

SHAITAN, IBLEES & JINN

EXPLANATION FROM LUGHAT-UL-QURAN

(Dictionary of the Quran)

Sh-T-e-N ش ط ن

“شَطَنٌ” (*shatan*) means strong, long rope.
“بئر شَطُونٌ” (*beirun shatun*): a deep well.
“شَاطِينٌ” (*shateen*) or “شَاطِئِنٌ” (*shaatin*): anything that is very far.

Ar-Rumani says “شَطَّ” (*shatt*), “شَطَنٌ” (*shatan*) and “بَعُدَ” (*ba'ad*) means to be distanced, and are of the same meaning {*Al-fazul Mutaradifa*}.

Ibn Faris too says it means to be distanced.

“شَطَنٌ” (*shatan*) means that he went too far.
“شَطَنَ صَاحِبَهُ” (*shatana sahibahu*): he opposed his companion, and intended to oppose him, to be rebellious {*T*}.

The word “شَيْطَانٌ” (*shaitaan*) has been derived from it, which will mean:

- to be far away or distance from Allah’s blessings, removed or deprived of life’s happiness.
- one who gives up the right path and adopts the wrong way by being rebellious.
- an ugly snake.

“رؤسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ” (*ru-oosush-shverseen*): a head snake (cobra) {*T*}.

Ibn Faris too says these are its basic meanings.

Some think that *shaitaan* has been derived from “شَاطِئِنٌ” (*shaat*) or “يَشِيئُ” (*yasheet*).

“شَيْطٌ” (*shait*) means to be incinerated, to be killed.
“شَاطِئُ الشَّيْءِ” (*shata-shaiyi*): the thing burned up.
“شَاطِئُ السَّمَنِ وَ الزَّيْتِ” (*shaatas samanuw zait*): the oil heated up so much that it almost caught fire.
“شَيْطَانٌ” (*shaitaan*) would hence mean fiery, rebellious, and producing negative results.

In the Hebrew language, *shaitaan* means one who obstructs.

The Quran says:

19:44	<i>shaitaan</i> is rebellious against Allah’s orders	إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا
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Surah *Al-Qasas* says that when *moosa* hit the *qubti* a punch in anger which killed him, he said:

28:15	This is a <i>shitaani</i> deed	هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ
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Thus it is obvious that anything done when overwhelmed by emotions (in this case anger) is attributed to *shaitanat* (devilishness), as in 12:5. The leaders of the people rebellious to Allah’s orders were also termed as “شَيَاطِينٌ” (*shayateen*):

2:14	when they go to their party leaders	وَأَذَا عَخَلُوا إِلَى شَيْطَانِهِمْ
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The wild and rebellious tribes which *Suleman* had subjugated and made to work for him are also called *shayateen* (38:37, 21:82). To mean snake, this word has been used in the tale about *Ayyub* (38:41). In the *Gharib-ul-Quran* by *Mirza Abul Fazal*, it has been mentioned with reference to *Qamoos*, that “شَيْطَانٌ” (*shaitaan*) also means the intensity of thirst.

In the tale about *Ayyub* it is said:

38:41	the snake to have touched (or the overwhelming of thirst)	أَتَى مَسْنَى الشَّيْطَانِ
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Also 8:11 says “رَجَزَ الشَّيْطَانِ” (*rijzas shaitaan*) where the meaning could be the weakness and trouble born out of thirst.

The Quran says:

37:65	whatever sprouts from it is like a snake’s head which is broad like a cobra’s	طَلَعَهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُؤُوسُ الشَّيْطَانِ
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Astrologers have also been called “شَيَاطِينُ” (*shiyateen*) in 67:5, 37:7.

Any force, according to the Quran that rebels against Allah’s laws, is “شَيَاطِينُ” (*shaitaan*), whether it is man’s own rebellious emotions or the leaders of nations which are opposed to Allah’s system. Rebelliousness and mutiny is their basic characteristic, and their job is to obstruct the establishment of the right systems.

“شَيْطَانُ” (*shaitaan*) and “طَاغُوتُ” (*taghoot*) are one and the same thing because “طَاغُوتُ” (*taghoot*) is anything that is non-godly (2:256, 4:76).

For more information about *shaitaan*, see heading (B-L-S) and (Ain-B-D).

B-L-S

ب ل س

Ibn Faris has said that the basic meaning of “أَبْلَسُ” (*ablas*) is of becoming disappointed and hopeless.

21:77	they will lose hope without cause	إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ
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It also means to be surprised or shocked. In ancient Semitic lexicon it meant “to kill by trampling, or trample” {*Ghareeb-ul-Quran*}.

