A hand holding a glowing sword against a dark background. The sword is held in a way that its blade points upwards and to the right, creating a bright, diagonal streak of light. The hand is visible at the bottom left, and the sword's hilt is partially visible. The background is dark and textured, possibly representing a night sky or a dark surface.

THE
EXORCIST
TRADITION
IN ISLAM

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THE EXORCIST TRADITION IN ISLĀM

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Edited by Riaz Ansary

كلام الله
KALAMULLAH

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

Consonants,

ء	ب	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	'	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short:	اَ	a	يَ	i	وُ	u
Long:	اَا	ā	يِي	i	وُو	ū
diphthongs:			اِي	ay	اُو	aw

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was originally submitted under the title “Exorcism in Islam” as a Ph.D. thesis, at the University of Wales, St. David’s University College, in September of 1993. It is unimaginable that an academic effort of this magnitude could successfully come to fruition without the help of others. Expressing gratitude to those to whom it is due is a highly regarded Islamic custom based upon the statement of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ):

من لم يشكر الناس لم يشكر الله

“Whoever does not thank people does not thank Allāh.”¹

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Mawil Izzi Dien, for his invaluable spiritual and academic advice and for his subtle direction of my efforts throughout the preparation of this thesis. Gratitude is also due to the Dean of the faculty of Theology, Dr. D. P. Davies, who provided both insights into the topic and technical guidance in its compilation. And lastly, I am indebted to sister Amatullah who typed my thesis at a moment’s notice.

¹ Narrated by Abū Sa’īd, collected by Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī, and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol.5, pp.356-357, no.6417.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history man has always had a strong attraction for the occult and supernatural. In the past, high priests, mediums, shamans, secret societies, cults and religions were always there to satisfy this thirst. With the birth of industrialisation and the evolution of modern science, there arose in the West an era of scepticism which relegated the occult to the realm of fairy tales and fiction. However, from time to time there have been upsurges of spiritualism. In the past two decades countless gurus, maharajis, swamis, *peers* and representatives of Christian and Islamic cults have plied their wares among the present, impressionable generation of Westerners. During the last twenty years, in particular, the spiritualist wave has reached an unprecedented height. In response, the movie industry has enthusiastically churned out a series of films about ghosts and demonic possession: *The Exorcist*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Possessed*, *Poltergeist*, *Ghost Busters*, etc. Publishing houses have also printed a plethora of books on this subject. The basis for many of these movie scripts and novels has been extracted from a long tradition of Christian influenced literature on the occult.

Belief in the spirit-world and diabolical possession of human beings has continued virtually unchallenged since the earliest times in the East, especially in the Muslim world. Consequently, there has been very little recent literature written and published, especially of research calibre, in the Muslim world. However, in the last ten years, an upsurge of interest among Muslims about possession and the spirit-world has led to the republication of most of the classical texts on this subject and the publication of a few modern works. There has also been a marked increase in the number of exorcists, especially among practising Muslims. Orientalist literature on this subject, although relatively abundant, concentrates extensively on the folklore aspect of the spirit-world and demonic possession as it manifests itself in different Muslim lands.

This present work is specifically aimed at filling a gap in modern research on the Islamic concept of exorcism and the supernatural world related to it, based upon the sources considered authentic by Islamic² authorities and augmented by field research. This thesis is comprised of four chapters. The first two investigate the theoretical aspects of exorcism, and the last two contain data gathered from field study and books, including a critical and comparative analysis of this collected information in light of its orthodox theological roots.

² When the term 'Islamic' is used, it refers to orthodox Islām, that which is in accordance with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (authentic traditions of Prophet Muḥammad [ﷺ]) as understood by the early generations of righteous, Muslim scholars.

The first chapter is an introduction to the theological roots of exorcism. The orthodox Islamic concept of created intelligent beings which comprise the spirit-world is given. Each class of the spirit-world is portrayed in regard to its origin, form and abilities. From this, it is deduced whether or not it is possible for any of these beings to possess humans.

The second chapter presents the theological basis for and against the belief in spirit-possession of humans and presents the authentic narrated evidence used by proponents of both views. It further looks at related terminology and examines the orthodox methodology of exorcism based upon prophetic tradition and the traditions of the Prophet's companions.

The third chapter is comprised of the results from a field study of sampling of orthodox Muslim exorcists collected from different Islamic communities around the world. This data includes theological views of the exorcists on the subject of exorcism, their techniques and some case histories of their patients. A tabulation of the data from the interviews is used to create a profile of the modern Muslim exorcist and his techniques. A brief presentation of the history, theory and practice of exorcism in the Roman Catholic branch of Christianity and other sects which share their view of demonology concludes this chapter.

The fourth and final chapter consists of a discussion in which the profile of the modern Muslim exorcist and his techniques developed in the third chapter are compared to the classical model also presented in the second chapter. The discussion is followed by a conclusion in which the views of the medical profession regarding exorcism are presented and the validity of exorcist tradition defended. It ends with a discussion of the Islamic view on successful exorcisms performed by Christians.

There is an appendix containing seventeen interviews of exorcists, grouped according to their locale. Also included is a summary of relevant data about exorcists in Sudan, extracted from the unpublished Master thesis of Abdel Rahim Elmahi Elnour, *Fugara Techniques of Mental Healing* (submitted to the Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, University of Khartoum, March, 1987).

Original texts of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* quoted throughout this thesis either have been translated by me or existing translations have been modified to correct errors or update the language. Consequently, the references to English translations are only to indicate existing English language sources. I have also endeavoured to authenticate *ḥadīths* not found in the collections of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which are generally accepted by Muslim authorities as completely authentic with a few well-known exceptions. In doing so, I have relied upon the works which have been critically authenticated by Shaykh Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī, one of the leading *ḥadīth* scholars of this century.

THE SPIRIT WORLD

According to Islamic beliefs there are three different species of created intelligent beings: mankind, angels and *jinn*. These intelligent beings are called *dhaw al-'uqūl* (rational beings).³ Although the bodies of human beings inhabit the visible material world, their souls inhabit the spirit-world of invisible rational beings. The spirit world of created beings in the Islamic cosmological view is composed of human spirits, angels and *jinn*. Therefore, the possession of human beings by spirits, if recognised by Islām, must involve one, some or all of these entities. In order to determine what role, if any, they play in the spirit-possession of human beings, the following chapter will investigate each of the created spiritual beings in regard to their reality, composition and abilities.

³ *Dictionary of Islam*, p.40

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

According to Islamic beliefs, the first classification of created spiritual beings is that of the human spirit. The most commonly used Arabic terms for the human spirit or soul are *rūḥ* and *nafs*. The word *rūḥ* was originally used by the Arabs to refer to breath or wind, while *nafs* was used reflexively to refer to the self or person. In the Qur'ān both terms are used in reference to the human soul.⁴

Some scholars of *ḥadīth* and law and some mystics held that the *rūḥ* was different from the *nafs*. One such scholar, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān⁵ explained this view, stating, “Man has life [*ḥayāh*], a spirit [*rūḥ*] and a soul [*nafs*]. When he sleeps, his *nafs* – by which he understands things – leaves him. However, it does not become completely separate from the body, but leaves like a rope with its fibres extending from it. He sees dreams with the *nafs* which has left him, while *ḥayāh* and *rūḥ* both remain, enabling him to breathe and toss and turn during sleep.”⁶

The judge, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī,⁷ held that the *nafs* was the breath which is inhaled and exhaled, and the *rūḥ* a manifestation (*'arād*) of the life force (*ḥayāh*).⁸

Although the terms *nafs* (soul) and *rūḥ* (spirit) are used to refer to a number of different things, the majority of scholars held that with regard to human beings, they are one and the same thing. However, the term *nafs* is more frequently used to refer to the spirit when it is attached to the body, but when it is completely separate from the body, the term *rūḥ* is usually used.

⁴ *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p.433. See also *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 1180 and *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 546.

⁵ Muqātil ibn Sulaymān ibn Bashīr al-Azdī (d.767 CE) was born in Balkh but lived in Baghdad, where he became among the leading Qur'ānic exegetes of his time. He also narrated *ḥadīths*, however, he was considered an unreliable narrator (*matrūk al-ḥadīth*) by his contemporaries among the *ḥadīth* scholars. His most noted works include *Nawādir al-Tafsīr* and *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 7, p. 281.)

⁶ *Al-Rūḥ*, pp. 327-328.

⁷ Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī (939-1013 CE) was born in Basrah and lived in Baghdad, where he became a judge and was among the leading scholastic theologians of his time. He became the leading scholar of the Ash'arī school of thought and wrote many books against the rival Mu'tazilī school. Among his published works are *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* and *al-Inṣāf*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 176.)

⁸ *Al-Rūḥ*, p. 274.

Rūḥ is not used to refer to the human body by itself or along with the soul. Among other usages, we find *nafs* referring to blood, as in the juristic maxim, “That which has no flowing blood [*nafs*] will not defile water if it dies in it.” The evil eye (*‘ayn*) is also referred to as *nafs*, as in the expression, “So-and-so was afflicted by the evil eye [*nafs*].” *Nafs* also means “self,” as in the verse:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

“Do not kill yourselves [*anfusakum*]”
Qur’ān, 4:29

The word *rūḥ* also has various usages. For example, it is used to refer to the Qur’ān itself:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِمَّا أَمَرْنَا

“And thus We revealed to you by Our command
a scripture [*rūḥan*]...”
Qur’ān, 42:52

It is also used in reference to Angel Gabriel, as in the verse:

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ

“The trustworthy angel (*rūḥ*) descended with it
[i.e., the Qur’ān].”
Qur’ān, 26:193

Allāh also refers to the succour which He grants His righteous servants as *rūḥ*:

أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ
بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ

“For such He has written in their hearts faith and aided
them with a spirit [*rūḥ*] from Himself.”
Qur’ān, 58:22

In Arabic, the human senses are also referred to as *rūḥ*, as in the expression, “The sense of smell [*al-rūḥ al-shāmm*].”⁹

⁹ *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p 445. The Arabic text was taken verbatim from *al-Rūḥ*, pp. 326-327 and 329-330.

There are two other Arabic terms, *nasam* and *nasamah*, which are derived from the same root and are synonymous with both *nafs* and *rūḥ*. These terms also refer to any crawling or walking creature which possesses a soul.¹⁰ Although these terms are not found in the Qur’ān, they are mentioned in a number of prophetic statements. For example:

إِنَّمَا نَسَمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ طَائِرٌ فِي شَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَبْعَثَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَى جَسَدِهِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Verily, the soul [nasamah] of the true believer becomes a bird in the trees of Paradise.”¹¹

ORIGIN

The opinion held by the majority of Islamic scholars is that the human soul (*rūḥ*) is not of divine origin, but it is a finite, created entity. The commentator of *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah* said the following, “The *rūḥ* [human spirit] is a part of Allāh’s creation and, as such, is created, according to the consensus of Sunnī scholars, as stated by Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī,¹² Ibn Qutaybah¹³ and others.”¹⁴ This position is based upon the following evidence from the Qur’ān:

اللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

“Allāh is the creator of all things.”

Qur’ān, 13:16 and 39:62

The meaning of this verse is general and includes everything besides Allāh

¹⁰ *Lisān al-‘Arab al-Muḥīṭ*, vol. 3, p. 629. See also Ibn al-Athīr’s *al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 5, p. 49.

¹¹ Narrated by Ka’b ibn Mālik, collected by al-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah, and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, vol. 2, p. 445, no. 1960.

¹² Muḥammad ibn Naṣr (806-852 CE), born and died in Baghdad, was a Ḥanbalī scholar of *ḥadīth*. Among his many works is *Ta’zīm Qadr al-Ṣalāh*, which has been published. (*Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 14, p. 33, no. 13.)

¹³ ‘Abdullāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al-Daynūrī (d. 878 CE) was also a Ḥanbalī scholar noted for his books *Musḥkil al-Qur’ān*, *Ta’wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān* and *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, the latter three of which are published. (*Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 13, p. 296, no. 138)

¹⁴ *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 391. See also *Majmū’ Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām*, vol. 4, p. 216.

and His attributes. Similarly, evidence may be found in Allāh’s statement to Zakariyyā in the Qur’ān:

وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٩﴾

“I created you before and you were nothing.”
Qur’ān, 19:9

The term “human being” refers to both the body and spirit, and the address is to Zakariyyā, who is composed of both a body and spirit.¹⁵

Further evidence for this position has been deduced from descriptions in the texts of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* of the spirit in terms of dying, being held, snatched and released. These are all qualities of created things.¹⁶ Allāh states:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

“Every soul [nafṣ] will taste death...”
Qur’ān, 3:185, 21:35 as 29:57

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فِيم_Sِكِّ الْأَلْبَانِ فَضَّلَ عَلَيْهَا الْوَمَوْتِ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأَخْرَى إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى

“It is Allāh that takes the souls [anfus] at death, and those that do not die He takes during their sleep. Those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He holds back [from returning to this life], and the rest He releases [back to their bodies] for an appointed term.

Qur’ān, 39:42

Umm Salamah reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) came when her husband, Abū Salamah, died and found his eyes open in a fixed stare. He closed them and said,

¹⁵ *Sharḥ al-Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, pp. 391-392.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

إن الروح إذا قبض تبعه البصر

“When a soul is snatched, the sight follows it.”¹⁷

The opinion that the soul is uncreated, and consequently a part of Allāh’s essence, was held by some of the Muslim philosophers like al-Kindī,¹⁸ al-Fārābī¹⁹ and Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī,²⁰ by *Ṣūfis* such as the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*²¹ and Ibn ‘Arabī,²² and by some scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*).²³ Some among them used Islamic texts to support their position that the soul is from “Allāh’s command,” an attribute of Allāh, and thus uncreated. This argument is based upon the Qur’ānic verse:

قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

“Say: ‘The spirit [*nafs*] is from my Lord’s command [*amr*].”

Qur’ān, 17:85

However, here the meaning of *amr* (command) is not divine order itself, but *ma’mūr*, the thing being ordered. The use of the *maṣdar* (infinitive) to mean

¹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, pp. 436-437, no. 2003.

¹⁸ Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī (d. 873 CE), a leading Arab Muslim philosopher of his time, was a son of one of the kings of Kindah. He grew up in Basrah, then travelled to Baghdad, where he studied and became famous in the fields of medicine, philosophy, music, engineering and astronomy. He authored many books and translated and wrote commentaries on many others, totalling over 300. His book on medical compounds, *al-Adwiyah al-Murakkabah*, was translated into Latin along with some of his treatises in philosophy. Among his other published works are *Risālah fī al-Tanjīm* on astrology, and *al-Qawl fī al-Nafs* and *Khamsah Rasā’il* in philosophy. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 8, p. 195.) See *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 443.

¹⁹ Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Tarkhān al-Fārābī (874-950 CE) was born in Fārāb (Transoxiana). He was of Turkish origin, but was raised in Baghdad. He became proficient in Greek and most of the Eastern languages known in his time. He became known as “The Second Teacher” due to his commentaries on the writings of Aristotle (“The First Teacher”) and is considered the pre-eminent Muslim philosopher. He is known in the West by the Latin name Alfarabius or Avennasir. Among his published works are *al-Fuṣūṣ*, *Iḥṣā’ al-‘Ulūm* and *al-Musiqa al-Kabīr*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 7, p. 20. See also *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, p. 680.)

²⁰ Ahū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (865-925 CE), a philosopher and among the leading medical scholars, was born in Ray and studied there. At the age of 30 he travelled to Baghdad, where he became famous and was given a number of leading scientific posts. In the West he was known by the Latin name Rhazes. The number of known titles of his written works is 232. His famous work is *al-Hāwī* in medicine, which was translated into Latin. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 6, p. 130.) See *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 443.

²¹ *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 296-299.

²² *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 436.

²³ *Majmū’ Fatāwā*, vol. 4, p. 222.

ism maf'ūl (passive participle) is a well-known Arabic construction.²⁴

Another evidence used by this faction to support the uncreated origin of the spirit is the Qur'ānic verse in reference to Allāh's creation of Adam:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي

“And I blew in him from My spirit.”

Qur'ān, 15:29

They claimed that in this verse Allāh attributes the spirit to Himself in the same way as He does His attributes, such as mercy, knowledge, sight, etc. On the other hand, orthodox scholars point out that it is necessary to acknowledge the two categories of things referred to by Allāh as “His”. The first includes descriptions of things which do not exist by themselves, like Allāh's mercy, knowledge, power and life. These are actual attributes and descriptions of Allāh. The other category consists of things which exist separate from Allāh, like the house of Allāh, His she-camel, His servant, His messenger and His spirit. These are created things attributed to their Creator as “His” to indicate their special place of honour among His creation.²⁵ Muḥammad ibn Naṣr was quoted as saying, “There is no difference among Muslims with regard to the fact that the souls of Adam and his progeny, Jesus, and all other descendants of Adam are created. Allāh created them, developed them and gave them form. Then He attributed them to Himself as He did with the remainder of His creation. Almighty Allāh said:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ

*“He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens
and on earth, all of it is from Him...”*

Qur'ān, 45:13²⁶

FORM

Some Muslim philosophers assert that each individual has three types of soul within him: *ammārah*, *lawwāmah* and *muṭma'innah*. They maintain that human personality is a reflection of the predominant soul. However, according to leading Sunnī scholars, the correct position is that these

²⁴ *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 392.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Al-Hujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥajjah*, vol. 1, p. 469.

Qur'ānic terms all refer to the single human soul which exists in three states.²⁷ In its lowest state *al-nafs al-ammārah bil-sū'* (the soul which persistently commands evil) urges the complete and unbridled fulfilment of the soul's base desires:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ

“Verily, the soul persistently commands evil.”

Qur'ān, 12:53

It is in this respect that Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said:

لا يزني الزاني حين يزني وهو مؤمن

“An adulterer is not a believer while committing adultery.”

When the sinful desires are opposed by faith, the soul may blame and chastise its owner for the sins he or she commits, and therefore becomes *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* (the constantly chiding soul). The Qur'ān states:

وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٧٥﴾

“And I swear by the self-recriminating soul.”

Qur'ān, 75:2

Likewise, the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إذا ساءتكَ سيئاتك وسرتك حسناتك فأنت مؤمن

“If your good deeds make you happy and your evil deeds make you feel bad, you are a believer.”²⁸

If faith becomes strong, good deeds predominate and the soul becomes tranquil. This is referred to as *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* (the soul at peace).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٧٦﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ

“O peaceful soul, return to your Lord.”

Qur'ān, 89:27-28

Attempts have been made by many scholars to identify the constitution of

²⁷ *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, pp. 394-395.

²⁸ Collected by Aḥmad, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 2, p. 83, no.550.

the soul. Some, like Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī,²⁹ held that it was corporeal.

Others, such as al-Ghazālī³⁰ and Ibn Sīnā,³¹ adopted the Aristotelian view that it was incorporeal. In *Tawālī' al-Anwār*, al-Bayḍāwī³² classified the human soul as an incorporeal emanation from Allāh.³³ Yet others, like Abū 'Abdullāh ibn al-Khaṭīb,³⁴ claimed that it was none other than the human body itself.³⁵ The majority of scholars rejected the latter two claims as being pure speculation, lacking any shred of evidence from the only sources

²⁹ Fakhruddīn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī (1150-1210 CE), a leading Qur'ānic exegete, was born in Rayy. He was the pre-eminent scholar of his time in Islamic sciences, as well as logic and philosophy. His famous work is his eight volume commentary on the Qur'ān, which he entitled *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, but which became known as *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*. Among his other published works are *Lawāmi' al-Bayyināt*, *Ma'ālim Uṣūl al-Dīn*, *al-Masā'il al-Khamsah* and *Nihāyah al-Iyāz fi Dirāyah al-Iyāz*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 313.)

³⁰ Abū Hāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1058-1111 CE), a leading Muslim theologian, was born in Tūs and was educated there and at Naysābūr, especially under Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (1028-1085 CE), with whom he stayed until the imām's death. He was appointed to teach at the Nizāmiyyah Madrasah at Baghdad. There he taught and wrote on canon law, and he also wrote controversial books against various deviant sects. He later engrossed himself in *Shūfism* and studied Greek philosophy. Through his writings the forms of Greek dialectic made their final entry into Muslim thought. Among his famous published works are *al-Mustaṣfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* in canon law; *Mi'yār al-'Ilm* and *Tabāfut al-Falāsifah* in logic and philosophy; and his classic, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 111-114.)

³¹ Known as Avicenna (d. 1037 CE) in the West, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn Sīnā was born in Bukhārā. He was a Persian physician and the most famous and influential of philosopher-scientists identified within Islām. He was particularly noted for his contributions in the fields of Aristotelian philosophy and medicine. He composed *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (*Book of Healing*), a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopaedia, and *al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb* (*Canon of Medicine*), which is among the most famous books in the history of medicine. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 1, p. 739.)

³² 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1287 CE), a jurist, Qur'ānic exegete scholar, was born in the city of Bayḍā (in Persia near Shīrāz) and was made the judge of Shīrāz for some time. He is most noted for his exegesis, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, commonly known as *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, *Tawālī' al-Anwār* in theology and *Minhāj al-Waṣṣūl fi 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* in canon law. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 4, p. 110.)

³³ *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 435.

³⁴ Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh (1313-1374 CE), born in Granada, was famous under the title "*Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb*." He was an historian and a man of letters. He later settled with his family in Fās, in what is now Morocco. At one point in his illustrious career he was jailed and accused of heresy and deviant philosophical studies. While in prison he wrote a number of books on the history of the cities of North Africa and Spain. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 235.)

³⁵ *Al-Rūḥ*, p. 275.

which could define it - the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Ibn Ḥazm³⁶ was quoted by Ibn al-Qayyim³⁷ as saying that the majority upheld the view of al-Rāzī in which the soul is considered corporeal and different from the human body.³⁸ Ibn al-Qayyim then listed one hundred and sixteen proofs from sources of Islamic thought in support of this view.³⁹

It is generally held that the soul exists throughout the physical body. Ibn Taymiyyah⁴⁰ said, "The soul has no specialised location in the body. It flows through the body in the same way as the life force, which is manifest in all parts of the body.

The presence of the soul is a condition for the existence of life. When the soul is present, life is present, and when it leaves, life leaves."⁴¹

³⁶ 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm al-Zāhirī (944-1064 CE), born in Córdoba, was among the leading Muslim jurists of all time. He revived the Zāhirī school of Muslim jurisprudence that was founded by Dāwūd ibn 'Alī al-Zāhirī (815-883 CE). He was a prolific writer, and among his more famous published works are *al-Fiṣal* in heresiology; an 11 volume work in Islamic law called *al-Muḥalla* and *Iḥkām li Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* in canon law. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 4, pp. 254-255.)

³⁷ Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr (1292-1350 CE) came to be known as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah or simply Ibn al-Qayyim because his father was the director (*qayyim*) of *al-Jawziyyah Madrasah* at Damascus. He was born in Damascus, where he studied and became a leading Ḥanbalī theologian and faithful disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah. Among his published works are *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'im*, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, *al-Ṣawāiq al-Mursalah*, *Madārij al-Sālikin*, *al-Rūb* and *Ighāthah al-Lahfān*. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 149. See also *Al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 56)

³⁸ *Al-Rūb*, pp. 275-276.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 277-299.

⁴⁰ Aḥmad ibn 'Abdul-Ḥalīm ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 CE) was born in Ḥarrān. His father and grandfather were themselves leading scholars of the Ḥanbalī school of Islamic Law. He grew up in Damascus, where he mastered at an early age the various Islamic disciplines. Much of his time and effort was spent defending the orthodox Islamic position against the various deviations which were current at that time. A great deal of his latter life was spent in jail due to theological and philosophical clashes with scholars of his time. He was a prolific writer, even while in jail. Some of his more famous published works are *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyyah*, *al-Īmān*, *Minbāj al-Sunnah*, *al-Furqān*, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il*, *al-Tawassul wal-Wasīlah* and *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 1, p. 144.)

⁴¹ *Majmū' al-Rasā'il al-Muniriyyah*, vol. 2. p. 47.

DEATH

Many Sunnī scholars maintain that the soul actually dies, based upon the obvious meanings of the following verses:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

“Every soul will taste death.”
Qur’ān, 3:185

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٢٧﴾

“Everything in the world will vanish leaving only the face of your Lord, the Glorious, the Noble.”
Qur’ān, 55:26-27

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

“Everything will perish except His face.”
Qur’ān, 28:88

It is also stated in the Qur’ān:

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا آثَمِينَ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا آثَمِينَ

“[The people of Hell say]: O Lord, You have caused us to die twice and brought us to life twice.”
Qur’ān, 40:11

They interpret this verse to be referring to the first death which we witness happening to the body in this life, and the second death referring to the death of the soul when the trumpet is blown prior to resurrection. Furthermore, they argue that if the angels die at the blowing of the trumpet, the human soul most certainly will die.⁴²

Other scholars, among them Ibn Ḥazm,⁴³ Ibn Taymiyyah⁴⁴ and Ibn al-Qayyim, hold that the soul does not actually die. The soul was created to exist eternally and only the body actually dies. They claim that the traditions referring to the pleasures of the righteous soul and the tortures of the evil soul after its extraction from the body until Allāh returns it to its

⁴² Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah, p. 395. See also al-Rūḥ, p.70.

⁴³ Al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal wal-Abwā’ wal Niḥal, vol. 5, p.88.

⁴⁴ Majmū’ al-Fatāwā, vol. 4, p. 279.

body indicate its eternal nature. According to them, the “death” of the soul is only its extraction from the body. In support of this position they cite the following Qur’ānic verses:

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ

“In it [i.e. Paradise] they will not taste death beyond the first death.”

Qur’ān, 44:56

Here the people of Paradise are described as only dying once. If there was a death of the soul also at the time of the blowing of the trumpet, it would mean that two deaths were decreed for them.

Regarding the verse mentioning two deaths used as evidence by those who hold that the soul dies: “[The people of Hell say], ‘O Lord, you have caused us to die twice and have brought us to life twice.’”⁴⁵ Those who deny the soul’s death claim that it is explained by the following verse:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ
ثُمَّ يَمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

“How can you disbelieve in Allāh when you were dead and He brought you to life, then He will cause you to die, then he will bring you back to life?”

Qur’ān, 2:28

Those who advocate that the soul does not die explain that the first of the two deaths mentioned in these verses refers to man being dead (i.e., nonexistent) while in the state of sperm in his father’s loin and ovum in his mother’s womb. The second death takes place after he is brought to life in this world and is caused to die a bodily death with the separation of the soul from the body. In this sequence the soul does not die prior to resurrection; otherwise there would be three deaths and not two.⁴⁶

They further argue that the stunning (*ṣa‘q*) of the souls at the time of the blowing of the horn (*ṣūr*) does not necessitate their death. According to them, mankind will be stunned on the Day of Resurrection when Allāh comes to judge them and the earth will be illuminated with His light, but this will not be their death. Similarly, when Prophet Moses asked to see Allāh and was thunderstruck, he did not die. Only those of creation who

⁴⁵ Qur’ān, 40:11

⁴⁶ *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, pp. 395-396.

are not already dead will die at the blowing of the horn, while those who died previously and those not destined to die among the damsels and youths of Paradise will not.⁴⁷

THE SOUL'S ABODE AFTER DEATH

Muslim scholars have disagreed regarding where the souls dwell after the death of the body until the Day of Resurrection. Some specified actual locations on earth, such as al-Jāhiyah⁴⁸ in Damascus or the well of Zamzam for the souls of believers, and Burhūt⁴⁹ in Yemen for the disbelieving souls.⁵⁰ However, these opinions are based upon fabricated traditions. Other scholars, like Ibn Ḥazm, held that they return to the *barzakh* where they had been created and kept before being blown by angels into the human embryos. Authentic traditions support the opinion that the souls of the dead in the *barzakh*⁵¹ are in different locations, according to their faith or lack of it and according to the quality or quantity of their good deeds and their sins.⁵²

⁴⁷ *Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, p.396.

⁴⁸ *Jāhiyah* literally means a watering trough which collects water (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 370)

⁴⁹ A well in Hadramaut (*Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, p. 454). According to Ibn al-Athīr in *al-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 122, it can also be written Barahūt, and it refers to a well in Hadramaut so deep that it is not possible to reach its bottom.

⁵⁰ *Al-Rūḥ*, pp. 154-155. See also *Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, p. 454.

⁵¹ *Barzakh* is a Persian and Arabic word meaning “obstacle,” “hindrance” or “separation”. It is found three times in the Qurʾān (23:100, 25:53 and 55:20). In eschatology, the word *barzakh* is used to describe the interval between the present life and that which is to come, from the period of each soul’s death until the Resurrection. Literally, “a thing that intervenes between any two things; a bar or an obstruction.” (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 59. See also *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 187.)

⁵² *Al-Fiṣal fī al-Milāl*, vol. 5, pp. 88-89.

SOULS OF THE PROPHETS ⁵³

The abode of the souls of the Prophets is the level in Paradise of the uppermost company (*al-rafiq al-a'lā*).⁵⁴ It is the uppermost of the *'illiyyīn*,⁵⁵ the highest level of the seventh heaven. Prophet Muḥammad's wife, 'Ā'ishah, reported that at the last moment of his life the Prophet (ﷺ) called out,

اللهم اغفر لي وارحمني والحقتني بالرفيق الأعلى

“O Allāh, forgive me, have mercy upon me and admit me to al-rafiq al-a'lā”⁵⁶

SOULS OF THE MARTYRS

Some of the souls of the martyrs reside inside green birds in Paradise, while others are held at the gates of Paradise. Ibn 'Abbās reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

لما أصيب إخوانكم بأحد جعل الله أرواحهم في جوف طير خضر ترد
أنهار الجنة تأكل من ثمارها وتأوي إلى قناديل من ذهب معلقة في ظل
العرش

“When your brethren were killed [on the day of Uḥūd], Allāh placed their souls inside green birds which drink from the rivers of Paradise and eat from its fruits. Then they retire to the golden lamps hanging from the shade of the throne.”⁵⁷

⁵³ The following classification can be found in *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, pp. 402-403 and in 'Umar al-Ashqar's *al-Yaum al-Ākbar: al-Qiyāmah al-Ṣughrā*, pp. 102-104.

⁵⁴ *Rafiq* here refers to a group of prophets who occupy the uppermost part of the seventh heaven (*Al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2, p. 246. See also Qur'an, 4:69)

⁵⁵ A place in the seventh heaven to which ascend the souls of the believers. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2147).

⁵⁶ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 392, no. 578 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1301, no. 5986.

⁵⁷ Collected by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, p. 455, fn. 3.

On another occasion a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked, “O Messenger of Allāh, what will I get if I am killed in the path of Allāh?” He replied: “Paradise.” When the man turned to walk away, the Prophet (ﷺ) added,

إلا الدين سارني به جبريل آفنا

“Except [if you have a] debt. Jibrīl just confided it to me.”⁵⁸

SOULS OF THE BELIEVERS

The souls of the righteous believers will also be in Paradise, but in the form of birds and not inside birds. Yet these souls will not be free to roam as those of the martyrs. Ka‘b ibn Mālik related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إنما نسمة المؤمن طائر في شجر الجنة حتى يبعثه الله عز وجل إلى جسده
يوم القيامة

“The believer’s soul [becomes] a bird which feeds upon the fruits of the trees in Paradise, until Allāh returns it to its body on the day he is resurrected.”⁵⁹

On the other hand, the soul of the disobedient believers are held in the graves and punished for minor and major sins. Ibn ‘Abbās reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by the graves of two men and commented:

إنهما ليعذبان وما يعذبان في كبير أما أحدهما فكان لا يستتر من البول و
أما الآخر فكان يمشي بالنميمة

“Surely, they are being punished right now, and not for major offences. One of them was not careful to protect himself from the splash of his urine, and the other used to spread rumours.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Collected by al-Nasā‘ī and Aḥmad and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 455, ftn. 1.

⁵⁹ Collected by al-Nasā‘ī, Ibn Mājah and Mālik and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 455, ftn. 1.

⁶⁰ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 141, no. 215 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 171-172, no. 575.

During the Prophet's ascension, he was shown a liar with a man standing over him continuously tearing down one side of his mouth to the nape of his neck, and then the other, until the Day of Resurrection. Adulterers and adulteresses were seen naked in an oven-like pit with a fire blazing under them. The one who dealt in interest was seen in a river of blood. Whenever he attempted to climb out, a large stone was thrown in his mouth, causing him to fall back in the river.⁶¹

SOUL OF THE DISBELIEVERS

The souls of those who rejected faith in Allāh will be confined to the grave and tormented there until their resurrection:

عن البراء بن عازب أن رسول الله (ﷺ) ذكر موت الكافر قال:
 .. فينادي مناد من السماء أن كذب فافرشوه من النار و البسوه من
 النار و افتحوا له بابا إلى النار فيأتيه من حرها و سمومها و يضيق عليه
 قبره حتى تختلف فيه أضلاعه

The Prophet (ﷺ) stated that bedding of fire would be spread for them to lie on and a door to Hell would be opened, allowing its scorching winds to roast them until the Resurrection and the grave would squeeze them until their ribs would interpenetrate.⁶²

CONTACT WITH OTHER SOULS

The souls of the righteous believers meet each other, according to orthodox Islamic view. This position is based upon the *ḥadīth* in which Masrūq reported that on one occasion the companions said to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), "It is not right for us to part company with you in this world because when you die and are raised up [into the heavens], we will not be able to see you."

⁶¹ See *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 2, pp. 262-265, no. 468.

⁶² Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Ṣiḥāh Abū Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1330, no. 4735) and Ibn Mājah and al-Nasā'ī and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Aḥkām al-Janā'iz*, p. 159.

Then Allāh, the Exalted, revealed the following verse: “Whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger will be in the company of those whom Allāh has shown favour – the Prophets, the affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. What a wonderful company they are.”⁶³

According to Ibn al-Qayyim, this “wonderful company” is established in this life, in the *barzakh* and in the Hereafter. Man is with whom he loves in these three stages of his soul’s existence, since there is no evidence restricting it to this life and Paradise only. The following prophetic tradition leaves no doubt that the pious souls are able to meet and converse with each other after their death. Abū Hurayrah quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

إذا حضر المؤمن أخته ملائكة الرحمة . . فيأتون به أرواح المؤمنين فلهم
أشد فرحا به من أحدكم بغائبه يقدم عليه فيسألونه : ماذا فعل فلان؟
ماذا فعل فلان؟ فيقولون : دعوه فإنه كان في غم الدنيا

“Verily, when a believer is about to die, angels of mercy come to him...They take his soul to the souls of other believers, who are happier to meet him than one of you would be at the approach of his absent loved one. They ask him, ‘What did so-and-so do?’ ‘What did so-and-so do?’ Some of them say, ‘Let him be, because he was [just now] in the sadness of the world’”⁶⁴

CONTACT WITH THE LIVING

There are some *Bāṭinī* (esoteric)⁶⁵ “Muslim” philosophers and mystics, like Ibn Sīnā and the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, who claimed that when the perfect souls leave their bodies, they appear to be living, conversing with them in order

⁶³ *Al-Rūḥ*, p. 28, fn. 2. The Qur’ānic reference is 4:69.

⁶⁴ Collected by al-Nasā’ī and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 3, p. 293, no. 1309.

⁶⁵ The name comes from the Arabic term *bāṭin* which means “unapparent, hidden, concealed, intrinsic, esoteric” (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 221.) It is used to refer to those who claimed that the apparent meanings of the Qur’ān and Sunnah were not intended meanings but were symbols for concealed truths. The hidden meanings were like a kernel in relationship to the shell. The obvious meanings were for the ignorant masses, while the intended meanings were hidden from them and revealed only to a special group of intellectuals. (Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā’ih al-Bāṭiniyyah*, p. 11)

to educate them and to polish their confined souls. However, the consensus of opinion among the orthodox scholars is that the human soul released by bodily death cannot communicate with or influence living beings in this world. The ability of humans to act righteously or unrighteously ends with death, according to the texts of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. The following are among the more common evidences used to support the mentioned position:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴿١٩﴾ لَعَلِّي
 أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِن
 وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

“[They will continue in falsehood] until when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘O my Lord, send me back so that I may do righteousness in the things that I neglected.’ But no! It is only a word he says, and behind them is a barrier [barzakh] until the day they are resurrected.”

Qur’ān, 23: 99-100.

When faced with the reality of the next life, the disbelievers will wish to return to this world to do sufficient good to avert the punishment with which they are confronted. However, Allāh informs that there is no opportunity to return and that the way back is blocked by a barrier erected between the souls of the dead and this world. Abū Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إذا مات الإنسان انقطع عنه عمله إلا من ثلاثة إلا من صدقة جارية أو علم
 ينتفع به أو ولد صالح يدعو له

“When a man dies, all of his deeds cease, except in three [cases]: charity of continuous blessing, beneficial knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for him.”⁶⁶

The implementation of human free will in choosing between doing good or evil ceases with death, although further good deeds may be added to his record as a result of the continuing benefit of some of his charitable deeds.

⁶⁶ Collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 867, no. 4005), Abū Dāwūd, and al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was also quoted by Abū Hurayrah as saying,

إن المؤمن يصعد بروحه إلى السماء ، فتأتيه أرواح المؤمنين فيستخبرونه
عن معارفهم من أهل الأرض

“Verily, when the soul of [a dead] believer soars up to the heavens, the souls of the other believers come to greet it, seeking news about their acquaintances among the people of the earth.”⁶⁷

Another companion, Sahl ibn Sa‘d, related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إنني فرطكم على الحوض ، من مر علي شرب ، ومن شرب لم يظمأ أبدا ،
ليردن علي أقوام أعرفهم ويعرفوني ثم يحال بيني وبينهم . . . فأقول : إنهم
مني ، فيقال : إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك

“Verily, I will precede you to the fountain [in Paradise]. Whoever passes by me will drink and never again experience thirst. Some people whom I will know, and who will know me, will come to me, but a barrier will appear between me and them. I will say, ‘Verily they are among my followers.’ It will be said to me, ‘You do not know what innovations they introduced after you.’”⁶⁸

Both of the latter two texts from the prophetic traditions indicate that the dead souls, including those of the prophets, are unaware of the happenings in this world. That is, they do not have contact with this world.

⁶⁷ Authenticated by al-Suyūfī and confirmed by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 2628.

⁶⁸ Collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sabīh Bukhārī*, vol. 8, pp. 381-2, no. 585) and Muslim (*Sabīh Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1236, no. 5682).

This is further supported by some Qur'ānic texts wherein the faculty of hearing by the dead is categorically denied:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تَسْمَعُ الدَّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلُوا مَدْبِرِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

“Verily, you cannot make the dead hear and you cannot make the deaf hear the call when they turn their backs and retreat.”

Qur'ān, 27:80

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾

“The living and the dead are not alike. Allāh makes whomever He wishes hear, but you cannot make those in their graves hear.”

Qur'ān, 35:22

CONCLUSION

Since the human soul enters the *barzakh* upon the death of the body and the state of the *barzakh* prevents any contact with this world, it would not be possible for disembodied human spirits to possess living human beings or to communicate with them. The preceding texts clearly indicate that the human soul is barred from knowledge of what transpires on the earth after its bodily death, and is prevented from performing any acts in this life, whether good or evil. Consequently, according to orthodox Islām, the human soul has to be ruled out as a potential source for the phenomenon of spirit-possession among human beings.

THE ANGELS

The second major classification of spiritual beings in the orthodox cosmological view is angels. In Islamic literature the Arabic term often used for angels is *malak* (pl. *malā'ikah*) which is believed to be a contraction of *mal'ak* or *ma'lak*, both of which are derivatives of *'alūk*, meaning "a message."⁶⁹ Thus, the original meaning of *malak* is to be taken to be "messenger,"⁷⁰ which seems to be consistent with the Qur'ānic description of them:

اللَّهُ يُصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

*"Allāh chooses messengers from the angels and from men.
For Allāh is He who hears and sees [all things]."*
Qur'ān, 22:75

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا

*"And when our messengers [i.e., angels] came to Lot,
he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless
[to protect] them..."*
Qur'ān, 11:77

ORIGIN

Many references to angels can be found throughout the Qur'ān; however, very little information about their actual origin may be deduced from these verses. According to Qur'ānic texts, angels are not considered to be of the same essence as Allāh.

⁶⁹ *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol. 10, p. 496. See also *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 318 and *Tahdhīb al-Lughab*, pp. 496-503.

⁷⁰ Messenger is also the basic meaning of the Greek word *angelos*, from which the English word "angel" is derived. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 1, p. 399.)

This conclusion may be deduced from the verses which deny the claim of the pagan Arabs that the angels were daughters of Allāh:

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَہُ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ

*“And they assign daughters to Allāh – Glory be to Him!-
and for themselves whatever they desire.”*

Qur’ān, 16:57

According to al-Shawkānī, the tribes of Kinānah and Khuzā‘ah used to claim that the angels were daughters of Allāh. Yet they, like all other Arabian tribes, preferred sons for themselves. This verse is a statement of amazement about the absurdity of their claim:⁷¹

وَحَرَّفُوا آلَهُ بَيْنَ وَبَيْنَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَہُ وَتَعْلَىٰ عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

*“And they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters,
Glory be to Him, for He is far above what
they attribute to Him.”*

Qur’ān, 6:100

In the two verses following this verse, the Qur’ān emphasises that the angels and all other beings besides Allāh are created. This is done by stating and restating that Allāh is the Creator of all things:

بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اَنۢ يَّكُوۡنَ لَہٗ وَلَدٌ وَّلَمْ تَكُنۡ لَہٗ
صَلۡجَبَةٌ وَّخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ وَّہُوَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیۡمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾ اَذٰلَکُمْ
اَللّٰهُ رَبُّکُمْ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا ہُوَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ
فَاعْبُدُوۡہُ وَّہُوَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ وَکِیۡلٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

*“To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the
earth. How could He have a son when He has no consort?
He created all things and He has full knowledge of all
things. That is Allāh, your Lord! There is no god but He,
the Creator of all things, so worship Him, for He alone is
the manager of all affairs.”*

Qur’ān, 6:101-102

⁷¹ *Fath al-Qadir*, vol. 3, p. 170.

LIGHT

Although there are no verses in the Qur'ān which identify the origin of the angels, there are authentic *ḥadīths* which specifically address the original material from which angels were created. Angels originated from light, according to the following statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) to his third wife, 'Ā'ishah, the daughter of Abū Bakr,

خَلَقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةَ مِنْ نُورٍ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقَ آدَمَ مِمَّا
وَصَفَّ لَكُمْ

“The angels were created from light, the jinn from fire and Adam from what has already been described to you.”⁷²

Because the Prophet (ﷺ) did not give any more details as to the origin of the light or its characteristics, any such pronouncements are considered merely speculative and are rejected by the majority of scholars. Included in this category are statements falsely attributed to some of the Prophet's companions (*ṣaḥābah*) and their students (*tābi'ūn*). For example, the companion, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr, was falsely reported to have said, “Allāh created the angels from the light of His forearms and His chest.” And the *tābi'ī*, 'Ikrimah, was likewise falsely quoted as saying, “The angels were created from the light of the Almighty, and Iblīs [the name of Satan in Arabic] was created from the Almighty's fire.”⁷³

BEFORE MAN

The time when angels were created has not been specified in either the texts of the Qur'ān or the Sunnah. However, it may be deduced from some Qur'ānic verses that they were created before mankind. In one such statement, Allāh informs the angels that He would create in the future a *khalīfah* (successor) on earth:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“[Remember] when your Lord said to the angels, “Surely, I will make on earth a *khalīfah*.””

Qur'ān, 2:30

⁷² *Sabih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1540, no. 7134.

⁷³ *Ālam al-Malā'ikah al-Abrār*, pp. 9-10.

FORM

Although the angels are made from light, as previously indicated, it cannot be said that they appear as light, as some have supposed, because they have not been described as such in either the Qur’ān or the authentic Sunnah. In their natural state, they are invisible to human eyes. This is proven by the fact that Angel Gabriel used to bring revelations to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was in the company of the companions, and none of them would see Gabriel.

قال أبو سلمة إن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قال رسول الله (ﷺ) يوماً
(يا عائشة هذا جبريل يقرئك السلام) فقلت: وعليه السلام ورحمة الله
(ﷺ) وبركاته، ترى ما لا أرى، تريد رسول الله

Abū Salamah quoted ‘Ā’ishah as saying, “Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) [once] said to me, ‘O ‘Ā’ishah, here is Gabriel greeting you with peace.’ I said, ‘And may Allāh’s peace and mercy be upon him. For you see what I cannot.’”⁷⁴

However, angels are visible to some animals. Abū Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إذا سمعتم صياح الديكة فسالوا الله من فضله فإنها رأت ملكاً

“If you hear a rooster crow, ask Allāh for His grace, for it has seen an angel.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5, p. 75, no. 112 and *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1302, no. 5997.

⁷⁵ Collected by Abū Dāwūd, (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1415, no. 5083), al-Bukhārī (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 332, no. 521) and Muslim (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1428, no. 6581).

NON-HUMAN

In their normal state, angels are not human-like creatures with a pair of birdlike wings, as portrayed in Greco-Roman legends⁷⁶ and Christian influenced works of art.⁷⁷ Instead, they are normally huge in size and their wings may number anywhere from two to several hundred:

جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعٍ
يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ

“...making the angels messengers, with wings two and three and four: He increases in the creation as He wills...”
Qur’ān, 35:1

عن عبد الله قال: رأى رسول الله (ﷺ) جبريل في صورته وله ست مائة جناح كل جناح منها قد سد الأفق يسقط من جناحه من التهاويل و الدر والياقوت ما الله به عليم

The companion, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw Angel Gabriel (Jibrīl) in his natural state in which he had six hundred wings, each of which filled the horizon. And there were multicoloured drops like pearls and coral falling from the wings.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Cupid, ancient Roman god of love, was the counterpart of the Greek god Eros. According to myth, Cupid was the son of Mercury, the winged messenger of the gods. He usually appeared as a winged infant carrying a bow and quiver of arrows. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 3, p. 796.)

⁷⁷ Cherubim (s. cherub) in Jewish and Christian literature are portrayed as celestial, winged beings with human and bird-like characteristics. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 3, p. 175.) In art the four-winged cherubim are painted blue [symbolising the sky] and the six-winged seraphim red [symbolising fire]. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 10, p. 644.)

⁷⁸ Collected by Ahmad. Ibn Kathīr rated its chain of narrators as *jayyid* (good). See *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 47. The description of Jibrīl having six hundred wings is mentioned in *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 301, no. 455.

In another narration the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said the following about Angel Gabriel:

رأيتُه منهبطًا من السماء سادا عظم خلقه ما بين السماء إلى الأرض

“I saw him descending from the heavens and his great size filled the space between the earth and the sky.”⁷⁹

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

أذن لي أن أحدث عن ملك من ملائكة الله من حملة العرش إن ما بين شحمة أذنه إلى عاتقه مسيرة سبع مائة عام

“I have been allowed to speak about one of the throne bearers.⁸⁰ The distance between his earlobe and shoulder is [what a bird would fly in]⁸¹ seven hundred years.”⁸²

BEAUTIFUL

It is generally held that the angels were created in a beautiful form, based upon the following Qur’ānic description of Gabriel:

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى ﴿٥﴾ ذُو مِرَّةٍ

“He [i.e., Muḥammad] has been taught by one mighty in power [i.e., Gabriel], endowed with beauty⁸³...”

Qur’ān, 53: 5-6

⁷⁹ Reported by ‘Ā’ishah and collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 111–112, no. 337).

⁸⁰ Qur’ān, 69:17, states that on the Day of Judgement Allāh’s throne will be borne by eight angels.

⁸¹ This explanation was given by Ibn Abī Hātim who collected the *ḥadīth*. See also an authentic narration of Anas ibn Mālik collected by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ*, in which the distance is described as that flown by a bird.

⁸² Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol.3, p. 1323, no. 4709) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 1, p. 72, no. 151.

⁸³ The Arabic word used here is *mirrah*, which Ibn ‘Abbās explained as meaning “*maḡbay ḥasan*” (a beautiful appearance) and Qatādah explained as *kbālq ṭawīl ḥasan* (a tall and beautiful form). Mujāhid, on the other hand, explained it as meaning *quwwah* (power). See Ibn Kathīr’s *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, vol. 4, p. 384.

Further support may also be found in:

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتَهُ أَكْبَرْتَهُ وَقَطَّعْتَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا
بَشَرًا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

“When they saw him, they exalted him and cut their hands [in amazement] and cried out, ‘Allāb forbid! This is not a man! This can only be a noble angel.’”

Qur’ān, 12:31

VISIBLE

According to accounts from the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, angels may take human form on certain occasions. An example from the Qur’ān may be found in the case of Mary, when Angel Gabriel came to inform her of her impending pregnancy:

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا
شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَأَتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا
إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾

“And mention in the scripture [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from the family to a place facing east. She placed a screen between herself and them. Then we sent to her Our angel, who appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects.”

Qur’ān, 19: 16-17

It is also recorded in authentic traditions from the Prophet (ﷺ) that Angel Gabriel used to visit him in various human forms. Sometimes the Prophet’s companions witnessed him visiting Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) in the likeness of a handsome *ṣaḥābī* by the name of Dihyah ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbī, and at other times in the likeness of an unknown bedouin.

عمر بن الخطاب قال: بينما نحن عند رسول الله (ﷺ) ذات يوم إذ طلع علينا رجل شديد بياض الثياب، شديد سواد الشعر، لا يرى عليه أثر السفر ولا يعرفه منا أحد، حتى جلس إلى النبي، فأسند ركبته إلى ركبته ووضع كفيه على فخذيه وقال: يا محمد أخبرني... عن الإسلام

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb⁸⁴ said, “One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black. No sign of journeying was to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet (ﷺ). Resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said, ‘O Muḥammad, tell me about Islām...’”

In the remainder of the ḥadīth the man asked about īmān (faith), iḥsān (piety) and the signs of the Last Hour. After the man left, the Prophet (ﷺ) informed his companions that the questioner was Angel Gabriel, who had come to teach them about their religion.⁸⁵

عن عائشة قالت: رأيت رسول الله (ﷺ) واضعاً يديه على معرفة فرس وهو يكلم رجلاً. قلت: رأيتك واضعاً يديك على معرفة فرس دحية الكلبي وأنت تكلمه. قال (ورأيتيه) قالت: نعم. قال ذلك جبريل، عليه السلام، وهو يقرئك السلام

On another occasion, ‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported that she saw him place his hand on the mane of Dihyah al-Kalbī’s horse while talking to him.

⁸⁴ The second caliph (d. 644 CE). See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 600-601.

⁸⁵ *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 17, no. 7, and *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 9-10, no. 18.

When she asked him about it, he replied that it was Gabriel and that he had sent his greetings to her.⁸⁶

NEUTER

In spite of the angels taking human male forms, they are not considered to be male or female,⁸⁷ nor is there any evidence in Islamic texts to indicate that they reproduce. In the Qur'ān the pagan Arabs are rebuked for referring to the angels as daughters of Allāh or even female:

فَأَسْتَفْتِهِمَ أَلرَّبُّكَ أَلْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾
أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

“Now ask them their opinion, ‘Does your Lord have [only] daughters and they have sons? Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses?’”

Qur'ān, 37: 149-150

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنثًا أَشْهَدُوا
خَلَقَهُمْ سَتَكُنَّ شُهَدَائِهِمْ وَيَسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

“And they made into females the angels who are themselves servants of the Most Merciful [i.e., Allāh]. Did they witness their creation? Their evidence will be recorded, and they will be called to account.”

Qur'ān, 43:19

⁸⁶ Collected by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 146 and Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt*, and rated authentic (*ḥasan*) by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 3, p. 105, no. 1111.

⁸⁷ The stories of Hārūt and Mārūt yielding to sexual temptation, like those collected by Ibn Abī Shaybah, 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn Abī Dunyā (in *Kitāb al-'Uqūbāt*), Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in *Shu'ab al-Īmān*), from the Jewish convert, Ka'b al-Aḥbār (see al-Suyūfī's *al-Durr al-Mantūr fī al-Taḥsīr al-Ma'thūr*, vol. 1, pp. 239-240), have led some Muslim theologians to conclude that angels have sex, but do not use it to propagate their kind. (See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 319.) However, all of these narrations are inauthentic. The elements of these stories are found in a Jewish *midrash* as well as in the New Testament. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 135.)

NAMES

Although many names have been attributed to angles in Muslim folklore,⁸⁸ only a very few of their names have been verified according to authentic Islamic traditions.

JIBRĪL

Jibrīl (Gabriel) is the angel of revelation. Ibn ‘Abbās said:

كان رسول الله (ﷺ) أجود الناس وكان أجود ما يكون في رمضان حين
يلقاه جبريل وكان يلقاه في كل ليلة من رمضان فيدارسه القرآن

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was the most generous person, and his generosity would be the greatest during Ramadan when Jibrīl met him. Jibrīl used to meet him every night in Ramaḍān to review the Qur’ān with him.”⁸⁹

He is referred to in the Qur’ān by a number of honorific titles:

وَإِنَّهُ لَنَزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾

“Verily, this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit [al-Rūḥ al-Amīn].”

Qur’ān, 26: 192-193.

وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْنَتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ

“... We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs and supported him with the Holy Spirit [Rūḥ al-Qudus].”⁹⁰

Qur’ān, 2:87

⁸⁸ *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 15-16.

⁸⁹ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 6, no. 5.

⁹⁰ *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 122.

MĪKĀ'ĪL

MĪkā'īl (or MĪkāl, Eng. Michael)⁹¹ is responsible for rain.⁹²

عن عبد الله بن الوليد عن ابن عباس قال أقبلت يهود إلى رسول الله (ﷺ) فقالوا: يا أبا القاسم إنا نسألك عن خمسة أشياء فإن أنبأتنا بهن عرفنا أنك نبي واتبعناك (فلما أجا بهم) قالوا: صدقت إنما بقيت واحدة وهي التي نبأبعك إن أخبرتنا بها ، فإنه ليس من نبي إلا له ملك يأتيه بالخبر ، فأخبرنا من صاحبك . قال (جبريل ، عليه السلام) قالوا : جبريل ذلك الذي ينزل بالحرب والقتال والعذاب عدونا . لو قلت ميكائيل الذي ينزل بالرحمة والنبات والقطر لكان . فأنزل الله عز وجل (من كان عدوا لجبريل) إلى آخر الآية

'Abdullāh ibn al-Walīd related that when a group of Jews asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about his [angelic] companion and he told them that it was Jibrīl, they said, "Jibrīl! The one who descends with war, fighting and punishment. He is our enemy. If only you had said MĪkā'īl, the one who brings mercy, rain and plants, it would have been better."⁹³

⁹¹ See Qur'ān, 2:97-98.

⁹² *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 336.

⁹³ Collected by Aḥmad. See *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 130, the exegesis of 2:97-98.

ISRĀFĪL

Isrāfīl⁹⁴ is the angel who will blow a horn (*ṣūr*) signalling the end of the world.⁹⁵ The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted by Abū Sa‘īd as saying,

كيف أنعم وقد التقم صاحب القرن القرن وحنى جبهته وأصغى سمعه
ينظر متى يؤمر

“How can I enjoy when the horn blower has placed it in his mouth, inclined his forehead and turned his ear to hear, awaiting the command to blow...”⁹⁶

MĀLIK

Māik is the name of the main guardian angel of Hell. His name is mentioned in the Qur’ān as follows:

وَنَادُوا بِمَلِكِكُمْ لِيَقْضَ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَرْكُومُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

“They will cry out: ‘O Mālik! Let your Lord put an end to us.’ He will say, ‘Surely you will stay [as you are].’”

Qur’ān, 43:77

MUNKAR AND NAKĪR

According to authentic narrations, Munkar and Nakīr⁹⁷ are two angels who will question each person following their death. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

⁹⁴ A loan-word with another dialectical variant “*Isrāfīn*” (*Mukbtār al-Ṣiḥāb*, p. 296), probably from the Hebrew word “*Serafim*” (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 184). It should be noted that descriptions of this angel, such as those found in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 184, have no basis in authentic Islamic texts and are the product of legend and myths.

⁹⁵ *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 45.

⁹⁶ Collected by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad (*al-Hadis*, vol. 4, p. 92, no. 21) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 3, pp. 66-68.

⁹⁷ Both names come from the Arabic root *nakira*, which means “to become bad, evil, abominable or foul.” The word *munkar* literally means “any action deemed or declared foul, hateful or hideous” and *nakīr* means “disapproval, or the like, and manifestation thereof.” (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2703.)

إذا قبر الميت – أو قال أحدكم – أتاه ملكان أسودان أزرقان ، يقال لأحدهما المنكر والآخر النكير ، فيقولان : ما كنت تقول في هذا الرجل ، . . . فيقول : ما كان يقول : هو عبد الله ورسوله

“When a dead man is buried, two bluish-black angels will come to him. One of them is called Munkar and the other Nakir. They will ask, ‘What did you used to say about this man?’ If he was a believer, he will reply, ‘He is the servant of Allāh and His Messenger...’⁹⁸

HĀRŪT AND MĀRŪT

Hārūt⁹⁹ and Mārūt¹⁰⁰ were two angels sent to the people of Babylon as a test of their faith:

وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا
 أَنْزَلَ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكِينَ بَيِّنَاتٍ هُتُوتَ وَمُرُوتٌ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ
 مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ

“...But it was the devils who disbelieved by teaching the people magic and what was revealed to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. However, the two would not teach anyone until after they had warned them, saying, ‘Surely, we are only a test and a trial, so do not disbelieve...’”

Qur’ān, 2:102

⁹⁸ Narrated by Abū Hurayrah, collected by al-Tirmidhī and rated authentic (*ḥasan*) by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* vol. 3, no. 1391, pp. 379-380. See *Mishkāb al-Maṣābīḥ*, vol. 1, chap. 5, pp. 35-36 and *al-Hadis*, vol. 3, pp. 85-86, no. 40.

⁹⁹ Generally held to be a foreign name. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2890.)

¹⁰⁰ According to Arabic lexicographers, this word is either of foreign origin or it is derived from *murūtab*, which refers to the condition of a land which is desert without water or herbage. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2703.)

OTHERS

There are some narrated statements from the companions and their students in which the angel of death is named as *Izrā'īl*;¹⁰¹ however, there are no narrations concerning this which can be authentically attributed to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).¹⁰² In fact, the origin of these recorded statements seems to have been from Jewish literature, where similar descriptions can be found.¹⁰³ The custodian of Paradise has also been identified as *Riḍwān*¹⁰⁴ in some narrations attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ), but none of them are authentic as far as I have been able to determine.

Some scholars have also claimed that there are two angels named *Raqīb* and *ʿAtīd*, based upon the following Qurʾānic text:

إِذْ يَنْفَخُ الْمَلَكَيْنِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ﴿٧٧﴾
مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾

“Behold, two [recording angels] appointed to learn and note [man’s doing], one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is beside him a guardian [raqīb] prepared [ʿatīd].”
Qurʾān, 50:17-18

However, the two terms are not the actual names of angels but descriptions of the recording angels who take note of all man does.¹⁰⁵

ABILITIES

The angels are in charge of the heavens and the earth. Thus, every movement which takes place in the world is a result of the [activities of the] angels.¹⁰⁶ The Almighty states:

¹⁰¹ *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, vol. 3, p. 458, exegesis of Qurʾān, 32:11.

¹⁰² *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 47.

¹⁰³ The name appears to be a corruption of *Isrʾīl*, which is given by Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, 11.333, as the name of the prince of Hell. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 190.)

¹⁰⁴ *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 50.

¹⁰⁵ *ʿĀlam al-Malāʾikah al-Abrār*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Sharḥ al-Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, p. 335.

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٥٠﴾

“By those [angels] who arrange the implementation
of [Allāh’s] command...”
Qur’ān, 79:5

فَالْمَقْسِمَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٥١﴾

“And those [angels] who distribute and apportion
by [Allāh’s] command.”
Qur’ān, 51:4

THOUGHTS

Some angels are able to read human minds. According to authentic traditions, the recording angels are aware of human intent and record the deeds that are intended but may or may not have been fulfilled. The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted by Abū Hurayrah as saying,

قالت الملائكة رب ذاك عبدك يريد أن يعمل سيئة وهو أبصر به فقال . . .
ارقبوه فإن عملها فاكتبوها له بمثلها وإن تركها فاكتبوها له حسنة إنما تركها
من جرائي

“The angels say [to Allāh], ‘That man intends to do evil.’
And He is more vigilant than them. He replies, ‘Watch him.
If he commits evil, record it in kind; but if he abandons it,
record for him one good deed. For surely he gave it up for
My sake.’”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 75, no. 235.

MOBILITY

The angels are able to traverse huge distances at speeds beyond our comprehension:

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ
خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤١﴾

“The angels and The Spirit ascend to Him in a day whose length is like fifty thousand years.”

Qur’ān, 70:4

OBEDIENCE

Angels are, by nature, obedient servants of Allāh and do not have the ability to disobey Allāh, according to the Qur’ānic texts:

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَهُمْ لَا يُسْتَكْبَرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

“All that is in the heavens and earth prostrate to Allāh, whether crawling creatures or angels; none are arrogant. They fear their Lord, high above them, and they do all that they are commanded.”

Qur’ān, 16:49-50

RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMANS

According to various texts from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, angels are in constant contact with man. They are reported to play a variety of roles at all stages of human existence – from birth to death, and even beyond the grave.

BIRTH

Angels have been assigned to the womb from the beginning of each human’s conception until his birth, implementing Allāh’s commands with respect to each individual.

Anas ibn Mālik reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

وكل الله بالرحم ملكا ، فيقول : أي رب : نطفة ، أي رب : علقة ، أي رب : مضغة ، فإذا أراد الله أن يقضي خلقها ، قال : أي رب : أذكر أم أنثى ؟

“Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious, has appointed an angel as the caretaker of the womb that says, ‘My Lord, it is like an oily drop; my Lord, it is now like a leech; my Lord, it has become like a chewed clump.’ Then, if Allāh wishes to complete its creation, the angel will ask, ‘My Lord, will it be a male or a female?...’¹⁰⁸

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

إن أحدكم يجمع خلقه في بطن أمه أربعين يوما ، ثم يكون في ذلك علقة مثل ذلك ، ثم يكون في ذلك مضغة مثل ذلك ، ثم يرسل الملك فينفخ فيه الروح . . .

“Each one of you is collected in his mother’s womb for forty days, then becomes like a leech for a similar period. Then Allāh sends an angel and orders him to record four things: his livelihood, his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be wretched or happy. The angel then breathes the soul into him...”¹⁰⁹

INSPIRATION

From his birth until his death, each person has been assigned an angel, inspiring him to do good and guarding him from evil.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd related that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said,

¹⁰⁸ *Sahib Bukhārī*, vol. 8, no. 594, p. 388 and *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1391, no. 6397.

¹⁰⁹ *Sahib Bukhārī*, vol. 8, no. 593 and *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1391, no. 6390.

ما منكم من أحد إلا وقد وكل به قرينه من الجن وقرينه من الملائكة

“Everyone of you has been assigned a companion from among the jinn and one from the angels...”¹¹⁰

These angels are entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and advising each individual, by Allāh’s will, to righteousness.¹¹¹ The Qur’ān also speaks about the guardian angel as follows:

لَهُم مَّعْقَبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهِ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

“For each [person] there are [angels] in succession¹¹² before and behind him. They guard him by Allāh’s command...”
Qur’ān, 13:11

However according to the recorded statements of the Prophet (ﷺ), these guardian angels leave him on certain occasions. For example, Abū Ṭalḥah reported that Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said,

لا تدخل الملائكة بيتا فيه كلب ولا صورة تماثيل

“The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or pictures or statues of living creatures.”¹¹³

RECORDING

Two angels are also assigned to every human being with the duty of recording their deeds. The Qur’ān refers to them in the following verses:

وَأِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۝ كَرَامًا كُنِينًا ۝

“But verily, watching over you [are appointed angels],

¹¹⁰ Collected by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* and Muslim (referred to by number only in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1472, no. 6758.) See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 17, p. 158 for the full Arabic text, the English of which has been deleted in the aforementioned translation.

¹¹¹ See *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 52.

¹¹² The Arabic term used in the verse is *mu‘aqqibāt*, which Ibn ‘Abbās interpreted to mean angels who would protect each person until something destined by Allāh is afflicted upon him. See *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 50.

¹¹³ *Sahih Bukhārī*, vol. 4, pp. 297-298, no. 448.

kind and honourable, writing down [your deeds].”

Qur’ān, 82:10-11

﴿١٧﴾ اِذْ نُنزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ مِنَ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ

﴿١٨﴾ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ اِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَمِيدٌ

“Behold, two [recording angels] appointed to learn and note [his doings], one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is beside him a guardian prepared.”

Qur’ān, 50:17-18.

Abū Umāmah reported that the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) described them as follows:

إن صاحب الشمال ليرفع القلم ست ساعات عن العبد المسلم الخاطئ،

فإن ندم واستغفر الله منها ألقاها، وإلا كتبت واحدة

“Surely, the [angel on the] left raises the pen [from the record] of a Muslim who commits an error for six hours. If he repents and asks Allāh’s forgiveness, the deed is cast aside, otherwise it is written down as one [evil deed].”¹¹⁴

PRAYING

According to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), there are also angels that pray to Allāh on behalf of man on specific occasions. For example, he was reported to have said,

إن أحدكم في صلاة ما دامت الصلاة تحبسه والملائكة تقول: اللهم اغفر

له وارحمه، ما لم يقم في صلاته أو يحدث

“As long as any one of you is waiting for prayer, he is in prayer, and the angels [continue to] say, ‘O Allāh, be merciful to him and forgive him,’ as long as he does not

¹¹⁴ Collected by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* and authenticated (*ḥasan*) by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḡīr*, vol. 2, p. 422, no. 2097.

leave his place of prayer or pass wind.”¹¹⁵

DEATH

Some angels have been assigned the job of extracting human souls from their bodies at the time of their death. Reference is made to these angels in the Qur’ān as follows:

قُلْ يَتُوفَّئِكُمْ مَلَكَ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ
رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾

“Say, the Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will take your souls. Then you will be returned to your Lord.”

Qur’ān, 32:11

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

“He is the Irresistible, far above His servants. He sets guardians over you until, when death comes to one of you, then Our angels take his soul without fail.”

Qur’ān, 6:61

Yet others have been given the duty of taking the extracted soul on a spiritual journey out of this world and back into it. Al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

¹¹⁵ *Sahih Bukhāri*, vol. 4, p. 299, no. 452.

إن العبد المؤمن إذا كان في انقطاع من الدنيا وإقبال من الآخرة نزل إليه ملائكة من السماء بيض الوجوه كأن وجوههم الشمس، معهم كفن من أكفان الجنة وحنوط من حنوط الجنة، حتى يجلسوا منه مد البصر، ثم يجيء ملك الموت، عليه السلام، حتى يجلس عند رأسه، فيقول: أيتها النفس الطيبة، اخرجي إلى مغفرة من الله ورضوان. قال: فتخرج تسيل كما تسيل القطرة من قي السماء، فيأخذها، فإذا أخذوها لم يدعوها في يده طرفة عين حتى يأخذوها فيجعلوها في ذلك الكفن وفي ذلك الحنوط ويخرج منها كأطيب نفحة مسك وجدت على وجه الأرض قال: فيصعدون بها فلا يمرون، يعني بها، على ملائكة الإقالوا: ما هذا الروح الطيب؟ فيقولون: فلان بن فلان، بأحسن أسمائه التي كانوا يسمونه بها في الدنيا، حتى ينتهوا بها إلى السماء الدنيا، فيستقون له، فيفتح لهم، فيشيعه من كل سماء مقربوها إلى السماء التي تليها حتى ينتهي به إلى السماء السابعة، فيقول الله عز وجل: اكتبوا كتاب عبدي في عليين وأعيدوه إلى الأرض فإني منها خلقتهم وفيها أعيدهم ومنها . . . أخرجهم تارة أخرى قال: فتعاد روحه في جسده

“When a believer is leaving this world and entering the next, angels with faces shining brightly like the sun descend from the heavens carrying a shroud and embalming fragrance from Paradise, and [then they] sit down within sight-range. The Angel of Death then approaches, sits by his head and says, ‘O good soul, come out to Allāh’s forgiveness and pleasure.’ It will then come out like a flowing drop of water from a water-skin, and he will catch it. But, within the blinking of an eye after he catches it, they will take it and put it in the shroud and fragrance.

There will then come from the soul a fragrance like that of the sweetest musk found on the face of the earth. They then ascend with it and every group of angels they pass ask, ‘Who is this good soul?’ to which they reply, ‘So-and-so, the son of So-and-so,’ using his best names by which people called him on earth. They then bring him to the lowest heaven and ask that the gate should be opened for him. This is done, and from every heaven its archangels escort him to the next heaven until he is brought to the seventh heaven, and Allāh, Most Great and Glorious, says, ‘Record the book of My servant in the ‘illiyyīn’ [register of the righteous]¹¹⁶ and take him back to earth, for I created mankind from it, and I shall return them to it, and from it I shall bring them forth again.’¹¹⁷ His soul is then restored to his body...¹¹⁸

QUESTIONING

Another two angels, Munkar and Nakīr, are charged with questioning the soul in the grave. In a continuation of the previous *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) went on to say,

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كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَنْبَاءِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١١٧﴾
 ﴿١١٦﴾ كِتَابٌ مَرْفُوعٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

“But, verily the record of the righteous is [preserved] in ‘illiyyīn. And what will explain to you what ‘illiyyīn is? It is a book of records.”

Qur’ān, 83: 18-20.

¹¹⁷ This statement coincides with the following Qur’ānic verse:

وَمِنهَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَفِيهَا نَعِيدُهُمْ وَمِنهَا نُخْرِجُهُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى ﴿٢٠٥﴾

“From it We created you, into it We will return you, and from it We will bring you forth again.”

Qur’ān, 20:55.

¹¹⁸ Collected by Aḥmad (*Mishkāḥ al-Maṣābiḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 340-342) and Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1330, no. 4735) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḡīr*, vol. 1, pp. 257-258, no. 456.

