



TEXT PETE NASH  
BILD LUKAS THELIN

# DJINN

SPIRITS BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL

**M**ythological creatures of the Islamic world, jinn are magical entities which live in a realm beyond our own, unseen by the humans with whose lives they capriciously meddle. Placed in Islamic theology between humans and angels, the djinni, ifrits and marids were powerful spirits. Capable of good or evil, they could be arrogant, malicious yet still be capable of benevolence when it suited them.

As creatures of “smokeless, scorching fire” they are for the most part intangible, but could affect the world of mortals and perform great deeds of magic. This makes them a perfect creature to create for *RuneQuest6*. Of course the power and scope of jinn vary from Aladdin’s genie of the lamp to the desert haunting ghuls of Arabic superstition. However, for fun we’ll model the following jinn on those from the popular *Bartimaeus Trilogy* by Jonathan Stroud (which I highly recommend); treating these supernatural entities as spirits which can be summoned and bound to the magician’s will.

## THE HIERARCHY OF THE JINN

The jinn in the *Bartimaeus* books are roughly in line with the mythological hierarchy of Islamic study. Jinn are categorised by their magical strength and standing within jinni society. Since *RuneQuest* already possesses a way of categorising spirits based on their magical power, it is an easy matter to use the same mechanics to describe them.

**Imps** - INT 2d6+6, POW 1d6+6, CHA 1d6. The weakest of the jinn, their magical abilities are relatively feeble but make good messengers of spies. They are often spiteful and rude. Intensity 1 spirits, imps know 1d3 Sorcery spells and have skills starting at 50%.

**Foliots** - INT 2d6+6, POW 1d6+12, CHA 2d6. Jinn of more capable strength, they make good servants and labourers, but show little imagination; nor even a likable personality, most being fawning lackeys. Intensity 2 spirits, foliots know 1d3+3 Sorcery spells and have skills from 70%.

**Djinn** - INT 2d6+6, POW 1d6+18, CHA 3d6. Potent spirits able to perform greater deeds of magical creativity, djinn often strain the skills of a magician to summon and bind to their will – not least because of their propensity to use their abilities in cunning, resourceful ways. Their personalities range from polite servility to intimidating rebelliousness. Intensity 3 spirits, djinn know 1d3+6 Sorcery spells and have skills of at least 90%.

**Ifrits** - INT 2d6+6, POW 1d6+24, CHA 4d6. Spirits of great ability and generally greater maliciousness, ifrit show a particular affinity to fire. Whilst thought of as less intelligent

than the lower ranking djinn, this is not strictly true. Rather the ifrit rely more on flexing their tremendous magical strength in brute-force approaches, than insightful or clever application. Intensity 4 spirits, ifrit know 1d3+9 Sorcery spells and have mastered many skills to a minimum of 120%.

**Marids** - INT 2d6+6, POW 1d6+30, CHA 5d6. The most powerful of these spirits, they are rarely summoned due to their immense magical strength and dangerous inclinations. It often takes the coordinated efforts of several magicians to attempt such a feat, or a great deal of flattery. Most marids are overbearingly arrogant and conceited. Intensity 5 spirits, marids know 1d3+12 Sorcery spells and their skills start at 150%

**Typical skills for jinn are:** Brawn, Conceal, Customs, Deceit, Evade, Influence, Insight, Invocation, Locale, Perception, Sing, Stealth, Unarmed, Willpower, and one extra professional skill per Intensity of the jinn as a personal interest.

## POWERS AND ABILITIES

All jinn possess a number of inherent abilities as the result of their spiritual form. These powers cost no Magic Points, but still require the spirit to spend an Action to perform. Jinn abilities are as follows:

**Invisibility:** Jinn are naturally invisible, but can make themselves visible with conscious effort. Since jinn can see others of their kind, invisible or not, they require the use of the Stealth skill to sneak past one another.

**Intangibility:** Jinn pass through solid objects unhindered. This includes trying to lift or move objects, unless they use their Telekinesis ability (read more about it later in this article). Likewise, they are immune to non-magical damage, although they can injure each other using ‘physical’ attacks.

**Shape-Shifting:** Since they lack a corporeal body, jinn may change their appearance at will. This can be the form of a human, animal, or a monstrous hybrid of the two. Imaginative jinn can even take the shape of inanimate objects or abstract visual phenomena. Most jinn have 1d3 favourite shapes with which they feel the most comfortable. A jinn can identify another jinn individual if they win an opposed test of Perception versus Deceit.

