

Lessons from the Jinn

The following is a summary of a speech delivered on Friday 18 May 2012 at Central Masjid Rochdale (this is not a transcription)

When the word Jinn or Jinnat is uttered or spoken about, immediately we think of a sinister, scary and spooky concept, or we are reminded of “Aladdin’s lamp”. However, when we study the Quranic text regarding jinn, then we find that discussion relating to their makeup or nature is minimal. Where the Quran discusses Jinn, such as in Surahatul Jinn (chapter 72) as well as some part of Surahatul Ahqaf (chapter 46) then instead of delving into the sinister or enigmatically unknown life of the jinn, we are prompted to learn a few lessons from the jinn, which are worthy of emulating.

The first lesson: Gratitude.

Our Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) once recited Surah Ar-Rahman (chapter 55) to his companions. In this chapter Allah Ta’alaa enumerates His favours and bounties upon man and jinn and at the mention of almost every bounty Allah Ta’alaa repeats the question, “So which of the favours of Your Master would you deny?” Upon completing the Surah Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) observed that the companions remained silent, so he said to them that “I recited this surah to the jinn and I found them to respond in a much more profound manner. Whenever they came across the verse “So which of the favours of Your Master would you deny?” They responded by saying “O our Master there is not a single favour of Yours that we deny. All praise and thanks are for You.” We learn from this that the jinn verbally thanked and showed gratitude in a very profound way. Verbally declaring gratitude to Allah Ta’alaa can be accomplished by acknowledging that the favours we enjoy are from Him and Him alone. Our Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) taught us a dua, that if one reads in the morning and evening, then one has shown gratitude to Allah for His favours bestowed upon him for that day and night. The dua is as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ مَا أَصْبَحَ / مَا أَمْسَى بِي مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ أَوْ بِأَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ فَمِنْكَ
وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ فَلكَ الْحَمْدُ وَ لَكَ الشُّكْرُ

O Allah whatever bounty I have enjoyed this morning/this evening it is from You and only You. You have no partner, thus all praises are due to You and You are worthy of all appreciation.

The second lesson we learn from the jinn is to be attentive and silent when Quran is recited.

Allah praises the jinn by mentioning their conduct when Quran was recited to them (see chapter 46, verse 29.) The etiquette of remaining silent and listening attentively extends to all discourses of deen. In fact there is particular mention of remaining silent during the khutbah of Jummah which contains verses of the Quran and hadith, so much so, that Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) said that if someone says as much as “sah” (which means be quiet) to another person he has also breached the etiquettes of the khutbah.

The third lesson that could be learnt from the jinn is not to exploit the disadvantaged and vulnerable.

“And verily there were men among mankind who sought the protection of men from the jinn, but instead the jinn extended (upon mankind) their domination” (chapter 72, verse 6)

Prior to the advent of Islam, whenever a traveller had set up camp in a desolate area or in the wilderness it was customary for them to read an incantation, which meant “I seek the protection of

the dominant spirit who rules this territory from all other evil spirits.” In this way the traveller would be safeguarded from any mischief or interference from the jinn. However when the jinn observed that this human being who is supposedly “Primary” is seeking our help, they began exploiting their (human being) fears and occasionally the chief spirit would demand a “protection fee”.

Upon the advent of Islam, Muslim travellers instead began seeking the protection of Allah Ta’alaa and in this way they were safeguarded from any interference. The jinn observed this and the noble among them realised their wrong and acknowledged their oppression in the aforementioned verse.

Islam abhors all forms of oppression, but totally condemns oppression against the disadvantaged and vulnerable. It regards it as one of the worst of crimes. It is unfortunate that presently this form of oppression is prevalent in all sectors of society. Therefore we find:

- Employers exploiting employees
- Husbands taking advantage of their spouses, particularly when the latter do not have any support structure
- Wives making unreasonable demands from their husbands, particularly if the husbands “citizenship” is dependent upon the marriage
- Exploitation of children especially from childcare and foster homes, as well as the weak and vulnerable has been on the rise.

During the period of ignorance (*jahiliyaah*) our Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) participated in a pact which stood for upholding and restoring the rights of the weak, the orphans, widows and the destitute. Many years later when Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) was asked regarding this pact He replied, “By Allah, if a similar covenant were needed today then participating in it would be more beloved to me than red she-camels” (Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah). Our Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) is also reported to have said that if a non-muslim, *dhimmi* (one who lives under Muslim rule) has to be mistreated by anyone (even though the aggressor is a Muslim) then on the day of judgement I will advocate the cause of the *dhimmi*. (Jaami-us-sagheer of Suyuti) The above narration clearly indicates that even a non-Muslim cannot be exploited.

Islam promotes the idea that one should be a well-wisher and protector of those who are subjected to circumstances. Jarir bin Abdullah (RadhiyAllahu anhu) who accepted Islam a short while before the demise of our Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) once sent his attendant to purchase a horse for him. The attendant purchased the horse for 300 dirhams. Jarir (RadhiyAllahu anhu) inspected the horse and told the seller that the horse is worth more than 300 dirhams and thus offered him 400 dirhams, which the seller happily agreed to. However, Jarir (RadhiyAllahu anhu) inspected the horse again and remarked that it is worth more than 400 dirhams. He then offered him 500 dirhams, which the seller was more than happy to accept, but Jarir (RadhiyAllahu anhu) was still not at ease at giving the person less than what the horse was worth and went on increasing the offer until he paid the person 800 dirhams. His attendant was surprised and asked him the reason for paying more than the initial amount that was agreed upon. Jarir (RadhiyAllahu anhu) replied “I had taken a pledge on the hands of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasalam) that I would always be a well-wisher for every Muslim” (Muslim)

May Allah Ta’alaa bless us with this great quality and protect us from taking advantage of any of His creation.