

Criticism of symbolic and interpretive readings of Satan from the perspective of the Holy Quran

Aziz Alizadeh Salteh

Assistant Professor, Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Khoy Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khoy, Iran (Corresponding Author); Email: alizadehsalteh@iau.ac.ir

Parivash Alizadeh

PhD student in Nahjul-Balagha Sciences and Education, South Tehran Branch, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran; Email: palizadehptf@gmail.com

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Introduction

The Holy Quran, as the last divine book, contains divine teachings and instructions for the happiness of humans. In it, the main obstacle to guidance, namely Satan, is mentioned in various verses, and in several surahs, the story of the angels' prostration to Adam, his rebellion and disobedience to God's command, Satan's temptation of Adam, and ultimately his departure from God's court, etc. is presented in detail. From the perspective of the Quran, the existence of Satan and his offspring is certain and indisputable, and the desires of the soul and carnal desires also provide the basis for Satan's influence and dominate man. However, some, as can be seen from the appearance of their words, try to interpret the language of the Quran about Satan and Adam in a way in terms of carnal powers and ignore his special role in misguidance and temptation; although some of them also clarify the origin of Satan's existence and the events of the beginning of man's creation. The question now is whether we can actually interpret the language of the Quran in this and similar cases, or whether we should consider it unrealistic and untrue? In that case, how can the guiding role of the Quran and the truth of divine words be justified? Symbolic and allegorical readings of Satan have shaped part of the history of Islamic and mystical thought and, at some levels, have had moral and educational functions. The main issue of this research is not the absolute negation of these readings, but rather the question of whether they can be accepted as the final interpretation of the language of the Quran or should they be limited to a secondary and interpretive level. Therefore, the present article attempts to reveal both the capacities and limitations of symbolism while maintaining analytical neutrality.

Research Method

The method of this research is descriptive-analytical and is based on a combination of Quranic text-based analysis, conceptual study in the philosophy of religion, and religious language analysis. The criteria for criticizing the views include: 1) compatibility with the appearance and context of the verses of the Quran, 2) internal coherence of the theory, 3) its epistemological consequences regarding the realism of the language of revelation, and 4) the educational and guiding function of the

interpretation presented. Accordingly, no view is rejected or accepted simply because of its affiliation with a particular tradition, but rather each reading is evaluated based on these criteria.

Research findings

1. Denial of the complete symbolism of the Quranic language regarding Satan: The Quranic language regarding Satan, due to its guiding nature and the expression of unseen truths, is not merely symbolic, and the notion that Satan is merely a force of fear or the ego is incompatible with the expressive structure of the Quran.

2. The existential reality of Satan: Satan is a real and independent being, a jinn, and is not an abstract concept.

3. The limitation of Satan's power: Satan's mechanism of influence on humans is solely through "temptation" and "invitation," and he lacks the power to force humans to sin.

4. The condition of influence: Satan's influence is only realized in people who, by following their own desires, are receptive to his temptation.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that although symbolic and allegorical interpretations of Satan have been prevalent among some intellectual and mystical currents throughout the history of Islamic thought, the epistemological foundations and Quranic texts do not absolutely support such a reading. The language of the Quran in this context is a guiding and realistic language, and its reports about Satan are not merely mythical or allegorical, but refer to a real and independent being from the jinn. At the same time, the Holy Quran, by utilizing symbolic and allegorical elements in some positions, has also provided the possibility of receiving deeper layers of meaning; however, these layers do not negate the external existence of Satan, but rather act to strengthen the educational and moral function of the verses. Therefore, it can be concluded that Satan in the Quran is both an objective truth and a warning symbol to show the role of sensual desires in the process of human misguidance. Such an approach, while preserving the realism of the Quranic language, also enables its connection with the lived experience of humans, thereby ensuring the guiding mission of the sacred text.

Keywords: Satan, Quran, symbolic language, Iblis, temptation, Sufism, interpretation.