

The Jinn, Devil and Satan: A Review on Qur'anic Concept

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Abstract

Public beliefs in the spirits vary widely and not totally in full conformity with the guidance of the revelation. This issue forces may have on human lives is an area concerning which there are many myths and superstitions and there is no storage of charlatans who will dupe people by offering remedies and protection at the cost of wealth and more seriously of their faith. The Qur'an has explained the nature of the righteous is to believe in the unseen, such as jinn, devil and Satan. Therefore, this study focused on the analysis of Islamic scholars about them. Hence, this study found three opinions on the existence of jinn; i) They have potential negative to invite people towards ugliness, ii) As a virus or germ and not obliged to act by religiously responsible, iii) As a wild who has not been civilized. The study further found that Al-Jann is the father of jinn and created from fire. They are like human beings some of them are fear of Allah and also rebellious. The devil is the father of Satan and created from fire. Both are being disobedient and do not want to prostrate to God, and always lead mankind astray. All the three are covered and hidden from human eyes view.

Keywords: Spirit; Jinn; Devil; Satan; Islam; Qur'an.

1. Introduction

Public beliefs in the spirits have existed since the beginning of human history. The word spirit is a term used to indicate the creatures that live in the unseen, such as angels, jinn, demons, souls, Satan, fiend, etc. (Noraseh, et al., 2013; Moeliono, 1988). In other terms frequently used for word spirit is supernatural beings. Literally means something hidden, invisible, or unseen.

According to al-Razi (1981) the spirit is everything related to invisible and cannot be reached by the senses. al-Tha'labi (2002) said it was blocked from the human eyes but could be known by heart. Among the spirit which is informed by the Qur'an and Sunnah is jinn, devil and Satan (Bali, 1998; Shihab, 2009). Some people believe the supernatural beings are invisible at all but can seem to some people. In the Islamic view, believe in the unseen is one of the fundamental of Islamic beliefs that characterize a believer.

No one in any of the Muslims sects denies the existence of spirits. The vast majority of disbelievers, whether pagan Arabs and other Semites, Indians and other Hemites, most Cananites and Greeks and other descendants of Japheth, confirm the existence of spirits. As for Jews and Christians, they recognize that spirits exist in much the same way that Muslims do though may be among them some individuals who deny the existence of spirits. Individuals who deny the existence of spirits may also be found among orthodox Muslims and Muslims sects like the Jahmites and Mu'tazilites (Phillips, 1996). Therefore, to get clearer comprehension to this issue, the further study focused on the description of Qur'anic experts of some verses that debate on the jin, devil and Satan by applying the content analysis methodology.

2. The Jinn: Etymology and Terminology

The word *jin* in Arabic refers to something that is concealed and hidden. Al-Jawhari (1984) said *al-jann* is the father of jinn, the plural of which is *jinnan*. It says in *al-Qamus al-Muhit*, *jannahu al-Jayl* means the night covered him. Everything

that is concealed from you is *junna anka*. *Jin al-layl* means the darkness of the night. *Al-mijannah* refers to the land where there are many jinn (al-Fayruzabadi, 1998). The jinn are so called because they are concealed and hidden from view. Hence the fetus is called *al-janin* because he is concealed in his mother's womb (Ibn Mandhur, 2008).

According to Arabic linguists there are different categories of jinn: (i) *jinni*, in general terms. (ii) *Amir* or dweller if the jinn lives in houses with people (iii) *Arwah* or spirits who interact with children. (iv) *Shaytan* or Satan if the jinn is wicked. (v) if he is worse than that, called *marid* or demon. (vi) *Ifrit*, if he is worse than that and strong (al-Shibli, 1985). In general, the pagan believe that jinn have hidden powers, giving some benefit and harassment. As Allah says in *Sura Saba'* verse 41:

They will say, "Exalted are You! You, [O Allah], are our benefactor not them. Rather, they used to worship the jinn; most of them were believers in them."

Similarly in *Sura al-Jinn* verse 6, Allah explains that most pagan seek help and protection to jinn. In view of them there is collaboration between man and poets of jinn which they can produce beautiful poetry to listen to (Shihab, 2002).