Some believe that “أَبْلِسُ” (*Iblees*) has been derived from “أَبْلَسُ” (*ablas*) which means “permanently without hope about God’s benevolence”, but some other dictionary scholars say that it is not an Arabic word and has been Arabised {*T*}.

The Quran has presented *Iblees* as the embodiment of rebelliousness and mutiny:

2:34	He refused to obey orders, was rebellious and mutinous, became among the disobeyers.	أَتَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ
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This word has come against *malaika* who are obedient by nature:

38:73	All the <i>malaika</i> bowed to him	فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ
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Man is the only creature in the entire universe who has been given the freedom of choice, when it comes to obeying the laws of God or disobey them if he so chooses. No other creation has been given the right to disobey (go against God’s laws). Man disobeys God when his emotions get the better of him. These emotions rouse him towards personal benefit as against the universal good, and thus he lays God’s laws aside and follows such emotions. Hence his intellect tells him how to achieve those ends. The Quran has

called such emotions and such intellect, which leads him on to this end “أَبْلِيْسَ” (*Iblees*), and due to its rebelliousness said that it has been created out of fire (*naar*) 7:12.

And since these emotions are hidden from the naked eye, and work in the subconscious, they are called “كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ” (*kaana minal djinn*) in 18:50 (*djinn* means hidden). Since these emotions (due to which Man can disobey God’s laws) are born with him and stay with him as long as he lives, the Quran says that “أَبْلِيْسَ” (*Iblees*) and Man co-exist (see heading *Adam*). “أَبْلِيْسَ” (*Iblees*) has been given time along with Man till the very last moment.

15:36	He said “My Sustainer, give me time till they are reawaken”	رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ
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But if you look at the depth of the meaning of the word “بَعَثَ” (*ba’as*), then the meaning of “يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ” (*yوم ba’asoon*) becomes something else. “بَعَثَ” (*ba’as*) means “to remove obstacles from the way of someone’s freedom”, hence “to grant freedom”. So what *Iblees* was told is that his activity was to break loose the moral codes of the people. Hence as long as people do not break their moral codes and get towards a common freedom, its presence shall be required. When they shall be able to do so by themselves, then the services of *Iblees* shall no longer be required. *Iblees* needs this due, and hence it is granted. It is a fact that it takes some effort to break loose from moral principles at first. But when it finally happens, its comes very natural for man to simply go with the flow.

The person who mutinies against God’s laws is deprived of all the happiness which would have accrued to him by following His laws. Therefore “أَبْلِيْسَ” (*Iblees*) has been termed deprived and hopeless.

Those who live according to the laws of Allah:

2:38	they will have no fear nor sorrow	فَلَا يَحْزَنُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
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About them it is also said that they will not be overwhelmed by *Iblees* in any way (15:42). The Quran has described “أَبْلِيْسَ” (*Iblees*) and “شَيْطَانَ” (*Shaitan*) as two sides of the same coin when, for example, it refers to the tale of Adam. In this tale *Iblees* refuses to bow before Adam, commits mutiny, shows pride and challenges God to mislead the mankind. These are all actions of *Iblees*. But where *Adam*’s fault is mentioned, it has been linked to *Shaitaan* (the opposer).

The Quran has described “ابليس” (*Iblees*) and “شيطان” (*Shaitan*) as two sides of the same coin when, for example, it refers to the tale of Adam. In this tale *Iblees* refuses to bow before Adam, commits mutiny, shows pride and challenges God to mislead the mankind. These are all actions of *Iblees*. But where *Adam*’s fault is mentioned, it has been linked to *Shaitaan* (the opposer).

2:36	Then the <i>Shaitan</i> made them (both) slip	فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ
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Also see 7:11-20 and 20:116-120.

This makes it obvious that *Shaitan* is actually a particular sort of mentality (not a person or being) and the way it works or operates is called *shaitan*. For details on *Shaitan* see heading (*Sh-Te-N*). For details of all these terms, see my book "*Iblees O Adam*" which is one in my series to an introduction to the Quran i.e. *Muarif-ul-Quran*.

Iblees and *Shaitan* are those obstacles which hamper human intellect in its natural growth. If the human intellect overcomes these hurdles and thus proves itself to be solid and steadfast, the evolutionary system moves ahead, but if these hurdles prove insurmountable, then that intellect is confined to the lower (or animal) level of life. Life, in fact, is the name of this very struggle between Man and *Iblees*, and that is why the existence of *Iblees* along with Man is inevitable. The human personality cannot find stability without opposition and clashes, or in other words, its solidarity cannot be tested without these. For the continuous flow of water, a waterfall is most essential. What remains to be seen is whether the water becomes a stagnant pool due to this (fall) obstacle or keeps its flow despite the hurdle. To select such a path, in which the hurdles of sect, celibacy, etc. are not present, is to stultify your own flow. So, life is a continuous struggle between Man and *Iblees*.