فأتته ملكان فيجلسانه فيقولان له : من ربك؟ فيقول : ربي الله . فيقولان له : ما دينك؟ فيقول : ديني الإسلام . فيقولان له : ما هذا الرجل الذي بعث فيكم؟ فيقول : هو رسول الله (ﷺ) فيقولان له : وما علمك؟ فيقول : قرأت كتاب الله فأمنت به وصدقته

“Two angels come to him, make him sit up and ask him, ‘Who is your Lord?’ He [the believing soul] will reply, ‘My Lord is Allāh.’ They will then ask, ‘What is your religion?’ and he will reply, ‘My religion is Islām.’ They will ask, ‘Who is this man who was sent among you?’ and he will say, ‘He is the Messenger of Allāh.’ They will then ask, ‘What was the [source of] your knowledge?’ and he will reply, ‘I have read Allāh’s Book, believed in it and declared it to be true.’”¹¹⁹

GUARDIAN

An angel by the name of Mālik is assigned to light the Hellfire and guard it, ensuring that no one escapes. The companion, Samurah, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

رأيت الليلة رجلين أتياني قالا : الذي يوقد النار مالك ، خازن النار ، وأنا جبريل وهذا ميكائيل

“Last night I saw [in a dream] two men approaching me. One of them said, ‘The person who will light the Hellfire is Mālik, the guardian of Hell; and I am Gabriel and this is Michael.’”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ See also *Sahih Bukhārī*, vol. 2, pp. 257-258, no. 456.

¹²⁰ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 302, no. 459.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing in the preceding collection of texts on the origin and the form of the angels to rule out the possibility of angels taking part in the possession of the bodies or minds of human beings. However, the material on their abilities, categories and relationships with mankind clearly indicates that the angels lack the independent ability to possess humans. According to the orthodox Islamic view of the texts quoted in this chapter, angels do not possess free will – they only do what Allāh commands them. Allāh’s commands do not include taking possession of humans, because possession is fundamentally a form of oppression and evil, and Allāh has clearly stated in the Qur’ān that He does not oppress anyone, nor does He command evil. Consequently, the angels may be ruled out as a possible source for spirit-possession of humans.

THE JINN

The third and last category of created beings belonging to the spiritual world that could possibly play a role in the spirit-possession of human beings is the *jinn*. The Arabic word “*jinn*” comes from the verb *janna*¹²¹ which means “to hide or conceal.”¹²² Therefore, the heart hidden in the chest is called *janān*, and the embryo concealed in the womb is called *jann*. Furthermore, *junnah* is anything which screens, veils or shields. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

الصوم جنة

“Fasting is a shield [*junnah*] (from desire).”¹²³

Also, a *jinn* of people means “most of them,” because one who enters among them is concealed by them.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Arab lexicographers explain the word *jinn* as a derivative of *ijtinān* which means “to be concealed.” (*Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 13, p. 95.)

¹²² The suggestion in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 90, that this derivation is etymologically difficult is without foundation, and the speculation that *jinn* may be a loan-word from *genius* is even more strange.

¹²³ Reported by Mu’ādh ibn Jabal, collected by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Ahmād (*Mishkāh al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 1, pp. 11-12), and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2, pp. 328-329, no. 2110. It is also reported by Abū Hurayrah in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, pp. 65-66, no. 118.

¹²⁴ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 463.

The singular form of the word *jinn* is *jinnī* (Eng., genie or genii), and *jānn*¹²⁵ is used synonymously with *jinn*.¹²⁶ The word “*jinnī*” is not found in the Qur’ān, but both *jinn* and *jānn* are found:

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانًا
عَجَبًا

“Say, ‘It has been revealed to me that a group of *jinn* listened and said, “Verily, we have heard a marvellous Qur’ān.”’”
Qur’ān, 72:1

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِ إِنسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ

“On that day, no question will be asked of man or *jānn* as to his sins.”
Qur’ān, 55:39

Jinn is also used as a collective noun, as are the words *jinnān*¹²⁷ and *jinnah*:¹²⁸

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

“...Among the *jinnah* and men.”
Qur’ān, 114:6

In addition, according to some scholars, the term “*jinnah*” is used in the Qur’ān to refer to the angels, since they are also concealed from human eyes:¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *Jānn* also means a snake, as in the verse:

فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا

“...but when he saw it moving like a snake [*jānn*],
he turned back in retreat...”
Qur’ān, 28:31.

¹²⁶ *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 90.

¹²⁷ *Jinnān* is also used as the plural of *jānn*, meaning a snake.
(*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 464.)

¹²⁸ *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 13, p. 95. See also *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, p. 114 and *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 463.

¹²⁹ *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 8, p. 342. See also *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 13, p.95.

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ نَسْبًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ

إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

“And they have invented kinship between Him and the angels [jinnah]; but the angels [jinnah] know that they will be brought before Him [for judgement].”¹³⁰

Qur’ān, 37:158

REALITY

“With respect to the existence of *jinn*, Ibn Taymiyyah said:

No one in any of the Muslim sects denies the existence of *jinn* or that Allāh sent Muḥammad (ﷺ) to them. The vast majority of disbelievers, whether pagan Arabs or other Semites,¹³¹ Indians¹³² and other Hamites,

¹³⁰ This verse has been translated according to the aforementioned interpretation; however, the majority of Qur’ānic exegetes understand *jinnah* here to refer to the *jinn*, and thus the translation most commonly found would be as follows: “And they have invented a kinship between Him and the *jinn*, but the *jinn* know that they will be brought before Him.” With regard to this verse, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Jarīr both quoted Ibn ‘Abbās as saying, “The enemies of Allāh claimed that He and Iblīs were brothers.” See *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, vol. 4, p. 23.

¹³¹ In the Mesopotamian religion among the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians, demons were of two kinds: non-human beings and the vengeful dead. The first were of many types, including those who lurked in dangerous places, e.g. deserts and graveyards and the *labartu*, a female demon of mountains and marshlands which attacked children in particular. The *sedu* and *lamassu* were ambivalent, being both evil and guardian-spirits. *Lilitu* was a *succubus* (a beautiful, nude female demon) who visited men at night and had intercourse with them. The second were the ghosts (*etimmu*) of those who died by mischance and were greatly feared. Sickness and misfortune were attributed to demonic attack, especially of the *etimmu*. (*A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, p. 232.)

¹³² Among Indians, demons are either of non-human or human origin. (a) Non-human spirits or fiends are endowed with superhuman powers and possess material bodies of various kinds, which they can change at will and which are subject to destruction. As free agents, they can choose between good and evil, but a disposition towards evil preponderates in their character. (*Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarsa of India*, 515ff.) The *Asuras*, *Danayas*, *Daityas* and *Raksasas* belong to this group. (b) Human spirits, or ghosts of human beings, collectively known as *bhuta* are always evil. They originate from souls of those who have died untimely or violent deaths...and the dissolute or wicked during life. The most dangerous of these are the spirits of the murdered, those who have left the world with unsatisfied desires, and spirits of foreigners. (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 4, pp. 601-603.)

most Canaanites and Greeks,¹³³ and other descendants of Japeth,¹³⁴ confirm the existence of the *jinn*. As for the Jews and Christians, they recognise that the *jinn* exist in much the same way that Muslims do,¹³⁵ although there may be among them some individuals who deny the existence of the *jinn*. Individuals who deny the existence of the *jinn* may also be found among the orthodox Muslims, as well as Muslim sects like the Jaḥmīs¹³⁶ and Muʿtazilīs, although most Muslims do not deny their existence.”¹³⁷

On the other hand, Fakhrudīn al-Rāzī said:

“According to the obvious meanings of narrated statements from the philosophers, it [i.e., the existence of the *jinn*] is denied. That is so because Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīnā¹³⁸ stated in his treatise on the parameters of existing things that the *jinn* are ethereal [*hawāʾ*] creatures, which may take different forms. He then said, ‘This is an explanation of the name.’ His statement, ‘This is an explanation of the name,’ indicates that the explanation is of the folklore meaning of the word [*jinn*] and that there is no external reality to the term. As for the majority of those following religions and those believing in prophets, they confirm the existence of the *jinn*. A large group of early

¹³³ The English word “demon” is derived from the Greek *daimon* (pl. *daimones*). The 8th century BC Greek poet, Hesiod, in his account of the Four Ages, explains that after death, those of the golden age became *daimones* (*Works and Days*, 109 ff.). They were described as kindly guardians of men, distributors of property and wealth, but wrapped in darkness so as to be invisible while they wander over every region of the earth. So long as they were treated with respect, they were expected to show favour. These were the good demons. Evil spirits were conceived as ghosts of heroes, as they were considered incapable of conferring blessings, being only powerful to work ill. Some evil demons were represented as specifically attached to each individual from birth until death. Others were conceived of as avenging demons and were the instrument appointed to punish the crimes of a particular family. They bore the special title of “Alastor.” (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 4, pp. 590-593.)

¹³⁴ A son of Noah mentioned in Genesis 5:32. from the Hebrew *Yepeth* meaning “increase.” (*The Random House Dictionary*, p. 763.)

¹³⁵ Their beliefs are explained in the section on Christian exorcism.

¹³⁶ The founder of this theological school, Jaḥm ibn Ṣafwān (d. 745 CE), denied all of Allāh’s attributes, except that He was Omnipotent and the Creator. He also claimed that as long as one believed, had deeds would not affect him nor would he be punished for them. He further affirmed an extreme form of predestination, denied freewill and asserted that Paradise and Hell were not eternal. His followers survived down to the 11th century around the city of Tirmidhī, but they adopted the doctrines of the most popular school of that time, that of the Ashʿarīs. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 83.)

¹³⁷ *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 2-4.

¹³⁸ See note 31, p. 12.

philosophers¹³⁹ and followers of sacred texts affirmed their existence and called them lower spirits [*arwāḥ suflīyah*].”¹⁴⁰

ORIGIN

There are numerous references in the Qur’ān that specifically identify fire to be the origin of the *jinn*. However, the expressions referring to this vary from verse to verse, giving slightly different shades of meaning:

وَالْجَانَّ حَقَّقَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ تَارِ السَّمُومِ ﴿١٧﴾

“The *jinn* were created from the fire of a scorching wind [*nār al-samūm*].”¹⁴¹

Qur’ān, 15:27

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾

“And He created the *jinn* from a flame of fire [*mārij min nār*].”¹⁴²

Qur’ān, 55:15

The same terminology is used in the authentic ḥadīths to describe the fiery origin of the *jinn*.

Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was quoted by his wife, ‘Ā’ishah (614-678 CE), as saying,

¹³⁹ Such as al-Fārābī (d. 950 CE), one of the pre-eminent thinkers of medieval Islam. Al-Fārābī’s philosophical thinking was nourished in the heritage of the Arabic Aristotelian teachings of 10th century Baghdad. Consequently, he saw human reason as being superior to revelation; and to him religion only provided truth in a symbolic form to non-philosophers, who were not able to apprehend it in its purer forms. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, p. 680.)

¹⁴⁰ *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 30, p. 148.

¹⁴¹ Ibn ‘Abbās is quoted by al-Ṭabarī as explaining that *samūm* is an extremely hot wind which can kill and that *nār al-samūm* is smokeless fire. (*Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, vol. 14, p. 30.)

¹⁴² In explaining the meaning of *mārij*, al-Ṭabarī referred to it as the tongue of the fire and quoted Ibn ‘Abbās as saying so, as well as saying that it was the flame itself (*Jāmi’ al-Bayān*, vol. 27, p. 126). Al-Rāzī defines it as smokeless fire (*Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, p. 620), while Ibn al-Athīr considers the phrase to mean “flame mixed with the black substance of fire” (*al-Nihāyah*, vol. 4, p. 315). This interpretation is based upon the fact that *mārij* means “a mixture.” See *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2704.

خَلَقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةَ مِنْ نُورٍ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ

“The angels were created from light and the jinn from a flame of fire [mārij min nār].”¹⁴³

However, it is the view of most Sunnī scholars, past and present, that the relation of the *jinn* to fire is like the relation of man to earth. Although man’s origin is from the elements of earth, man himself is not composed of earth. Similarly, *jānn* (father of the *jinn*)¹⁴⁴ was created from the elements of fire, but neither he nor his descendants are any longer composed of fire. According to some of these scholars, proof for this can be found in the Prophet’s statement,

مر علي الشيطان فأخذته فحنقته حتى إني لأجد برد لسانه في يدي

“Satan appears before me in my prayer and I choked him and felt the coldness of his saliva on my hand...”¹⁴⁵

They argued that if Satan was himself a fiery being, then how could his saliva be cold or how could he even have saliva?¹⁴⁶

It is generally held that the *jinn*, like the angels, were created before mankind. This belief is based upon the apparent meaning of the following Qur’ānic verse:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ﴿١٦﴾
وَالْجَانَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَارِ السَّمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾

“Verily, We created mankind from dried clay, from black putrid mud. And We created the jinn before that from the fire of a scorching wind.”
Qur’ān, 15:26-27

¹⁴³ *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1540, no. 7134.

¹⁴⁴ *Mukhtār al-Şihāh*, p. 114. See also *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 462.

¹⁴⁵ Reported by ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd on the authority of his father, and collected by Imām Aḥmad. Scholars disagree as to whether ‘Āmir ever heard *ḥadīth* from his father. If he did, then the *isnād* is *ṣahīh*, but if he didn’t, which is more likely, it is weak.

¹⁴⁶ *Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 27.

This may also be deduced from the following Qur'ānic text in which the creation of the *jinn* is mentioned before that of man:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

*“I have not created the jinn and mankind except
for My worship.”*
Qur’ān, 51:56

In addition, Ibn Kathīr (1300-1373 CE) quotes a narration from the Prophet’s companion, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (d. 693 CE), wherein the Prophet (ﷺ) stated that the *jinn*, descendants of *jānn*, were on earth two thousand years before the creation of Adam.¹⁴⁷

DEATH

The *jinn* are created beings, consequently they die as do humans. Evidence for this belief may be found in the general statements from the Qur’ān which indicate that all of creation will cease to exist:

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

*“Everything [that exists] will perish except His
[i.e., Allāh’s] face.”*
Qur’ān, 28:88

كُلُّ مِمَّنْ عَلَيْهَا تَأَنٍّ

“Everything in the world will vanish...”
Qur’ān, 55:26

Furthermore, there is a verse which addresses the issue directly:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمِّرٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَسِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

*“Those are the ones against whom is justified the sentence
among the previous generations of jinn and men that have
passed away. Surely, they are the losers.”*
Qur’ān, 46:18

¹⁴⁷ *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, vol. 1, p. 108.

Al-Ālūsī¹⁴⁸ said, “The statement of [Allāh], Most Great and Glorious, ‘...among the previous generation of *jinn* and men that have passed away,’ is used to prove that the *jinn* die, generation after generation, like humans.”¹⁴⁹

Proof can also be found in authentic traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ). For example, Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 688 CE) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

أَعُوذُ بِعِزَّتِكَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَالْجِنُّ وَالْإِنْسُ يَمُوتُونَ

“I seek refuge in Your power. There is no god besides You, [You are the One] who does not die, while the *jinn* and mankind die.”¹⁵⁰

SATAN

(Ar. *Shayṭān*)

The word *shayṭān* (pl. *shayṭān*) is of the measure *fay‘āl*, from the root verb *shatana*, signifying “he was or became distant or remote from the truth and the mercy of Allāh.” This term is equivalent in meaning to the words “devil” or “demon” when used indefinitely or in the plural, but with the definite article “*al*,” it specifically refers to the Devil, i.e., Satan.¹⁵¹

It is clearly apparent from the authentic *ḥadīths* that Satan was a *jinn* and not an angel. When taken by themselves, some verses of the Qur’ān imply that he might have been an angel; however, there are also many others which infer that he was a *jinn*, and one that explicitly states that he was a *jinn*:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا
لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

“It is We who created you and gave you shape. And we

¹⁴⁸ Maḥmūd ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Ālūsī (1802-1854 CE), a great Qur’ānic exegete and scholar of prophetic traditions, was born in Baghdad, where he became a leading jurist until he resigned from his post and devoted himself to acquiring knowledge and writing. His most significant work was his commentary on the Qur’ān, *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, which has been published in nine large volumes. (*Al-A‘lān*, vol. 7, p. 176.)

¹⁴⁹ *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, vol. 26, p. 21.

¹⁵⁰ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9, p. 357, no. 480.

¹⁵¹ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 1552.

*told the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves to Adam,' and they
prostrated themselves, except Iblīs. He refused to be
of those prostrate."*

Qur'ān, 7:11

The above verse indicates that Iblīs¹⁵² (the personal name of Satan)¹⁵³ was among the angels. It also seemed to imply that he was an angel, otherwise the command to prostrate would not have applied to him and he would not have been wrong in disobeying it.¹⁵⁴ There are some who support the view that Satan is an angel. Al-Qurṭubī¹⁵⁵ said:

It is the opinion of the majority of scholars, like Ibn 'Abbās (d. 688 CE) and Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 654 CE) [from among the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)]; Ibn Jurayj,¹⁵⁶ Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib,¹⁵⁷ Qatādah¹⁵⁸ and others. It was

¹⁵² Iblīs is derived from *ablasa*, which means "he despaired or gave up hope of the mercy of Allāh." However, some Arab philologists consider it a foreign word (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 248) and orientalist consider it a corruption of the Greek *diabolos* (slanderer or accuser) (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 145 and *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 216).

¹⁵³ *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 145.

¹⁵⁴ This opinion has been attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd and other companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in a number of narrations describing Iblīs' life among the angels prior to his disobedience to Allāh. For example, they are quoted as saying, "When Allāh finished creating what He wished and rose above the throne, He appointed Iblīs over the angels of the lowest heaven. He was from a tribe of angels called 'Jinn', because they were the guardians of *Jannah* (Paradise)." (*Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 55 and *Aḥkām al-Jān*, pp. 201-202.)

¹⁵⁵ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273 CE), born in Cordoba but travelled to Egypt, is one of the leading Qur'ānic exegetes of all times. He is known for his *Tafsīr*, in which he concentrated on the legal import of the verses. The *Tafsīr*, published in 20 volumes, is known as *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, however, he entitled it *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (*The Compendium of Qur'ānic Laws*). (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 5, p. 322).

¹⁵⁶ 'Abdul-Mālik ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz ibn Jurayj (699-767 CE), a Makkian jurist, was the leading scholar of the Ḥijāz in his time and the first to write Islamic works in Makkah. Although born in Makkah, he was a freed slave of Byzantine origin. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 4, p. 160.)

¹⁵⁷ Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib (634-713 CE), the leading *tābi'ī*, was among the seven leading jurists of Madīnah. He was a scholar in *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence and was a noted ascetic. He was also the leading narrator of Caliph 'Umar's rulings. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 3, p. 102.)

¹⁵⁸ Qatādah ibn Di'āmah (680-736 CE), blind from birth, was the leading *ḥadīth* scholar of his time in Baṣrah. He was also a highly respected Qur'ānic exegete and Arab philologist. He died in Wāsiṭ of the plague. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 5, p. 189.)

the choice of Abul-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī,¹⁵⁹ Ibn Qudāmah¹⁶⁰ and the leading scholars of the Mālikī school. Al-Ṭabarī¹⁶¹ favoured it [over the opposing view], and al-Baghawī¹⁶² said that it was the opinion of most exegetes. It is also the obvious meaning of the verse:

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ
وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

“So the angels prostrated all together, except Iblīs, who was haughty and became one of the disbelievers.”
Qur‘ān, 38: 73-74.”¹⁶³

However, when Iblīs was asked why he did not prostrate, he replied that he was better than Adam:

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ
وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٧﴾

“[Allāb] said, ‘What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you?’ He replied, ‘I am better than he.

¹⁵⁹ Abul-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī (874-935 CE) was a famous theologian, born in Baṣrah. Until his 40th year, he was a zealous pupil of the Mu‘tazilī theologian, al-Jubbā‘ī; however, his study of *ḥadīth* elucidated for him the error of that school of thought. He henceforth championed the orthodox views against the Mu‘tazilīs and composed a large number of works refuting their views. The number of his books amounted to around 300. The most significant of his published works are *al-Iḥānah fī Uṣūl al-Dīyānah* and *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, a catalogue of heretical movements, the first work of its kind in Islamic literature. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 46-47.)

¹⁶⁰ ‘Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāmah (1146-1223 CE), born in Palestine, became one of the leading jurists among the scholars of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence. His most noted works are *al-Mughnī* in jurisprudence, and *Rawḍah al-Nāzir* in the science of jurisprudence. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 4, p. 66.)

¹⁶¹ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839-923 CE), the Arab historian and exegete, was born in Amul in the province of Ṭabaristān. He travelled extensively to Baghdad, Baṣrah, Kūfah, Syria and Egypt in search of knowledge in his early years; later he spent his time mainly teaching and writing. His great commentary on the Qur‘ān, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, is the earliest extant work of its kind. It became a standard work upon which later commentaries drew. His other major work was the 12 volume history of the world, *Tārikh al-Umam wal-Mulūk*, (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 556-557.)

¹⁶² Al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas‘ūd al-Farā’ al-Baghawī (1044-1117 CE), from a town in Khurasān between Herāt and Marw called Baghā, became a leading scholar in jurisprudence, *ḥadīth* science and *Tafsīr*. His best known published works are *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*, a 14 volume collection of the Sunnah, and *Amwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta‘wīl*, a 4 volume exegesis of the Qur‘ān. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 2, p. 259.)

¹⁶³ *Al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 1, p. 294.

You created me from fire and created him from clay.”

Qur’ān, 7:12

The reason which he gave for his superiority was that he was created from fire. Since the angels were created from light, as was previously narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ), and the *jinn* from fire, this justification of superiority on the part of Satan implies that he was a *jinnī* and not an angel. Ibn Kathīr said, “When Almighty Allāh commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam, Iblīs was included in the address, even though he was not from the same origin as them, because he resembled them and had become characterised by their deeds. Consequently, he was included in the address to them and cursed for disobeying the command.”¹⁶⁴ Al-Zamakhsharī¹⁶⁵ said, “The command included him, even though it was specifically for the angles, because Iblīs was in their company and he used to worship Allāh Almighty, the way they worshipped Him. So when they were commanded to prostrate to Adam and humble themselves in his honour, it was even more appropriate that the *jinn* [i.e., Iblīs], who was with them, humble himself.”¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, Qur’ānic texts quoted in the preceding section have shown that the angels do not have free will but do what ever Allāh commands them. There is another verse from the Qur’ān which addresses the issue in no uncertain terms:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ
مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ
أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ

*“And when We told the angels, ‘Prostrate to Adam,’ they
prostrated, except Iblīs. He was one of the jinn, so he
broke his Lord’s command. Will you then take him and his
children as protectors besides Me?
And they are enemies to you!...”*

Qur’ān, 18:50

¹⁶⁴ *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-A‘ẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 117.

¹⁶⁵ Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Zamakhsharī (1075-1144 CE), one of the greatest scholars of the Arabic language and a major proponent of the Mu‘tazilī doctrine, was born in Khwārizm in Central Asia. He later travelled to Khurasān, Baghdad and Makkah, where he lived for some time. His book *al-Mufaṣṣal*, on Arabic grammar, generated numerous commentaries. He is most famous for his controversial *Tafsīr* of the Qur’ān, *al-Kashāf*, which generated numerous rebuttals of his Mu‘tazilī positions. (*Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 20, pp. 151-6.)

¹⁶⁶ *Al-Kashāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq al-Tanzīl*, vol. 2, p. 555.

Al-Shanqīṭī¹⁶⁷ said:

“The apparent [meaning of this verse] shows that the reason for his disobedience to his Lord’s command was his being a *jinnī*; for it is an established principle in the basic rules of Qur’ānic exegesis with regard to the treatment of a clear text, implications of a text and recommendations of a text, that *fā* [then, therefore, for, because, so that], is among the conjunctions which indicate ‘cause’...For example, in Almighty Allāh’s statement: ‘The thief male or female, [*fā*] cut off his or her hand.’ [Qur’ān, 5:38] That is, their hands are to be cut off because of their act of theft.¹⁶⁸ His disobedience was because of his being a *jinnī*: ‘He was one of the *jinn*, so [*fā*] he broke his Lord’s command.’ It is this characteristic which distinguishes him from the angels. They all obeyed the command, and he did not.”¹⁶⁹

In Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī’s¹⁷⁰ opinion:

“It is obvious that the evidence [for Iblīs being a *jinn*] found in the phrase, ‘He was one of the *jinn*,’ is stronger than the evidence for him being an angel found in the exception [they (i.e. the angels) prostrated except Iblīs], because exceptions [in Arabic] often come in the broken [*munqaṭiʿ*] form,¹⁷¹ as in the Almighty’s statement:

قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَاؤُكُمْ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قَالُوا لَا بَدَءَ لِلَّهِ شَيْءٌ قُلْ إِنَّمَا نَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ قُلْ لِمَ نَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُ لَنَا شَيْئًا
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَنَا فِئْتَانٌ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ
وَلَكِنَّا نَكْفُرُ بِالْإِلَٰهِيَّاتِ الَّتِي نَدْعُو بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَتُحْكَمُ فِيكُمْ بِالْحُكْمِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُحْكَمُ
بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُكُمْ بِمَا نُهَيْتُمْ عَنْهُ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاتَّبَعُوا مَا كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

¹⁶⁷ Muḥammad al-Amīn ibn Muḥammad al-Jaknī al-Shanqīṭī (d. 1974 CE), a famous Arabic scholar and Mālikī jurist in his homeland, Mauritania, taught *Tafsīr* in the Prophet’s Mosque in Madīnah and the science of jurisprudence in Riyadh and Madīnah. His books are used in the colleges of Shari’ah. The most notable of his writings is *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān li Tafsīr al-Qur’ān bil-Qur’ān*, an exegesis of the Qur’ān. (*Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*, vol. 10, appendix, pp. 18-55.)

¹⁶⁸ *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*, vol. 4, p. 119.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī (1504-1567 CE) was a leading jurist from Egypt who studied at al-Azhar university and died in Makkah. He wrote a number of books in a variety of fields, among them are *al-Ṣawā’iq al-Muḥriqah* and *al-Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthīyah*. (*Al-A’lām*, vol. 1, p. 234.)

¹⁷¹ A type of exception in which the thing excepted is disunited in kind from that which the exception is made. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2990.) See also W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. 2, p. 336.

“He [i.e., Abraham] said, “Can you see whom you have been worshipping, you and your forefathers? For they are [all] enemies to me, except the Lord of all the worlds, who created me and guides me.”

Qur’ān, 26:75-78

‘the Lord of the worlds’ is not from the preceding [group from which He is excepted].”¹⁷² It has also been pointed out by some commentators that the verse given previously (Qur’ān 18:50) refers to Satan’s “children,” yet the angels, being without sex, do not procreate.¹⁷³

Concerning the widespread opinion among exegetes that Iblīs was an angel, al-Shanqīṭī said, “What has been attributed by the exegetes to many of the early scholars, like Ibn ‘Abbās and others, to the effect that he [i.e., Iblīs] was from the most noble group of angels who were guardians of Paradise, that he was in charge of the lowest heaven, and that his name was Azāzīl,¹⁷⁴ are all from Jewish sources [*isrā’īliyyāt*], which are unreliable.”¹⁷⁵ Thus, the more correct opinion is that Iblīs was present among the angels, but not one of them. How he got to be among them has been explained in a number of questionable narrations attributed to the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their students.¹⁷⁶

Whether or not Satan was the forefather of all of the *jinn*, as Adam was the forefather of man, has also been a subject of debate among some Muslim scholars. Some held that he was just one among the *jinn* and not their forefather. Furthermore, similar to Cain being the first wretched human, they considered him the first wretched *jinnī* due to his disobedience of Allāh’s command to bow to Adam.¹⁷⁷ The following verse has been cited as evidence to support this view:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ
مِنَ الْجِنِّ

“And when We told the angels, ‘Prostrate to Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblīs. He was one of the jinn...”

¹⁷² *Al-Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, p. 125. See also *Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī*, vol. 1, p. 210.

¹⁷³ *Abkām al-Jānn*, pp. 199-202.

¹⁷⁴ See also *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 143-144.

¹⁷⁵ *Aḍwā al-Bayān*, vol. 4, pp. 120-121.

¹⁷⁶ *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 1, p. 56.

¹⁷⁷ *Al-Īmān bil-Malā’ikah*, p. 109.

Qur'ān, 18:50

The apparent meaning of this verse implies that Satan was just one among them and not the first among them.¹⁷⁸

The other view was expressed by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in his interpretation of the phrase from the above mentioned verse, “He was one of the *jinn*,” He stated, “Iblīs was not one of the angels for even the blinking of an eye. He was the origin of the *jinn* as Adam was the origin of mankind.”¹⁷⁹ This was also the view favoured by Ibn Taymiyyah.¹⁸⁰ However, regarding the issue of whether or not Satan was indeed the forefather of the *jinn*, there is not any conclusive evidence from either the Qur'ān or the Sunnah to favour one opinion over the other.

FORM

In their natural state, most of the *jinn* are invisible to humans, but are visible to some animals. This is the position of the majority of scholars, past and present. Concerning seeing the *jinn*, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā wrote the following, “If angels or *jinn* take a dense form like a human or other [animals], it becomes possible to see them. However, under normal conditions they cannot be seen in their natural state.”¹⁸¹ The following are some of the authentic traditions used in support of this position:

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إذا سمعتم نباح الكلاب و نهيق الحمر بالليل فتعودوا بالله فإنهن يرين ما
لاترون

“If you hear the barking of a dog or the braying of a donkey at night, seek refuge in Allāh from Satan, because they see what you do not.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ *Ālam al-Jinn wal-Shayātīn*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁹ *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 226.

¹⁸⁰ See *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol. 4, p. 235.

¹⁸¹ *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 7, p. 525.

¹⁸² Collected by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1415, no. 5084) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 961, no. 4256.

In another narration by Abū Hurayrah, he quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

وإذا سمعتم نهيق الحمار فتعوذوا بالله من الشيطان فإنها رأت شيطاناً

“When you hear a donkey braying, seek refuge in Allāh from Satan, for he has seen a devil.”¹⁸³

In yet an additional narration, Abū al-Dardā’ said,

قام رسول الله (ﷺ) فسمعناه يقول (أعوذ بالله منك) ثم قال (ألعنك
بلعنة الله) ثلاثاً وبسط يده كأنه يتناول شيئاً، فلما فرغ من الصلاة قلنا: يا
رسول الله (ﷺ): قد سمعناك تقول في الصلاة شيئاً لم نسمعك تقوله قبل
ذلك ورأيناك بسطت يدك. قال (إن عدو الله إبليس جاء بشهاب من نار
(... ليجعله في وجهي

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) stood up [in prayer] and we heard him say, ‘I seek refuge in Allāh from you.’ Then he reached out his hand as if he were catching hold of something, and he said thrice, ‘I curse you by Allāh’s curse.’ When he finished praying, we asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, we heard you say something in your prayer that we have never heard you say before, and we saw you stretch your arm.’ He replied, ‘Indeed, Allāh’s enemy Iblīs brought a fiery torch and tried to thrust it in my face...’¹⁸⁴

Their invisibility has also been deduced from the following verse:

إِنَّهُمْ يَرِينَكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ

“He [i.e., Satan] and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them.”

Qur’ān, 7:27

¹⁸³ Collected by Abū Dāwūd, al-Bukhārī and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1428, no. 6581).

¹⁸⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 273-274, no. 1106.

Some scholars of the past, like al-Shāfi‘ī,¹⁸⁵ al-Naḥḥās¹⁸⁶ and Ibn Ḥazm,¹⁸⁷ used this verse as proof that only Prophets could see the *jinn*. Al-Bayhaqī¹⁸⁸ narrated in his book, *Manāqib al-Shāfi‘ī*, from al-Rabī‘ that al-Shāfi‘ī said, “We will invalidate the witness of anyone who claims to have seen the *jinn*, unless he is a Prophet.” Ibn Ḥajar¹⁸⁹ commented on his quotation, saying, “This statement should be taken to refer to one who claims to have seen them in the form in which they were created. One who claims to have seen them in their adopted animal shapes and forms should not be discredited, due to many reports with regard to their taking visible forms.”¹⁹⁰

Imam al-Shāfi‘ī supported his ruling that only the Prophets could see the *jinn* in their natural state with the above-mentioned Qur’ānic verse, to which Ibn Ḥajar commented, “The Almighty’s statement, ‘He and his tribe watch you...’ specifically refers to when they are in the form in which they were created.¹⁹¹ Al-Qurṭubī quoted al-Naḥḥās as saying, “[The phrase] ‘from a position where you cannot see them’ indicates that the *jinn* cannot be seen, except during the mission of a Prophet, so that it could be evidence for [the truth of] his prophethood. Allāh, Most Great and Glorious, created them in an invisible world, and they can only be seen if they are changed from their [natural] form, which is among the miracles which only occur during the era of the Prophets (May Allāh’s peace and blessings be upon

¹⁸⁵ Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī (767-820 CE) was born in Ghazzah, Palestine. He became one of the leading scholars of all time, and one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence was founded by him. His most famous published works are *al-Umm* in jurisprudence and *al-Risālah* in the science of jurisprudence. He also compiled a work of *ḥadīth* called *al-Musnad*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 6, p. 26.)

¹⁸⁶ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (d. 950 CE), known as al-Naḥḥās, was born in Egypt, where he became an outstanding Qur’ānic exegete of his time. He travelled to Iraq and met the outstanding scholars of the region. His most noted published works are *Nāsikh al-Qur’ān wa Mansūkhuh*, *Tafsīr Abyāt Sibawayh* and *Sharḥ al-Mu‘allaqāt al-Sab‘*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 1, p. 208.)

¹⁸⁷ See note 36, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (994-1066 CE) was born in one of the villages of Bayhaqī in the region of Naysābūr. He travelled to Baghdad, Kūfah, Makkah and elsewhere in search of knowledge. He was among the greatest Shāfi‘ī scholars, but became even more famous as a master of the *ḥadīth* sciences. Among his most noted works are *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, *al-Asm‘ uwal-Ṣifāt* and *Manāqib al-Shāfi‘ī*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 1, p. 116.)

¹⁸⁹ Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ‘Asqalānī (1372-1449 CE), commonly known as Ibn Ḥajar, was one of the greatest Islamic scholars of all time. He was born in Cairo, but travelled extensively to learn from the leading scholars of his time. He was a historian but became best known for his mastery of the science of *ḥadīth*. He served as a judge in Egypt on a number of occasions. His works are many, among them: *Lisān al-Mizān*, *Tahdhīb al-Tabdhīb*, *al-Isābah fī Tamyiz al-Ṣaḥābah*, *Bulūgh al-Marām* and his most famous work, *Fath al-Bārī: Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 1, pp. 178-179.)

¹⁹⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 6, p. 344.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 488.

them).”¹⁹² Ibn Ḥazm al-Zāhirī states, “They see us and we do not see them. Almighty Allāh has said, ‘He and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them.’ So if Allāh, Most Great and Glorious, has informed us that we do not see them, anyone who claims to see them or to have seen them is a liar, except if he is among the Prophets (May Allāh’s peace be upon them). For that was a miracle for them, as in the case where Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) stated that Satan appeared before him in order to break his prayer...”¹⁹³ Further on, al-Zāhirī states, “There is no way for there to be any authentic report of the sighting of a *jinn* after the death of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). There are either narrations with broken chains (*munqaṭi’āt*) or narrations from worthless [narrators].”¹⁹⁴

Different reasons have been given by scholars for the invisibility of *jinn*. Some held that they were invisible because Allāh did not create human eyes with an ability to see them, while others were of the view that they were invisible due to the fineness of their bodies.¹⁹⁵ Due to a lack of evidence to support these opinions from either the Qur’ān or the Sunnah, this issue cannot be resolved.

VISIBLE

There are numerous authentic narrations which show that some of the *jinn*, like the angels, can take visible human shapes and other various forms. Some exist in permanent or temporary visible animal forms from this world.

¹⁹² *Al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 7, p. 187.

¹⁹³ *Al-Fisāl fī al-Mīlāl*, vol. 5, p. 12.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁹⁵ See *Gharā’ib wa ‘Ajā’ib al-Jinn*, pp. 29-31.

In one of his long narrations Abū Hurayrah said,

وكلي رسول الله (ﷺ) بحفظ زكاة رمضان فأتاني آت فجعل يجثوا من
الطعام فأخذته وقلت: والله لأرفعنك إلى رسول الله (ﷺ). قال: إني
محتاج وعلي عيال ولي حاجة شديدة. قال: فخليت عنه فأصبحت
فقال النبي (ﷺ) (يا أبا هريرة ما فعل أسيرك البارحة؟) قال قلت: يا
رسول الله شكاً حاجة شديدة وعيالا فرحمته فخليت سبيله. قال (أما
إنه قد كذبك وسيعود) .. فقال النبي (ﷺ) (أما إنه قد صدقك وهو
كذوب. تعلم من تخاطب منذ ثلاث ليال، يا أبا هريرة؟) قال: لا. قال
ذاك شيطان

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) put me in charge of the zakāh of Ramaḍān.¹⁹⁶ While I was doing so, someone came and began to rummage around in the food, so I caught hold of him and said, ‘By Allāh, I am going to take you to Allāh’s Messenger!’ But the man implored, ‘Verily, I am poor and I have dependents. I am in great need,’ so I let him go. The next morning the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘O Abū Hurayrah, what did your captive do last night?’ I replied, ‘He complained of being in great need and of having a family, so I let him go.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, ‘Surely, he lied to you, and he will return.’” The incident was repeated another two times, after which the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “O Abū Hurayrah, do you know with whom you have been speaking these past three nights?” He replied that he did not, and so the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “That was a devil.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Compulsory charity given in the form of foodstuff at the end of the annual month of fasting, Ramaḍān, and distributed among the poorest members of society.

¹⁹⁷ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 289, no. 505.

CATEGORIES

According to various authentic *ḥadīths* of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), the *jinn* may be divided into three broad categories in relation to their modes of existence. He said,

الجن ثلاثة أصناف: صنف لهم أجنحة يطرون في الهواء و صنف
حيات و كلاب و صنف يحلون و يطعنون

“There are three types of jinn: one type which flies in the air all of the time, another type which exists as snakes and dogs, and an earthbound type which resides in one place or wanders about.”¹⁹⁸

AERIAL

Among aerial *jinn* are those who eavesdrop on the angels in the lowest heaven. The *jinn* then convey this information to some fortune-tellers.

عبد الله بن عباس قال: أخبرني رجل من أصحاب النبي (ﷺ) من
الأنصار أنهم بينما هم جلوس ليلة مع رسول الله (ﷺ) رمي بنجم
فاستنار، فقال لهم رسول الله (ﷺ) (ماذا كنتم تقولون في الجاهلية
إذا رمي بمثل هذا؟) قالوا: الله ورسوله أعلم، كنا نقول ولد الليلة
رجل عظيم ومات رجل عظيم. فقال رسول الله (ﷺ) (فإنها لا يرمى
بها موت أحد ولا حياته ولكن ربنا تبارك وتعالى اسمه، إذا قضى أمرا
سبح حملة العرش ثم سبح أهل السماء الذين يلونهم حتى يبلغ التسبيح
أهل هذه السماء الدنيا ثم قال الذين يلون حملة العرش لحملة العرش ماذا

¹⁹⁸ Collected by al-Ṭabarī and al-Ḥākim (*Mishkāh al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 2, p. 883) and authenticated by al-Albānī in his edition of *Mishkāh al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 2, p. 1206, no. 4148.

قال ربكم؟ فيخبرونهم ماذا قال) قال (فيستخبر بعض أهل السماوات
 بعضا حتى يبلغ الخبر هذه السماء الدنيا فتخطف الجن السمع فيقذفون
 إلى أوليائهم ويرمون به، فما جاءوا به على وجهه فهو حق ولكمهم
 يعرفون فيه ويزيدون

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās related an incident told to him by another companion of the Prophet. He said that while they were sitting at night with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), a [falling] meteor gave off a dazzling light, so the Prophet (ﷺ) asked them, “What did you say in pre-Islamic days about such occurrences?” They replied, “Allāh and his Messenger know best [the truth], but we used to say that on such a night a great man was born and a great man died.” Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) then said, “These [meteors] are not sent at either the death or birth of anyone. When Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious, decides to do something, He issues a command. Then the angels bearing the throne and those in the heavens next to them glorify and praise Him, until the glorification of Allāh reaches those in the heaven of this world. The angels near the throne-bearers then ask them [i.e., the throne-bearers], ‘What has your Lord said?’ They inform them of what He has said, and those in the heavens [below] seek and relay information from them [i.e., the angles near the throne-bearers] until it reaches the heaven of this world. While the information is being transferred, [the jinn] snatch what they manage to overhear and carry it to their friends. When the angels spot the jinn, they attack them with meteors. If they [i.e., the jinn] were to narrate only what they overhear, it would be all correct; however, they add to it and mix it with lies.”¹⁹⁹

Prior to the beginning of Prophet Muḥammad’s mission, the *jinn*, by eavesdropping were able to gather a considerable amount of information about the future. However, after revelation began, Allāh had the angels carefully guard the lower reaches of the heavens, and most of the *jinn* were chased away. This phenomenon is described in the Qur’ān through the statement of one of the *jinn*:

¹⁹⁹ Collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1210, no. 5538).

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا
 ﴿٨﴾ وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعِدًا لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ
 يَحْدِثْ لَهُ شُهَابًا يَأْصُدُ ۝٩

“We [i.e., the jinn] had sought out the heavens, but found it filled with strong guardians and meteors. We used to sit on high places in order to listen, but whoever listens now finds a flame waiting for him.”

Qur’ān, 72: 8-9

Allāh Himself says:

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَسْرَقَ السَّمْعَ
 فَأَنْعَدُهُ شُهَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨﴾

“And We have guarded it [i.e., the heavens] from every cursed devil, except the one who is able to snatch a hearing. And he is pursued by a brightly burning flame.”

Qur’ān, 15: 17-18.

The Prophet’s companion, Ibn ‘Abbās, further elaborated on this change in which the *jinn* could no longer eavesdrop, saying,

انطلق رسول الله (ﷺ) في طائفة من أصحابه عامدين إلى سوق عكاظ وقد حيل بين الشياطين وبين خبر السماء وأرسلت عليهم الشهب، فرجعت الشياطين إلى قومهم، فقالوا: ما لكم؟ قالوا: حيل بيننا وبين خبر السماء وأرسلت علينا الشهب. قالوا: ما ذلك إلا من شيء حدث فاضربوا مشارق الأرض ومغارها فانظروا ما هذا الذي حال بيننا وبين خبر السماء. فانطلقوا يضربون مشارق الأرض ومغارها فمر النفر الذين أخذوا نحو تهامة عامدين إلى سوق عكاظ وهو يصلي بأصحابه صلاة الفجر، فلما سمعوا القرآن استمعوا له وقالوا: هذا الذي حال بيننا وبين

خبر السماء . فرجعوا إلى قومهم فقالوا : يا قومنا إنا سمعنا قرآنا عجا
يهدى إلى الرشـد فأمتنا به ولن نشرك بربنا أحدا

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) and a group of his companions set out for the ‘Ukāz market,²⁰⁰ the devils were blocked from hearing information in the heavens. Meteors were let loose on them, so they returned to their people. When their people asked what had happened, they told them. Some suggested that something must have happened, so they spread out over earth, seeking the cause. Some of them came across the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions while they were in prayer, and they heard the Qur’ān being recited. They said among themselves that this must have been what blocked them from listening. When they returned to their people, they told them: ‘Verily we have heard a marvellous Qur’ān. It guides unto righteousness, so we believed in it. And we will never make partners with our Lord,’²⁰¹

ANIMAL

As for *jinn* appearing as snakes, the Prophet’s companion, Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إن بالمدينة نفرا من الجن قد أسلموا ، فمن رأى شيئا من هذه العوامر
فليؤذنه ثلاثا ، فإن بدا له بعد فليقتله ، فإنه شيطان

“Madīnah has in it a group of *jinn* who became Muslims, so whoever sees any snakes [in their homes] should request them to leave three times. If any of them appear after that, he should kill it, because it is a devil.”²⁰²

²⁰⁰ An annual fair of 21 days, which was held between Tā’if and Nakhlah and which opened on the 1st of Dhul-Qa’dah at the commencement of the three sacred months. It was abolished by Prophet Muḥammad. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 649-650.)

²⁰¹ Collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6, pp. 415-416, no. 443), Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 243-244, no. 908), al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad. The Qur’ānic reference is 72:1-2.

²⁰² *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1213, no. 5557.

In a number of authentic *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke about the *jinn* appearing as dogs.

عن عبد الله بن الصامت عن أبي ذر قال: قال رسول الله (ﷺ) (إذا قام أحدكم يصلي فإنه يستره إذا كان بين يديه مثل آخرة الرجل فإذا لم يكن بين يديه مثل آخرة الرجل فإنه يقطع صلاته الحمار والمرأة والكلب الأسود). قلت: يا أبا ذر، ما بال الكلب الأسود من الكلب الأحمر من الكلب الأصفر؟ قال: يا ابن أخي، سألت رسول الله (ﷺ) كما سألتني، فقال: الكلب الأسود شيطان

Abū Dharr quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying, “When any of you stands for prayer, it should be towards something that shields him, equivalent [in height] to the back of a saddle, otherwise his prayer will be broken by the passing of a donkey, a woman or a black dog.” Abū Dharr’s student asked, “What is the difference between a black dog, a red dog and a tan-coloured dog?” He replied, “O my nephew, I also asked Allāh’s Messenger as you are asking me and he said, ‘The black dog is a devil.’”²⁰³

It is also believed by some scholars that camels are *jinn*. This opinion is based upon an authentic tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ) reported by al-Barā’ ibn ‘Azib, in which he quoted him as saying,

لا تصلوا في مبارك الإبل فإنها من الشيطان

“Do not offer prayer in camel pens, because they are [created]²⁰⁴ from the devils.”²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Collected by all of the six authentic books of *ḥadīth* (*al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*), with the exception of *Sahih al-Bukhārī*. See *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 261-262, no. 1032.

²⁰⁴ The word “created” occurs in the narration of this *ḥadīth* collected by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 86.

²⁰⁵ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 1, pp. 44-45, no. 184) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 1, p. 37, no. 169.

However, other scholars hold that the description is metaphorical and not literal. Ibn Ḥibbān²⁰⁶ said, “If the discouragement from formal prayer in camel pens was actually due to camels being created from *jinn*, the Prophet (ﷺ) would not have prayed on the back of a camel [while riding it]. It is impossible that formal prayer not be allowed in areas where devils may be, but allowed on the devils themselves. The meaning of his [i.e., the Prophet’s] statement, ‘They are created from devils,’ is that the devils accompany them.”²⁰⁷

EARTHBOUND

The *jinn* which stay in one area or wander about belong to the earthbound category and includes those *jinn* known as *qarīn* (literally, “companion”). One of these accompanies each human, from his birth until death.

²⁰⁶ Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān (d. 965 CE), also known as Abū Ḥātim al-Bustī, was a great historian, geographer, jurist and *ḥadīth* scholar. He was born in Bust (Sijistān) but travelled extensively to Khurasān, Syria, Egypt and Algeria. He was made the judge of Samarqand for some time and is noted for his writings. His most noted published work is *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (known as *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*), which is said to be more authentic than *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 6, p. 78.)

²⁰⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, vol. 3, p. 157.

This *jinn* encourages man's lower desires and constantly tries to divert him from righteousness. The Prophet (ﷺ) referred to this relationship, saying,

ما منكم من أحد إلا وقد وكل به قرينه من الجن قالوا : وإياك يا رسول الله؟ قال : وإياي إلا أن الله أعانني عليه ، فأسلم ، فلا يأمرني إلا بخير

“Everyone of you has been assigned a companion from the jinn.” The Ṣaḥābah asked, “Even you, O Messenger of Allāh?” and the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Even me, except Allāh has helped me against him and he has submitted. Now he only tells me to do good.”²⁰⁸

ABILITIES

Eat and Drink

According to explanations recorded in authentic *ḥadīths*, the *jinn* consume food and drink.

عن ابن مسعود قال : قال رسول الله (ﷺ) (أتاني داعي الجن فذهبت معه فقرأت عليهم القرآن .) قال : فانطلق بنا ، فأرانا آثارهم وآثار نيرانهم ، وسألوه الزاد ، فقال : (لكم كل عظم ذكر اسم الله عليه يقع في أيديكم أوفر ما يكون لحما وكل بعرة علف لدوابكم) فقال رسول الله (ﷺ) (فلا تستنجوا بهما فإنهما طعام إخوانكم)

The companion, Ibn Mas'ūd, said, “The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘An emissary from the jinn came to me [and asked me to accompany him], so I went with him and recited the Qur’ān to them.’ He took us and showed us their tracks and remnants of their fires. They asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to specify food for them. He said [to them], ‘You may have as meat every bone on which Allāh’s name has been mentioned which falls into your hands, and for your

²⁰⁸ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1471, no. 6757.

animals every animal dropping.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) then said [to his companions], ‘So do not wipe yourselves clean [istinjā’] with them, for they are the provisions for your brothers.’”²⁰⁹

This ability of the *jinn* to ingest substances is further supported by the Prophet’s edict concerning eating and drinking. Ibn ‘Umar quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

إذا أكل أحدكم فليأكل بيمينه وإذا شرب فليشرب بيمينه فإن الشيطان يأكل بشماله ويشرب بشماله

“If any one of you eats, let him eat with his right [hand], and if he drinks let him do so with his right, for surely Satan eats and drinks with his left.”²¹⁰

Some of the earlier scholars have debated as to how the *jinn* eat, whether by sniffing or by chewing and swallowing. One side argued that the *jinn* were invisible because they were incorporeal, and the process of chewing and swallowing could only be done by corporeal beings. The other side base their argument on the implications of a *ḥadīth* collected by Abū Dāwūd²¹¹ and reported by Umayyah ibn Makhshī.

قال أمية: كان رسول الله (ﷺ) جالسا ورجل يأكل فلم يسم حتى لم يبق من طعامه إلا لقمة، فلما رفعها إلى فيه قال: بسم الله أوله وآخره. فضحك النبي (ﷺ) ثم قال: ما زال الشيطان يأكل معه، فلما ذكر اسم الله عز وجل استقاء ما في بطنه

He stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting by a man who continued to eat without mentioning Allāh’s name until only a single morsel was left. When he raised it to his mouth, he said, “In the name of Allāh in the beginning and the end.” The Prophet (ﷺ) laughed and said, “Satan

²⁰⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 244, no. 903.

²¹⁰ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1115, no. 5008.

²¹¹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1064, no. 3759. It is also collected by al-Nasā’ī, al-Dāraquṭnī and al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, p. 268.

continued to eat with him, but when he mentioned Allāh's name, he vomited what was in the stomach.”

However this *ḥadīth* is not authentic²¹² and there is not sufficient canonical evidence to determine the correctness of either opinion.²¹³

COHABITATION

The majority of the Sunnī scholars hold that the *jinn* are capable of having sexual relations and bearing offspring. This opinion is based upon the existence of male and female *jinn* alluded to in the following verse:

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ
رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾

“True, there were men among humans who sought refuge
from men among the *jinn*, but they only
increased them in folly.”

Qur’ān, 72:6

The usage of men in reference to the *jinn* implies that there must also be women among them.²¹⁴ Female *jinn* are spoken about in *ḥadīths* from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions. For example, Anas ibn Mālik stated that whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) went into the toilet area, he would say,

اللهم اني أعوذ بك من الخبث والخبائث

“O Allāh, surely I seek refuge in You from evil male and
female *jinn*.”²¹⁵

²¹² The *ḥadīth* is only reported by Jābir ibn Subḥ from al-Muthannā ibn al-Khuzā’ī (*‘Awn al-Ma’būd*, vol. 10, p. 243), and al-Muthannā is classified *majhūl* (unknown). Thus, it is classified *ḍa’īf* (unreliable), according to the science of *ḥadīth* criticism. See *Taqrīb al-Taḥḍīb*, vol. 2, p. 228, no. 913 and *al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’ḍīl*, vol. 3, p. 435, no. 7062.

²¹³ *‘Ālam al-Jinn fī Ḍaw’ al-Kitāb wal-Sunnah*, p. 49.

²¹⁴ *Al-‘Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah wa Ususubā*, vol. 2, p. 27.

²¹⁵ The Arabic term used in this *ḥadīth* to refer to male and female *jinn* are *khubuth* and *khabā’ith*. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī said, “*Khubuth* is the plural of *khabth*, and *khabā’ith* is the plural of *khabthab* which mean the male and female devils, as was stated by al-Khaṭṭāb, Ibn Ḥibbān and others.” (*Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 1, p. 243.) The *ḥadīth* was collected in all six books of *ḥadīth*. See *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, pp. 105-106, no. 144; *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 205, no. 729 and *Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 1, pp. 1-2, no. 4.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb once asked a question to a former fortune teller who had converted to Islām,

فَمَا أَعْجَبَ مَا جَاءَكَ بِهِ جَنِّيَّتِكَ؟

“Tell me the strangest thing which your female jinn (jinniyah) told you?”²¹⁶

Further support for this opinion is found in the implications of the following two verses from the Qur’ān:

لَمْ يَطْمِئْتُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾

“[Maidens of Paradise] whom no man or jinn before had deflowered.”

Qur’ān, 55:74

أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ

“Will you then take him [i.e., Satan] and his children as protectors besides Me? And they are enemies to you!”

Qur’ān, 18:50

The sexual act of deflowering and the possession of offspring attributed to the *jinn* in these verses imply that they procreate sexually.²¹⁷

FREE WILL

The *jinn* possess a free will like human beings; as such they may be divided into two main groups according to their faith – Muslims (i.e., believers) and *kuffār* (disbelievers). The Qur’ān addresses this distinction in *Surah al-Jinn*:

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانًا
عَجَبًا ﴿٢﴾ يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ﴿٣﴾

“Say, ‘It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn listened and said, “Verily, we have heard a marvellous

²¹⁶ *Sahib Bukhārī*, vol. 5, pp. 131-132, no. 206.

²¹⁷ *Abkām al-Jānn*, pp. 51-52.

*Qur'ān. It guides unto righteousness so we have believed in it. And we will never make partners with our Lord.”*²¹⁸

Qur'ān, 72:1-2

وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُوَلِّتِكَ
تَحَرُّوا شِدَا ۖ ﴿١٤﴾ وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿١٥﴾

“And there are among us Muslims [in submission to Allāh] and others who deviate from justice, and whoever accepts Islām has sought out the right path. As for those who deviate, they will be firewood for the Hellfire.”

Qur'ān, 72: 14-15

The disbelieving *jinn* are referred to in Arabic as *Shayāṭīn* (s. *shayṭān*). The Qur'ān also calls human beings who became enemies of righteousness *Shayāṭīn* (devils):

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

“Likewise, We have made for every prophet an enemy, devils [Shayāṭīn] from among mankind and the jinn.”

Qur'ān, 6:112

The powerful and crafty *jinn* (especially the evil ones among them) are called 'Ifrīt':²¹⁸

قَالَ عَفْرَيْتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ

*“An 'Ifrīt from among the jinn said,
‘I will bring it for you...’”*

Qur'ān, 27:39

The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

إن عفريتاً من الجن تفلت علي البارحة ليقطع علي الصلاة

*“Verily, an 'Ifrīt from among the jinn tried to break my prayer last night by spitting on me...”*²¹⁹

The lowest category of *jinn* in terms of their power or ability is referred to

²¹⁸ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 2089. See also *al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3, p. 262 and *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīf*, vol. 2, p. 611.

²¹⁹ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 268, no. 75.

in Arabic as *himm*. This category includes the weakest of the *jinn* and also those who appear in the form of dogs which are completely black.²²⁰

The *jinn* that suddenly appear in horrible, rapidly changing forms in the presence of humans are referred to in Arabic as *ghūl* (pl. *ghūlān*). Mention of them can be found in the *ḥadīths*. For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted as saying,

... وإذا تغولت لكم الغيلان فنادوا بالأذان ...

“If the *ghūlān* appear and transform themselves before you, call the *adhān*.”²²¹

MOBILITY

Jinn have the ability to traverse huge distances instantaneously and transport objects without being detected. This fact is mentioned in the Qurʾān in the story of Prophet Solomon and Bilqīs,²²² the queen of Sheba. Bilqīs was coming to see him, and prior to her arrival he asked the *jinn* to bring her throne from her land:

قَالَ عِفْرِيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا أَنِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

“An ‘Ifrit from among the *jinn* said, ‘I will bring it to you before you can get up from your place. Verily, I am strong and trustworthy for the assignment.’”

Qurʾān, 27:39

²²⁰ *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol. 13, p. 132.

²²¹ *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 305.

²²² Bilqīs is the name among Muslims for the Queen of Sheba. Her story is given in 1 Kings 10:1-10, 13 and in the Qurʾān, 27:20-45. The name is not mentioned in the Qurʾān, but according to Arab historians she is identified as the daughter of al-Had-hād, the son of the Himyarite king, Shurahbīl (or Shurāḥīl) of Yemen. Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406 CE) gives her name as Balqamah in *al-Muqaddimab*, and the first century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (original name, Joseph ben Matthias, d. 100 CE), regards her as the ruler of Egypt and Ethiopia and records her name as Naukalis. Among Ethiopian historians, she is known as Makedah. See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 63; *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 10, pp. 713-714; and *al-Mawsūʿah al-ʿArabīyyah al-Muyassarah*, vol. 1, p. 400.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH HUMANS

According to numerous statements of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), the *jinn* are in very close contact with humans. The *qarīn*, mentioned earlier, is an evil *jinn* that accompanies each and every human being from birth until death. This demon encourages man's lower desires and constantly tries to divert him from righteousness.

DREAMS

The *jinn*'s contact with man goes even deeper. Ṣafīyyah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إن الشيطان يجري من ابن آدم مجرى الدم

“Verily, Satan flows in the bloodstream
of Adam's descendants.”²²³

The *jinn* are able to affect the subconscious human mind, according to the Prophet's statement,

الرؤيا ثلاث: فالرؤيا الصالحة بشرى من الله والرؤيا تحزين من الشيطان و

رؤيا مما يحدث به المرء من نفسه

“Verily, the dreams which a man sees in his sleep are of three types: a dream from the Most Merciful [Allāh], a sad dream from Satan, and a sub-conscious dream.”²²⁴

In another narration the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

²²³ Collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, pp. 142-3, no. 255), Muslim (*Sahib Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1188, no. 5405), Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd.

²²⁴ Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and collected by Muslim (*Sahib Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1224, no. 5621), Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1395, no. 5001) and Ibn Ḥibbān, and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 985, no. 4369.

إذا رأى أحدكم رؤيا يحبها فإنما هي من الله فليحمد الله عليها وليحدث
بها ، وإذا رأى غير ذلك مما يكره فإنما هي من الشيطان فليستعذ من
شرها ولا يذكرها لأحد فإنها لا تضره

“If one of you sees a dream which pleases him, it is from Allāh, so let him praise Allāh and speak about it. But if he sees other things which he dislikes, it is from Satan, so let him seek refuge in Allāh and not mention it to anyone and it will not harm him.”²²⁵

THOUGHTS

They can also affect the conscious mind by introducing deviant thoughts. Abū Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

يأتي الشيطان أحدكم فيقول: من خلق كذا؟ من خلق كذا؟ حتى
يقول: من خلق ربك؟ فإذا بلغه فليستعذ بالله ولينته

“Satan will come to one of you and say, ‘Who created this and that?’ until he asks, ‘Who created your Lord?’ When he comes to that, one should seek refuge in Allāh and stop [such idle thoughts].”²²⁶

HOMES

They may sleep in the houses of humans and eat with a man while he eats. Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

²²⁵ Collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sabih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 324, no. 506) and Aḥmad.

²²⁶ Collected by Muslim (*Sabih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 77, no. 244) and al-Bukhārī (*Sabih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 320, no. 496).

إذا دخل الرجل بيته فذكر الله عند دخوله وعند طعامه قال الشيطان:
 لا مبيت لكم ولا عشاء. وإذا دخل فلم يذكر الله عند دخوله قال
 الشيطان: أدركم المبيت. فإذا لم يذكر الله عند طعامه قال: أدركم
 المبيت والعشاء

“If a man enters his house and remembers Allāh while entering and while eating, Satan says [to his companion], ‘There is no place to pass the night and no dinner.’ But if he enters without remembering Allāh while entering, Satan says, ‘You have caught a place to pass the night.’ And if he does not mention Allāh’s name before eating, he says, You have caught both a place for the night and dinner.”²²⁷

They may also cause houses to burn down through the agency of animals present in the house. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

إذا نمت فأطفئوا سراجكم فإن الشيطان يدل مثل هذه على هذا
 فتحرقكم

“When you go to sleep, put out your lamps, because Satan may guide something like this [rat] to that [lamp] and cause you to be burned.”²²⁸

BIRTH

At birth, every child is not only assigned a devil to accompany it throughout life, but it is also touched by Satan. It was reported that Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said,

²²⁷ Collected by Muslim, Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1063, no. 3756) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 717, no. 3200.

²²⁸ Narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās, collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1447, no. 5227) and Ibn Hibbān, and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 985, no. 4369.

ما من بني آدم مولود إلا يمسه الشيطان حين يولد فيستهل صارخا من مس
الشيطان غير مريم وابنها

“Satan pricks with his finger every newborn child of Adam’s descendants. They all begin screaming from Satan’s jab, except Mary and her son [i.e. Jesus].”²²⁹

The reason given by Abū Hurayrah for their protection is the supplication made by Mary’s mother at the time of Mary’s birth.²³⁰ It is recorded in the Qur’ān:

وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾

“I commend her and her offspring to Your protection from Satan, the rejected.”
Qur’ān, 3:36

SICKNESS

Some physical human sicknesses are caused by the effects of *jinn*. The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted as saying,

فناء أمتي بالطعن والطاعون . . . (الطاعون) طعن أعداءكم من الجن ،
وفي كل شهادة

“[One of the causes for] the destruction of my nation of followers will be [assassination by] stabbing and the plague, which is harassment from your enemies among the jinn. [Death] by either way is martyrdom.”²³¹

In the case of a woman who complained of vaginal bleeding at times other than her menstrual period, the Prophet (ﷺ) called it,

²²⁹ Collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sabih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 426, no. 641) and Aḥmad.

²³⁰ See *Sabih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 426, no. 641.

²³¹ Reported by Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī, collected by Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī, and ruled authentic by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣagħīr*, vol. 2, p. 779, no. 4231.

ركضة من الشيطان

“one of the kicks of Satan.”²³²

عن زينب امرأة عبد الله قالت: دخل عبد الله يوماً . . . فجلس إلى جاني فمسني فوجد مس خيط فقال: ما هذا؟ فقلت: رقى لي فيه من الحمرة. فجذبه وقطعه فرمى به وقال: لقد أصبح آل عبد الله أغنياء عن الشرك. سمعت رسول الله (ﷺ) يقول: (إن الرقى والتائم والتولة شرك) قلت: فإني خرجت يوماً فأبصرني فلان فدمعت عيني التي تليها فإذا رقيتها سكنت دمعتها وإذا تركتها دمعت. قال: إنما ذاك عمل الشيطان كان ينخسها بيده فإذا رقاها كف عنها

Zaynab, the wife of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, reported that once he saw a cord necklace around her neck and he asked what it was, she replied, “It is a cord in which a spell has been placed to help me.” He snatched it from her neck, broke it and said, “Surely, the family of ‘Abdullāh has no need for shirk! I heard Allāh’s Messenger say, ‘Verily, spells, talismans and charms are shirk.’” Zaynab replied, “Why are you saying this? My eye used to discharge, and when I went to So-and-so, the Jew, he put a spell on it and it stopped discharging!” Ibn Mas‘ūd replied, “Verily, it was only a devil prodding it with his hand, so when you had it bewitched, he stopped.”²³³

²³² Reported by Ḥammah bint Jaḥsh, collected by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah, and authenticated (*ḥasan*) by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 1, p. 56, no. 267.

²³³ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1089, no. 3874), Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah and Ibn Ḥibbān and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 2, pp. 736-737, no. 3288.

DEATH

At the time of death, the evil *jinn* try their utmost to cause the believers to stumble and go astray. It was reported by Abul-Yasār that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray for refuge from that moment as follows:

اللهم إني... أعوذ بك أن يتخبطني الشيطان عند الموت

“O Allāh...I seek refuge in You from Satan causing me to fumble at the time of death...”²³⁴

COHABITATION

Scholars of the past have debated the possibility of humans and *jinn* having sexual relations. The debate covered two basic points: (1) whether it was physically possible for intercourse to take place, and (2) whether it was legally permissible²³⁵ within the bounds of marriage.

Those who hold that sexual relations are possible support their position with the implications of the following verse:

لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّا بِأَن يَأْتِيَنَّاهُمْ وَلَا جُنَّ

“[Maidens of Paradise] whom no man or *jinnī* before them has deflowered.”

Qur’ān, 55:74

Al-Ālūsī said:

“The verse clearly negates the deflowering of the maidens of Paradise (*ḥūr ‘īn*) by male humans. As for its [the verse’s] negation of *jinn* deflowering

²³⁴ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 1, p. 402, no. 1547), al-Nasā’ī and al-Hākim (*Mishkāh al-Maṣābīh*, vol. 1, p. 526) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḡīr*, vol. 1, p. 275, no. 1282.

²³⁵ *Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 91.

the maidens of Paradise, Mujāhid²³⁶ and al-Ḥasan²³⁷ were reported to have said that the *jinn* are able to have sexual intercourse with human females when their husbands do not mention the name of Allāh [before engaging in sex]. Thus, the negation here includes both of those [i.e. men and *jinn*] who engage in sex. It has been said by others that there is no need for such a [convoluted] explanation, as the negation of deflowerment of the maidens of Paradise by *jinn* is sufficient to indicate that it is possible for them [the *jinn*] to do so [i.e. have sex with human females]. There is no doubt that male *jinn* are capable of independently having sex with human females without the presence of their husbands if the husbands do not mention Allāh's name."²³⁸

The concept of *jinn* having sex with the wives of men who do not mention Allāh's name prior to intercourse is based on a famous but weak tradition. Al-Rāzī wrote in his Qur'ānic commentary on this verse, "What is the benefit in mentioning the *jinn* if they do not engage in sexual intercourse? The view that they do not have sex among themselves is wrong, because the *jinn* do have offspring and descendants. The difference of opinion [among scholars] is whether they are able to engage in sex with human females or not. The majority view is that they are able to do so...It is as if the human deflowerment [of the maidens] is like that of the *jinn* with regard to the implication of their negation [in the verse]."²³⁹ Ibn al-Jawzī²⁴⁰ states the following concerning the above mentioned verse, "The verse is proof that a *jinnī* can have sex with women in the same way that men do."²⁴¹

Those scholars who deny the possibility of *jinn* having sexual relations with humans rely on the implications of the following verse:

²³⁶ Mujāhid ibn Jabr (642-722 CE), born in Makkah a freed slave of the Makhzūm clan, he became the leading Qur'ānic exegete and authority on recitations among Makkans. He was a *tābī'ī* (student of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ) and the main pupil of the well-known commentator among the Prophet's companions, Ibn 'Abbās. He later travelled and settled in Kūfah. The work which he composed in *Tafsīr* was avoided by other commentators because he used to rely upon narrations from Christian and Jewish sources. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 5, p. 278.)

²³⁷ Al-Ḥasan ibn Yasār al-Baṣrī (643-728 CE), a *tābī'ī* and the leading scholar of Baṣrah, was perhaps the most outstanding scholar of his time. He was born in Madīnah and raised there. He was highly esteemed as a transmitter of prophetic traditions and greatly renowned as an ascetic. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 2, p. 226 and *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 136.)

²³⁸ *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 27, p. 119.

²³⁹ *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 29, p. 130.

²⁴⁰ 'Abdul-Rahmān ibn 'Alī al-Jawzī (1114-1201 CE) was born in Baghdad and became one of the leading scholars of his time in history and *ḥadīth*. He was a prolific writer, producing over 300 works. Among the most notable of his published works are *Rūḥ al-Arwāḥ*, *Talbīs Iblīs*, *Sayd al-Khāṭir*, and *Zād al-Masīr fī 'Ilm al-Tafsīr*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 3, pp. 316-317.)

²⁴¹ *Zād al-Masīr fī 'Ilm al-Tafsīr*, vol. 8, p. 122.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا
إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

“And among His signs is that He created for you [men] mates from among yourselves in order that you may live with them in tranquillity, and He has put between you love and mercy...”

Qur’ān, 30:21

According to them, men are blessed by Allāh with wives from within their own species and of a similar form wherein they find tranquillity, love and mercy. Consequently, the divinely ordained goals of marriage cannot be achieved with mates from another species who exist in another form.²⁴²

Al-Māwardī²⁴³ said, “The intellect rejects [the possibility of sex between humans and *jinn*] due to the differences in their species, natures and senses. Man is corporeal and the *jinn* incorporeal, and man was created from clay while the *jinn* were created from fire. Thus, mixing would not be possible with such differences, and offspring would be inconceivable.”²⁴⁴

Al-Suyūṭī²⁴⁵ was of the opinion that sexual relations occur between humans and *jinn*. He mentioned many narrations from the early scholars and those of later generations indicating this. Ibn Taymiyyah wrote the following, “*Jinn* and humans may also have sexual intercourse with each other and beget children. This is a frequent occurrence that is well-known to many.”²⁴⁶

Assuming that sexual relations can occur, the vast majority of scholars opposed it even within the bounds of marriage. There is a lack of evidence

²⁴² *Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 93.

²⁴³ ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad (974-1058 CE), known as Abul-Ḥasan al-Māwardī, was the leading judge of his time and a prolific writer. He was born in Baṣrah and transferred to Baghdad. He was made chief judge during the rule of the ‘Abbāsī caliph, al-Qā’im bi Amrillāh, and used to lean towards some of the opinions of the Mu’tazilīs. Among his published works are *Ādāb al-Dunyā wal-Dīn*, *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah* and *‘Alām al-Nubawwah*. (*Al-A’lām*, vol. 4, p. 327.)

