



In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

## Angels in Islam

**Among the most important matters of the belief (Iman) is to believe in the Angels, although we don't usually see them, that angels exist and they are one of the kinds of creations Allah created.**

The concept of angels in Islam is probably very different from anything you've ever heard before. Western society has idealized angels to the point most people think they're naked babies with arrows and blonde locks. This concept is actually derived from pagan Greek and Roman beliefs in the false deity Cupid. But angels in Islam hold a very high and sacred place.

Popular mythology suggests that there are angels who have disobeyed and rebelled against Allah (God). To Muslims, this idea is foolishness. Angels in Islam do not have the ability to choose as humans do. In Islam, angels were not created with a will and therefore do not disobey Allah. They do whatever Allah tells them to do.

Nobody knows the number of angels and when the angels were created, but they were around a long time before mankind and jinn. We know this from the Qur'an when Allah (swt) states:

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood, whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not."

**[Qur'an 2:30]**

***How many angels there are? Only Allah (swt) knows.***

The Much-Frequented House is a sacred heavenly sanctuary above the Kaaba, the black cube in the city of Mecca.

...Al-Bait-al-Ma'mur (i.e. Allah's House), every day seventy thousand (70,000) angels visit and perform prayers daily and then leave, never returning to it again, followed by another group...

**[Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 4, Hadith Number 429, translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan]**

## How do the Angels Look?

Angels in Islam have a very unique appearance. Even though there are very few humans who have seen angels in their original form, we know of several facts about angels from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

- The angels are made of light, whereas the Jinn are made from smokeless fire, and mankind is from earthen clay.
- The angels are very large.
- They have wings, sometimes in pairs of two, three or four.
- They are extremely beautiful. With the exception of the Angel of Death.
- They are neither male nor female.
- They do not sin.
- They can take on the form of humans.
- The angels do not eat. We know this from their visit to Prophet Ibrahim(as) as mentioned in the Qur'an.

**The Angels also have names. However, we only have the names of a few.**

- **Jibril** (Gabriel): This is the highest of all the angels. One of Jibril's primary responsibilities was transferring the Words of Allah to the Prophets of Allah. Jibril is also known as the Holy Spirit in Islam, as he carried the inspiration to Prophet Mohammed and several other Prophets of Allah (may Allah be pleased with them all).
- **Mika'il** (Michael): Responsible for directing the rain and winds according to the will of Allah.
- **Kiraaman and Kaatibeen**: The angels who write down the deeds of the person. Each person has two of these angels with them, one who writes the *good deeds*, and the other who writes the *bad deeds*.
- **The Angel of Death - Azraeel (Malak al-Mawt)**: Takes away life with the order of Allah. He is in charge of death. Numerous Angels work under him. Some take away the lives of good persons whilst others looking very fearful take away the lives of sinners and disbelievers.
- **Israfil**: Responsible for blowing the trumpet that will signal the end of creation.

- **Ridwan:** The primary guardian of Paradise
- **Malik:** The primary guardian of Hell.
- **Munkar and Nakeer:** Questions the person upon their death in grave as to their belief and what they knew of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). These two angels also punish those in the grave who did not believe, or were hypocrites, while alive.
- **Harut and Marut:** Two angels who came to earth (Babylon, in Iraq) and taught men some of the dark arts, such as ruining a marriage, as a test (it was to enable the people to differentiate between sorcery and the true miracle).

**“They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) against the power of Solomon; the blasphemers were not Solomon but the evil ones, teaching men magic and such things as came down at Babel to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: “We are only for trial; so do not blaspheme.”... [Qur'an 2:102]**

### Duties of Angels.

Here are some of the duties of many angels.

- To praise, glorify, and pray to Allah.
- Deliver the message of Allah.
- Deliver the punishment of Allah.
- Protecting mankind according to the will of Allah.
- Recording the deeds and statements of humans throughout their life.
- Sending blessings upon humans who are praising Allah and behaving righteously.

Unlike other faiths, Islam gives us clear information about the angels. Hence, we do not have to create myths and legends about them. We simply have to learn the information given to us about angels in Islam in the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ (Peace be upon him).

Here are several quotations from the Qur'an describing the angels and their duties in Islam. Please note; this is not an exhaustive list. There are dozens of verses in the Qur'an relating to the role of the angels in Islam.

