Dialogue Between Allah and Iblīs in The Qur‘ān: Structure and Characteristics

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ABSTRACT:

This article discusses the themes and questions which are necessary to be evaluated in the dialogue occurred between Allah and Iblīs. It examines the structure and the features of this dialogue with paying attention to composition and form, essential principles and fundamental characteristics of this dialogue. It then raises some questions regarding the reaction of Allah to the disobedience of Iblīs such as: why did this dialogue happen? What is special in this dialogue? Is this dialogue some kind of polemic discussion? Through this explanation the author resulted to some important issues: the reaction of Allah to Iblīs’s disobedience takes place as Almighty’s generosity. A variety of characteristics with its own specific form makes this dialogue remarkably informative and profound which resulted to some crucial events such as: expulsion of Iblīs, giving long respite to him, and assigning him as a vigorous enemy for men. Another significant output is that the history, vicissitude, personality and destiny of Iblīs have been artily exposed in this dialogue. Due to profound teachings of this dialogue, implementing a comprehensive study on all dialogues in the Qur‘ān as an independent course is necessary. This article examines these issues using the method of analysis.

Key Words: Allah, Iblīs, Dialogue

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INTRODUCTION

The Qurʾān-as the main source of understanding Islam and one of the fundamental components that shaped Islamic civilization- reveals remarkably different models of dialogue. In the Qurʾān we find various kinds of conversations between different people. Most of the time we find verses narrating the interactions between the Prophets and others by way of dialogue, such as when a specific Prophet invites people to truth. Also, some commands in the Qurʾān have been expressed in the form of dialogue. For example, the early Muslims asked Prophet Mohammad about the decree concerning drinking wine and gambling. Prophet Mohammad’s answer was a kind of command that they should be aware about the decree of these two things. This question and answer indicates another aspect of dialogue in the Qurʾān.

Dialogue in the Qurʾān, however, is not only between people. One of the important categories of dialogue in the Qurʾān is between Allah and others. Dialogue between Allah and Moses or between the former and Ibrāhīm are exemplars of this category of dialogue. Other than these, there is a very specific dialogue between Allah and Iblīs in the Qurʾān. This conversation belongs to the early period of creation where the angels were present at that stage. When Allah commands them to bow to Adam, they do so without hesitation; but among them, Iblīs, who was a jinn, did not bow and disobeyed Allah. Thereby, dialogue takes place between Allah and Iblīs and finally Allah curses the latter and expels him from the Stage.

This article discusses the themes and questions which are necessary to be evaluated before going in-depth into the dialogue. In order to do this, the article examines the form and composition of this dialogue in different parts of the Qurʾān. It provides some essential principles of the dialogue. Then, it raises the question whether it is a dialogue or jadal (debate). Additionally, by categorizing this dialogue in the Qurʾān, the articles brings to the features therein. Also, this article points out some questions regarding the reaction of Allah to the disobedience of Iblīs and discusses it in detail.

THE DIALOGUES AND ITS COMPOSITION

In order to have a clear understanding of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs in the Qurʾān, it is indispensable to highlight all the dialogues in this regard. This dialogue, whether in whole or part, has been repeated four times throughout the entire Book.¹

The verses in chapter’s al-Aʿrāf, al-Hijr and Ṣād each include different pieces of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs as a whole. However, they are regarded as complete dialogues. It should be emphasized that, although the whole pieces of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs are being correspondingly repeated in these three chapters, different words have been used. In other words, sometimes there are some words in certain parts of one dialogue which are not replicated in the others. This style is very common in the Qurʾān concerning various issues in order to give a profound and spacious understanding through the use of different words in different portions of the Book.

The dialogue in chapter al-Istı́rāʾ is not a complete dialogue. It is somehow different from the others. This is because some pieces of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs mentioned in the former ones are not indicated in the later ones. The words, or the parts of speech also, are being somewhat quoted differently from the previous dialogues. In addition, a portion of verse 64 in this chapter which says, wa mā yaʿiduhum al-Shayṭān illā ghurūrā (and whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude the mind) would not be regarded as a piece of the dialogue. In this portion of the verse, Allah is not directly addressing Iblīs; rather He is talking about the character of Iblīs.