²⁴⁴ *Al-Jāmi’ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 13, p. 211.

²⁴⁵ ‘Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Abū Bakr (1445-1505 CE), known as Jalāludḍīn al-Suyūṭī, is among the leading Muslim scholars of all time. He grew up in Cairo. At the age of 40, a leading scholar in all of the various Islamic disciplines, he secluded himself from his students and devoted himself to his writing. Among his most notable published works are *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḡīr* and *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bil Ma’tūr*. (*Al-A’lām*, vol. 3, pp. 301-302.)

²⁴⁶ *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, p. 39. See also *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, p. 31.

to pronounce it *ḥarām* (forbidden): however, some scholars ruled it to be *makrūh* (disliked). Sa'īd ibn Dāwūd al-Zubaydī reported that some people from Yemen wrote a letter to Imām Mālik ibn Anas²⁴⁷ asking him about marriage to the *jinn*. He responded saying, “I do not see in it any religious objection, but I consider it detestable. For if a woman found pregnant is asked, ‘Who is your husband?’ and she replies that he is a *jinn*, this will lead to much corruption in [the principles of] Islām.”²⁴⁸ Qatādah and al-Ḥasan were also reported to have ruled that marriage to the *jinn* is *makrūh*.²⁴⁹

Other scholars prohibited sexual relations between humans and non-humans, within or without marriage. Among leading Ḥanafī scholars, Jamāluddīn al-Sijistānī²⁵⁰ stated, “Marriage between humans and *jinn* or mermaids²⁵¹ is prohibited due to the differences in their species.”²⁵² Among Shāfi'ī scholars, al-Bārizī²⁵³ also ruled that such marriages were *ḥarām*, because Almighty Allāh informed mankind that He blessed us by creating wives for us from among ourselves (Qur'ān, 30:21). If marriage to *jinn* were permissible, there would not be any blessing in the creation of human wives.²⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

From the preceding presentation of the origin, characteristics and capabilities of the *jinn*, it is clear that they represent the only possible source of spirit-possession of humans from the orthodox Islamic viewpoint. The

²⁴⁷ Mālik ibn Anas (712-795 CE), born in Madīnah, became its leading scholar and the founder of one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. He was an outstanding scholar of *ḥadīth* and composed the earliest extant collection of *ḥadīth*, which he named *al-Muwatta'*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 5, pp. 257-258.)

²⁴⁸ Quoted in *Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 92, from *al-Ilbām wal-Waswasah* by Sa'īd ibn al-'Abbās al-Rāzī.

²⁴⁹ *Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 97.

²⁵⁰ Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Sijistānī (d. 1240 CE) was the outstanding scholar of Ḥanafī jurisprudence of his time. His most notable published literary contributions are *Munyah al-Muftī* and *Ghunyab al-Fuqabā'*. (*Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn*, vol. 13, p. 270. See also *Kasbf al-Zunūn*, vol. 2, p. 1887.)

²⁵¹ The Arabic term used is *insān al-mā'* (literally “human of the water”), a legend which apparently developed as a result of sailors sighting manatees at a distance and believing that they were seeing humans or human-like creatures.

²⁵² This was mentioned in *Munyah al-Muftī* and attributed by the author to *al-Fatāwā al-Sirājiyyah*. See *Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 98.

²⁵³ Ibrāhīm ibn al-Muslim al-Bārizī (1184-1271 CE), a leading Shāfi'ī jurist, was born in Ḥamāh. He was made the judge of Ḥamāh and was also a teacher and writer. (*Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn*, vol. 1, p. 112.)

²⁵⁴ *Al-Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, p. 69.

canonical texts clearly indicate that the *jinn* are able to enter the human mind and body, and they can affect human beings both physically and psychologically. The fact that a minority of scholars have interpreted these texts symbolically and have ruled out the possibility of spirit-possession is of no legal consequence. The general rule followed by orthodox scholars is that the apparent meanings of texts are to be accepted and that symbolical interpretations should only be resorted to when apparent meanings either contradict other authentic texts or are logically impossible. Since neither condition is fulfilled here, symbolical interpretation is rejected. Consequently, the following chapters on possession and exorcism will specifically refer to the *jinn* vis-à-vis humans.

SPIRIT POSSESSION

TERMINOLOGY

The most commonly used term for spirit-possession in Arabic is *ṣarʿ*. This term is also applied to epilepsy and the fits associated with it. The possessed person is called *maṣrūr*. These terms come from the root *ṣaraʿa*, which basically means “to throw down on the ground.” The passive form verb *ṣuriʿa* means to be affected with epilepsy, diabolical possession or madness.²⁵⁵

Another frequently used term is *mass*, coming from the root *massa* which literally means “to touch with hand.” *Mass* is also used to mean madness or diabolical possession, as in the phrase *bihi mass*, “in him is madness.” One possessed is termed *mamsūs*.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 1678.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2711-2712.

Among the meaning of the term “*khabṭah*” (literally, “a strike or hit”) is “a touch, stroke of diabolical possession or insanity.”²⁵⁷

In Arabic the insane person is called *majnūn*, which is derived from the same root as the word *jinn*, thereby indicating that insanity, at least in some cases, was considered to be the product of *jinn*-possession. E.W. Lane’s entry for *majnūn* reads: “possessed by a *jinn* or by *jinn*, or by a devil, demon; a demoniac: and hence meaning bereft of reason; or mad, insane, unsound in mind or intellect or wanting therein: (see *junūn*:) it may generally be rendered possessed; or mad, or insane.”²⁵⁸

REALITY

According to the Islamic conception of the world of created spiritual beings, the conclusion drawn from the evidence presented in the previous chapters was that the only possible source which could be involved in the spirit-possession of humans would be the *jinn*. This is the view held by the majority of Sunnī scholars, past and present. However, there is a minority of Muslim scholars, philosophers and scholastic theologians who have questioned the possibility of possession. Some have denied this possibility altogether, while others have offered different explanations for the phenomenon of madness and epilepsy.

Among the many statements from outstanding classical scholars confirming the reality of possession is that of Imām Aḥmad.²⁵⁹ ‘Abdullāh reported that when he asked his father, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, “There are some people who claim that the *jinn* cannot enter the body of a human.” His father replied, “O my dear son, they are lying; for that is one [*jinnī*] speaking with his tongue.”²⁶⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah expressed the position of the majority of Muslim scholars, stating, “The existence of the *jinn* is an established fact, according to the Book [i.e. the Qur’ān], the Sunnah and the agreement of the early scholars. Likewise, the penetration of a *jinnī* into a human body is also an established fact, according to the consensus of leading

²⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 698.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 464.

²⁵⁹ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal (780-855 CE) was born in Baghdad, but his travels, in search of knowledge took him to Kūfah, Baṣrah, Makkah, Madīnah, Yemen, Syria, Maghrib, Algeria, Persia, Khurasān etc. He is the founder of one of the four main schools of jurisprudence and is noted for his *ḥadīth* compendium called *al-Musnad*, which contains over 30,000 traditions. However, he wrote a number of other works. Among those which have been published are *al-Radd ‘alā al-Zanādiqqah* and *al-Zuhd*. (*Al-A‘lām*, vol. 1, p. 203.)

²⁶⁰ *Īdāh al-Dilālāh fi ‘Umūm al-Risālah*, p. 6.

Sunnī scholars. It is also a fact witnessed and experienced by anyone who reflects on it. The *jinn* enters the one seized by fits and causes him to speak incomprehensible words, unknown to himself; if the one seized by fits is struck a blow sufficient to kill a camel, he does not feel it.” Elsewhere he also said, “There is no one among the major scholars who denies the [possibility of] a *jinnī* entering the body of one seized by fits, as well as the bodies of others. Whoever denies *jinn* possession and claims that the divine law [*sharʿah*] belies it, has lied against divine law. For there does not exist among the evidences of the divine law anything which repudiates demonic possession.”²⁶¹

Even some of the leading scholars of the Muʿtazilīs have confirmed the occurrence of *jinn*-possession of humans. For example, al-Qāḍī ʿAbdul-Jabbār al-Hamathānī²⁶² was reported to have said, “There is nothing to prevent them [i.e. the *jinn*] from entering our bodies, just as air and shifting breath – which [in my opinion] is the soul [*rūḥ*] – enters our bodies by penetration and rarefaction.”²⁶³ Further on he commented on Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd’s²⁶⁴ statement, “Surely, one who denies that *jinn* can enter the bodies of humans is an atheist or will give birth to an atheist.” Al-Hamathānī remarked, “He [i.e. Abū ʿUthmān] only said that because the fact that *jinn* can possess humans is as well-known and obvious as information about formal prayer [*ṣalāh*], fasting, *ḥajj* and *zakāh*. Just as whoever rejects this basic type of information is judged as an apostate, whoever rejects knowledge which may only be obtained through the Messenger [like the *jinn*-possession of humans] is a disbeliever.”²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 24, p. 277.

²⁶² ʿAbdul-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamthānī (d. 415 AH) was a prominent Muʿtazilī theologian and an outstanding Shāfiʿī jurist. He was chief justice of Rayy and a prolific writer. Among his most famous published works are *Tanzīh al-Qurʾān ʿan al-Maṭāʾin* and *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah*. (*Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, vol. 17, pp. 244-245.)

²⁶³ *Ākām al-Murjān fī Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 108.

²⁶⁴ ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd al-Baṣrī (699-761 CE) was the leading Muʿtazilī theologian of his time, a competent jurist and ascetic. Due to his knowledge, he was popular with the ʿAbbāsī caliphs, especially al-Manṣūr (ruled 754-775 CE). He wrote a number of books and treatises, the most important among them were *al-Tafsīr* and *al-Radd ʿalā al-Qadariyyah*. (*Al-Aʿlām*, vol. 5, p. 81.)

²⁶⁵ *Ākām al-Murjān fī Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 109.

EVIDENCE FOR POSSESSION

QUR'ĀNIC EVIDENCE

Evidence for spirit-possession can be found in both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. From the Qur'ān the most commonly quoted support for *jinn*-possession is the following verse:

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي
يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ²⁶⁶

*“Those who devour interest rise up like one stumbling
from Satan’s touch.”*

Qur'ān, 2:275

Al-Qurṭubī commented on this verse in his exegesis, saying, “This verse contains proof of the incorrectness of those who deny possession [*ṣar'*] by way of the *jinn*, claiming that it is the result of natural causes, as well as those who claim that Satan does not enter humans nor does he touch them.”²⁶⁶ Abū Ja'far ibn Jarīr²⁶⁷ said the following in his commentary on the verse, “He [i.e. Allāh], whose praise is great, said to those who deal in interest: He whom We have so described in this life will rise up in the next life from his grave like one stumbling from Satan’s touch rises up. He meant that Satan drives him insane in this life. He is one whom Satan causes to stumble, and he overpowers and knocks him down by the touch – that is madness.”²⁶⁸ Ibn Kathīr’s view on the interpretation of the verse was as follows: “That is, they rise up from their graves on the Day of Judgement unbalanced like an insane person in a fit of madness. His fumbling around under Satan’s touch means that he will rise up unbalanced. Ibn Abī Ḥātim²⁶⁹ reported that Ibn 'Abbās said, ‘One who devours interest will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement insane in a suffocating fit of madness.’ Ibn Abī Ḥātim also said that similar commentaries²⁷⁰ were narrated from 'Awf ibn

²⁶⁶ *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3, p. 355.

²⁶⁷ He is also known as al-Ṭabarī and his biographical data can be found in footnote no. 161.

²⁶⁸ *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3, p. 101.

²⁶⁹ 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Abī Ḥātim (854-938 CE) was among the major scholars of *ḥadīth* criticism. He contributed many works in various Islamic disciplines. His most famous published works are *al-Jarḥ wal-Ta'dīl* in eight volumes, *al-Radd 'alal Jaḥmiyyah*, *'Ilal al-Ḥadīth* and *al-Marāsīl*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 3, p. 324.)

²⁷⁰ See *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 3, p. 102 for narrations of their comments on this verse.

Mālik,²⁷¹ Sa'īd ibn Jubayr,²⁷² al-Suddī,²⁷³ al-Rabī' ibn Anas,²⁷⁴ Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān²⁷⁵ and Qatādah,²⁷⁶²⁷⁷ In a treatise on this subject, Ibn Taymiyyah stated the following, “Although some Mu'tazilīs, like al-Jubbā'ī²⁷⁸ and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, erroneously rejected the possibility that *jinn* enter the bodies of madmen, they did not deny the existence of *jinn*, because the former is less evident than the latter. Thus al-Ash'arī mentioned among the doctrines of orthodox Muslims [*Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*] that they believed that the *jinn* entered the bodies of madmen as stated by the Almighty in the verse, ‘Those who devour interest rise up like one stumbling from Satan’s touch.’²⁷⁹

EVIDENCE FROM THE SUNNAH

In the authentic texts of the Sunnah there are a number of traditions which indicate that the *jinn* may and do enter the human body. Some of these *ḥadīths* are rather general, while others are quite specific. The most widely

²⁷¹ ‘Awf ibn Mālik al-Ash'arī al-Ghaṭafānī (d. 692 CE) was a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), and he took part in the battle of Khaybar and the conquest of Makkah. He lived in Damascus, and is known to have transmitted 67 recorded traditions from the Prophet (ﷺ). (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 5, p. 96.)

²⁷² Sa'īd ibn Jubayr (665-714 CE), the most learned of the *tābi'īs*, was of Ethiopian origin. He was a pupil of both Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar, the leading scholars among the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). His home was in Kūfah, and he was executed by al-Ḥajjāj (661-714 CE) for taking part in the revolt of 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn al-Ash'ath (d. 704 CE) against the Umayyad caliph, 'Abdul-Mālik ibn Marwān (646-705 CE). (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 3, p. 93.)

²⁷³ Ismā'īl ibn 'Abdul-Raḥmān al-Suddī (d. 745 CE) was a *tābi'ī*, originally from the Ḥijāz, but he settled in Kūfah. He was a noted Qur'ānic exegete and an historian and was a leading scholar of the time. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 1, p. 317.)

²⁷⁴ Al-Rabī' ibn Ziyād ibn Anas al-Ḥārithī (d. 673 CE) lived during the time of the prophethood, but did not meet the Prophet (ﷺ) before his death. He was a successful leader of the Muslim armies during the righteous caliphate and was made governor of Bahrain and later Sijistān. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 3, p. 14.)

²⁷⁵ Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān ibn Dawāl Dūr (died approx. 150 AH) was a reputable narrator of prophetic traditions from the major scholars among the pupils of the Prophet's companions. He fled Khurasān during the reign of Qutaybah ibn Muslim and settled in Kahul, where many converted to Islām at his hands. (*Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 6, pp. 340-341.)

²⁷⁶ *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 487.

²⁷⁷ *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 334.

²⁷⁸ Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Waḥḥāb al-Jubbā'ī (849-916 CE) is considered among the leading Mu'tazilī theologians and the most outstanding scholastic theologian of his time. He held a number of opinions which differed from those of the theological school to which he belonged, so much so that his views formed an independent branch. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 256.)

²⁷⁹ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, p. 12. See also p. 7 of *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*. The Qur'ānic quotation is 2:275.

quoted of the general texts is one in which the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by his wife, Ṣafīyah, to have said: “Verily, Satan flows in the bloodstream of Adam’s descendants.”²⁸⁰ According to the Sunnī scholars who use this *ḥadīth* as evidence, it clearly indicates that Satan – and by extension the *jinn* – is able to invade the human body and permeate its various parts, similar to the way blood circulates within the limbs.

عن يعلى بن مرة قال: لقد رأيت من رسول الله (ﷺ) ثلاثاً ما رآها أحد قبلي ولا يراها أحد بعدي لقد خرجت معه في سفر حتى إذا كما ببعض الطريق مررنا بامرأة جالسة معها صبي لها، فقالت: يا رسول الله، هذا صبي أصابه بلاء وأصابنا منه بلاء. يؤخذ في اليوم ما أدري كم مرة. قال (ناوليني) فرفعته إليه فجعلته بينه وبين واسطة الرجل ثم فغر فاه فنفت فيه ثلاثاً وقال: (بسم الله أنا عبد الله أخسأ عدو الله) ثم ناولها إياه، فقال (القينا في الرجعة في هذا المكان فأخبرينا ما فعل) قال: فذهبنا ورجعنا فوجدناها في ذلك المكان معها شياها ثلاث: فقال: (ما فعل صبيك؟) فقالت: و الذي بعثك بالحق ما حسسنا منه شيئاً حتى الساعة

Ya‘lā ibn Murrah said: “I saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) do three things which no one before or after me saw. I went with him on a trip. On the way we passed by a woman sitting at the roadside with a young boy. She called out, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, this boy is afflicted with a trial, and from him we have also been afflicted with a trial. I do not know how many times per day he is seized by fits.’ He said, ‘Give him to me.’ So she lifted him up to the Prophet (ﷺ). He then placed the boy between himself and the middle of the saddle, opened the boy’s mouth and blew in it three times, saying, ‘In the name of Allāh; I am the slave of Allāh. Get out, enemy of Allāh!’ Then he gave the boy back to her and said, ‘Meet us on our return at this same place and inform us how he has fared.’ We then went. On our return, we found

²⁸⁰ Collected in the six authentic books of *ḥadīth* with the exception of al-Tirmidhī. See *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, pp. 1187-1188, no. 5404. It is also narrated by Anas in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1188, no. 5404.

her in the same place with three sheep. When he said to her, ‘How has your son fared?’ she replied, ‘By the One who sent you with the truth, we have not detected anything [unusual] in his behaviour up to this time...’²⁸¹

This authentic narration – and others which are weaker but still strong enough to be used as supportive evidence – portrays the Prophet (ﷺ) apparently commanding an entity within this boy seized by fits of “madness” to leave. If there was nothing really possessing this boy, it would mean that the Prophet (ﷺ) was involved in folly and deception. Since he knew that his actions would be imitated by his followers, he would not engage in such deviation. The idea of him being deceitful is totally inconsistent with the Islamic concept of prophethood and its responsibilities – that of clarity and guidance. Consequently, the vast majority of orthodox Muslim scholars conclude that such narrations confirm the concept of diabolic possession of humans.

LOGICAL EVIDENCE

The Mu‘tazilī judge, ‘Abdul-Jabbār al-Hamthānī,²⁸² was reported to have rationally argued in favour of spirit-possession. He said:

“If what we have proven concerning the fineness and delicacy of their [i.e. the *jinn*’s] bodies and that they are gaseous is correct, there is nothing to prevent them from entering our bodies, just as air and shifting breath – which is the soul – enters our bodies by penetration and rarefaction. And that does not lead to the [impossible] combination of two substances in a single location, because they only combine by being adjacent to each other and not by one occupying the place of the other. They penetrate our bodies the way thin bodies enter crevices. If it is said that the entrance of *jinn* into our body orifices would necessitate the orifices being torn apart or the dismemberment of the devils – because whenever bodies enter narrow locations, the penetrating body is always broken – then it may be said that the breaking of the penetrating body would occur if the penetrating body is dense like iron or wood. As for a gaseous penetrating body, this would not be the case. [Therefore], it may be similarly said of devils that they are not dismembered by entering human bodies, because they will either completely penetrate as one body or partially penetrate as one cohesive whole without being torn apart.”²⁸³

²⁸¹ Collected by Aḥmad (*al-Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 170) and al-Ḥākim, who declared it *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and al-Dhahabī agreed with his assessment.

²⁸² See note 262, p. 78.

²⁸³ *Ākam al-Murjān fī Aḥkām al-Jānn*, p. 108.

EVIDENCE AGAINST POSSESSION

The body of Muslim scholars who denied the possibility of demonic possession also used Qur'ānic verses and logic to support their arguments. Although most of them belonged to the deviant Mu'tazilī philosophical school of thought, some were Sunnīs, and to this day some Sunnī scholars deny it. Al-Ālūsī recorded the following in his exegesis of the Qur'ān, "The Mu'tazilīs and al-Qaffāl²⁸⁴ from among the Shāfi'īs²⁸⁵ stated that the claim that epilepsy [*ṣar*] and insanity [*junūn*] were from Satan is false, because he does not have the ability to do that."²⁸⁶ Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī quoted the Mu'tazilī scholar, al-Jubbā'ī, as saying, "People say the reason for the state of the epileptic fit is that Satan touched [the victim] or possessed him. This is false, because Satan is weak and unable to possess or kill humans."²⁸⁷

QUR'ĀNIC EVIDENCE

The verse most commonly quoted by those who deny the possibility of spirit-possession is the following:

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ
وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ
مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُمْكُمْ فَأَسْتَجِبْتُمْ لِي

"And Satan will say when the matter is decided, 'It was Allāh who gave you a truthful promise. I too promised you, but I broke my promise to you. I had no authority over you except to call you, but you answered my call...'"

Qur'ān, 14:22

Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī made the following comment in his Qur'ānic exegesis of this verse, "This is unambiguous and unequivocal evidence that Satan

²⁸⁴ Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Qaffāl (904-976 CE) was among the leading scholars of his time in law, *ḥadīth*, grammar and literature. He was from the town of al-Shāsh in Transoxiana (*mā warā' al-nahr*) and was responsible for the spread of the Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence in the entire region. His travels in search of knowledge took him to Khurasān, Iraq, Hijāz and Syria. The best known of his published works are *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and *Sharḥ Risālah al-Shāfi'ī*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 6, p. 274.)

²⁸⁵ The Sunnī school of legal thought founded in the 9th century CE and named after its founder, Muḥammad Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī.

²⁸⁶ *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 3, p. 49.

²⁸⁷ *Al-Taḥfīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 89.

does not have the ability to possess, kill or harm [humans].”²⁸⁸

Regarding the verse, “Those who devour interest rise up like one stumbling from Satan’s touch,”²⁸⁹ al-Zamakhsarī stated, that is, they rise up when they are resurrected from their graves like one thrown to the ground in convulsions [*takhabbut*] by Satan, i.e., the possessed. [The concept of] satanic convulsions are among the erroneous claims of the Arabs, whereby they falsely assert that Satan can throw a person down in convulsions and possess him. The word *khabṭ* refers to an aimless journey, as in the phrase ‘*khabṭ al-ashwā*’ [reckless], but it is mentioned [in the Qur’ān] according to their beliefs. The word ‘*mass*’ means ‘madness’, and a man in that state is *mamsūs*. It is also among the Arab fables that a *jinnī* can touch a man and cause his mind to become mixed up. Similarly, the phrase *junna al-rajul* means that a *jinnī* has struck him. I have observed them [i.e., the Arabs] regarding [their ideas about] the *jinn* [as mentioned] in their stories, reports and remarkable tales. According to them, denial of these fables is the same as denial of visually observable phenomena.²⁹⁰

Two well-known Sunnī Qur’ānic exegetes, al-Bayḍawī and Abū Su’ūd,²⁹¹ both followed al-Zamakhsarī’s view. These scholars were of the opinion that *jinn* do not have powers of possession. They thought that only in order to get points across, the Qur’ān addresses the Arabs in expressions familiar to them and in terms of their beliefs and claims. According to al-Qaffāl, the Arabs had a habit of describing ugly things in terms of the devil. For example, they used this claim to explain the description given by Allāh for the tree of Zaqqūm, which grows from the bottom of Hell and which will be among the sources of torment for sinners:

طَعْمَهَا كَأَنَّهَا رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿١٥﴾

“The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils.”

Qur’ān, 37:65²⁹²

Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī was of the opinion that the “madness” (*takhabbut*)

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁸⁹ Qur’ān, 2:275

²⁹⁰ *Tafsīr al-Kashāf*, vol. 1, pp. 398-399.

²⁹¹ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (1493-1574 CE), a famous Qur’ānic exegete and poet, was born in Constantinople. He was fluent in both Arabic and Persian as well as his native Turkish, and he was a judge in Turkey. He is most well-known for his Qur’ānic exegesis, *Irshād al-‘Aql al-Salīm ilā Mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm*, which came to be known as *Tafsīr Abi Su’ūd*. (*Al-A’lām*, vol. 7, p. 59.)

²⁹² Quoted from *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 89.

mentioned in verse (Qur’ān, 2:275) was not directly from Satan, but from his touch (*mass*) by way of harmful whisperings, which, in turn, cause convulsions and subsequent madness (*ṣar*). He further likened the meaning of this verse to another in regard to Prophet Ayyūb:

وَأذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ
بُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ ﴿٤١﴾

“Remember when Our servant Ayyūb cried out to his Lord, ‘Satan has afflicted [‘massan’, literally, ‘touched’] me with distress and suffering!’”

Qur’ān, 38:41

And he added, “The madness occurs with these whisperings because Allāh, Most High, created man with a weak disposition, the black bile [*al-sawdā*]²⁹³ being victorious over him, whereby he becomes fearful when the whisperings occur. By not being courageous [enough to withstand the mental pressure] he goes mad, just as the cowardly are driven mad by vacant locations. Due to that, this form of madness does not happen to noble humans who have attained perfection and those who are resolute and intelligent, but it exists among those possessing a weak temperament and mental imbalance.”²⁹⁴

LOGICAL EVIDENCE

Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī quoted in his Qur’ānic exegesis the main arguments of the Mu’tazilī theologian, al-Jubbā’ī, which later became the standard line of logical reasoning used by those who rejected spirit possession:

“Satan can be said to have either a dense body or a fine body. If he has the former, he must be visible. For, if it were possible for him to have a dense form and be present and visible, it would also be possible for suns, peals of thunder, flashes of lightening and mountains to be in our presence without us seeing them; that would be greatly irrational. If he has a dense shape, then how would it be possible for him to enter into the insides of a human body? If, on the other hand, he were fine-bodied like air, such a being could not be solid or powerful and could not be able to possess a human or kill him.

²⁹³ *Al-Sawdā* (melancholy) was considered to be one of the four humours (*akblāt*) of the body. The others are yellow bile or cholera (*al-ṣafrā*), blood and phlegm (*al-balgham*). (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 1463.) See also *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 145.

²⁹⁴ *Al-Taḥṣīn al-Kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 89.

If Satan were able to possess and kill [humans], it would also be possible for Satan to do acts similar to the miracles of the Prophets. This would lead to the defamation of prophethood.

If he were able to do that [i.e., possess], why does he not possess all of the believers? Why does he not send all of them into convulsions, considering the severity of his enmity towards the faithful? Why does he not steal their wealth, corrupt their affairs, expose their secrets and drive them all mad? All of that is obviously not taking place.

Those who claim that Satan can do these things may bring as evidence the report concerning the devils who used to do hard labour during the era of Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd (May peace be upon him). This is based upon what Allāh told about them [i.e., the devils] making whatever he [i.e., Prophet Sulaymān] wished of arches, statues, basins as large as reservoirs, and [cooking] cauldrons fixed in place.²⁹⁵ If this is brought as proof, the response is that Allāh, Most High, charged them with such tasks during Sulaymān's era and gave them the power to do those works as indications of a miracle for Prophet Sulaymān (peace be upon him).²⁹⁶

Among modern scholars following the symbolic approach of al-Rāzī and others towards the *jinn*, al-Ghazālī has presented an interpretation of the *ḥadīth* of Ṣafīyah in which she quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, "Verily, the devil flows in the bloodstream of Adam's descendants." He claims this is not the actual occupying of the human body, but refers to demonic whispering [*waswasah*].²⁹⁷ Another recent Muslim scholar, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā,²⁹⁸ considered epilepsy (*ṣarʿ*) and other mental illnesses to be a sickness of the nervous system. He claimed that these are caused in part by microbes, and due to their invisibility he considered them to be a species of the entities known in Islām as *jinn*.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ This is in reference to Qurʾān, 34:13.

²⁹⁶ *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 7, pp. 88-89.

²⁹⁷ *Al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 94 and 96.

²⁹⁸ Muḥammad ibn Rashīd ibn ʿAlī Riḍā (1865-1935), born in Tripoli (in Lebanon), was a writer and scholar in *ḥadīth*, literature, history and Qurʾānic exegesis. He was a student of Muḥammad ʿAbdū (1849-1905) and the editor of the Islamic magazine *al-Manār*. His most notable literary contribution was his Qurʾānic exegesis, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, which came to be known as *Tafsīr al-Manār*. (*Al-Aʿlām*, vol. 6, p. 126.)

²⁹⁹ *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 3, pp. 95-96.

ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS

From the aforementioned arguments, it may be concluded that those who deny the possibility of diabolical possession rely on only two sources – Qur’ānic texts and logic – while those who affirm it rely on three – Qur’ānic texts, texts from the Sunnah and logic. According to the correct methodology of Qur’ānic interpretation outlined by Ibn Kathīr in the introduction of his exegesis of the Qur’ān,³⁰⁰ the interpretations of the Sunnah are essential for determining the correct understanding of the Qur’ānic text. Ibn Kathīr wrote,

If it is asked what is the best method of interpretation, the reply is that the most correct method is that of [interpretation of] the Qur’ān by the Qur’ān. This is because what has been generalised in one place has been specified in another. If an explicit explanation is not found in another verse, then the answers are found in the Sunnah, for it explains and clarifies the Qur’ān. In fact, Imām Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī said, “Whatever the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ruled was based upon what he understood from the Qur’ān. The Almighty stated:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا
 أَرَبْنَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ حَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾

“Surely, We revealed the Book to you in truth that you may judge between people by what Allāh has shown you. So do not plead for the treacherous.”

Qur’ān, 4:105

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي
 اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ

“We have only revealed the Book to you in order that you clarify for them the things about which they differ...”

Qur’ān, 16:64

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

“Verily, We have revealed the Reminder [i.e., the Qur’ān] to you [O Muḥammad] so that you may explain to the people what has been revealed to them...”

Qur’ān, 16:44

³⁰⁰ *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, vol. 1, pp. 3-6.

Due to this fact, the Messenger of Allāh stated,

الإنبي أوتيت الكتاب ومثله معه

‘I have been given the Qur’ān and something similar to it along with it.’³⁰¹

He meant the Sunnah, because the Sunnah was revealed to him as the Qur’ān was revealed, except that it was not recited as the Qur’ān was recited.”³⁰²

If one applies the Sunnah to the interpretations of the Qur’ānic texts in question, then it can only be concluded that spirit-possession of human beings by the *jinn* is not only possible, but real. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the majority of the orthodox scholars support this view.

REFUTATION OF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST POSSESSION

QUR’ĀNIC EVIDENCE

The clear meaning of the verse concerning Satan’s denial of authority over man (Qur’ān, 14:22) is in reference to his inability to force them to do evil. He is only capable of making the evil way seem attractive to man, while the actual act of evil is of man’s own choosing. In this verse “authority” (*sultān*) has been interpreted by some classical exegetes as meaning “evidence.” That is, Satan stated that he did not have any authority (i.e., proof) for the false promises that he made those who followed him.³⁰³ Therefore, in this verse the devil’s denial of authority over man, whether physical or psychological, does not rule out the possibility of demonic possession.

It is not necessarily true that the Qur’ān only “appears” to confirm *jinn*-possession by using the familiar style, terms, and false pre-Islamic beliefs of the Arabs in order to assist them in their comprehension of a point. In reference to the comparison of the fruit of the Zaqqūm tree of Hell to the imaginary heads of devils, some exegetes and Arab lexicographers have pointed out that “heads of devils” (*ru’ūs al-Shayāṭīn*) was the name of a tree which grew in the region between Makkah and Yemen. Others used

³⁰¹ Narrated by al-Miqdām ibn Ma’dkarib, collected by Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah (see *al-Hadis*, vol. 1, pp. 165-166, no. 106), and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, pp. 870-871, no. 3848.

³⁰² *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 3.

³⁰³ *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, vol. 2, p. 529.

the term to describe a species of ugly crested snakes which were called *Shayāṭīn*.³⁰⁴ Therefore, the comparison was not to something imaginary but to something real and seen by the Arabs. Furthermore, in respect to normal human tastes, there is nothing to indicate that *jinn*, in general, are not extremely ugly. Just as angels are described in the Qurʾān as being beautiful and were customarily held to be so by the Arabs, it could also logically be said that the comparison of someone possessed would be with something known and real, just like many other similes in the Qurʾān. This was the position of those scholars, like Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Shanqīṭī and others, who held that whatever the Qurʾān used for comparison is real and true, because the Qurʾān emphatically describes itself as a Book of truth, free from any falsehood:

زَلَّ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ

التَّورَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾

“It is He who revealed to you the Book in truth, confirming previous [scriptures], and it is He who revealed the Torah and the Gospel.”

Qurʾān, 3:3

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَطْلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ

حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

“Those who reject the Message when it comes to them [are known]. And indeed, it is a Book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before it and behind it. It is sent down by the Most Wise, Most Praised.”

Qurʾān, 41:41-42

EVIDENCE FROM ḤADĪTH

Shaykh Ghazālī’s interpretation of Ṣafīyyah’s *ḥadīth* to mean demonic whispering and not to refer to the actual ability of the *jinn* to penetrate the human body is somewhat far-fetched, for demonic whispering is consistently described in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah as taking place in the

³⁰⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr fī ‘Ilm al-Taḥsīn*, vol. 7, pp. 63-64. See also *al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 15, pp. 86-87.

human heart and chest and not throughout the limbs of the body:

فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ

“...Who whispers into the chest of men.”

Qur’ān, 114:5

LOGICAL EVIDENCE

In the first argument al-Jubbā’ī sought to prove that *jinn* must have fine bodies, otherwise they would have to be visible. He then claimed possession could only take place if *jinn* had dense bodies. He further concluded that if *jinn* had dense bodies they could not enter human bodies because the human body does not have enough room to hold a *jinn*. ‘Abdul-Jabbār’s argument refutes this presentation using the same rules of logic. It may also be said that al-Jubbā’ī’s argument assumes that man is capable of understanding the laws which govern the unseen. This is not the case. For example, we are informed that angels blow the human spirit into the embryo in the womb³⁰⁵ and that they sometimes fight along with the believers, but only Allāh knows how these things take place. Likewise, this could be the case for demonic possession. Also questionable is al-Jubbā’ī’s point that if *jinn* were fine-bodied like air, they would not have the solidity or power necessary to possess humans or kill them. The ability to knock down a human is not limited to dense bodies. The force of a powerful gust of wind or a jolt of electricity, which can knock over a man, is more powerful than that produced by many dense bodies.

The second argument claimed that if Satan and the *jinn* were able to possess humans it would enable them to imitate the miracles of the prophets, which would be a defamation of prophethood. However, the difference between miracles and satanic acts is great. The former are supernatural occurrences granted to prophets in order to confirm their prophethood and the divine origin of their message, while the latter are illusions and tricks performed by the evil human cohorts of the devils. It should also be noted that this argument is quite far-fetched, because possessed individuals do not exhibit any abilities even remotely resembling the miracles of the prophets. Furthermore, through deception, magicians of the past and present have done tricks which have convinced the masses that they possess supernatural abilities. According to prophesy, the false-Christ (*Masīḥ al-Dajjāl*) apparently will have supernatural abilities which will delude many.

In the third argument the question was raised: if *jinn* had these abilities,

³⁰⁵ See Chapter One, “The Human Spirit.”

why do they not concentrate their attacks on the true believers. Since the evil *jinn* are the avowed enemies of the God-fearing, they should exclusively possess the pious and ruin their social and material lives, however, those who seem most frequently possessed are not from the true believers. The reason for this phenomenon may be due to the protection which Allāh granted the believers against much of the *jinn*'s harm. True believers closely follow the prophetic instructions for seeking refuge in Allāh and shielding themselves in righteousness and piety throughout their daily lives:³⁰⁶

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

“He has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is only over those who take him as a patron and who join partners with Allāh.”

Qur’ān, 16:99-100

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤْزُهُمْ أَزًّا ﴿٨٣﴾

“Can you not see that We have set the devils on the disbelievers, excitedly prodding them [to sin and disbelief].”

Qur’ān, 19:83

The fact is that the *jinn* fear those who are strong among the righteous, and therefore avoid them. On one occasion the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إِنِّي لَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى شَيَاطِينِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ قَدْ فَرَوْا مِنْ عَمْرٍ

*“Surely, I can see the devils among the jinn and among mankind fleeing from ‘Umar.”*³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ *‘Ālam al-jinn fī Ḍaw’ al-Kitāb wal-Sunnah*, pp. 284-286.

³⁰⁷ Collected by al-Tirmidhī and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḡbūr*, vol. 2, p. 329, no. 2492.

REASONS FOR POSSESSION

Muslim scholars of the past recognised that some cases of apparent possession (i.e., madness/convulsions) were a result of biological imbalance. An example of this comes in the *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn ‘Abbās.

عطاء بن أبي رباح قال: قال لي ابن عباس: ألا أريك امرأة من أهل الجنة؟
قلت: بلى. قال: هذه المرأة السوداء أتت النبي (ﷺ) فقالت: إني
أصرع وإني أتكشف، فادع الله لي. قال: (إن شئت صبرت ولك الجنة
وإن شئت دعوت الله أن يعافيك) فقالت: إني أتكشف فادع الله لي أن
لا أتكشف. فدعا لها

One day he said to his student, ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāḥ, “Should I show you a woman from among the people of Paradise?” ‘Aṭā’ said, “Of course.” He said, “This black woman came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, ‘Verily I have falling fits [uṣra’u] and I get uncovered. Pray to Allāh for me.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘If you wish, be patient and you will have Paradise, or if you wish I can pray to Allāh to cure you.’ She said, ‘I will be patient,’ then she added, ‘but I become uncovered, so pray to Allāh for me that I not get uncovered.’ So he prayed for her.”³⁰⁸

In this regard Ibn al-Qayyim stated:

“Fits of madness [or epileptic seizures] are of two types: fits resulting from evil, earthly spirits [i.e., the *jinn*] and fits resulting from bad humours.³⁰⁹ Doctors have spoken about the causes and remedies of the latter. Leading scholars and intellectuals acknowledge the occurrence of spirit-possession and do not attempt to treat it. They recognise that its treatment requires that noble transcendent spirits counter, neutralise, and expel the evil spirits. Hippocrates himself spoke on the matter at length in some of his books, wherein he mentioned some remedies for epileptic fits and then said, “These [medicines] are beneficial in the case of fits due to humours and other biological causes. As for fits resulting from the effects of spirits, these remedies are of no use.” Only ignorant doctors and those pseudo-intellectuals

³⁰⁸ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, pp. 376-377, no 555 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1365, no. 6245.

³⁰⁹ Any fluid or semi-fluid substance in the body.

who consider heresy a virtue deny spirit-possession and its effects on the body of the insane. They have no evidence for their denial except their ignorance of its occurrence. There is nothing in the field of medicine which rejects it, while the senses and experience of people worldwide confirm it. Their ascribing it to the preponderance of some humours is correct in some instances, but not in all.”³¹⁰

Ibn al-Qayyim went on to describe the biological causes. He said:

“Regarding madness due to humours (*akhlāt*), it is a sickness which partially prevents the limbs from feeling, moving and straightening out. It is caused by a viscous, sticky humour partly blocking the pores inside the brain, resulting in a fractional inhibition of sensory influence and movement within it and within the limbs. Or it could be from other causes. For example, it could be from the trapping of viscid odour in the outlets of the spirit, or from the rising of bad gases to the brain from some of the organs...causing the brain to contract in order to ward off the pain. This is followed by convulsions and twitching in all the limbs. The man is not able to remain upright but falls down, and froth usually appears in his mouth. This illness is considered among the periodical sicknesses relative to the [short] time frame of its painful occurrence. It is also considered among the chronic illnesses relative to the long period of its presence and the difficulty of curing those afflicted, especially beyond the age of twenty-five. It is an illness of brain matter, and such a form of epilepsy is persistent. As Hippocrates said, “Epilepsy remains in such persons until death.””³¹¹

With regard to the causes for spirit-possession, Ibn al-Qayyim said, “Evil spirits mostly gain control of those having little religious inclination and those whose hearts and tongues faith has deserted; those whose souls are desolate of the remembrance of Allāh and of the formulas for strengthening faith. When evil spirits meet a man who is isolated, weaponless and naked, they are easily able to attack him and overcome him.”³¹²

Ibn Taymiyyah suggested the following three circumstances to be the main reasons why *jinn* may possess humans:

1. “The occasional possession of man by the *jinn* may be due to sensual desires on the part of the *jinn*...or even love, just as it may be among humans.”³¹³

³¹⁰ *Zād al-Ma’ād*, pp. 67-69.

³¹¹ *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, p. 55.

³¹² *Zād al-Ma’ād*, p. 69.

³¹³ *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, p. 31.

2. “Demonic possession sometimes also occurs as a result of horseplay, jest or plain evil on the part of the *jinn*, just as evil and mischief occurs among humans for similar reasons.”³¹⁴

3. “However, possession is most often a result of the *jinn* being angry because some wrong has been done to them. Thus, the *jinn* punish those who wronged them. For example, when humans accidentally harm or hurt them by urinating on them, by pouring hot water on them, or by killing some of them, the *jinn* think that they have been intentionally harmed. Although humans may not realise what they have done, the *jinn* are by nature very ignorant, harsh and volatile in their behaviour, so they may vengefully punish humans much more severely than they deserve.”³¹⁵

Thus, in the view of Ibn Taymiyyah, possession may occur with relative frequency to practising Muslims as well as to weak and non-practising Muslims.

PARTIAL POSSESSION

MEDIUMSHIP

In occultism the medium is a person reputedly able to make contact with the world of spirits, especially in a state of trance. Disembodied voices speak either directly or indirectly through the medium, and materialisation of a disembodied spirit may take place.³¹⁶ The practice of communicating with incarnate spirits is ancient and widespread. Although those involved claim to be in contact with the spirits of dead humans, from an Islamic point of view, they could only be involved with the *jinn*. Authentic cases of mediumship would be interpreted as the voluntary acceptance of spirit-possession by the *jinn*. From the Islamic point of view this remains the only possible explanation. When human spirits enter the world of the *barzakh* after they are removed from their bodies, they cannot return to this world, communicate with the living, or have an effect upon any events taking place.³¹⁷

Ibn Taymiyyah spoke about this phenomenon nearly nine hundred years ago, saying, “The *jinn* usually communicate by either visions or voices

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

³¹⁶ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 7, p. 1008.

³¹⁷ *‘Ālam al-jinn wal-Shayāṭīn*, p. 103.

with those seeking information among the idol-worshippers, Christians, Jews and heretical Muslims driven astray by the devils...The devils will often respond while taking the form of the one besought, whether dead or alive...This frequently happens to Christians who call upon those whom they deify, whether dead or alive...It also occurs with heretical Muslims who call upon the dead or those not present, and the devils take the form of the one called upon.”³¹⁸ Elsewhere he said, “And among them [i.e., disbelievers, pagans, magicians, etc.] are those who believe that when someone dies he can return and communicate with them, pay their debts, retrieve their lost items, and advise them. Images of those who die come to them [during these things], but they are actually devils taking their forms.”³¹⁹ He also said, “And among them are those upon whom the devils descend and speak using their tongues about things which they [i.e., the mediums] do not know or things which they do not understand. Sometimes they may reveal what is in the hearts [and minds] of those present or they speak in different languages and voices, similar to the way that a *jinnī* speaks using the tongue of the possessed.”³²⁰

POSSESSION OF OBJECTS

Jinn may penetrate and control animate and inanimate objects in order to harm humans or to mislead them. An example of the possibility of *jinn*-induced harm could be deduced from the Prophet’s instructions concerning lamps. Ibn ‘Abbās quoted him as saying, “When you go to sleep, put out your lamps, because Satan may guide something like this [rat] to that [lamp] and cause you to be burned.”³²¹ Evidence for the demonic possession of objects to purposely misguide humans may be extracted from the Qur’ānic account of Prophet Moses and the golden calf:

وَأَتَّخَذَ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ مِن حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَّهُ
 خُورٌ أَلْتَدِيرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا اتَّخَذُوهُ
 وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

“And in his absence Moses’ people made out of their

³¹⁸ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, pp. 46-47. See also *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 43-45.

³¹⁹ Quoted in *‘Ālam al-Jinn wal-Shayṭān*, p. 102 from Ibn Taymiyyah’s *Jāmi‘ al-Rasā’il*, pp. 194-195.

³²⁰ *Al-Furqān Bayna Auliya’ al-Raḥmān wa Auliya’ al-Shayṭān*, p. 14.

³²¹ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1147, no. 5227) and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 985, no. 4369.

ornaments the statue of a calf which mooed. Could they not see that it neither spoke to them nor showed them the way? They took it for worship and they were wrong.”

Qur'an, 7:148

فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعَدًّا حَسَنًا أَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُم مَّوْعِدِي ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلِكِنَا وَلِنَكُنَّا حَمْلُنَا أَوْ زَارًا مِّن زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَدَتْهَا فَاكْذَلِكَ الْقِيَ السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عَجَلًا جَسَدًا لَّهُ خَوَارٍ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَنَسِيَ ﴿٨٨﴾ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَلَّا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا ﴿٨٩﴾

“Then Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and sorrow. He said, ‘O my people, did your Lord not make you a good promise? Did the promise seem to you too long in coming? Or did you wish that your Lord’s punishment would fall upon you, so you broke your promise to me?’

They said, ‘We did not break our promise to you by our own choice. We were forced to carry the weight of the people’s ornaments, which we threw into the fire, as suggested by al-Sāmīr.’³²² Then he extracted for them the statue of a calf which mooed, so they said, ‘This is your god and the god of Moses, but he forgot.’ Could they not see that it could not answer them and that it was neither able to harm them nor do good for them?’

Qur'an, 20:86-89

The mooing of the idol could have been caused by a *jinn* entering it. Concerning the phenomenon of demonic possession of animate and inanimate objects, Ibn Taymiyyah wrote, “I know people whom the plants

³²² Al-Sāmīrī, identified by al-Ṭabarī and some other exegetes as the Samaritan, is the Qur’ānic name given to the man who seduced the Israelites to idol-worship. The story not only absolves Aaron of blame (levelled at him in the Biblical accounts) and points out how Satan sometimes leads believers astray, but, if al-Ṭabarī’s identification is correct, it also gives the reason for the pariah status of the Samaritans among the other Jews, namely by way of punishment. See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 501-502.

greet and inform them of their beneficial ingredients; however, it is, in fact, Satan who has entered the plants and spoken to them. I also know of others to whom stones and trees speak, saying, ‘Congratulations, O saint of Allāh,’...I am acquainted with yet others who have gone bird-hunting and the sparrows addressed them, saying, ‘Take me so that the poor may eat me.’ Such are the cases of evil *jinn* possessing birds in the same way that they possess humans and talk through them.”³²³ He further wrote, “The *jinn* also enter idols, speak to those who worship idols and fulfil some of their needs.”³²⁴

DEMONIC VISIONS

According to Islamic beliefs, one of the ways by which the devils lead humans astray is to appear to them in images which reinforce their false beliefs. They become visible as apparitions or visions. In his thirty-six volume compendium of Islamic rulings called *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

The devils may appear to those who worship them in forms which humans mistakenly identify as heavenly spirits...*Jinn* may also make humans hear the voice of those whom they call upon who are far away. Such cases are frequent among idolaters, Christians, Jews and ignorant Muslims who seek refuge in those whom they consider holy. When some devotees call upon their spiritual masters for help, saying “O my lord So-and-so,” the *jinnī* will address them in the voice of their masters...The devils will often respond while taking the form of the one besought, whether dead or alive, even if he is unaware of those who call upon him. Those committing idolatry in this fashion believe that the person beseeched has actually replied, when, in fact, it is the *jinnī* replying. This frequently happens to Christians who call upon those whom they deify, whether dead or alive, like George or other holy figures.³²⁵ It also occurs to heretical Muslims who call upon the dead or those not present, and the devils take the form of the one called upon even without him realising it. I know of many cases where this has occurred. Although those beseeching them for help saw their images and were convinced that it was the actual person, the people called upon have told me that they were not aware of this. More than one person has mentioned that they called upon me in times of distress, each telling a different story about how I responded. When I told them that I never

³²³ *Al-Furqān Bayna Awliyā’ al-Rahmān wa Awliyā’ al-Shayṭān*, p. 87.

³²⁴ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, p. 41.

³²⁵ Divine grace (salvation) is felt to be especially potent in places visited by Jesus Christ or saints or Mary; where they have appeared in visions. Major pilgrimage centres include Lourdes where visions of the Virgin Mary were first seen in 1858 and where healing has been occurring since that time. (*Dictionary of Religions*, p. 254.)

answered any of them nor did I know that they were calling upon me, some said that it must have been an angel. I told them that angels do not benefit those committing idolatry and that it was actually a devil trying to further misguide them. Sometimes the *jinnī* is actually a devil trying to further misguide them. Sometimes the *jinnī* will even take the form of those admired and stand at ‘Arafāt,³²⁶ and those who believe well of him will think that he actually stood in ‘Arafāt.³²⁷

MAGIC

Magic may be defined as the seeming control of natural forces or events by ritual invocation of supernatural beings. It includes the belief that men can coerce nature by the use of certain rites, formulas and actions.³²⁸ In Arabic the term *sihr* (magic) is defined as whatever is caused by hidden or subtle forces.³²⁹ For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ سِحْرًا

“Verily, some forms of speech are magic [sihr].”³³⁰

The speeches of an eloquent, charismatic speaker who makes right seem wrong and vice-versa, fall into this category. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to some aspects of speech as being magical.³³¹ The pre-dawn meal taken before fasting is called *saḥūr* or *suḥūr*³³² because its time is in the darkness at the end of the night. The magician is called *sāḥir* and the one spellbound *mashūr*.

In addition to the above-mentioned terms, a bewitched person is described

³²⁶ A plain 12 miles from Makkah where pilgrims performing *Hajj* gather on the 9th Dhul-Hijjah (the 12th month of the lunar calendar), perform the midday and afternoon prayers, listen to the sermon and busy themselves in personal prayers until sunset. See *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 44.

³²⁷ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, pp. 41 and 45.

³²⁸ See *Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, p. 813.

³²⁹ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, pp. 1316-1317.

³³⁰ Collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 445, no. 662), Muslim, Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1393, no. 4989) and al-Tirmidhī.

³³¹ *‘Ālam al-Sihr wal-Sha‘wadhab*, p. 69.

³³² *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 1317. Apparently, the connection in meaning is that the dark of night is the preferred time to perform magic.

as *maṭbūb* from the verb *ṭabba* meaning to become bewitched.³³³ A magician is termed *muʿazzim*, and a spell is called *ʿazimah*.³³⁴

According to Islamic law, magic has been defined as “a contract or incantation, spoken or written, or something done which will affect the body, heart or mind of the one bewitched without actually coming in contact with him.”³³⁵ It has also been defined as “the occurrence of extraordinary [*khāriq*] events when something prohibited in the divine law [*sharʿī*] is said or done. Allāh, Most Glorious, has permitted this occurrence to take place spontaneously whenever such acts are said or done.”³³⁶

REALITY

Orthodox Islām rejects the effects of charms and amulets with regards to the prevention of misfortune and the attraction of good fortune. However, most Sunnī scholars recognise that there are other aspects of magic which are real and that they are not all cases of illusion.³³⁷ Al-Qarāfī³³⁸ stated, “Magic is real. The bewitched person could die or his nature or habits could change even if it [i.e., the magic] did not touch him. This was the position of al-Shāfiʿī and Ibn Ḥanbal. The Ḥanafīs held that if smoke or something similar reached the person’s body, it [i.e., magic] could have an effect, otherwise it could not. The Qadarīs³³⁹ held that there was no reality to magic.”³⁴⁰

EVIDENCE FOR THE REALITY OF MAGIC

The majority of Muslim scholars hold that magic is real because of its prohibitions in the Qurʾān and Sunnah. There are severe warnings for those who practise it and a practitioner can be punished, accordingly, in this life

³³³ *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 10, p. 228. See also *al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3, p. 110.

³³⁴ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2038.

³³⁵ *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 12, p. 229.

³³⁶ *Kasbf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn*, p. 152.

³³⁷ *Al-Jāmiʿ li Ahkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2, p. 46.

³³⁸ Ahmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī (d. 1275 CE), of Moroccan-Berber origin, was born and raised in Egypt. He was one of the leading scholars of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence. Among his many books on canon law are *Anwār al-Burūq fī Anwāʿ al-Furūq*, a 4 volume work; *al-Iḥkām fī Tamayiz al-Fatāwā* and *Sharḥ Tanqīḥ al-Fuṣūl*. (*Al-Aʿlām*, vol. 1, pp. 94-95.)

³³⁹ Qadarīs (Ar. *Qadariyyah*), a name used regularly as a descriptive surname for Muʿtazilis. (*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 200.)

³⁴⁰ *Al-Burūq fī Anwāʿ al-Furūq*, vol. 4, p. 149. See also *al-Mughnī*, vol. 12, p. 299.

as well as in the next. Allāh has revealed how to seek refuge from magic. According to these scholars, it is illogical for Islamic law and the revealed texts to treat something (e.g. magic) in such a serious and severe manner if it is unreal. There is specific evidence used by the orthodox majority to prove that there is such a thing as magic.

The first proof is the following Qur'ānic verse:

وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا
 أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ
 مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ
 مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ
 بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا
 يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ

“...[B]ut it was the devils who disbelieved by teaching the people magic and what was revealed to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. However, the two would not teach anyone anything until after they had warned them, saying, ‘Surely, we are only a test and a trial, so do not disbelieve.’ But the people went ahead and learned from the two of them what would cause the separation of a man from his wife. However, they could not harm anyone except by Allāh’s permission. They learned what would harm their own souls and not benefit them.”

Qur’ān, 2:102

If there is no reality to magic, what were the devils teaching and what were the people learning? The fact that the magician is referred to in this verse as being able to separate a man from his wife and to harm people (by Allāh’s permission) is sufficient evidence that magic is real.

Another Qur’ānic verse states as evidence:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ الْقَائِلَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾

“And [I seek refuge] from the evil of the witches who blow on knots.”

Qur’ān, 113:4

Blowing on knotted material was a means by which spells were cast. The Qur’ānic command to seek refuge from this act indicates that there is a

reality to magic.³⁴¹

Also, al-Qarāfi used as proof the consensus (*ijmā'*) of Muslim scholars. He mentioned that since differences of opinion about the reality of magic occurred after the consensus of the Prophet's companions, these later-day differences were of no consequence.³⁴² In regard to the Mu'tazilī opinion that all magic is deception, Ibn al-Qayyim said, "This [opinion] contradicts the numerous accounts related from the *ṣaḥābah* and early scholars, the agreement of scholars of jurisprudence, the scholars of Qur'ānic exegesis and *ḥadīth*, and that which is known practically to scholars of law in general."³⁴³

Support for the reality of magic is also found in the *ḥadīths* describing the time when the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was bewitched. In various authentic narrations it is related that a Jew, Labīb bin A'sam, cast a spell upon the Prophet (ﷺ).³⁴⁴ The Qur'ānic exegete, al-Qurṭubī, referred to the statement made by the Prophet after the breaking of the spell:

أما الله فقد شفاني

"Allāh cured me,"

as indicating that magic is real, because cure only follows an actual sickness or disease.³⁴⁵

In addition, the following Qur'ānic verses indicate that magic is real:

سَكَّرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ

"They bewitched the people's eyes..."

Qur'ān, 7:116

³⁴¹ *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 12, p. 299. See also *Ālam al-Siḥr wal-Sha'twadhab*, p. 91.

³⁴² *Al-Furūq*, vol. 4, p. 150.

³⁴³ *Al-Tafsīr al-Qayyim*, p. 571.

³⁴⁴ See, for example, *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, pp. 443-444, no. 660 and *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 3, pp. 1192-1193, no. 5428.

³⁴⁵ *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 41.

فَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ وَعَصِيَهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ سَارِعُونَ

“Their magic caused it to appear to him that they were crawling.”

Qur’ān, 20:66

Ibn al-Qayyim stated with regard to these two verses:

“If it is possible for the magicians to bewitch all the people’s eyes, in spite of their large numbers, to such a degree that they all saw something in a way different from what it actually was – which is a change in their senses – then what prevents its [i.e., magic’s] effect from changing some of the nonessential characteristics [*ṣ’rād*] of humans [like] their abilities and their temperament? And what is the difference between changing what is actually seen and changing the reality of some other characteristic of the body and soul?...For if the senses are changed to the degree that they perceive the stationary as moving, the connected as disconnected, and the dead as living, what, then, prevents the actual changing of characteristics whereby that which is loved becomes hated and the hated becomes loved, etc.?”³⁴⁶

Scholars also use the occurrence of magic as evidence for its being real. Ibn al-Qayyim stated, “Magic exists, for its effects cause illness to the dim-witted and the intelligent, love and hate, and even bleeding. It is known to the masses, and many know it from personal experience.”³⁴⁷ Ibn Qudāmah added, “So much information about magicians has been narrated that it is virtually impossible for all those who narrated them to conspire to convey such a lie.”³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ *Al-Taḥf al-Qayyim*, p. 571.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 12, p. 300.

EVIDENCE AGAINST THE REALITY OF MAGIC

There were a few early scholars and a number of more recent scholars who consider magic to be merely an illusion created by tricks. They consider that any effect it might have on humans was purely psychological. Among the early scholars who denied magic's reality was al-Jaṣṣāṣ.³⁴⁹ He defined magic in its linguistic meaning according to Islamic law, saying, "The philologists mention that its [i.e., magic's] basic linguistic meaning includes everything whose cause is hidden or subtle. This term was then transferred to everything whose cause was hidden – anything which is imagined to be other than it is in reality and anything which occurs by tricks and deception."³⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥazm³⁵¹ and Fakhrud-dīn al-Rāzī were among the later scholars who accepted al-Jaṣṣāṣ' view. Al-Rāzī quoted al-Jaṣṣāṣ' definitions and arguments verbatim in his exegesis of the Qur'ān,³⁵² and after mentioning the eight different types of magic, he said, "The Mu'tazilīs unanimously reject all of these types [of magic] except the types caused by deception, and by sowing dissension and slander."³⁵³ Among the more recent Muslim scholars, Sayyid Qutb³⁵⁴ echoed this view, stating, "Magic is deception of the senses and the nerves, and it is a suggestion to the mind and feelings. It neither changes the reality of things nor does it create any new realities for them. Rather, the senses and feelings imagine whatever the magician wishes."³⁵⁵

Following is some of the evidence brought by those who believed that magic is only deception. Concerning the Qur'ānic verses 7:116 and 20:66, al-Jaṣṣāṣ stated, "Whenever it [i.e., the word magic] is used unrestrictedly [*mutlaq*] it refers to something false – having no reality or stability. Almighty Allāh

³⁴⁹ Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Rāzī (917-980 CE), known as Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ, was born in Rayy and educated in Baghdad. He became the leading Ḥanafī legal scholar of his time. His most noted published work is *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 1, p. 171.)

³⁵⁰ *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, pp. 41-43.

³⁵¹ *Al-Fiṣal*, vol. 2, p. 2.

³⁵² *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 3, p. 205.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

³⁵⁴ Sayyid ibn Qutb ibn Ibrāhīm (1906-1966 CE), a leading 20th century Islamic thinker, was a graduate of Dār al-'Ulūm in Egypt. He wrote for several newspapers and Islamic magazines, like *al-Risālah*, and was an Arabic school teacher for some time. He joined the *Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*. Later he was jailed and executed during the rule of Jamāl 'Abdul-Nāṣir (1918-1970 CE). During his imprisonment, he wrote many Islamic books. Among them are *al-Naqd al-Adabī*, *al-'Adālah al-Ijtīmā'iyyah fil-Islām*, *Ma'ālim fi al-Ṭarīq* and his exegesis of the Qur'ān, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. (*Al-A'lām*, vol. 3, pp. 147-148.)

³⁵⁵ *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, vol. 6, p. 4007.

said, ‘They bewitched [*saḥarū*] the people’s eyes.’³⁵⁶ They deluded them into thinking that their ropes and staffs were crawling. And [Allāh also] said, ‘Their magic caused it to appear [*yukbayyalu*] to him that they were crawling.’³⁵⁷ He informed us that that which they thought was crawling was actually not. It was only an illusion.’³⁵⁸

Al-Jaṣṣāṣ logically argued:

‘If the magician and charmer [*mu‘azzim*] were actually able to cause benefit and harm in the way they claim – to fly, to know the unseen and information about [what is going on in] distant lands, to steal things [without being seen], and to harm people in other ways – it would be possible for them to seize property, extract treasures from the earth, and conquer countries by killing the rulers without any harm befalling them. They would be able to prevent anyone from hurting them, and they would have no need to seek the common people’s wealth. If this is not the case, they will [appear to] be in the worst condition, having the greatest desire and fanciest tricks to take people’s money, and they would be the most obviously poor and impoverished. Thus, [since the latter is the case], you can be certain that they are unable to do any of that [which they claim].’³⁵⁹

Some of these scholars also logically argued that if magicians were actually able to do as they claim, their magic would become indistinguishable from the miracles of the prophets.³⁶⁰ Al-Jaṣṣāṣ said, ‘It is amazing to see those who combine belief in the prophets (may peace be upon them) and their miracles with belief in similar acts by magicians when the Almighty has said: ‘The magician will never be successful, no matter what amount of

³⁵⁶ قَالَ الْقَوَا فَمَا الْقَوَا سَحَرُوا عَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَأَسْتَرَهُمْ وَهُمْ
وَجَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْحَرُ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣٥٦﴾

‘He [i.e., Moses] said, ‘You throw [first].’ So when they threw, they bewitched the people’s eyes and struck terror into them, and they displayed great magic.’ Qur’ān, 7:116

³⁵⁷ قَالَ بَلْ الْقَوَا فَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ وَعَصِيَّتُهُمْ بِخَيْلٍ إِلَيْهِمْ
سَحَرَهُمْ أَنَّهُ سَعَى

‘[Moses] said, ‘No, you throw [first].’ And all of a sudden their magic caused their ropes and staffs to appear to him that they were crawling.’ Qur’ān, 20:66

³⁵⁸ *Abkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 1, pp. 41-43.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁶⁰ *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, vol. 1, p. 339.

skill he may attain.”³⁶¹ Belief in them [is belief in] those whom Allāh has declared liars, and [He has] informed [us] that their claims are false.”³⁶²

Many of those who denied the reality of magic claimed that the traditions about Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) being bewitched were false. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ said, “Such traditions are among disbelievers’ fabrications in order to play, by interpolation, with [the minds] of common people and to drag them into falsifying the miracles of the prophets (peace be upon them).”³⁶³ Others held that the assertion of a spell being placed upon the Prophet (ﷺ) contradicted the Qur’ān. Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī quoted the argument of the Mu’tazilīs, “If he [i.e., the Prophet (ﷺ)] became bewitched, the disbelievers would not deserve the rebuke in the Almighty’s statement:³⁶⁴ **‘And the wrongdoers say, “You are only following a bewitched man.”’**”³⁶⁵ Yet others declared the traditions false on the basis that they all had chains of narration with individual reports [*khbar āḥād*]³⁶⁶ which they [i.e., those who denied the reality of magic] argue cannot be used as a basis for establishing articles of faith.³⁶⁷

ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS

The evidence used by the majority of scholars is more substantial, because it not only utilises the Qur’ān, logic and human experience, but it also finds support from the Sunnah and the consensus of early scholars. The minority, who are mainly from the Mu’tazilīs (so-called rationalist school of thought), follow their usual pattern of preferring human reason over revelation. Consequently, their evidence is only from three sources: the Qur’ān, logic and human experience. Their denial of the evidence from the traditions is

³⁶¹ This was stated by Allāh to reassure Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) that the miracle which he had been given would overcome the magician’s magic: “And throw what is in your right hand. It will swallow up what they have made! What they made is only a magician’s trick, and the magician will never be successful, no matter what amount of skill he may attain.” Qur’ān, 20:69

³⁶² *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 1, p. 49.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ Allāb quoted the argument of the disbelievers against Muḥammad’s prophethood: “And they say, ‘Why does this messenger eat food and walk about in the markets [like ourselves]? Why is an angel not sent down as a warner along with him? Or why has treasure not been granted to him or a garden of Paradise from which he may eat?’ And the wrongdoers say, ‘You are only following a bewitched man.’” Qur’ān, 25:8

³⁶⁵ *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 3, p. 214. See also *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 1, p. 49.

³⁶⁶ *Khbar āḥād* are traditions which were transmitted during the first three generations of Muslims by one to four transmitters only. (*Hadith Literature*, p. 194.)

³⁶⁷ See *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1, p. 214 and *‘Ālam al-Sīyah wal-Sha’wadhab*, pp. 180-181.

not based upon criticism according to the science of *ḥadīth*, but upon their own logic. There is an established principle in the science of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) to favour the view supported by a preponderance of evidence. It is therefore apparent that the view of the majority is the correct Islamic view.

REFUTATION OF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THE REALITY OF MAGIC

The two Qurʾānic verses (7:116 and 20:66) address illusionary magic, and this form of magic is not denied by anyone. However, the Qurʾān's description of some magic as being trickery does not exclude the possible existence of real magic, as indicated by verse (2:102).³⁶⁸ Furthermore, the discussion previously presented by Ibn al-Qayyim regarding these two verses supports the possibility of real magic. It could also be said that even real magic is illusionary from a particular point of view, for whatever magicians produce of real magic is not from their power but from the help of the *jinn*.³⁶⁹

In respect to the powers of magicians, the logical argument assumes that they must be able to do all they claim in order for them to be able to do any. However, their abilities are very limited, so they resort to trickery to capture customers, concentrating on the easily deceived, ignorant masses. Since magic is usually illusion and most magicians are tricksters, the majority of them will be impoverished and dependent upon people. However, there have been many instances in human history when magicians have held very high and powerful positions in society.

The other logical argument proposes that if magic is in fact real, miracles will become indistinguishable from it. This is not sufficient to deny the reality of some magic, because established Islamic principles clearly distinguish between miracles and magic. The following are four such principles:

- Miracles are divine gifts and not skills which may be learned by anyone who studies them, as in the case of magic.³⁷⁰
- Miracles are events which go against the natural laws, while acts of magic stay within the abilities of humans and *jinn*.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 10, p. 255.

³⁶⁹ *Ālam al-Siḥr wal-Shaʿwadhāb*, p. 99.

³⁷⁰ See *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 10, p. 223 and Ibn Khaldūn's *al-Muqaddimah*, p. 932.

³⁷¹ *Al-Furūq*, vol. 4, p. 168 and *Abkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 1, p. 49.

- Miracles are only performed by those close to Allāh, whereas magic is performed by the friends of the devil.³⁷²
- Magic may be counteracted by prayers, recitations or magic, but miracles cannot be counteracted.³⁷³

The claim that the narrations of the Prophet's bewitchment are fabricated is incorrect, because they were reported by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim (*muttafaqun 'alayh*), which Muslim scholars unanimously agree to be the most authentic category of *ḥadīth*.

The assertion that these *ḥadīths* contradict the Qur'ān is false, and these *ḥadīths* do not support the pagans' idea that Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was bewitched. The pagans claimed that whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) taught and recited from the Qur'ān was a result of madness or bewitchment and not revelation from Allāh. The fact that on one occasion he was bewitched in a way which did not affect his prophethood does not confirm the pagans' claim. It should also be noted that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was bewitched along with the other people present and saw the rods and staffs of the magicians moving like snakes.³⁷⁴ Therefore, it is clear that anyone can be affected by magic.

Because the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet's bewitchment was a single report (*khabar āḥād*), it was rejected as a means for establishing a doctrine of faith. However, the vast majority of Muslim scholars and the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were known to have promulgated both doctrines of faith and religious rituals based upon single reports.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAGIC AND POSSESSION

Real magic is the product of satanic intervention. Both the acts of magic and the effects of spells on humans involve the agency of *jinn*. Al-Ālūsī addressed this issue, saying, "What is meant by magic is an act which resembles a miracle but is not, because it [i.e., magic] is learned. And in order to perform it, the help of the devil is sought by pleasing him with abominable acts. [These acts may be in the form of] statements, like incantations containing phrases of *shirk* and praises of Satan; acts, like planet worship and an adherence to crime and licentiousness; and

³⁷² See *al-Furūq*, vol. 4, p. 170; *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 10, p. 223 and *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 173.

³⁷³ *Ālam al-Sihr wal-Sha'wadhab*, p. 78.

³⁷⁴ See Qur'ān, 20:67.

beliefs, like the preference and love of whatever is necessary to please [the devil].”³⁷⁵ Al-Ghazālī was quoted as defining magic as follows, “Magic is something which is derived from knowledge of the special characteristics of elements [*jawābir*] and mathematical calculations related to the time of the rising of the celestial bodies. From these special characteristics a form is made resembling the bewitched person, and a particular time of the rising of celestial bodies is awaited. When the time arrives, words of disbelief and obscenity, which contravene divine law, are uttered to obtain access to the devil’s assistance. The combination of these factors results in – according to normal procedure – strange conditions within the bewitched person.”³⁷⁶ During his discussion on the type of *sihr* in which the devil’s help is employed, al-Rāghib³⁷⁷ said, “The second [type] is that in which the devil’s help is attracted by acts which will gain favour, as in the Almighty’s statement: ‘**Shall I inform you about those upon whom the devils descend? They descend on every lying sinner.**’”³⁷⁸

Dr. ‘Umar al-Ashqar explicitly stated, “Real magic is that in which the magician relies upon the devil. Our Lord, whose knowledge encompasses all things, has informed us that it was the devils who taught mankind magic: ‘**...Sulaymān did not commit disbelief, but it was the devils who disbelieved and taught mankind magic.**’”³⁷⁹

A good example of the relationship of magic to possession can also be seen in an incident in which ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd found his wife wearing a knotted cord necklace and asked about its purpose. She informed him that it was given to her by a Jewish magician and that a spell had been placed on it to stop her eye from discharging, which it did. Ibn Mas‘ūd snatched it from her neck, told her it was an act of *shirk* and informed her that the discharge was caused by a *jinnī*, who desisted when the spell was placed on her.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁵ *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, vol. 1, p. 338.

³⁷⁶ Quoted in Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān’s *al-Dīn al-Khālīṣ*, vol. 2, p. 324.

³⁷⁷ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad, known as al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, from Iṣfahān in central Iran, was a major scholar and author of the fifth century AH. His most famous work is *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, a dictionary of the Qur‘ān. Reports of his death vary as widely as 452 AH to 502 AH. See *Sīyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, vol. 18, p. 120.

