As-Sama’-i-wal-‘Alam, Bihar-ul-‘Anwar, Abwab-ul-Mala’ikah, Vol. 59, P. 144–326. Also, Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermons number one and ninety one, Sermon ‘Ishbah, sermons 109, and 171.

Having these attributes mentioned for the angels in mind, are they abstract or material?

Certainly, with these specialties, they cannot be formed from the dirty elemental matter, but it does not matter that they have been created from some tender matters, some things beyond this ordinary matter which we are acquainted with.

Of course, we know the angels as those who are introduced by the Qur’an and by the certain Islamic narrations, and we know them as a great part of the high and outstanding beings of Allah, without considering any rank for them save the rank of servitude, and we do not know them as the partner of Allah in creation or worship, because this is absolutely polytheism and infidelity.

By the way, in many phrases of the Torah the angels are introduced as gods, which is blasphemous and this is one of the signs of the distortion in the present Torah.

But the Qur’an is pure and far from these meanings, since it has not considered any rank for them except servitude and worship, and executing the commands of Allah; and, as we said before, it is understood from the different verses of the Qur’an that the rank of a complete man is higher than and superior to the angels.

Surah Al-Fatir – Verse 2

مَا يَفْتَحِ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكُ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

2. “Whatever mercy Allah opens to men, none can withhold and whatever He withholds, none can loose after Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”

All people throughout the world are enjoying the favours of Allah, the Almighty, the Merciful.

Next to the explanation of the creative power of Allah and the mission of the angels, who are the means of giving favours, this verse refers to His Mercy which is the foundation of the whole world of existence.

It says:

“Whatever mercy Allah opens to men, none can withhold...”

“...and whatever He withholds, none can loose after Him...”

“...and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”

In short, all of the treasures of mercy are with Him, and whomever He sees eligible He gives it to him, wherever His Wisdom requires, He opens its doors; and if all humankind may gather with together in order to open the door He has shut, they will never be able to do. This fact is an important branch of Unity which is the origin of other branches.

Similar to this meaning has also been mentioned in some other verses of the Qur'an, for example it says:

“And if Allah afflicts you with any hurt, none can remove it but Him. And if He intends any good for you, none can repel His favour. He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”²⁰

Surah Al-Fatir – Verse 3

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَانِّي تُؤفَّكُونَ

3. “O’ people! Remember Allah’s favour upon you; is there any creator, apart from Allah, who

gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth? There is no god but He; whence are you then turned away (from the truth)?”

We ought to invite all to contemplation upon the blessings of Allah, because the best way of knowing Allah is to be attentive to His favours.

In this holy verse the Qur'an has pointed to 'the Unity of worship' based on 'Unity of creative power and giving sustenance'.

It says:

“O’ people! Remember Allah’s favour upon you...”

Do think properly! Who and where is the main origin of all these favours, merits, and blessings? Who has given you all these vital possibilities in which you live? Is there any creator, except Allah, who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth?

Who sends the life giving light of the sun, the enlivening drops of rain, and the pleasant breezes from heaven toward you? And who brings out the mines and treasures of the earth, the food stuffs, kinds of plants, vegetables, fruits and other blessings from this land for you?

In this regard the verse continues saying:

“...is there any creator, apart from Allah, who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth?...”

Now that you know that Allah is the origin of all of these blessings, then do know that there is no object of worship but He, and worshipping is eligible only for His Pure Essence.

It says:

“...There is no god but He; whence are you then turned away (from the truth)?”

The Qur'anic term ***/tu'fakun/*** is derived from */'ifk/* which is used for anything that diverts it from its original state, therefore any hardship which diverts from the Truth is called */'ifk/* and it is from this very point of view that it is applied in the sense of falsehood and slander; but some commentators believe that this word refers to the great lies and slanders.

Surah Al-Fatir – Verse 4

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

4. “And if they belie you, apostles before you have been belied, and to Allah are all affairs returned.”

All Divine prophets had some opponents, and rejecting the truth is the permanent style of the pagans. Pagans, of course, do not do anything against ordinary persons, they are opposite of the way and aim. Whoever calls to the truth he will be rejected by them.

This holy verse, at first, teaches the Prophet (S) to be steadfast along his way, and this is the most important lesson for him.

It says:

“And if they belie you, apostles before you have been belied...”

This rejection is not a new thing. Those prophets before you also persevered in this way and they did not stop their activities in their prophecy before when they fulfilled their mission. You, too, must stand firm and perform your prophecy, the rest is up to Allah.