Apart from these four dialogues, in chapter al-Nisāʾ we see a remark by Satan which was a piece of those four dialogues, but in this chapter it is not laid down in the form of a dialogue.1

After mentioning Satan in verse 117, Allah alludes to the remark by Satan that we had seen in the previous dialogues. The sentence laʿanahu Allah (whom God has rejected) in verse 118 is not part of Iblīs' speech, but a general report by Allah concerning what He did with Iblīs. The speech of Iblīs continues up to “and I shall command them and they will corrupt God’s creation!” in verse 119. We do regard this part of speech by Iblīs as a piece of the dialogue between him and Allah with the difference that it is being mentioned as a single part of that in this chapter. The rest of verse 119 as well as the next verses which talk about Allah's reminder to us about Satan are not counted as a direct response by Allah to Iblīs. Therefore, we do not consider them as a piece of the dialogue, but we must discuss them in our analysis.

An identical matter has taken place in the first part of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs which is about Allah's command to the angels to bow down to Adam. This part is not a piece of the dialogue, but since it is entirely in connection with the dialogue, it is necessary in order to perform a proper analysis. Some verses with regard to this part have been repeated in some other parts of the Qurʾān.2

After putting forward all the important verses in connection with the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs in order to organize the dialogues based on the verses, all the dialogues and the related verses have been placed into two major parts as follows:

1-The First part relates to the creation of Adam and Allah's command to the angels to bow down to Adam. This part is not a piece of the dialogue, but since it is entirely in connection with the dialogue, it is necessary in order to perform a proper analysis. Some verses with regard to this part have been repeated in some other parts of the Qurʾān.2

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1-The First part relates to the creation of Adam and Allah's command to the angels to bow down to him prior to the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs. This part also features the reaction of Iblīs to the command.

2-The second part precisely covers all the segments of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs. This part includes seven sections as follow:

1. The first section belongs to the question of Allah to Iblīs. From this section the dialogue begins.
2. The second section is the response of Iblīs to the question of Allah.
3. The third section discusses the expulsion of Iblīs from heaven by Allah.

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1 The Qurʾān, 4:117-121.
2 The Qurʾān, 2:34, The Qurʾān, 18:50, The Qurʾān, 20:116
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4. The fourth section points out the request of Iblīs from Allah for respite.
5. The fifth section states that Allah agrees with the request of Iblīs.
6. The sixth section talks about the promise and vow of Iblīs with respect to humans.
7. The seven and last section alludes to the final words of Allah to Iblīs.

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION WITH
THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALLAH AND IBLĪS

According to the meanings and definitions of the dialogue, some principles are essentially assumed in each dialogue. ¹

First, a dialogue happens with at least two persons. Second, since dialogists discuss by using words, therefore, exchange of words is another necessary condition of dialogue. Third, in light of the second stipulation, meaningful words must be used, otherwise, the dialogists cannot understand each other and no dialogue will occur. This requires use of comprehensive language or intelligible and understandable words on both sides. Fourth, In order to express the words, freedom of speech is indispensable principle in every dialogue. Fifth, without listening to one another, the exchange of ideas will fail and none of the dialogists can understand the other. Thus, listening is a significant principle in every dialogue. Sixth, every dialogue must be purposeful and follow objectives in order to be conducted in a correct manner. One of the important objectives of every dialogue is mutual understanding. Seven, each dialogue covers certain issue(s) and it cannot occur without a topic. Eighth, in light of the seventh principle, the dialogists must be sapient regarding the issues that are being discussed during the dialogue. Ninth, every dialogue is supposed to be continuous whether it takes place for a short or long duration. A real dialogue takes place on the foundation of these crucial principles.

Now, in examining the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs, it is necessary to reconcile the above principles with the dialogue. In fact, the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs is a real dialogue since it encapsulates all the above-mentioned principles.