³⁷⁸ *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, p. 226. The Qur‘ānic quote is 26:221-222.

³⁷⁹ *Ālam al-Sihr wal-Sha‘wadhab*, p. 152. The Qur‘ānic quote is 2:102.

³⁸⁰ See *Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1089, no. 3874. The whole text of this *ḥadīth* was mentioned earlier on page 71 and its authentication in footnote no. 232.

THE EVIL EYE

A part of Islamic traditional belief is the concept of a type of glance capable of causing harm to those upon whom it befalls.³⁸¹

Ibn ‘Abbās reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

العين حق ولو كان شيء سابق القدر سبقته العين

“The effect of the evil eye [al-‘ayn] is real,³⁸² for if there were anything which could overtake destiny, it would have been [the effect of] the evil eye.”³⁸³

The word *al-nafs* is synonymous with *al-‘ayn*.³⁸⁴ The evil eye is included in the study of possession because, like magic, its effects most likely take place through the agency of the *jinn*, and it is a type of demonic possession requiring treatment. Ibn al-Qayyim referred to the role of spirits pertaining to the evil-eye, “Due to the close connection with the eye, its [i.e., the evil eye’s] effect is attributed to it, but the eye is not the perpetrator. The effect is caused by spirits.”

The evil eye is a form of jealousy (*hasad*). Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“Every possessor of the evil eye is jealous, but not every jealous person possesses the evil eye. Since the category of jealousy is general and the evil eye specific, seeking refuge from jealousy includes seeking refuge from the evil eye. This is the reason why the Qur’ānic text addresses the jealous and not specifically the evil eye:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ① مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ② وَمِنْ
شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ③ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي
الْعُقَدِ ④ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ⑤

“Say, ‘I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of what He has created...and from the evil of the jealous one when he is envious.’”

³⁸¹ See *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 112.

³⁸² This portion is also narrated by Abū Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 427, no. 636) and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1192, no. 5426.)

³⁸³ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1192, no. 5427.

³⁸⁴ *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, p. 168.

Qur'ān, 113:1,2 and 5”³⁸⁵

According to Ibn al-Qayyim, there are two types of evil eye: the human evil eye and the *jinnī* evil eye. He said:

“It is authentically reported from Umm Salamah that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw a girl in her house whose face had become dark³⁸⁶ and said,

استرقوا لها فإن بها النظرة

“Recite over her incantations, for she has [the effect of] the glance [al-naḥrah].”³⁸⁷

Al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd al-Farrā³⁸⁸ said, “*Al-naḥrah* is from the *jinn*. He said that she had an evil eye caused by the glance of a *jinnī*, which is more penetrating than the point of a spear.”³⁸⁹

FORMS

According to Islamic understanding, it can be concluded that the spirit-possession of humans may take a variety of different forms. Possession is not defined by any one set of symptoms. Possession may be partial, affecting only certain parts of the body, or it may be complete, affecting the whole body – thereby resulting in convulsive disorders like epilepsy and hystero-epilepsy. However, it should be recognised that in some cases the origin of these disorders may be purely biological. They may also include the various categories of what have been termed by modern medical science as “mental illness” like hypochondriacal neurosis, schizophrenia and other dissociative disorders.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 167.

³⁸⁶ The Arabic term used here is *sufah*, which is defined in *al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2, p. 374 as “changing towards black.”

³⁸⁷ *Sabīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 426, no. 635.

³⁸⁸ He is most commonly known by the title al-Baghawī. Biographical notes are given for him in footnote no. 162.

³⁸⁹ *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, p. 164.

³⁹⁰ See Prof. ‘Alī Muḥammad Muṭāwī M.D., *Madākhil ilā al-Ṭibb al-Islām*, p. 201, quoted by the author in an article for *Risālah al-Imām*, no. 5, 1986.

EXORCISM

The English term “exorcism” is derived from the Greek word “*exorkizo*” meaning “to bind with an oath,” “to adjure,” and denotes the expulsion of malevolent spirits from possessed persons, objects and places. The general definition states that expulsion is usually achieved by the utterance of an adoration in which the name(s) of more powerful spirits or deities are invoked and their aid sought.³⁹¹ This definition generally describes the process by which those who are ill due to spirit-possession are treated, except, according to Islamic law, only the name of Allāh may be invoked. Cure is usually effected by the use of religious formulas, prayers and/or artefacts.

Recited formulas are collectively referred to in Arabic as *ruqā* (s. *ruqyah*), which is derived from the verb *raqā* / *yarqī* meaning “to charm [someone] by invoking Allāh.” *Ruqyah* is “a charm or spell, either uttered or written, by which a person having an evil affection, such as fever and epilepsy etc., is charmed.”³⁹²

Originally, *ta’wīdh*, *’ūdhab* and *ma’ādhab* all meant the same as *ruqyah*.³⁹³ Later these terms almost exclusively referred to “a kind of amulet or charm bearing an inscription which is hung upon a man [or woman, child, horse etc.] to charm the wearer against the evil eye, against fright and diabolical possession.³⁹⁴ The root of these terms is the verb *ādha* / *ya’ūdhu* meaning “to seek protection or refuge.”³⁹⁵

Charms or amulets used for curing a sick, possessed or mad person are collectively called “*nushrah*,” derived from the verb *nashshara* which means “to charm away sickness, diabolical possession or madness by a charm or amulet.”³⁹⁶

The Arabic term “*da’wab*” (literally, “invitation, calling”) in the Indian subcontinent has come to mean “a system of incantation.”³⁹⁷

³⁹¹ *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, p. 268.

³⁹² *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 1140.

³⁹³ *Lisān al-’Arab*, vol. 2, p. 923.

³⁹⁴ *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2192.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2793-2794.

³⁹⁷ *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 72.

VALIDITY

According to Islamic law, treatment by exorcism is divided into two categories: prohibited techniques and permissible techniques. Prohibited techniques are those which include statements or acts which are contrary to Islamic law. Permissible methods are those which conform to the guidelines found in the sources of Islamic jurisprudence. In this regard Ibn Taymiyyah said:

Idolaters use talismans and chant formulas containing glorification and worship of the *jinn*, and most [of the] incomprehensible incantations, talismans and charms³⁹⁸ in use among the Muslim masses contain *shirk* [associating partners with Allāh] by way of the *jinn*. As a result, Muslim scholars have prohibited the use of incantations whose meanings are not understandable, because there is a possibility of *shirk* being involved, even if it is not so in actuality.

عن عوف بن مالك الأشجعي قال: كنا نرقى في الجاهلية فقلنا: يا رسول الله كيف ترى في ذلك؟ فقال: اعرضوا علي رقاكم. لا بأس بالرقى ما لم يكن فيه شرك

‘Awf ibn Mālik al-Ashja‘ī said, “We used to make incantations during the times of ignorance, so we said, O Messenger of Allāh, what is your opinion on this matter?” He replied, ‘Let me hear your incantations, for incantations which do not have *shirk* in them are fine.’³⁹⁹

Most of what is recited by those preparing amulets and talismans have *shirk* in them. In an attempt to hide the *shirk*, Qur’ānic verses are often added throughout the recitation.⁴⁰⁰ There are sufficient cures prescribed by Allāh and His Prophet to remove any need for methods involving *shirk* and any need for those who practise it. Some Muslims may dispute the

³⁹⁸ See, for example, Ahmad Sa‘id Dehlvi, *Prophetic Medical Sciences (The Saviour)*, Ganjina-e-Asrar, p. 36. “VEIN-SEALING: (1) In case somebody has sealed the vein of somebody through some [magical] trick, etc., due to which he is unable to perform sexual intercourse, write on a sword the formula given below and cut an egg of a black hen right from the middle to turn it into two pieces. One piece [should] be eaten by him and one by the woman. Allāh-willing, due to the blessings of this formula, the vein will get released. It is very well-tried. *Bksm la la um ma ma la la la bbb.*”

³⁹⁹ *Sabih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1197, no. 5457.

⁴⁰⁰ See, for example, the quotations from *Jawābir al-Khamsah* by Abū al-Mu‘ayyid of Gujarat (d. 956 AH) in the *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 72-78.

permissibility of using medicines containing forbidden substances like pork and parts of animals which die of themselves.⁴⁰¹ However, there is no difference of opinion with regard to the prohibition of treating sickness with acts of *shirk* and *kufr* [disbelief], because it is prohibited under all circumstances. Performing acts of *shirk* and *kufr* are not the same as only saying statements to that effect under duress, for the latter is allowed if one's heart is full of faith. Speaking words of *shirk* and *kufr* only has an effect if it [i.e., disbelief] already exists in the heart of the one saying them. Thus, if one says them while his heart is at peace in faith, it has no effect on one's level of belief. One under duress does not intend to utter words of disbelief, but is forced. If Satan knows that the one using prohibited amulets or incantations does not take them seriously, he will not aid him. Therefore, one may not use *shirk* on the basis that he or she does not believe in it. It should also be noted that there is no necessity to treat an afflicted person with *shirk* or *kufr* from at least two other points of view: First, there may be no effect, for most of those who treat illnesses with amulets have no success.

⁴⁰¹ Although scholars have differed with regard to treating illnesses with prohibited substances, the authentic evidence supports the position of those who disallow it under circumstances where neither life nor limb are threatened. For example:

عن وائل الحضرمي أن طارق بن سويد الجعفي سأل النبي (ﷺ) عن
 الخمر فيها أو كره أن يصنعها، فقال: إنما أصنعها للدواء. فقال: إنه ليس
 بدواء ولكنه داء

Wā'il al-Ḥaḍramī reported that Ṭāriq ibn Suwayd al-Ju'fī questioned Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) about wine. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade its use and expressed hatred that it should be prepared. Ṭāriq remarked, "But I prepare it as medicine." He replied, "It is not a medicine but an ailment." (Sahih Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1099, no. 4892.) In another narration Abū al-Dardā' quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

إن الله أنزل الداء و الدواء و جعل لكل داء دواء فتداووا و لا تداووا
 بحرام

"Allāh has sent down both disease and cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourselves with medicine, but do not use anything prohibited." (Sunan Abu Dawūd, vol. 3, p. 1087, no. 3865.) On the subject of using wine as a medicine, the Prophet's companion, Ibn Mas'ūd, said,

إن الله يجعل شفاءكم فيما حرم عليكم

"Allāh has not made a cure for your sickness in what He has prohibited." (Sahih al-Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 357, no. 15.)

Instead, they may even make the affliction worse. Second, there are sufficient authentic methods of cure available to make false methods superfluous.⁴⁰²

In order for *ruqā* to be legitimate according to Islamic law, Ibn Ḥajar said, “The scholars are in unanimous agreement that *ruqā* is permissible if [the following] three conditions are met:

- 1) Only Allāh’s words [i.e., the Qur’ān], names or attributes can be used.
- 2) It must be in [comprehensible] Arabic or intelligible words in another language.
- 3) Those taking part must believe that the incantation cannot have an independent effect, but it is Allāh who causes it to have effect.”⁴⁰³

Some people considered unintelligible *ruqā* permissible because of the narration of Jābir.

عن جابر قال: نهى رسول الله (ﷺ) عن الرقى فجاء آل عمرو بن حزم إلى رسول الله (ﷺ) فقالوا: يا رسول الله، إنه كانت عندنا رقية نرقي بها من العقرب وإنك نهيت عن الرقى. قال: فعرضوها عليه، فقال: ما أرى بأساً، من استطاع منكم أن ينفع أخاه فلينفعه

He reported that when Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited incantation, the ‘Amr ibn Ḥazm family came to him and said, “We know an incantation which we used to recite for curing scorpion stings.” They recited the incantation for him, and he said, “I do not see anything wrong with it. Whoever among you is able to help his brother should do so.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 93-95.

⁴⁰³ *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 10, p. 195.

⁴⁰⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1197, no. 5456.

However, Ibn Hajar pointed out that ‘Awf’s narration in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “incantations which do not have *shirk* in them are fine,”⁴⁰⁵ indicates that any *ruqyah* which leads to *shirk* is prohibited, and there is no way of knowing if incomprehensible *ruqā* contain *shirk* or not. Therefore, such *ruqā* are also prohibited as a precaution.⁴⁰⁶

THE EXORCIST

There is no official position known as the “exorcist” under Islamic law. However, in various parts of the Muslim world, titles have been given to those who practise exorcism. For example, in India and Pakistan an exorcist is called an ‘*āmil*.⁴⁰⁷ According to *sharī‘ah*, exorcism is merely considered a method of treatment for the ill and for helping the needy. As such, it is required of all Muslims who are capable of treating those afflicted. In addressing the generality of this responsibility, Ibn Taymiyyah said:

The fundamental principle on the basis of which this subject [i.e., exorcism] should be understood is that it may be permissible, recommended or even compulsory to defend or aid one who is possessed, because helping the oppressed is a duty according to one’s ability. There is a narration in both *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in which the Prophet’s companion, al-Barā’ ibn ‘Azib, said,

عن البراء رضي الله عنه قال: أمرنا النبي (ﷺ) بسبع ونهانا عن سبع،
 أمرنا بعبادة المريض واتباع الجنائز و تشميت العاطس وإجابة الداعي
 ورد السلام ونصر المظلوم وإبرار المقسم، ونهانا عن سبع: عن خاتم
 الذهب—أو قال حلقة الذهب—وعن لبس الحرير والديباغ والسندس
 والمياثر

‘Allāh’s Messenger commanded us to do seven things and prohibited us from doing seven. He enjoined upon us visiting the sick, funeral processions, wishing well for one who sneezes, fulfilling oaths, helping the oppressed,

⁴⁰⁵ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1197, no. 5457.

⁴⁰⁶ *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 10, p. 195.

⁴⁰⁷ *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 73.

responding to invitations, and spreading greetings of peace. He forbade us from wearing gold rings, drinking from silver vessels, using silk brocade saddle blankets, wearing silk blend clothes, silk clothes, velvet or silk brocade.⁴⁰⁸

...In [exorcism] there is also alleviation of the oppressed person's grief and suffering. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported by Abū Hurayrah in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* to have said,

من فرج عن مسلم كربة فرج الله عنه بها كربة من كرب يوم القيامة

'Whoever relieves a believer of one of the tragedies of this life, Allāh will relieve him of one of the calamities of the Day of Resurrection.'⁴⁰⁹

Jābir was also reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* to have said that when Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked about incantation, he replied, 'Whoever among you is able to help his brother should do so.'⁴¹⁰

As to leaving one's [possessed] companion without treating him, it is the same as abandoning someone who is oppressed. Aiding the oppressed is *farḍ kifāyah* (a group obligation) on everyone according to his ability, based upon what the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

المسلم أخو المسلم لا يظلمه ولا يسلمه

'A Muslim is a brother to every other Muslim, he does not leave him in harm nor does he harm him.'⁴¹¹

If he is unable to help him or is busy with something more obligatory or someone else has gone to help the possessed individual, it is no longer obligatory on him to do so. If, on the other hand, he is the only one present who is able to help and he is not busy with something more obligatory, it then becomes a compulsory duty to exorcise the possessed.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 8, p. 156, no. 241 and *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1139, no. 5129.

⁴⁰⁹ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1366, no. 6250.

⁴¹⁰ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1197, no. 5456. The quotation is from *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 60-62.

⁴¹¹ This *ḥadīth* was narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar in *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 373, no. 622 and by Sālim in *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1366, no. 6250.

⁴¹² *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 80-81.

CONDITIONS

According to Islamic scholars, both parties to the exorcism must fulfil certain spiritual and legal characteristics for effective treatment to take place. In describing these necessary attributes, Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“Treatment of fits due to spirit-possession requires two factors on the part of the possessed and on the part of the healer.

1) On the part of the possessed it requires (a) personal strength and turning to the Creator of these spirits truthfully, and (b) the correct method of seeking refuge wherein the heart and tongue will be in harmony. Indeed this type of treatment is, in fact, warfare, and the warrior will not be able to defeat his enemy unless he possesses two qualities: that his weapon itself be good and sharp and that his arm be strong. If either of these two conditions are not met, a long sword will be of no value. And if both are missing? The heart which is in a state of desolation and ruin with respect to *Tawhīd* [belief in the unity of Allāh], trust in Allāh, fear of Allāh and turning to Him, will have no weapon.

2) The requirement on the part of the exorcist is that he also possess both [of the above-mentioned] factors.”⁴¹³

Ibn Taymiyyah warned:

“If the possessing demon is an *‘Ifrīt* among *jinn* and the exorcist is weak, it could harm him. Consequently, he should shield himself by reciting prayers through which he seeks refuge in Allāh, the *mu‘awwidhatān*⁴¹⁴ and *Āyah al-Kursī*; by performing formal prayer (*ṣalāh*); by making supplications and doing other similar things which strengthen his faith; and by putting aside sins through which the evil *jinn* may gain control over him. Such a person is a soldier of Allāh, and since exorcism is among the greatest forms of *jihād*, he should beware not to help his enemy overcome him by his own sins. If the circumstance is beyond his capacity, he should remember that ‘**Allāh does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.**’ He should not expose himself to tribulation by taking on what he is unable to handle.”⁴¹⁵

METHODOLOGY

The following steps of exorcism have been deduced from the texts of the

⁴¹³ *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, p. 69.

⁴¹⁴ Chapter numbers 113 and 114.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 69-72.

Sunnah, the practice of the Prophet's companions and early scholars. The order in which the steps are mentioned is not intended to be unalterably fixed, but merely a possible sequence which may be followed.

FIRST STEP: (A) UNDO CHARM

In cases where possession is a result of magic the most effective method of cancelling its effects is by finding and undoing the charm used in the bewitchment. Ibn al-Qayyim stated, "Removing the charm and neutralising it is the most profound treatment."⁴¹⁶ Once the charm has been found and dismantled, the spell will be broken and the *jinnī* connected with it will leave the person alone. This was the method used by Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) on the occasion of his own bewitchment. Zayd ibn Arqam reported that a Jew, by the name of Labīb ibn A'ṣam [from the Zurāq clan],⁴¹⁷ cast a spell on the Prophet (ﷺ). When he began to suffer from it, Jibrīl came to him and revealed the two chapters for seeking refuge (*mu'awwidhatān*) and then said to him, "Surely, it was a Jew who cast this spell on you, and the magical charm is in a certain well." The Prophet (ﷺ) sent 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to go and fetch the charm. When he returned with it, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him to untie the knots, one by one, and to recite a verse from the two chapters with the undoing of each knot. When he did so, the Prophet (ﷺ) got up as if he had been released from being tied up.⁴¹⁸ Although destroying the charm is the best method of breaking the spell, it is the most difficult, unless someone confesses or the charm is discovered accidentally. The Prophet (ﷺ) only found out the location of the charm by revelation. Consequently, the cases of *jinn*-possession induced by magic may be treated by the usual method for general demonic possession outlined below.

FIRST STEP: (B) ADDRESS

It was the practice of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) to address the possessing spirit and command it to leave. In his narration Ya'ālā ibn Murrah reported that on one occasion a woman brought her demented son to the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said [to the boy], "Get out, enemy of Allāh! I am the Messenger of Allāh!" The boy recovered, and she gave the Prophet (ﷺ) a gift

⁴¹⁶ *Zād al-Ma'ād*, vol. 3, p. 104. See also *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, p. 124.

⁴¹⁷ What appears in brackets was mentioned in al-Bukhārī's narration on the authority of 'Ā'ishah. See *Sabīh al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, pp. 443-444, no. 660.

⁴¹⁸ The report of Zayd ibn Arqam was collected by Aḥmad and al-Nasā'ī and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, vol. 3, pp. 855-6, no. 3802, but neither version mentions the recitation of the *mu'awwidhatān*. Mention of the *mu'awwidhatān* in relation to this incident comes in versions reported by al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 7, p. 92, and by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Musnad*.

of two male sheep, some *aqat* (dried curd)⁴¹⁹ and fat. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Take the *aqat*, the fat and one of the sheep and return the other."⁴²⁰

According to some early scholars, an attempt should be made to communicate with the intruding spirit(s), encouraging it/them to leave by giving advice and admonishment.

This procedure was proposed by Ibn Taymiyyah, who said:

"In the first instance, where possession is due to sexual desire on the *jinnī*'s part – even with the consent of the human partner – it [i.e., sexual relations] is as forbidden by Allāh as it is among [unmarried] humans. Without the possessed human's consent it becomes an even graver case of atrocity and oppression. In such circumstances the *jinn* should be addressed and informed that their acts are either abominable and prohibited or vile and tyrannical. They are informed [of this] so that evidence may be brought against them on the Day of Judgement and that they are made aware that they have broken the laws of Allāh and His Prophet, whom He sent to both worlds – that of men and *jinn*.

In cases of the second category wherein the [possessed] human was unaware that he had harmed a *jinnī*, the *jinnī* should be addressed and informed that the human's act was unintentional and therefore not deserving of punishment. If it [i.e., the accidental injury] took place in the man's house or on his property, the *jinnī* should be informed that the house and property belong to the man and, as such, he is permitted to use them in allowable ways as he pleases. The *jinnī* should also be told that they do not have the right to inhabit human property without the permission of the occupants. They only have a right to dwell in places not occupied by humans, like abandoned buildings and open country."⁴²¹

[In summary], if the *jinn* attack a human, they should be informed of Allāh and His Messenger's ruling on the matter, and proof of their error should be pointed out. They should be instructed to be righteous and to abstain from evil, just as is done with humans, based upon Allāh's statement:

⁴¹⁹ A preparation made from sheep or goat's milk which has been churned and the butter removed, then cooked and left to dry until it becomes hard like stone. It is used in cooking. See *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 70.

⁴²⁰ Collected by Aḥmad and rated authentic by al-Arnā'ūṭī in his edition of *Zād al-Ma'ād*, vol. 4, p. 68, fn. 1.

⁴²¹ *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*, p. 32-33.

وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

‘We will not punish [the wayward] until a messenger has
been sent [to them].’

Qur’ān, 17:15

As a result of this obligation, the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade the killing of snakes found in houses until after they have been told to leave three times. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and other books of *ḥadīth* there is a narration from Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī in which he stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Madīnah has a group of *jinn* who became Muslims, so whoever sees any snakes [in their homes] should request them to leave three times. If any of them appear after that, he should kill it, because it is a devil.”⁴²²

SECOND STEP: CURSING

If the *jinnī* refuses to respond appropriately by leaving, the exorcist may then use harsh language wherein Allāh’s curse is invoked upon the *jinnī*. This step was specifically referred to by Ibn Taymiyyah, and he brought evidence in support of it in one of his works, saying, “The commanding of a *jinnī* to righteousness and its prohibition from evil should be carried out in the same way that humans are admonished. Whatever is allowable in the case of humans is also allowable in the case of *jinn*. For example, the repelling of *jinn* might require scolding, threatening and even evoking Allāh’s curse.

⁴²² *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, p. 42. The *ḥadīth* can be found in *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1213, no. 5557.

قام رسول الله (ﷺ) فسمعناه يقول (أعوذ بالله منك) ثم قال (ألعنك بلعنة الله) ثلاثاً وبسط يده كأنه يتناول شيئاً ، فلما فرغ من الصلاة قلنا : يا رسول الله : قد سمعناك تقول في الصلاة شيئاً لم نسمعك تقوله قبل ذلك ورأيناك بسطت يدك . قال (إن عدو الله إبليس جاء بشهاب من نار ليجمعه في وجهي ، فقلت : أعوذ بالله منك ، ثلاث مرات ، ثم قلت : ألعنك بلعنة الله التامة ، فلم يستأخر ثلاث مرات ، ثم أردت أخذه ، والله لولا دعوة أخينا سليمان لأصبح موثقا يلعب به ولدان أهل المدينة

Abū al-Dardā' narrated, "Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) stood up [in prayer] and we heard him say, 'I seek refuge in Allāh from you.' Then he reached out his hand as if he were catching something, and he said three times, 'I curse you by Allāh's curse.' When he finished praying, we asked him, 'O Messenger of Allāh, we heard you say something in your prayer which we have never heard you say before, and we saw you stretch out your arm.' He replied, 'Indeed, Allāh's enemy, Iblīs, brought a fiery torch and tried to thrust it in my face, so I sought refuge in Allāh and cursed him by Allāh's perfect curse three times. But he did not retreat. So I caught hold of him and, by Allāh, had it not been for the prayer of our brother, Sulaymān,⁴²³ he would have been tied up for the children of Madīnah to play with.'⁴²⁴

This ḥadīth provides the foundation for the practice of seeking refuge in Allāh from the jinn and cursing them by Allāh's curse."⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon) asked Allāh for a unique miracle to be granted only to him. Consequently, Allāh gave him control over the animals, the *jinn* and many forces of nature. See Qur'ān, 38:36-38.

⁴²⁴ *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 273-274, no. 1106.

⁴²⁵ *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 64-65.

THIRD STEP: (A) RECITATIONS

Since the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), recitation of the Qur'ān for the sick has been an accepted practice among Muslims. Textual evidence for the use of the Qur'ān in curing illnesses is based upon the following verses:

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ
الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾

“We revealed in stages of the Qur'ān that which is a healing and mercy for believers. But for the unjust it only adds to their loss.”

Qur'ān, 17:82

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي
الضُّدُورِ وَهَدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“O mankind, there has come to you [in the Qur'ān] an admonition from your Lord and a healing for the [diseases] in your hearts and, for the believers, a guidance and mercy.”

Qur'ān, 10:57

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

The companions of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) used to recite chapters and verses of the Qur'ān as a cure for possession as well as other illnesses.

عن خارجة بن الصلت التميمي عن عمه قال: أقبلنا من عند رسول الله (ﷺ) فأتينا على حي من العرب فقالوا: إنا أنبئنا أنكم قد جئتم من عند هذا الرجل بجزير، فهل عندكم من دواء أورقية، فإن عندنا معوهها في القيود. قال: فقلنا: نعم. قال: فجاءوا بمعوه في القيود. قال: فقرأت عليه فاتحة الكتاب ثلاثة أيام غدوة وعشية، كلما ختمتها أجمع بزاقني ثم أتقل، فكأنما نشط من عقال. قال: فأعطوني جعلاً، فقلت: لا، حتى أسأل رسول الله (ﷺ)، فقال: كل، فلعمري من أكل برقية باطل. لقد أكلت برقية حق

The uncle of Khārijah ibn al-Ṣalt reported that he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and embraced Islām. During his return journey, he came across a tribe which had among them a madman fettered in iron chains. The madman's family said to him, "We have been informed that your companion [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)] has come with good. Do you have anything with which to treat illnesses?" He recited over him *Fātiḥah al-Kitāb*,⁴²⁶ and he got well. [In another narration it stated: "He recited over him *Fātiḥah al-Kitāb* every morning and evening for three days. Whenever he would finish his recitation, he would gather his saliva and spit. And he got well."] They gave him one hundred sheep [but he was in doubt about whether he should accept them] so he went back to Allāh's Messenger and informed him of the incident. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, "Did you recite anything else besides this?" He replied that he had not. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, "Take them, for by my religion, whoever devours the payment for a false incantation will be destroyed. Indeed, you have eaten the price of a truthful incantation."⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ The first chapter of the Qur'ān.

⁴²⁷ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1093, no. 3892) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 737, no. 3297.

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال: كما في مسير لنا فنزلنا فجاءت جارية
 فقالت: إن سيد الحي سليم وإن نفرنا غيب فهل منكم راق؟ فقام
 معها رجل ما كنا نأبئه برقية فرقاه فبرأ فأمر له بثلاثين شاة وسقانا لبنا،
 فلما رجع قلنا له: أكت تحسن رقية؟ أو: كمت ترقى؟ - قال: لا،
 ما رقيت إلا بأم الكتاب. قلنا: لا تحدثوا شيئاً حتى نأتي - أو: نسأل
 - النبي (ﷺ). فلما قدمنا المدينة ذكرناه للنبي (ﷺ) فقال: وما كان
 يدره أنها رقية؟ اقسموها واضربوا لي بسهم

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī said, "While we were on a journey, we dismounted at a place, whereupon a servant girl came to us and said, 'The chief of our tribe has been stung by a scorpion and our men are not present. Is there anyone among you who can recite incantations?' A man from among us, whom no one suspected knew incantations, got up and went with her. He subsequently recited over him. When the chief got well, he gave him thirty sheep and gave us milk to drink. On his return we asked him, 'Did you have previous experience at reciting incantations?' He replied, 'No, I only recited over him Umm al-Kitāb.'⁴²⁸ We agreed not to speak about it until we reached Madīnah and sought the Prophet's advice. When we arrived and asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about it, he said, 'How did he know that it exorcises? Distribute the sheep among yourselves and set aside a share for me also.'⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ Another name for the first chapter of the Qur'ān.

⁴²⁹ *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6, p. 490, no. 529 and *Sahīh Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1198, no. 5460.

Āyah al-Kursī⁴³⁰

Among the greatest weapons which may be used to exorcise the *jinn* is *Āyah al-Kursī*, as confirmed in Abū Hurayrah’s narration:

Allāh’s Messenger put me in charge of the *zakāh* of Ramaḍān.⁴³¹ While I was doing so, someone came and began to rummage around in the food, so I caught hold of him and said, “By Allāh, I am going to take you to Allāh’s Messenger!” But the man implored, “Verily, I am poor and I have dependents. I am in great need.” So I let him go. The next morning the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “O Abū Hurayrah, what did your captive do last night?” I replied, “He complained of being in great need and having a family, so I

⁴³⁰ Qur’ān, 2:255. *Āyah al-Kursī* literally means “Verse of the Footstool.” Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) declared it to be the greatest verse of the Qur’ān relative to man.

عن أبي بن كعب قال: قال رسول الله: (يا أبا المنذر أتدري أي آية من كتاب الله معك أعظم؟) قال: قلت: لله ورسوله أعلم. قال: (يا أبا المنذر أتدري أي آية من كتاب الله معك أعظم؟) قال: قلت: (الله لا إله إلا هو الحي القيوم) قال: فضرب في صدري وقال والله ليهنك العلم أبا المنذر

Ubayy ibn Ka’b said, “Allāh’s Messenger asked me, ‘O Abul-Mundbir, do you know which verse of Allāh’s Book is the greatest relative to you?’ I replied, ‘Allāh, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal.’ Thereupon he patted my chest and said, ‘May knowledge always be pleasant for you, O Abul-Mundbir!’ (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 2, p. 387, no. 1786.) The full text of the verse is as follows:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

“Allāh, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and earth belong to Him. Who can intercede [on behalf of others] to Him except by His permission? He knows what is in front of them and what is behind them. They will not grasp any of His knowledge, except what He wills. His footstool extends over the heavens and earth, and He is not made tired by governing them [i.e., the heavens and earth]. He is Transcendent, the Magnificent.

⁴³¹ Compulsory charity given in the form of foodstuff at the end of the annual month of fasting, Ramaḍān, and distributed among the poorest members of society.

let him go.” The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, “Surely, he lied to you and he will return.” Since I knew that he was going to return, I laid in wait for him. When he returned and began to dig about in the food, I grabbed him and said, “I am definitely going to take you to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ).” Again he pleaded, “Let me go! Verily, I am poor and I have a family. I will not return.” So I had mercy on him and let him go. The next morning Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Abū Hurayrah, what did your captive do last night?” I said that he complained of being in great need and of having a family, so I let him go.” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Surely, he lied to you and he will return.” So I waited for him and grabbed him when he began to scatter food around. I said, “By Allāh, I will take you to Allāh’s Messenger. This is the third time, and you had promised that you would not return; yet you come back anyway!” He said, “Let me give you some words by which Allāh will benefit you.” I said, “What are they?” and he replied, “Whenever you go to bed, recite *Āyah al-Kursī* from beginning to end. If you do so, a guardian from Allāh will remain with you and Satan will not come near you until the morning.” I then let him go. The next morning the Messenger of Allāh said, “What did your captive do last night?” I said that he claimed that he would teach me some words by which Allāh would benefit me, so I let him go. When the Prophet (ﷺ) asked what they were, I told him that they were the saying of *Āyah al-Kursī* before going to bed. I also told him that he said that a guardian from Allāh would remain with me, and Satan would not come near me until I awoke in the morning. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Indeed he has told the truth, although he is a compulsive liar. O Abū Hurayrah, do you know with whom you have been speaking these past three nights?” I replied, “No,” and so he said, “That was a devil.”⁴³²

Regarding *Āyah al-Kursī* Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“The countless many who have experience in this field unanimously confirm the incredible effectiveness of this verse in warding off the devils and breaking their spells. Indeed, it is greatly effective in repelling the evil *jinn* from human souls and exorcising them from the possessed, as well as those prodded by the devils, like tyrants, those easily enraged, the lustful and lecherous, musicians and those who ecstatically whistle and clap, enraptured by their music. If this verse is sincerely recited over them, it will drive away the devils and neutralise their illusions. It will also disrupt satanic visions and devil-aided, supernatural feats performed by humans.”⁴³³

Sūrah al-Baqarah

Another means recommended for repelling the devil is reading the second

⁴³² *Sabīh al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9, p. 492, no. 530.

⁴³³ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 19, p. 55.

chapter of the Qur'ān, *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (The Cow). Abū Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

لا تجعلوا بيوتكم مقابر إن الشيطان ينفر من البيت الذي تقرأ فيه سورة
البقرة

“Do not make your houses like graveyards.⁴³⁴ Verily, the devil flees from a house in which *Sūrah al-Baqarah* is read.”⁴³⁵

According to the prophetic traditions, the last two verses of this chapter also have special merit for exorcism. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was reported by al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr to have said,

أنزل منه آيتين ختم بهما سورة البقرة، ولا يقرآن في دار ثلاث ليال فيقربها
شيطان

“When the last two verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* are read in a home for three consecutive nights, the devil will not come near it.”⁴³⁶

Basmalah⁴³⁷

Also reported to have preventive and curative properties is the *basmalah*. This is written before each chapter of the Qur'ān, excluding the 9th chapter, and is also found in verse 30 of chapter 27 (*Sūrah al-Naml*).

⁴³⁴ The Qur'ān may not be recited in graveyards. Thus, a home in which the Qur'ān is not read resembles a graveyard in that respect.

⁴³⁵ Collected by al-Tirmidhī and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 337, no. 1707).

⁴³⁶ Collected by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Ḥibbān and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 3, p. 4, no. 2311.

⁴³⁷ This is the verbal noun meaning: to say the phrase, “*Bismillāh-ir-Raḥmān-ir-Raḥīm*” (“In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful”). See *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 206.

عن أبي المليح عن رجل قال: كنت رديف النبي (ﷺ) فعثرت دابة فقلت: تعس الشيطان. فقال: لا تقل: تعس الشيطان، فإنك إذا قلت ذلك تعاظم حتى يكون مثل البيت ويقول: بقوتي. ولكن قل: بسم الله، فإنك إذا قلت ذلك تصغر حتى يكون مثل الذباب

Abū al-Māliḥ's father quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, "Do not say, 'May Satan be degraded,' for surely, he will grow until he becomes the size of a house and he will say, 'By my power, I will possess him.' Say instead, 'Bismillāh' ['In the name of Allāh']. If you do that, he will shrink until he becomes the size of a fly."⁴³⁸

عن عثمان بن أبي العاص الثقفي أنه شكأ إلى رسول الله (ﷺ) وجعا يجده في جسده منذ أسلم فقال له رسول الله (ﷺ) ضع يدك على الذي تألم من جسدك وقل: بسم الله، ثلاثا وقل سبع مرات: أعوذ بالله وقدرته من شر ما أجد وأحاذر.

'Uthmān ibn Abul-'Ās al-Thaqafī reported that when he complained to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) about a pain which he felt in his body from the time he accepted Islam, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Place your hand at the place where you feel the pain in your body and say, 'Bismillāh' three times, then say seven times, 'A'ūdhu billāhi wa qudratihi min sharri mā ajidu wa uḥādhir.'" ['I seek refuge in Allāh and His power from the evil that I find and (from the evil) that I fear.']"⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1387, no. 4964), al-Nasā'ī and Aḥmad and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, p. 1234, no. 7401.

⁴³⁹ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, pp. 1198-1199.

Ta‘awwudh⁴⁴⁰

Seeking refuge in Allāh has been prescribed in some Qur’ānic verses as a means of warding off the devils:

وَأَمَّا يَنْزِعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

“If Satan touches you, seek refuge in Allāh, for verily, He is the Hearer and Knower.”

Qur’ān, 41:36

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ
رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿١٨﴾

“Say, ‘My Lord, I seek refuge in You from the prodding of the devils, and I seek refuge in You, my Lord, from their presence.’”

Qur’ān, 23:97-98

In regard to one whose face had become red with anger, the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إني لأعرف كلمة لو قالها لذهب عنه الذي يجذ: أعوذ بالله من الشيطان
الرجيم

“Verily, I know some words which would cause his anger to subside if he said them. He should say, ‘A‘ūdhu billāhi min al-shayṭān al-rajīm.’ [‘I seek refuge in Allāh from Satan, the cursed.’]”⁴⁴¹

Before the recitation of the opening chapter of the Qur’ān in formal prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

⁴⁴⁰ To seek refuge in Allāh.

⁴⁴¹ Narrated by Sulaymān ibn Ṣard and collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim (*Sabīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1377, no. 6317).

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان من نفخه ونفثه وهمزه

“A‘ūdhu billāhi min al-shayṭān min nafkhihi wa nafathihi wa hamzihi.” (“I seek refuge in Allāh from the pride, poetry and touch of Satan, the cursed.”)⁴⁴²

Among the most powerful Qur’ānic formulas for seeking refuge are the last two chapters of the Qur’ān, collectively referred to as the *mu‘awwidhatān*. According to a number of reports, these two chapters were specifically revealed to break the magical spell which had been placed upon the Prophet (ﷺ).⁴⁴³

عن عائشة قالت: كان رسول الله (ﷺ) إذا مرض أحد من أهله نفث عليه بالمعوذات

The Prophet’s wife, ‘Ā’ishah, also reported that whenever any of the members of the household fell ill, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to blow⁴⁴⁴ over them by reciting the *mu‘awwidhatān*.⁴⁴⁵

*Adbān and Iqāmah*⁴⁴⁶

Both calls to pray have been defined by the Prophet (ﷺ) as having the ability to drive away the devils. Abū Hurayrah reported Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

⁴⁴² Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 1, p. 196, no. 736) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Irwā’ al-Ghalīl*, no. 342.

⁴⁴³ These include versions reported by ‘Ā’ishah, Ibn ‘Abbās, Zayd ibn Arqam and Zayd ibn Aslam and collected by ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd, al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah* and Ibn Mardawayh. See *al-Durr al-Mantbūr*, vol. 6, pp. 716-7, and *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 10, pp. 236, 241.

⁴⁴⁴ The Arabic term used here is *nafath*, which refers to the act of blowing with a spitting sound produced by placing the tip of the tongue between the lips prior to blowing. The actual term for blowing is *nafakh* and for light spitting is *tafal*. See *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2819.

⁴⁴⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1195, no. 5439.

⁴⁴⁶ The *adbān* is the general call to prayer recited at the beginning of the period for each prayer, and the *iqāmah* is the prayer call proclaimed when the congregational prayer is about to begin.

إذا نودي للصلاة أدبر الشيطان وله ضراط حتى لا يسمع التأذين ، فإذا
 قضى النداء أقبل ، حتى إذا ثوب بالصلاة أدبر ، حتى إذا قضى التثويب
 أقبل ، حتى يحظر بين المرء ونفسه ، يقول : اذكر كذا ، اذكر كذا ، لما لم
 يكن يذكر ، حتى يظل الرجل لا يدرى كم صلى

“When the adhān is made, Satan runs away and breaks wind to drown it out. When it is finished, he returns, but when the iqāmah is proclaimed, he again turns and runs away. When it is finished, he returns to distract a man [praying], saying, ‘Remember such and such; remember such and such,’ referring to something the man did not have on his mind. As a result, he forgets how much he has prayed.”⁴⁴⁷

عن سهيل قال : أرسلني أبي إلى بني حارثة ، قال : ومعى غلام لنا - أو
 صاحب لنا - فناده من حائط باسمه ، قال : وأشرف الذي معى
 على الحائط فلم ير شيئاً ، فذكرت ذلك لأبي ، فقال : لو شعرت أنك تلق
 هذا لم أرسلك ، ولكن إذا سمعت صوتاً فناد بالصلاة ، فإنى سمعت أبا
 هريرة يحدث عن رسول الله (ﷺ) أنه قال : إن الشيطان إذا نودي
 بالصلاة ولي وله حصاص

Suhayl reported that his father sent him to the Ḥārithah clan along with someone. On the way there, a voice from an enclosure called him by his name. When the person with him looked into the enclosure, he saw no one. Upon his return, he mentioned it to his father, who said, “Had I known that you would have met such a situation, I would never have sent you. But whenever you hear such a call, pronounce the adhān, for I have heard Abū Hurayrah say that he heard Allāh’s Messenger say,

⁴⁴⁷ *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 336, no. 582 and *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 211, no. 756.

‘Whenever the adhān is given, Satan runs away vehemently.’⁴⁴⁸

It was also the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) to recite the *adhān* in the ears of children at the time of their birth.

عن أبي رافع قال: رأيت رسول الله (ﷺ) أذن في أذن الحسن بن علي
حين ولدته فاطمة بالصلاة

Abū Rāfi‘ said, “I saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) call the adhān in the ear of [his grandson] al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, when Fāṭimah gave birth to him.”⁴⁴⁹

This was to neutralise or to reduce the effect of the devil’s influence on the newborn. According to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), all newborn children are touched by the Devil. He was reported by Abū Hurayrah to have said, “Satan pricks with his finger every newborn child of Adam’s descendants. They all begin screaming from Satan’s jab, except Mary and her son [Jesus].”⁴⁵⁰

PROPHETIC PRAYERS

The Prophet (ﷺ) taught a number of prayers for a variety of occasions. Some cure illnesses caused by the *jinn* and others ward them off. The following are a selection of them:

باسم الله يبريك ومن كل داء يشفيك ومن شر حاسد إذا حسد وشر
كل ذي عين

“Bismillāhi yubrīka wa min kulli dā’in yashfika wa min sharri ḥāsidiñ idhā ḥasad⁴⁵¹ wa sharri kulli dhī ‘ayn.” (“In the name of Allāh, may He make you well and may He cure you from every ill, from the evil of the jealous when

⁴⁴⁸ *Sahib Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 211, no. 755.

⁴⁴⁹ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 1415, no. 5086) and al-Tirmidhī and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2, p. 93, no. 1224.

⁴⁵⁰ *Sahib al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 324, no. 506.

⁴⁵¹ The phrase, “*wa min sharri ḥāsidiñ idhā ḥasad*,” is the last verse of the 113th chapter, the first of the two chapters known as the *mu’awwidhatān*.

they envy, and from the harm of the evil eye.”)⁴⁵²

باسم الله أرقيك من كل شيء يؤذيك، من شر كل نفس أو عين حاسد،
الله يشفيك، باسم الله أرقيك

“Bismillāhi arqīka min kulli shay’in yu’dhīka, min sharri kulli nafsin aw ‘aynin ḥāsīdin, Allāhu yashfīka. Bismillāhi arqīk.” (“In the name of Allāh I exorcise you from everything which harms you, from the evil of every soul or jealous eye. May Allāh cure you. In the name of Allāh I exorcise you.”)⁴⁵³

أعوذ بكلمات الله التامة من كل شيطان وهامة ومن كل عين لامة

“A’ūdhu bi kalimātillāhit-tāmmāti min kulli shayḥānin wa hāmmatin wa min kulli ‘aynin lāmmah.” (“I seek refuge with the perfect words of Allāh from every devil, poisonous pest and every harmful evil eye.”)⁴⁵⁴

أذهب الباس رب الناس واشف أنت الشافي لا شفاء إلا شفاؤك شفاء
لا يغادر سقما

“Adh-hibil bā’sa rabban-nāsi washfi anta al-shāfi lā shifā’a illā shifā’uka shifā’an lā yughādiru saqamā.” (“Remove the suffering, O Lord of mankind, and heal it perfectly – You are the true healer; there is no cure except Your cure – a cure which is not followed by sickness.”)⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵² The Prophet’s wife, ‘Ā’ishah, reported that Angel Gabriel used to exorcise the Prophet (ﷺ) with these words whenever he complained of illness. *Sabih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1192, no. 5424.

⁴⁵³ Abū Sa’īd reported that Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him, “Muḥammad, have you fallen ill?” He replied, “Yes,” and Gabriel said the above-mentioned prayer. *Sabih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1192, no. 5424.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibn ‘Abbās reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek refuge with Allāh for his grandsons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, saying, “Your forefather, [i.e., Abraham], used to seek refuge in Allāh for Ishmael and Isaac by reciting, ‘A’ūdhu bi kalimātillābi....’” *Sabih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, pp. 385-386, no. 590.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported that whenever someone among them fell ill, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to wipe him with his right hand and then say the aforementioned prayer. *Sabih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1194, no. 5432.

من قال: لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، له الملك وله الحمد وهو على كل شيء قدير، في يوم مائة مرة كانت له عدل عشر رقاب وكتبت له مائة حسنة ومحيت عنه مائة سيئة وكانت له حرزا من الشيطان يومه ذلك حتى يمسي، ولم يأت أحد أفضل مما جاء به إلا أحد عمل أكثر من ذلك

“Whoever says ‘Lā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahu lā sharīka lah, lahul-mulku wa lahul-ḥamdu wa huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in Qadīr,’ (‘There is no god but Allāh, Who is alone without partner; the dominion and praise are His, and He is able to do all things,’) one hundred times per day will have a reward similar to freeing ten slaves, one hundred good deeds will be recorded for him, one hundred of his sins erased, and he will have a charm against Satan for the whole day until the night. No one can do better than that except one who does it more often.”⁴⁵⁶

لو أن أحدكم إذا أتى أهله قال: باسم الله اللهم جنبنا الشيطان وجنب الشيطان ما رزقتنا، فقضي بينهما ولد لم يضره

“If one of you goes to his wife and says, ‘Allāhumma jannibnā al-shayṭān wa jannib al-shayṭān mā razaqtanā,’ [‘O Allāh, keep Satan away from us and keep Satan away from what (offspring) You have bestowed upon us,] and they have a child, Satan will not harm him or gain control over him.”⁴⁵⁷

“If a man enters his house and remembers Allāh while entering and while eating, Satan says [to his companions], ‘There is no place to pass the night and no dinner.’ But if he enters without remembering Allāh while entering, Satan says, ‘You have caught a place to pass the night.’ And if he does not

⁴⁵⁶ Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim (*Sabih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1415, no. 6508).

⁴⁵⁷ Reported by Ibn ‘Abbās and collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sabih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, p. 105, no. 143 and vol. 7, p. 74, no. 94) and Muslim.

mention Allāh's name before eating, he says, 'You have caught both a place for the night and dinner.'⁴⁵⁸

THIRD STEP: (B) MEDICINES

The Prophet (ﷺ) prescribed certain natural medicines for sicknesses associated with the *jinn*.

Dates

For protection against magic or for its treatment, the Prophet (ﷺ) recommended the eating of dates in the morning. Sa'd quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

من تصبح سبع تمرات عجوة لم يضره ذلك اليوم سم ولا سحر

"Whoever takes seven [Madinite]⁴⁵⁹ *ajwah*⁴⁶⁰ dates in the morning, neither magic nor poison will hurt him that day."⁴⁶¹

Truffles

The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

الكمأة من المن وماؤها شفاء للعين

"Truffles are a form of manna [mann] and their water is a cure for the eye."⁴⁶²

Bath

In cases of suffering from the evil eye, the Prophet (ﷺ) recommended taking a bath with water used by the source of the evil eye. Ibn 'Abbās quoted Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

⁴⁵⁸ Narrated by Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh and collected by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd (*Ṣunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1063, no. 3756) and Ibn Mājah.

⁴⁵⁹ What appears in the brackets was mentioned in Muslim's narration. See *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1129, no. 5080.

⁴⁶⁰ The best kind of Madinite dates coming from the Leenah palm-tree. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, pp. 1968-1969).

⁴⁶¹ *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 446, no. 664 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1129, no. 5081.

⁴⁶² Reported by Sa'īd ibn Zayd in *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 409, no. 609.

العين حق ولو كان شيء سابق القدر سبقته العين وإذا استغسلتم

فاغسلوا

“The effect of the evil eye is real, for if there were anything which could overtake destiny, it would have been [the effect of] the evil eye. So if you are asked to take a bath [as a cure] for the evil eye, do it.”⁴⁶³

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت: كان يؤمر العائن فيتوضأ ثم يغتسل

منه المعين

‘Ā’ishah also said that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to instruct the possessor of the evil eye to perform ablution (wuḍu’) and then for the one suffering to bathe from its water.⁴⁶⁴

FOURTH STEP: BEATING

If the above-mentioned three steps fail to bring the desired results, the exorcist may then resort to striking the possessed individual in order to inflict pain on the possessing spirit and to elicit a response to commands, prayers or recitations. Ibn Taymiyyah spoke on this subject, saying,

Curing a possessed person and removal of the *jinn* may require that the afflicted individual be beaten several times. However, the blows fall upon the *jinn* and the possessed human does not feel them. When a demented person regains his senses after a beating, he often informs those present that he did not feel anything, and that they [i.e., the blows] did not have any effect on his body. Even when some are struck over three or four hundred times with severe blows on their feet, the effects of which would normally kill a man, only the *jinn* feel it. The *jinnī* will scream and yell and inform those present about many things. We have ourselves experienced such cases in the presence of crowds on so many occasions that it would take a long time to describe them all.⁴⁶⁵

Ibn Taymiyyah’s student, Ibn al-Qayyim, described an exorcism performed

⁴⁶³ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1192, no. 5427.

⁴⁶⁴ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1088, no. 3871) and authenticated by al-Arnā’ūṭī in *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, p. 163, ftn. 1.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Essay on the Jinn*, p. 93.

by his mentor in which he struck the patient. He said,

“Often the *shaykh* [i.e., Ibn Taymiyyah] would recite in the ear of the insane, “*Afa ḥasibtum annamā khalaqnākum ‘abathan wa annakum ilaynā lā turja’ūn.*” [“Do you imagine that We created you in jest and that you will not return to Us?”]⁴⁶⁶ He told me that on one occasion he read this verse in a madman’s ear and the possessing spirit replied in a drawn-out voice, “Ye-e-e-s.” So he took a stick and beat the man on the veins of his neck until Ibn Taymiyyah’s arm became fatigued from hitting him and those present were sure that the man was dead from the beating. During the beating the *jinn* cried out, “I love him.” The *shaykh* said, “He does not love you.” It said, “I want to make *ḥajj* with him.” He replied, “He does not want to make *ḥajj* with you.” It said, “I will leave him in your honour.” He replied, “No, do so in obedience to Allāh and His Messenger.” It said, “Then I will leave him.” The madman sat up, looked left and right and said, “Why did I come to the honourable *shaykh*?” Those present said to him, “What about all of the beating you have received?” He asked, “Why would the *shaykh* beat me when I have not committed any sin?” He was not at all aware that he had been beaten.”⁴⁶⁷

The practice of beating was attributed to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) in a narration related by Umm Abān from her father, al-Wāzi‘, that her grandfather, al-Zāri‘ ibn ‘Amir al-‘Abdī, went to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) with his son (or nephew) who was insane. She reported that her grandfather said,

“When we reached Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), I said, “I have a son [or nephew] with me who is insane. I have brought him to you so that you may pray to Allāh on his behalf.” He said, “Bring him to me.” So I went to get him from the group of riding animals [among which I had left him]. I took off his travelling clothes and dressed him in his good clothes. I then took him by the hand back to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). He said, “Bring him closer to me and turn his back to me.” He then grabbed the boy’s garment and began to beat him on the back so vigorously that I saw the whiteness of his [i.e., the Prophet’s] armpits. While doing so, he said, “Get out, enemy of Allāh! Enemy of Allāh, get out!” The boy then began to gaze in a healthy manner quite different from his earlier gaze. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) then sat him down directly in front of him, called for some water for him and wiped his face. Then he prayed for him. After the Messenger of Allāh had prayed for him, there was no one in the delegation better than him.”⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁶ Qur’ān, 23:115

⁴⁶⁷ *Zād al-Ma’ād*, vol. 4, pp. 67-69.

⁴⁶⁸ Collected by al-Ṭabarānī (*al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, vl. 5, pp. 275-6) and Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālasī.

This narration is weak, however there is an authentic narration in this regard collected by Ibn Mājah:

عن عثمان بن أبي العاص قال: لما استعملني رسول الله (ﷺ) على الطائف جعل يعرض لي شبيبي في صلاتي حتى ما أدري ما أصلي. فلما رأيت ذلك رحلت إلى رسول الله (ﷺ)، فقال: (ابن أبي العاص؟) قلت: نعم، يا رسول الله. قال: (ما جاء بك؟) قلت: يا رسول الله، عرض لي شيء في صلواتي حتى ما أدري ما أصلي. قال: (ذاك الشيطان. ادنه) فدنوت منه فجلست على صدور قدمي. قال: فضرب صدري بيده وتغل في فمي وقال: (اخرج عدو الله) ففعل ذلك ثلاث مرات، ثم قال: (الحق بعمالك) قال عثمان: فلعمري ما أحسبه خالطني بعد

“When the Messenger of Allāh appointed me as governor of al-Ṭā’if, something began to appear to me in my ṣalāh so that I wouldn’t know how many rak‘ahs I had prayed. When I noticed that, I travelled to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). He said, ‘Ibn Abi al-‘Ās?’ I said ‘Yes, O Messenger of Allāh.’ He said, ‘What brings you here?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, something appears to me in my ṣalāh, so that I don’t know how many rak‘ahs I have prayed.’ He said, ‘Come close.’ So I came close to him and sat on the soles of my feet. He struck my chest with his hand, blew into my mouth and said, ‘Get out, enemy of Allāh!’ He did that three times, then said, ‘Resume your duty.’ After that, I swear I was never confused [in my ṣalāh].”⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ Collected by Ibn Mājah and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, p. 273, no. 2858.

MODERN MUSLIM EXORCIST

The main purpose of this chapter is to investigate the current trends in the practice of exorcism among Muslims in order to determine the degree which they have either adhered to or strayed from prophetic guidelines. The secondary purpose is to compare Muslim exorcist tradition with that of the Christian tradition. Since Christianity can be an example of exorcist tradition among other nations and religious systems, an Islamic rationale is necessary to explain the apparent success of practitioners whose theology Islām considers false.

METHODOLOGY

A field research was undertaken in order to gather a sample of ideas and methods used by Muslim exorcists from various segments of the Islamic world. Approximately three exorcists from each country – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Pakistan, India and Trinidad – were interviewed. All of these men claimed to treat the possessed according to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. Additionally, data was obtained from an unpublished M.A. (Psychology) thesis on the techniques of Muslim exorcists in Sudan.⁴⁷⁰

PROCEDURE

The interviews were conducted using a questionnaire which had been prepared beforehand. The questions dealt with bio data, experience and training, theological concepts and practical observations. These interviews were taped, transcribed and translated into English when necessary, and are compiled in an appendix at the end of the book. Included within this appendix is the data extracted from the M.A. thesis on Sudanese exorcists. The information from these interviews was subsequently placed in tables to facilitate analysis of the data and to develop a profile of the modern Muslim exorcist. The results are followed by a discussion in which modern practices are compared and contrasted with those of early Muslims.

Lastly, a brief history of exorcism and the theoretical basis for it in Christianity (Roman Catholicism in particular) is compared with modern Christian concepts and analyses. These are then discussed in the light of Islamic beliefs and practices.

QUESTIONNAIRE: EXORCISTS

NAME:

DATE OF BIRTH:

PLACE OF BIRTH:

NATIONALITY:

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

⁴⁷⁰ *Fugara Techniques of Mental Healing.*

- 1) When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?
- 2) What percentage of the cases you meet are actual possession?
- 3) Identify the main signs of real possession.
- 4) From your own experience, what are the main reasons why people are possessed?
- 5) What percentage of your cases of possession are women?
- 6) Do male and female *jinn* possess human males and females without distinction, or is there a preference? If so, what are the percentages?
- 7) Is it only disbelieving *jinn* which possess humans? If not, identify the percentages?
- 8) Have you treated cases of people who are possessed by more than one *jinnī* at a time?
- 9) Is possession a swift or a slow process (taking months or years)?
- 10) Do the *jinn* speak in the voice of the possessed person or in another voice?
- 11) Have you ever experienced the *jinn* speaking in languages other than that of the possessed person?
- 12) Which part of the human body do *jinn* enter and leave by, and in which part do they dwell?
- 13) Do the possessing *jinn* have names or titles that they go by?
- 14) During exorcisms, do the possessing *jinn* try to possess you? If so, how do you avoid it?
- 15) After you began practising exorcism, have any of your family members been affected?
- 16) Describe the steps involved in a typical exorcism.
- 17) Does treatment usually involve more than one session?
- 18) Describe in detail three of the most distinct cases of exorcism which you have performed, mentioning names, ages, dates and background of patients (whenever possible).

Country	Age	Education	Length Of Practice	Reason For Beginning	Real Cases	Female Cases	Number Of Jinn
Egypt							
A	41	University	9	Study	50%	>75%	Multi
B	73	University	40	Accident	>75%	70%	Multi
C	47	Diploma	10	Accident	<50%	95%	Multi
Saudi Arabia							
A	29	University	2	Study	Not All	55%	Multi
B		University	3	Accident	Not All	>75%	Multi
C	28	Primary (S)	5 Months	Accident	-	80%	Multi
D	55	Non-formal	30	Accident	-	>75%	Multi
Pakistan							
A	35	Secondary (S)	17	Study	-	70%	One
B	68	University	20	Study	Few	>75%	One
C	36	University	18	Study	-	85%	One
India							
A	62	Secondary (S)	30	Inherited	10%	-	One
B	69	University	50	Inherited	20%	40%	Multi
C	71	University	33	Study	8%	70%	Multi
Trinidad							
A	-	University	10	Inspired	Not All	70%	Multi
B	42	Secondary (S)	2	Study	-	>75%	Multi
Bahrain							
A	52	University	33	Study	-	>75%	One
Sudan							
A	52	Non-formal	21	Inherited	Not All	-	-

Country	Kāfir Cases	Male Jinn Human F/M	Voice Change	Foreign Language	Enter/Exit	Names/Titles	Attack Exorcist
Egypt							
A	Usual	Both	Usual	Rare	Any	Yes	No
B	Both	Both	At Times	Often	Orifices	-	No
C	Both	Usual	At Times	-	-	Yes	Son
Saudi Arabia							
A	Both	90%	40%	-	Feet	-	No
B	Both	Both	At Times	-	Feet	Yes	-
C	Usual	Both	Rare	-	Big Toe	-	Yes
D	Both	Both	-	-	Orifices	-	No
Pakistan							
A	Both	95%	20%	Rare	Any	Yes	Yes
B	Rare	Both	Rare	Rare	Any	Yes	Son
C	Both	Both	-	At Times	-	-	-
India							
A	Usual	Both	Usual	At Times	-	Yes	No
B	Both	Both	50	Rare	Any	-	-
C	Usual	Usual	33	Rare	Mouth/nose	Yes	No
Trinidad							
A	Both	Both	10	At Times	Orifices	Yes	No
B	Both	Both	Usual	-	-	Yes	-
Bahrain							
A	Both	-	Usual	At Times	Pores	Yes	Son

COUNTRY	SIGNS OF POSSESSION
EGYPT	
A	Uneasiness; unintelligible speech; convulsions; preternatural knowledge
B	Preternatural strength; swift mood shifts; recurring nightmares; insomnia; depression; migraine headaches; inexplicable loss of faculties of speech, hearing or sight; paralysis; epileptic convulsions
C	Reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; untreatable; continual vaginal bleeding; loss of speech; nightmares; feelings of suffocation; infertility; regularly spending unusually long time on toilet; anaesthesia to pain
SAUDI ARABIA	
A	Reaction to oil rubbed or water drunk, over which Qur'ān has been read; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; preternatural strength; depression; headaches; nightmares; movement within the body; bad odours; hypochondria; inexplicable loss of faculties
B	Suffocation; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; unusual movements; unconscious talking; nightmares; a state of immobility when going to sleep; mood shifts; love of seclusion; dislike for filthy things and places; extreme depression; epileptic fits; partial paralysis; preternatural knowledge; spontaneous fires.
C	Uneasiness; going to toilet often; strange smile; weird laugh; laughing without reason; unnatural movements; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; constriction of chest; severe headaches; hearing sounds; foul odour.
D	Unusual way of walking; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; epileptic convulsions; whispering
PAKISTAN	
A	Erratic actions; plain water or sugar over which Qur'ān is read tastes bitter; if cotton cloth changes in length; preternatural strength; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; fits; contortion of face
B	Particular eye movements; shoulder pains; uneasiness; unnatural actions; shouting; facial expression
C	Bilious complexion; red eyes; unintelligible speech; laughter; animalistic behaviour; dislike for artificial lights; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation (<i>Sūrah al-Jinn</i>); preternatural strength

COUNTRY	SIGNS OF POSSESSION
INDIA	
A	Prayer of choice performed during three consecutive nights, diagnosis shown in dream; weight on shoulders; palms smell foul; unusual behaviour; ability to speak different languages; spontaneous fires
B	<i>Darūd Sharīf</i> and <i>al-Fātiḥah</i> recited seven times, blow once in patient's left palm, then patient makes a fist, <i>Sūrah al-Nās</i> recited three times and blown over patient's fist, if palm smells fishy, patient possessed; The numerical value of patient's mother's name added to the numerical value of the day (in Persian) and divided by four. If the remainder is one, it means <i>jinn</i> -possession.
C	A piece of patient's clothing is removed and measured, Qur'ān is recited over it and the patient is asked to wear it. It is then taken off and re-measured. If it decreased in length, the person is possessed. Something is written in black ink on a piece of clay and put in fire. If the letters turn white or red, the person is possessed. Preternatural strength is also a sign.
TRINIDAD	
A	Eye movements; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation; preternatural knowledge; loss of faculties; unnatural swelling of affected limbs; suicidal tendencies
B	Uneasiness; nightmares; <i>jinn</i> -rape; fits; uncontrolled, violent movement
BAHRAIN	
A	Unnatural movements; falling; unintelligible speech; reaction to Qur'ānic recitation
SUDAN	
A	Speaking in loud voice; quick speech; incoherent speech; uncoordinated movement of limbs; staring in odd directions

COUNTRY	REASONS FOR POSSESSION
EGYPT	
A	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; no fortifying prayers; walking about house naked; <i>jinn</i> -lust
B	retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> , extreme fear; extreme anger; extreme jealousy; <i>jinn</i> -love; human devotion to lust
C	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> , human error; no fortifying prayers; irreligiousness; <i>jinn</i> -love
SAUDI ARABIA	
A	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; <i>jinn</i> -love; magic; evil eye; mischief; irreligiousness
B	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; magic; mischief; <i>jinn</i> -love; sleeping alone in deserted places; travelling alone; extreme fear; excessive merry-making
C	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; irreligiousness; abuse of parents; extreme fear
D	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; evil eye; magic; mischief
PAKISTAN	
A	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> or their property; <i>jinn</i> -love, mischief
B	Mischief; retaliation; <i>jinn</i> -lust
C	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> or their property; mischief; <i>jinn</i> -love.
INDIA	
A	Unknown
B	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; <i>jinn</i> -lust
C	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; <i>jinn</i> -lust; mischief
TRINIDAD	
A	<i>Jinn</i> -love; retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; devil worship; magic
B	<i>Jinn</i> -love; mischief; envy; greed
BAHRAIN	
A	<i>Jinn</i> -love; retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ; mischief
SUDAN	
A	Retaliation for harming the <i>jinn</i> ;

COUNTRY	METHOD OF EXORCISM
EGYPT	
A	Qur'ānic recitation; crushed lotus leaves in water and Qur'ān read over it; drinking and bathing; beating; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; command to leave
B	Recitation; <i>adhān</i> called in right ear and <i>iqāmah</i> in the left; Qur'ān read over water and olive oil; water drunk and oil rubbed; beating; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; command to leave
C	Qur'ānic recitation; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; command to leave; <i>adhān</i> called
SAUDI ARABIA	
A	Qur'ānic recitation; grasping the neck; beating; Qur'ān read over olive oil and water; oil rubbed and water drunk; string tied around fingers and toes; beating; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; command to leave
B	Qur'ānic recitation; grasping the throat; communication with <i>jinn</i> , bound with an oath to leave
C	Qur'ānic recitation; blowing; grasping the neck; Qur'ān read over olive oil or water; oil rubbed and water drunk; rarely beating; string tied around fingers and toes; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; bound with an oath to leave; command to leave
D	Qur'ānic recitation; Qur'ān read over rose water; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; bound with an oath to leave; slapping
PAKISTAN	
A	Scented oil poured on cotton and Qur'ān read over it and given to smell; Qur'ānic verses recited in the patient's ear; blowing in ear; patient shaken; a lock of hair from the forehead of female patients wrapped around exorcist's finger; beating; amulets with Qur'ānic verses tied around arm; Qur'ān read over water and drunk; nails over which Qur'ānic verses read hammered in four corners of house; communication with <i>jinn</i> , scolded and commanded to leave; incantation before lighting lamps and blowing over lamps causes <i>jinn</i> to leave patient, enter lamp and be consumed
B	Qur'ān recited over water and drunk; Qur'ān recited over oil and poured in patient's ears; knot tied in patient's hair to imprison the <i>jinn</i> ; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; bound with oath to leave
C	Patient tied; Qur'ān recited; amulet put around patient's neck or right arm; charm burnt and smoke inhaled; communication with <i>jinn</i> , who is commanded or permitted to leave

COUNTRY	METHOD OF EXORCISM
INDIA	
A	Patient recites Qur'ān; Qur'ān recited over water; drunk and bathed with; patient tied down; talismans made of lines, numerology and knowledge of names; charms written in saffron ink on plate, washed with milk and drunk
B	Qur'ān recited over patient; blowing; amulet with Qur'ānic verses given; communicate with <i>jinn</i> ; a lock of hair grabbed to arrest the <i>jinn</i> ; knot tied in patient's hair; prayers
C	Qur'ān recited over water and drunk; amulet worn around neck for seven days
TRINIDAD	
A	Qur'ān recited over water and drunk; Qur'ān recited and blown in face; supplications; communication with <i>jinn</i> , command to leave
B	Qur'ān recited over water and drunk; mustard oil put in patient's right palm and Qur'ān recited over the patient with blowing; lock of hair tied; mustard oil placed in patient's ear and sealed; nostrils pinched closed and palm with mustard oil held in front of mouth; patient's limbs massaged and pressed to determine location of <i>jinn</i> ; communication with <i>jinn</i> ; <i>jinn</i> driven upward to head and hair; tied lock of hair cut off; beating
BAHRAIN	
A	Patient faces Makkah and line is drawn in front of him and another drawn around him, along with supplications; Qur'ānic verses are recited; light beating; communication with <i>jinn</i> , command to leave
SUDAN	
A	Aching part of body touched with hand; Qur'ānic verses recited; point of pain blown upon; administered only at sunrise or sunset; Qur'ānic verses written on tablet or bowl and washed with water; solution drunk and rubbed over body; Qur'ānic verses or their numerical value written on paper and burned, patient inhales fumes; amulets of Qur'ānic verses hung on ankle, waist or neck; beating; fasting from meat, milk and dairy products.

PROFILE OF THE 20TH CENTURY MUSLIM EXORCIST

BACKGROUND

The contemporary Muslim exorcist is about 50 years old, likely to have memorized the whole Qurʾān during childhood and graduated from a university, having specialised in one of the Islamic disciplines. He has probably been practising exorcism for about 20 years, although this is not his main job but something he does in his spare time due to his reputation. If he is from India or Sudan, knowledge of exorcism was probably passed on to him from his father, but if he is from elsewhere, particular circumstances have probably drawn him into the field, inspiring him to make a thorough study of exorcism before undertaking treatment of others.

CASES

Not all cases brought in for treatment are real cases of demonic possession. In most countries the seeming frequency of real cases can only be due to the inclusion of other types of illnesses (psychological or biological) seen for treatment by an exorcist; or it could be due to the exorcist's high rate of cure. Only in India and Pakistan is the percentage of real cases extremely low. The vast majority of patients are women possessed by a single *jinnī* or a group of *jinn*. The possessing entity may be a male or a female *jinnī*, a Muslim or non-Muslim.

SIGNS OF POSSESSION

According to the experience of most Muslim exorcists, the signs of possession are as follows:⁴⁷¹

A.) CHANGE OF PERSONALITY

1. Rapid mood shifts; uncontrollable laughter or crying
2. Depression
3. Prefers solitude

B.) PHYSICAL CHANGES

1. Preternatural strength
2. Epileptiform convulsions
3. Catatonic symptoms; falling
4. Clouding of consciousness; anaesthesia to pain
5. Changed voice
6. Psychosomatic pains, especially migraine headaches
7. Loss of certain faculties

C.) MENTAL CHANGES

1. Glossolalia; understanding unknown languages
2. Preternatural strength
3. Recurrent nightmares; insomnia

D.) SPIRITUAL CHANGES

1. Strong reaction to Qur'ānic recitation or the *adhān*
2. An adverse reaction when touched by oil on which the Qur'ān has been read, or when bathed in water over which Qur'ān has been read, or when water over which Qur'ān has been read is drunk.
3. Abandonment of religious practices

⁴⁷¹ The format used here is one developed by John Richards in his book, *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 156.

Muslim exorcists from the subcontinent, especially those from India, diagnose their patients by rather unusual means, most of which seem to border on the magical or supernatural. Most of them do cite some of the above-mentioned signs, but they seem to prefer to rely on other “mysterious” methods to verify possession.

REASONS FOR POSSESSION

Contemporary Muslim exorcists have identified four main reasons for demonic possession of humans:

1) **Retaliation for harming the *jinn*** – This occurs when humans inadvertently harm the *jinn* and are therefore possessed by them out of revenge. In this circumstance the possessing spirit may either be male or female.

2) ***Jinn*-love or lust** – Under some circumstances, a *jinnī* may possess a human being because of “carnal” love. In such cases the sex of the *jinnī* will be different from that of the human.