Al-Razi (1981) said most of the philosophers, the anti-fatalists, and the heretics did not believe in the existence of jinn. The philosopher believes if jinn exist, they will in the form of smoothness or roughness creatures. If they were being rough means necessarily visible to everyone, but this has never been proven. Instead of as spirit it would have to be torn and perish by hurricane. In addition, they will not be able to do heavy works as narrated by people. When someone has a view that jinn are kind of spirit, it indicates to understand in improperly meaning, but the designation may be reviewed and revised in terms of disability and the limitation of human beings to see and recognize their existence (Shihab, 2002). al-Kafawi (1992) cited the opinion of Ibn Sina that jinn are microorganisms that can exist in many forms. Al-Ghazali (1928) defines jinn as animals that are wise, have a mild form and can exist in various forms.

Most Islamic contemporary experts recognizes the existence of jinn and did not deny that the Qur'an itself speaks clearly about the jinn. From their point of view there are three popular opinions about the nature of jinn (Shihab, 2002):

- i) The jinn have potentially negative to invite people towards evil. According to this opinion, jinn and Satan are negative potential in human beings and do not have their own forms (Al-Razi, 1981). In *Sura al-Shams* (The Sun) verse 8, the Qur'an explained that in human beings there are positive and negative potentials (wickedness and its righteousness). But it does not mean the jinn do not exist outside human, but they have existences that cannot be perceived by senses. As explained in *Sura al-Hijr* (The Rocky Tract) verse 27 that Allah has created the jinn before Adam.
- ii) The opinion sees the jinn as an existing germs and viruses, not being rational and obligated to embrace Islam and follow its teachings. This opinion is supported by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. However, Abduh not entirely think so, due to in his Quranic exegesis that relate to the jinn he did not deny the existence of jinn.
- iii) The jinn as a wild creatures and have not been civilized that live in the jungles and remote areas in the mountains. This opinion was stated by Ahmad Khan, one of India thinker. His view is a strange opinion, while his arguments towards jinn was misunderstanding.

2.1 The Jinn: From the Qur'anic view

The term *jin* occurs thirty nine times in the Qur'an. There is a whole *sura* called *sura al-Jinn*, which speaks clearly and explicitly about the jinn. They are a part of divine creation separate from humanity and the angels, but they share certain qualities with mankind, like intellect, discrimination and the capacity for freedom (Leaman, 2006).

In the Qur'an, Allah mentions the word *jin* as *jan*,¹ *jinnah*,² and *jin*.³ The word of *al-jan* shows in plural meaning and indicates as a creature that is hidden from the insights, as mentioned in *sura al-Hijr* verse 27. This verse explains the jinn were created before the creation of mankind, and their origin is from smokeless fire. This fire was taken from the clean, pure, extremely hot and the most excellent (Ibn Kathir, 1999; al-Alusi, n.d). With regard to the explanation that jinn were created out of fire, there is a hadith narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

¹ The word of *jan* was mentioned 7 times in the Qur'an, see in *suras al-Hijr* verse 27, *al-Naml* verse 10, *al-Qasas* verse 31, and *al-Rahman* verses 15, 39, 56 & 74.

² The word of *jinnah* was mentioned 10 times in the Qur'an, see in *suras al-A'raf* verse 184, *Hud* verse 119, *al-Mu'minun* verses 25 & 70, *al-Sajdah* verse 13, *Saba'* verses 8 & 46, *al-Saffat* verse 158 (in two times), and *sura al-Nas* verse 6.

³ The word of *jin* was mentioned 22 times in the Qur'an, see in *suras al-An'am* verses 100, 112, 128 & 130, *al-A'raf* verses 38 & 179, *al-Israa'* verse 88, *al-Kahfi* verse 50, *al-Naml* verses 17 & 39, *Saba'* verses 12, 14 & 41, *Fussilat* verses 25 & 29, *al-Ahqaf* verses 18 & 29, *al-Zariat* verse 56, *al-Rahman* verse 33, and *al-Jinn* verses 1, 5 & 6.