Being two people in the dialogue, exchanging words, using meaningful and intelligible words, having freedom of speech on both sides, listening to one another, being purposeful, having issues to be discussed, mutual sapience on both sides regarding the issues, and the dialogue taking place as a continuous conversation, even though in a short time, illustrates that a real dialogue happened between Allah and Iblīs in the Qurʾān. The dialogue ranks very high, since all the principles were present in their best form. For example, Iblīs was totally free to say anything. He was free to show his deep arrogance in his own expressions. He was free to utter his fierce hostility about humans. More so, he was utterly free to appeal to anything. He appealed to Allah for respite to push people into hell. The best words also were used in the dialogue due to the fact that Allah is exalted and Iblīs would be a very knowledgeable person.

These principles were laid down as primary and essential in the dialogue. In other words, the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs did not take place without these principles.

**IS THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALLAH AND IBLĪS A JADAL (DEBATE) OR NOT?**

Here, it is necessary to examine whether the dialogue is jadal or not? Every Jadal is a kind of dialogue, but every dialogue is not necessarily jadal. In other words, dialogue could take place along with a jadal or it could be advanced without it. The proper word for jadal in the English language is “debate” or “argument”. According to Lisān al-‘Arab, the meaning of jadal is “the violence in enmity and ability on it or the intensity in hostility.” When someone debates with another, it means “conquer him or quarrel with him”.

In light of the above, the meaning of jadal contains dialogue, but it is not a peaceful dialogue and one side is supposed to be hostile and must be defeated by the other. A dialogue turns into jadal when the dialogists demonstrate in any way their opinions and challenge the opinions of the other side. In this vein, the dialogists perhaps do not refrain from presenting invalid and disqualified arguments to cause the other side to retreat from their opinions. This issue has come strikingly in the verse stating that

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	ext{وَمَا نُرْسِلُونَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَيُحَدِّثُونَ وَيَجَادِلُونَ لَمْ تَرْجُوهُمْ بِالْخَيْفَةِ وَلَمْ تَرْجُوهُمْ آتِيَاتُهُمْ وَمَا أُذِنَّ لَهُمْ فِرْعَوْا}
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\[(75)\text{(الكلف)}\]

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\*But We send [Our] message bearers only as heralds of glad tidings and as warners whereas those who are bent on denying the truth contend [against them] with fallacious arguments, so as to render void the truth thereby, and to make My messages and warnings a target of their mockery.*

This kind of debate which comes with any argument, including fallacious arguments, in order to conquer one's rival is been forbidden by Allah. This is because it does not rely on true reasons, which Allah always order us to apply. The forbidden jadal is based on ignorance, impoliteness and seeking to conquer. The verses which indicate the forbidden jadal have come frequently in the Qur’ān. Another verse in this regard states that:

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	ext{مَا يَجَادِلُونَ فِي أَيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَا يُرِدِّدُكُمْ كَفَّارَكُمْ فِي الْبَلَادِ} 
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\[(4)\text{(الغافر)}\]

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None but those who are bent on denying the truth would call God’s messages in question. But let it not deceive thee that they seem to be able to do as they please on earth.

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1. Rohī, Ba’albakī, 414.
3. Ibid.
4. The Qur’ān, 18:56; Mohammad Asad, 477,478.
6. The Qur’ān, 40:2; Mohammad Asad, 717.
According to this verse, any jadal on the verses of the Qurʾān signify the infidelity of the debater. Since the Qurʾān is the word of Allah, any opposition to it will be based on a fallacious argument, which results from the stubborn hostility and infidelity of the debater, thus, this kind of debate is not allowed.

However, tempts to conquer rival in a debate is not always forbidden; sometimes it is admirable. The admissible jadal follows and confirms the truth and is laid on a pure foundation and true way.\(^1\) In order to elaborate that this verse will be useful

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\text{اذْعَ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَعْلُوْكَةِ الْخَسَاءَةِ وَحَادِثَهُمْ بَالْحَقِّ هُوَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ صَنَّعَ عَنْ سِبْيْهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ}
\]

*Call thou [all mankind] unto thy Sustainer's path with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner: for, behold, thy Sustainer knows best as to who strays from His path, and best knows He as to who are the rightly-guided.*\(^2\)

The above verse obviously advocates jadal with opponents provided it is performed in the best way. The word Jādil is used in this verse to indicate the permissible debate with a misguided person, who does not have any proof from Allah, but he debates with truth. This person, however, would be a poor or strong enemy. It is allowed to dialogue with such a person in order to overcome him and discredit his opinions.