3) **Mischief** – The evil disbelieving *jinn* or corrupt Muslim *jinn* may possess a human being due to their perverted love of sin.

4) **Magic** – Demonic possession may be a result of bewitchment caused by jealousy, hatred, etc. on the part of other humans.

In the view of Muslim exorcists, the people most likely to be possessed are those who are irreligious and those who become spiritually weakened by entering into states of extreme fear and anger. Also open to attack are those who do not practise the means of protection prescribed by the Prophet (ﷺ).

METHOD OF EXORCISM

The method of exorcism developed by modern Muslim exorcists outside of the Indian subcontinent and Sudan is free from the use of talismans, amulets and numerology. It may be summarised in the following steps:

1) Qur’ānic verses are read over the patient, punctuated by blowing on the patient or on the part of the body which ails him.

2) Qur’ānic verses may be recited over water and given to the patient to drink. Olive oil over which the Qur’ān has been read may be rubbed on the aching limbs.

3) Once communication is established with the possessing spirit, information

is sought concerning its name and its reason for possessing the patient.

- 4) Through admonition, scolding and/or persuasion, the *jinn* or group of *jinn* are then encouraged to leave.
- 5) If the possessing *jinnī* refuses to leave through encouragement, it is then tortured by further Qur'ānic recitation. It is commanded to leave and to take an oath not to return.
- 6) Beating may be resorted to in order to inflict pain on the possessing entity only when the human personality is not conscious. This is used in conjunction with commands to the *jinnī* to leave.
- 7) Water over which the Qur'ān has been recited is used for drinking, and olive oil over which the Qur'ān has been recited is used for rubbing on the aching parts of the body.

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES⁴⁷²

- 1) The patient may be made unconscious by depressing his jugular veins in order to force the *jinnī* to expose itself.
- 2) A forelock of the patient's hair may be wrapped around the exorcist's finger or tied in order to arrest the *jinn*.
- 3) Thread may be tied around each of the patient's fingers and toes in order to trap the *jinnī* within the patient.
- 4) Amulets containing Qur'ānic verses may be either worn by the patient or burned and the fumes inhaled.
- 5) The *adbān* may be called in the patient's presence.
- 6) Inscriptions from numerology and other occult sciences may be contained within charms which are worn, or such inscriptions may be written, then washed, and the resulting solution imbibed.

⁴⁷² These are methods used by two or more of the exorcists interviewed.

POSSESSION AND EXORCISM IN CHRISTIANITY

The English term “exorcism” is derived from the Greek word, “*exorkizo*,” meaning to bind with an oath or to adjure, and it denotes the expulsion of malevolent spirits from possessed persons, objects and places.⁴⁷³ In its proper and technical sense, exorcism refers to a ceremony used by the Christian church to expel demons from persons who have come under the demon’s power.⁴⁷⁴

Exorcism is also described in the Exeter report, which states,

“In Christian usage the verb to *exorcise* applies strictly only to demons. It is possible to speak loosely about exorcising persons or places, but what is meant is the exorcising of the demonic forces of evil in those persons or places. Exorcism is an exercise of *exousia*: it commands and binds. This... must never be applied to humans as such. And in dealing with places it is well to exorcise over the place, in order to release it from the domination of any evil powers that may be there...Christian exorcism is the binding of evil powers by the triumph of Christ Jesus, through the application of the power demonstrated by that triumph, in and by his Church.”⁴⁷⁵

John Richards, who was secretary of the Bishop of Exeter’s Study Group on Exorcism for nine years and helped to bring out its valuable report,⁴⁷⁶ explained that, “Christian expulsion of demons has nothing to do with entering into any relationship or pact with them, as the term [Christian exorcism] suggests...The avoidance of any sort of pact or agreement between minister and spirits is sound and essential...Christian exorcism may be either a petition to God, as in the Lord’s Prayer and [as in the means used within] the tradition of the Eastern Churches; or a command addressed not to the demonic but to the demon(s).”⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷³ *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, p. 268.

⁴⁷⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 8, p. 972.

⁴⁷⁵ *Exorcism*, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁶ *The Christian Healing Ministry*, p. 128.

⁴⁷⁷ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, pp. 160-161.

DEVILS, DEMONS AND FALLEN ANGELS

Devils are frequently mentioned in literature about possession. The term denotes non-human, wicked spirits, usually fallen angels of God. When the expression “the Devil” is used, it refers to one of the leaders of the fallen angels, often called Satan, Beelzebub or Lucifer. Usually, lesser non-human spirits are not named, but are simply referred to as “devils” or “demons.” In general, the latter word has evolved to signify “evil spirits” and also can include the spirits of wicked, incarnate human beings.⁴⁷⁸

The term “demon” is derived from the Greek word *daimon* (pl. *daimones*), which means a “supernatural being” or “spirit.” Although it has commonly been associated with an evil or malevolent spirit, the term originally meant a spiritual being that influenced a person’s character.⁴⁷⁹

In Hebrew literature, demons were believed to be *jinn*-like beings. For example, in Isaiah (34:14) reference is made to *se’irim*, i.e., “hairy ones” (translated in the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible as “satyrs”), which were demonic beings inhabiting ruins and desert wastes. Reference to the origin of demons is found in Genesis 6:2-4, wherein they are represented as fallen angels.⁴⁸⁰ The hierarchy of demons in Judaism is quite varied. It is rooted in ancient Middle Eastern and Zoroastrian demonology after the post-exilic period (after 538 BC). The prince of evil forces⁴⁸¹ was called by different names – Satan (the Antagonist), Belial (the spirit of perversion, darkness and destruction), Mastema (Enmity or Opposition) and others. Although the Old Testament refers to Satan as the prosecutor of God’s celestial court (Zach. 3; Job 1-2), he was also considered the head of a hierarchy of demons or other princes of evil. This idea was developed within Old Testament literature and later Judaism.

Christianity inherited Old Testament demonology, and leading figures like Thomas Aquinas (d.1274 CE) endorsed the traditional view that demons were fallen angels – fallen from their original state through envy and pride. They abide in both Hell (where they are tormented and damned) and in the air (where they trouble men).⁴⁸² Developed later was the concept of a hierarchy of demons, based upon various sources, including Jewish,

⁴⁷⁸ *Multiple Man*, p. 135.

⁴⁷⁹ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 17, p. 409.

⁴⁸⁰ *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, pp. 230-231.

⁴⁸¹ Forces of evil are known in Hebrew as “*shaedim*”, meaning “demons.” This term applied to foreign gods who were often believed to inflict humanity with various physical, psychological and spiritual disorders.

⁴⁸² *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, p. 231.

Zoroastrian, Gnostic, and the indigenous religions that succumbed to Christian missionary activity. In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of Beelzebub as the chief of demons and equates him with Satan. During the European Middle Ages and the Reformation period, various demonic hierarchies were developed, such as the one associated with the seven deadly sins: Lucifer (pride), Mammon (avarice), Asmodeus (lechery), Satan (anger), Beelzebub (gluttony), Leviathan (envy), and Belphegor (sloth).⁴⁸³

ORIGIN: OLD TESTAMENT AND APOCRYPHA

There is little direct reference to possession and exorcism in the Old Testament. King Solomon, who is identified as having great knowledge and wisdom, was described as a skilled exorcist only by the first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus. Writing in his monumental *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus stated that Solomon's gifts were so varied that "God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and healing to men." According to this historian, King Solomon "left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return and this method of cure is of great force to this day."

Josephus also cited several people who were demoniacal in the presence of the Roman emperor, Vespasian (ruled 70-79 CE), his sons, his captains, and the whole multitude of soldiers. An exorcist named Eleazar took a root mentioned by Solomon and attached it to a ring. Then, holding this to the nostrils of the possessed person, he drew out the demon through this person's nostrils. Eleazar, seeing the man fall to the ground, warned the demon not to return to the man again, while at the same time mentioning Solomon and reciting the incantation which he had composed.⁴⁸⁴ Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, a contemporary of Josephus, once prescribed the following technique to expel demons: "Take roots of herbs, burn them under him [i.e., the possessed person], and surround him with water, whereupon the spirit will flee."⁴⁸⁵

The only allusion in the Old Testament to an evil spirit which actually took possession of a man and tormented his mind is found in the story of Saul (I Sam. 16:14-16, 18:10 and 19:9). The shepherd boy, David, drove away the evil spirit from King Saul by playing his lyre.⁴⁸⁶ In the Book of

⁴⁸³ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, p. 7.

⁴⁸⁴ See *Antiq.* VIII.ii.5 (*By the Finger of God*, p. 79, ff. 16) and *Exorcism Past and Present*, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸⁵ *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 199.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Tobias⁴⁸⁷ there is the story of Sarah, whose seven successive husbands were each killed by a demon on their wedding night. When Tobit and Sarah prayed to God for deliverance, the angel, Raphael, instructed Tobit (6:7, 16-17; 8:3) to ban the evil spirit from the marriage chamber by making a fire and then placing on the embers the heart and liver of a fish. "And Tobias⁴⁸⁸ remembered the words of Raphael and took the liver of the fish and the heart out of the bag which he had, and put them on the ashes of the incense. And the smell of the fish baffled the demon, [Asmodeus],⁴⁸⁹ and he ran away into the upper parts of Egypt."⁴⁹⁰ *Jubilees*⁴⁹¹ (10:10-14) preserves the Jewish legend that all of the secret herbs which were used to control demons were given to Noah by an angel and that he passed the information down to his eldest son, Shem. *Jubilees* (69:14-15) relates that the archangel, Michael, revealed a hidden name which was to be enunciated in an oath, together with other secrets, for protection against demons.⁴⁹² In Palestine the secretaries of Qumran recorded in the *Genesis Apocryphon*⁴⁹³ the tale of Abraham exorcising the Pharaoh in Egypt. "I prayed for him...and I laid hands on his head; and the scourge departed from him, and the evil spirit

⁴⁸⁷ An Apocryphal work (non-canonical for Jews and Protestants) that found its way into the Roman Catholic canon via the Septuagint. This is a religious folk-tale primarily concerned with the problem of reconciling evil in the world with divine justice. Tobit and the daughter of his nearest relative, Sarah, are pious Jews unaccountably afflicted by malevolent forces, but their faith is finally rewarded, and God is vindicated as both just and omnipotent. Historical inaccuracies, archaisms and confused geographical references indicate that the book was not actually written at Nineveh in the early 7th century BC but possibly in Antioch during the reign (175-164 BC) of Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Syria. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 11, p. 813.)

⁴⁸⁸ The son of Tobit.

⁴⁸⁹ *By the Finger of God*, p. 77.

⁴⁹⁰ Tobit, 8:1-3.

⁴⁹¹ The Book of *Jubilees*, also called "Little Genesis" (not included in any canon of scripture) is most notable for its chronological schema by which events described in Genesis through Exodus 12 are dated by jubilees of 49 years, each of which is composed of seven cycles of seven years. In its final form, *Jubilees* was likely written about 100 BC, although it incorporates much older mythological traditions. Several fragments of the original, Hebrew edition of *Jubilees* were found in the Qumran library. However, it is preserved in its entirety only in an Ethiopian translation which was derived from a Greek translation made from the Hebrew. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 635.)

⁴⁹² *By the Finger of God*, p. 102.

⁴⁹³ A pseudepigraphical work (not accepted in any canon of scripture) which was one of the most important works of the Essene community of Jews, part of whose library was discovered in 1947 in caves at Qumran near the Dead Sea in Palestine. The contents of the scroll, the last of the seven scrolls discovered in Cave I, comprise four major sections: the story of Lamech, the story of Noah, the tale of the Peoples, and the story of Abraham. It is a good example of Essene biblical exegesis and shows striking similarities to the pseudepigraphical *Book of Jubilees*. Because the scroll also contains material related to that found in *First Book of Enoch*, the *Genesis Apocryphon* was possibly the source of both *Jubilees* and *I Enoch*. It is written in Aramaic and dates from either the 1st century BC or CE (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 5, p. 177.)

was expelled and he lived.”⁴⁹⁴ The Jewish theory about exorcism may be gathered from the *Testament of Ruben* (3:2) among the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁴⁹⁵ It stated that the spirit of deceit sends seven other spirits upon a man: lust, gluttony, anger, flattery, pride, lying and grasping at injustice.⁴⁹⁶

NEW TESTAMENT

In the narratives of demonic possession within the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples commanded evil spirits to depart and never again to afflict their victims. To the demon in the Capernaum synagogue, Jesus said, “Hold your peace and come out of him!” (Mark 1:25) At Gerasa, Jesus said, “Come forth, you unclean spirit, out of the man!” (Mark 5:8) His words to a demon which afflicted an epileptic boy were, “You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter no more into him!” (Mark 9:25) Jesus cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2) and his disciples exorcised on many occasions (Mark 6:13, Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12). According to Mark (6:7), when Jesus sent his twelve disciples forth on their mission, the power over demons was their only specific duty or power which he gave them.⁴⁹⁷ However, the disciples sometimes failed in their exorcisms during the time of Jesus (Mark 9:18). They felt that the power which they had over demons came from Jesus. And they expressly acknowledged his authority. On this point, Luke (10:17) testifies, “And seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in Your name.’” The exorcisms recorded in the Acts of the Apostles are done in the name of Jesus. An example of this is the soothsaying maid at Philippi exorcised by Paul (Acts 16:16 f.). To the demon that possessed her, Paul said, (16:18), “I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” Another example is in the attempt to exorcise by the seven sons of Sceva at Ephesus, who applied Jesus’ name, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” (Acts 19:13)

⁴⁹⁴ *Exorcism*, p. 11.

⁴⁹⁵ A pseudepigraphical work (not in any biblical canon) purporting to present the last words of the 12 sons of Jacob – founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. It contains lengthy moral exhortations based upon the supposed sin or virtue of each patriarch. In its extant form, the book is a Jewish work, probably of the late 2nd century CE, with Christian interpolations. The work is extant in several Greek manuscripts and in Armenian and Slavic translations. The Testaments are connected historically and ideologically with the Essene sect at Qumran and their Dead Sea Scrolls, among which fragments of the testaments of Levi (in Aramaic) and Naphtali (in Hebrew) were found. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 12, p. 78.)

⁴⁹⁶ *Exorcism*, p. 11.

⁴⁹⁷ See also Matthew 10:1 and Luke 9:1

However, they not only failed to cast out the demon, but were themselves also severely beaten by the possessed man. (Acts 19:14).

It seems from the evidence of the New Testament that the essential element within the techniques of early Christian exorcists was to adjure the demon to depart in the name of Jesus. At the same time, there is evidence even in Mark (9:29) that this simple procedure expanded early. When the disciples asked Jesus why they were unable to cast out the demon from the epileptic boy, he replied, "This kind can come out by nothing except prayer." To this passage in Mark many ancient manuscripts add "and fasting." This shows that long ago, fasting and prayer were regarded as necessary preparations for the exorcist to perform his work.

DEVELOPMENT: SECOND CENTURY CE

The procedure of exorcising in the name of Jesus is also characteristic of second century Christians. Exorcism was familiar to them. Justin⁴⁹⁸ gives much attention to this phenomenon, using such expressions as "[T]he devils...are overthrown by men through the name of Jesus Christ,"⁴⁹⁹ and "[E]very demon, when exorcised in the name of this very Son of God...is overcome and subdued."⁵⁰⁰ Tertullian⁵⁰¹ writes that, "[T]he authority and

⁴⁹⁸ Justin (c. 100-165 CE), born in Nablus [Israeli-occupied Jordan], was one of the most important Greek philosopher-apologists in the early Christian church. A pagan raised in a Jewish environment, Justin studied Stoic, Platonic and other pagan philosophers and then became a Christian in 132 CE at Ephesus. At first, he wandered from place to place proclaiming his newfound religion. Then he spent considerable time in Rome, where he was denounced as a subversive and condemned to death. The authentic works of Justin are two, *Apologies* and *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin's concrete description of the sacramental celebrations of Baptism and the Eucharist remain a principal source for the history of the primitive church. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 663.)

⁴⁹⁹ *Second Apology* viii, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 105, ff. 28.

⁵⁰⁰ *Dialogue* lxxxv, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 105, ff. 29.

⁵⁰¹ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (c. 155/160-after 220 CE), born in Carthage [now in Tunisia], was an important early Christian theologian, polemicist and moralist. As the initiator of ecclesiastical Latin, he was instrumental in shaping the vocabulary and thought of Western Christianity. His parents were pagan, and he became exposed to Christian teachings during his studies in Rome. Sometime before 210 CE, Tertullian left the orthodox church to join a new prophetic, sectarian movement known as Montanism, which had spread from Asia Minor to Africa. He later broke with them and founded his own sect. This group existed until the 5th century in Africa. He was a prolific writer. Among his works are *Apologeticum (Defence)*, in defence of the faith; *Adversus Marcionem*, against heresy; *De Resurrectione Carnis (Concerning Resurrection of the Flesh)*; *De Baptismo*, the first Christian book on baptism; and *De anima (Concerning the Soul)*, dealing with the Christian doctrine of man. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 11, pp. 652-653.)

power we have over them is in our naming the name of Christ.”⁵⁰² Origen⁵⁰³ states, “It is not by incantations that Christians seem to prevail [over evil spirits], but by the name of Jesus, accompanied by the announcement of the narratives which relate to him; for the repetition of these has frequently been the means of driving demons out of men, especially when those who repeated them did so in a sound and genuinely believing spirit.”⁵⁰⁴

THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES CE

The development of numerous ritualistic and sacramental acts in connection with exorcism occurred within the third and fourth centuries CE. The passage in Mark 9:22, to which reference has already been made, shows that the tendency toward ritualism began even in the first century. Origen’s reference to reading the narratives about Jesus in connection with exorcism shows this expansion. Also, the sacramental development is clearly evident in the belief that, although demons may deceive the Christian exorcist and defy his spoken word, the waters of baptism exert a power from which the devils flee in terror. This idea is clearly expressed in the following words of Cyprian:⁵⁰⁵

But if anyone is moved by this, that some of those who are baptised in sickness are still tempted by unclean spirits, let him know that the obstinate wickedness of the devil prevails even up to the saving water, but that in

⁵⁰² *Apology* xxiii, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 106, ff. 32.

⁵⁰³ Oregenes Admantius (c. 185-254 CE), born in Alexandria, was the most important theologian and biblical scholar of the early Greek church. His greatest work is the *Hexapla*, which is a synopsis of the six versions of the Old Testament. Origen’s exegetical writings consist of commentaries (scholarly expositions for instructed Christians), homilies for mixed congregations and scholia (detached comments on particular passages or books). He also wrote *De Principiis*, an ordered statement of Christian doctrine on an ambitious scale; and *Contra Celsum*, a vindication of Christianity against pagan attack. In his lifetime he was often attacked, suspected of adulterating the Gospel with pagan philosophy. After his death, opposition steadily mounted. In the 6th century, Justinian I issued a long edict denouncing Origen and those who supported some of his views. The chief accusations against his teachings are the following: making the Son inferior to the Father, thus being a precursor of Arianism; spiritualising away the resurrection of the body, and denying Hell. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 8, pp. 997-999.)

⁵⁰⁴ *Against Celsum* I. vi. Cf. I. xiv; II, xxxiii, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 106, ff. 33.

⁵⁰⁵ Thascius Ceacilius Cyprianus (c. 200-258 CE), born in Carthage, was an early Christian theologian and bishop of Carthage who led the Christians of North Africa during a period of persecution from Rome. Upon his execution, he became the first bishop-martyr of Africa. He was born of wealthy pagan parents and educated in law. Before his conversion to Christianity in 246 CE, he practised as a lawyer in Carthage. His major writing was a treatise, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, in which he promoted the central idea of unity and uniqueness of the church, stating, “He no longer has God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother.” (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 3, pp 826-827.)

baptism it loses all the poison of its wickedness...And this is also done in the present day, in that the devil is scourged, and burned, and tortured by exorcists, by human voice, and by divine power; and although he often says that he is going out and will leave the men of God, yet in that which he says he deceives...When however, they come to the water of salvation and to the sanctification of baptism we ought to know and to trust that there the devil is beaten down, and the man, dedicated to God, is set free by divine mercy.⁵⁰⁶

The earliest descriptions of exorcisms in relation to Christians baptism are those of Rome in the third century, preserved in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus.⁵⁰⁷ Candidates were exorcised by their sponsors at the end of each weekly instruction by their teacher and immediately before baptism by the bishop.⁵⁰⁸ This practice was mentioned at the Council of Carthage in 255.⁵⁰⁹ Thus, the ancient liturgical books, which date from the third century and deal with baptism, disclose the prevailing Christian doctrine about Satan and his intervention in the affairs of man. In the devil's hatred for God, he turned on man, who was made in God's image. In occurrence with "original sin" men were no longer temples of the Holy spirit; but rather, they were now habitations for the demon. There is not much of a distinction between the possessed and the unbaptised. St. Isidore of Seville⁵¹⁰ placed both classes on the same level when he stated that exorcism is the ceremony of banishing the most wicked influences of the devil from catechumens and possessed alike.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁶ *Epistle*, LXXXV. xv, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 106, ff. 34.

⁵⁰⁷ Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-235 CE), a Christian martyr and the first antipope (217-235 CE), was a controversial theologian who was the first Roman priest to produce a theologico-philosophical work on dogma. He was a leader of the Roman church during the pontificate (c. 199-217 CE) of St. Zephyrinus. His most monumental work is considered to be *Philosophumena* (*Refutation of all Heresies*), which seeks to show that all Christian heresies are traceable to pagan philosophies. The church order, *Apostolic Tradition* is now generally attributed to him and illuminates liturgical practice around 217 CE. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 5, p. 940.)

⁵⁰⁸ *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, p. 110. See also *Exorcism*, p. 18.

⁵⁰⁹ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 365.

⁵¹⁰ Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636 CE) was a theologian, the last of the Western Latin Fathers, an archbishop and an encyclopaedist. His *Etymologies*, an encyclopaedia of human and divine subjects, was for many centuries one of the most important reference books. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 6, pp. 407-408.)

⁵¹¹ *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism*, p. 93, quoting from Rev. Philip Weller's introduction to the modern version of the *Roman Ritual*.

Asceticism became a further device for driving out demons. It was believed that demons took possession of human bodies in order to enjoy food, indulge in sexual pleasures or satisfy other cravings. Naturally, therefore, the practice of rigid asceticism was thought to make the human body unattractive to demons. It was a means of driving them out. This belief is expressed within the *Clementine Homilies*⁵¹² as follows: “They enter into the bodies of men, in order that, getting organs to minister them, they may obtain the things that they wish, whether it be meat, by means of men’s teeth, or sexual pleasures, by means of men’s members. Hence, in order to put the demons to flight, the most useful help is abstinence, and fasting, and suffering affliction. For if they enter men’s bodies for the sake of sharing pleasures, it is manifest that they are put to flight by suffering.”⁵¹³ But this same document proceeds to say that some of the more malignant demons can be expelled only by “recourse to God by prayer and petitions.”

Additionally, in other writings of this period, Jesus himself is no longer regarded as the sole means of exorcism nor is he central in the procedure. This new attitude appears clearly in the following quotes from Lactantius: “When they [i.e., demons] seize upon the bodies of men and harass their souls, they are adjured by them, and at the name of the true God are put to flight...”⁵¹⁴ and: “They fear the righteous, that is, worshippers of God, adjured by whose name they depart from the bodies of the possessed.”⁵¹⁵ Therefore, by the beginning of the fourth century, the chief means of Christian exorcism was no longer simple adjuration in the name of Jesus. The name of God himself had now become central in the procedure, and included various other complementary techniques. Ritual, sacrament, prayer and asceticism all assumed places of importance.⁵¹⁶

There was no separate order of exorcists in the Eastern Church, and

⁵¹² Clement I (d. c. end of 1st century CE) was the first Apostolic Father, pope from 88-97 CE and supposed third successor of St. Peter. Bishop St. Irenaeus of Lyon lists him as a contemporary of the Apostles and a witness of their preaching. *Letter to the Church of Corinth* (I Clement) has been traditionally ascribed to him. Still extant, his *Letter* achieved almost canonical status and was regarded as scripture by many 3rd and 4th century Christians. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 3, p. 371.) The *Second Letter of Clement* (II Clement), which was not a letter but a sermon, was accepted as a genuine work of Clement’s by some. It was regarded as canonical in the Codex Alexandrinus (a 5th century manuscript of the Greek Bible) and by the later Syrian Church. The *Homilies* (preserved in the Greek original) attempt to exalt the position of the Oriental churches in relation to Rome and were based upon an earlier work, the *Circuits of Peter*, attested by Epiphanius. They are important for the information they give on Jewish-Christian heresy in the early centuries of the church. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 3, p. 376.)

⁵¹³ IX. x, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 107, ff. 35.

⁵¹⁴ *The Divine Institutes*, V. xxii, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 107, ff. 37.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.* II. xvi, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 107, ff. 38.

⁵¹⁶ *By the Finger of God*, pp. 103-107.

exorcism against the evil eye was performed by “charismatic” lay people (male or female) or monastics. In contrast, the Church of the West regularised exorcism by making the second office of the minor orders that of “exorcist.” This office was first made official in the mid-third century and was retained within the Roman Catholic Church until the reforms of the ordinal which took place in the 1960’s.⁵¹⁷ In Rome in 251, Pope Cornelius retained a team of fifty-two men as exorcists, and they worked in the fourteen divisions of Rome.⁵¹⁸

MIDDLE AGES AND REFORMATION

By the Middle Ages, exorcism was part of infant baptism. The service also included the exshufflate, the thrice-repeated breathing on the face of the infant with the accompanying words, “Depart from him, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit.”⁵¹⁹ The main purpose of exorcisms, apart from curing the demoniac, seemed to have become a demonstration of the sanctity of the exorcist.

After the reformation began, exorcisms were used by one group of Christians as propaganda against another. For example, in France, exorcisms were utilised by the Catholics in order to convert, or at least confute, the Huguenots⁵²⁰ and also to confirm the faith and devotional practices of the Roman Church. Catholic exorcisms were designed, not only to demonstrate transubstantiation, but also to vindicate other practices and beliefs that were under attack from Protestants. Catholic practices were considered by them to be purely magical superstitions, and they criticised the use of relics, holy water and other blessed objects, the sign of the cross, the power of names, etc. Consequently, the exorcisms of this era were accompanied by deliberately encouraged publicity, both at the time, by attracting large audiences, and afterwards, by publishing printed accounts.⁵²¹ Sometimes during the public exorcisms in Loudon⁵²² there must have been as many

⁵¹⁷ *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, p. 111.

⁵¹⁸ Sybil Leek, *Driving Out the Devils*, p. 123.

⁵¹⁹ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 365.

⁵²⁰ Huguenots are any of the Protestants in France in the 16th and 17th centuries. The origin of the name is uncertain. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 127.)

⁵²¹ *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 4.

⁵²² A great seventeenth century epidemic of possession took place in Loudon, and several of the exorcists taking part were themselves infected. *L’Histoire des Diables de Loudon*, Amsterdam, 1716, quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, pp. 50 and 92.

as 7,000 spectators. The exorcisms of Nicole de Vervins (1566 CE) were also great spectacles. Catholics and Protestants came in crowds from the surrounding districts to the cathedral of Laon, and civil authorities were also present.⁵²³

There was at this time a great variety of published exorcisms from which a priest could choose, but they all followed a similar pattern of adjuring the evil spirit by Almighty God. This diversity can be seen in the practices of the following saints from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the end of the fifteenth century. To effect a cure, St. Augustine⁵²⁴ laid his hands on the possessed and implored God.⁵²⁵ St. Bernard⁵²⁶ prayed inwardly, put wine from the chalice [used in the Eucharist] on his fingers and applied it to the possessed person's lips. He allowed some drops of wine to fall onto the person's body in one of his exorcisms.⁵²⁷ In another he made the sign of the cross with the sacred Host (bread used in the Eucharist), read the Lord's prayer and commanded the demon to leave, saying, "By the terrible power of His majesty I command thee, evil spirit, to come out of His servant and dare to touch her no more thereafter."⁵²⁸ On one occasion, St. Francis⁵²⁹ was reported to have cured a possessed person by praying, signing the

⁵²³ *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 103.

⁵²⁴ Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) was the bishop of Hippo in Roman Africa [what is now Algeria] and the major Christian theologian of the Western Church. Although his mother was a devout Christian, during his studies of philosophy he converted to Manichaeism and later went on to Neoplatonism before being converted to Christianity in 386 CE. His best known works are *Confessions*, the story of his restless youth and conversion; and *The City of God*, which espoused a religious philosophy of predestination. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 1, p. 700.)

⁵²⁵ *Acta Sanctorum*, Augusti, vol. vi, p. 439 (August 28), quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 177.

⁵²⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 CE), a Cistercian monk and mystic, was the founder and abbot of the abbey of Clairvaux and one of the most influential churchmen of his time. Among his works are *Praises of the Virgin Mother* on Mariology, and his greatest literary endeavour, *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 2, pp. 144-145.)

⁵²⁷ *Acta Sanctorum*, Augusti, vol. iv, p. 281 (August 20), quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 178.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 282, quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, pp. 179-180.

⁵²⁹ Francis of Assisi, original name, Francesco di Pietro di Bernardone (1181-1226 CE), was the founder of the Franciscan orders of men and women and a leader of the church reform movements of the early 13th century. His fraternal charity, consecration to poverty and dynamic leadership drew thousands of followers and made him one of the most venerated religious figures. He is (along with Catherine of Siena) the principal patron saint of Italy. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, pp. 926-927.)

possessed person with the cross and blessing him.⁵³⁰ On another occasion, he addressed the demon directly and ordered it to leave, saying, "In virtue of obedience I bid thee to go out for her, thou unclean spirit!"⁵³¹

In one exorcism, St. Nobert⁵³² commanded the unclean spirit to depart. Then he instructed that the possessed woman be plunged into exorcised water and he had her hair cut. He then fasted for a day and night, read several passages from the Gospels over her head and attacked the demon by prayer until it fled.⁵³³ It was reported that St. Francis of Paolo⁵³⁴ exorcised by adjuring the spirit and commanding it to leave the body of the possessed, which it did after numerous, lengthy discussions.⁵³⁵

The growth of exorcism finally came to an end at the time of the Counter-Reformation. This was due, in part, to the publication of the *Rituale Romanum* (*The Roman Ritual*) in 1614 at the repeated request of Pope Paul V.⁵³⁶ However, this was not the only text written on the subject during this era. In 1626, Maximilian van Eynatten produced his 1,232-page *Manuale Exorcismorum*,⁵³⁷ in which he covered every eventuality, each one with an appropriate rite, ranging from a conjuration against the "antique serpent," noxious pests, the evil spirits that wreck matrimony, and any demon causing vexation in a house.⁵³⁸ Preparation of the *Ritual* and the *Manual* was essential, because this period of time preceding and accompanying the witchcraft persecutions had been one of doctrinal confusion. Rules were

⁵³⁰ Thomas of Celano, *The Lives of St. Francis of Assisi* (London, 1908), First Life, part i, chap. xxv, p. 66, quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 181.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69, quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 182.

⁵³² Nobert of Xanten (1080-1134 CE) was the archbishop of Magdeburg and founder of the Premonstratensians (Norbertines or White Canons), a congregation of priests. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 8, p. 757.)

⁵³³ Joseph von Gorres, *Die Christliche Mystik* (Regensburg: 1842), vol. iv, part i, p. 332, from the *Acta Sanctorum*, June 6, c. viii, p. 834, quoted in *Possession and Exorcism*, pp. 182-183.

⁵³⁴ Francis of Paolo (1416-1507 CE) was the founder of the Minin Friars, a severely ascetic Roman Catholic order that does charitable work and refrains from eating meat, eggs or dairy products. Francis was named patron of Italian seamen in 1943 by Pope Pius XII, because many of the miracles attributed to him were related to the sea. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, p. 927.)

⁵³⁵ *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis, vol. i, p. 144, cited in *Possession and Exorcism*, pp. 184-185.

⁵³⁶ *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 101.

⁵³⁷ The 1974 New York edition of *Rituale Romanum* reproduced verbatim the text as written by Maximilian van Eynatten together with an introduction by Francis Cardinal Spellman. (*Driving Out Devils*, p. 127.)

⁵³⁸ *Driving Out the Devils*, p. 127. See also *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 102.

evolving, but haphazardly. A French priest, Grosbal, recorded on April 6, 1601 that he was beginning an exorcism case, but the proceedings had not been completed by September 10. Other priests, including travellers from Limoges and Savoy, tried to help. One pilgrim from Spain sought to question the demon in Spanish, but was not understood. Two visitors from Scotland addressed him in Gaelic and others in Breton. It was useless. Grosbal concluded reluctantly that conceivably it was not a case of demonic possession.⁵³⁹

SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN EXORCISTS

The preceding information answers the first question of the survey used while interviewing the Muslim exorcists:

“1. When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?”

The *Roman Ritual*, the *Exeter Report* and other studies made by Christian researchers will be used to answer the remaining questions.

2. What percentage of the cases are actual possession?

Father Ugo Saroglia, 72, who retired in 1984 after almost ten years as a Turin exorcist, told the newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* that only about ten percent of the cases he was involved in dealt with “authentic possession. The others who came...were simply afflicted by nervous or psychiatric disturbances.”⁵⁴⁰ In his book, *Exorcising Devils*, Dom Robart Petitpierre said that possession in which an individual is “controlled” by a demon is “extremely rare, estimated at no more than one percent of all the cases coming forward.”⁵⁴¹ However, Canon John D. Pearce-Higgins, who treated about 3,000 cases in England during an eighteen-month period in 1971 and 1972, found that five percent were genuine cases of possession.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ *Exorcism Past and Present*, p. 89.

⁵⁴⁰ *The Sunday Star*, November 24, 1985, H8.

⁵⁴¹ *Exorcising Devils*, p. 37.

⁵⁴² *Exorcism Past and Present*, p. 201.

3. Identify the main signs of real possession

(a) Change of Personality

i) Resulting in change of intelligence, character, demeanour, and appearance

(b) Physical Changes

i) Preternatural strength

ii) Epileptiform convulsions; foaming

iii) Catatonic symptoms; falling

iv) Clouding of consciousness; anaesthesia to pain

v) Changed voice

vi) There will be physical signs such as bilious complexion, wasting of the body and psychosomatic pains, all unassociated with any particular illness; an evil or frightening expression will become habitual.⁵⁴³

(c) Mental Changes

i) Glossolalia; understanding unknown languages

ii) Preternatural knowledge

iii) Psychic and occult powers, e.g., clairvoyance, telepathy and prediction. (The theological theory behind these symptoms is the doctrine that devils, being fallen angels, retain their angelic intelligence; their minds are immeasurably quicker and more experienced than those of men, and their knowledge therefore enormously greater.)⁵⁴⁴

(d) Spiritual Changes

i) Reaction to and fear of Christ; causing blasphemy, etc.

ii) Affected by prayer⁵⁴⁵

iii) Horror and revulsion of sacred things, at hearing scripture, being touched by relics, the host, holy water or other blessed objects.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ Symptom number 6 has been taken from *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, p. 86.

⁵⁴⁴ *Unclean Spirits*, p. 13.

⁵⁴⁵ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 156.

⁵⁴⁶ *Unclean Spirits*, p. 12.

4. How can a distinction be made between demonic possession and bodily and/or mental ills?

One of the few pieces of diagnostic writing relating to this subject is an essay by Dr. Lechler.⁵⁴⁷ It includes the following points:

- a) Although the possessed person may be restless and driven into a rage at times, he still remains sane in his thoughts, whereas one with mental problems does not.
- b) The mental patient will speak in extravagant tones of demons which he alleges to be living inside of him. However, the possessed person avoids all mention of demons as long as no one approaches him on a spiritual level.
- c) The voices which a mental patient claims originate from strange people are usually of a pathological nature. The satanic voices heard by a possessed person are of a completely different nature. If the voices are demonic in origin, they will attempt to lure the person away from God, whereas if they are the result of some natural abnormality, they will speak about unnatural and nonsensical things.
- d) Schizophrenics who continually talk about being possessed are deluding themselves. On the contrary, a person who is really possessed will never let the idea of possession enter his head, even if there is no other logical explanation for his condition.
- e) A person who blasphemes without the slightest remorse is most likely to be possessed. The mental depressive will lament the fact that he thinks such things and will try not to express them.⁵⁴⁸

5. What are the main reasons why people and places are possessed?

People and places are possessed due to the following:

- a) Accident, e.g., heredity, place, occult experience and healing, occult transference and curses
- b) Invitation – knowingly, e.g. devil subscription
- c) Invitation – unknowingly, e.g., mediums⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ In "Part II" of Kurt Koch's *Occult Bondage and Deliverance* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publishing House).

⁵⁴⁸ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, pp. 158-159.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Possession is not as common as the media like to portray. It cannot just “happen” unwillingly. Man cannot catch demons as he catches the common cold. He has to put himself at risk and in a vulnerable position. The greatest risk is that of straightforward invitation. This can occur knowingly by becoming a member of voodoo, witchcraft, magic or Satanist group; by “do it yourself” magic experiments, or by the deliberate invitation extended from a despairing soul. It can take place unknowingly by fringe occultism of various kinds, such as the Ouija board, planchette, or other “sessions,” like séances, in which the operator exposes himself to possible invasion by some external spirit. Although rare, there may be cases when the invitation is very indirect, in which the victim may be an empty soul with no particular faith to withstand stray spiritual influences of a malign kind. This is one who has put himself in a position of danger without realising the danger in which he stands. Also, possession may sometimes occur through some kind of occult transference from a Satanist group or witch coven, by cursing, or perhaps genetically, through long family occult traditions.⁵⁵⁰

Places, such as churches, houses, towns and the countryside, may be strained and influenced by a variety of causes – frequently by more than one at a time. Among these causes may be the following:

Souls of the departed (ghosts proper) – Most often of those who have recently died.

Magicians – They claim to be able to instigate and operate “haunts,” and this can be in some measure substantiated.

Human sin – Human sin opens the door for other forces to enter; for example, a house or site used for sexual misbehaviour. The office of an organisation devoted to greed or domination can also often incur trouble or act as a dispersal centre.

Place memories – These account for some nine-tenths of what are popularly called “haunts.” They are impersonal traces of personal action and seem to be caused either by habitual actions or by actions accompanied by violent emotion.

Poltergeists and the accompanying apparitions, levitations and other phenomena – These remain a mystery. There is the possibility of psychic action similar to table-turning or perhaps planchette.

⁵⁵⁰ *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, pp. 82-83.

This may be due to some uncontrolled subconscious of a human in the house, to the interference of magicians, or even perhaps to some form of non-human, mischievous spirit.

Demonic interference – This is common on desecrated sites such as ruined sanctuaries, and in connection with séances. This kind of activity and that of magicians frequently revivifies ancient pagan sites, thereby causing a general sense of “buzz” or strain that can be disturbing, but rarely dangerous.

There are, therefore, at least three quite different types of forces which may possibly be operating at any given place: those which are purely human (1, 2 and 3); those which are impersonal (4 and perhaps 5) and those which are demonic (6).⁵⁵¹

6. What percentage of cases are women?

So far as age is concerned, the first appearance of possession is not connected with any given time of life. But in regard to sex, possession occurs predominantly in women. Out of thirteen cases related by Kerner (*Nachricht*, etc.), some which were observed by him, there were only two men. These numbers are essentially in agreement with percentages derived from other sources, except that perhaps the number of males is slightly more. The epidemics of possession have almost always affected convents of nuns or corresponding establishments. However, men are only occasionally affected in similar circumstances.⁵⁵²

7. Do only male spirits possess women?

Traugott said, “The feminine voice is transformed into a bass one, for in all the cases of possession which have hitherto been my lot to know the new individuality was a man.” On the other hand, Adam Crabtree cites the case of Anna Ecklund (b. 1882 CE), who was exorcised by Father Theophilus Riesinger, a Capuchin monk from the community of St. Anthony at Marathon, Wisconsin, in 1912 and again in 1928. During the exorcism, a possessing female demon by the name of Mina appeared.⁵⁵³ Mr. Crabtree also cited the case of the three day exorcism of Karen Kingston (b. 1960 CE) in April, 1974, in which female demons by the names Mariana, Jeanne and Elizabeth were expelled from her.⁵⁵⁴ In fact, there are numerous other cases in which female, possessing entities were involved.

⁵⁵¹ *Exorcism*, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁵² *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 121.

⁵⁵³ *Multiple Man: Explorations in Possession and Multiple Personality*, pp. 138-143.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-148.

8. Can more than one spirit possess a single person?

Jesus is recorded in Luke (8:2) as casting out seven demons from Mary of Magdala. When he asked the demon possessing the man in Gerasenes its name, it replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many;" and when he permitted them, "the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine."⁵⁵⁵

"The Roman Catholic manuals on exorcism instruct the priest to interrogate the possessing spirit to find out if it has any other companions."⁵⁵⁶ The German authority, Kerner, is quoted by Oesterreich as saying, "It often happens that we recognise in a single individual not merely one demon but several at once or in succession." Most Pentecostalist literature on the subject treats multiple possession as the norm.⁵⁵⁷

In the twelve exorcism sessions of Karen Kingston, who was mentioned earlier, thirteen demons were expelled. Each demon had a distinct personality and a total of eight handwriting samples were obtained from the demons, each with a very distinct style.⁵⁵⁸

9. Are there different kinds of possession?

"Possession: the domination by the demon over the man's bodily organs and his lower spiritual faculties; or, in later times, a distinction is made between possession and obsession, the latter connoting a lesser grade of demonic disturbance."⁵⁵⁹

It is generally thought that there is only one state of demonic assault on human lives, but there is, in fact, a whole range of demonic influences. Writers on this subject have a vast array of terms for the more ordinary states of possession. Among Catholic terminology, "temptation" and "infestation" are commonly used (L. Cristiani), while among Pentecostalists "oppression" and "obsession" refer to less acute states (H. Maxwell Whyte). Others used terms such as "bondage" and "vexed." However, there are a number of people who feel that to be true to the Scriptures one must use "demonised," as it is a literal translation of Greek terminology. Still

⁵⁵⁵ Mark 5:1-13.

⁵⁵⁶ *Roman Ritual*, Chapter 1:15, quoted in *The Story Behind The Exorcist*, p. 219. See also *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England*, p. 8.

⁵⁵⁷ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 151.

⁵⁵⁸ *Multiple Man*, pp. 148-150.

⁵⁵⁹ Quoted from the introduction to *Rite of Exorcism* in the most modern version of the *Roman Ritual* (English translation by Rev. Philip T. Weller) in *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism*, p. 92.

others say that three terms may be used: for mild cases, demonic influence; for more serious cases, demonic possession; and for acute demonic states, demonic attack.⁵⁶⁰

In his book, *Deliverance*, Michael Perry divided the spectrum of demonic activity into four categories:

“a) Every Christian knows that he is subject to **temptation**.

b) Temptation may become so intense that it has to be described as demonic **obsession**. In this state, temptation and demonic interference increase to such a degree that normal life begins to become impossible because of ideas in the mind, a preoccupation with evil, or a sense of all-pervading guilt or fear.

c) A further stage may be called **oppression**, in which there is an occult or demonic attack in dreams or otherwise.

d) **Possession** is the most serious case. In this, the person’s will is taken over by an intruding alien entity. When this happens, the person is incapable of asking for deliverance on his own behalf. It may be a temporary state, however, so that the person when he is not possessed may know that he has been, and so will come to a counsellor expressing a wish to be released from this recurring condition. If a person is possessed by a demon, it can only be dislodged by exorcism.”⁵⁶¹

In one form of possession, the possessed person may be conscious of having been invaded and dominated by an outside personality beyond his control, and this now dwells within him together with his own spirit. The person at times speaks normally and does not lose his sense of identity. But he is aware of the presence of the intruder, who may be vicious, licentious and irrational. This intruder takes possession of the victim’s speech organs and of his body in general, making the victim do and say things which he disapproves of but is helpless to prevent. While the demon is speaking or performing, the normal self stands by as a helpless spectator. The person is aware of what is going on, for reason is not entirely removed. This type is sometimes called lucid possession.

In the extreme form of possession, the abnormal personality completely replaces the normal one. He is unaware that his own spirit appears to have been completely routed by the invader, losing consciousness of his own true identity. The victim fully identifies himself with the demonic ego, and

⁵⁶⁰ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 91.

⁵⁶¹ *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, p. 82.

his normal self is forgotten. He is like a sleepwalker, although he does not know that he is asleep. In fact, this strange phenomenon has been identified as amnesia. But it is distinguished from ordinary somnambulism or amnesia by the intensity of its emotional and motor accompaniments.⁵⁶²

Spirit-possession has also been categorised by other writers as either temporary, intermittent or permanent.⁵⁶³

10. Do possessing entities speak in the voice of the possessed person or in another voice?

One of the signs of true possession is that the person's voice changes to match that of the invading spirit. Oesterreich referred to this, saying,

“The second characteristic which reveals change of personality is closely related to the first: it is the voice. At the moment when the countenance alters, a more or less changed voice issues from the mouth of the person in the fit. The intonation also corresponds to the character of the new individuality manifesting itself in the organism and is conditioned by it. In particular the top register of the voice is displaced; the feminine voice is transformed into a bass one...In other cases the timbre of the voice is not changed to an extreme degree...But the most important particular in which ‘the invasion of the organism by a strange individuality’ is manifested, is the third: the new voice does not speak according to the spirit of the normal personality but that of the new one. Its ‘ego’ is the latter’s, and is opposed to the character of the normal individual.”⁵⁶⁴

11. Do spirits speak in languages unknown to the possessed?

The ability to understand and speak in other languages was previously identified as one of the characteristics of true possession. Under the heading, “The Signs of Demonic Possession,” Michael Perry wrote, “When blessed, or prayed for, he may fall into a type of trance-state, in which he will manifest one of the three characteristic signs: (i) speaking in a voice unlike his normal voice; (ii) in a language, or languages, unknown to him in his normal state; (iii) he will be able to converse in that language and answer questions if they are put to him. He will completely be unaware of what has happened when he recovers from the state.”⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² *By the Finger of God*, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁶⁴ *Possession and Exorcism*, pp. 19-21.

⁵⁶⁵ *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, p. 86.

12. Do the possessing entities have names which they go by?

In Catholic manuals of exorcism, the priest is told to interrogate the devil and to ask its name. The following passage from the *Roman Ritual* illustrates this point. It states, “I command you, unclean spirit, whoever you are,...by the mysteries of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ; by the descent of the Holy Spirit; by the coming of our Lord for judgement, that you tell me by some sign your name.”⁵⁶⁶ Thus, according to Catholic tradition, the devils or spirits have names or titles.

13. During exorcisms, do possessing spirits try to possess the exorcists?

The French mystic, Jean-Joseph Surin, became a victim in the course of his exorcism to the great seventeenth-century epidemic of possession at the Ursuline convent at Loudon. He was already extremely exhausted by a long and rigorous life of asceticism.⁵⁶⁷ In spite of all of his torment, Surin escaped with his life. However, Lactance and Tranquille, two of the other exorcists involved in the struggle with the epidemic of Loudon, succumbed to possession.⁵⁶⁸

Rev. John Nicola stated that the three principal dangers confronting a priest during exorcism are “physical injury, perhaps even death; mental and spiritual intimidation, usually by the revelation of embarrassing information through the mouth of the energumen; and transference of the diabolical possession to the exorcist.”⁵⁶⁹

14. Does treatment usually involve more than one session?

Oestereich presented his view, saying, “Cures by a single application of exorcism appear to have been rare; exorcisms last as a rule for days, weeks, months and even years.”⁵⁷⁰ Dom Petitpierre expressed that in the case of a major exorcism where “it becomes evident that there has been an actual attack by a demon – a non-human spirit...there must be a longish time, perhaps up to a month, spent in examination and prayer for the person concerned.”⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁶ *The Story Behind the Exorcist*, p. 221.

⁵⁶⁷ *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 50.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵⁶⁹ *Diabolical Possession*, p. 95.

⁵⁷⁰ *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 103.

⁵⁷¹ *Exorcising Devils*, p. 158.

15. Describe the steps involved in a typical exorcism.

The Roman Ritual

a) The priest first goes to confession. Then he wears a surplice and a violet stole and traces the sign of the cross over the possessed person (bound if he is violent), over himself, and those present. He then sprinkles all present with holy water, kneels and says the Litany of the Saints, with all present making the response.

b) The priest then reads Psalms 53 (“God, by your name save me”), followed by specific prayers in which he implores God to give them courage, to strike terror into the demon and cast him out of the person by His mighty hand. He then commands the demon and its helpers to reveal its name and the time of its departure, to strictly obey him and not to harm the possessed person or the bystanders.

c) Then the priest reads over the possessed person one or all of the following selections from the Gospels: John 1:1-14, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 10:17-20 and Luke 11:14-22. A prayer is then made to Jesus Christ seeking pardon from sins, steadfast faith and power to confront the demon.

d) Next the priest makes the sign of the cross over himself and the one possessed, places the end of his stole on the latter’s neck, and, putting his right hand on the latter’s head, he says another prayer to God the Father for help through Christ.

e) The priest then recites the First Exorcism: “I cast you out, unclean spirit, along with every satanic power of the enemy, every spectre from hell, and all your foul companions; in the name of our Lord Jesus [†] Christ. Begone and stay far from this creature of God [†], for it is He who commands you, He who flung you headlong from the heights of heaven into the depths of hell. It is He who commands you, He who once stilled the sea and the wind and the storm. Hearken, therefore, and tremble in fear, Satan, you enemy of the faith, you foe of the human race, you begetter of death, you robber of life, you corruptor of justice, you root of all evil and vice; seducer of men, betrayer of the nations, instigator of envy, font of avarice, fomenter of discord, author of pain and sorrow. Why, then, do you stand and resist, knowing as you must that Christ the Lord brings your plans to nothing? Fear Him, who in Isaac was offered in sacrifice, in Joseph sold into bondage, slain as the paschal lamb, crucified as man, yet triumphed over the powers of hell. (The following three signs of the cross are traced on the forehead of the possessed.) Begone, then, in the name of the Father, [†] and of the Son, [†] and of the Holy [†] Spirit. Give place to the Holy Spirit by this sign of the holy [†] cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

f) Then the priest leads those present in prayer to God, imploring Him to repel the devil's power, break his snares and put him to flight, [saying], "By the sign [†] (on the fore-head) of your name, let your servant be protected in mind and body. (The following three crosses are traced on the chest of the possessed.) Keep watch over the innermost recesses of his/her [†] heart; rule over his/her [†] emotions; strengthen his/her [†] will...through Christ our Lord."

g) The priest then recites the Second Exorcism: "I adjure you, ancient serpent, by the judge of the living and the dead, by your Creator, by the Creator of the whole universe, by Him who has the power to consign you to hell, to depart forthwith in fear, along with your savage minions, from this servant of God, (name of the person), who seeks refuge in the fold of the Church..."

h) Those present are again led in prayer directed to God of heaven and earth, God of the angels and the archangels, to deliver the servant from unclean spirits through Christ.

i) The Third Exorcism is then recited by the priest: "Therefore, I adjure you, every unclean spirit, spectre from hell, every satanic power, in the name of Jesus [†] Christ of Nazareth, who was led into the desert after His baptism by John to vanquish you in your citadel, to cease your assaults against the creature whom He has informed from the slime of the earth for His own honour and glory..."

j) The priest repeats the above steps as long as is necessary until the one possessed is freed.⁵⁷²

The Exeter Report: The Exorcism and Blessing of a person

a) All present gather around the patient and join in the Lord's Prayer, followed by a reading from John 1:1-14 and a silent prayer concluded with: "O God, whose nature and property it is ever to have mercy and to forgive, grant that the chains of evil binding this person may, by your mercy, be loosened, and let no evil power harm any one. Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

b) The exorcist stands before the patient [and] performs the exorcism by saying a prayer like the following: "I command you, every evil spirit, in the Name of God the Father Almighty, in the Name of Jesus Christ, his only son, and in the Name of the Holy Spirit, that, harming no one, you depart from this creature of God, (name), and return to the place appointed you, there to remain forever."

⁵⁷² *Roman Ritual*, quoted in *The Story Behind the Exorcist*, pp. 220-227.

c) Then the exorcist exhales deeply or sprinkles holy water on the patient and repeats the exorcism over the patient (who should be firmly held down) if, as occasionally happens, there are violent physical reactions. It is also recommended that on such occasions the exorcist recite some form of St. Patrick's Breastplate, such as:

Christ be with you; Christ within you;
Christ before you; Christ behind you;
Christ on your right hand; Christ on your left hand;
Christ above you; Christ beneath you;
Christ round about you.

d) The final prayer is made to God as follows: "O God, the creator and defender of men, look upon this your servant, (name). Drive back from him, O Lord, the power of the demons and banish forever their treacherous deceptions. May the wicked tempers flee away. May your servant, (name), be fortified in mind and body by the power of your Name. Guard his inner life, rule his desires, strengthen his purposes. May the powerful temptations of the enemy vanish from his souls. Grant grace, O Lord, by this invocation of your Name, that the prince of this world, who has struck terror until now may himself flee in terror to his own place. And may this your servant be enabled to do your will with a firm heart and undivided mind: through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen"

e) If contact with occultism was involved, the Baptismal Promises are then renewed in any of the official forms available.

f) A final blessing is then invoked with hands laid on the person's head.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷³ *Exorcism*, pp. 37-39.

DISCUSSION

In the Muslim world today exorcism has, to a large degree, become the profession of an elite few. However, those practising it have limited Islamic education. In most cases in India and to some degree in Sudan, the practice is a closely guarded and inherited secret, handed down from father to son. For people like Rāna Muḥammad in Pakistan and al-Dawsarī in Saudi Arabia, it is their means of earning a livelihood. Although there still remains no officially designated office called “The Exorcist,” certain names and titles (e.g., *‘āmil*, *faqīr*, *peer*, etc.) are now commonly used to identify professional exorcists. Unfortunately, most of the common Muslims today erroneously attribute the power to expel *jinn* to the exorcist himself, rather than the mercy of Allāh, which is available to any believer.

The basic principle of reciting verses from the Qur'ān over possessed people forms the foundations of Islamic exorcism, past and present. Although Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), like Jesus, was recorded to have commanded the possessing spirit in those demonically possessed to leave, his companions read Qur'ānic verses over possessed individuals in their treatments. The Prophet (ﷺ) personally approved treatment by Qur'ānic recitation when cases utilising the Qur'ān were related to him by his companions. Consequently, since the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), exorcism by Qur'ānic recitation became an indisputable part of canonical prophetic tradition (the Sunnah).

Communicating with the *jinn* also has its foundation in prophetic practice, even though the Prophet (ﷺ) was only recorded to have said, "Get out, enemy of Allāh, I am the Messenger of Allāh."⁵⁷⁴ He did not hold a two-way conversation with the possessing spirit but, instead, gave it a firm command to leave. Likewise, commanding the evil spirits to leave was the recorded practice of Jesus, but on some occasions it was recorded that he also questioned the possessing spirit (Mark 5:1-13). The Roman Catholic handbook on exorcism, *Roman Ritual*, instructs the exorcist to ask the name of the possessing entity, the number of spirits inhabiting the patient, the cause of their entry, the time when it or they entered, and their intended time of departure.⁵⁷⁵ However, in the book's introductory directions, the priest is also admonished not to believe what the possessing devil says. Furthermore, as a result of the trial of Father Louis Gaufridi, who was convicted of conferring with and being possessed by the Devil, a law was passed in 1620 which stated that the testimony of devils should not be accepted in any court of law. The University of Sorbonne, in Paris, France, judiciously stated that the devil could not be expected to tell the truth.⁵⁷⁶ Among early Muslim scholars, Ibn Taymiyyah advocated communication with possessing entities in order to persuade them to leave through admonition, etc. Considering the perverse nature of possession, little credibility can be placed on the information relayed by possessing demons. They should be distrusted in the same way as corrupt and irreligious humans, since the reliability of their information is suspect. Consequently, although communication is permissible, it should be restricted to what is necessary or useful in encouraging the spirit's departure.

The practice of blowing over the demonically possessed patient or on the location where the patient complains of pain is unanimously applied by modern exorcists throughout the Muslim world at different points during

⁵⁷⁴ Collected by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* and authenticated by al-Arnā'ūṭ in Ibn al-Qayyim's *Zād al-Ma'ād*, vol. 4, p. 68, fn. 1.

⁵⁷⁵ *The Story Behind the Exorcist*, p. 219, no. 15.

⁵⁷⁶ *Driving Out Devils*, p. 126.

their exorcisms. This also has its foundation in the Prophet's practice. On one occasion, he was recorded as blowing in the mouth of a possessed boy before ordering the possessing spirit to leave.⁵⁷⁷ It was also his practice to blow in his hands and wipe them on the parts of his body where he experienced aches and pains. This corresponds with the early Christian baptismal tradition of exorcism which included the exshufflate – the thrice-repeated breathing on the face of the infant with the accompanying words, "Depart from him, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit."⁵⁷⁸ It is also mentioned as a recommended practice in the Exeter Report on exorcism for the Church of England.⁵⁷⁹

The additional practices of having possessed patients drink water over which Qur'ānic verses have been read or writing Qur'ānic verses on a plate, washing it and having one drink the wash-water, seem to have begun among the early generation of Muslims. Likewise, having the demonically possessed bathe in water over which verses from the Qur'ān have been read was recommended by some of the early Muslim scholars. This practice has its counterpart, or perhaps even its origin, in Catholic and Anglican exorcisms wherein holy water is sprinkled on patients.⁵⁸⁰ During an exorcism performed by St. Nibert of Magdeburg (d. 1134 CE), he instructed that the possessed woman "be plunged into exorcised water."⁵⁸¹ "Holy water" – if water on which Qur'ānic verses were recited could be described as such – was not utilised by the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions in their exorcisms. On the other hand, the use of olive oil and its use for diagnostic or therapeutic treatment is relatively new. A modern Anglican exorcist, Dom Robart Petitpierre, recommended the use of blessed oil, saying, "I have known blessed oil, which is used to anoint the forehead of the troubled person, to be of considerable efficacy."⁵⁸² The use of "blessed" water and olive oil has arisen from the unanimous belief among Muslims in the healing qualities of the divine word, which is itself based upon Qur'ānic verses (17:82; 10:57) and prophetic traditions to that effect.

⁵⁷⁷ Collected by Ahmad in *al-Musnad* and by al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak* and authenticated by al-Dhahabī. See *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*, pp. 83-84.

⁵⁷⁸ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 365.

⁵⁷⁹ *Exorcism*, p. 37.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.* See also instruction no. 16 of *The Roman Ritual (The Story Behind The Exorcist)*, p. 219).

⁵⁸¹ *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 183.

⁵⁸² *Exorcising Devils*, p. 37.

This belief has been further extended to justify the use of amulets containing Qur'ānic verses, which is the predominant method for treating the possessed in Sudan. In India, numerology and other occult arts are widely used in the preparation of such amulets. However, the use of amulets has been strictly forbidden by the Prophet (ﷺ) in a number of his authentically recorded statements. For example, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, "Verily, spells, talismans and charms [by incantation] are *shirk*."⁵⁸³

عن عقبه بن عامر الجهني أن رسول الله (ﷺ) أقبل إليه رهط فبايع تسعة
وأمسك عن واحد، فقالوا: يا رسول الله بايعت تسعة وتركك هذا.
قال (إن عليه تيممة) فأدخل يده، ففقطعها، فبايعه وقال: من علق تيممة
فقد أشرك

'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir reported that a group of ten men approached Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) to pledge their allegiance to him. He accepted the oath of allegiance from nine of them, but refused one. When they asked him why he had refused one of them, he replied, "Verily, he is wearing an amulet." The man who was wearing it put his hand into his cloth, pulled it off and broke it, and then made the oath. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, "Whoever wears an amulet has committed *shirk*."⁵⁸⁴

In the case of incantations (*ruqā*), the Prophet (ﷺ) made an exception. If, after hearing the incantation for himself, he determined that the *ruqā* did not contain *shirk*, they were permitted.⁵⁸⁵ However, the exception in the case of allowing *ruqā* cannot be legally extended to amulets. Talismans were also in vogue during the Prophet's time, but he did not ask to see them in order to distinguish between them. Since talismans and amulets were so closely associated with pagan beliefs and rituals, Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) left the prohibition of talismans as general, never specifying if and when they were permitted. Consequently, the use of Qur'ānic amulets or talismans represents a clear deviation from the prophetic way.

The Church succumbed to popular demand and allowed the use of amulets,

⁵⁸³ Collected in *Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1089, no. 3874 and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 2, pp. 736-737, no. 3288.

⁵⁸⁴ Collected by Aḥmad and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣagħīr*, vol. 2, p. 1092, no. 6394.

⁵⁸⁵ See *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1197, no. 5457.

although some Christian scholars opposed this trend. According to the opinion of Arnald of Villanova (d. 1311 CE), a physician and theologian, even divine words, if carried on the body, would represent magic amulets.⁵⁸⁶ This was in agreement with more rigorous churchmen like St. Eligius, who taught them “fraught, not with the remedy of Christ, but with the poison of the Devil.”⁵⁸⁷ However, other physicians, like Bernard of Gordon (d. 1303 CE), made the priest not only recite the biblical passages for epileptics, lunatics and demoniacs, but also write them down so that they may be carried by the patient as an amulet.

As to the Indian practice of using numerology and other occult sciences in the preparation of amulets, it is an even greater deviation from Islām. Numerology has no place in Islām because of its pagan origin.⁵⁸⁸ In fact, the *Abjad* system of numerology in use among Muslims came from the Jewish Cabalist system called *gematria*, in which each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is given a numerical value.⁵⁸⁹ The *Abjad* is in the order of the old Hebrew alphabet up to the number 400, the remaining six letters having been added by the Arabs.⁵⁹⁰

On the other hand, in vogue in Sudan is the burning and inhalation of Qur’ānic verses written on paper. This is not considered an obvious violation of Islamic law, but it could be included in the same category as the practice of drinking the wash-water of Qur’ānic writings. However, in India, the use of occult writings plays an even bigger part than the use of Qur’ānic verses in the practice of inhaling smoke of burnt paper amulets. These inscriptions make the Indian version of this practice a clear violation of Islamic law.

The use of beating during exorcism is a common feature among Arab Muslim exorcists. Those of India and Pakistan (with the exception of Rāna Muḥammad) did not use any form of what may be termed in some cases as “aversion therapy.” The rationale for its use is that the patient who is in a state of somnambulism or amnesia does not feel the blows, but the demon which has overtaken his consciousness does. Consequently, it constitutes a means of punishing the possessing devil and forcing it out

⁵⁸⁶ *The Falling Sickness*, pp. 104-105.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ The Greek origin of numerology can be found in the Pythagorean philosophy that all things can be expressed in numerical terms because they are ultimately reducible numbers. Hence, in the Greek alphabet, each letter represented a number. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 8, p. 829).

⁵⁸⁹ *Into the Unknown*, p. 63.

⁵⁹⁰ *A Dictionary of Islam*, p. 3.

of the patient. In Sudan, flogging is also applied to inhibit undesirable behaviour by patients.⁵⁹¹ This methodology, according to experienced Muslim exorcists, should be applied sparingly and judiciously in order to avoid hurting the patient himself. The origins of this practice can be found in two narrations attributed to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). In one he beat a young boy vigorously while commanding the possessing spirit to leave.⁵⁹² In the other, he struck ‘Uthmān ibn Abi al-‘Ās three times on the chest, blew in his mouth and commanded the spirit to leave. The reliability of the first narration is suspect,⁵⁹³ but the second is authentic.⁵⁹⁴ Beating during exorcism has been attributed to some early scholars, like Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, but such narrations need to be critically researched. However, there is no doubt that later scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah used beating during their treatment. After exorcisms involving physical force, possessed patients usually awaken without any recollection of pain from being beaten.

However, there have been cases when people who were believed to have been possessed have died during exorcisms after severe, excessive beatings. For example, a 30-year old agricultural engineer, Abdul-Fattāḥ Khalīl, died in Cairo in 1988 after a violent exorcism. A relative, Ad-ham, and a friend, Fāris, were charged with murder.⁵⁹⁵ In a village outside Zurich, Switzerland, a teenage girl by the name of Bernadette Hasler died from a violent exorcism in 1966. Three years later, a Zurich court imprisoned Magdalena Kohler and Stocker, co-founders of the Christian cult to which Bernadette belonged, for her death.⁵⁹⁶ A later case (reported in *The Times* on September 4, 1980) involved a preacher and his friend who kicked a

⁵⁹¹ *Fugara Techniques of Mental Healing*, p. 76.

⁵⁹² Collected by al-Ṭabarānī (*al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, vol. 5, pp. 275-6) and Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī from Maṭar ibn ‘Abdul-Raḥmān from Umm Abān from her father, al-Wāzi’, from his father, al-Zāri’ (*ʿUsūd al-Ghābah*, vol. 2, p. 245). There is only one *ḥadīth* narrated by al-Zāri’ in the six main books of *ḥadīth*. That narration is found in *Sunan Abū Dawūd* with the same chain of narration as this *ḥadīth* but the text only mentions that al-Zāri’ and others kissed the Prophet’s hand and feet (*Sunan Abū Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1441, no. 5206). Al-Albānī authenticated (*ḥasan*) the latter narration, excluding the mention of the Prophet’s feet (*Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 981, no. 4353).

⁵⁹³ One of the principal narrators, Hind, known as Umm Abān, the daughter of al-Wāzi’, was classified by Ibn Ḥajar as acceptable (*maqbulah*) in *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 2, p. 619, no. 1. However, this classification is conditional on there being a supporting narration; otherwise, she is considered weak (*layyinah*). Since there are no other supporting narrations for the incident she related, the *ḥadīth* is considered unreliable (*ḍaʿīf*).

⁵⁹⁴ It was collected by Ibn Mājah with a chain of narrators composed of *thiqāt*, eminently reliable narrators, with the exception of ‘Uyaynah ibn ‘Abdul-Raḥmān, who was classed as *ṣaḍūq* (truthful) by Ibn Ḥajar and others, which would make the *isnād ḥasan*. See *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, p. 441, no. 5343.

⁵⁹⁵ *Al-Muslimūn*, vol. 4, issue no. 161, 4/3/88, pp. 1 and 3.

⁵⁹⁶ *The Devil’s Bride*, pp. 171-179.

mentally unstable woman to death as they tried to rid her of an evil spirit, allegedly that of Judas Iscariot, which was possessing her.⁵⁹⁷ Even more recently in June 1991, 20-year old Kousar Bashīr was starved for eight days, given chilli powder to eat, and battered to death in Manchester, England, by two *peers*, 63-year old Muḥammad Nūrāni and 55-year old Muḥammad Bashīr. During the exorcism she suffered 16 fractured ribs and a fractured breast bone from beating with a cane, broken ashtray, fists and from the *peers*' jumping up and down on her stomach.⁵⁹⁸

As was previously stated, the report which mentions the Prophet (ﷺ) vigorously beating the possessed boy is weak and, thus, cannot be used as evidence to support such a practice. The one authentic narration of the Prophet (ﷺ) striking a man in the chest in the course of an exorcism must be understood in conjunction with his statements and the general guidelines of the *Shari'ah*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

لا ضرر ولا ضرار

“One should neither hurt himself nor others.”⁵⁹⁹

He was also quoted as saying,

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده

“The Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.”⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁷ Quoted in *Deliverance: Psychic Disturbances and Occult Involvement*, p. 112.

⁵⁹⁸ *Q News*, vol. 1, ed. 0, Friday, 27th March, 1992, p. 4.

⁵⁹⁹ Reported by 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit and Ibn 'Abbās, collected by Ibn Mājah, Mālik, al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī. (See Fzzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, *An-Nawāwee's Forty Hadeeth* [Salimiah, Kuwait: International Islamic Federation of Student Organisations, 1991], p. 106), and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, p. 39, no. 1896.

⁶⁰⁰ Reported by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀs and collected by Muslim (*Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 29, no. 64).

He also said that if a man reaches the point of striking his reluctant wife, the blow should be:

غير مبرح

i.e., it should not leave a mark.⁶⁰¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) struck ‘Uthmān on the chest three times only. The narrator went to the trouble of mentioning that he sat on the soles of his feet. If the Prophet (ﷺ) had hit him hard, he would have knocked him over, but this is not mentioned, which indicates that the blow was light. Therefore, the Prophet’s action should not be extended beyond the way he did it, since his previously quoted words establish the general rule with regard to beating and inflicting harm. The claim that flogging is a reason for success in treatment cannot be used as a justification for its use. Inflicting unwarranted pain and bodily harm is prohibited. The issue is not whether the patient feels the pain or not, because battering a comatose person is as prohibited as battering a conscious person. The issue is whether it is allowable in Islām. The Prophet (ﷺ) stated,

إن الله أنزل الداء و الدواء و جعل لكل داء دواء فتداووا و لا تداووا

بحرام

“Verily, Allāh has sent down disease and medication, and [He has] made a treatment for every disease. So treat [your sicknesses] but do not treat [them] with what is prohibited.”⁶⁰²

Shaykh ‘Alī Mushrif in Saudi Arabia seems to have developed a unique technique of grasping the patient’s throat in order to force the *jinnī* to expose itself. According to him, this method replaces beating, which he feels causes more harm to the patients than to the possessing spirit. His grasp is a firm, choking grasp which throws the patient into a state of frenzy or causes him to faint. It is alleged that in most cases this technique has proven itself successful. The possessing spirits have revealed themselves, leading to their expulsion and the curing of those possessed. Others have developed a milder grasp of depressing the jugular veins, which starves the brain of oxygenated blood and causes patients to faint. The choking

⁶⁰¹ Reported by Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh and ‘Amr ibn al-Aḥwaṣ and collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 615, no. 2803), Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2, p. 505, no. 1900), al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and al-Dārimī.