### The Prophet and his followers believe in the Angels.

The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles... **[Qur'an 2:285]**

### **Angels Watch over Us.**

But verily, over you (are appointed angels) to protect you. Kind and honourable writing down (your deeds): They know (and understand) all that ye do. **[Qur'an 82:10-12]**

### **They do not eat or drink. The Angels do not get bored or tired of worshipping Allah (swt).**

They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever flag or intermit. **[Qur'an 21:20]**

### **The Angels will greet the inhabitants of Heaven.**

Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring: and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation): "Peace unto you for that ye persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final (heavenly) home!" **[Qur'an 13:23-24]**

### **The Angels carry the Throne of Allah (swt).**

And the angels will be on its sides, and eight will, that Day, bear the Throne of thy Lord above them. **[Qur'an 69:17]**

### **The Angels are not female.**

And they make into females angels who themselves serve Allah. Did they witness their creation? Their evidence will be recorded, and they will be called to account! **[Qur'an 43:19]**

### **The Angels have wings.**

Praise be to Allah, who created (out of nothing) the Heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings, two, or three, or four (Pairs)... **[Qur'an 35:1]**

Angel Jibril (as) have up to six hundred (600) wings. Each of them filling the horizon. Allah (swt) says about him:

" He was taught by one mighty in power." **[Qur'an 53:5]**

### **The Armies of Allah (swt).**

...To Allah belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth... **[Qur'an 48:4]**

Remember thou saidst to the Faithful: "Is it not enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels (specially) sent down?" **[Qur'an 3:124]**

### **The guardians of the hell-fire are Angels.**

Over it are Nineteen. And We have set none but angels as Guardians of the Fire; and We have fixed their number only as a trial for Unbelievers- in order that the People of the Book may arrive at certainty, and the Believers may increase in Faith, And that no doubts may be left for the People of the Book and the Believers, and that those in whose hearts is a disease and the Unbelievers may say, "What symbol doth Allah intend by this?" Thus doth Allah leave to stray whom He pleaseth, and guide whom He pleaseth:

None can know the forces of thy Lord, except He and this is no other than a warning to mankind. **[Qur'an 74:30-31]**

### **The souls of humans will be collected by the Angel of Death - Azraeel alayhi salaam (Malak al-Mawt).**

Say: "The Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls: then shall ye be brought back to your Lord." **[Qur'an 32:11]**

### **It is Angel Israfil who will blow the trumpet (soor) on the Last Day.**

The first trump will cause the death of every living creature in the heavens and the earth and the destruction of all created things:

Then, when one blast is sounded on the trumpet, and the earth is moved, and its mountains, and they are crushed to powder at one stroke. On that Day shall the (Great) Event come to pass, and the sky will be rent asunder, for it will that Day be flimsy, and the angels will be on its sides, and eight will, that Day, bear the Throne of thy Lord above them. **[Qur'an 69:13-17]**

...Then will a second one be sounded, when, behold, They will be standing and looking on! **[Qur'an 39:68]**

### **And on the Day of Resurrection, the angels will be sent down to the earth in hosts:**

The Day when the heaven shall be rent asunder with clouds, and the angels shall be sent down,

descending (in ranks). **[Qur'an 25:25]**

### **They ask forgiveness for those on earth:**

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 beings on earth: Behold! Verily Allah is He, the Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. **[Qur'an 42:5]**

### **Allah (swt) endowed the Angels with Great Strength.**

Among the examples of his strength is how Angel Jibril (as) destroyed the cities of the people of Prophet Lut (as). With just the edge of one of his 600 hundred wings, Angel Jibril (as) pulled out of the ground the cities of Prophet Lut's people, and raised them near to the first sky, until the angels inhabiting that sky could hear the barking of the dogs and the crowing of the roosters. Then he turned those cities upside down and sent them down to the earth. Allah ordered Angel Jibril (as) to destroy those cities of the people of Prophet Lut (as) to punish them because they belied Prophet Lut (as) and harmed him.