Following the above clarification, we can now discuss the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs as just a dialogue or dialogue along with jadal. When the dialogue began, Allah did not view Iblīs as an enemy to be destroyed. Whereas in the early part of the dialogue Allah asks Iblīs the reason of his disobedience, Allah regarded him as a disobedient person and not as an enemy. In a similar manner, this is clearly seen in Allah's treatment of Adam after his disobedience. Allah never considers Adam in advance as an enemy to be conquered, but He inquires first about his disobedience. Therefore, Allah is an inquirer who seeks the reason of disobedience from Iblīs. He is not a combatant who wants to shatter his enemy. He started a dialogue with Iblīs.

But the situation changed and Iblīs argues over the question posed by Allah. When Iblīs, in response to Allah's question, declares that “I am better than him” it was a forbidden jadal rather than a dialogue. Iblīs here tries to justify his disobedience by all means which amount to an arrogant argument. Thus, since Iblīs, by this response, resulted to arrogance to conquer his rival, the encounter would not be classified as dialogue only rather it is also a jadal.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALLAH AND IBLĪS IN THE QURʾĀN**

In order to know what the traits of this dialogue are, it is necessary to compare and contrast this dialogue with other dialogues in the Qurʾān. Many dialogues have occurred

\(^1\) Zāhir, ibn Awwād, Manāhij al Jadāl fi al-Qurʾān, (The Methodologies of Debate in the Qurʾān), (Riyadh: Maktabi al-Farazdaq al-Tijāriyah, 1983), 50.
\(^2\) The Qurʾān, 16:125; Mohammad Asad, 416.
in the Qurʾān. All the dialogues can be categorized into six major themes. These categories include dialogues between Allah and others, dialogues between angels and others, dialogues in the hereafter, dialogues between Prophets and others, dialogues between Prophet Muhammad and others, and dialogues between different people. As we see, the first category is the dialogue between Allah and others. The dialogues between Allah and Moses or between Allah and Ibrāhīm and some others are also examples in this category. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs is a distinct and noticeable exemplar of this category. First, since the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs is placed in the category “Dialogue between Allah and others”, thus, this category is compared and contrasted with dialogues in other categories, then the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs itself is compared and contrasted with other dialogues within the abovementioned category.

As compared to all dialogues in the Qurʾān, one of the major differences between this category and others is that one of the dialogists is Allah. Therefore these kinds of dialogues cannot be analyzed like normal conversation since Allah is not a normal person, rather He is exalted.

This feature signals that the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs would not be regarded as a simple and ordinary dialogue. This category also shows clearly that Allah can emerge as a dialogist in order to break the barrier between Him and others. In fact, the Qurʾān lays great stress on the Majesty and Omnipotence of Allah seeking to vindicate the otherness of Allah, but it does so not in order to establish an impassible barrier between Allah and man. Indeed, one can argue that this barrier does not exist between Allah and Iblīs in the first of the dialogue between the two.

Another trait of this category is that most times, especially when Allah is the beginner of a dialogue, the dialogue between Allah and others takes place suddenly and unexpectedly. This is due to the fact that Allah does not often dialogue with others as we do. Rarely does dialogue between Allah and others happen. Thus, occurrence of these kinds of dialogues is often unpredictable and the issues would not be settled in advance. The continuation of such dialogues would not be foretold and one would expect that the dialogists exhibit hasty or even an impetuous reaction. The handling of a dialogue in which the distance between the dialogists is unfathomable will be more difficult for the lower other. Perhaps everything will be exposed and declared in a hurry and only for justification.

These are very striking features in the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs. The immediate onset of the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs in the Qurʾān, to a very large extent, indicates that the dialogue occurred in an unexpected and urgent situation. Nobody assumed that Iblīs would disobey Allah and perhaps nobody anticipated that Allah would query Iblīs about his disobedience. Iblīs also hastily reacted to the question by Allah, yet he could have reacted like Adam in a very humble manner. Therefore, Iblīs failed to manage the dialogue as he merely justifies his disobedience.