"Angels have been created from light, and jinn have been created from fire without smoke, and Adam has been created from what was described for you (dust)".

Most of exegetes said *Jann* was the father of jinn as Adam was father to the mankind (Al-Razi, 1981). The jinn live in a world that cannot be seen with the senses. According to most of scholars, they eat, drink and procreate. Similar to humans, some are righteous while others are not. In the book of *Ahkam al-Jan*, al-Shibli (1985) quoting of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amru ibn al-'Ash which says that Allah created the jinn two thousand years before Adam.

Jinnah's words described by most scholars as a group of the jinn (Shihab, 2009), as mentioned in *sura al-Saffat* (Those who set the Ranks) verse 158 below:

And they have claimed between Him and the jinn a lineage, but the jinn have already known that they [who made such claims] will be brought to [punishment].

In addition, the Qur'an also mentions *Ifrit* in *sura al-Naml* (The Ant) verse 39 and *khannas* in *sura al-Nas* (The Mankind) verse 4 which both mean the jinn. Moreover, the exegetes noted the Qur'an has given a description and explanation about the jinn and their social condition. Al-Tabari (2001) for example in his commentary explains that human and jinn were created as creatures who have the obligation to surrender and worship God as the creator. Allah mentioned in *sura al-Dharyyat* (The Winnowing Winds) verse 56 that indicates the existence of the jinn which means:

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.

According to the majority of scholars the jinn are being obliged to follow the Islamic law that was revealed by Allah to His Messenger Muhammad (Al-Shibli, 1985). They are obliged as well as human in obeying of all commands and avoid the prohibitions (Bali, 1998, Al-Ashqar, 1999), as described in *sura al-Rahman* (The Beneficent) verse 13:

So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

According to al-Razi (1981) in his exegetical work the discussion appearing in this verse is addressed to the jinn and mankind. It means that the jinn are obliged to act in accordance with Allah's orders and to perform worshipping like humans.

From here, the jinn conditions as human beings, among them have accepted the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). They are part of the divine creation and have attitudes, namely intellect, ability to be free and independent. They have the power to choose between true and false, right and wrong as Allah said in *sura al-Jinn* verse 11 below:

And among us are the righteous, and among us are [others] not so; we were [of] divided ways.

2.2 Do Jinn's social condition like a mankind?

A few explanation from the Qur'an according to the scholars the jinn are a great nation. They have a group, even a community of men and women (Al-Razi, 1981). They live in a society, get married and have a family. It is mentioned in *sura al-Rahman* verse 33 which states that the word jinn in plural form shows various meanings. There are several hadith explained the jinn are men and women, such as Hadith from Anas ibn Malik who says when the Prophet went into the toilet he read a prayer (al-Bukhari, 1980; Muslim 2006):

"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the jinns of men and women".

In *Fath al-Bari*, Al-'Asqalani (2001) stated *al-khubth* is the plural of *khabiṭha* which means Satan or the jinn of men, while *al-khabaith* is plural of *khabiṭah* means the jinn of women. Sometimes the Qur'an uses the word *ma'shar* indicates congregation or group when talking about jinn.

There are 3 types of Jinn as described in the following authentic Hadith as narrated by al-Hakim (1988) and al-Baghawi (1993), the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"There are 3 types of Jinn; one type flies through the air, another type consists of snakes and dogs. A third is based in one place but travels about."

In this hadith the jinn have wings and can fly through the air, creeping such as snake or scorpion, do not have permanent residence and constantly moving from one place to another. Al-Shibli (1985) said among the places commonly used by the jinn to stay are the village, mountains and the bay. While the usual places visited by them, and sometimes used to as residence are toilet, ocean, market, roofs, landfills and graves (Shihab, 2002). Apart from these places, they also liked the quiet place, such as valleys, deserts, soil and rock (al-Sayyid, 2005; Bali, 1998).

Before the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the jinn can easily rise into the sky and listen to the conversation of the angels and proclaimed to the sorcerer. But after the Prophet assigned their efforts blocked by the star with the fire (Al-Qurtubi, 2006), as explained in *sura al-Jin* verse 9:

And we used to sit therein in positions for hearing, but whoever listens now will find a burning flame lying in wait for him.