He never ignores your troubles in this way, in the same manner that He does not leave the rejections of the obstinate opponent without retribution. If there were not the Day of Hereafter, there would be the state of anxiety. But, regarding to the existence of that great Court and that the entire deeds of people are recorded and preserved for that Great Day, there is no room for anxiety any more.

Surah Al-Fatir – Verse 5

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

5. “O’ people! Verily the promise of Allah is true. So let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the arch-deceiver (Satan) deceive you about Allah!”

The promises of Allah are true, but the promises of Satan are chaffy and deceptive.

In this verse, the Qur’an states the most important program of men where it says:

“O’ people! Verily the promise of Allah is true...”

Hereafter, Reckoning, Record, the Balance, Retribution, Paradise, and Hell-Fire are all the promises which are not changeable from the side of Allah, the Almighty, the Wise.

With regard to this true promise, let not the life beguile you and let not the deceptive Satan deceive you and make you proud of the forgiveness and mercy of Allah.

The verse says:

“...So let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the arch-deceiver (Satan) deceive you about Allah!”

Yes, the amusing factors, and deceptive dazzling glares of this world tend to occupy your heart and cause your neglect from that great Divine promise constantly.

The Satans from among jinn and men are always busy beguiling you by various means of deception. They also want to attract your whole thought and attention to them and deviate it from that great promised Day that you have in front of you.

Thus, if their deception and temptation become effective, all your life will be destroyed and the wish of your happiness will fail. So you should be careful of them, too.

The repetition of warning unto people that they should be neither proud of the Satan’s temptations nor of the world is, in fact, an indication to this that the way of penetration of sin in man consists of two ways:

1– The deceptive glories of the world: rank and dignity, wealth and position, and kinds of lusts, (being proud of the Divine forgiveness and mercy, and it is here that, from one side, Satan decorates the dazzling glory of this world in the man’s view and introduces it as a present, attractive, lovely, and valuable thing.

And, on the other side, whenever man decides to control himself, by the remembrance of Hereafter and the Great Court of Allah, against the charm and intense attraction of the world, Satan makes him proud of the vastness of the Divine Mercy and, consequently, he invites him to sin and disobedience.

But man may be neglectful that in the same manner that Allah is ‘the Most Merciful of all merciful’ in the rank of mercy, in the rank of punishment and retribution, He is severe in retribution, too. His Mercy never encourages any one to committing sin, as His Wrath cannot be the cause of despair.

The Qur’anic word ***/qarur/*** here means a being which is extraordinarily deceitful, and the objective meaning of it here may be any deceitful factor, and its purpose may be particularly Satan.

Of course, the second meaning is more fitting with the next verse specially that, in the verses of the Qur’an, ‘deceit and pride’ has repeatedly been attributed to Satan.

Surah Al-Fatir – Verses 6-7

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ
السَّعِيرِ

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ
كَبِيرٌ

6. “Verily Satan is your enemy, so you (too) take him (as your) enemy. He only invites his adherents that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire.”

7. “Those who disbelieve, for them shall be a severe chastisement, and as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them shall be forgiveness and a great recompense.”

The record of enmity of Satan with humankind is ancient.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“If Satan is an enemy, then why do you neglect him?”*²¹

This verse is a warning to all believers in relation to the temptations of Satan which were referred to in the previous verse.

It says:

“Verily Satan is your enemy, so you (too) take him (as your) enemy...”

His enmity began from the first day of the creation of Adam. When Satan was rejected from the presence of Allah as the result of the lack of submission to the command of Allah concerning prostration to Adam, he took an oath that he would be an enemy to Adam and his children for ever, and he even asked Allah a respite and length of lifetime for this action.

Satan persists on his saying and he avail himself of the slightest opportunity for enmity upon man. Does wisdom let you that you do not accept him as an enemy and remain neglectful of him even for a moment? Let alone that you wish to follow Satan’s footsteps, or accept him as a close friend and sincere adviser.

The Qur’an says:

“...Will you then choose him and his seed as your protecting friends instead of Me, when they are enemies to you?...”²²

Moreover, he is an enemy who attacks you from every side, as he himself says:

“Then I will certainly come upon them from before them, and from behind them, and from their right and from their left...”²³

Specially that he is in a hiding place where he sees man and man does not see him:

“...Surely he sees you: he and his Tribe, from where you do not see them...”²⁴

Of course, this does not hinder your power to defend yourself against his temptations.