And it is said that *Iblees* (hopelessness) and *Shaitan* (rebelliousness) are two sides of the same coin. Modern psychology supports the theory that hopelessness leads to rebelliousness or aggressiveness. When Man finds something not being according to his wishes, he gets frustrated. If he takes out the frustration

on himself, the result is worry or gloominess which might end in self-destruction. When the frustration is against the cause of frustration, it appears as vengeance, but if that is not plausible, then he takes out his anger or frustration against things which are not even related to the cause. This is the beginning of madness, thus this shows how closely hopelessness and rebelliousness, and in other words *Iblees* and *Shaitaan*, are related.

These are the psychological frames of the human mind. The Quranic laws create a society which has no room for hopelessness for its members.

39:53	don't lose hope in Allah's benevolence	لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ
7:156	and this benevolence encompasses everything necessary for the growth of life	وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

Thus in such a society hopelessness cannot overwhelm anyone. This is why the Quran says:

15:42	Surely you cannot overwhelm My mission takers.	إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ
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Also see headings (*Q-N-Te*), and (*Y-A-S*).

Jinn - (Jeem-Noon-Noon).

Janna means hidden. According to Raghib, it means not only hidden from the eyes but also from senses. In verse (6/77) the Quran says, "When the night spread darkness over him, he saw a star."

Jananun means grave, as it hides the dead body. Iblees is also a Jinn as this force remains hidden from the eyes (18/50).

Janeen is an embryo (foetus) in mother's womb. Junnatun is the shield or any weapon with which a person protects himself (58/16). Jinnatun means madness (23/25). The Arabs thought that Majnoon was a person who was afflicted by a Jinn. According to Raghīb "Al-Jinno" is used in two ways: for those hidden forces that are good in nature, including angels, and those which are evil, called "Shia'teen" (Taj / Raghīb). The Quran also mentions the Arabs doing worship of Jinn, where it means angels (37/158) (Taj / Raghīb).

The earth in the beginning was in the form of molten matter, and took billions of years to cool down to a tolerable temperature, suitable for the habitation of mankind. Prior to this, there existed a creation, which originated from steaming fire (15/27). It is now extinct and is therefore referred to as "Al-Jaann."

The Quran has referred to, and addressed "Jinn and Ins" together in many verses. Ins, (as explained under heading "Ins") means tribes which used to settle down at one place, and Jinn means those bedouins, nomadic tribes or gypsies who kept on wandering and remained in deserts or forests, away from cities. In Arabia such people were in great numbers. Since the message of the Quran was for both of them, it has pointedly addressed both of them. For instance:-

In verse (6/131), "Oh Ye, assembly of 'Jinn and Ins,' don't you know that a Rasool came to you from amongst you." There is no evidence in the Quran to show that at any time a Jinn was also a Rasool; on the contrary, it is further clarified in verse (7/35) that the Rusul were from Bani-Adam and were sent towards them. In Surah Jinn and Ahq'af, it is mentioned that a group of Jinn came to the Rasool to listen to the Quran (72/1, 46/29). This also shows that the group who came to Rasool-Allah (peace be upon him) were actually human beings, but from uncivilised tribes.

Surah Bani-Isr'ael mentions in a verse that even if all the Jinn and Ins get together, they cannot produce a Book like the Quran (17/88).

Verse (6/113) states that some rebellious ones from amongst the Jinn and Ins used to oppose the Anbia. Verse (7/179) further explains that majority of Jinn and Ins are those who do not use their intellect and do not contemplate and, therefore, belong to the category of those who would be in Jahannam. Verse (41/29) states that those in Jahannam would say that they were misled by some of the Jinn and Ins. In verse (6/129), it is stated that the Ins would say that they used to derive benefit from Jinn, and the Jinn would say that they also derived benefit from Ins. Verse (27/17) says that Solomon had an army consisting of Jinn and Ins. In (34/13) it is stated that he employed Jinn for the construction of synagogues, statues, basin like wells and boilers built into the ground. Some of them were used as divers to extract pearls from ocean-depths (21/82), and others were kept in chains (38/37-38). The above narration clearly explains that Jinn means nomadic tribes which keep on wandering and Ins were those who were social and remained settled.