The jinn can also do a terrible job, such as build tall buildings, sculptures and large plates, as explained in *Sura Saba* verse 13:

They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. [We said], "Work, O family of David, in gratitude." And few of My servants are grateful.

In *Tafsir al-Misbah*, *Ifrit* means the jinn that are very strong, intelligent and cannot be harmed, nor invincible. Therefore they can do the heavy job that cannot be done by ordinary people, such as present the Queen Balkis's throne within half day (Shihab, 2002). Moreover, in the Qur'an cannot be found any verses describing exactly clear that the jinn eat and drink. But some exegetes have argued that they also eat and drink like humans, according to the explanation of *sura al-Rahman* verse 46 and an authentic hadith in *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* that prohibit the Muslims to clean themselves using foods of jinn, such as the bones and the dirt (al-Tirmidhi, 1997; Sakat, 2007 & 2011).

From here, the jinn are intelligent beings capable of doing good and evil. They were first known to the inhabitants of pre-Islamic Arabia as a kind of nature spirit or minor deity. Poets and seers were believed to have magical powers in part owing to being possessed by, or having a special relation with them. The jinn can have human qualities; their knowledge is limited and they have moral agency. They can either submit to God or become Muslims, or they can slander and disobey Him, for which God will judge them. Moreover, according to O'Donnell and Campo (2009) when Islam spread outside of Arabia, belief in the jinn was assimilated with local beliefs about deities and spirits, from Africa to Iran, Turkey, India and Southeast Asia. In folk religion, they are spirits often held responsible for extraordinary events, even miracles, as well as many kinds of illness. Special amulets are made to control them or keep them from doing harm.

3. The Devil and Satan: How to Know them?

The word of *iblis* (devil) according to most linguists come from *ablasa* which means desperation from Allah's mercy, or stem from the word *balasa* which means no benefits. The original name of devil is Azazil (al-Razi, 1986). They called *iblis* due to their despair of mercy and compassion of Allah (Ibn Manzur, 2008). The devil is the head of the Satan, who incited mankind to do wickedly, fighting and disobeying Allah and always endeavoured to lead them astray from His guidance (Noresah et al, 2013).

The word of *shaytan* (Satan) stems from the root *shatana* which means stay away. Whoever prefer to disturb from jinn, human and animal called Satan (Ibn Manzur, 2008). They named of Satan because away from the truth and usually like to disrupt (al-Qurtubi, 2006; Shihab, 2002). This word is mentioned in the Qur'an more than 80 times.⁴ In some interpretations of the Qur'an explained the word *al-taghut* also means Satan in human form (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1998). The Qur'an mentioned this word in 8 places.⁵

⁴ Also see the words of *shaytan* or *shayatin* in *suras al-Baqarah* verses 14, 36, 102 (in two times), 168, 208, 268, and 275, *Ali 'Imran* verses 36, 155, and 175, *al-Nisa'* verses 38, 60, 76 (in two times), 83, 117, 119, and 120, *al-Maidah* verses 90 and 91, *al-An'am* verses 43, 68, 71, 112, 121, and 142, *al-A'raf* verses 20, 22, 27 (in two times), 30 (in two times), 175, 200, and 201, *al-Anfal* verses 11 and 48, *Yusuf* verses 5, 42 and 100, *Ibrahim* verse 22, *al-Hijr* verse 17, *al-Nahl* verses 63 and 98, *al-Isra'* verses 27 (in two times), 53 (in two times), and 64, *al-Kahfi* verse 63, *Maryam* verses 44 (in two times), 45, 68, and 83, *Taha* verse 120, *al-Haj* verse 22, 52 (in two times), 53, *al-Anbiya'* verse 82, *al-Mu'minin* verse 97, *al-Nur* verse 21 (in two times), *al-Furqan* verse 29, *al-Shu'ara* verses 210 and 221, *al-Naml* verse 24, *al-Qasas* verse 15, *al-Ankabut* verse 38, *Luqman* verse 21, *Fatir* verse 6, *Yasin* verse 60, *al-Saffat* verses 7 and 65, *Sad* verses 37 and 41, *Fussilat* verse 36, *al-Zukhruf* verses 36 and 62, *Muhammad* verse 25, *al-Mujadalah* verses 10 and 19 (in three times), *al-Hashr* verse 16, *al-Mulk* verse 5, and *sura al-Takwir* verse 25.