⁶⁰² Reported by Abū al-Dardā’, collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, p. 1087, no. 3865) and rated authentic (*ḥasan*) by al-Arnā’ūṭ in *Jāmi’ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 7, p. 512, no. 5626.

or grasping method introduced by Shaykh ‘Alī Mushrif of Madīnah has spread among those who studied his methodology and subsequently set up their own practices in Riyadh and other parts of Saudi Arabia. However, it is not employed in any other areas of the Muslim world. The theory behind this technique is that it causes the possessing devil to expose itself by submerging the human personality. This practice has no foundation in prophetic tradition, and when people are hurt, it violates Islamic Law. Some of Shaykh ‘Alī’s patients whom I interviewed complained of severe neck pains after their treatment. There is also potential danger of brain damage by cutting off the blood supply to the brain. An even greater danger is suffocation by strangulation of patients. In spite of its reported successes, this method is Islamically undesirable. One cannot correctly argue that the suffering caused by choking during exorcism is like the pain involved in an injection against disease. That is, the greater good of the injection outweighs the minor pain of a needle piercing the skin. This argument is not sound, because, in some cases, injection is the only way by which inoculation against certain diseases can be given. However, exorcism may be accomplished in other ways that do not involve physical harm to the patient.

Holding or tying the forelock to “arrest” the *jinn* and tying fingers and toes to “trap” the *jinn* appear to be part of the psychological techniques of auto-suggestion used to help the patient cure himself. Although it has no foundation in prophetic tradition, it does not seem to have any apparent pagan roots, either in its theology or in its ritual. However, it is based upon the erroneous idea held by some Muslim exorcists in India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Trinidad that the *jinn* can be imprisoned within the human body by such means. Consequently, it cannot be considered to have any real value in the actual exorcism of those who are affected by true, demonic possession. When people’s complaints are based upon psychological problems, like neuroses and psychoses, or, to a certain degree, biological reasons, such techniques may have a positive effect. It depends upon the strength of the patient’s confidence in the exorcist, as has been amply demonstrated in the use of placebos by Western experimental psychologists.

The question which arises here is whether the methodology of exorcism is restricted to what was done by the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions or if the field is open for individual experimentation. In respect to *ruqā* and Qur’ānic recitation, it appears that the latter position was taken by the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). The numerous reports of them using different recitations and then asking the Prophet (ﷺ) about it afterwards seem to indicate that the door is open for experimentation within the bounds of divine law. The basic principle appears to be that one may experiment as long as what is done does not contain *shirk*, cause bodily harm or contravene either the letter or the spirit of the divine law in any way. A further principle is that experimentation cannot be done in areas which have already been specified

by the Prophet (ﷺ), because that would involve amending what the Prophet (ﷺ) taught, based upon divine revelation,⁶⁰³ which is inconceivable according to Islamic law and theology. It is stated in the Qur’ān:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

“Whatever the Prophet gives you, take it; and whatever he has forbidden you, leave it.”

Qur’ān, 59:7

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۗ

“He [i.e., the Prophet] did not speak from his own desires. What he said was revelation.”

Qur’ān, 53:3-4

Much of the theory and practice of exorcism in Islām agrees with that of Christianity. This has also been the observation of experienced Christian writers on the subject. For example, John L. Nevius wrote the following in his book, *Demon Possession and Allied Themes*: “There is also much exorcism among the Moslems of Palestine and other sections of the Orient. The Dervishes are especially noted for it. But aside from the fact that they use Koran verses and Moslem terminology, their healings are the same in principle as the Christian.”⁶⁰⁴ However, there is a fundamental difference with regard to the identity of the possessing entity. The Christian church recognises two classes of angels (like some early Muslim exegetes): those obedient to God, who are generally called angels, and those who disobeyed God and came to be referred to as fallen angels. Fallen angels are one source of demonic possession, according to the Christian view. The Church also accepts that the souls of some departed humans can influence events in this world after their death (perhaps originating from the Greek concept of demons). This represents the second source of diabolical possession from the Christian perspective. However, this category has no Biblical basis, and its validity has been contested by some Christian scholars. One of the leading Christian authorities on this subject, John Richards, stated, “Possession by the departed is not mentioned in the Bible, and many friends of mine, for example Prebendary Henry Cooper and Rev. Dennis Peterson, would argue strongly, on quite different grounds, for the impossibility of ‘earthbound’ spirits.”⁶⁰⁵ Some Christian writers have also acknowledged another class of possessing spirits, which they have termed “non-human spirits,” whose

⁶⁰³ *Al-Ruqā*, p. 47.

⁶⁰⁴ Quoted in *By the Finger of God*, p. 59.

⁶⁰⁵ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 152.

origin remains unknown.⁶⁰⁶ Muslim theology on the other hand, recognises only the *jinn* as a source of spirit-possession of humans.

CONCLUSION

The basic concepts and methods of exorcism have changed little in the Orthodox Islamic world over the past fourteen centuries. There has been neither an official formulation of methodology, as took place in Christendom, nor has there evolved a position designated as exorcist. However, in circles where people have deviated from the prophetic path by utilising methods involving amulets and *shirk*, standard methods have evolved and are being taught.⁶⁰⁷ Even though there is no “official” methodology, there is continuity of practice among Muslim scholars. This is due to the great emphasis placed upon closely following the Sunnah of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and avoiding innovation in religious practices. Abū Najīb quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

عليكم بسنتي و سنة الخلفاء المهديين الراشدين تمسكوا بها و عضوا
عليها بالنواجذ وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة
ضلالة

“Keep to my Sunnah and that of the rightly-guided caliphs after me. Bite onto it with your molars, and beware of innovations, for verily, they are all [forms of] heresy, which are all misguidance [leading to the Hellfire].”⁶⁰⁸

The Prophet’s wife, ‘Ā’ishah, reported that he also said,

من أحدث في أمرنا هذا ما ليس منه فهو رد

“Whoever introduces something new into our religion that does not belong in it will have it rejected.”⁶⁰⁹

The practice of exorcism is based upon the belief that spirits can enter,

⁶⁰⁶ *Exorcism*, p. 22.

⁶⁰⁷ See for example, *Prophetic Medical Sciences, Jawāhir al-Khamsah* and *Shams al-Ma’ārif*.

⁶⁰⁸ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1294, no. 4590) and al-Tirmidhī and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 871, no. 3851.

⁶⁰⁹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 535, no. 861 and *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 931, no. 4266.

occupy or possess inanimate objects, places, animals and human beings. One identifying feature of demonic possession is that it involves a partial or complete change of personality of the possessed person. His normal self is replaced by an abnormal personality believed to be that of a demon.⁶¹⁰ Prior to the advent of modern scientific theories and methodologies, exorcism was more readily seen as a cure for personality disorders. The ideas about demonic possession in the past often had the same respectable standing that theories of science have today. However, this once reputable profession has presently fallen into disrepute in the West and to a large degree in the East. The modern person looks upon exorcism as superstition. This may be due to the radical changes in man's ideas about his own nature and the world in which he lives. These new concepts form the body of modern science. Medicine today completely rejects the notion that demons can cause disease. Methods of treatment are based upon newly developed concepts about personality.⁶¹¹ The phenomena called "demon possession" now seems to occur less frequently in those parts of the world where science has been freely accepted. It should be kept in mind that in the past the exorcist was seen for any and all of the complaints which today's physicians handle. The disappearance of exorcism on a large scale has come about primarily because of the acceptance of a new physiology and psychology which treat man's problems and which reject the belief that spirits can cause illnesses. In this new structure of thought, there is no place for what appears as irrational, and this includes the belief in demonic possession and the practice of exorcism. The exorcist, with his commands, incantations or charms, has today been replaced by a physician who diagnoses on the basis of naturalistic theories and then proceeds with treatment along rational lines.

The mysteries of personality still remain, but the approach to them is now different. However, the basic phenomena of human life and the natural world remain the same today as they were before. The change that has come about is in our ideas of them. While the old phenomena remain unchanged, modern science has given us new concepts about them. The new terminology seems to be more efficient, but it still designates essentially the same facts of life. To understand disease more fully is not to alter its own nature. The modern physician still faces the same phenomenon, but he brings a new understanding and new methods of healing.

The exorcist was among other things a physician. It was his function to cure disease; and, in general, disease was the same then as it is today. It is a historical fact that, at times, the exorcist cured the sick. Occasional success was sufficient to validate his procedure. In evolving efforts to treat patients,

⁶¹⁰ *By the Finger of God*, p. 12.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

he stumbled upon principles of sound therapy which worked in spite of inaccurate interpretations of them. Exorcism has been most successful for illnesses which yield to suggestion. The principle of suggestion probably accounts for most of the cures which are achieved.⁶¹² In modern times, medicine is rediscovering the virtue of suggestion as an instrument of healing. Just how this principle operates in restoring deranged minds and ailing bodies still appears to be a mystery, but the fact of its healing value can not be denied. Healing by exorcism usually involves confidence: faith in the healer and assurance that the demon will be driven away.⁶¹³ Psychiatry has come to be a recognised branch of healing, and every reputable physician frequently utilises suggestion in his ordinary treatment of disease. Confidence and faith are important aspects of the healing process, without which the physician's power is greatly limited. This is not to discredit drugs, surgery and other procedures, but underlying them all is the element of faith in the skill, especially in the knowledge, of the physician.⁶¹⁴ The successful physician establishes confidence in himself, and he deliberately builds up in the mind of his patient the belief that he is going to get well.

Specific characteristics are exhibited during treatment of possession. The demon recognises the exorcist, usually admitting the superiority of the exorcist's power. The exorcist in turn speaks to the demon, threatening him. After begging for mercy, which may or may not be granted, with visible signs the demon departs from the afflicted person. The technique of the exorcist usually consists of incantations or adjurations involving divine names.⁶¹⁵ These elements are found in records of exorcisms performed worldwide by representatives of the major religions. The symptoms which are associated with demonic possession are generally classified by modern psychiatry as neuroses or psychoses, and these labels are further divided into organic, toxic and psychogenic. Under organic are included psychoses resulting from syphilis, senility, arteriosclerosis, head injuries, epilepsy and neurological disorders. Toxic psychoses result from alcoholism, metal poisoning, drugs or certain bodily diseases. The third group includes classifications of paranoia, schizophrenia, mental deficiency and psycho-neuroses. This is subdivided into states like hysteria, anxiety and compulsion neuroses. It is obvious that the psychoses resulting from organic and toxic conditions respond best to medical treatment, while those which are psychogenic in origin (which constitute over fifty percent of all cases) yield only to treatment which is primarily psychological in nature. However, there may be an advantage in using psychological therapy as a

⁶¹² *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 100.

⁶¹³ *By the Finger of God*, pp. 16-18.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

supplement to other therapies in treating organic and toxic psychoses.⁶¹⁶ It should be noted that the new psychological and psychiatric labels are more descriptions of symptoms than of causes,⁶¹⁷ and as such, do not rule out the possibility of demonic possession. Regarding such labels, Victor White in *God and the Unconscious* concludes:

This writer's limited acquaintance [Fr. White was a foundation member and lecturer at the Jung Institute of Analytical Psychology!] with psychiatric literature, confirmed by discussions with psychiatric friends, strongly suggests that the names by which mental diseases are classified are purely descriptive, and in no sense at all cover etiological explanations; that is to say they are no more than labels for certain syndromes or symptoms which are commonly associated together. To the extent that their respective psychosomatic 'causes' are understood (which would not seem, in most cases, to be to any great extent), this would seem in no way to invalidate such conceptions of their diabolic origin.⁶¹⁸

Thus, the ultimate cause is not always within the sphere of medicine or psychiatry. For example, schizophrenia may be due to a chemical imbalance or it may not. In the body/mind/spirit unity of man, it would be logical to expect some suffering, if not traceable to bodily or mental factors, to be due to spiritual causes.⁶¹⁹

Convulsive disorders peculiar to demoniacs have been identified by modern science as epilepsy. However, epilepsy is itself an ill-defined group of disorders sharing characteristic fits and seizures. When a cause of epilepsy can be detected, the condition is termed "symptomatic epilepsy." However, two-thirds of epileptics suffer from what is called "idiopathic epilepsy" in which the cause is unknown. In the first case, the symptoms as well as the causes can be treated, for they are known. But in the latter case, only the symptoms can be treated. Apart from the fits, the individual can remain in perfect health. Yet, as many as one-fifth of epileptics receive no benefit from existing drugs.⁶²⁰ In addition, those diagnosed as epileptic in well-known cases of exorcism do not automatically exclude demonic possession as the cause of their disease. Epilepsy, like most psychiatric labels, is the name of a symptom, not a description of its origin. Doctor John Wilkinson, writing on "The Case of the Epileptic Boy" in the *Expository Times*, vol. 1xxix, no.

⁶¹⁶ *By the Finger of God*, pp. 25-26.

⁶¹⁷ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 106.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

⁶²⁰ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, pp. 98-100.

2, writes: "If demon possession is a fact, there seems no reason why it could not be the cause of some cases of epilepsy. We do not know enough about the spirit world to disprove demon possession, nor enough about epilepsy to deny that it may be caused by such possession."⁶²¹

Regardless of the variety of causes which lead to it, somnambulism or amnesia are also forms of demonic possession which bring about a change in personality.⁶²² The individual either temporarily or permanently forgets his real identity. It is a form of sleep. Hypnosis is also a form of sleep, a type of amnesia that the physician artificially induces for the purpose of his therapy. The suggestion made by the physician to the patient under hypnosis is therefore virtually identical with the spell uttered by the exorcist to the person supposed to be possessed.⁶²³ Thus, even this favourite tool of modern psychiatry seems to be a case of new labels on ancient methodologies.

Various accounts of exorcism in pagan, Christian and Islamic sources manifest a general uniformity in the symptoms of the possessed, in the conversations between the demons and the exorcists, and in the relief which the afflicted person enjoys after the demon has been driven out. This has been verified by people who have witnessed successful exorcisms and by ancient stories describing treatments. Uniformity exists because we are dealing with things which really occur, not with mere creations of the imagination.⁶²⁴ Does medical success in the treatment of the mentally deranged automatically mean that its physiological and psychological interpretations more accurately describe the phenomena than the universal description of exorcisms from those who believe in demonic possession? Centuries ago Islamic scholars distinguished between psychoses whose origins were biological and those which were spiritual. The authentic, Islamic traditions clearly indicate that some cases of derangement are a product of diabolical possession. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) addressed real entities, which he commanded to leave from the possessed people brought to him, and so did Jesus Christ. Consequently, from the Islamic perspective, there is no room for doubt about the occurrence of demonic possession.

However, that does not justify the extremes to which some modern Muslim exorcists have gone in labelling all unusual psychological symptoms as evidence for possession. For example, Waḥīd Abdul-Salām Bālī lists in his book, *Wiqāyah al-Insān min al-Jinn wal-Shayṭān (Protecting Mankind from the Jinn and Satan)*, the following thirteen symptoms which may occur

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁶²² *Possession and Exorcism*, p. 39.

⁶²³ *By the Finger of God*, p. 28.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

during sleep as evidence of possession: 1) insomnia; 2) disturbed sleep; 3) seeing in a dream something disturbing and wishing to call for help but being unable to call out; 4) nightmares; 5) seeing animals like cats, dogs, camels, snakes, lions, foxes or rats in dreams; 6) grinding one's teeth; 7) laughing, crying or screaming; 8) moaning; 9) sleepwalking; 10) dreaming of oneself about to fall from a high place; 11) having a dream in which one sees oneself in a graveyard, in a garbage dump, or on a desolate road; 12) seeing strange-looking humans who are extremely tall, incredibly short or black; and 13) seeing ghosts in one's dreams.⁶²⁵

The list covers virtually all of the common human sleep experiences, thereby indicating that almost everyone is possessed – which is a gross exaggeration. Muslim and Christian exorcists unanimously indicated that only a minority of patients who came to them were actually diabolically possessed. A list such as Wahīd's places well over 90 percent of human beings in the category of being possessed.

The question which remains to be answered regarding the Islamic view of exorcism is, "How does Islām explain successful exorcisms performed by Christians over the centuries when it considers Christianity to be a false religion?" First and foremost, it must be said that Islām recognises the exorcisms of Jesus Christ and his true followers as being in conformity with Islamic and Mosaic tradition. That is, according to the Islamic view, Jesus exorcised by the will of God and so did his disciples. Furthermore, it is believed that the disciples exorcised in the name of God and not in Jesus' name, as recorded in the Gospels.

As for those who exorcise in the name of Jesus or in the name of Muḥammad (ﷺ), they are considered within the same classification as those who exorcise in pagan religions in the names of their gods or by using sorcery. Since the possessing spirits are fundamentally evil, they will leave if *shirk* is done in their presence. Their leaving reinforces in the minds of the audience and the exorcist that their false beliefs and methods are correct.

⁶²⁵ *Wiqāyah al-Insān min al-Jinn wal-Shayṭān*, p. 77.

Consequently, the *jinn* leave the diabolically possessed during Christian and pagan exorcisms by their own free will, having accomplished their malevolent goal of misguiding mankind as promised by Satan in the Qur’ān:

قَالَ فِيمَا آغْوَيْتَنِي لأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾
 ثُمَّ لآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ
 وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

“[Satan] said, ‘Because You have sent me astray, I will surely sit in wait against them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come at them from their front and from behind, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them dutiful to You.’”

Qur’ān, 7:16-17

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا آغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

“[Satan] said, ‘O my Lord, because You sent me astray, I will surely beautify the path of error for them [i.e., mankind] on earth, and I will mislead them all.’”

Qur’ān, 15:39

قَالَ فِعْرَنِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

“[Satan] said, ‘Then, by Your might, I will mislead them all.’”

Qur’ān, 38:82.

Thus, the revulsion shown by the demonically possessed to the sign of the cross, the sprinkling of “holy water,” relics of the saints, etc., is all feigned by the possessing spirit. This is to delude the Christian exorcist into thinking that these symbols have power over the spirits and to falsely assure these exorcists that their belief in the divinity of Christ – which is considered by Muslims the greatest act of *shirk* [idolatry] – is correct. The spirit’s exit may be quick, or it may be slow and torturous. When there is an opportunity for the spectacular, the *jinn* will put on a show in order to create a lasting impression on the witnesses.

The following eye-witness account from the autobiographical book by Peter Goullart published in 1961 further illustrates this point of view:

“We arrived at a medium-sized stone courtyard, halfway up the hill, situated in front of a temple. There was a small group of onlookers standing in corners in the shadow of the wall, among them a distracted couple who... were the energumen’s parents. The energumen himself, a rather emaciated man of about twenty-five...lay on an iron bedstead on a rush mat. He was very pale and there was a wild, roving look in his fevered eyes. The [Taoist] priest...was attired in full ritual robes and stood before a portable altar on which was an incense burner, the small image of a god, a vase of holy water, a ritual sword and other articles and a book from which he was reading. Two monks were assisting him, whilst four muscular men watched the prostrate demoniac.

The Abbot was reading the [Taoist] scriptures in a monotonous, droning voice, repeating mantras over and over again with a great deal of concentration. Then he stopped and, taking an elongated ivory tablet, the symbol of wisdom and authority, he held it ceremonially in both hands in front of his chest and approached the bed slowly. There was a visible transformation on the energumen’s face. His eyes were filled with malice as he watched the priest’s measured advance with a sly cunning and hatred. Suddenly he gave a bestial whoop and jumped up in his bed, the four attendants rushing to hold him. “No! No! You cannot drive us out. We were two against one. Our power is greater than yours!” The sentences poured out of the energumen’s mouth in a strange, shrill voice, which sounded mechanical, inhuman – as if pronounced by a parrot. The priest looked at the victim intensely, gathering all his inner strength; beads of perspiration appeared on his thin face. “Come out! Come out! I command you to come out!” He was repeating in a strong metallic voice with great force. “I am using the power of the One compared to whom you are nothing. In his name I command you to come out.”...The man was struggling in the bed with incredible strength against the four men who held him. Animal growls and howls issued from time to time from his mouth... I had the impression that a pack of wild animals was fighting inside the body...Terrible threats poured out of the contorted mouth, now fringed in white foam, and interspersed with such incredible obscenities that the women had to plug their ears with their fingers...Again the Abbot cried his command to the unseen adversaries to leave the prostrate man. There was a burst of horrible laughter from the victim’s throat and suddenly with a mighty heave of his supernaturally strengthened arms he threw off the men who held him and jumped at the priest’s throat like a mad bloodhound. But he was overpowered again. This time they bound him with ropes and fastened the ends to the bedposts...

“Leave him! Leave him!” cried the monk concentrating harder...For an hour this continued and then the energumen...seemed to come to rest, with his eyes watching the unmoved priest who was still reading...The priest stopped reading; with sweat pouring down his face, he backed down to the altar, laid down the tablet and took up the ritual sword. Threateningly

and commandingly he stood again over the energumen. "The struggle is useless!" He cried, "Leave him! Leave him, in the name of the Supreme Power, who never meant you to steal this man's body!"...A long time passed with the Abbot reading and commanding interminably. At last he sprinkled the inert man with holy water and advanced to him again with a sword. His concentration was so deep that he did not seem to see anybody. He was utterly exhausted and swayed slightly. Two novices came up to support him.

"I have won!" he cried triumphantly in a strange voice. "Get out! Get out!" The energumen stirred and fell into dreadful convulsions. His eyes rolled up and only the whites were visible..."Damn you! Damn you!" came a wild scream from the foaming lips. "We are going, but you shall pay for it with your life!" There was a terrible struggle on the bed, the poor man twisting and rolling like a mortally-wounded snake...Suddenly he fell flat on his back and was still. His eyes opened. His gaze was normal and he saw his parents who now came forward. "My parents!" he cried weakly. "Where am I?" He was feeble and they carried him out in a specially ordered sedan chair. The Abbot himself was in a terrible state of prostration and was half-carried and half-dragged away by his novices...

The Taoist hosts stated that these exorcist priests sacrificed years of their mortal lives as the price for every victory of this kind, their vital forces drained and spent."⁶²⁶

All of the elements of possession and exorcism are contained in this narrative. And, like many Christian exorcisms, it is very taxing on the exorcist. The robes, relics and rituals are the same as within Catholic tradition, and the treatment is impressive. The Taoist consider their supreme being, *Tao*, to be ineffable, eternal, and the creative reality which is the source and end of all things.⁶²⁷ He is called upon, but somehow it is the "power" of the exorcist which appears to exorcise the energumen. This is why he exclaims, "I have won!" Consequently, exorcism takes its toll on the Taoist exorcists. However, it is not his powers of concentration or spiritual training which overcame the demon, but his reliance on false rituals and idols which satisfied the devil's wish.

⁶²⁶ Quoted in *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism*, pp. 101-104 from Laurence G. Thompson, *Chinese Religion: An Introduction*.

⁶²⁷ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 11, p. 551.

Allāh said in the Qur’ān:

وَجَدْتُهُمْ وَاقِفَةً يُسْجِدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَرَبِّينَ لَهُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ فُصَّدَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ

“I [i.e., Prophet Sulaymān] found her [i.e., the Queen of Sheba] and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allāh. And Satan had made their deeds fair-seeming to them and barred them from the path [of truth]...”

Qur’ān, 27:24

Non-Muslims may be expected to raise the objection that if *jinn* sometimes leave the possessed of their own free will and sometimes are driven out by exorcism, then who is to say which exorcist tradition forces them to leave? What is to say that they don’t leave of their own free will after a Muslim exorcism in order to confirm the Muslims in their particular religious misconceptions? The Muslim’s response to this is that the criterion for distinguishing between the truly effective and the seemingly effective exorcism is the presence or absence of *shirk*. Whenever the exorcism ritual involves *shirk*, the invocation of anyone besides Almighty God, then the desires of the evil *jinn* are fulfilled, and there is nothing in such a process to compel them to leave, and if they do so it is of their own free will.

In the case of Orthodox Muslim exorcisms or those of other religions where only Almighty God is called upon without giving Him associates and without attributing His attributes to others, the evil *jinn* are defeated and expelled by the force of truth. An illustration of a part of this conclusion may be found in a statement of Justin Martyr to Trypho, the Jew, with whom he was debating the truth of Christianity: “For every demon, when exorcised in the name of this very Son of God...is overcome and subdued. But though you exorcise any demon in the name of any of those who were amongst you – either kings, or righteous men, or prophets, or patriarchs – it will not be subject to you. But if any of you exorcise it in the name of the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, it will perhaps be subject to you.”⁶²⁸

Calling upon God alone was recognised by this second century, Christian scholar as a successful method of exorcism. Note, however, how confused his declaration of this principle is, for “this very Son of God” is in no way the God of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. Freedom from *shirk* is what distinguishes Islām from every other religion on the face of the earth. Although prophets came to all peoples with the message of *Tawḥīd* (monotheism), deviations

⁶²⁸ Justin, *Dialogue* Ixxxv, quoted in *By the Finger of God*, pp. 87-88.

crept into the beliefs of their followers after the passing of the prophets. These deviations reached the point of corrupting the scriptures and central message of all religious traditions except the scripture of the final prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ). For although there are Muslims who have lost the understanding of *Tawḥīd*, the most essential principle of the religion, the message is still intact in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah in its pristine form, and there are still Muslims who understand it and practise it. Every other religious tradition has become contaminated with elements of *shirk*, the worship of other than the One True God, and this contamination tends to be present in their exorcism procedures. There is no difference between calling upon Jesus or calling upon Buddha or upon a Hindu avatar to remove the affliction, because they are all created beings. There is a difference between all that and calling solely upon the Creator, as is only done in Islām, because He alone has the power to drive the *jinn* out. Consequently, the only tradition where one can expect to find exorcism procedures that are free from *shirk* is orthodox Islām. This makes Islām unique among the world’s religious traditions and leaves it as the only logical candidate for true exorcism which drives the *jinn* out against their will.

Although there are records of Muslims appearing “successful” exorcising possessed people using the name of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), such exorcisms are looked at in the same light as Christian exorcisms conducted in the name of Jesus and pagan exorcisms performed in the name of other deities. For example, Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, head of the Beirut law courts, wrote:

While exorcising, I have tested swearing by the Prophet (ﷺ) along with [recitation of] the Almighty’s statement, “**Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and those with him are stern with the disbelievers...**”⁶²⁹ to the end of *Sūrah Fatḥ* (48), on my two young daughters who had fits, and they became well. Among the most unusual incidents [which I have encountered] was that of Ghazālī, our Ethiopian servant. She was seized by demonic epileptic fits on the Ḥijāz road. [We were] on our way to Makkah after returning from a visit [to the Prophet’s grave] in 1285 AH. Egypt was our final destination. Her fits and convulsions continued for some days, and I besought the Prophet (ﷺ) for help. During a dream, the one possessing her was brought to me by the Prophet’s command, and I scolded him. He swore not to return to her again. When I awoke, her pain had disappeared; and from that point onward, it did not return to her – *alḥamdulillāh* – and she remained in good health until I parted with her in Makkah in 1294 AH.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ Qur’ān, 48:29.

⁶³⁰ *Al-Anwār al-Muḥammadiyyah min al-Mawāhib al-Laduniyyah*, p. 457.

However, it needs to be pointed out that swearing by the Prophet's name is strictly forbidden in Islām, based upon the Prophet's statement:

أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَنْهَاهُمْ أَنْ تَحْلِفُوا بِآبَائِكُمْ، فَمَنْ كَانَ حَالِفاً فَلْيَحْلِفْ بِاللَّهِ وَإِلَّا

فَلْيَصْمِتْ

“Surely, Allāh forbids you to swear by your fathers. So whoever has to take an oath, let him do so by Allāh or be quiet.”⁶³¹

In fact, swearing by the Prophet's name is considered an act of idolatry (*shirk*), according to another statement of the Prophet (ﷺ),

مَنْ حَلَفَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ

“Whoever has sworn by other than Allāh has associated partners [with Allāh].”⁶³²

Consequently, the cure could not have been because of al-Nabhānī's act of *shirk*. Similarly, calling upon the dead for help is an idolatrous act, because the deceased cannot do anything in this world after their death. The Prophet (ﷺ) stated,

إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ

“When a man dies, his acts cease.”⁶³³

So the cure which took place in al-Nabhānī's dream could not have been in the way he perceived. In both of these cases it was not the name of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) which affected a cure, but the possessing *jinnū* left when idolatry was resorted to in order to convince al-Nabhānī of the validity of his actions.

Names such as Jesus and Muḥammad are not magical entities. They have no special power. John Richards had the following to say in this regard:

The Apostolic Church healed in the Name of Jesus, not because they

⁶³¹ Reported by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and collected in *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 8, p. 417, no. 642 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 875, no. 4038.

⁶³² Reported by Ibn 'Umar, collected by al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad, and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣagḥīr*, vol. 5, p. 282, no. 6080.

⁶³³ Reported by Abū Hurayrah and collected in *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 867, no. 4005.

regarded it as magically significant, but as signifying that it was not they who were healing, a fact that Peter makes very clear in Acts 3. It is well known that the Name in Babylonian and Assyrian demonology was of foremost importance in using 'words of power.' The fact that Jesus' name could be used in this way successfully (see Mark 9:38) does not indicate that this was the Church's use of it. The fate of Sceva's sons⁶³⁴ has already been referred to and illustrates the dangers of confusion about this.⁶³⁵

However, the stress placed on the name of Jesus by the second century church fathers seem to indicate otherwise. In conclusion, the Islamic view holds that the power to exorcise comes from Allāh alone and not from any of His creatures. It is in His name alone that devils are actually driven out. In the name of others, the devils leave of their own free will, or they are obliged to exit due to the human body/mind becoming uninhabitable as a result of treatment by drugs, electric shock or physical abuse.

⁶³⁴ The seven Jewish sons of Sceva tried to exorcise a possessed man at Ephesus in Jesus' name but failed and were severely beaten by the energumens. (Acts 19:13-14).

⁶³⁵ *But Deliver Us from Evil*, p. 165.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW: NO.1

LOCATION: Cairo, Egypt

DATE: 9/8/88

NAME: Shaykh Muḥammad Ṭāhir ‘Abdul-Muḥsin

DATE OF BIRTH: 1952

PLACE OF BIRTH: Cairo

EDUCATION: BA in Islamic Studies from al-Azhar University, specialising in *qirā’āt*, 1978. Lectures occasionally at al-Azhar.

Q. When did you begin practising exorcism?

A. I began about nine or ten years ago.

Q. What caused you to begin?

A. I read Ibn Taymiyyah’s book on the *jinn* and when my friend in Ṭālibiyyah described his wife’s state, I realised that it was a case of possession and proceeded to treat her.

Q. What are the signs which indicate that a person is possessed?

A. Some of the signs are that a person mentions that he is uneasy, he finds himself getting up and sitting down frequently, he speaks unintelligibly, etc. This is called demonic possession (*ṣar’ al-jinn*).

Q. What is the first thing you do when a possessed person is brought to you?

A. In the beginning, we ask the possessed if he has been treated by a physician. If he has already been treated by a doctor, we address the *jinnī*, saying, “Fear Allāh!” I speak to it in the same way that I speak to a human. If he is in a state of convulsion, I speak directly to the *jinnī*. Otherwise, I recite over him some Qur’ānic verses. Sometimes it will manifest itself during the recitation and at other times it will hide.

Q. How do you distinguish between one who is possessed and one who is sick?

A. The state of the possessed is unstable, and they usually do not come to me until after they have visited a physician or psychiatrist. Patients usually won’t come until after they have tried all other methods. In that way, we know that he is likely to be possessed or possibly under a magical spell.

Q. How do you distinguish between the effects of magic and demonic possession?

A. In the case of possession the *jinn* will speak immediately, yet for a patient under a magical spell the *jinn* will not talk. The one under a magic spell will require recitation for a long time, and he will need to take Arabic folk medicine. This is encouraged, according to the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) collected by Muslim, “Whoever is able to help his brother should do so.” When the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited incantations, someone stated, “O Messenger of Allāh, we have some incantations against magic and scorpions.” He said to them, “Read your incantations to me.” When they did so, he prohibited those containing idolatry and confirmed those which did not. He then said, “Whoever is able to help his brother, let him do so.” He meant by that, for example, cancelling the effects of magic from one bewitched, which may make him unable to go to his wife. He takes a double edged axe, heats it on a fire until it becomes red, then he passes it over her. This does not have *shirk* in it. It is Arabic medicine. Such things are mentioned in *Fatḥ al-Bārī*.

There are two ways of treating magic – one way is according to divine law (*sharīah*) and another is not. The legal way removes it completely while the illegal method only removes it temporarily. Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned that if the effects of the spell have been present for a long time, it must be broken by Arabic medicinal methods. On the other hand, if it is recent, it may be removed by Qur’ānic verses and prophetic methods.

Q. Based upon your communication with possessing *jinn*, what are the main reasons why *jinn* possess humans?

A. The reasons are as follows:

1. Walking around the house naked.
2. Being isolated and unprotected by the prophetic morning and evening prayers.
3. Entering the toilet without the fortifying prayers because the toilets are among the dwelling places of the *jinn*.
4. Pouring hot water on the *jinnī* without mentioning Allāh’s name.
5. Going without making the fortifying prayers to the areas of the *jinn*, like mountain tops and garbage dumps, hurting them by urinating on them or stepping on them – The *jinn* may then ignorantly hurt the person much more than he deserves. In such cases, the treatment involves addressing the *jinnī* and telling it that the patient had accidentally – and not intentionally – hurt it. If it was harmed in the patient’s home, it should be told that it had no right to be there in the first place, for *jinn* are not allowed to live in the homes of humans. Thus, the *jinnī* should be told that it is in the wrong. They will actually reply. Sometimes they will say, “I love him.” Other times they may threaten those in their presence by saying, “I will leave and hurt him.” In such cases, the exorcist must have strong faith and believe in the oneness of Allāh and say to the *jinnī*, “You are certainly not able to do anything at all because the only one who can benefit or harm is Allāh.”

At that point, the *jinnī* will become fearful and cause the person to shake.

Q. Who are most affected by *jinn*, men or women?

A. Women are most affected because the *jinn* love beautiful women. They may even have intercourse with them. A case of possession was presented to me in which a Christian woman said that she feels something come upon her and she struggles with it but it overcomes her. I told her, “Accept Islām and I will – by the grace of Allāh – remove it from you.” She refused, so I left her. Consensual intercourse can take place between them, but this would be a major sin because Allāh has created that which is suitable for each species. Thus, it is not allowable for humans to marry from the animal world.

Q. Do male *jinn* possess women and female *jinn* possess men, or is it possible that male *jinn* possess males and vice-versa?

A. In reference to those *jinn* who possess because of love, their love for humans is based upon desire. Therefore, male *jinn* love women, and female *jinn* love men. However, there is no gender preference when humans accidentally cause harm to *jinn*. For example, we saw a man from Upper Egypt who knew nothing of the Qur’ān and Sunnah, but in his possessed state he would recite the Qur’ān like a trained reciter. When the *jinnī* was removed, we discovered that it used to worship in a cave. The man, who was a stonemason, went into the cave and urinated and defecated in it, so the *jinnī* hurt him. We told the *jinnī*, “You are a Muslim who has memorized the Qur’ān, and spoiling this man’s mind and body is satanic.” The *jinnī* complied by leaving.

Q. From your experience, if a *jinnī* speaks, does he use the voice of the possessed person or does the voice change?

A. The voice is often different. If it is a female *jinnī*, it speaks with a female voice, and a male *jinnī* with a male voice.

Q. Can a disbelieving *jinnī* enter a Muslim?

A. Usually a disbelieving *jinnī* enters a Muslim. The conditions of the *jinn* are like that of the humans. Some are Muslims and others are not. Some are righteous and others are not. However, it is possible for a Muslim *jinnī* to harm a Muslim human.

Q. Whenever you address the *jinn* and invite them to Islām, do they accept it?

A. Yes. I present Islām to them and they usually accept. I remind them of the next life and that they will have to return to Allāh. They often comply immediately. Sometimes they listen to a great deal of religious admonition, yet do not respond. The ease or difficulty of their removal varies from one person to another. By using methods involving *kufr*, the *jinn* will respond but they won’t leave permanently. If the exorcist possesses strong faith, the *jinnī* will respond and leave. However, if he does not, the possession of

the person will continue. In the *kufr* methods, the *jinn* are called up using unlawful means, like making oaths containing *shirk* and *kufr*. For example, they say, "I swear by your seven most mighty." In such a case *shirk* is involved, and assuredly the *jinn* will answer him and ask him what he wishes because he has exalted them. He will then ask the *jinn* to leave, but the *jinn* will ask him to do some things in return. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah said that one should not do anything that the *jinn* request. If he tells you to drink water or sacrifice an animal for him, it should not be done. If he says that he will leave for one reason or another, tell him that he must leave in obedience to Allāh and His Messenger.

Q. From your experience, how do *jinn* benefit from possessing humans?

A. It is from love or just desire. For example, if an ignorant man walking down the street is accidentally hurt by an intelligent person, the ignorant man decides to punish the intelligent one. What benefit does he get from that? It is just ignorance. There are prophetic traditions which indicate that the *jinn* may take the form of vermin, like snakes and rats. One may kill a vermin without mentioning Allāh's name and it may have been one of them. Because of this, the *jinn* may afflict him with some punishment.

Q. How does a *jinnī* enter a human?

A. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that the devil flows in the blood stream of Adam's descendants. Sometimes it may have fun with the superstitious by saying that it will leave through the eye of the possessed and gouge it out or that it will leave by his leg, paralysing it. Consequently, the true believer should not accept such statements but tell it to leave as it came. Sometimes the *jinn* will only leave if they are flogged.

Q. Have you found any *jinn* who spoke in a different language than the one possessed?

A. Yes. We found a *jinnī* in an Egyptian woman who spoke Urdu. He was originally from Pakistan. He said that he was on *ḥajj* and fell in love with her and returned with her to Egypt. His name was strange, incomprehensible. He said that he lived in an abandoned apartment and that he had over ten thousand children and grandchildren. Some people may hear this and ask, "How could ten thousand live in one apartment?" However, we already pointed out that they may take the form of vermin, like ants.

I also helped a Saudi married to an Egyptian woman who used to curse her husband in different languages, like English and French. I communicated with the *jinnī* in Arabic, and it left her after promising to do so.

Sometimes exorcists fall into *shirk* as a result of a *jinnī*. For example, when an exorcist orders a *jinnī* to leave a person by the permission of Allāh, but the *jinnī* swears that it will only leave by other than Allāh (e.g., swearing to leave by a so-called saint) and the exorcist agrees to its stipulation, this is *shirk*. If the exorcist strictly believes in the oneness of Allāh, he will say to

it, “No. You are a liar and a pagan. You are not allowed to swear by other than Allāh. You must swear by Allāh, saying, ‘I promise Allāh to leave the person and protect her from others as much as possible. By the One who split the sea for Moses and made the winds blow for Solomon, I will leave her and will not return again.’” And it will actually leave.

Q. When you address the *jinn*, do you find that they have names like humans?

A. Yes. They sometimes name themselves with human names like ‘Abdul-‘Azīz. At other times they have non-human names and incomprehensible titles.

Q. Have any of your children been affected by possession after you began treating possessed people?

A. No, may Allāh be praised. My children recite from the Qur’ān the two chapters of protection (*mu’awwidhatān*) and the opening chapter (*al-Fātiḥah*). The Qur’ān is a cure for all physical and spiritual ailments. If the people ask how disease can be resisted, the response is that resistance is granted by the Lord of the earth and the sky. The proof of this is that the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) treated scorpion stings with the recitation of *al-Fātiḥah*. The sting was a physical ailment and the recitation of *al-Fātiḥah* was a spiritual healing. Ibn al-Qayyim also used as proof the Almighty’s statement:

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“We revealed in the Qur’ān what is a healing and mercy for the believers.”⁶³⁶

This is in reference to all forms of ailment, physical or spiritual. In several known cases when the possessed reached the door of a particular house, the *jinnī* screamed out, “I will never enter this place because the Qur’ān is read in it.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If *Sūrah al-Baqarah* is read in a house, the devil will not come near it for three days.”⁶³⁷

Q. During an exorcism have you ever found more than one *jinnī* in a person?

A. Yes, more than one *jinnī* may cause harm to a person’s body, as Ibn Taymiyyah confirmed. They will also have different voices.

⁶³⁶ Qur’ān, 17:82.

⁶³⁷ This version of the *ḥadīth* was collected by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 6, p. 163, no. 5864, and by Ibn Ḥibbān. Both *isnāds* share a weak narrator, Khālīd ibn Sa’d al-Madanī, as was mentioned by al-Arnā’ūt. (See *al-Iḥsān fī Tartīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, vol. 3, p. 59, no. 780.) Imāms Muslim, Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī reported a *ḥadīth* similar to this, but without a mention of a time period. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 377, no. 1707.) See note 433, p. 124.

Q. Could you describe the steps that you use for treatment?

A. First I ask the person being treated his name and he may say, for example, Aḥmad or Muḥammad. During my recitation I again ask for his name and he may say, for example, George. Therefore I know that it is a *jinnī*. I then ask if it is a Muslim and so on.

Q. If you communicate with the *jinnī* and it refuses to leave, what do you do?

A. I recite many verses of Qurʾān over him. And if it still refuses to leave, I then say, “I will drive you out with severe beating.” It becomes fearful, because humans are stronger than *jinn*. I saw a case in which a *jinnī* was in love with a woman, and I said to it, “I will read a lot of Qurʾān over you.” It replied that it loved the Qurʾān. I asked it how it could love the Qurʾān and at the same time be passionately in love with a woman. I brought a stick and hit her on the neck with it, yet the possessed woman did not feel anything. Only in cases of possession should beating be used.

Q. Do you tie the toes of the person?

A. There are many different methods which do not contain *shirk* or *kufr* which may be used.

Q. Do you recite over water and make the possessed person drink it? Or do you use oil?

A. Yes, sometimes I have, as long as there is no *shirk* involved. I have used the *nushrah* method of stone grinding seven lotus leaves, placing this in a container of water and reciting the *kawāfir* (*Sūrah al-Kāfirūn* [109], *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* [112], verse 255 of the second chapter and *al-Fātiḥah*) over it. The patient then drinks three mouthfuls of this and bathes with the remainder. It is a good and effective method.

When the possessed person comes, I recite verses over him, such as the four verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, “*wa ilāhukum ilāhun wāhid...*”⁶³⁸ verse 255 of *al-Baqarah* and the closing verses of *al-Baqarah*; the last verses of *Āl ʿImrān* (3); *Sūrah al-Aʿrāf* from the Almighty’s statement: “*inna rabbakumullāhu alladhī khalqas samāwāti wal-arḍa fī sittati ayyāmin thummastawā ʿalal-ʿarsh yughshil laylan nahār...*”⁶³⁹ for about four verses until His statement: “*innahū lā yuḥibbul muʿtadin wa lā tufsidū fil arḍi baʿda iṣlāḥihā wadʿūhu khaufan wa ṭamaʿan inna Raḥmat-allāhi qaribun minal muḥsinīn*”;⁶⁴⁰ also “*laqad jāʾakum rasūlun min anfusikum*”;⁶⁴¹ *Sūrah al-Muʾminūn* (23); *Sūrah*

⁶³⁸ Qurʾān, 2:163.

⁶³⁹ Qurʾān, 7:54.

⁶⁴⁰ Qurʾān, 7:56.

⁶⁴¹ Qurʾān, 9:128.

al-Ṣāffāt (37); the ending of *Sūrah al-Ḥashr* (59); and *Sūrah al-Kāfirūn* (109).⁶⁴² This is called the small dose (*jur'ah ṣuḡhrā*). Those possessed always are affected by it and the *jinnī* usually comes out after this recitation. If the *jinnī* does not come out or manifest itself, I know that the person is not possessed. However, instead, he may be bewitched. Sometimes the *jinnī* will manifest itself while I address it after the recitation. Some cases may be delusion and therefore are called delusionary magic (*siḥr al-awḥām*). Sometimes the person may have ailments due to bad character.

About 50 percent of the cases that are brought to me are demonic possession or magic and the rest common sicknesses.

Once a woman came to me and I recited upon her, and the *jinnī* was burned up. It is possible for them to be burned. On another occasion, a Saudi man came to me who had been bewitched by menstrual blood and sperm. He was screaming like a calf being slaughtered.

⁶⁴² This is based upon a narration from Abū Laylā and collected by Ibn Mājah. However, it is not authentic due to the presence of Abū Janāb al-Kalbī in its chain of narrators.

INTERVIEW NO. 2

LOCATION: Cairo

DATE: 9/8/88

NAME: ‘Abdul-Khāliq al-Attār

DATE OF BIRTH: 1920

PLACE OF BIRTH: Cairo

EDUCATION: Law Degree from Cairo University, 1950. Memorized complete Qur’ān and studied *sharīah* at the College of Law.

Q. When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. About forty years ago one of my sons was afflicted by the *jinn* – although I did not know it at the time – and his sickness became a major problem for me. I went to many psychiatrists, psychologists, neurologists, brain specialists and a variety of medical doctors for treatment. But after every visit to the medical specialists his sickness became worse. Around that time I happened to be reading Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah’s book, *Zād al-Ma’ād*. In a chapter on the treatment of the possessed, I noticed that the symptoms of possession were the same as those shown by my son. The prescribed treatment mentioned in the chapter was the recitation of some Qur’ānic verses and prophetic supplications. So I recited over my son and he began to get better. His condition improved the more I recited until he became completely well – by the permission of Allāh. From that moment I felt a great desire to increase my knowledge of this science. Day and night I began to research the topic of the world of the *jinn*, the devils and the angels. I read many good books and many terrible ones. However – by the grace of Allāh – whenever I came across new information, I would not adopt it until after I had checked its authenticity based upon the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. What was confirmed, I accepted and what was not, I rejected. The correct information I recorded in my own notebooks until I had gathered many such notebooks and a large quantity of material. I then read extensively the writings of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh be pleased with him) and his student Imām Ibn al-Qayyim. Then I began to organise the information in chapters which lead – by the mercy of Allāh – to my writing 30 books in the form of manuscripts about Qur’ānic medicine (*al-Ṭibb al-Qur’ānī*) and prophetic medicine (*al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*). These books are ready for publication; however, due to my limited resources, I have been unable to publish any of them to date.

Q. What percentage of the cases you meet are actual cases of demonic possession?

A. When I visit someone or someone is brought to me who believes that he is affected by magic, evil eye or the *jinn*, my first session is an examination (*fahṣ*) and giving advice. The method of examination is quite simple. Anyone afflicted by magic, evil eye or *jinn* attack must show some

symptoms of the affliction, which I call, “symptoms of satanic bonding.” The symptoms have peculiarities like the symptoms of any other sickness, such as influenza or rheumatism. During the examination I, therefore, ask about the symptoms which may appear in both the waking state as well as during sleep. Symptoms during sleep include nightmares, sleeplessness, broken sleep, uneasiness, the grinding of teeth, and dreams of Satan in the form of carnivorous animals. Then I ask about symptoms while awake, such as feelings of anxiety, forgetfulness, hopelessness, lethargy and immobility. Included among the signs are being easily angered, crying, and staring aimlessly or avoiding the eyes of others. If the patient displays such symptoms during his waking and sleeping states, I recite upon him some Qur’ānic verses. If he is possessed, the *jinnī* may begin at this point to talk either with the voice of the person or with another voice. Sometimes it will use foul language, curse those present or strike and kick. It may reveal why it possessed the person and when it did so. It may also reveal if there are others present. Psychiatrists diagnose this as schizophrenia or dual personality. If a *jinnī* speaks through a human telling its name, religion and condition, they call it dual personality. If the *jinnī* does not speak but the person’s personality goes through a major change, they call it schizophrenia.

Q. Are there other signs, like bad smells or an unnatural smile, that are common to those possessed?

A. In reality, when a *jinnī* bonds with a human, there are innumerable signs. Among them are laughter and crying for no reason. These symptoms are well-known to the medical profession and are explained as a result of over-activity or under-activity of certain glands. We know in spiritual medicine that this is due to demons playing with the glands, causing them to over-secrete or to decrease their secretions, therefore causing sudden changes in personality and swift mood shifts. The possessed person may also exhibit supernatural strength.

Q. What is the percentage of real cases of possession among your patients?

A. My *shaykh* and mentor, Imām Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him), who died more than 700 years ago, said in *al-Fatāwā* the following, excellent statement, “If the veil were removed from the people of this time [Ibn Taymiyyah’s time, over 700 years ago], we would find most of the people of this time are possessed by demons.” If that was said 700 years ago, what can we say about this age in which filth is widespread and the means of demonic possession are abundant. This is a time of sport and play, disobedience and corruption. The percentage of those possessed is very startling – may Allāh protect us all. Those spared demonic influence are very few, while those under attack are many. Allāh, the Almighty said in *Sūrah al-Nisā’*:

شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا ﴿١١٧٣﴾ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَ لَا أَخَذَنَّ مِنْ
 عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٧٤﴾ وَلَا ضَلَّتْهُمْ وَلَا مَنِينَهُمْ وَ
 لَا مَرْئِيَهُمْ فَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مَا كَانُوا لَمْ يَكُنُوا لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
 أَذَانَ الْأَنْعَامِ وَلَا مَرْئِيَهُمْ
 فَلْيَعْرِضْ بَعْثَ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ

“...rebellious devil, cursed by Allāh, said, ‘I will surely take a definite portion of Your servants and mislead them. I will create in them false desires and order them to slit the ears of cattle and to deface the creation of Allāh...’”⁶⁴³

They are many. And Almighty Allāh’s statement:

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقًا
 مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

“And Satan proved his idea true on them, and they all followed him except a group of those who believed.”⁶⁴⁴

So in reality, the percentage of those under satanic influence in the world today is extremely high. And there is a need everywhere for thousands and thousands of exorcists in order to help mankind achieve bliss in this life. There are a number of real sicknesses which the medical profession, past and present, in the East and in the West, has been unable to cure, and the cure lies only in the Noble Qur’ān. The medical profession readily admits it has not advanced over the years in its ability to cure problems such as epilepsy, bewitchment, and schizophrenia. In reality, those touched by Satan are so many and their percentage is rapidly increasing. Yet, those involved in treating them according to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah are so few that one cannot but fear for the future of mankind if a solution is not found. By Allāh’s blessing, I am working on passing on knowledge of this science to many young people. But resources to do this effectively are very limited.

Q. From your own experience, what are the main reasons why people are possessed?

A. I have written a chapter in my book, *Iqtirān al-Shayṭān bil-Insān*,⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴³ Qur’ān, 4:117-119.

⁶⁴⁴ Qur’ān, 34:20.

⁶⁴⁵ An unpublished manuscript, as mentioned earlier.

specifically for this question. There are exactly six reasons: 1) extreme fear, 2) extreme anger, 3) extreme jealousy, 4) devotion to lust, 5) human aggression against devils, and 6) love of demons for humans. Human aggression could be in the form of pouring hot water on the places where devils reside or urinating in holes or cracks in the ground. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited us from urinating in holes and cracks in the earth because they are places where the *jinn* reside. The love of demons for humans is very, very common. When male *jinn* possess human females and we communicate with them, they often readily admit that they are in love with them. And when female *jinn* possess men, they often express the same.

Q. What is the percentage of females among your patients?

A. They are about 70 percent of the cases. The percentage of possession among women is greater than it is among men. And this percentage is consistent with the texts of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. On one occasion, the Prophet (ﷺ) visited a group of women and said, "Give in charity, because I was shown that you made up most of the inhabitants of the Fire." When he was asked why, he replied, "You deny the good your husbands do whenever he makes a single mistake."⁶⁴⁶

Q. You mentioned about male *jinn* possessing human females and female *jinn* possessing men. Is this always the case?

A. No. Sometimes female *jinn* possess human females and male *jinn* possess men. But I am unable to give you a percentage as I did not keep a record of this.

Q. When *jinn* speak through humans, do they use the same voice of the possessed? If not, what is the percentage?

A. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek refuge in Allāh from what appears at night and is hidden during the day, and what is hidden at night and appears during the day.⁶⁴⁷ And he also used to seek refuge in Allāh from every [evil] which announces itself and every [evil] which hides.⁶⁴⁸ That which appears at night is that which speaks and that which is hidden is that which does not. Thus, the speaking or not speaking of a *jinnī* through the voice of the possessed is found in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). Even in the cases when the Prophet (ﷺ) treated those possessed, the *jinnī* did not speak with him or respond to him. The Prophet (ﷺ) struck the possessed person and said, "Get out, O enemy of Allāh, for I am the Messenger of Allāh!" And the *jinn* did not reply to the Prophet (ﷺ). But, in the case of the *jinnī* who was searching

⁶⁴⁶ See *Sahīb al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, pp. 95-6, no. 125, and *Sahīb Muslim*, vol. 2, pp. 431-2, no. 1982.

⁶⁴⁷ *A'ūdhu billāhi tabāraka wa ta'ālā min sharri mā yaẓharu bil-layli wa yakmunu bil-nabāri wa min sharri mā yaẓharu bil-nabāri wa yakmunu bil-layl.*

⁶⁴⁸ *A'ūdhu billāhi min sharri kulli mu'īn wa musirr.*

through food and was caught by Abū Hurayrah, it spoke with him. Also, the *jinnī* who possessed ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd communicated with him. Likewise, the *jinnī* who was beaten by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb spoke with him. Another example is the female *jinnī* who spoke to Imām Ibn Taymiyyah in the presence of his student, Ibn al-Qayyim, saying, “I love him.” And Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah replied, “But he does not love you.” It then said, “I want to make *ḥajj* with him.” And Ibn Taymiyyah replied, “But he does not want to make *ḥajj* with you.” It said, “Then I will leave him for your sake.” Ibn Taymiyyah said, “No. Leave him in obedience to Allāh’s command.” This incident can be found in Ibn al-Qayyim’s book, *Zād al-Ma‘ād* in the chapter on prophetic guidance for treating the possessed. Likewise, during the reign of the ‘Abbāsī caliph, Mutawakkil, the caliph informed Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal that one of his slave girls was possessed. Imām Aḥmad sent one of his students with a pair of his wooden slippers and told him to tell the *jinnī*, “It is not permissible for you to inhabit this woman’s body, and Aḥmad commands you to leave this woman’s body.” Al-Mutawakkil and others present heard the woman speak in a gruff, male voice, saying, “Aḥmad’s command is welcome. For Aḥmad is one who has obeyed Allāh, and Allāh has made everything obedient to him. If Aḥmad ordered us to leave Iraq, we would leave.” Today, in many cases the *jinn* do speak, but in many other cases they do not.

Q. Is possession a swift process or does it take a long time, like months or years?

A. Medical doctors say that epilepsy is a sudden, unknown change in the electrical discharges of the brain. They say that there are more than 40 million electrical connections in the human brain, and it is like a small electrical generating station. It produces electricity and distributes it throughout the other parts of the body. According to doctors, an epileptic fit occurs when there is a sudden surge in the electric discharge of the brain. This overloads the circuit and leads to dysfunction in the body parts and becomes manifest in shaking, stiffness in the body parts, drooling and foaming at the mouth and staring lasting for a few brief moments. When we see such conditions, we call the *adhān* in the epileptic’s right ear and call the *iqāmah* in the left ear and – by Allāh’s will – he becomes cured and returns to his normal state. Although the medical profession, ancient and modern, does not know the cause of the sudden increase in the electrical discharges of the brain, the Prophet (ﷺ) indicated a cause. In a *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him), a black woman came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “O Messenger of Allāh, I am overcome with fits and take off my clothes.” [and

in another narration, “Verily, the evil *jinnī* takes off my clothes.”]⁶⁴⁹ In this *ḥadīth* the Prophet (ﷺ) confirmed that it is the devil who causes people to fall down in fits. It has been demonstrated that the cause is demonic from the many cases in which we have called the *adbān* in the ears of those in epileptic fits, and consequently the fits ceased. For the Prophet (ﷺ) has stated, “When Satan hears the *adbān*, he turns and flees.” This is in the case of complete possession (*ṣarʿ kullī*). There are other types of possession in which humans are affected, like migraine headaches (*ṣudāʿ niṣṣī*), insomnia (*araq*), depression, introversion (*intiwā*), or pains occurring in different parts of the body at various times. The possessing demon who inhabits the human brain is able to vary cerebral electric discharges – by the will of Allāh and due to reasons known only to Allāh – and affect the body parts with a variety of ailments. For example, it may affect the man’s tongue so that he cannot speak, his ears so that he cannot hear, his eyes so that he cannot see, or his hands so they tremble and become paralysed. These are all various types of possession.

Q. Have you ever experienced the *jinn* speaking in languages other than that of the possessed person?

A. I have found many cases in which the *jinn* speak in other languages or other dialects common to other regions of the country.

Q. Do the *jinn* enter the human body from particular points, like the mouth, eyes or hand?

A. There are three types of *jinn*. One type consists of animals, such as dogs, snakes, donkeys, and mules. These give birth to offspring like themselves. A dog-*jinnī* gives birth to a dog-*jinnī* and a snake-*jinnī* gives birth to a snake-*jinnī*. Another type flies in the air, like the one mentioned in *Sūrah al-Naml*: “An *ʿIfrīt* among the *jinn* said, ‘I will bring it to you before you can rise from your position, for surely I am strong and trustworthy for that purpose.’”⁶⁵⁰ I consider this type of *jinnī* like the TV picture which is transferred through the air. The *jinn* which enters the bodies of humans are from this type. Allāh referred to them at the beginning of *Sūrah al-Aʿrāf*: “Surely, he and his tribe see you from a position where you cannot see them...”⁶⁵¹ This verse means that the *jinn* see us, but we cannot see them. Air is with us everywhere. We sense it and are certain about its existence, but we cannot see it. The *jinn* are just like air, which is the meaning of

⁶⁴⁹ A wording close to this was collected by al-Bazzār in his *Musnad*: “Verily, the evil [*jinn*] overcomes me...Verily, I fear that the evil [*jinn*] will take off my clothes.” However, Ibn Ḥajar said, “We don’t know any *isnād* for this wording except this one...and Farqad [one of its narrators] has a bad memory.” (*Mukhtaṣir Zawāʿid Musnad al-Bazzār*, vol. 1, pp. 336-7, no. 535.)

⁶⁵⁰ Qurʾān, 27:39.

⁶⁵¹ Qurʾān, 7: 27.

Almighty Allāh’s statement in *Sūrah al-Raḥmān*: “And He created the *jinn* from a flame [*mārij*] of fire.”⁶⁵² *Mārij* is the hot air which is above the fire. Thus, the *jinnī* which enters the human body is not of the type which has a material form, like that of a human, donkey or dog. This type has a fine, invisible, ethereal (*hawā*) body. And it enters the body just like air does through open orifices, like the mouth, the nose and the anus. Even the pores of the skin allow air to enter and thus become ports of entrance for the *jinn*. If we drink water in the summer, the water spreads throughout the body and passes out through the pores in the skin. Air also enters and along with it the *jinn* of this kind. However, the *jinn* usually live in the toilet areas used for defecation, urination and bathing. This is based upon the Prophet’s statement,

إن هذه الحشوش محضرة

“Surely, these *ḥushūsh* are inhabited.”⁶⁵³

The *ḥushūsh* are the places used by humans to relieve and clean themselves. Thus, Muslims are enjoined to recite the following supplication before entering such places, “O Allāh, I seek refuge in you from the evil male and female *jinn*.” The *jinn* find it easiest to enter from the anus so this is the most common entrance. However, they also gain access from other orifices, including the eye.

Q. And how do they leave?

A. From the same places that they enter.

Q. In which part of the human body do the *jinn* dwell?

A. When the *jinn* enter the human body, they settle in the control centre of the human body – the brain. They concentrate in the brain and conceal the human mind, making the person lose consciousness in a way similar to hypnotism. Then they manifest themselves and take control of the body through the brain. However, this does not mean that they only concentrate in the brain. They may concentrate in other body parts and organs, thereby leaving the brain.

Q. During exorcisms have you experienced any attempts by the *jinn* to possess you?

A. I praise Allāh and give thanks to Him in the way appropriate to His glory. My shaykh, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said in his book, *al-Fatāwā*, “Applying this knowledge of spiritual medicine

⁶⁵² Qur’ān, 55:15.

⁶⁵³ Collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 1, p. 2, no. 6) and Ibn Mājah (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, vol. 1, p. 171, no. 296) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 1, p. 4, no. 4.

and/or Qur’ānic medicine is compulsory upon whoever learns it. Because it is equivalent to relieving the troubled, helping the oppressed, liberating the distressed and supporting the weak, it is among the greatest branches of fighting in the path of Allāh (*jihād fi sabillāh*).” He also said, “Those who work in this field are feared by the *jinn* because they know that they [i.e., the exorcists] do it as a means of pleasing Allāh. Thus, Allāh places in the soul of the *jinn* a fear of the exorcist.” I have never experienced a *jinnī* attack while I was awake. However, if I go to sleep without making the protective supplications, the *jinn* hurt me during my sleep and make me restless. Whenever this happens, I awaken quickly and recite the supplications of divine refuge (*ta’awudhāt*) and protection, and Allāh protects me.

Q. Since you began exorcising people over 40 years ago, have any of your family members been possessed?

A. I have not experienced it within my family. However, whenever devils fail in their attack on the human soul, they will try an external attack by setting his family against him, such as his wife, child, mother, father or leader. But such attacks are comparatively mild. If the exorcist has strong faith in Allāh and is truthful and pious, external attack will also fail. I would like to advise those who wish to work in this field to be careful. On one occasion I was exorcising a *jinnī* by the name of Jibrīl, who had been severely hurting a woman (and this was around the time that I began exorcising). I said to it, “Jibrīl, leave the woman and come into my body. Give her a break. Perhaps Allāh will give me the strength and health to bear your presence.” Jibrīl was silent for a moment, then he said, “From where will I enter you? From which part can I?” I took this as glad tidings from Allāh that He was protecting me by sending angels who would ward off the evil of the *jinn*. For Allāh has made a type of angel which is specifically for the protection of humans, according to the text of the Qur’ān:

إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٦٥٤﴾

“Surely, every soul has a protector over it.”⁶⁵⁴

لَهُ مَعْقِبَتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ
مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

“Each [person] has a succession of angels in front of him and behind him, protecting him by Allāh’s command.”⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ Qur’ān, 86:4.

⁶⁵⁵ Qur’ān, 13:11.

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً

“He is the Irresistible, high above His servants, and He sends protectors over you...”⁶⁵⁶

Whenever Allāh sees His servants being sincere and in constant worship, working in the service of mankind and Islām, He protects the servant from the evil *jinn* by sending angels to protect him. I thank Allāh for protecting me and all who work in this field.

Q. You mentioned earlier that your first session with a patient is an examination. If it leads to the conclusion that the patient is possessed, what is your next step?

A. I begin the treatment sessions (*jalasāt al-ilāj*). These sittings vary in length and number depending upon the case involved. The first of these sessions I call “purification of the heart” (“*taḥīr al-qalb*”). The idea being that the faith of the person whom I am to treat must be clear and pure. There should not be in his faith any paganism, evil, disbelief, hypocrisy or falsity. I therefore clean the heart first so that when the verses of treatment are read, they meet a pure heart. Otherwise, the verses will meet a defiled, sick heart not capable of treatment. This is comparable to planting a seed in infertile ground. It will not grow, but not due to any defect in the seed. The ground was not prepared for cultivation.

The third sitting I have named “purification of the psyche” (“*tazkiyah al-nafs*”), for Allāh has created man with a heart, mind, spirit/soul (*rūḥ*), psyche and a body. The treatments are aimed at the first four elements. The soul (*nafs*) is a combination of cravings (*shahwah*), instincts (*gharīzah*), emotions (*‘ātifah*) and inclinations (*naz‘ah*). So, we purify the sick patient’s psyche. If he smokes, drinks, gambles, lusts after women or is corrupt in any way, we purify it so that the psyche can help the heart. I also try to purify the psyche of other sicknesses, like anger, hatred, malice, jealousy, conceit, pride, arrogance, intemperance, greed and stinginess. This session is no less important than the second, for it is by the way of the evil psyche that the possessing *jinnī* establishes itself. Consequently, this level of treatment may require two, three or four sittings until the psyche of the patient is purified and contented. After this treatment, the psyche does not whisper to itself and it will block the whisperings of devils.

The fourth sitting concentrates on the mind, and I refer to it as “cleaning the mind” (“*tanqiyah al-‘aql*”). In this session I address how a person spends much of his time. If he reads useless material, like love stories, pornographic material, detective stories and newspaper articles, it only

⁶⁵⁶ Qur’ān, 6:61.

increases his remoteness from Allāh. I advise those who read such material to give them up and replace them with reading the Qur'ān and its exegesis, authentic books of *ḥadīth*, and books of law. I also encourage them to read useful books in other fields, like mathematics, philosophy, physics, engineering, etc.

The final treatment can be one session or as many as six to twelve sessions. I call it “removing the spirit” (“*ṭakblīṣ al-rūḥ*”). It consists of removing the evil spirit from its hold on the human spirit. This is in accordance with a *ḥadīth* recorded in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad in which a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a mad person and recited over him a legal *ruqyah* for six days, morning and evening.⁶⁵⁷ Also in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Ibn Mas'ūd and others, it is recorded that the legal *ruqyah* should be repeated twice per day for six days. If it produces results, fine. If it does not, it means that something is incomplete from the previous steps. Therefore, I go back over all of the sessions and check the state of the patient.

These sessions are followed by the prescription of precautionary measures (*ṭaḥaffuzāt*). When a patient gets well, doctors usually advise him to avoid certain foods in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the sickness. I do the same. I advise the patient to give up watching TV – especially the useless programs, to be consistent in performing his daily acts of worship, to get up at night for voluntary prayer, to read certain Qur'ānic verses daily, to repeat the declaration of faith a hundred times daily, to seek forgiveness from Allāh, to pray for the Prophet (ﷺ).

Q. Do you use in your treatment physical techniques like tying fingers or tying hair, burning incense, rubbing olive oil, salt or beating?

A. There are no authentic narrations to support the use of salt except in cases of scorpion stings. There is no basis for using either it, oil or other such things to treat *jinn*-possession. Likewise, the use of amulets (*ḥijāb*,⁶⁵⁸ *ta'widh* and *tamīmah*) which are worn around different parts of the body are completely forbidden. Regarding beating, it is authentically reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) utilised it, and Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah also used a stick to beat a patient possessed by a *jinnī*. However, I advise my young brothers who are working in this field not to use beating at all, because the use of beating has guidelines and conditions. We do not beat the possessed human, but the *jinnī* which has possessed the human. And this requires

⁶⁵⁷ The recitation was for three days, twice a day. See note 420, p. 118. See also *Mawsū'ah al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf, Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad*, nos. 20833-4.

⁶⁵⁸ The name given to an amulet consisting of a sheet of paper on which Qur'ānic verses are written and folded into a rectangle or square. It is then covered with a thick cloth, leather or tin and a thread is added so that it may be worn around the ankle, waist or neck. This is usually given after recovery as a sealing treatment. See *Fugara Techniques of Mental Healing*, p. 44.

a high level of skill and discernment to be able to accurately know who the exorcist is hitting. For if he hits the possessed person, it is prohibited in divine law, and it would only increase the suffering of the patient. The details of this, I cannot go right into now, because it would require a very long sitting to explain exactly how to determine the appropriate time to hit. At any rate, I do advise the beginners in this field not to use beating. And even the beating used by many is far too violent and is applied to very dangerous areas of the body. It should only be on the behind, the shoulders or the extremities of the hands or feet. As to hitting the face, eyes or head with sandals and sticks, it is forbidden. However, if the exorcist has had much experience and insight, and he is absolutely certain that it is the *jinnī* which is present, he may do as the Prophet (ﷺ) did.

Q. What is your opinion about recitation over oil and rubbing with it?

A. These methods are not forbidden according to Islamic law. They are permissible and have some basis in the religion. Before going to sleep, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite the *quls* in his palms, blow in them, and then wipe his hands over whatever his hands could reach of his body, beginning with his face. On the basis of this, the companion Ibn ‘Abbās, and also Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other Muslim scholars permitted the recitation of Qur’ān on pure olive oil. There are verses in *Sūrah al-Nūr* (24) and *Sūrah al-Tīn* (95) which indicate that olive oil is blessed. Qur’ānic verses may also be read over other substances like musk, oil, saffron, rose water or drinking water. Subsequently, the patient drinks or bathes with these. However, one who bathes with such fluids must do so in a place where the fluids will not flow into sewage pipes or other filthy places. The liquids used should be collected in a special container and thrown on the roadside.

Q. During treatment do you have to seek assistance to hold the patient down?

A. Sometimes when a person is possessed, the *jinnī* causes him to make unusual movements like punching, getting up and sitting down, and breaking things. I may need help in holding down his legs and arms, and then I begin to recite over him.

Q. Could you recount some of your more recent and unusual cases?

A. I have treated many patients and my students have recorded on tape the conversations, actions and words which are used in these gatherings. Each case is on a 60 minute tape.

Q. Do disbelieving *jinn* possess Muslims?

A. The world of the *jinn* is similar to the world of man. There are no rules in this matter. All possible permutations occur.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a person at the same time?

A. From my experience, this is possible. In fact, in some of my taped

exorcisms, you can hear the removal of six or more *jinn* from some possessed people.

Q. Have you treated non-Muslims who were possessed?

A. Some have come. However, I inform them that I only treat with the Qur'ān; I do not treat them. Most Christian Egyptians who have come to me have welcomed treatment with the Qur'ān and have experienced successful cures – all praise belongs to Allāh. And a number of them have converted to Islām by the grace of Allāh.

Q. How do *jinn* benefit from the possession of humans?

A. Allāh has created the *jinn* to live in isolated areas, deserts, refuse dumps, graveyards and animal pens. *Jinn*-animals eat faeces and *jinn* eat bones. The *jinn* are definitely on a level below humans, as a result of Allāh's favours which He gives to whomsoever He wishes. Allāh said in *Sūrah al-Isrā'*:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ
مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا
تَفْضِيلًا

“We have honoured the children of Adam, carried them on the land and on the sea, provided them with good things and greatly preferred them over much of what We have created.”⁶⁵⁹

Consequently, *jinn* accompany humans in order to enjoy some of that favour with which Allāh has honoured men. They try to partake of the good food, drink, clothes, sex and sleep. This good life tempts the *jinn* into attacking humans.

Q. Do *jinn* take pleasure by having sex with humans?

A. There is a verse in *Sūrah al-An'ām* in which our blessed, Almighty Lord said:

رَبَّنَا أَسْتَمِعُ بَعْضَنَا بَعْضًا وَبَلَّغْنَا أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَلْتَ لَنَا

“Our Lord, some of us took pleasure one from the other, and we have reached the term which You appointed for us.”⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁹ Qur'ān, 17:70.

