



L3 TALKING TO THE DEAD – Islam and the Afterlife

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Lecture Content

- Angels
- Iblīs. 'Shayṭān'
- Day of Judgement
- Hell
- Paradise

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Angels



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Muhammad receiving his first revelation from the angel Gabriel. Miniature illustration on vellum from the book 'Jam' al-Tawarikh' (literally 'Compendium of Chronicles' but often referred to as 'The Universal History or History of the World'), by Rashid al-Din, published in Tabriz, Persia, 1307 CE. Now in the collection of the Edinburgh University Library, Scotland.

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Gabriel *Jibrīl*

FIRST REVELATION

c.610 – Muhammad retreats to a cave on Mount Hira, in the month of Ramadan [II 105];

"The apostle would pray in seclusion on Hira every year for a month to practice *tahannuth* as was the custom of Quraysh in heathen days. *Tahannuth* is religious devotion." [II 105]

According to bibliographical sources, Muhammad had a pre-disposition towards meditation, and often secluded himself away.

Muhammad has an encounter with Jibril,

It was during this visit that he heard these words – Revealed by God through the Angel Gabriel – that according to tradition formed the first Revealed portion of the Qur'an

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***"In the name of God, the Compassionate,
the Merciful,
Read in the name of your Lord, Who
created
He created man from a clot.
Read, by your Most Generous Lord,
Who taught by the Pen,
He taught man what he did not know."***

Surah al'Alaq 'the blood clot', 96:1-5; [F]

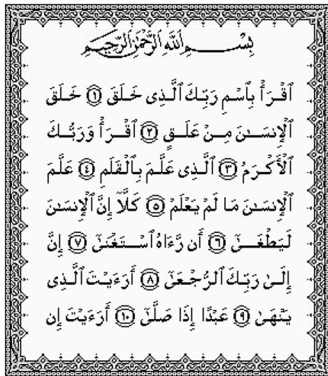
Recitation – al-Hafsa (Majma'at)

Recitation – Abul Rahman Ali Nadwi

Also Life of Muhammad – Yusuf Islam – 6/02/09

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Angels in Islam

Mulk – rule, reign, supreme authority, power

Malik – king, sovereign

Malak – angel

Malaki – angelic

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Nature of Revelation

“If We had sent unto thee a written (Message) on parchment, so that they could touch it with their hands, the Unbelievers would have been sure to say: ‘This is nothing but obvious magic!’”

“They say: ‘Why is not an angel sent down to him?’ If we did send down an angel, the matter would be settled at once, and no respite would be granted them.

“If We have made it an angel, We should have sent him as a man, and We should certainly have caused them confusion in a matter in which they have already covered with confusion.” [Q *An'am* – Cattle, 6: 8-9]

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“They say: ‘O thou to whom the Message is being revealed’! Truly thou art mad (or possessed)!”

“Why bringest thou not Angels to us if it be that thou has the Truth?”

“We send not the angels down except for just cause: if they came (to the ungodly), behold! No respite would they have!” [Q *al-Hijr*, The Rocky Tract, 15: 7-8]

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“He doth send down His angels with inspiration of His Command, to such of His servants as He pleaseth, (saying): ‘Warn (Humanity) that there is no god but I: so do your duty unto Me.’” [Q *Nahl* The Bee 16:2]

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“The Day the heaven shall be rent asunder with clouds, and angels shall be sent down descending (in ranks), -

“That Day, the dominion as of right and truth shall be (wholly) for (God) most Merciful: it will be a Day of dire difficulty for the Misbelievers.” [Q 25: 25-6 *al-Furqan* ‘The Criterion’]

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"To him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: and He is most High, Most Great.

"The heavens are almost rent asunder from above them (by His Glory): and the angels celebrate the Praises of their Lord, and pray for forgiveness for (all) beings on earth: Behold! Verily God is He, the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

[Q 42: 5 *Shura* - 'Consultation']

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"It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein

"Behold, two (guardian angels) appointed to learn (his doings) learn (and not them), one sitting on the right and one on the left.

"Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready (to note it),

"And the stupor of death will bring truth (before His eyes): 'This was the thing which thou was trying to escape!'

Cont/d

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"And the Trumpet shall be blown: "That will be the Day Whereof Warning (has been given)

"And there will come forth every soul: with each will be an (angel) to drive, and an (angel) to bear witness.

"(It will be said:) Thou was heedless of this; now have We removed by thy vile, and sharpest eyesight this Day!

"And his Companion will say: "Here is (his Record) ready for me!

"(The sentence will be:) "Throw, throw into every contumacious Rejecter (of God)!-" [Q *Qaf* 50: 16-24]

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"How many so-ever be the Angels in the heavens, their intercession will avail nothing except after God has given leave for whom he pleases that he is acceptable to him.

"Those who believe not in the Hereafter, name the angels with female names.

"But they have no knowledge therein. They follow nothing but conjecture; and conjecture of avails nothing against Truth." *Najm* 'Star' 53: 26-28

"The Angels and the Spirit send unto Him in a Day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years." *Ma'arij* Ways of Ascent 70:4

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By the (Angels) who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence;

By those who gently draw out (the souls of the Blessed);

And by those to glide along (on errands of Mercy),

Then press forward as in a race,

Then arrange to do (the Commands of their Lord)

Q *Nazi'at* – 'Those who tear out' 79 1:5

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But verily over years (are appointed angels) to protect you

Kind and honourable, writing down (your deeds):

They know (and understand) all that ye do.

As for the Righteous, they will be in Bliss;

And the Wicked - they will be in the Fire,

Which they will enter on the Day of Judgement

And they will not be able to keep away therefrom.

[Q *Infitar* The Cleaving Asunder, 82:10-12]

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Satan > Shayṭān

"Satan" is derived from the Hebrew word for "adversary," which has as a cognate Arabic shayṭān

"Satan" has several meanings in the Islamic traditions.

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Shayṭān

Shayṭān refers to a class of jinn with exceptional powers

Satans are also considered to be familiar spirits who accompany and inspire poets and other talented people.

Someone who is possessed by a jinn or a satan is thought to be psychologically deviant, but satans in such cases are not necessarily considered evil.

Satans are also said to bring diseases and cause mischief.

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Shayṭān

- They are said to be powerless during the fasting month of Ramaḍān except against those who improperly break the fast, and the recitation of the *basmalah* is said to drive them from any room.
- Prophylactic amulets worn to ward off satans are often fashioned in the shape of a hand with five fingers, five being a powerful magic number.
- Satans are said to be ugly, with hooves for feet, and to dwell in dark places and ruins.

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Iblīs

The chief of the satans is Iblīs, the rebel jinn who refused to bow down to Adam when all the angels were commanded to do so by God (Qur'ān, 15:30-34, 17:61), for which he was cast out of heaven and said to be cursed (*rajīm*).

His real punishment is delayed until the day of judgment.

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Who is Iblīs?

Iblīs is not the ruler of hell—that job is reserved for an angel named Malik—but he will be thrown into hell along with all his host and the rest of the damned on the day of judgment (26:94-95).

an angel? a jinn?

According to some sources a jinn who is not a Muslim is a satan; if very large and powerful, it is considered to be an 'ifrīt.

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What does Iblīs represent?

The satan Iblīs represents the power of evil and is an enemy of God and humanity.

Iblīs's disobedience comes from pride: his belief that he was superior to Adam and the other angels.

Theologians point out that Iblīs has no real power over humans that they do not themselves grant by being deceived by his trickery.

He is always whispering in the ears of humans, but they can resist the temptation.

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Iblis in popular tradition

In popular tradition, he is also the one who instills the propensity to sin into humans at birth

Some sources say that Jesus was preserved from sin by his mother's ability to ward off Satan.