⁵ Also see the words of *taghut* in *suras al-Baqarah* verses 256 and 257, *al-Nisa'* verses 51, 60, and 76, *al-Maidah* verse 60, *al-Nahl* verse 36, and *sura al-Zumar* verse 17.

The devil known under two designations in the Qur'an: *iblis*, used always as a proper name, and *al-shaytan* (the Satan) originally a generic designation but with the definite article used as a proper name as well. The generic Satan takes up a pre-Islamic nation of a superhuman entity not unlike the jinn, which may govern the words and deeds of humans as did the pagan demands and deities. An Arab was seen as possessed by a jinn or a Satan. The name *iblis* is usually seen as derived from the Greek diabolos, the name of the devil in Christian scripture, and is thus etymologically related to the word devil. *Shaytan* is most probably derived from the Hebrew, *shatan* (Satan). Arab Muslim philologists suggest different etymologies. They derived *iblis* from an Arabic root, meaning to render hopeless and find also an Arabic etymology for *shaytan*. *Al-shaytan* in its different forms occurs more frequently in the Qur'an than *iblis* (Wild, 2006).

In the Qur'an the word *iblis* (devil) found 11 times in the singular form,⁶ it gives the impression that devil is only one. In contrast to the Satan in plural form, *shayatin*. According to Ibn 'Abbas, Satan are descendants of the devil. They will not die except by the death of devil on the Day of Judgment. The devil had begged their death postponed till the day of resurrection (Shihab, 2002). But their demand unfulfilled by Allah, if the devil can live up to they would try to disturb and mislead the people who are already in the Hereafter.

Pagans claimed between Allah and the devil have brotherly relations, some others said *jinnah* was the daughters of Allah and it was among the angels. As shown in *sura al-An'am* (The Cattle) verse 100 (Al-Tabari, 1954).

Devil, or Satan, are one of the jinn, but the Qur'an also portrays them as rebellious angels, a belief that had arisen in Judaism and Christianity previously. The scholars agree the devil are the first creatures who refused to obey Allah's command to salute Adam. They also seduced, or deceived Adam and Eve until expelled from heaven (Al-Shaukani, 1994). When God ordered the angels and all creatures including devil to bow down to Adam, but the devil refused and got Allah's wrath and curse and bringeth them out from heaven (al-Musayyar, 1998, al-Sha'rawi, 1991), as shown in *sura al-Kahfi* (The Cave) verse 50.

The devil refused to do so because of pride and arrogance. Instead they disobey Allah (Al-Razi, 1981). Resentment of the devil to Adam become thicker, even after their appeals to be given the opportunity to live could be suspended until the day of resurrection is not permitted by Allah, they swore to deceive the servants of Him (Shihab, 2002). In *sura al-Baqarah* (The Cow) verse 36, Allah commanded Adam and the devil down to earth, and reminded Adam that the devil are extremely dangerous enemies. The cause of hostility the devil to Adam because of envy and arrogance for the blessings that Allah gave to Adam (Al-Razi, 1981). The devil also stated that they will continue to resist and deceive Adam and his descendants, as described in verse 5 of *sura Joseph* (Al-Tabari, 2001). However, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (1997) said some of the wisdom of the creation of the devil and Satan are: Human face them in order to achieve a high position in Him, to seek refuge in Allah always, increasing their fear and devotion to Allah, the divine power and evidence perfection as a test for them.