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Another feature of this category is that since these dialogues rarely happen, they would not be testable and repeatable in order to be studied from a practical point of view and fully aware of the particulars. Nobody can replace himself in the situation where Allah dialogues with someone; because he cannot experience Allah. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs is an unrepeatable dialogue; it cannot be tested at all. Additionally, since these dialogues happen away from the visibility of others, they are not observable. Nobody can observe and report about these dialogues except the dialogists. Thus, referring to the scriptures would be the best way to understand these dialogues.

The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs is very noticeable in this regard. Neither Allah nor Iblīs would be heard and the best source for understanding this dialogue is the Qurʾān. In addition, actions and gestures which would be enumerated as the features of a very effective dialogue do not relate to one of the dialogists who is Allah and Iblīs would be regarded as such. Therefore, actions and gesture do not have any account in the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs.

Another characteristic -although it is not limited to this category- is that contrary to most of the dialogues in the Qurʾān, which are reported in a long and discrete period, the dialogues in this category occurred in a short period. They are consecutive and continual. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs occurred continually spanning a very short period. There is no pause between the dialogue and the remarks like an arrow would be bandied.

The next feature of this category is that although the dialogues would be regarded as face-to-face, Allah does not appear in any examples of this kind of dialogue in the Qurʾān. Even the intense and extreme enthusiasm of Moses did not favour him to behold Allah, who is keeping the long waiting till the Day of Judgment for those who are restless to behold Him! A pain which is remedied with a panting patience! There is also no evidence to prove that Allah has exposed Himself to Iblīs in the dialogue between Him and the latter.

These are some major characteristics of this category particularly in the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs in comparison with other dialogues in the Qurʾān that one must point out here.

Besides, the comparison between different types of dialogues in the above-mentioned category, the “Dialogue between Allah and others”, would be important. The exemplars of this category include dialogue between Allah and Moses, dialogue between Allah and Adam, dialogue between Allah and angels, dialogue between Allah and Ibrāhīm, dialogue between Allah and the person who slept for 100 years, and the dialogue between Allah and Messiah. Others are the dialogue between Allah and Nūḥ, dialogue between Allah and Iblīs, dialogue between Allah and the prophets, dialogue between Allah and sinners on the Day of Judgment, dialogue between Allah and Dhu al-Qarnayn, dialogue between Allah and the descendants of Adam, dialogue between Allah and the prophet who has been mentioned in the chapter al-Muʾminūn but without any name¹ and dialogue between Allah and Iblīs.

¹ The Qurʾān, 23:32-41.
One should point out the prominent exemplars of this category in the Qurʾān. They are “prominent” because there are other dialogues between Allah and others which do not make sense like the afore-mentioned dialogues.¹

Although Allah’s dialogue with Moses has been more extended and expanded in the Qurʾān in order to show that Moses is kalīm Allāh (the one who has talked with Allāh), the frequency of this dialogue in which Allāh assigns Moses to go to Pharaoh is identical in comparison with the dialogue between Allāh and Iblīs. Both dialogues, whether complete or incomplete, have been repeated four times in the Qurʾān.² This equivalence in the Qurʾān indicates that the dialogue between Allāh and Iblīs would be as significant as the dialogue between Allāh and Moses stressing the need for them to be examined. No other dialogues between Allāh and others are repeated like these two in the Qurʾān.

The next feature of the dialogue between Allāh and Iblīs as compared to all the dialogues in above-mentioned category is that this dialogue is well organized than the other ones. It is not a broken dialogue. It is an integrated and united dialogue. All the implications of the dialogue would have been encapsulated in one single dialogue, although some words or parts of speech have changed from one dialogue to another.

Another characteristic is that compared to other dialogues in the afore-mentioned category where one of the dialogists is human, in the dialogue between Allāh and Iblīs, the latter is not human. Iblīs is a jinn”; a strange character with a long history of worshipping Allāh. This is similar to the dialogue between Allāh and the angels.

The other feature as the dialogue between Allāh and angels is that the dialogue did not occur in the universe but in the transcendental place (heaven), which has made the dialogue more mysterious, since the features and characteristics of that stage are unknown and even unimaginable and inconceivable to us.