There is also a popular belief that every human is accompanied by both an angel and a satan offering contradictory inspirations.

Did Muhammad have a satan, to whom he taught portions of Qur'an?

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Satan and hajj

Muslims on pilgrimage are reminded of the existence of Satan through the ritual act of stoning Satan in the form of a stone column

This act that ritually repels the evil in the world and recalls Abraham's stoning of Satan at Mina.

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Stoning Satan at Mina



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Stoning Satan at Mina



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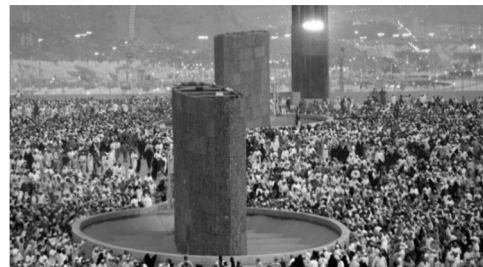
Stoning Satan at Mina



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Stoning Satan at Mina



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Sufism: Satan as serpent

Satan has also been identified with the lower appetites of humans, the so-called *nafs*, and as such has been identified with the serpent.

Mystics who have attained spiritual mastery over the *nafs* can convert the base appetite into something useful, just as Moses's rod was transformed into a snake and back again.

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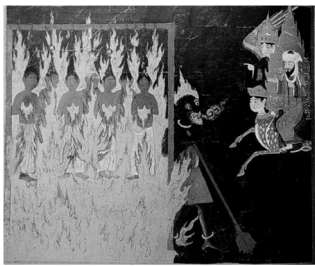
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Distinguish between this world (*al-dunyā*) and the next (*al-ākhirah*)

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Hell (*jahannam*)



Persian, 15th century: prophet Muhammad, with Buraq and Gabriel.

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Hell (*jahannam*)

References to hell, in one form or another, are ubiquitous in the Qur'ān, as part of its general eschatological message. Hell has several names.

Hell is linked with fire and heat in its various forms, and is firmly part of the Prophet's message as the eventual residence of those who are wicked and who disregard God's instructions. There are various levels of hell.

Whereas paradise (*jannah*) is a garden replete with lush vegetation, hell is the place of pain and discomfort, and the suggestion is made that the punishment will continue forever.

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The fire, sometimes referred to as Jahannam (the Arabic cognate of the Hebrew word which is the source of English "gehenna"), is often interpreted as having seven gates, leading to the understanding common to several religious traditions that hell has seven levels.

By putting together scattered Qur'ānic passages, one can determine that these gates are intended for different categories of sinners, although there is no consistent picture provided.

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In the sociocultural context of Arabia where the Prophet Muḥammad received his Revelations, belief in an afterlife (including Iblis) was virtually nonexistent.

The preaching of the Prophet concerning the day of resurrection and the accountability of every individual at the time of judgement was met with scorn and rejection, as attested in the Qur'ān itself.

Integral to the message of the Qur'ān, however, and providing the content of the earliest revelations, is the affirmation that God will indeed raise the dead on the day of judgment and that resurrected bodies and souls will be joined for the definitive and inevitable time of assessment and recompense.

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Afterlife refers both to the ultimate dissolution of this world and to the process of final determination in which all individuals of all ages will share.

Barzakh (literally, interval or partition), mentioned in the Qur'ān only fleetingly, came to be understood in popular imagination as both the period of time between a person's death and resurrection and the barrier blocking forever the deceased's return to the realm of the living.

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According to the detailed descriptions of popular belief, the judgement to be experienced at the end of time is also indicated by

- the mode of death itself,
- the ability or inability of the dead person in the grave to answer correctly the questions posed by the fearsome angels Munkar and Nakīr ("the denied" and "the denier") immediately after death,
- the degree of comfort or discomfort he or she experiences while awaiting the resurrection.