**Size-Shifting:** When manifested jinn have similar proportions to a human of a SIZ equivalent to the jinn’s POW. If the jinn desires they may further enlarge themselves by a multiple up to their CHA, or similarly shrink by applying the same number as a divisor. Of course as spirits they possess no true SIZ characteristic so they can be bound into any object such as a ring or lamp, but some jinn like to overawe viewers by swelling up to gigantic proportions.

**Flight:** Jinn usually travel by flying from place to place – although they are happy to mimic walking if fitted to their adopted form. At top speed they can move at INTx5 metres per round.

**Telekinesis:** To interact with the physical world jinn instinctively move objects via telekinesis, providing part of their intangible body is touching it. They have a pseudo STR equal to their POW, though for the expenditure of a Magic Point they can multiply this limit by a factor of five, solely for the purpose of shifting exceptionally heavy objects.

The Action Points, Strike Rank, and Magic Points of the jinn are calculated as described on page 203 of *RuneQuest*. Spirit Damage is based upon the Jinn’s Willpower skill, whilst its Damage Modifier (used for hand to hand combat) is calculated using POWx2 instead of STR+SIZ.

## SUMMONING AND BINDING

In the *Bartimaeus* stories the summoning of jinn is a dangerous activity, with weak willed magicians often tricked to their deaths by the irritated spirit. Such attempts require extremely careful preparation, the use of various paraphernalia to aid concentration and drawing of pentacle or other magical wards to trap the jinn whilst it is being coerced to the summoner’s will.

The most important aspect of jinn summoning is knowing the *true name* of the entity called. Each jinn holds this name as their most prized secret, for without this, a magician cannot summon them to perform years of enslaved servitude. As any jinn called to the material world is prevented from being summoned again, until they are released back to the realm from which they originated; most magicians hoard such snippets of information, being the basis of their personal power.

Conjuring a jinn is similar to the Animism rules concerning summoning spirits. The magician uses their Trance skill to perform the ritual, which calls the named jinn (if available) to the prepared pentacle. This initial stage costs the conjurer a number of Magic Points equal to the Intensity of the Spirit. Once manifested, the real struggle occurs. This comprises of a battle of wits and will between the magician and the jinn, represented by the equivalent of a Spirit Combat using the Binding skill of the conjurer and the Willpower of the jinn.

If the jinn is reduced to zero Magic Points before their summoner, then they are chained to the magician’s will and can be forced to personally serve until released from service (or the premature death of the magician); or they can be eternally bound into an object from which there is no escape (The Indefinite

Confinement). Although some jinn might willingly serve a master at first, extended enslavement twists their attitude so that the magician must force them to perform each and every task – requiring a successful Binding test and the expenditure of a Magic Point.

Conversely, if the jinn wins the battle they break free from the conjurer’s control, allowing free use of their magic or immediate escape to their home realm. Whilst an unleashed imp may be an aggravating annoyance, losing control of a Djinn might result in the conjurer being consumed, leaving a pile of picked-clean bones.

## WEAKENING OF BOUND JINN

Jinn in the physical world, whether bound to attending the will of a magician or trapped within an object, are prevented from rejuvenating themselves. They can neither heal any damage suffered, nor recover Magic Points. Unlike normal *RuneQuest* spirits, jinn actually take damage to their POW characteristic which can only be recovered if allowed to return to their home realm. Running out of POW leaves a jinn helpless, open to utter and final destruction.

Using magic drains jinn of their strength. A jinn can replenish its Magic Points if permitted to feast upon the life-force of a living creature, effectively recovering a number equal to the victim’s POW characteristic. If a jinn performs the dubious act of consuming another jinn, then they absorb whatever Magic Points were left to the entity before its death.

## JINN MAGIC

Jinn use sorcery to perform their miraculous acts of magic. Whilst imps are barely capable of harming small animals, the largest marids can create vast palaces in a single night. Jinn do not use the Shaping skill per se, each spell costing a single Magic Point to cast with a Range of POW in metres, Duration of POW minutes, a single Target, and a Magnitude of twice the jinn’s spirit Intensity.

The following spells are suitable for jinn with, where known, the associated names utilised in the *Bartimaeus* books placed in parenthesis – most of which are rather destructively orientated!

Abjure, Animate, Banish (*Void*), Castback, Damage Resistance (*Shield*), Diminish SIZ (*Compression*), Enhance SIZ, Enlarge, Hide Life, Hinder, Holdfast, Imprison (*Nexus*), Mystic Vision (*Pulse*), Neutralise Magic (*Flux*), Palsy (*Spasm*), Phantom, Protective Ward, Repulse, Revivify, Sculpt, Sense, Shapechange, Shrink, Smother (*Convulsion*), Spell Resistance (*Shield*), Wrack (*Detonation*, *Plasm*, *Inferno*, *Pestilence*, *Essence Lance*)