Among all the angels, Angel Jibril (as) is the one with the most merit and highest status. He is the Messenger of Allah to the messengers of Allah, meaning mostly it was Jibril (as) who would bring the Revelation to the prophets. Angel Jibril would come to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and convey the Revelation to him, and the Prophet would hear his words and memorize them immediately. Angel Jibril (as) used to come to the Prophet not in his own shape--usually he would take the shape of a man. However, when Angel Jibril brought the Revelation of prophethood to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Cave Hira', he retained his original shape. When Prophet Muhammad saw Jibril (as) this first time in his original shape, he fainted. He fainted, not out of fear of what he was seeing, (because Jibril did not at all resemble what one usually sees, i.e, humans, animals, the sun, the moon, etc.) and not out of fear that Jibril (as) would harm him. Rather, he felt that he was seeing a very strange and a very great thing, and was so affected by the aura of what he was seeing that he fainted. During the night of al-Mi'raj, the Prophet once again saw Angel Jibril in his original shape. However, this time the Prophet did not faint at the sight of Jibril (as) , because before that the angels had washed his heart to make it stronger and ready to see the wondrous things in the upper world during the ascension. Allah (swt) gave Prophet Muhammad ﷺ a great strength, enabling him to bear many unfamiliar sights and unusual matters that night.

**Another** proof of this is that when Allah (swt) sends forth an angel, he gives just one shout and a part of creation is destroyed, as it happened to the people of Thamood:

For We sent against them a single Mighty Blast, and they became like the dry stubble used by one who pens cattle. **[Qur'an 54:31]**

**Some of the Angels are Very Big.** It was narrated that the Prophet told us about one of the angels who carries the Arsh. He said that the distance between that angel's ear lobe and his shoulder is equivalent to a seven hundred (700) year journey. **[Abu Dawud]**

There are guardian angels responsible for protecting the believer throughout his life, at home or traveling, asleep or awake.

There are also angels responsible for breathing the soul into the fetus and writing down its provisions, life-span, actions, and whether it will be wretched or happy.

Some angels are roamers, traveling around the world in search of gatherings where Allah (swt) is remembered.

#### **Hadith Qudsi:**

Allah (glorified and exalted be He) has supernumerary angels who rove about seeking out gatherings in which Allah's name is being invoked: they sit with them and fold their wings round each other, fillin that which is between them and between the lowest heaven. When [the people in the gathering] depart, [the angels] ascend and rise up to heaven. He (Prophet p.b.u.h) said: Then Allah (mighty and sublime be He) asks them - [though] He is most knowing about them: From where have you come? And they say: We have come from some servants of Yours on Earth: they were glorifying You (Subhana llah), exalting you (Allahu akbar), witnessing that there is no god but You (La ilaha illa llah), praising You (Al-Hamdu lillah), and asking [favours] of You. He says: And what do they ask of Me? They say: They ask of You Your Paradise. He says: And have they seen My Paradise? They say: No, O Lord. He says: And how would it be were they to have seen My Paradise! They say: And they ask protection of You. He says: From what do they ask protection of Me? They say: From Your Hell-fire, O Lord. He says: And have they seen My Hell-fire? They say: NO. He says: And how would it be were they to have seen My Hell-fire: They say: And they ask for Your forgiveness. He (Prophet p.b.u.h) said: Then He says: I have forgiven them and I have bestowed upon them what they have asked for, and I have granted them sanctuary from

that from which they asked protection. He (Prophet p.b.u.h) said: They say: O Lord, among them is So-and-so, a much sinning servant, who was merely passing by and sat down with them. He (Prophet p.b.u.h) said: And He says: And to him [too] I have given forgiveness: he who sits with such people shall not suffer.

There are also angels constituting Allah heavenly army, standing in rows, they never get tired or sit down, and others who bow or prostrate, and never raise their heads, always worshipping Allah (swt).

### **The Case of the Fallen Angel**

There is another very much misunderstood episode concerning Satan (Shaytan). It is said, and it is believed, that prior to his fall he belonged to the category of angels. The Glorious Qur'an rejects this view and presents Satan as possessing a fiery nature, thus belonging to such forms of life as are created from fire, for example the Jinn.

As we learn from above, the Angels are truly wondrous creations of Allah. He is in no need of these creatures, but having knowledge and if one thinks about this creation of Allah, it will strengthen, with assurity, his belief in the One Who created the angels -- the One Who Created Everything -- Allah (swt).

**May Allah the Almighty forgive us for our shortcomings and guide us to that which He loves and is pleased with. Whatever written of Truth and benefit is only due to Allah's Assistance and Guidance, and whatever of error is of me alone. Allah Alone Knows Best and He is the Only Source of Strength.**

The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an, 11th edition 1429 AH / 2008 C.E with Revised English Translation, Commentary and Index by 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali.

Last updated 24th November 2013