There is an interesting meaning in the teachings of Allah to Moses, the son of ‘Imran, as Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) narrates that Allah told Moses:

“I have four recommendations to you in the protection of which you should try:

The first is that during the time you do not see your sins to be forgiven, do not refer to others’ defects.

The second is that while you do not see my treasures have been ended, you might not be sad for your sustenance.

The third is that when you do not see my sovereignty destroyed, you should not be hopeful to anyone except Me.

The fourth is that during the time you do not see Satan as dead, you should not (think to be) secured from his deceit (and plots).”²⁵

However, the enmity of Satan unto the children of Adam is a matter which has been pointed out in many verses of the Qur’an, and he has even been mentioned repeatedly in them as ‘a manifest enemy’:²⁶

We should always avoid such an enemy.

For more emphasis, the Qur’an at the end of the verse, says:

“...He only invites his adherents, that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire.”

The Qur’anic word ***hizb*** originally means: ‘a group or society which has an organization and intensity in action’; but it is usually used for any group and society that follow a special program and aim.

The purpose of the Qur’anic phrase ***‘Hizb-ush-Shaytan’*** is his adherents and those who are on his line.

Of course, Satan can never take anybody as a formal member of his party, and invites him toward Hell.

The members of his party are those who are mentioned in some other verses of the Holy Qur’an and they have the following symptoms:

Those who have put the yoke of Satan’s servitude and friendship on their necks are as such:

“His authority is only over those who befriend him, (following him)...”²⁷

Those who are qualified as follows:

“Satan has gained hold on them, so he makes them forget the remembrance of Allah; they are

Satan's party. Beware! Verily, the party of Satan are the losers."²⁸

It is interesting that in three occurrences of the verses of the Qur'an '***The Party of Allah***' has been mentioned, and in three different occurrences '***The Party of Satan***' is referred to; so that what persons may enrol their names in this party or may be the members of that one.

But, however, it is natural that Satan invites his party to corruption, and sins, to pollutions of lusts, to polytheism, disobedience, cruelty, and, finally, to the Hell-Fire.

In the second verse, the Qur'an refers to the final fate of '***The Party of Allah***' and the painful end of 'the Party of Satan' as follows:

"Those who disbelieve, for them shall be a severe chastisement, and as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them shall be forgiveness and a great recompense."

It is interesting that, concerning those who deserve of Divine punishment, the above verse suffices to the subject of disbelief, while for gaining 'forgiveness and a great recompense' it does not suffice to, 'faith' alone and adds 'righteous deed' to it, because only infidelity by itself causes a person to dwell eternally in Divine punishment, but having faith without good action does not cause man to be saved, so, from one view, faith and good action are necessarily with each other.

At the end of this holy verse, the Qur'an at first mentions forgiveness, and then speaks of '***great recompense***', for, in fact, at first forgiveness washes the spirit of the believers and then makes them ready to receive '***a great recompense***'. In literary terminology, the first is called 'dissociation' and the second is 'ornamenting'.

-
1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 285
 2. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 26
 3. Surah Al-'Anbiya', No. 21, verse 27
 4. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verse 17
 5. Surah Nazi'at, No. 79, verse 5
 6. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 37
 7. ar, No. 82, verses 10-12 Sura Al-'Infit
 8. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 61
 9. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 77
 10. Surah zab, No. 33, verse 9 Al-'Ah
 11. Surah I, No. 16, verse 2 An-Nah
 12. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verses 30-34
 13. Surah Hud, No. 11, verses 69 and 77
 14. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 78
 15. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 126
 16. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 174
 17. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 175

18. Surah As-Saffat, No. 37, verse 164–166
19. Bihar, Vol. 59, P. 174
20. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 107
21. Tafsir-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, following the verse
22. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 50
23. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 17
24. Ibid, verse 27
25. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 1, P. 509
26. Al-Baqarah, verses 161, 203; Al-'An'am, verse 142; 'Al-A'raf, verse 22; Yusuf, verse 5; Yasin, verse, 60; and Az-Zukhruf, verse 62
27. Surah I, No. 16, verse 100An-Nah
28. Surah Al-Mujadalah, No. 58, verse 19

Source URL:

[https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-15/section-1-humanity-exhort ed-hold-satan-its-enemy](https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-15/section-1-humanity-exhort-ed-hold-satan-its-enemy)