⁶⁶⁰ Qur'ān, 6:128.

Actually, all the Qur’ānic exegetes understand the pleasure taken here to refer to the *jinn*’s misguidance of men and man’s worship of the *jinn*. They consider the taking of pleasure to only mean obedience and following. However, the Qur’ān should be interpreted first by its own verses. This verse should be understood along with the Almighty’s statement in *Sūrah Muḥammad*:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَنَّوْنَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْآنَامُ
وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ ﴿١٣﴾

“Those who disbelieve take pleasure and eat as animals do, and the Fire will be their home.”⁶⁶¹

Do animals follow *jinn* or do *jinn* misguide animals? No. The taking of pleasure here refers to the fulfilment of sexual desire. Thus, the “pleasure” mentioned in *Sūrah al-An’ām* can also include sexual pleasure enjoyed by males and females. This is what happens when a man or woman has a wet dream. And I have dealt with many cases where male *jinn* were taking pleasure from women and female *jinn* were taking pleasure from men.

Q. Do *jinn* possess believing Muslims who are conscientious in their religious practices?

A. This only happens to those of weak faith. The *jinn* have no power over the true believers. The Almighty said:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ
مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

“You will have no authority over My servants, except those among the misguided who follow you.”⁶⁶²

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾
مِنَهُمُ الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

“He [i.e., Satan] said, ‘By Your power, I will surely mislead them all, except Your sincere, chosen servants.’”⁶⁶³

⁶⁶¹ Qur’ān, 47:12.

⁶⁶² Qur’ān, 15:42.

⁶⁶³ Qur’ān, 38: 82-83.

The true believers and sincere worshippers of Allāh are protected by Him, so the devils cannot possess them. On the other hand, the devils play with the worshippers of Satan who disobey Allāh in the same way that children play football.

Q. If that be the case, how do you explain the *hadīth* of the woman who was overcome by fits, yet the companions bore witness that she would be among the people of Paradise?

A. *Ṣar'* is of two types: fits caused by *jinn* and those caused by biological reasons which Ibn al-Qayyim called *ṣar' min al-akblāt*. Thus, seizures may be from *jinn*-possession or they may be from a chemical imbalance in the brain or the nervous system. *Jinn*-possession is treated most effectively by the Qur'ān, because it is a spirit treating another spirit. Demonic possession is like the loss of sight and hearing. It may be a test from Allāh. The Prophet (ﷺ) told the woman, "If you are patient, your reward is Paradise."

Q. How do you explain a Christian priest's successful exorcism of patients?

A. The non-Muslim in this field works with the *jinn*. The *jinn* may ease the pain for a week or month in order that the patient put his trust in the disbelieving healer. If he were a Muslim patient, his faith would be lost. For only the Qur'ān is the word of Allāh and only it can heal the spirit. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

من أتى عرافا فسأله عن شيء لم تقبل له صلاة أربعين ليلة

"Whoever visits a fortune-teller, his prayer will not be accepted for 40 days."⁶⁶⁴

And he also said,

من أتى كاهنا أو عرافا فصدقه بما يقول فقد كفر بما أنزل على محمد (ﷺ)

"Whoever believes a fortune-teller has disbelieved in the religion that Muḥammad brought."⁶⁶⁵

Q. How do you distinguish between someone who is suffering from bewitchment and one suffering from the evil eye?

A. They are very similar, and they are both a product of the *jinnī* attaching

⁶⁶⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1211, no. 5540.

⁶⁶⁵ Collected by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abū Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1095, no. 3895), al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 739, no. 3304. The wording is that of Aḥmad's version.

itself within a person. The distinction comes in the treatment. The longest lasting and more difficult to cure is from magic spells and the easiest to treat are seizures (*ṣar'*). As to the Prophet's bewitchment, some scholars have declared it false even though the narrations are highly accurate, without any discrepancy in their chain of narrators or in their text. These scholars have allowed their limited minds to determine right and wrong in the religion. This is an error on their part. There are different types of magic: *habal* (dimwittedness), *khabal* (confusion) and *'abaṭ* (stupidity). These all affect the mind of the bewitched person. There is another kind called *sihr al-jawāriḥ wal-a'ḍā'* (magic of the limbs and the organs) which does not affect the mind but affects one of the organs, like the hand or the genitals. The type which affected the Prophet (ﷺ) was the second type in which his mind was not affected at all. For him to be affected is not strange because he was a human being and affected by many sicknesses. He was wounded, his incisor tooth was broken, he was cursed, made fun of, called a fortune-teller, a magician and a madman. He was an example for us of one who suffered as we do, but was patient and accepted his fate. The *ḥadīth* about the Prophet's bewitchment in al-Bukhārī and Muslim reported by 'Ā'ishah states that he used to think that he had come to his wife when he had not. And in the other books of traditions it is mentioned that he would think he had done something which he had not. That was merely forgetfulness, which all the prophets were subject to. The Almighty said in *Sūrah Yūsuf*:

فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ
بِضْعَ سِنِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

"But Satan made him forget to remember his Lord, and he remained in prison for a few [more] years."⁶⁶

And in *Sūrah al-An'ām*:

وَأَمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تُقَعِّدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

"And if Satan causes you to forget, do not remain in the company of transgressors after you have remembered,"⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Qur'ān, 12:42. This verse has two valid interpretations: either, "Satan made the servant forget to mention Prophet Yūsuf's ability to interpret dreams to his lord (i.e., his master)" or "Satan made Yūsuf forget to ask help from his Lord (i.e., Allāh) instead of others." See *The Noble Qur'ān*, p. 347.

⁶⁷ Qur'ān, 6:68.

And in *Sūrah al-Kahf*:

وَمَا أُنسِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ، وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ
فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٨﴾

“None made me forget it except Satan, and amazingly it
took its way back to the sea.”⁶⁶⁸

The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed a four unit prayer and concluded it with *salāms* after the second unit. The companion, Dhul-Yadayn said to him, “Has the prayer been shortened or did you forget, O Messenger of Allāh?” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The prayer has not been shortened and I did not forget.” The companion told him that he only prayed two units. The Prophet (ﷺ) then asked the other companions if what he said was correct, and they confirmed it. So the Prophet (ﷺ) got up and prayed with them two more units of prayer.⁶⁶⁹ Consequently, forgetfulness can happen to prophets and this is not considered mental disorder (*habal*) in any sense of the term.

Q. What do you recite over those suffering possession, magic and the evil eye?

A. There are incantations called *ruqyah al-mashūr*, others called *ruqyah al-mahsūd*, a third, *ruqyah al-maṣrūʿ* and *ruqyah al-marīd*. I have gathered the many narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) and placed them under these headings in a large, unpublished volume, which I have entitled *Wasāʾil Himāyah al-Insān min Maṣāʾib al-Shayṭān*. Time does not permit me to go through them at this point.

⁶⁶⁸ Qurʾān, 18:63.

⁶⁶⁹ See *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, pp. 278-9, no. 469, and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 285-6, nos. 1182-4.

INTERVIEW NO.3

LOCATION: Cairo, Egypt

DATE: 10/8/88

NAME: Sa'd Muḥammad

DATE OF BIRTH: 1946

PLACE OF BIRTH: Ṭanṭa

EDUCATION: Diploma from the 'Ibād al-Du'ā' Institute.

Q. When did you begin practising exorcism?

A. I began practising more than ten years ago.

Q. What caused you to begin?

A. It began when the wife of my brother became afflicted with continual vaginal bleeding that the doctors were unable to treat. As you know, there is a prophetic tradition in which a woman came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "O Messenger of Allāh, I am a woman whose blood flows continually." He said to her, "It is due to a blow struck by the devil." That is, the devil has some influence in this area. Perhaps it was due to a fit (*mass*) or perhaps she was bewitched, both of which are manifestations of the *jinn* in the body. There is a *ḥadīth* saying that the devil flows in the bloodstream of Adam's descendants. Because of this, I recited over her *al-Fāṭiḥah*; the first five verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*; "wa ilāhukum ilāhun wāḥid..."⁶⁷⁰ verse 255 of *al-Baqarah*; "shahidallāhu annahu lā ilāha illā hu..." from *Sūrah Al-Imrān*;⁶⁷¹ "rabbakumillāh..." from *Sūrah al-A'rāf*;⁶⁷² "afahasibtun..." from *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*;⁶⁷³ the closing verses of *Sūrah al-Ḥashr*, and three verses from *Sūrah al-Jinn*. The *jinnī* in her manifested itself and spoke to me. I realised that it was a male *jinnī*. It said that it came to her when she cried in the dark because her husband had travelled. My brother's complaint was that whenever he approached his wife, she would begin to bleed even though it was not the time of her menses. In the end, after my recitation, I found that the *jinnī* was not a Muslim. I invited him to Islām, and he accepted and then left her.

Q. Was his voice different from your brother's wife's voice?

A. Yes, it was the voice of a male.

⁶⁷⁰ Qur'ān, 2:163.

⁶⁷¹ Qur'ān, 3:18.

⁶⁷² Qur'ān, 7:54.

⁶⁷³ Qur'ān, 23:115.

Q. How old was the woman?

A. She was 25 years old. It is the Qur'ānic verses which can control the *jinn*, Muslim or non-Muslim. Some are rebellious and others are Muslim. Sometimes it may argue with the exorcist himself. We see that the churches are filled with magic, for when we ask the *jinn* questions, they say that they came from the church of George's family. And the *jinn* are tough and try to destroy whoever is in their presence.

Q. What percentage of the cases are true, demonic possession?

A. Some are imaginary. Women often imagine that someone has bewitched them or that the change of their husband's treatment is due to a magic spell put upon their husbands.

The first sign of real possession in a woman is that her menses becomes irregular. She also feels a kind of suffocation which is quite different from psychological depression or medical asphyxia. It comes to her at night in the form of a nightmare, even if she is regular in her formal prayers and uses the prescribed daily supplications. At the end of her treatment she listens to a tape of the verses which I mentioned earlier. When she listens to the tape alone, she discovers her life changing. She becomes imbalanced at first. In the beginning, I greet the *jinnī* with salutations of peace. If it is a Muslim, it replies, and if not, it does not reply. I then begin to address it with any other greetings, and it replies, informing me that it is not a Muslim. After speaking to it, it leaves the woman, freeing her from all of the afflicting pains, from headaches to infertility and other symptoms which doctors are unable to cure.

On one occasion during an argument between a woman and her husband, the wife lost her speech. Her tongue refused to function, and she became very depressed. She saw a doctor who was unable to determine the medical cause, so he sent her to me. I recited over her the verses I mentioned earlier and called the *adhān*. At the end of the *adhān*, the woman began to speak again. She made the declaration of faith (*shahādah*), and the *jinnī* left her.

Q. From your experience, what are the reasons why the *jinn* possess people?

A. *Jinn* enter human bodies when man commits errors. However, if he lives according to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and uses the prescribed supplications and prayer shields (*tahaṣṣunāt*) which the Prophet (ﷺ) taught us, he will not be afflicted by the *jinn*. The *jinn* may afflict one who is far from supplications, the Sunnah and Qur'ānic recitation. Such an affliction can be quite destructive. Sometimes when marital partners argue for no reason, the husband will report that he saw his wife looking quite unnatural, and she will say likewise about him. This is a form of magical spell called "the reversal" (*qalb*). It existed during the era of Moses and is still around today. The wife may become possessed or bewitched. When a *jinnī* enters a human body, it wishes the body to remain in its possession. It

may practise evil with the woman in her eating and drinking habits, in her sleep, etc. It may enter the toilet with her when she goes to relieve herself. If you ask her if she spends a long time in the toilet relieving herself, she will reply, "Yes, I do although I do not need to spend all of that time in there." This is because the *jinn* want her in that state in order to see her exposed private parts.

Q. What are the other reasons?

A. The *jinn* may fall in love with a woman. When we perform intercourse, we are supposed to say, "O Allāh, remove the devil from us and from whatever offspring You provide us." It may be deduced from this prayer that the devil may take part when a man has intercourse with his wife. As Allāh, Most Great and Glorious, said to Satan in *Sūrah al-Isrā'*:

وَسَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ

*"Share in their wealth and children..."*⁶⁷⁴

Satan does not have power over the true servants of Allāh who pray regularly and read the Qur'ān. When you enter a house, you may find most of its occupants are afflicted with some sort or form of demonic possession (*mass*), and when you ask the head of the household if he prays, he will say no. The house is in ruins and thus the devils enter.

Q. What is the percentage of possessed women in relationship to men?

A. The greater majority are women, about 95 percent, because they like to adorn themselves, display their beauty, and are disobedient. I have only encountered one possessed woman who was pious. She attended one of my lectures and after I recited the verses, we heard her scream. She was known to pray regularly and had memorized much of the Qur'ān, so I asked her what was wrong with her, and she replied in a man's voice, "I am 'Alī." I asked him, "Are you a Muslim?" and he replied, "Yes." I asked, "How did you enter her?" He said, "She poured hot water outside and hurt me." I told him, "Get out!" and he left her. She was 28 years old.

Q. How did you know that she was possessed?

A. She said that when she poured the hot water she felt as though there was fire in her left leg. Some people sense the *jinn*'s entrance while others do not.

⁶⁷⁴ Qur'ān, 17:64.

Q. From your experience, do male *jinn* enter women and female *jinn* enter men?

A. If a woman harms a female *jinnī*, it will enter her. Sometimes we have found both male and female *jinn* inside of a single person. Sometimes, when you say to it, "Send out So-and-so," it turns out to be only one *jinnī* pretending to be different people.

Q. Do they have names?

A. Yes, they do have names. However, on one occasion, I asked a *jinnī* about its name and it replied that it was the number thirty-six. When I asked about its tribe, it said it was from Bani al-Aṣḫār. And when I inquired about the location of its home, it replied that it was Printing Press Road.

Q. Is it common for a male *jinn* to affect a woman?

A. Yes. It is the usual case for women to be possessed by male *jinn* and men by female *jinn*. I saw one case in which a man was possessed by a female *jinnī* who was a non-Muslim. He used to have terrible fits whenever he recited the Qur'ān. I told her that he was going to get married soon and she screamed. After great effort, she was made to leave.

Q. Are possessing *jinn* usually Muslims or non-Muslims?

A. In reality, *jinn* may be both. But Muslim *jinn* only enter if they are hurt, while non-Muslim *jinn* will enter whether hurt or not. Most often they are non-Muslims.

Q. Do the *jinn* settle in a particular portion of the human body?

A. Usually they spread throughout the whole body. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Certainly the devil flows in the veins of Adam's descendants." And in another narration, "Satan circulates in Adam's descendants like blood." In some cases, I ask the *jinnī* to congregate in one specific place.

Q. Have you experienced any attempt to possess you?

A. The *jinn* have tribes and families. They are just like us. They will try to take revenge on the one who removes them. One time, they tried to affect my son, Aḥmad.

INTERVIEW NO. 4

LOCATION: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

DATE: 2/4/88

NAME: ‘Abdullāh Mushrif al-‘Amrī

DATE OF BIRTH: 1964 CE

PLACE OF BIRTH: Riyadh

EDUCATION: BA from Imām Ibn Sa‘ūd Islamic University in the field of *Hadīth*.

Q. Exactly when did you begin to treat possessed people?

A. I began reciting the Qur’ān over the sick approximately two years ago.

Q. What made you decide to begin this?

A. I am not of those who haphazardly began to treat people. I first noticed that this sickness was common. I was working as a member of the Morals Commission (*Hay’at al-Amr bil-Ma’rūf wal-Nahiy ‘an al-Munkar*), following the statement of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ),

من رأى منكم منكرا فليغيره بيده فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه
وذلك أضعف الإيمان

“Whoever sees evil should change it with his hand. If he is unable, he should change it with his tongue. And if he is unable to do [even that], he should hate it in his heart, and that is the lowest [level] of faith.”⁶⁷⁵

As a member of the Morals Commission, we arrested a number of people involved in magic and trickery who were treating people from a variety of backgrounds. These individuals admitted exploiting the ignorant masses in the most repulsive and gross ways. They were using a variety of amulets and charms which all involved *shirk*. I was assigned as the *imām* of a *Masjid*. A lot of people came to me with different ailments so I recited over them regularly. This was not connected with any special treatment. Any *imām* of a *Masjid* can read for people, however, there are some conditions for recitation. One should have strong faith and full trust in Allāh. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If you trust in Allāh as He deserves to be trusted, the angels will

⁶⁷⁵ Collected by Imām Muslim (*Sabih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 33, no. 79).

shake your hands.”⁶⁷⁶ I found that people were greatly benefiting from these readings. Among the problems they faced was the effect of the evil eye. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

العين حق ، تدخل الرجل في القبر و تدخل الجمل في القدر

“The evil eye is real. It may put a man in the grave and a camel in a pot.”⁶⁷⁷

أسماء بنت عميس قالت : يا رسول الله (ﷺ) ، إن ولد جعفر تسرع إليهم العين ، أفأستترقي لهم ؟ فقال : نعم ، فإنه لو كان شيء سابق القدر

لسبقته العين

Asmā’, the daughter of Abū Bakr, said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “O Messenger of Allāh, the Ja‘far clan is affected by the evil eye. Should we do incantations for them?” He said, “Yes, for if there was anything which could overcome destiny, it would be the evil eye.”⁶⁷⁸ And Ibn Bāz mentioned that whoever denies the entrance of *jinn* into humans has told a lie against the divine law (*sharī‘ah*). There are very clear proofs of this taking place. After being appointed the governor of Ṭā‘if, ‘Uthmān ibn Abi al-‘Ās came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and informed him that he was getting confused in his prayers. He explained that something was interfering with his ability to perform prayer and to recite the Qur’ān. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Come here. That is a devil.” When he came close, the Prophet (ﷺ) blew in his mouth and said,

⁶⁷⁶ The well-known, authentic *ḥadīth* of similar wording is,

لو أنكم تكونون على الله حق توكله لرزقتم كما يرزق الطير . تدو خماسا
وتروح بطانا

“If only you trusted in Allāh as He should be trusted, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds, who leave their nests in the morning hungry and return in the evening full.” Collected by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad, and authenticated by al-Arnā‘ūṭī in *Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 10, p. 140, no. 7620.

⁶⁷⁷ The first sentence is a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhārī (*Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 427, no. 636), Muslim (*Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1192, no. 5426) and others. The second sentence was narrated by Jābir, collected by Ibn ‘Adī in *al-Kāmil* and Ahū Nu‘aym in *al-Ḥilyah*, and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, p. 761, no. 4144.

⁶⁷⁸ Collected by al-Tirmidhī and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2, p. 206, no. 1682. Also collected by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah and al-Dārimī. A similar narration by Ibn ‘Abbās was collected by Muslim.

“Get out, enemy of Allāh, I am the Messenger of Allāh.” So what was he telling to leave, sickness? And he also said, “Get out, enemy of Allāh,” and we are prohibited from cursing sicknesses. After that, ‘Uthmān ibn Abi al-‘Ās said that for the rest of his life he was never again confused in his prayer. That was a devil called *Khanzab*.⁶⁷⁹ Also, when the Prophet (ﷺ) was on a journey with a companion named Abū Ya‘lā Shaddād ibn Aws,⁶⁸⁰ a woman came to them with her son, the Prophet (ﷺ) read over him, blew in his mouth and said, “Get out, enemy of Allāh.” The woman offered the Prophet (ﷺ) two goats and some fat. He told Abū Ya‘lā to take the fat and one of the goats and return the other. Allāh has also said in the Qur’ān: “Those who eat interest get up like one stumbling from Satan’s touch.”

Q. How long have you been the *imām* of the masjid?

A. I have been the *imām* for three years. After the first year of experience with people coming for readings and consequently getting better, I began to research the subject of possession thoroughly. I gathered the classical reference works containing information on this. I studied cases of these sicknesses, methods of treating them and specific verses which should be recited during treatment. Praise be to Allāh, I was able to master this subject and began to treat a few people at a time. Eventually, my high success rate became known and people came in droves. If people had not found any improvement after my treatment, no one else would have come.

Q. Could you describe your methodology in curing the possessed?

A. The first thing to understand is that seizures (*ṣar‘*) are of two kinds. The first type are seizures of the brain which can only be treated in the hospital. The Qur’ān cannot cure it. An example of this is a case of the woman who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and informed him that she was overcome by seizures during which she would tear off her clothes. He told her, “If you wish, I will pray to Allāh on your behalf, or, if you wish you may be patient and Paradise will be yours.” She asked him to pray on her behalf in order for her to stop exposing herself, which he did. The second type are seizures caused by the *jinn*-possession of humans. Sometimes it is due to the *jinn*’s love obsession with humans, desire to punish or merely scare them, and at other times due to magic or the evil eye. The recitation of the Qur’ān over them once, twice, three times or more cures them.

⁶⁷⁹ The *ḥadīth* was collected by Ibn Mājah and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, p. 273, no. 2858. The two narrations of ‘Uthmān ibn Abi al-‘Ās on this matter collected by Imām Muslim (*Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 252, no. 946 and vol. 3, p. 1198, no. 5462) do not include the Prophet (ﷺ) blowing in his mouth or saying, “Get out, enemy of Allāh. I am the Messenger of Allāh,” but they do mention *Khanzab* as the name of that devil.

⁶⁸⁰ The name of the companion who accompanied him on the journey was Ya‘lā ibn Murrah ibn Wahb ibn Jābir al-Thaqafī and not (Abū) Ya‘lā ibn Shaddād ibn Aws al-Anṣarī, who was from the third level of *ḥadīth* narrators and not a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ). See Ibn Hajar’s *Taqrīb al-Tabdhīb*, vol. 2, p. 378.

Q. Do you use any particular verses?

A. There are no special verses besides *Āyah al-Kursī*, *al-Fātiḥah* and the *mu'awwidhatān*, which were all mentioned in very strong prophetic traditions. Otherwise, all of the Qur'ān is blessed. After recitation, I communicate with the *jinnī*, which will say, for example, "I am in love with her."

Q. Do you use any other supportive techniques along with your recitation?

A. Yes. Some *jinn* will only leave if they are beaten. Continuous recitation is sufficient to make some of them communicate, yet others will only communicate if I grasp the neck here (i.e., on the jugular veins). Then they reveal the reason for their possession of the human, which is either out of love or caused by the magic or the evil eye. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that the evil eye is real and attended by the devil.⁶⁸¹ I then order the possessing spirit to leave after telling it what it has done is oppression, which is forbidden in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. I may quote the *ḥadīth qudsī* in which Allāh said:

يا عبادي إني حرمت الظلم على نفسي وجعلته بينكم محرماً فلا تظالموا

"O my servants, I have made oppression forbidden to Myself and prohibited it among you, so do not oppress each other."⁶⁸²

And also the Prophet's statement,

الظلم ظلمات يوم القيامة

"Oppression is darkness on the Day of judgement."⁶⁸³

If a man is possessed by a female *jinnī* out of love for him, I tell her that her possession is oppressing him.

Q. Do female, Muslim *jinn* sometimes possess people?

A. Yes. Female *jinn* will possess Muslims and cause seizures. I tell the *jinnī* that her possession is not an expression of love but one of harm, and I ask her to depart and not to return. I have her swear by Allāh not to possess male or female Muslims in the future. If she is a disbelieving *jinnī*, I invite her to Islām. In fact, a number of them have accepted Islām from me – all

⁶⁸¹ Reported by Abū Hurayrah and collected by al-Kāḥilī in his *Sunan*, but it is rated inauthentic (*ḍa'īf*) by al-Albānī in *Ḍa'īf al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḡhīr*, vol. 4, p. 76, no. 3906.

⁶⁸² Reported by Abū Dharr and collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1365, no. 6246).

⁶⁸³ Reported by al-Bukhārī (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 376, no. 627) and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1366, no. 6249).

praise is due to Allāh – around thirteen or fourteen Buddhists, Christians, etc.

Q. Do female *jinn* always enter men and male *jinn* enter women?

A. Yes. That is the most common occurrence. Although it is very rare, a male *jinnī* may also possess a man, perhaps only in 10 percent of the cases.

Q. If the female *jinnī* speaks, does it speak with the man's voice?

A. Sometimes it speaks with the man's voice and sometimes with a female's voice. About 60 percent of the time, the *jinnī* communicates with the possessed person's voice.

Q. I notice that you have with you bottles of water and olive oil. What is their purpose?

A. I will explain this to you. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

كُلُوا الزَّيْتَ وَادْهِنُوا بِهِ ، فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مَبَارَكَةٍ

“Eat olive oil and anoint yourselves with it; for verily, it is a blessed tree.”⁶⁸⁴

The olive tree is a blessed tree by which Allāh swears in the Qur'ān.⁶⁸⁵ I recite some verses from the Qur'ān over the oil and the person rubs some of the oil on the part of their body which gives him pain. In any case, everything is by experimentation, even medical knowledge. As to the water, I also recite over it and they drink it. If the person experiences gradual improvement – by the grace of Allāh – fine, because the *jinn* cannot withstand contact with the Qur'ān. If the person drinks the water and rubs the oil and finds himself becoming uneasy and irritated, it means that he is possessed by a *jinnī*. So, it is used to determine the nature of the illness, like a medical examination. This method has proven itself effective in the vast majority of cases. There are other methods being used, but the best is by using only the Qur'ān.

Q. Do others assist you by holding down patients?

A. Yes. If the man is possessed by a female *jinnī* – and a female *jinnī* is stronger than ten men – it will require at least ten men to hold him down. It happened in my home recently that I recited over one man who suddenly became incredibly powerful. He leaped up and it took about ten men to

⁶⁸⁴ This is in reference to the following verse: “Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche with a lamp, the lamp encased in glass, the glass like a brilliant star lit from a blessed olive tree...” Qur'ān, 24:35. The *ḥadīth* was reported by 'Umar and Abū Usayd, collected by al-Tirmidhī, and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 167, no. 4374.

⁶⁸⁵ See Qur'ān, Chapter 95.

hold him. I am usually assisted by the patient's relatives or friends. If I find that there is something in him, I ask them to hold him steady so that he will not punch or kick me. Sometimes the *jinnī* will speak immediately, so I recite a few verses and it leaves right away. The *jinn* have different strengths, for some are very strong and yet others are quite weak.

Q. What is the purpose of depressing the jugular veins?

A. Sometimes it is only when the human mind is unconscious that the *jinn* appear. I hold them lightly and not in a way which could lead to strangulation. This has happened at the hands of some inexperienced exorcists. The comparison is like the difference between the treatment by a qualified doctor and someone just beginning their studies.

Q. Do you tie strings around the fingers and toes during treatment?

A. Sometimes there are cases when a man comes with his wife, informing me that she is possessed by a *jinnī*. When she is in my presence the *jinnī* leaves immediately, but by the time he takes her back to his car, the *jinnī* returns. This type of *jinnī* is *mārij*, and the only way to hold him is by tying the strings. Therefore, I tell the husband that if the *jinnī* returns, he should tie string around her fingers and toes and bring her back to me. In this manner it is caught and cannot escape.

Q. How are the fingers and toes tied?

A. A string is tied around each finger and each toe separately. The string should not be very tight. On one occasion a possessed woman was brought to me with her fingers and toes tied. I began reciting over her until the *jinnī* screamed and said, "I swear by Allāh that I will leave." I said, "No. I will burn you with the Qur'ān, the words of Almighty Allāh. I will not let you go. You have become imprisoned by Allāh and then by me." It promised over and over again to leave and never to return again. At that point, I untied her fingers and it left through her fingers.

Q. Do they always leave by the fingers or could it also be through the toes?

A. It could be either. Occasionally the *jinn* will seek permission to leave through the eyes or the head. I tell them no, leave from here, and they depart from where they are commanded.

Q. Are there any signs which let you know which part of the body they are leaving from?

A. Yes. The arm or the leg will begin to shake, sometimes moderately, and sometimes violently, until the movement gradually subsides, indicating that the *jinnī* has left.

Q. When you use beating in your treatment, on what part of the body do you apply it?

A. The patient should only be beaten when he has become unconscious and

the *jinnī* has appeared. And even in such cases, it should not be severe. It is preferable to hit the back or the shoulders, the point of the body where the *jinnī* seems to be residing or different parts as it moves. At times the patient may be conscious, and he can identify the movement of the *jinnī* about his body.

Q. What percentage of your patients are men and women?

A. I would first like to point out that people's abandonment of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah is what has caused them to be afflicted by possession. For example, when I encounter a person who says that he feels depressed or bored with life and I subsequently recite the Qur'ān over him, I find a female *jinnī* present. When I ask why she possessed him, she replies, "He does not pray." Allāh spoke the truth when He said:

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا
فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

*"And whoever turns away from remembrance of the Most Merciful [i.e., Allāh], We appoint for him a devil as a companion."*⁶⁸⁶

And the Almighty said:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا
وَنُحْشِرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى ﴿١٢٤﴾

*"And whoever turns away from My remembrance will have a wretched life, and We will gather him up blind on the Day of Resurrection."*⁶⁸⁷

So after the *jinnī* leaves, I advise the patient to fear Allāh, establish his prayers at their proper times, and read the Qur'ān regularly. By the will of Allāh, it will never return. I tell him that if he does not do these things or only does them for a while then stops, it may return. Regarding the percentage of patients, it is about the same. However, I have about 5 percent more women patients than men due to the general weakness of women in comparison to men.

Q. What benefit does a *jinnī* get from possessing a human?

A. In the case of a female *jinnī* possessing a man out of love, it has intercourse

⁶⁸⁶ Qur'ān, 43:36.

⁶⁸⁷ Qur'ān, 20:124.

with him in his dreams and takes pleasure in this way. Sometimes it may take the form of a woman, but even then it will have intercourse with him while he is sleeping. Most often this occurs during dreams. Otherwise, the *jinnī* just disturbs him based upon the fact that it was sent by a magical spell or in revenge for some harm done to it by the person.

Q. Is there a particular part of the body that the *jinnī* occupies?

A. In the case of women it usually occupies their wombs, and in the case of men it usually settles in their chests.

Q. Are there degrees of possession?

A. Yes, there is a complete and final possession. When a *jinnī* first enters the human body, it only has a partial hold. It takes time for it to completely possess the individual.

Q. From what parts of the body do they enter?

A. They enter mainly from the feet.

Q. Have you encountered cases of more than one *jinnī* possessing a single person?

A. On many occasions during exorcisms it becomes evident that the person has within him more than one *jinnī*. After expelling one, the person still exhibits signs of possession. When I recite over them, another entity emerges and speaks in a different voice, using a different name.

Q. Does the *qarīn* (the companion *jinnī*) assigned to every man from birth possess, or is it another *jinnī*?

A. No. It is another *jinn*. It is the *qarīn* (قارین) which the Prophet (ﷺ) said flows in the bloodstream, but it is another *jinnī* which actually possesses.

Q. Does the *qarīn* harm its human companion?

A. Sometimes its strong whispers swerve the human away from performing prayer, remembering Allāh and helping the needy.

Q. During an exorcism have you ever experienced the *jinn* trying to possess you?

A. No. Never.

Q. Are all of the patients brought to you cases of true possession?

A. No, but I recite over everyone. Illness due to biological causes may be cured by recitation, depending upon the level of the person's faith. The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite *al-Fātiḥah* over those stung by scorpions, and they were cured. What about a few microbes which enter a person? He should seek help from Allāh believing that Allāh has revealed within the Qur'ān a cure. He should rely upon it with sure faith and sincerity as Ibn al-Qayyim said, "If every sick person recited the Qur'ān over himself with certainty of faith and sincerity, no sick person would

remain. Almighty Allāh informs us:

لَوَأَنزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا
مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ

*“If We revealed this Qur’ān on a mountain, you would see it humbly crumbling out of fear of Allāh.”*⁶⁸⁸

And He said:

وَنُزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*“And We reveal within the Qur’ān healing and mercy for the believers.”*⁶⁸⁹

And elsewhere:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ فَدَجَاءَ نَكْمٌ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ
لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

*“O mankind, there has come to you from your Lord a good advice and healing for what is in your chests...”*⁶⁹⁰

Some of them have ailments which cannot be diagnosed in hospitals. For example, when one afflicted by the evil eye is checked in the hospital, they will not find anything wrong with him. Others have sicknesses which can be treated medically. Not everyone over whom I have read has recovered. I recommended that those with physical ailments be treated in a hospital.

Q. Have truly insane people been brought to you for treatment?

A. Yes, such people have been brought to me. I usually tell them that if the hospital has diagnosed their ailment and identified its causes, there is no need to bring them to me. However, if the hospital is unable to identify the cause, I will try to treat them. Sometimes the *jinn* will cause a human to act in an insane manner. So it is better to recite over such a patient to see if he is really possessed. There was a young man who was admitted to Ṭā’if Psychiatric Hospital whom I treated, and he was cured. His condition was caused by *jinn*-possession. The *jinn* used to speak through his voice and cause him to make strange movements.

⁶⁸⁸ Qur’ān, 59:21.

⁶⁸⁹ Qur’ān, 17:82.

⁶⁹⁰ Qur’ān, 10:57.

Q. What are the signs and symptoms of possession?

A. I first ask the patients some questions. I ask if they experience states of depression, headaches, continual movements in the body or disturbing dreams. If that is the case, they spend the night at my house, and I ask them to inform me when the condition comes. I then recite over them. If I find them shaking or breathing strangely when I recite, I continue reciting until they scream and the *jinnī* starts communicating. I ask it why it came, and it reveals the reason, for example, magic, the evil eye, etc. I take from it a solemn oath to leave and not to return. The patients then find out that all of their ailments are gone.

Q. Have you noticed any other symptoms like a strange way of smiling or a foul odour?

A. Yes, particularly those afflicted by a magic spell give off a very bad odour. Other signs are continuous movements and pains which seem to travel around the body. When I recite, they scream, faint or tremble. Some patients do not do these things and are cured with just recitation of the Qur'ān.

Q. What about that little boy who was just brought to you?

A. That little boy has a problem with his leg. On Thursdays and Fridays he is able to walk quite normally, but during the rest of the week he is unable to walk. He has pains here and here (i.e., his thighs and lower legs).

Q. Could the cause be due to his dislike for school?

A. No, he is not going to school at all. I think – and Allāh knows best – that he may be afflicted by the evil eye.

Q. Could you describe a few recent cases of possession which you have successfully treated?

A. There are many.

CASE NO. 1

There was a woman about 28 years old who used to be overcome by seizures from time to time over a period of two years. Sometimes she would lose consciousness. Whenever she had fits, they took her to the hospital, where she received injections, putting her in a drugged state. About a year ago, she had a very intense seizure and her family brought her to me at 10 o'clock at night. They told me that the hospital only informed them that she had psychological problems. When I recited over her it became obvious that she was possessed, and the cause was from magic. The *jinnī* in her was a Buddhist. She did not respond immediately after recitation, but after pressing her jugular veins, the *jinnī* presented himself and informed us about the magician who put the spell on her and the charm's location.

Q. Do you believe everything that the *jinn* say?

A. Not everything they say is to be believed unless it is confirmed. In this case we found the charm where the *jinnī* said it was located and we burned it. Since then she has not had any more seizures.

CASE NO. 2

About six months ago, a man brought his wife and told me that she refused to speak to him. She became agitated and depressed whenever he came near her. After reciting over her, the *jinnī* appeared and informed us that her state was due to bewitchment and that the charm was buried in her father's grave. We went to the grave, dug it up and removed the charm, which was made with her hair and fingernail clippings, and then we burned it. After that she was cured – by the will of Allāh.

INTERVIEW NO. 5

LOCATION: Madīnah, Saudi Arabia

DATE: 8/4/88

NAME: ‘Alī Mushrif al-‘Amrī

EDUCATION: Teacher at Islamic University of Madīnah

Q. When and why did you practise exorcism?

A. This situation whereby people came to me for ailments caused by the *jinn* began quite recently. When I was appointed imām of Masjid Qubā⁶⁹¹ – and my Qur’ānic recitation was good, praise be to Allāh – I was afflicted by the evil eye in my throat. When I got down off the podium after delivering the Friday sermon and wanted to recite the Qur’ān for the prayer, I was totally unable to recite the opening chapter, *al-Fātiḥah*. In fact, I could not even say, “*Allāhu akbar*” (Allāh is the greatest) in order to begin the prayer. Some of those behind me realised that I had been affected with the evil eye, and one of them stepped forward and led the prayer for me. When the prayer was over, people came to me and greeted and wished me well and cursed whoever put the evil eye on me. They all knew it was caused by the evil eye, but there was no way to identify the person because of the large number of people who prayed in the mosque. I was forced to resign from leading prayer in the mosque due to inability to recite or lead the prayer. It even reached the level that I was unable to teach at the University of Madīnah, and I asked to be released from my post. Some of my friends and close relatives suggested that I go to see some magicians. But how could I do that when I was a teacher of *Tawḥīd* at the university, teaching that it was prohibited to go to fortune-tellers and magicians? I refused to go to a magician even if it meant my death. Then I recalled that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

لَا رُقِيَةَ إِلَّا مِنْ عَيْنٍ أَوْ حِمَّةٍ

“Incantation is not allowed except for the evil eye or the sting of a scorpion.”⁶⁹²

I reflected that this text explicitly allows the believers to use permissible incantations – and the greatest would be for the evil eye. So I began to

⁶⁹¹ Qubā is a place three miles from Madīnah where Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) laid the foundations of the first place for public worship in Islām. It is esteemed as the fourth mosque in rank, being next to that of Makkah, Madīnah and Jerusalem. (*Dictionary of Islam*, p. 482.)

⁶⁹² Reported by Buraydah ibn Ḥuṣayb al-Aslamī and collected by Muslim (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 141–142, no. 625) and Ibn Mājah (*Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, p. 266, no. 2832). A similar statement was also reported by ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn and collected by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḡhīr*, vol. 6, p. 191, no. 7373).

research this issue by gathering together books of prophetic traditions, commentaries on the Qurʾān, writings of the scholars about the use of verses and prophetic supplications. I found that these scholars said that when some Jews wanted to affect the Prophet (ﷺ) with the evil eye, the following verse was revealed:

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيَرْفُقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَرِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ
إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

“And surely those who disbelieve will almost make you slip with their eyes when they hear the Reminder [i.e., the Qurʾān], and they say, ‘Surely, he is a madman.’ But it is only a reminder to all of the worlds.”⁶⁹³

The scholars say that whenever this verse is recited on someone afflicted with the evil eye, it cures him by the permission of Allāh. They mentioned their experience in using this verse and its results. Almighty Allāh stated that He revealed in the Qurʾān a verse which is a cure and a mercy for the believers.⁶⁹⁴ I found in authentic traditions that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Verily, in the Qurʾān is a cure for your sicknesses.”⁶⁹⁵ And I found that other chapters like the *muʿawwidhatān* and *al-Fātiḥah* were used for various spiritual ailments. So I gathered these verses, chapters and prophetic supplications and recited them upon myself. In addition, I noticed that the commentaries written about them usually spoke of the *jinn*. So, not only did I personally benefit from this research concerning the evil eye, but I also learned about the world of the *jinn*. I discovered what may be recited as protection against them or for relief for those possessed, and I discovered the effects of magic and its Qurʾānic cures. Reading upon myself cured most of the effects of the evil eye. Although I am still unable to raise my voice in recitation between *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʿ*, I have begun to give lectures again and have returned to teaching.

Shortly after this, I came across an article in the newspaper about a man from the Muṭayrī clan in Hadbān (about 300 km from Madīnah) whose place was being burned by fire, and he was forced to leave his place because

⁶⁹³ Qurʾān, 68: 51-52.

⁶⁹⁴ See Qurʾān, 17:82.

⁶⁹⁵ I could not find any tradition with this wording in the reference books on prophetic traditions. The wording, “The best medicine is the Qurʾān,” is not authentic (*Daʿīf Sunan Ibn Mājah*, p. 287, no. 774 and p. 284, no. 767) and neither is the wording, “Use two cures – honey and the Qurʾān” (*Daʿīf Sunan Ibn Mājah*, p. 280, no. 756). There is a narration with the wording, “Surely, this Qurʾān is the rope of Allāh, light and a beneficial cure,” collected by al-Dārimī, (*Sunan al-Dārimī*, vol. 2, p. 431), however, it is also not authentic due to the presence of the unreliable narrator, Ibrāhīm ibn Muslim al-Hajar (*Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, p. 93, no. 252).

of it. The papers mentioned that after investigation some geologists and other scientists concluded that the area was flammable due to gas leaks, while others claimed that it was caused by bacteria. In the end, they wrote that the scientists were unable to solve the problem. So I contacted the civil defence administration and informed them that the cause was *jinn*. The man or a member of his family had harmed the *jinn*, so they were taking revenge by hurting the family. I told the administration that with Qur'ānic recitation it would go away. The civil defence contacted the Emirate and informed them of what I had said. They in turn contacted the Director of the University, who summoned me and told me that I would be sent by car to Hadbān, so I went.

When I met the man, I greeted him and asked him what had happened. He said that he built a seven room residence and dug a well there. He placed his camel-hair tent next to his house. While he and his family were sitting in the house after *Zuhr*, they noticed a fire had started in the tent. They put it out, assuming that someone passing by had inadvertently thrown a cigarette into the tent and caused the fire. So they began to curse the one who did it. When they sat back down in the living room, they noticed the smell of smoke and thought that the tent had reignited, but they did not find it on fire. They began to search in other rooms for the source. They discovered that the room next to them was on fire, and they thought that perhaps someone had deliberately thrown another lit cigarette through one of the open windows of the room. Again, they cursed the perpetrator. However, while they were putting out this fire, they found that the room in which they had previously been sitting was now on fire. So they realised that it was not as they suspected. They collected some of their belongings and gathered in one of the bedrooms. There was a metal wardrobe in this bedroom along with a metal trunk containing some valuables. They suddenly noticed smoke coming from inside the metal trunk. When they opened it, they found their belongings burned to ashes. So they collected their remaining belongings, left the house, went to the head of the tribe in the region, and informed him of what had occurred. While the tribal leader was debating whether the information was true or false, their car ignited. The leader told them to leave the house and to stay in two tents which he would set up outside the house. At the time of 'Aṣr prayer, a tent was set up for the women and another for the men. When *Maghrib* came and they left the tents to perform their prayers, the two tents burst into flames.

Subsequently, every time they set up new tents, they also went up in flames. They sent a telegram to the King asking him to save them from the fire. The governorate was contacted, and the civil defence was sent. Another tent was set up for the family, and two officers from the civil defence sat with al-Muṭayr inside the tent. When they all got up and went outside, the tent ignited and burned to the ground. The civil defence apologised that they were unable to do anything further in the case. Next the geologists came and said that the land was subject to spontaneous ignition due to gas seepage,

so the man and his family were taken to a town 30 kilometres away, but things kept bursting into flames around them. The other scientists, who said that the combustion was due to bacteria, were just as wrong because the combustion would only occur when they left a place. In fact, whenever someone from the family remained behind in a place, the fires stopped. Then other problems began. If they were in front of food, nothing would happen, but if they left, salt would spill in the food or soap powder would be found all over it. Sometimes they would find cow dung or goat droppings in their food when they left it alone for a moment.

During my first night there I recited in all seven rooms of the house, then everyone left. We ate at the leader of the tribe's house which was many kilometres away. When we returned that night, nothing was burned. So we spent the night there without an incident. I also spent the next night there, and again we left and returned without any fires igniting. After that I returned to Madīnah. The newspapers, which like to exaggerate everything, wrote a number of lengthy articles on the incident and how a *hadīth* scholar from the Islamic University had driven away the *jinn*. Within three days, people came in droves outside my door, informing me that they were afflicted with *jinn*, etc. I told them that I was myself afflicted and I only wanted to help the family in Haddbān. I informed them that I had never read over anyone before, but they insisted that I recite anyway. I felt that if I recited and nothing happened, it would convince them and they would leave. So I recited over the first case, a woman, and to my surprise the *jinnī* left her immediately. That only increased the problem and the crowds got bigger and bigger. Even now, sometimes nights pass and I am unable to sleep due to the many cases which are brought to me.

Q. How long have you been exorcising people?

A. I have been exorcising people for two years.

Q. What are the main signs of possession?

A. There are many. For instance, a man may come to me complaining that he feels as though chains are tied to his body between his stomach and his neck and at times something seems to suffocate him. When I recite over him for a while, he begins to take deep breaths and his body begins to shake. If I grab him by the neck and speak to the *jinnī* in him, it begins to speak. When I ask the *jinnī* its name, it gives a name different from that of the man, or the *jinnī* may say that she is a woman. Once I recited over a brother and ordered the possessing spirit, "Get out you evil, male *jinnī*," and it replied, "I am a woman and not a man." When I asked her, "Why did you take him?" she replied, "I did not come to him, he came to me. I was in a well along with my children and he climbed down the well and hurt us." When the man regained consciousness, he confirmed her story, saying that he had a well and when he had climbed down into it, he felt something enter his stomach like an arrow.

One possessed by a *jinnī* exhibits some strange movements and speaks without realising it. People will inform the person after regaining consciousness about the things he had said.

If a person experiences nightmares or a state of immobility at the time of going to sleep or between the state of wakefulness and sleep, these are among the beginning signs of possession. They must be treated immediately, otherwise they will lead to major problems later. If *Āyah al-Kursī* is recited repeatedly, the *jinnī* will go away and not return.

Q. How do you distinguish between a possessed person and one who is bewitched?

A. These two states are quite similar and can easily be mistaken for each other. When researching these cases, one finds that magic operates by way of the *jinn*. The magician is not able to affect the one on whom he casts the spell except with the help of the *jinn*. I am able to tell the difference during treatment. Treating *jinn*-possession is much easier than breaking a magic spell. The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) recited over a possessed person three times and he got well. The Prophet (ﷺ) addressed a possessed person on one occasion and he was cured. However, the spell which was cast upon the Prophet (ﷺ) lasted for six months. It was not broken until he was informed where the charm was and it was dismantled. This tells us that complete cure will usually only take place when the charm has been destroyed. Finding the charm is not easy unless one discovers the one who cast the spell and forces him to destroy it. If the charm is not found, it is very difficult to cure. The spell can be broken without the charm, but it requires continuous treatment and patience. I have treated a few cases successfully, so it can be done, but it requires long, continuous treatment. When verses are read over a possessed person, he becomes uneasy and begins to make many unnecessary movements. This tells you that the cause is *jinn*. If the verses of magic (*Āyāt al-siḥr*) are read over a bewitched person, he will also exhibit additional movements. One knows by experience the difference between the two. In the beginning it is not easy to tell. Now when a patient comes and I recite over him some verses I am able to tell his relatives if he is under a spell or possessed. Because of that, some people say that I am a magician. Some tell me that I am dealing with magic because they went to magicians who confirmed what I said. However, it is only coincidence. If the patient's movements are strange or unusual, it may be due to *jinn*-possession. If not, it will probably be due to magic. Spells often affect only one particular characteristic of the person. If the person develops a phobia about something; it is probably due to a magic spell. For example, a person suddenly develops an intense dislike for his job. If you take him anywhere else he is fine, but if you take him to his job he refuses to go. His supervisor would then terminate his contract because he does not wish to work. This is probably due to magic. However, it might be mixed with the evil eye. The difference is that the person under the spell will act crazily when taken to something he dislikes. Those affected by the *jinn* will develop a dislike

of filthy things. For example, he may refuse to enter a bathroom. He may dislike entering a number of places and he develops a fear of them. Also, he will begin to like being alone, avoiding people. The *jinn* want to be secluded with the one possessed.

Q. Do only non-Muslim *jinn* possess?

A. No, the possessing spirit could be Muslim, but a corrupt one, like corrupt Muslim humans.

Q. Can righteous *jinn* possess humans for their benefit?

A. No, the act of possession is an act of oppression. However, if a human develops a habit of doing a righteous act, like prayer at a particular time, and he oversleeps or forgets, a righteous *jinnī* (or angel, according to some scholars) will sometimes remind him. He may hear a voice calling him to get up, and when he awakens, no one is there.

Q. Are people possessed by only one *jinnī* at a time?

A. There are no limitations for the *jinn* in this regard. It is not a case where one enters and the host is full.

Q. How do the *jinn* possess humans?

A. They enter most often from the feet. One feels as though an ant is crawling on one's foot and then up one's leg. This continues until it occupies the whole body. Or it may come feeling like a sharp arrow piercing one's stomach. Then it seems to enter the throat. A third way is that one experiences a very severe headache which temporarily causes a complete loss of consciousness, then it descends on the remainder of the body. Or one may suffer from an extreme bout of depression.

Ibn Taymiyyah divided the *jinn* with regard to their affecting humans into three groups: 1) a group which attacks humans and may even kill them, 2) a group which possesses humans without killing or harming them, but it is difficult to get them to leave, and 3) a group which harms them slightly and leaves quickly. The third group is the most common. They are the mischievous type which will possess without any logical cause. They possess just to do harm, and they only control humans whose hearts are empty, vacant of the remembrance of Allāh. *Jinn* usually occupy filthy, vacant and deserted places. If the Qur'ān is recited over someone possessed by this type of *jinnī*, it leaves quickly because it had no real purpose besides mischief. The second group consists of *jinn* who possess humans out of passionate love, and they usually cause epileptic fits. This type requires long treatment because it is the most difficult to remove. The first group is the worst and most dangerous. They harm humans according to the level of harm which humans did to them. If someone threw a stone and killed one of them, they may kill him or one of his children. If part of the body was paralysed from human harm, the *jinn* will cause the paralysis of a part of the person who harmed them. This is the type that the Prophet (ﷺ) warned us about, and

he gave us prayers to protect ourselves from them. Muslims are instructed to mention the name of Allāh before entering the toilets, when leaving and entering their homes, when eating, when discharging a weapon during hunting, when throwing anything or when pouring hot water. The last two are the most common causes for the possession of women. I will cite two cases of this type.

A woman was brought to me unconscious and, when I recited over her, the spirit left and she regained her consciousness. I asked her what had happened. She replied that she had left her house after *Maghrib* – and this is when possession most often takes place, which is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said in an authentic tradition:

إذا استجبح الليل – أو قال: جبح الليل – فكفوا صيانتكم فإن
الشیطان تتشر حينئذ

“When night falls, keep your children in your homes
because the devils spread out in that hour,”⁶⁹⁶

– and saw a black cat which ran into her apartment. She chased it from room to room, trying to expel it, until she cornered it in the bedroom. There she took her nightgown from a chair and hit it, and it ran under the bed. She looked under the bed but did not see it. So she assumed that it must have left without her realising it. When her husband returned later on that night and she put on the nightgown, it possessed her from her nightgown. However, because her harm to it was slight, it readily left after a single recitation on her and did not return.

Another unconscious woman was brought to me, and after I recited over her and grasped her throat, the *jinnī* began to speak, because it suffered from this. Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and other scholars used to beat their patients, but I found that beating sometimes hurts the person. The *jinnī* spoke, saying, “My name is *Ṣāliḥ*.” Then I said, “*Ṣāliḥ* is a Muslim name,” and he replied, “I am a Muslim.” I scolded him, saying, “Since you are a Muslim, why are you hurting this Muslim woman?” He said, “She hurt me. Why did she hurt me?” I asked how she hurt him and he replied, “She poured hot water on me in the toilet and wounded me. She did not even warn me.” I questioned, “How could she have warned you?” He said, “By saying *bismillāh* (In the name of Allāh). I would have heard that and left.” When the woman regained consciousness, I asked her if she poured hot water in the toilet, and she confirmed that she had. So I told her to

⁶⁹⁶ Reported by Jābir and collected by al-Bukhārī (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 321, no. 500) and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, p. 1113, no. 4995-8).

mention Allāh's name before doing so in the future. As for the possessing *jinnī*, he left and did not return again.

Q. Are there other circumstances when the *jinn* may possess humans?

A. The weapons are in one's hands to protect oneself from falling into their evil. Whenever a Muslim leaves or enters his home, he should mention the name of Allāh. When he goes to sleep, he should recite *Āyah al-Kursī*. One should try not to leave any opportunities for them to attack. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned certain circumstances which should be avoided: 1) Do not sleep by yourself in an empty house or in the desert. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited people from sleeping alone because the devil may gain control over them. 2) Do not travel alone. He named the one who travels alone "satan," two who travel together "two devils" (*shayṭānān*), and three "a caravan" (*rakb*).⁶⁹⁷ Most people who are possessed either forgot to mention Allāh's name before pouring hot water or throwing something, or they slept or travelled alone.

The *jinn* usually possess people when they are in a state of either extreme fear or excessive frivolity. For example, there is a type of *jinn* called *jinn al-zār* which possessed people during musical parties. It can be treated. When the participants of such gatherings are filled with the spirits, the exorcist grasps them by the throat and recites over them until the *jinn* leave.

Q. What are the Qur'ānic verses which you read over the possessed?

A. Most of them can be found in *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *al-Adhkār* by al-Nawawī, *Tadhkirah al-Dhākirīn* by al-Shawkānī, *Sharḥ al-Ḥirz al-Ḥaṣīn* and *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*. It is good to read *Sūrah al-Jinn*, *Sūrah al-Kāfirūn*, *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, *Sūrah al-Falaq* and *Sūrah al-Nās*. These last four may be read three times each or seven times each. There are also prophetic prayers which have been used successfully by some scholars, as well as supplications used by early scholars which are mentioned by Ibn al-Qayyim in his book, *Zād al-Ma'ād*. That is from the point of the exorcist. The possessed is recommended to recite the seven verses on magic, among them are the following verses: Qur'ān, 10:81, 20:69 and 7:117-121. These three *sūrahs* contain seven verses which have been tried and tested by scholars with very good results.

Q. Is it necessary to take an oath from the *jinn* before they depart?

A. It is necessary in order to discourage them from returning. Sometimes I will grasp the patients neck and say, "I ask you by the One besides whom there is no god, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, to speak on her tongue without hurting her," and it will begin to talk. It may say, "What do you want?" or "This is none of your business."

⁶⁹⁷ Collected by al-Tirmidhī, Ahmad, Mālik and Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2, p. 721, no. 2601), and authenticated (*ḥasan*) by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 494, no. 2271.

Q. Do the *jinn* speak in the voice of the possessed?

A. Yes, the *jinn* speak in the same dialect and with the same voice. But I did have a case where a common, uneducated person recited the Qur'ān better than I could. If I recited over him *Āyah al-Kursī*, he would say, "I have learned it better than you." And he would proceed to recite it.

Q. What is the role of the *qarīn* in possession?

A. The *jinnī* assigned to a person may inform the magician or fortune-teller's *jinnī* all about you. So they appear capable of knowing the unseen. There was a case in the time of Caliph al-Mahdī (ruled 775-785 CE) in which a man entered his court and claimed that he was a prophet receiving revelation. He was asked for proof and he said, "Everyone put in his hand a specific number of items. I will leave and come back and inform you of what you have in your hands. This will prove what I say because it could only take place by revelation." They did as he asked and he informed them of the exact amounts in their hands. They were amazed until a scholar came and told them that the man was lying to them. The scholar said that the man was really a magician. They asked how he knew that and he told them that he would demonstrate. He said, "If he is able to tell what is in my hand, he is a true prophet." Then he told the man to leave. He then took out a number of dirhams and held some in his hand. When the man returned, the scholar asked him to inform them. The man lowered his head for a moment then raised it up and said, "Thirty." The scholar opened his hand and showed he had over one hundred. When asked how the impostor did it the first time, he told them that they counted what was in their hands and their *jinn* counted along with them and informed the impostor's *jinnī*. However, the scholar grasped a quantity without counting them, so his *jinnī* was unable to count them; therefore, the magician could not find out what he had. The man was beaten and he admitted the truth.

There is a popular school of thought spreading in these times called mediumship. It is all lies and involves magic. If someone says, "But I heard my father's voice," the answer should be "No, you heard your father's *jinnī*." The *qarīn* may not die when the man dies. It may live for some time. So if the person's father's *jinnī* is still around, it is able to talk in his dialect, just as *jinn* often speak in the exact same voice of the humans they possess. Their voices are indistinguishable from their hosts, whether male or female. The *jinnī*, through the medium, will inform a person of things only known to him and his father, because he was with him. The ignorant believe that it is the spirit of the dead communicating. However, it is impossible, because the Qur'ān and the Sunnah clearly state that the souls of the dead cannot return to this life.

INTERVIEW NO. 6
LOCATION: Nasīm, Riyadh
DATE: 12/6/88

NAME: Muḥammad al-Funaytil al-ʿUnayzī
AGE: 28
PLACE OF BIRTH: Riyadh
NATIONALITY: Saudi
EDUCATION: Primary school and religious studies in the *masjid*.

Q. What was your first exposure to exorcism?

A. Prior to five months ago, I knew nothing about the *jinn* and was among those who did not believe that the *jinn* could enter a human being. About five months ago, a relative of mine became sick, and I took him to al-ʿAmrī (the exorcist's name) in Ulayā.⁶⁹⁸ During the exorcism, al-ʿAmrī grabbed him by the throat and recited some Qur'ānic verses over him, and a female *jinnī* spoke, saying that her name was Rif'ah. He asked her if she was a Muslim or non-Muslim and she replied that she was not a Muslim. When he asked her when she entered the man, she answered that it was more than twenty years ago.

Q. What were the signs exhibited by your relative which made you take him to al-ʿAmrī?

A. Farḥān used to be in the military with the border defence and had his own car. Then he changed and began to live out in the desert alone. He built a shanty house out of old car tires and empty oil drums and became very careless about his personal hygiene. He constantly remained in an odorous and filthy state, and he avoided company. If someone stared at him, he would get angry and challenge the person. He developed a strong love for refuse and collected around himself enough garbage to make a whole country dirty. He also began to dislike his parents intensely, and he refused to see them.

Q. When the female *jinnī* possessing your cousin spoke, was it in the man's voice?

A. Yes, it was in Farḥān's voice. Al-ʿAmrī then asked her where she came from and she said from Iraq. He asked her how she entered the man, and she replied that it was during one of his bouts of anger. On one occasion, Farḥān was extremely angry with someone and entered the toilet without mentioning Allāh's name. The *jinnī* then appeared before him in the form of a woman and told him that she loved him. I took him to al-ʿAmrī six times for treatment. The *jinnī* would leave from his right foot, and after we

⁶⁹⁸ A district in northern Riyadh.

left al-‘Amrī’s, it would return to him. Each time we went, I would watch how al-‘Amrī treated the different patients – how he recited and blew upon them, how he grabbed their necks and they fainted, and how he hit them. Sometimes the *jinn* did not speak. These were the most difficult cases.

After I took my cousin back the sixth time, I decided to try to treat him myself. I sat in front of him and recited *Āyah al-Kursī*, the last verses of *Sūrah al-Ḥashr* and other verses which I had gathered from books about the *jinn* and exorcism and had written down in a notebook. *Al-ḥamdulillāh*, I succeeded, and the *jinn* left just as it did for al-‘Amrī. I kept making it difficult for the *jinn* to stay in him for any length of time by expelling her regularly. Then I went to my cousin’s shanty home, took out his few useful belongings and burned the shack down. I bathed Farḥān and cleaned him up, and his condition began to steadily improve. Then his uncle from Kuwait came and took him away, and he returned to a state worse than he was before.

Q. What are the main reasons that *jinn* possess humans?

A. The sick people who have come to me do not pray, and their thoughts are very corrupt. When I asked a female *jinnī* why she possessed a man I was treating, she replied, “Because he does not pray.” This is one of the main reasons for possession – the abandonment of religion. The second reason could be because they do not honour their parents, instead they abuse them. So Allāh sends a *jinnī* to punish them.

Q. How do you know that the *jinnī* was sent by Allāh?

A. Nothing happens in this world except by the permission of Allāh. When a person goes away from the Qur’ān, his thoughts become perverse. All of those who have come to me were sinful people, except one young girl who was from a religious family, and she became possessed by a Muslim *jinnī* called Khalaf. It was apologetic when I scolded it for possessing her, and it left through her left leg with an oath not to return. Possession may also be due to the *jinn* taking revenge for some harm done to them by humans inadvertently.

Q. Are the possessing *jinn* usually disbelievers?

A. Yes, they are often Hindus or Christians. One *jinn* possessed a patient of mine. When I was exorcising it, she revealed how she had influenced him to delay his prayers until he abandoned his night prayer all together.

Q. When someone comes to you, how do you know that he is possessed?

A. He acts unnaturally, always looking at the ground, or he gets up suddenly and walks around. The possessed are generally unable to sit still in one place for any length of time. He frequently goes to the toilet and seems to be generally uneasy. Sometimes he displays a strange, eerie smile. He may laugh in an abnormal way without any reason, as if he is seeing things we cannot. I have noticed this among the twenty or so cases which

I have treated.

Q. In your cases, did the *jinn* speak or did the possessed people communicate their situations?

A. The cases were different. Concerning the young girl whom I mentioned earlier, the *jinnī* spoke in a deep, male voice. Usually in the beginning of a session the people themselves speak, and later the *jinn* take over. On one occasion while we were praying in our *masjid*, we heard the sound of loud breathing. After the prayer was over, we looked around the *masjid* where we found my cousin, Farḥān, lying on his stomach and moving as if he were swimming in the gravel. When I grabbed him by the throat and asked the *jinnī* why she had returned, she responded that she would leave, which she did. My cousin had been passing by the *masjid* and the recitation of the Qur'ān during prayer had affected the *jinnī* within him. Another time during a visit of some *imāms* from the neighbouring *masjids*, a woman was brought to my house. She came in, sat down for a moment and then she suddenly got up and began to run. When I called out to her she stood still, but her body was quivering. I told her to come back and sit down in front of me, and I asked her what was wrong, but she said nothing. When she came close, I took a hold of her throat, recited and blew over her. Then I asked the *jinnī* what its name was, and it replied, "Mīrgid."

Q. What was the purpose of holding her throat?

A. The human mind loses consciousness and the *jinnī* appears in order to defend itself.

Q. Do you use any other means in your treatment besides Qur'ānic recitation and pressing the veins of the throat?

A. I do not flog. I have never beaten anyone except in one case in which the person was possessed by a disbelieving *jinnī* which refused to communicate. It remained camouflaged. So I hit the person three times with my hand, and the *jinnī* began to talk, revealing things about itself. After reciting over a person and determining what his condition is, I recite over a bottle of olive oil or water the *mu'awwidhāt*, *Āyah al-Kursī*, *Sūrah Ikhhlāṣ*, the last verses of *Sūrah al-Ḥashr* (59:21-24) and verse 54 of *Sūrah al-A'rāf*. Then I blow over the oil or water and say,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّهُ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ

الْعَلِيمُ

“Bismillāhi alladhī lā yaḍurru ma‘asmihī shay’un.”
 (“In the name of Allāh, with whose name nothing is harmed.”)⁶⁹⁹

Sometimes circumstances occur when it is necessary to threaten the *jinn*. If there is a disbelieving *jinn* who refuses to leave, I tell it that I will tie the person’s fingers and toes and then burn it. This has an effect because when the fingers and toes are tied, the *jinn* cannot exit. And if the Qur’ān is recited continuously over them, the *jinn* will be burned up inside of the person, which may even kill the person. So, you cannot continue to read over them if you tie their fingers and toes. In any case, I only use this as a threat.

Q. Are there different types of possession?

A. Sometimes the *jinnī* takes complete control over the human mind, and the human does not remember anything that occurs during that period of his possession. At other times the human retains control and is only overcome by the *jinnī* for short intervals.

Q. Is possession a swift process or does it take place over long periods of time?

A. There are two circumstances. In some cases the *jinnī* encounters a human unintentionally. For example, if a person failed to mention Allāh’s name while pouring hot water into a place where there happened to be a *jinnī*, it may possess the person immediately. In some cases when I ask the *jinnī* why it possessed a person, it replies that hot water was poured on it or on his/her children. At other times the *jinnī* may take a form and appear before a person who does not remember Allāh. The person will become very afraid, and it will take control of him.

Q. What form do *jinn* take?

A. Sometimes they appear as humans, sometimes as a black dog or camel. In human form it may even greet a person, and when he extends his hand to shake hands, it disappears. This creates great fear in one’s heart, and the *jinn* usually possess humans who are in a weakened state due to extreme fear.

⁶⁹⁹ A du‘a’ collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, pp. 1411-2, no. 5069) and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 958, no. 4244.

Q. What percentage of your cases of possession are women?

A. About 80 percent of those whom I have seen are women. *Jinn* have strong and weak personalities. Female *jinn* are stronger than male *jinn*.

Q. Do only male *jinn* possess women?

A. Male *jinn* enter women or men, and female *jinn* do likewise.

Q. Have you encountered cases of more than one *jinnī* possessing a single human?

A. Most of the cases which I have treated involved only one *jinnī*, but there were two instances in which I found more than one.

Q. Which part of the human body do *jinn* enter and leave by, and in what part do they dwell?

A. Usually they enter by the big toe and leave by the big toe or finger. When they are leaving through the foot or hand, it begins to shake and rise, whether the person is sitting down or lying on his back. The *jinn* seem to concentrate in the chest or the head of the person. Those possessed usually experience tightness or constriction of their chests along with severe headaches. They may also hear sounds which no one else can.

Q. During exorcisms, do the possessing *jinn* try to possess you?

A. I have experienced the partial entrance of the *jinn* into my hands up to my elbows. It felt like electricity or ants crawling up my arms.

Q. Could you describe the steps you take in performing a typical exorcism?

A. As I mentioned previously, I first recite certain verses and chapters over the patient and then blow on him. In difficult cases I sit on the person's stomach and have two people hold his hands, then I blow on his face. If the *jinn* respond at this point, I begin to communicate with them. If they do not, I grasp the patient's neck with my thumbs on the jugular veins and ask the patient to inform me when he feels dizzy or sleepy. If the patient falls asleep, it means that he was only touched by the *jinn* and is not possessed. Otherwise, the patient begins to lose consciousness, then suddenly he awakens with an evil look on his face. Also, a foul odour comes from him before the *jinn* begin to speak. At this point, I let go of the patient's neck and find out who the *jinn* are and why they came. Then I scold them and order them to give an oath to leave. If the *jinn* refuse, I threaten them by saying that I will burn them after tying the fingers and toes of the possessed. Usually they leave by this point. I then recite over olive oil and water. The patient rubs the oil on the aching parts of the body, and he drinks or bathes with the water. This treatment is repeated for three to ten days until the patient becomes gentle and the roughness goes.

INTERVIEW NO. 7

LOCATION: Ghubayrah, Riyadh

DATE: 22/6/88

NAME: Muḥammad ibn Sa'īyyid al-Dawsarī

AGE: 55

PLACE OF BIRTH: al-Aflāj (Qaṣīm), Saudi Arabia

EDUCATION: Qur'ānic studies in *masjids*.

Q. When did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I began to practise exorcism thirty-one years ago. I visited some *shaykhs* who were reciting the Qur'ān over a woman. They concluded that nothing was possessing her. But when I came near her and touched her, she fell down. So I recited over her and to our surprise, the *jinnī* spoke. It said that its name was Sa'd and was from such and such a village. The *jinnī* then swore that he would leave her, and he promptly left. After that, I realised that Allāh had blessed me with the ability to fight the *jinn*. Whenever I came near possessed people, they would begin to tremble, and when I read over them verses, such as *Āyah al-Kursī*, the beginning verses of *Sūrah Yā Sīn*, the *mu'awwidhatān* and *Sūrah Iklās*, three times, the *jinn* would leave.

Q. Did you learn your method of exorcism from anyone?

A. My uncle used to exorcise with the Qur'ān, but he would also hit. I do not hit. I only read over the possessed. The *jinn* say, "You have burned us with the Qur'ān. May Allāh burn your parents."

Q. Can you identify the main signs which indicate that a person is possessed?

A. Sometimes one can tell from the way that the possessed walks. Other times one cannot detect possession until after reciting over them. Some patients have epilepsy (*ṣar'*), which is not caused by the *jinn*. At other times they are affected by the evil eye.

Q. From your experience, what are the main reasons why people are possessed?

A. The actions of human beings lead to their possession. They may unknowingly pour hot water upon a *jinnī* or they may fall upon one while playing football. If a person forgets to mention Allāh's name in either case, a *jinnī* may possess him. Some patients are affected by the evil eye. One woman whom I recently treated had spilled tea on the ground and had mentioned Allāh's name on behalf of her brothers, but she forgot to do so for herself, so a *jinnī* possessed her. Possession may also be caused by magical spells. Magic opens the door for the *jinn* to whisper doubts in the mind of the bewitched person.

Q. What is the percentage of men and women who become possessed?
A. The greater majority are women.

Q. Do only disbelieving *jinn* possess humans?
A. The corrupt *jinn*, whether disbelieving or Muslims, possess humans.

Q. Have you encountered cases of more than one *jinnī* possessing a single human?

A. In the past, I only found one *jinnī* possessing. Now, groups of male and female *jinn* will possess a person. There are no hard and fast rules. The *jinn* are different types. *Jinniyah al-arḍ* cause the possessed to lose their consciousness, making them unaware of what happened to them until they regain consciousness. When a person is possessed by *jinn al-rīb*, he knows when the *jinnī* comes and goes, and they converse with one another. The third type is the whispering *jinn* which mainly affect the minds of the religious. They whisper such things as, "You are going to die, do not bother to pray, etc."

Q. How do the *jinn* benefit by possessing humans?
A. There is no benefit. They are merely corrupt, like corrupt humans committing adultery, etc.

Q. Does possession take a long time or is it swift?
A. There are two types. One type causes distress and seizures over a long period of time, while the other will enter quickly and leave quickly if exorcised.

Q. From which part of the body do the *jinn* enter?
A. *Jinn* enter mainly by the air, sometimes through the nose or mouth, or sometimes they feel like an ant crawling gradually up a leg. Only a *jinnī al-arḍ* enters through the blood. It fears the *adhān* and Qur'ānic recitation.

Q. Which parts of the human body do the *jinn* occupy?
A. They occupy the head or the heart. They cause the heart to beat faster or to become irregular. When operations are performed, no physical defects are found. The *jinn* may concentrate on one part of the body and later spread over the whole body and speak in the voice of the possessed.