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- The Qur'an depicts the dread day when resurrected bodies are joined with their souls and brought for judgment before the throne of God that the Qur'ān becomes most eloquent.
- signs of the hour and the events that herald the end of time and of the world,
- the terrifying moment when the trumpet is blown,
- the resurrection itself,

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- the ingathering of all persons for judgment,
- the reckoning (*ḥisāb*),
- the crossing of the *Ṣirāt* bridge,
- the possibility of intercession (*shafā'ah*), and the preparation for final consignment to the fires of hell (*al-nār*) or the gardens of bliss (*al-jannat*).

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Qur'an surah 9:19–31 discusses the accounting of one's book of deeds.

The person who is given his or her book in the right hand is destined for a blissful condition.

But woe to the one to whom it is given in the left hand, for that person will be seized and bound and exposed to the burning of the fire

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According to the Qur'ān, the tortures of the fire are fearful—it has crackling and roaring flames, fierce boiling waters, scorching wind, and black smoke.

The inhabitants sigh and wail, wretched in their torment, their scorched skins exchanged for new ones so that they can experience the pain again and again; they drink foul liquids in the hopeless effort to assuage their thirst; boiling water is poured over their heads, melting their insides; iron hooks drag them back if they try to escape.

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Gardens of Paradise

The faithful there are peaceful and content, enjoying gentle speech, pleasant shade under dark green foliage, fruits, cool drink, and meat as they desire.

They are treated to delicious wine from a shining stream from which they will suffer no ill effects.

They recline on couches, adorned in armlets of gold and pearls and wearing green and gold robes of embroidered silk, waited on by menservants.

Male inhabitants of the garden are said to benefit from the ministrations of the houris, young virgins said to have eyes like precious pearls ...

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Hell has seven gates (15:44), and the Qur'ān details the horrors sinners will experience there:

- having their skin burned (4:56)
- being stuck on iron hooks (22:21)
- drinking boiling water (18:29)
- drinking pus (44:16).

The absence of death is something that makes the punishment even worse since it is continual and unceasing, and there is no hope of escape.

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The Qur'ān (11:107) refers to people staying in hell forever, unless God changes His attitude to them; thus implying a certain possibility of retrieval.

Hell has ranks of punishment appropriate for various sinners, and is clearly modeled on heaven with its different levels.

Heaven seems to be above hell, since the inhabitants of the latter call on those in heaven to pour water down on them, something that God has apparently forbidden (7:50).

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The inhabitants of hell include:

- Unbelievers
- Polytheists
- Idolaters
- some *jinn*
- the Devil

A long list of crimes condemns one to hell, including even what some may consider quite minor actions like slander or cowardice in battle.

It could not be argued that those punished were not aware of what lay before them since the Qur'ān explains these points in detail.

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The prospect of hell is constantly mentioned and people are warned of the inevitable consequences of their behaviour.

For those actually in hell the prospect of their constant punishment is itself a punishment, as is their sense that they have been abandoned by God.

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Jannah. جنة

- "garden" (Ar.)
- Paradise = firdaws - reward for the faithful
- Details: in Qur'an and Hadith
- Location: under Allah's throne (not the same garden as the one from the creation story)
- Part of the process of reward and punishment outlined in the Qur'an
- Links to other religious concepts associated with Afterlife

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jannah

- Populated by immortals in heavenly mansions
- Youths and maidens attend
- Eight gates to paradise
- Eight 'levels', including: dar al-salam (House of peace), jannat al-khuld (Garden of eternity); annat al-Ma'wā - Garden of Abode; jannat al-Na'īm - The Gardens of Delight and jannat Aden (Garden of Eden); jannat al-'adn - Gardens of Everlasting Bliss; Dār al-Ākhirah - The Home in the Hereafter; Dār al-maqāmah - The Home
- Represented in art and architecture

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- Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (In His Cause) and remained steadfast? 3:142
- Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans—those who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness—will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve

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Sources

The following translation of the meaning of the Qur'ān is used in the lectures (in conjunction with other sources):

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