The next feature is that in the above-mentioned category, those who dialogue with Allāh have been promoted after dialogue to the upper degree of ʿubūdīyah (servitude) but Iblīs has fallen from his transcendental stage to a lower stage. He was an unfortunate person not only because of his fall from the transcendental stage but also because of missing the great and unbelievable opportunity to be closer to Allāh after this dialogue. Thus, dialogues with Allāh may not always have good results.

Another feature is that in a very short dialogue, very great and significant events occurred even though we may not see such events in other dialogues of this category. The expulsion of Iblīs from the heaven was a very important event which occurred during this dialogue. The granting of Satan a very long respite and assigning him as a vigorous enemy of humans was a crucial decision that Allāh made.

¹ See for example dialogues between Allāh and Hawāriyūn (The Qurʾān, 5:111) or dialogue between Allāh and sky or earth (The Qurʾān, 41:11).
² Dialogue between Allāh and Moses has been indicated in these chapters and Verses (The Qurʾān, 20:11-48), (The Qurʾān, 42:10-17), (The Qurʾān, 27:8-12) and (The Qurʾān, 28:30-35).
The next and crucial feature is that this dialogue is a revolutionary turning point in the history of man. Although the refusal of Iblīs eventuated the dialogue, it determined tremendously the fundamental outlooks of the life of man. In other words, if this dialogue had not happened the story and history of man would have completely changed in other version.

Another interesting characteristic in this dialogue is that apart from man, history, vicissitude and destiny of Iblīs has been artily exposed in this dialogue. From when he was a righteous person and in the stage of Allah to his arrogance and expulsion from the transcendental stage and to long period of his hostility and vengeance to men and finally his castigation into hell fire have been elaborated upon in this dialogue.

The revengeful personality of Iblīs by representing this speech that he wants to mislead all descendent of man, skillful psychologist with extraordinary powers in order to implement all his promises in appropriate and possible time, exact knowledge of Iblīs about the future since he declares that he can not misguide all people but majority, his rebellion and arrogance and its awful and destructive consequences of it have been artily shown in this articles.

The next trait is that this dialogue, like most other examples of dialogue between Allah and others in the Qurʾān, began with a question by Allah. A question asked by Allah, however, results indispensably in the dialogue since the person in front of Allah cannot refuse the response. We see such thing in Allah's dialogue with Messiah, Adam, the man who slept for 100 years and Iblīs. Normally, when the dialogue is begun with a certain person and particularly with a question by that person, the person will dominate the whole dialogue and the dialogue will be under his control. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs is in like manner and He is the striking moderator of the dialogue since he initiated it. This is also manifested in the final remark in this dialogue which largely identifies the result. Allah ended the dialogue to undermine all the intrigues of Iblīs.

Another characteristic of this category, which also exists in the dialogue between Allah and Adam, is that contrary to other dialogues between Allah and others which the main cause was positive, amazingly the dialogue here happened because of the negative cause which is the disobedience of Iblīs. Allah dialogues with a guilty character who must explain why he disobeyed Him. This fact reminds us that every sinner finally will be asked by Allah about his sin. This will not happen in the universe or in a transcendental place but on the Day of Judgment. There are some dialogues between Allah and sinners on the Day of Judgment which clarify that every sinner will be inquired. The Qurʾān in this regard states that

\[\text{If you could but see [them] when they shall be made to stand before their Sustainer [and] He will say, “Is not this the truth?” They will answer: “Yea, indeed, by our}\]

\[\text{true.}\]
Sustainer!” [Whereupon] He will say: “Taste, then, the suffering that comes from your having refused to acknowledge the truth!”

This verse elucidates that undoubtedly the dialogue between Allah and disobedient people will happen but it would be a very tragic dialogue since they will immediately be pushed to the Hell. They are supposed to be unforgivable people who must confess their sins in response to Allah, although this confession will not benefit them. This is contrary to Iblīs' story because when Allah dialogued with Iblīs, he was not regarded as an unforgivable person. Allah granted Iblīs a chance to repent but Iblīs did not appreciate this grace.