3.1 Do Devil and Satan have power?

Satan are the hidden creatures and invisible to the human eyes. Allah has given the ability to them to see humans, while humans cannot see them due to Satan's forms are smooth and soft (Al-Shaukani, 1994). Allah also reminds the people of their danger and intrigue as they will attempt to mislead people on the right path by providing a range of luxury world, as described in the Qur'an of *surah al-A'raf* (The Heights) verse 27.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) explained the Satan can get into the human body through various ways to disturbing them, such as the hadith narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Safiyah bint Huyay:

"Satan circulates in a person like blood (in the blood streams). I apprehended lest Satan should drop some evil thoughts in your minds". (al-Bukhari, 1980).

Accordingly, in *sura al-Baqarah* verse 275, the Qur'an explained the ability of Satan to possess and disturb descendants of Adam to become mad. This means they can change their forms when they want to penetrate into the human body. They can change shapes so that they can appear as animals such as cats, dogs, and goats. They never extinct their determination to lead people astray. The ultimate goal is to make people forget Allah, ascribing partners to Him and even deny Him, as indicated in *Sura al-Hashr* (The Exile) verse 16 (Al-Tabari, 2001). However, their plot was limited and very weak (al-Andalusi, 1993). The Qur'an explained this issue in *sura al-Nisa'* (The Women) verse 76. Satan will not be able to control Allah's servants who believe in Him, but who follow their desires only, as described in *sura al-*

⁶ Also see the words of *iblis* in *suras al-Baqarah* verse 34, *al-A'raf* verse 11, *al-Hijr* verses 31 and 32, *al-Isra'* verse 61, *al-Kahfi* verse 50, *Taha* verse 116, *al-Shu'ara* verse 95, *Saba'* verse 20, and *sura Sad* verses 74 and 75.

Hijr (The Rocky Tract) verse 42 (Al-Ashqar, 1999). They to be powerless during the fasting month of Ramadhan except against those who improperly break the fast, and the recitation of basmalah is to drive them from any room.

Notwithstanding, the Satan also have fears like human beings, therefore they did intrigue, deceit, and justify any ways to achieve their goals, as in *sura Ali Imran* (Family of Imran) verse 175 (Shihab, 2002). Satan also have characteristic of *khannas* which means hiding until they get a chance to whisper and attacks to their enemies. When people neglect and forget, the Satan will come and disturb, when Human remember Allah then Satan will retreat and hide (Al-Zuhayli, 1996). And among the wisdom of spirits creation are: (i) to strengthen Muslims' faith to Allah, and to convince of His greatness and majesty. (ii) to remain vigilant against enemies that did not appear that always determining and trying to disturb and mislead them. (iii) to examine one's faith to use their common sense and body wisely and not be fascinated by Satan's persuasions and tricks. (iv) to measure the strength and greatness of one's faith. (v) In order to feel confident for Allah's help.

In Islamic thought, the Satan or Devil represent the power of evil and are enemies of humanity. Devil's disobedience comes from pride; their belief that they were superior to Adam and the other angels. In keeping with Islamic monotheism, however, theologians point out that Devil have not real power over humans that they do not themselves grant by being deceived by Devil's trickery. They are always whispering in the ears of humans, but they can resist the temptation. In popular tradition, they are also who instill the propensity to sin into humans at birth; some stories say that Jesus was preserved from sin by his mother's ability to ward of Satan. There is also a popular belief that every human is accompanied by both an angel and a Satan offering contradictory inspirations (Newby, 2009).

4. Conclusion

The Qur'an has explained in detail about the existence of spirits which include jinn, devil and Satan that were created from fire. Satan's his original name is *Azazil* as a father or head to Satan. In the beginning, the devil are obedient creatures and worship Allah but then they rebelled due to their arrogance to honouring Adam. The devil and Satan will always invite people to do vices and lead them astray until the Day of Judgment.

The jinn also being obliged to Islamic commands, among them are believers and others are not. As Allah's creatures, jinn, devil and Satan have been given extraordinary powers, such as hidden and unreachable by eyesight, could change their form as they want, fly and run faster, and could penetrate into human body. For the devil and Satan in particular, they have a persistent character, strong determination and patience in disturbing and misleading people. The devil and Satan also have the disadvantages, that they are weak when facing of the believers. Belief in them is an accepted aspect of official Islamic doctrine.

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