The above are some of the major characteristics the dialogue under study when compared with other examples of dialogue between Allah and others in the Qurʾān. There are also some general features which are not specific to this dialogue category but they are embedded in this dialogue.

One of these features is that all four dialogues between Allah and Iblīs have come independently and separately in the Qurʾān. They have not come along with other dialogues or among them as in the case of some dialogues in the Qurʾān. These dialogues also do not contain a specific marker such as idh (when) which the other genre often have to signal their beginning.

WHY DID ALLAH REACT TO IBLĪS' DISOBEEDIENCE

This section discusses the reaction of Allah to Iblīs' disobedience before we go in-depth into the dialogue. Allah may not have reacted had Iblīs not disobeyed Him. In fact, this disobedience was very serious that Allah did not tolerate it as He tolerates other forms of disobediences committed by different people. Perhaps, Allah did not expect Iblīs to commit such a sin, since he had a very high degree in heaven. Allah reacted by starting the dialogue with Iblīs. Some questions may come agitate our minds: why did Allah choose dialogue to react and not something else? Why does Allah not always dialogue with sinners except Iblīs or Adam in this universe?

Although, one of the general reasons why Allah dialogues is the decrease in distance between Allah and others, but since the dialogue is a reactionary to the disobedience of Iblīs, the decrease in distance is not necessarily the case. This study discusses some other hypotheses to answer the question.

First, when Iblīs refused to bow down, he was accused by Allah, since every disobedience is a crime and unacceptable. There is no remedy for Iblīs unless he confesses and repents his sin; otherwise, he is not forgiven by Allah. Thus, Iblīs must confess and repent. But the question is if this confession and repentance does not automatically happen by Iblīs what would be the case?

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1 The Qurʾān, 6:30; Mohammad Asad, 206.
Here, the role of Allah is important; Allah with regard to a guilty person such as Iblīs, when he does not repent and confess, has three options. First, he forgives Iblīs right away. Such action will not occur unless repentance and confession happen. The remission of Allah is for those who fracture themselves from Allah. Second, according to some verses of the Qurʾān that Allah punishes sinners whether here or in the hereafter, He can punish Iblīs whether in this universe or in the Hereafter, more so that Iblīs was fully aware that his disobedience would not be acceptable to Allah. If Allah does that, it is not far from His justice, but that did not happen!! From this point of view, we can say that the dialogue with Iblīs was not compulsory to be done by Allah. Nonetheless, the dialogue occurred!!

The third option -although Allah is not supposed to do such- is inquiry and clarification about this disobedience. This would be preferred on two accounts. First, since Allah will inquire sinners about their sins on the Day of Judgment, in the same manner, He inquires Iblīs about his sin in order not to have any excuse when He punishes him either here or on the Day of Judgment. In this regard, Iblīs is considered an unforgivable person. But, we know that this is not so!! Second, the inquiry and clarification were necessary because Iblīs could possibly confess his sin and then Allah forgives Him. If such gesture comes from Allah, undoubtedly it is part of the compassion of Allah he was not supposed to do so. The clarification and inquiry by Allah whether with the first or second purpose, must happen through the dialogue.

Allah is merciful, compassionate and sagely, most likely the third option or hypothesis in the second purpose will be more predictable and implementable by Allah. He chooses the dialogue first with the hope that Iblīs would confess and repent his sin and to show his very profound mercy with regard to a sinner like Iblīs. Therefore, the dialogue was chosen by Allah because of His generosity. Allah, in the early part of the dialogue when he addressed Iblīs was not furious and vehement. He was entirely soft and mild. He strongly believed in the power of dialogue to clarify and as a solution with strong influences on people. He used the dialogue with Iblīs to alert him in a better way to his sin. Unfortunately, Iblīs did not derive benefit from this great opportunity. The dialogue can be framed in another fashion: had Iblīs not shown arrogance in his remarks, he was free to say anything but he was stupid.

Therefore, one of the lessons from this dialogue is that we must be patient with a sinner even in a very unbearable case and we should dialogue with him with the hope of leading him to the true way. Although Iblīs missed the opportunity, Adam used the advantage when Allah dialogued with him. This fact signals that we should never despair from the power of dialogue with a sinner and disobedient person in order to lead him in a true way.

Regarding question two, Allah's dialogue with someone takes place much rarely according to the verses of the Qurʾān. In effect, not everyone is qualified to dialogue with Allah. However, Iblīs' had dialogue with Him perhaps for the first and last time thus indicating the qualification of Iblīs in this regard. This qualification comes from the past personality and characteristics of Iblīs. Iblīs was a very pious person with a very high level of insight and intuition just as the Prophets. He served Allah in the heavens along
with other angels. Thus, the qualification of Iblīs was a crucial factor for the dialogue. Otherwise, the dialogue would not have happened as we see that dialogues with other sinners do not happen in this universe until the Day of Judgment.

**CONCLUSION**

This dialogue included three complete dialogues, one incomplete dialogue and one single segment of the dialogue. Each complete dialogue conveyed the major implications of this dialogue but the differently quoted parts of speech enriched this dialogue. Allah quoted the speeches in the same position variously which showed that He did not have any limitation in quotation of meaning. It also seemed that some other speeches had been exchanged in this dialogue but Allah had not quoted them.

The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs was a real dialogue since it encapsulates all the essential principles of a formal dialogue. Being two people in the dialogue, exchanging words, using meaningful and intelligible words, having freedom of speech for both side, listening to one another, being purposeful, having issues to be discussed, being sapient of both sides regarding the issues of the dialogue and taking place as a continuous conversation although in a short time illustrated that a real dialogue has taken place between Allah and Iblīs in the Qurʾān.

Although at the beginning of the dialogue Allah was not a furious Lord and the dialogue started based on Allah’s mercifulness, it ended with an anticipated evil destiny for Iblīs. Iblīs could not utilize this great opportunity to get towards Allah and he changed the flow and pace of the dialogue to tension and polemic conversation, having been exposed vehemently with tough speeches. It was a dialogue associated with hard contact between Allah and Iblīs.

There were so many dialogues in the Qurʾān having been categorized in six major groups. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs was placed in the category of dialogue between Allah and others.

The major differences between this category and others were that one of the dialogists was Allah. This category indicated very well that Allah can emerge as a dialogist in order to break the barrier between Him and others. Another feature was that the dialogue between Allah and others takes place suddenly and unexpectedly. This is due to the fact that Allah is not going to dialogue easily with others as we do. Since these dialogues rarely happen they would not be testable and repeatable to be studied from a practical point of view in order to be aware more of the particulars. Additionally, since these dialogues happened far from the visibility of others, they cannot be observable. Referring to the scriptures would be the best way for understanding of these dialogues. All the dialogues in this category had taken place at the moment and in a short period. They were consecutive and continual. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs had taken place consecutively and continually in a very short time.
Besides, the comparison and contrast between the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs and other dialogues in this category showed some specific characteristics to this dialogue.

The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs was more organized than other ones. It was not a broken dialogue. It was an integrated and united dialogue. This dialogue had not taken place in the universe, but in the transcendental place (heaven), which made this dialogue more mysterious. Contrary to other dialogues in this category which those who dialogued with Allah have been promoted after dialogue to the upper degree of servitude “ʿubūdiyah”, Iblīs has fallen from the transcendental stage to a lower stage. The dialogue between Allah and Iblīs was also prominent since in a very short dialogue crucial events occurred such as expulsion of Iblīs, giving long respite to him and assigning him as a vigorous enemy for men. Similar to the dialogue between Allah and Adam and as a specific characteristic, the dialogue between Allah and Iblīs happened because of a negative cause which was the disobedience of Iblīs and Allah dialogued with a guilty person.

This dialogue was a revolutionary turning point of history of man yet informing a long history and future of Iblīs.

Undoubtedly, this dialogue was informative and profound. This fact signals that other dialogues in the Qurʾān would be like that. Thus, it offers opportunities for implementing a holistic and comprehensive plan to scrutinize separately and connectively all dialogues in the Qurʾān. After this evaluation, the analyses of the dialogue in general and the dialogue in the Qurʾān in particular would be precious and revealing. The study of dialogue in the Qurʾān could be regarded as an independent specialization which must be conducted and supported by those who are enthusiastic about developing the knowledge of the Qurʾān.