Q. During exorcisms, do the possessing *jinn* try to possess you?
A. No, but they threaten me, and I threaten them. If they were able to kill me, they would.

Q. Do you use other means of exorcising like tying fingers and toes?
A. No, I only use the recitation of the Qur'ān and rose water. Tying fingers and toes was used in earlier times. Now, it has no effect.

Q. Do the *jinn* leave from a particular part of the human body?

A. They often leave from the hands, fingers or nose, yet there is no specific place from which they leave. They are like steam in a pot. When the water boils, the steam will raise the lid and escape.

Q. If the *jinn* give an oath when leaving, do they return?

A. Sometimes some of them return and at other times they bring others in their places. Some leave and do not return.

Q. During your exorcism, do you hold or touch any part of the patient's body?

A. I do not grab or squeeze any particular part of the body, but I may slap the patient on his shoulders or the top of his head.

INTERVIEW NO. 8
LOCATION: Karachi, Pakistan
DATE: 18/7/88

NAME: Rāna Muḥammad Anwār
AGE: 35 years old approximately
PLACE OF BIRTH: Karachi
EDUCATION: Matric (Grade 10)

Q. When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I began about 16 or 17 years ago. As a youth I heard people talking about the *jinn* and that they possessed people. I became interested in how they were expelled, so I began to gather information about exorcism.

Q. Did any of your family members practise exorcism?

A. No, I am the only one.

Q. How did you learn?

A. I learned by questioning those who are known to practise exorcism and by attending their sessions.

Q. Does the possessed person have fits and become unconscious?

A. He usually displays erratic actions, sometimes fighting and striking those around him.

Q. In what language does the possessed person usually speak during a fit?

A. He speaks in his own language 90 percent of the time.

Q. How can you tell that a person is possessed?

A. Possession is determined by giving the possessed person certain tests by asking him different questions.

Q. Can you tell from the person's physical appearance?

A. No.

Q. Please describe the tests which you use.

A. There are three possible methods: In the first method I read Qur'ānic verses over a glass of plain water and give it to the patients to drink. If they find that it tastes bitter it means that they are possessed. If the water tastes insipid, it means they are afflicted by magic. And if it tastes salty, then the person has been cursed. In the second method I ask the afflicted person to bring me a piece of reasonably thick cotton cloth that he wears. I then measure it and give it to another person to measure. If it decreases or increases in length, it means that the person is possessed. In the third method I ask the patient to bring half a gram or one gram of sugar and

ask him to taste it. I then read over it. If the taste is bitter, the person is possessed. If it is salty or insipid, he is under the influence of magic, and such a person will not have fits and/or becomes unconscious. If the person cannot describe the taste at all, it also means he is affected by magic.

Q. What type of *jinn* possess men, and what type of people get possessed?

A. Both good and bad *jinn* possess good and bad people.

Q. What are the reasons why *jinn* possess humans?

A. The *jinn* live in trees and abandoned buildings. If a person disturbs them, they may be possessed because the *jinn* are stronger than humans. Possession may also be a result of humans defiling, damaging or destroying property of the *jinn*. They may also do so out of love. For example, in our village there was a girl from among my relatives who was possessed by a *jinnī*.

Q. Did she speak in her own voice?

A. It communicated in a slightly lower tone of her voice. I asked it, "Why have you bothered her?" It replied, "Because she had put on make-up and went into the forest to defecate. When I saw her looking so beautiful, I fell in love with her."

Q. What percentage of your cases of possession involve women?

A. Approximately 70 percent of those brought to me are women.

Q. Do female *jinn* possess men and vice-versa?

A. Yes.

Q. What percentage of cases involves male *jinn* and women, and female *jinn* and men?

A. About 95 percent of cases involve *jinn* entering human beings of the opposite sex.

Q. Do the *jinn* always speak in the voice of the possessed person? If not, in what percentage of cases is it different?

A. They do not always speak in the voice of their host. Maybe in about 20 percent of the cases the voice changes and around 80 percent remain the same.

Q. What percentage of possessing *jinn* are disbelievers and what percentage are Muslims?

A. It is not possible to tell because they lie and one cannot observe the life of the *jinn* in order to determine the truth. But I believe that both types possess.

Q. In your view, what benefit do *jinn* derive from possessing humans?

A. Sometimes they possess in order to tease humans because they are

irritated with them. At other times they possess due to their ignorance.

Q. Is possession a swift process or a slow process, possibly taking years?

A. Sometimes the *jinn* play with the person for a period of time and tell him not to contact anyone to have him removed. Later they take possession of him.

Q. Through which part of the human body do *jinn* enter and leave?

A. They do not enter from a particular part of the body or leave from any particular place.

Q. Do they affect particular sections of the human body?

A. They can affect all parts of the body or only certain places.

Q. Can the possessed person tell when they are possessed?

A. They usually know when the *jinnī* comes and leaves. When it comes, it may cause them to change their position and shiver, and when it leaves, they feel as if they have been untied.

Q. Have you observed particular parts of the body shaking when the *jinn* leave?

A. I have not noticed this; however, after fits, possessed people usually become extremely weak and their whole body aches.

Q. Have *jinn* tried to take possession of you while you were expelling them?

A. Yes, this occurred twice, but they did not succeed. However, I have been beaten up by the *jinn* while expelling them.

Q. After you determine that the patient is possessed, what is the usual procedure that you follow in exorcising?

A. Before I try to remove the *jinnī*, I first make *wudu*. Then I use different methods to make the *jinnī* manifest itself in the person's body. I pour some scented oil on cotton, read some Qur'ān over it and make the patient smell it. Then I read some more verses in the person's ear and blow on it. But I do not use any verses or methods that are not according to the *sharī'ah*.

Q. What methods do you employ to make the *jinnī* manifest itself?

A. The *jinnī* usually begins to curse if I shake the person.

Q. Do you tie any portions of the patient's hair?

A. In the case of female patients, I usually take a lock of their hair from their foreheads and wrap it around my finger.

Q. What is the purpose of this?

A. When this is done, the *jinnī* cannot leave until I am ready to let it go.

Q. Do you ever strike your patients?

A. Through the *jinn*, a frail woman may have the strength of two grown men, so I sometimes hit patients on their backs with my open hand in order to make the *jinn* submit. However, I always try not to bruise or do any damage to the person.

Q. Do you at any time tie threads around the fingers or toes of those being exorcised?

A. No.

Q. Could you describe three cases of exorcism which you have performed within the last two years?

Case 1:

A pregnant woman around forty-five years from Karachi, Qaidabad, was brought to me.

Q. What was her name?

A. I do not ask people's names. I treated her in her home. She was the wife of my friend, Yār Maqsūd, and she was possessed. I gave her amulets on which certain Qur'ānic verses were written.

Q. What verses?

A. That's my secret. I gave her one to tie on her arm, because putting amulets around the neck is not permitted. I also gave her water to drink, upon which I had done some readings. I gave her some nails, which I read over, to hammer into the four corners of her house. It has been three months now since she was given this treatment, and she seems to have been cured after being affected for more than two years.

Q. Had she been treated previously?

A. She was taken to see some other exorcists before me. However, when she was given something to drink, she would not take it. If a Maulavi was called in, the patient would beat people up.

Case 2:

A neighbour from the same district heard about the first case and brought for treatment his maternal aunt, who was about 45 years old. Her nephew and the husband of the woman in case number one were present. I first examined her to see if she was possessed, then I caused the *jinnī* to manifest itself by reading verses from the Qur'ān. When I did this, the patient began to have fits. Her face became contorted, showing clearly that she was possessed. The *jinnī* would talk for a moment and then become silent and cause pain in different parts of her body. I took a lock of hair in my hand. (It should be noted that solid objects in the vicinity of the person have to be

removed so that the *jinnī* cannot hit you with them.) I asked the *jinnī* who he was. His Urdu was weak, yet he told us that he was a Muslim. I scolded him by telling him that he did not behave like one and asked him why he was not ashamed of bothering a poor, widowed woman with six or seven children. He said that he was sitting in the bathroom and she came in and urinated on him. I told him that it was her house and he should have exited when she entered. He said that he was only resting. I informed him that he should reside in his own areas, such as forests, and not in places where humans live. I hit him on his back (and one *jinnī* told me that he got boils from beatings). Anyway he became weakened by it. After listening to me, he promised to go away. I threatened him that if he returned, I would not let him live. It has now been two and a half months since she was cured. She used to have continuous fits six or seven times every 15 days. I first try to gently make the *jinn* leave, but if they resist, I then use force.

Q. Is she still okay?

A. Just recently I went for *tablīgh*, and she was still okay.

Q. Is possession by more than one *jinnī* at the same time possible?

A. I have never experienced it.

Q. Do the *jinn* always talk in the language of the one they possess?

A. Most of them speak in the same language. However, an educated *jinnī* may speak in more than one language.

Case 3:

This case involved an eighteen year old girl living in Faisalabad. I was preparing to go to Saudi Arabia when I was asked to treat her. I went to her home, which was quite modern. Her family was not very religious. Her problem was that she would have epileptic fits whenever she attended marriages, listened to songs or went to the cinema. She was to be married within three or four months, and her relatives were quite worried. I gave her an amulet to put around her arm and gave her some water to drink upon which I had recited. After approximately ten days, she went to the cinema and nothing happened. Three or four months later, she was married. However, one time she was preparing to attend a marriage in Jhang. While bathing, she took off the amulet I had given her and had an epileptic fit. An exorcist had to be brought in from Faisalabad, and he cured her using

Jafr,⁷⁰⁰ astrology and lines. I do not use these branches of knowledge to cure. Only the ignorant use such methods to cure and make money. The book I read from was *al-Bareili on Palm Reading* by ‘Allamah Ishāq. I myself do not use any *shirk* in my treatments.

Q. Do the *jinn* have names?

A. Their names are just like ours. Some have Hindu names, Sikh names, etc.

Q. Is it possible to burn the *jinn*?

A. We can burn the *jinn* by lighting lamps. I do not know whether it is permitted by *sharī‘ah* or not. I have heard of many cases where burning is used to deal with stubborn *jinn*. On one occasion, I expelled a *jinnī* who had fallen in love with a woman and he promised not to come back, but he did. I hit him a lot and I tried to make him feel ashamed by asking him, “What if someone did something to your sister?” He said that no one would dare do anything to her. The *jinnī* said that in his family he was the only son and that he had been expelled from home by his parents. The *jinn* live on earth, in trees but not in the air. He said that he could not go. I told him to be our friend and go to some other place. If he did, I would not hurt or harm him in any way. I said to him, “See, I have more strength at this moment, you are sitting listening to me.” He said, “It is only a question of time. I can harm you a lot.” I said, “I will not let that happen.” He said, “I will go for now but will come back again.” I burnt him by burning lamps in front of the patient. One can see the patient getting better during such treatment.

Q. Why do you do this type of exorcism?

A. I am doing this work out of necessity. It is not permissible according to *sharī‘ah*. There is Hellfire for it. I read something before I light the lamps, then I blow on the lamps. This process is repeated until the *jinnī* enters into the lamp. When it does so, the patient usually shivers. If you ask the patient he will tell you that he can see things burning in the lamp.

⁷⁰⁰ *Jafr* literally means “a just weaned kid or lamb.” Early Shi‘ites claimed that Ja‘far al-Šādiq (d. 765 CE) wrote a book on lamb skin for the information of the House of the Prophet (ﷺ), containing all they needed to know and all that was to happen until the Last Day. Later, there arose a belief that in the *Jafr*, meanings were cabalistically expressed by separate letters, and ‘*Ilm al-Jafr*’ came to mean “*Ilm al-Hurūf*,” the method of prediction by assigning (by *abjad*) numerical values to letters. This also came to be known as *al-Simiyā’*. (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 80-81.)

INTERVIEW NO. 9
LOCATION: Karachi, Pakistan
DATE: 20/7/88

NAME: Qāri' 'Abdul-Khāliq Raḥmān
DATE OF BIRTH: 1925
PLACE OF BIRTH: Delhi
EDUCATION: Dārul-Ḥadīth Raḥmāniyyah University. Taught at
Maqāṣid al-'Ulūm University in Agra for 8 years.

Q. When did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I began to practise exorcism while I was a student at college. I had memorized the whole Qur'ān when I was 9 years old. Consequently, from a young age people used to come in order for me to read the Qur'ān and supplications over them. But I really began to learn about exorcism when I was at university. I studied under some scholars within and outside the university. After my graduation, many people came to me for treatment.

Q. If a person is brought to you, how do you know that he is possessed?

A. It is possible to tell from their eyes that they are possessed.

Q. What is it in their eyes which indicates their state of possession?

A. Through my experience in dealing with the possessed, I have learned to recognise a particular way in which their eyes move. They also have pain in their shoulders and feel a heaviness upon themselves. Sometimes the possessed person will display uneasiness or obvious signs of madness, like shouting, screaming and unnatural actions.

Q. How do you distinguish between those who are biologically or psychologically ill and those who are truly possessed by *jinn*?

A. Those who are really possessed are few. People are often overcome by fear and bewilderment and assume that these feelings are caused by demonic possession. Some "exorcists" make a business of treating such people. Those who come to these practitioners with biological sicknesses or psychological ailments are told that they are possessed, but they are deluded. I can detect the truly possessed by their facial expression, their eyes and their movements. My great experience in this field enables me to determine the true cases through outward signs. There are signs which are difficult to explain, for they are only known to those who have experience in this field.

Q. Based upon your experience, what are the main reasons leading to true possession?

A. I cannot tell you the reasons why people are truly possessed for I have seen demonic possession among the pious and among the corrupt.

Q. During exorcism, do you ask the *jinn* why they have possessed your patient?

A. I do not ask the reason because the *jinn* do not tell the truth. They may say that the person sat on their heads or anything, but they cannot be believed because they are compulsive liars.

Q. Who are most affected by *jinn*, men or women, and to what percentage?

A. Affected most are women, perhaps 70 percent or more are females.

Q. Do male *jinn* possess women and female *jinn* possess men, or is it possible for male *jinn* to possess human males and female *jinn* human females?

A. Both may occur, however, from my experience in most cases males possess both males and females. Female *jinn* are rare.

Q. If a *jinnī* speaks during treatment, does it use the voice of the patient or does it speak in another voice?

A. Occasionally the voice changes and occasionally it does not. Usually the voice heard is the patient's. Sometimes a person who does not know English or Arabic speaks in these languages. There are even cases when the patient recites the Qur'ān with *tajwīd*, although he had never learnt to read the Qur'ān.

Q. Does this mean that both a Muslim *jinnī* and a non-Muslim *jinnī* may possess a Muslim human?

A. Yes, it does.

Q. Have you found among non-Muslim possessing *jinn* Buddhists, Christians, etc.?

A. I have not found the *jinn* following specific pagan religions.

Q. Which are most common cases of possession, Muslim or non-Muslim *jinn*?

A. Muslims are most common, and they are more evil.

Q. Which are the easiest to remove?

A. They are the same. Sometimes after leaving they return, although in most of my cases they leave permanently.

Q. From your experience, what do *jinn* gain from possessing humans?

A. They enjoy inflicting pain, and most often they are taking revenge for something. That is why my father, who was a very great shaykh, forbade me from exorcising people. Because of this I usually just recite over water which is then sent to my patients, this has been sufficient to cure them. Like evil humans, they take pleasure from harming others. Sometimes they enter women, obtaining sexual pleasure from them.

Q. Have you observed such cases?

A. Yes, before my eyes I have seen women being raped by invisible entities.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a single human?

A. From my experience, only one possesses at a time. Although I suppose it is not impossible for the *jinn* to have companions with them who share in possession. However, I have only found one *jinnī* within a patient at a time.

Q. Do *jinn* enter and leave humans from any particular parts of the body, like the hand, head or foot?

A. They do not enter from any special place, but they seem to affect the brain and the heart the most. When I used to exorcise I tied a knot in the patient's hair and this was sufficient to hold the *jinn* during expulsion. And I did not allow them to leave until they had begged permission to do so. When the *jinn* left, the person often screamed.

Q. Do the *jinn* have their own names or human names?

A. They have human names.

Q. During exorcism, have you experienced any attempt by the *jinn* to possess you?

A. I have never experienced this. Sometimes after I expelled a *jinnī* from a patient, it returned at night and possessed my young son, and he cried out. At other times, it moved around the house in an attempt to frighten me.

Q. How long ago did you stop exorcising people?

A. I stopped about 20 years ago. Many people came to me from all over the world, from Islamabad, Lahore, America, etc. But most of them are under magical spells. True cases of possession are rare. When I find these cases, I excuse myself and refer them to others.

Q. How can you refuse them when they are in need of your help?

A. Helping these people could lead to infliction of harm on my family. As I mentioned before, the *jinn* are evil and will seek revenge by attacking other members of my family. And, as you know, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Do not harm yourself or harm others." In any case, before my father died he had advised me to stop, and I am following his advice.

Q. During the time when you did practise exorcism, when a possessed person was brought to you, how did you begin to treat him?

A. The methodology varied, because the *jinn* and their effects are varied. In some cases, I recited over water which my patients drank, while in others I recited over oil, which I poured into their ears and sealed. If the spirit was particularly evil, I tied the patient's hair and the *jinnī* screamed and wailed, and eventually repented. Then I told it to swear by Allāh that it would

leave. Sometimes the *jinnī* swore by Sulaymān that it would leave. I told it that swearing by Sulaymān was *shirk* and it must swear only by Allāh, the Lord of Sulaymān, to leave.

Q. During your treatment did you grab the person's neck, hand or any part of their body, or did you only recite?

A. I only recited and used oil.

INTERVIEW NO. 10
LOCATION: Karachi, Pakistan
DATE: 21/7/88

NAME: Maulana Shaykh Aḥmad Ḥusayn Zurdāvī

AGE: 36

PLACE OF BIRTH: Baltistan (Kashmir)

EDUCATION: Educated in Najaf; studied *Fiqh*, Philosophy, Literature and Chemistry. Studied in Iraq for 18 years.

Q. When and why did you begin practising exorcism?

A. Practising exorcism has been in my family. In the Ustada region of Baluchistan there were no doctors to cure people's ailments. In the company of my people from this region I learnt how they cured through understanding people by the vein of the forehead and using verses of the Qur'ān. Then I went to Najaf for education. The students with us were poor, and only people who had money or contacts could afford to go to the hospitals. I read some books containing information similar to that which I previously had learned from my forefathers. In order to help some of my classmates, I used the same methods and people were cured. When I returned to Pakistan, those people whom doctors could not cure came to me for help and returned satisfied. I use only prayer and verses of the Qur'ān.

Q. What are the signs which indicate that a person is possessed?

A. Sometimes the person's colour changes. Often possessed people talk unintelligibly, laugh a lot or argue excessively. Sometimes they do not behave like humans at all but like savage beasts. They also dislike artificial lights.

Q. How do you distinguish between physical ailments and actual possession?

A. I read over the person various things like *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, whether he is possessed or not. Then I read *Sūrah al-Jinn* and sometimes the *jinn* begin to weep. There are two types of *jinn*, *kāfir* and Muslim, and there are different ways of curing those afflicted by them.

Q. Why do *jinn* possess humans?

A. *Jinn* occupy different places. Some sit in dirty areas, others where their fathers resided, some by the shores of water, and others where wild animals live in the forests. If a person walked across one of these places where the *jinn* reside and recited the *Basmalah*, then the *jinn* would not harm him, but otherwise they might. Sometimes the *jinn* appear in the form of dogs, cats, the wind or yet other forms.

Q. How do *jinn* possess humans?

A. The *jinn* enter the body, first affecting the heart and then the mind, and therein it will reside.

Q. Who are more affected by *jinn*, males or females?

A. More women are possessed than men.

Q. Do male *jinn* possess women and female *jinn* possess men, or is it possible that male *jinn* possess males and vice-versa?

A. From my experience, women are mainly possessed by female *jinn* because the *jinn* seek to harm these women's children, while males are usually possessed by male *jinn*. This is the case about 80-85 percent of the time.

Q. Does the possessing *jinnī* speak in the language of its host?

A. The language is sometimes different. The woman may be an ignorant village woman, but the *jinnī* might be educated and perhaps speak in English or Arabic.

Q. How do the *jinn* benefit from possessing humans?

A. The *jinn* attempt to harm humans in order to protect their rights and their areas. Some desire superiority over humans so they try to overwhelm them. A few fall in love with humans.

Q. What does the possessed person experience?

A. When a person becomes possessed, he suffers great pain. When the *jinnī* is expelled, patients often say that they feel as if they are being burned. Possessed people of weaker constitution, like women and the old, suddenly find the strength to resist the restraining efforts of seven or eight grown men.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a person at the same time?

A. A person is possessed by only one *jinnī* at a time.

Q. What are the steps that you take to exorcise someone.

A. I begin by reading something to protect and fortify myself. Then I commence the treatment of others. The *jinnī* often tries to resist me, cursing or attempting to beat me. If this occurs, I prepare a rope, tie him with it and read something over him. I take a thread three hands long, which is nearly 1.5 yards long, and I recite *al-Fātiḥah* over it seven times and other Qur'ānic verses. Then I blow on the thread. Following this, I make a vow in the name of the Prophet and check the thread. If the thread remains the same length, it indicates that the person merely has some physical illness. If it increases in length, the person is afflicted by magic, and if it decreases by five fingers, it shows that the person is possessed by a *jinnī*. Usually the recitation of *Sūrah al-Jinn* is enough to indicate that the person is possessed by a *jinnī*. However, in difficult cases we resort to the above procedure. There are ten ways. First I read *Sūrah al-Falaq* and *Sūrah al-Nās* and the *jinn* are usually angered by these. Then I read *al-Fātiḥah* and the *jinnī* runs

away. If it is a harder case, then I read *Sūrah al-Jinn* and I write an amulet to put around the patient's neck or his right arm. At this point the *jinnī* often begs me not to burn them, saying, "The sky has fallen upon me."

Q. For how long do you recite over your patients?

A. It depends upon how long the *jinnī* has been in possession of them. If the person was recently possessed, it is easier to expel the *jinnī* than in the case of the one who has been possessed for months or years.

Q. How do you know when the *jinn* have left?

A. If the person becomes unconscious during the reading of the Qur'ān, it indicates that the *jinnī* has left. If it does not go away with this method, I then burn a charm in the patient's presence and have him inhale its smoke. This treatment usually makes the *jinnī* vow to leave. However, it usually asks that a cow, goat or a hen be sacrificed to it or it requests that some other things be done, as it does not like leaving empty-handed.

Q. Approximately how many people have you exorcised since you began?

A. In Najaf I have treated around 1,000 patients and in Karachi around 1,500. The total is probably around 3000.

Q. Can you describe three cases that you have treated over the past year?

Case 1:

In Korangi I worked in the shop of the chairman of the Awami Colony Mill Area. He told me about a 27-year old married woman by the name Āminah. For some time she had been talking in an unintelligible manner, and she did not like having the lights on. From that I concluded that she was possessed. I usually treat people late at night around ten o'clock, when there are few people around. In this woman's case the *jinnī* had come from the forest. He had six children. The woman's house was also in the forest. On one occasion she did not read the *Basmalah* before leaving the house. She subsequently collided with the children of the *jinnī* and that is why he possessed her. I tried to get him to leave her for two or three hours, but he would not leave. Finally, I commanded him to leave, and with the help of a charm he said he would leave for a *kāfir* land like Peking, China.

Case 2:

In Baltistan, a friend of mine brought his 40-year old sister, Hayder Bi, to see me. She was the mother of five or six children. Her brother had taken her to many doctors for her ailments, but they could neither pinpoint the ailment nor find a cure. When he brought her to me, I noticed that her eyes were red. This is one sign of *jinnī* possession, so I assumed that she was in fact possessed. I was informed that sometime back a Maulavi had read *Sūrah al-Jinn* over her for a treatment of her. The *jinnī* told me that it had possessed her because its children had been harmed by the woman's

animals. She had taken her animals to the well where the *jinnī*'s children lived. When she went to the well to get water, the *jinnī* entered her. It took me two weeks to expel the *jinnī* by reading *Sūrah al-Jinn*, burning written charms and asking her to inhale the smoke.

The person who is possessed is given a charm to wear around his neck. Sometimes we read verses of the Qur'ān and make prayers over a large plate of water. The possessed person sometimes sees the *jinnī* in the water – two, three and four headed ones. We keep an iron knife ready, over which we have made prayers, and we give it to the possessed person so that he may stab the *jinnī* in the water. When he strikes the water with the knife, it becomes bloody, indicating that the *jinnī* has been killed.⁷⁰¹

Case 3:

The third case is that of Ghulam Hayder, a 25-year old labourer in a mill. At one point he began to speak in a garbled manner on his job and was subsequently fired. When he was brought to me and his situation explained, I found that the manager of the mill had been unjust to him. He had given him less wages than he deserved, which caused the labourer to become annoyed. In this disturbed state of mind, he passed by a dirty stream of water and his clothes got dirty. It was at this point that he became possessed. I was also informed that he sometimes cursed religious people. The *jinnī* believed in ibn Ziyād, who was a leader of the troops who fought against Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim in Sind. The *jinnī* had come to help defeat the Muslims and had been living in Sind since that time. It said that it had made the mill's manager become selfish and greedy, and it had made him pay less wages to all of the labourers. It followed the labourer home because he was weak hearted. The *jinnī* appeared in the form of a dog near this dirty stream about which the labourer had spoken earlier. When it started barking, Ghulam Hayder became very nervous. He was already disturbed from the situation on his job, so he was easily possessed. I read *Sūrah al-Jinn* over him, as well as some prayers of the Prophet Sulaymān and the *jinnī* left.

Q. Do you take payment for your services?

A. I sometimes take money to treat people but not always.

⁷⁰¹ Observation: The images are obviously from the person's imagination, as the *jinn* are invisible in their natural form. The appearance of "blood" in the water is probably a trick by the exorcist to convince the "possessed" person that he or she has killed the *jinnī*. The psychological effects led to physical relief and effect a cure.

INTERVIEW NO. 11
LOCATION: Delhi, India
DATE: 29/7/88

NAME: Khwāja Ḥasan Saneh Nizāmī

DATE OF BIRTH: 5/15/1931

PLACE OF BIRTH: Basti *Dargah* Hazrat Nizāmuddīn Awliyā'

EDUCATION: Graduated from Jamiya Miliya Islāmiya and was also educated at home by his father, Hazrat Khwāja Ḥasan Nizāmī, Sajada Nashīn of *Dargah* Hazrat Nizāmuddīn Awliyā'. His father was a Muslim scholar who is claimed to have written over 500 books.

Q. When and why did you begin practising exorcism?

A. People used to come to my father regularly for treatment, so I saw cases of possessed people from childhood.

Q. When did you actually begin to practise exorcisms?

A. I began my practice in 1955.

Q. What percentage of the cases that come to you are actually possession?

A. About 90 percent of the people who come for treatment are mentally ill or suffering from hysteria, while only about 10 percent are really under the influence of magic or spirit-possession.

Q. How do you determine whether or not a person is actually possessed?

A. I do the "prayer of choice" (*istikhārah*),⁷⁰² reciting with it verses from the Qur'ān, for example, *Sūrah al-Inshirāḥ* seven times for three consecutive nights. Following that I usually see in a dream whether or not the person is possessed. There are many external signs which can indicate that the person is possessed, but they are not foolproof. One of the signs is that the person feels a weight on his shoulders and his palms smell foul. One can also know by the unusual behaviour exhibited by the person. For instance, one woman who was brought to me was able to speak in different languages even though they were unknown to her.

Q. Why are people possessed?

A. I have no explanation.

Q. What percentage of cases of possession involve males and females?

A. The *jinn* which possess may be male or female, good (believing) or bad (*kāfir*) *jinn*. They may possess people and even do jobs for them. For instance, over 100 years ago there was a female *jinnī* called Grandma Sobiya – my father wrote about her. She was invisible, and she used to sew

⁷⁰² A prayer which Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) prescribed when choices have to be made.

clothes and grind flour.

Q. Do the *jinn* speak in the voice of the possessed person?

A. They usually speak in a different manner from that of the possessed person.

Q. Are the *jinn* which possess people Muslim *jinn*?

A. Mainly *kāfir jinn* possess humans.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a single person at the same time?

A. I have not had the experience of more than one *jinnī* possessing the same person.

Q. Do the *jinn* have names?

A. They have names in their own language, and if they are Muslims, they have Muslim names.

Q. What part of the body is affected by possession?

A. The whole body is usually affected by *jinn*-possession.

Q. Have the *jinn* ever tried to possess you during an exorcism?

A. I have not yet experienced the *jinn* trying to possess me, but it can happen.

Q. Could you please describe your most common method of treatment of possessed people?

A. If the possessed person is capable of reciting, I ask him to recite some verses of the Qur'ān. I also give him water over which the Qur'ān has been recited to bathe with or drink. Sometimes a possessed person has to be held down or tied with a rope. In exorcism three types of knowledge are used: knowledge of lines (*khuṭūṭ*), knowledge of numerology and knowledge of names. In order to use these types of knowledge, permission from a specialist is absolutely necessary. For example, we write "786" to indicate the *Basmalah* and draw lines of *raml*. Then we make four squares. In each square we write certain Arabic letters and under it we write "333" and under that we write other Arabic letters. All of this has meaning to the person writing it.

Q. Does the treatment take a long time?

A. The person might not be cured in the first attempt. For example, when the wife of the producer of All India Radio was brought to me, I gave her a plate with a charm written in saffron ink. She washed the plate with milk and drank from it. She had to repeat this process for months before she was finally cured. Her case was a strange one. I was asked to see her in her house, and there were a number of obvious signs indicating that she was possessed by the *jinn*. When I arrived and stepped out of the car, the seats of the car were slashed as if by a sharp blade.

Q. Could you describe three cases of exorcisms which you have performed?

Case 1:

The person who was affected has since died, but her husband is still alive and can bear witness to my successful treatment of his wife. She was cured by my usual methods.

Q. Was she possessed or merely ill?

A. I do not know whether she was possessed or she had some other physical illness.

Case 2:

Once a possessed woman, who was being treated by my father in her home, told him not to tamper with the *jinn* or else they would burn his house. My father did not heed her warning and when he returned to his house, he found the house on fire, and his wife died in child labour.

Case 3:

I treated a woman in Badaiyun, U.P., at a *dargah* of Shah Wilāyat, who was a saint 800 years ago. Many people visit his grave. She was an illiterate woman about 35 years old, and she came from a small village in the area. She was successfully treated with my customary method of using charms and Qur'ānic recitation. I am not a regular practitioner so I can only give a few, brief descriptions.

Q. Do you recall any particularly strange cases which were treated by your father?

A. Whenever my father visited Hyderabad, he spent the night at the house of a tax collector, Ma'sūm 'Alī. My mother told me that on one occasion she accompanied him to the house and that a number of other women were also present. When they sat down to have a meal, the women from Hyderabad began to make fun of an old woman among them who had a scarf tightly tied around her head so that none of her hair showed. The women continued to laugh at her although my mother gestured to them not to do so until the old woman untied her scarf and said, "Do you want to see my hair?" She had no hair, so she told them the story behind it. Strange things had happened in her house. Clothes and money caught fire for no reason at all, and cooked food got dumped in the bathroom. One day she lost all of her hair and tried various cures but to no avail. Her husband sent a letter to my father in Delhi and in the same mail he got another letter mentioning that they also wanted to punish her. She suffered, then was brought to my father. He asked the family whether they had ever teased anyone or if they had enemies. The husband said that some time ago he had gone hunting in Hyderabad and killed a deer. Since his car was

parked far away, he asked a man in a field to pick up the deer and carry it to the car. The man refused, so the husband beat him up and forced him to carry the dead animal to his car. My father said that that man had cursed the husband and so he must be found. They reached the man's cottage in the village. He had made statues of flour and read something over them, which made the statues move. He was involved in satanic practices. Then the person who had wronged him sought forgiveness from the man, but the woman's hair never came back. My mother asked my father if it were true, and he confessed that it was. My father worked a lot in the field of exorcism. He had *jinn* working under him, but during his youth he ruined his health in pursuit of all of this. Then a holy person made him leave this path.

INTERVIEW NO. 12
LOCATION: New Delhi
DATE: 1/8/88

NAME: Qāri' Maulana Sayyid Muḥammad Idrīs

DATE OF BIRTH: 1924

EDUCATION: Dār al-'Ulūm Nu'māniyyah, Delhi. Did not complete 'ālim studies, but *qāri'* (recitations) completed.

Q. When and Why did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I began about 50 years ago. It was a tradition in my family. My grandfather and father, Maulana Qāri' Muḥammad Yūsuf, a graduate of Dār ul-'Ulūm Deoband, practised it during their lifetimes. So I grew up observing their practices.

Q. What are the signs which indicate that a person is possessed?

A. Sometimes patients appear constantly uneasy, unable to sit still. Sometimes they appear lifeless with no facial expressions, and at other times they cry constantly.

Q. Of the cases brought to you, what percentage is actually due to possession?

A. About 20 percent are actual cases of *jinn*-possession, 20 percent due to magic, 10 percent due to evil eye, and about 50 percent are a result of physical ailments.

Q. How do you distinguish between the effects of possession and the effects of magic?

A. There are two basic methods which I use: 1) I recite *Darūd Sharīf* and *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* seven times, blow one time in the left palm of the patient and tell him to close his fist. Then I recite *Sūrah al-Nās* three times and blow once over the fist. I then smell the person's palm. If it has an unpleasant smell, it means that he is affected by magic. And if it has a fishy smell, it means that he is possessed by *jinn*. 2) I add the numerical value of the patient's name to the numerical value of his mother's name plus the numerical value of the day (in Persian) and divide the total by four. If the remainder is one, the cause is the *jinn*; if two, the evil eye; if three, physical sickness; and if zero, magic.

Q. What are the main reasons why *jinn* possess humans?

A. *Jinn* possess usually out of love and lust. Sometimes it is due to the *jinn* being disturbed or annoyed by human actions. For example, if a person relieves himself under a tree in which the *jinn* have made their home, the *jinn* inhabiting the tree may be offended and punish the offender by possessing him.

Q. Who are the most often affected by *jinn*, men or women?

A. 60 percent of the cases referred to me are men.

Q. Do male *jinn* possess women and female *jinn* possess men exclusively, or is it possible for male *jinn* to possess men and female *jinn* to possess females?

A. Both combinations occur.

Q. Which is more frequent?

A. I have not noted the percentage as I was not keeping track of cases from that point of view. I deal with cases as they come.

Q. From your experience, if a *jinnī* speaks, does it use the voice of the possessed person or does the voice change?

A. Usually the *jinn* speak with the normal voice of the patient. However, on rare occasions, men's voices have changed to that of females when possessed by a female *jinnī*.

Q. Do the possessed ever speak in other languages?

A. It is very rare that they speak in languages unknown to the possessed person.

Q. Can disbelieving *jinn* possess Muslims?

A. Both types of *jinn* can possess Muslims.

Q. Which is most common?

A. I have not taken note.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a single person at the same time?

A. Yes. More than one *jinnī* may possess a single person.

Q. Do *jinn* enter and leave from specific parts of the human body?

A. They can enter from any point of the body.

Q. Do *jinn* reside in any particular part of the body?

A. No, they can occupy any part of the body, causing pain at various points.

Q. After you have determined that a patient is possessed, what is your usual procedure of exorcising them?

A. I recite *Sūrah al-Muzzammil*, *Āyah al-Kursī* and the *mu'awwidhatān* and blow over the person three times. With this the *jinnī* becomes uneasy, and the patient begins to find some relief from his ailment. This treatment continues for 40 days. If relief is gained after 10-11 days from the beginning of the treatment, I give them a *ta'wīdh* consisting of *Sūrah al-Muzzammil* and *Āyah al-Kursī*. On rare occasions I talk to the possessing *jinn*. To arrest the *jinnī*, I grab a lock of hair on the head of the possessed and recite

Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ seven times. I then tie a knot in the possessed person's hair and recite seven times, “*Yā kbāliṣ! Yā muqallib al-qulūb wal-abṣār.*” (O saviour! O controller of hearts and sight.) And then I say the *qunūt* prayer.

Q. Can you describe three cases of exorcism which you have performed recently?

Case 1:

Twenty years ago I took some clothes to the laundry. The owners informed me that their 25-year old Hindu sweeper was possessed. They also informed me that the patient had attacked two people who had tried to treat him previously. When I began treating him by recitation and blowing, the *jinnī* immediately began to speak to me. It said, “Why did you come? Do you wish to harm me?” I assured it, saying, “I wish you no harm. I only came to visit you.” I then had the sweeper tied up with ropes and began to recite over him continually. The next day he returned with his family and thanked me.

Case 2:

Three years ago, three people from Dubai were brought to me. One of them was suffering from the effects of magic, one from the evil eye and the last one from the *jinn*. I recited over them for 30 to 40 days, and they were all cured.

Case 3:

A year and a half ago, Shaykh Nabīl from Dubai (37-years old) came to the Meridian Hotel in order for me to perform his marriage ceremony between him and his wife from Aligarh. During the ceremony, I observed that Nabīl was possessed. He was exhibiting symptoms of uneasiness, tension and pain throughout. About three or four days later I went and treated him with Qur’ānic recitation and blowing. After some time the possessing *jinnī* left him.

INTERVIEW NO. 13
LOCATION: Kandla, India
DATE: 3/8/88

NAME: Maulana Iftikhārul-Ḥasan
DATE OF BIRTH: 1/10/1922

EDUCATION: Madrasah Mazāhir ‘Ulūm, Saharanpur which was founded by Maulana Sa‘dat ‘Alī and Maulana Aḥmad ‘Alī almost one hundred years ago. ‘Ālim course completed in 1363 AH. Graduate of Dārul-‘Ulūm, Deoband.

Q. When did you begin practising exorcism?

A. I heard about exorcism from my blind teacher in Deoband, and I started practising it in 1955. Deoband at that time was the most famous centre of learning where such practices were taught. Although the practice of exorcism had been in my family, during my lifetime no one practised it. I started it at a young age.

Q. Do you still practise exorcism?

A. No. A very strange incident happened to me, and I stopped practising it. About 32 years ago I stopped killing *jinn*.

Q. Were most of the cases brought to you actual possession?

A. Only 8 percent of the cases were real possession, the rest were either psychological or medical sicknesses.

Q. What signs indicate that a person is possessed?

A. There are no specific signs in a person’s expression or speech. However, possession may be determined by measuring the length of the clothes that a patient wears.

Q. How do you do that?

A. I ask the patient to take off some of his clothing in order to measure it. Then I recite verses of the Qur’ān over it. The person is then requested to wear the clothing again. The clothing is then taken off the patient a second time and re-measured. If its length decreases or increases, the person is possessed.

Q. Are there any other ways?

A. Another of my methods is to write something on a piece of clay and then burn it. If the letters which were written in black ink turn white or red, this means that the person is possessed.

Q. Are there any physical changes in the possessed person?

A. Yes, possessed, frail people often have the strength of many men.

Q. What are the main reasons why *jinn* possess humans?

A. There are many causes. For example, if pious *jinn* reside in a house which human inhabitants have kept filthy, the *jinn* may possess them as punishment. *Jinn* may also be attracted to beautiful women and possess them out of love.

Q. Who are most often affected by *jinn*, women or men?

A. Women are possessed more than men. About 60 or 70 percent of the cases involve women.

Q. Do male *jinn* possess women and female *jinn* possess men exclusively, or is it possible for male *jinn* to possess men and female *jinn* to affect females?

A. Male *jinn* may possess human females or human males and vice-versa. However, in most cases, females are possessed by male *jinn* and males are possessed by male *jinn*.

Q. From your experience, if a *jinnī* speaks, does it use the voice of the possessed person or does his voice change?

A. Usually it speaks in the same voice of the possessed human, and in rare cases it uses a different voice.

Q. Does it ever use different languages?

A. In very rare cases it speaks in languages unknown to the patient.

Q. Can a disbelieving *jinnī* enter a Muslim?

A. Non-Muslim *jinn* possess and tease humans more often than Muslim *jinn*.

Q. Do you treat non-Muslims also?

A. Most of my clients are Hindus!

Q. What benefits do *jinn* gain in possessing humans?

A. They gain pleasure. The *jinn* are just like human enemies who take personal pleasure in doing harm to one another.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a single person at the same time?

A. Even 20 or more *jinn* can possess a person at one time, just like flies at the sweet shop. This is also mentioned in *ḥadīth*.

Q. Is the process of possession a swift or slow one?

A. It is a sudden one.

Q. Do the *jinn* enter and leave from specific parts of the body?

A. There are visible signs that they enter through the mouth and come out through the nose. This route of entering and existing is also mentioned in *ḥadīth*. We are required to say *al-ḥamdulillāh* (praise be to Allāh) after

sneezing to make Satan leave the nose.

Q. When you addressed the *jinn*, did you find that they had names like humans?

A. Most of their names are like humans, but sometimes they are different. Just like in the case of the seven or nine *jinn* who became Muslim in the early days of Islām. They were named Shasan, Basan Hasa, Basa, etc. and one was called Jābir and another Raḥmatullāh.

Q. Do the *jinn* reside in any particular part of the body?

A. Most *jinn* occupy the region of the shoulders. Possessed persons usually feel excessive weight in that area.

Q. Have you ever experienced an attempt of a *jinnī* to possess you during or after exorcisms?

A. I have never been attacked by a *jinnī*, but one time when I tried to expel a *jinnī* by reciting and blowing on the patient, the patient blew on me and chased me.

Q. After determining that a patient is possessed, what was your usual procedure in exorcising him?

A. I would give him some water to drink, over which I had recited *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, some other verses and supplications. And I would give him a *ta'wīdh* to wear around his neck for about seven days.

Q. Could you describe some cases of possession and exorcism which you know about or have taken part in?

A. Some years ago a young, very beautiful girl from the region of Kandla was possessed, and from time to time she would be carried away by the *jinn*. Whoever tried to stop them from carrying her away would themselves be carried as far as two miles. Her father, Ḥabīb Aḥmad, had given an oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) to Hazrat Jī⁷⁰³ - it was the early days of his *Tablīgh* (missionary) work. Ḥabīb Aḥmad did not mention his daughter's illness for a long time, and he did not visit Hazrat Jī. When Ḥabīb Aḥmad finally went to see Hazrat Jī, he did not shake hands with Ḥabīb and asked him why he had not come before this. Ḥabīb started to weep and said, "I am lost!" and then related what had happened to his daughter. Hazrat Jī said, "It won't happen to her anymore." From that time on the possession stopped and she was not carried away again. This incident took place approximately 55 years ago. Although Ḥabīb Aḥmad died 5 years ago, his daughter is still alive today and can verify the story.

⁷⁰³ In'āmūl-Ḥasan Khān, referred to affectionately as "Hazrat Jī" by his followers, was the leader, until his death in 1995, of the Islamic missionary movement known as "Jamā'ah al-Tablīgh."

In Delhi I witnessed another incident. In Panipat there was an extremely beautiful girl who was possessed by a *jinnī*. She could not keep her clothes on, but she did not display her ailment in any other way. Different treatments were tried but none succeeded in curing her. Finally someone suggested that she be taken to the *dargah* (tomb and shrine) of Hazrat Sulṭān Nizāmuddīn Awliyā’ and have her bathe there. It was summer time, and her father took her to the shrine during the early afternoon. In those times there were no buses, so five or seven men escorted her, first in a car and then in a *tonga* (a horse driven carriage). They helped her to bathe at the *dargah*. These were the times of Maulana Yūsuf Ṣāhib and Maulana In‘ām Ṣāhib. Our relative, Ḥakīm ‘Abdul-Rashīd, and Ḥakīm Anṣār and Ḥāji ‘Abdul-Raḥmān, who is deceased (may Allāh bless him), were also with them. When Hazrat Jī wished to lie down and sleep, his bedroll was taken to a certain pillar and opened. If he wanted to swim, some people would help him. When he arrived at the *dargah*, he saw a crowd of people watching the girl being bathed. Ḥāji ‘Abdul-Raḥmān asked her father if he had lost all of his shame and dignity. He wept and said, “She is under the influence of something, and we are trying to remove it.” Hazrat Jī said, “This will not help. Come to our *masjid* and bring her after *Zuḥr* prayers.” The *Zuḥr* prayer was held in his *masjid* that day at 3:00 instead of 3:30. When he and his daughter stepped on to the *masjid*’s steps, the *jinnī* spoke through the girl and asked her father for her clothes. She then ran into the *dargah* by the side of the *masjid* and put on her clothes. Since then the *jinnī* has never returned to the girl. Hazrat Jī was himself inspired by this incident. He felt that if Allāh had given him strength to drive away the *jinnī*, he should waste no time and energy trying to exterminate *jinn* nor busy himself with such matters, instead, he should busy himself with spreading the religion and looking after its affairs.

INTERVIEW NO. 14

LOCATION: London, England

DATE: 1/93

NAME: Faiṣal Boadi

PLACE OF BIRTH: Ghana

EDUCATION: BA, Islamic University of Madīnah and MA in Herbology

Q. When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I did not practise anything of this nature before I studied at the Islamic University in Madīnah. However, once at the university, I prayed to Allāh to help me to assist others. After graduation I intended to study medicine. But later I thought that becoming a doctor would preoccupy me so much that I would have no time to teach religious education (*sharīah*). At the university I frequently performed night prayers and fasts, seeking Allāh's help and asking Him to grant me the ability to assist others. It so happened that I used to pray over water, give it to some sick students, and they would get well. Sometimes I would just recite the Qur'ān over them and other standard prophetic prayers, and they recovered. After my graduation I went to Trinidad but did not begin to practise exorcism there immediately. I discovered that Muslims were going to non-Muslims, Hindus and others, asking them to pray for their spiritual sicknesses, which they did not know how to cure. So the Muslims went to Hindus and Baptists for treatment, and some of them were cured and consequently changed their religion because of the help they had received. I thought it was wise that I provide an alternative, by praying to Allāh to help Muslims and cure them. *Al-ḥamdulillāh*, I accomplished a lot during three or four years.

Q. What percentage of your cases are actual possession?

A. I cannot really say. Some people come with psychological sicknesses while others come with physical illnesses. At times they go to doctors who have no cure for their problems, and sometimes the sickness cannot even be diagnosed. I learned about the pressure points in the hands and so forth, so I used to press certain places. The individual's reaction indicated which organ was affected, and I would inform him of this. I obtained my masters in Herbology, and therefore I prescribed herbal medicines and – *al-ḥamdulillāh* – they would be cured.

Q. Can you tell if a person is possessed by looking in their eyes or by looking at a photograph of them? If so, what are the indications?

A. I look at a person's face and I know – with the help of Allāh – if the person is possessed or not. But I cannot do this with a photograph of an individual. Noticeable symptoms include that the person acts strange and that his eyes start to roll. I can infer that the person is possessed when I recite some verses of the Qur'ān and it irritates whatever evil is inside the person. At times the *jinnī* will even talk out loud.

Q. Can you mention other methods that you use to determine possession?
A. Sometimes I hold the hand of the person and recite *Āyah al-Kursī* and *Ṣalātul-Ibrāhīmiyyah* and – as Allāh wills – the person’s body begins to shake violently and I see that the person is no longer consciously present. At times the person will collapse. From this I know that the individual is possessed.

Q. From your own experience, what are the main reasons why people are possessed?

A. Most of the cases which come to me are those of non-Muslims. For example, they come from Hindu background, Baptists and so forth. Most of them are disbelievers, worshipping and invoking the *jinn*. In the beginning, the *jinn* show that they can do some good things for the ones they are possessing. However, later on they begin to do all kinds of mischief and so forth to the people, causing pain and harm. From these things it is known that most people who invoke these spirits end up having it react upon them.

Q. What percentage of the cases are women?

A. About 70 percent of these cases are women. Maybe the reason for this is because most of the Baptists and other religious groups, like Shango, etc. who invoke the *jinn* in their worship, are women.

Q. Do male *jinn* possess men and women?

A. Yes. Female *jinn* also possess women and men. I cannot say what the percentages are. Sometimes *jinn* enter a person on their own. They may see some person and like him, then they follow the person. Some will follow the person, staying with him some time, and then they will begin to create mischief. Hence, the Prophet (ﷺ) taught Muslims what to say when they go outside and what to say when they enter their homes. For example, before one leaves home, he says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

“*Bismillāh tawwakaltu ‘alallāh, lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh,*”⁷⁰⁴
 (“In the name of Allāh. I have put my trust in Allāh. There is no movement or power except by Allāh,”) three times and blow it over his body.⁷⁰⁵

One should also say *Āyah al-Kursī* and the *quls*, and – *inshā Allāh* – he

⁷⁰⁴ Reported by Anas ibn Mālik, collected by al-Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1413, no. 5076), and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, p. 959, no. 4249.

⁷⁰⁵ There is no mention in the narration of this *ḥadīth* about saying this prayer three times or of blowing it over the body.

will be protected by the help of Allāh. Also, when entering one's home, one should say:

اللهم إني أسألك خير المولج وخير المخرج، بسم الله ولجنا وبسم الله
خرجنا وعلى الله ربنا توكلنا

“*Bismillābi walajnā wa bismillāhi kharajnā wa ‘alallābi rabbinā tawakkalnā.*”⁷⁰⁶ (“In Allāh’s name we entered and with Allāh’s name we left, and in Allāh, Our Lord, we put our trust.”)

When these verses and supplications are blown over the body, evil things that may have been following a person will realise that they do not have authority over him anymore and will leave.

Q. Is it only disbelieving *jinn* which possess humans?

A. Disbelieving *jinn* are primarily involved in possession. Most of the cases which I treat are a result of people who have done all sorts of bad things in order to invoke the *jinn*'s help. These *jinn* are then sent upon others to harm them. When the believing *jinn* possess a person, they really do not harm them. For example, there is the case of some brothers who went out with *Jamā'ah al-Tablīgh* to some place, and when they returned, one of them was possessed by a *jinnī*. That *jinnī* was a Muslim *jinnī*. I asked his companions about the condition of the brother when he was at the place they had visited. The brothers said that he used to have a dream in which someone was telling him that he was sleeping in this place, and consequently he was being threatened. He did not understand the dream. Later on, he noticed himself acting strange and felt inside himself some sort of movements. He did not know how to read the Qur'ān, and he had not memorized its short chapters. However, when he stood up to give a talk, he found himself able to recite the Qur'ān from beginning to the end. The people were amazed that this person who previously did not know anything has suddenly become a memorizer of the Qur'ān. However, when the *jinnī* left him and he was asked to recite what he had read only a few moments before he could not do it. When he returned to Trinidad, the *jinnī* started to speak through him and to inform people that it was a Muslim *jinnī*. It was upsetting to the *jinnī* when this individual slept in his place, therefore, he possessed him. The *jinnī* said that it did not want to harm him, but the boy became weak and unable to do things by himself. So I prayed for him, and – *māshbū' Allāh* – it left him and he became well again.

⁷⁰⁶ Reported by Abū Mālik al-Ash'arī, collected by Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*, vol. 3, p. 1413, no. 5077), and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 1, p. 50, no. 225.

Q. Have you treated cases of people possessed by more than one *jinnī* at a time?

A. Yes. I have had some cases like this. Those who have sent the *jinn* may continue to send more if they do not see any effects on the possessed person. This is the reason why at times, you may have more than one *jinnī* possessing a single human being.

Q. Is possession a swift or slow process?

A. Possession may be swift, in which case the person begins to misbehave immediately, or it may take months or years for the *jinnī* to establish control over the individual. For example, we had a case of some children who were playing hide-and-seek. One of the children went to hide in a place which had been inhabited by an old lady who used to invoke the *jinn* and worship them. When the child returned, it began to act and talk like the old lady, who had died some years before, saying that he was this person. The other children ran away from him and went and informed their parents. The child was brought to me. When I questioned the *jinnī*, it said that it was one of the *jinn* which was invoked and worshipped by that particular woman who had died. When the child went there to hide, he stepped on it, so it possessed him.

Q. Do the possessing *jinn* speak in the voice of the possessed person or in another voice?

A. At times they speak in the person's voice – in reality, through the person's voice. But at other times they speak in a different voice. If it is a man possessed by a female *jinnī*, he may speak in a female voice. At times, they may even speak in a different language from that of the possessed person. In Trinidad and Guyana, some of the *jinn* spoke Urdu even though the possessed person could not speak that language. Some have also spoken in Arabic, and others in Swahili. Especially when possessed, the Baptists speak some Ethiopian languages. Other people who are unable to understand the language will say that the possessed person is speaking in tongues, thereby assuming it is coming from Allāh and that the possessed person is truly purified. But no, this is not the case. They are being possessed by those *jinn* that they invoke. The *jinn* use whatever language that they speak when speaking through the voice of the individual.

Q. Through which part of the human body do the *jinn* enter, and where do they reside?

A. *Jinn* are smokeless fire and can enter any part of a human being's body, so any part of the body which they can get hold of, they may enter. This includes through the nose, the ears, the mouth or through the genital organs. All of the prayers that we have been instructed to do in Islām are good. For example, when we are going to the toilet, we should say, "*Allāhuma innī a'ūdhu bika minal-khubthi wal-khabā'ith.*" These forms of protection are good for us because the *jinn* like to dwell in places of filth. If we go to such places without seeking refuge in Allāh against them and their mischief, they

may enter us and harm us.

Q. Do the possessing *jinn* have names or titles that they go by?

A. Of course they do. Some are doctors, engineers, memorizers of the Qur'ān, teachers, etc. the same as humans. Anything that humans do, the *jinn* are capable of doing.

Q. During exorcism, do the possessing *jinn* try to possess you also? If so, how do you avoid it?

A. *Al-hamdulillāh*, before I go to attend to any sick person, I seek refuge in Allāh – may He be glorified – to protect me from any kind of evil from these creatures. Praise be to Allāh, I have not experienced the *jinn* trying to possess me – except in dreams. Sometimes in dreams they come and offer to help me because they find that what I am doing is good. But I do not respond to these offers. I tell them, “No, I do not need your help. I will only seek help from Allāh alone.” The moment one seeks their help, they will try to entice him to do acts of disbelief by requiring him to do certain things for them. If one does not do as they request, they will interfere with his family. So I do not do anything of that nature.

Q. Since you began performing exorcisms, have any of your family members been affected?

A. No – *māshā' Allāh* – none of them have been affected.

Q. Has your methodology of exorcism changed over the years?

A. Not really. It has not changed. What I do at times is that I get a glass of water and I recite *Āyah al-Kursī* and the *quls*, then I blow into the water and give this to the person to drink. When the person drinks it – and only Allāh knows how it affects the *jinn* – the person begins to react and so forth. After this I pray to Allāh to help the person and to make the *jinn* leave. Then, I start to speak to the *jinnī* through the person and command it to leave. And, *māshā' Allāh*, it leaves the person.

Q. Does treatment involve more than one session?

A. Of course. Sometimes it goes beyond one session. When the *jinnī* leaves the person's body, the person then becomes weak and may even collapse, fall down or become unconscious for some time. Some of the *jinn* are very stubborn and refuse to come out. For example, during one person's treatment a *jinnī* told me that it had come up to the patient's throat but did not want to come out. It told me that if I wanted it to come out, I would have to cut the throat of the person.

Q. Describe in as much detail as possible three of your most distinct cases.

A. There are so many cases, it's difficult to recall all of the details.

Case. 1

There was a man who was brought to me during the night in October, 1992. His head was so severely swollen that he was hardly recognisable as

a human being. He began to talk unintelligibly until I contacted the *jinnī* and asked the reason for the man's condition. The *jinnī* informed me that it was lying under the shade of a tree one morning about 10 am. The man, who was passing by at that time, went to the tree and urinated in the *jinnī*'s face. The *jinnī* became angry and seized the man and applied pressure to his head as punishment. I told the *jinnī* that the man did not see him, and it replied that the man had eyes and should be able to see. I informed him that human eyes cannot see beings of the spirit-world which is the reason why he urinated as he did. It asked me what I would do if someone urinated in my face, and I replied that I would have to see why the person did it. If he was a blind person, I would do nothing because I know that he cannot see. Or if he could see, but the place in which I was resting was dark or hidden, then I would know that he did not do it intentionally. It then told me that I must tell people not to urinate under trees, other hidden places or into holes, for these are places which the *jinn* like to occupy. After that I prayed to Allāh, seeking refuge in Him, and I ordered the *jinnī* to leave the person in the name of Allāh and by His permission. The *jinnī* left and the man's head returned to its normal state.

Case. 2

The next case was also in October, 1992, when I returned to Trinidad. A girl named Shamīna Nūr was brought to me with her hands in bandages. When I asked her relatives about her they informed me that she tried to commit suicide several times. Sometimes she claimed that she was Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) – I seek refuge in Allāh from cursed Satan – and at other times she said that she was Jesus (peace be upon him) – I seek refuge in Allāh from the cursed Satan. Recently, she had jumped from a structure over 17 feet high, but – Allāh be praised – she did not break any bones or harm herself in any way.

She related to me that when she and her mother were alone in the house, and the mother was in the house cooking, a *jinnī* told her to go and kill the mother. She spoke to herself saying, "I do not want to kill my mother. I love my mom, I do not want to kill her." But the *jinnī* told her that it needed blood. It directed her to a cutlass knife which, she took hold of and while she was walking towards her mother whose back was turned to her, she said to the *jinnī*, "If you must have blood, then drink my blood." So she cut her own wrists. The cuts were very deep. But – praise be to Allāh – she was taken to the hospital, where she got stitches and her hands bandaged.

I asked the *jinnī* who it was that sent it upon her. The *jinnī* informed me that it was her former boyfriend, Dedāt, who was angry because she terminated her relationship with him and married someone else. So her former boyfriend wanted to see her dead rather than someone else marrying her. The *jinnī* was sent to kill her. I asked how it would kill her and if it had a gun or knife. The *jinnī* said that it did not possess such weapons but

it could cause the person to kill herself. In other words, the *jinnī* could put into the head of a person to do such and such. Once it put into the girls mind to drink a bottle of glamozone, which is a poisonous substance. She drank this, but – Allāh be praised – she was taken to the hospital and they met a Ghanaian doctor there. In Ghana, when somebody drinks poison and there is charcoal around, a drink is made from it and given to the person to drink. This neutralises the poison. Or if no charcoal is available, mud can be mixed with water and given to the person to drink. Even though the person vomits while drinking, they are still given the drink. This also kills the effect of poison. So, the doctor used the same procedure as he did at home, and – praise be to Allāh – she got well.

I asked the *jinnī* what else it did to her, and he said that he told her to jump from the high structure and she complied, but she did not die. When I asked him what else, he said that he put into her mind to kill her mother. I asked him why he had suggested the mother. He replied that if she killed her mum, she would also be killed. But – Allāh be praised – none of these things happened. When I asked him why he had her claim that she was Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) he said he did so because he knew that Muslims loved Muḥammad and thought that if he could convince them of it, they would not try to remove him from her. I told him that a woman could not be a prophet, and this includes Jesus. He then said that he was a Hindu. So I prayed to Allāh, seeking refuge in Him against the Satan, and I made him get out of the girl. He taught the girl a certain Hindu song which she was still able to recall after he left, and she sang it for us.

Case. 3

The next case was another sister who was also possessed. On one occasion her husband met me and said, “Praise be to Allāh, I have met you, because I have a big problem.” When I asked him about it, he related that his wife had attempted suicide a number of times, and he did not know what to do. He had taken her to doctors, psychologists, and all types of specialists, but without success. He said that on one occasion he was reading a book in his bedroom and he smelt a very strange and repugnant odour. When he looked around the room for the source and did not find anything, he then went out into the living room. There he saw his wife lying on the ground with a razor blade in her hand, her wrists slashed and blood gushing out of her veins onto the floor. He took her to the hospital and her wrists were stitched; she was given blood and fluids. After getting well, she again tried to kill herself by taking an overdose of pills. When he brought her to me and I communicated with the *jinnī* possessing her, it related that it had been sent by a woman who had loved the man but he did not like her. She was intensely jealous that he had married someone else, so she wanted to hurt the man’s wife.

Case. 4

There was also a case in Trinidad whereby I was asked to go to a family's home for lunch. I made a 9 a.m. appointment with them, but when the time came I was unable to go due to many people who were at my house with their marital problems and sicknesses. Since I was so occupied, I phoned and told them that I would not be able to come at the appointed time. I said that maybe I would come around one o'clock. When I arrived there, they said that at nine o'clock the 20-year old girl started to cry continuously until one o'clock. When they asked her why she was crying, she could not give them any reason. When I looked at her face, especially her eyes, and I recited *Āyah al-Kursī* and blew it over her eyes, she started to react. The *jinnī* started to speak, saying, "I love her, I love her. I want to be with her." I told her to sit down and asked who he was. He said that he was a non-Muslim *jinnī* by the name of Paul. I asked him why he came to a Muslim woman. He said that because Muslim women are very clean and so forth. I asked him how long he had been with her, and he replied that he had been with her for five years. When the girl was going to school, there was a certain bridge over which she passed. He was under the bridge, followed her and stayed with her since then. I asked why he was crying, and he replied that he knew what was going to happen: I was going to take him out of her. When I asked him if he wanted to become Muslim, he said, "No," because he earns his livelihood by fighting. I suggested to him that if he became a Muslim he could find better employment. He said, "No," because he was uneducated and that was the only way he could obtain money. I asked him if he wanted to marry the girl, and he said, "Yes." So I told him he could not have children, and the girl wanted children. He said that he would leave her when she reached 30 years old. I told him that she would be old by then and no one would want her then. I again asked him to accept Islām, but he said that if he did so it would be because of the lady. He felt his companions would make fun of him because he had been captured and they would say that was why he became a Muslim. The conversation with him lasted for over half an hour and in the end he agreed to become a Muslim, not because of the girl but because Allāh wanted him to become one.

INTERVIEW NO. 15
LOCATION: Caroni, Trinidad
DATE: 11/8/91

NAME: Sharūn Khān
PLACE OF BIRTH: Trinidad
AGE: 42
EDUCATION: Secondary School
OCCUPATION: Caretaker of Caroni Islamic Centre

Q. When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I was an exorcist's assistant for approximately two years while he was in Trinidad. I assisted this shaykh in exorcisms along with some other brothers. We studied under his methodology of exorcism.

Q. Did he formally teach you exorcism?

A. Yes. He dictated notes on the subject.

Q. Can you describe the methodology of exorcism that you were taught?

A. These are the notes which I wrote concerning the exorcism of cases of black magic:

To Spoil the Effects of Black Magic:

1. Perform *wuḍu*
2. Write the following Qur'ānic verses and chapters on paper, and dip it into a container of rainwater or river water: 2:1-10, 7:117-122, 10:81-82, 20:69, 26:45-48, 38:41-43 and the *mu'awwidhatān*.
3. Give the water to the patient to drink, wash his hands and face and have him bathe with it.
- 4a. Recite the first *rukū'* of *Sūrah Yā Sīn* (36) and blow over the patient. Note: Do not speak to anyone during the treatment, only repeat the praises of Allāh.
- 4b. Repeat 21 times: *yā Allāh*, *yā 'Azīz*, and *yā Muġīb*.

Q. What are the steps for exorcising those possessed by *jinn*?

A. The methodology of exorcism is as follows:

Exorcism:

1. Question the patient with regard to his experiences.

2. Recite *al-Fātiḥah*, *Āyah al-Kursī* and the three *quls* over a glass of water and have the patient drink it.

3. Place some mustard oil on the palms of the patient's right hand and recite *al-Fātiḥah*, *Āyah al-Kursī* and the three *quls*.

4. Tie a lock of the patient's hair.

5. Let the assistant put some mustard oil on your fingertip and insert this finger in the patient's ear hole. Then close the ear hole with the ear flap or with an assistant's finger.

6. The exorcist should then close the patient's nostrils and place his palm in front of the patient's mouth. Observation: If there is no reaction from the patient after these steps, the problem is diagnosed as purely biological requiring medical treatment and not spiritual.

7. Massage, feel and press the patient's limbs and different portions of the body to identify the location of the *jinnī*.

8. When the *jinnī* has been located, an attempt should be made to communicate with it. It should be asked about its beliefs and reasons for possessing, and Islām should be explained to it.

9. The *jinnī* should then be driven progressively upward toward the patient's head by pressing the area of the body in which it resides. When it reaches the throat, slide the hand up to the face to the hair line. If the *jinnī* accepted Islām, it should be released into the air or imprisoned, if requested.

10. Cut off the tied lock of the patient's hair, at which point the patient will return to his normal state, totally unaware of the proceedings. The hair should be either flushed down the toilet or put in a bottle and buried.

Q. What reasons are given by the *jinn* for possessing humans?

A. I hear of greed, envy, uncleanness of the host to simply desire to do harm.

Q. Are the possessing *jinn* ever Muslims?

A. I never encountered a case in which the *jinnī* was a Muslim.

Q. Has the methodology which you have outlined remained the same from the time that the shaykh began until he left?

A. No, the methods used changed with time and experience.

INTERVIEW NO. 16

LOCATION: Princes Town, Trinidad

DATE: 12/10/91

NAME: Ḥasan Muḥammad

AGE: 38

PLACE OF BIRTH: Trinidad

EDUCATION: High School (O levels), Diploma in Teaching Agricultural Science, Primary School Teaching Certificate.

Q. When and why did you begin to practise exorcism?

A. I became exposed to exorcism about 15 years ago through reading Christian and Hindu literature. The movie “The Exorcist” further sparked my interest, but no Islamic literature on the topic was available. About six years ago I became a student of a shaykh here in Trinidad, who was teaching about the *jinn*. Two years later the shaykh began to openly exorcise at the Islamic centre. He did so to encourage the Muslims to leave the pundits (Brahmanic scholars) and to stop going to St. Benedict’s Convent for treatment. Two years ago I took four sets of people to the shaykh and assisted him in the exorcisms. I was very impressed with his methodology and decided to study exorcism under him.

Q. Could you describe some cases which you took part in as the shaykh’s assistant?

Case 1:

Ismā’īl ‘Abdul’s father complained of aches and pains which shifted over his body, especially around his back. Doctors were unable to identify the cause or to treat the symptoms, so he made an appointment to see the shaykh. The first thing that the shaykh did was to recite over a glass of water and blow into it, and he gave it to the man to drink. When he drank it, he became somewhat confused, so we sat him down and the shaykh began to treat him by transferring mustard oil from his hand to the man’s ear-holes. He closed off the ear-holes with the ear-lobes, and I held the ear-holes closed with the lobes. Then he rubbed mustard oil in the man’s palms and on the soles of his feet. He proceeded rubbing upwards from the lower part of the man’s body as if the weight was down below.

Q. So he started from the man’s foot?

A. Yes, but before he did, he pulled some of the man’s hair away from the centre of his head and knotted it tightly. (Ḥasan then demonstrated this.) The shaykh sometimes had someone else to do this. He then took the mustard oil in his own palm and held it over the person’s head and mouth. After that, he began pushing upwards from one foot, as if he were

massaging something out of it. All of this time he was speaking to the *jinnī*, asking it who it was and why it had come; and right from the beginning his questions were answered. In this case the *jinnī* said, "I am his friend."

Q. What was the first question he was asked?

A. "Who sent you?" And the *jinnī* answered, "Nobody sent me." Then he asked it, "How did you get there?" and it replied, "I came because I like him." The shaykh told the *jinnī* this was fornication because the man was married. It said, "I still like him."

Q. Was the old man speaking in his own voice?

A. Yes, but he did not know what he was saying. The shaykh asked the *jinnī*, "How long have you been there?" It answered, "Twenty-four years."

Q. Did the old man pass out unconscious at that time?

A. No. He was not unconscious. His pupils were dilated and he was talking as if he were normal. But he would sometimes jerk as if someone kicked him.

Q. But how could he hear, when his ear holes were closed?

A. That's the point. The old man could not hear but the *jinnī* obviously could. The shaykh did the same thing with the man's sister and the *jinnī* answered everything it was asked without any problems. The shaykh was speaking softly at one point and harshly at another, but the old man could not hear at all. He continued like this for some time. Then the shaykh said, "You have to come out. You are not supposed to be inside this man. It is wrong."

Q. Did he ask the name of the person or what the entity was?

A. He asked, but I don't think he was informed of its name. He was told that she was a Spanish girl-*jinnī* who had liked him since his childhood. She mentioned that they have children inside of him. I thought this very fascinating. She did not want to come out, so tactical means had to be used. The old man had to be hit on the face with slippers. The shaykh began slapping him very hard. Afterwards when I asked the old man about being hit, he said he felt nothing. He did not feel any ache or pain or anything at all, even though he had received a number of serious slaps. At first the shaykh hit him with his hands and then when the *jinnī* became too difficult, with slippers. The shaykh used the slippers on his jaws, which is what I did too. He asked the *jinnī* to leave in the name of Allāh, and he informed it that it was committing sin and error. After half an hour, she came out.

Q. While the *jinnī* was being spoken to, what was its response?

A. "I don't want to come out. I love him. I have to be with him." The shaykh told it that this was fornication and forbidden.

Q. Did the shaykh ask it if it was a believer or not?

A. There was no reply to this. It just wanted to be left inside him. Eventually, we were able to pull it out. It wanted to return through the nostrils and the ears. The old man kept breathing alternatively from the nose and the mouth. Then the *jinnī* came out into the air. When the shaykh brought it out, he had the mustard oil in his hands. He closed the man's nostrils and ears without squeezing them so as not to suffocate him. He kept on alternating between the mouth and the nostrils. When the *jinnī* finally came out, the shaykh took a pair of scissors and he cut off a piece of the man's hair.

Q. How did he know that she had gone up into the air?

A. I did not know, but there were visible changes in the man. He was relaxed and his eyes were not dilated. He jumped as if he were out of a trance. He was transformed back into a normal person. Then the shaykh took the strands of hair which he was holding, and he locked them inside a bottle which he said he would bury afterwards.

Q. So he took the strands of hair from the middle of the man's head?

Have you ever observed him take it from any other part?

A. Basically, it is more towards the centre of the hair than to the front or the side.

Q. Do you recall any other cases?

Case 2

There was one sister with a similar case. It was an easy case, and she was cured by the same process. Her name was Nusrat Begum.

Q. What was her complaint?

A. She told me she was not feeling normal because of something appearing in her dreams. When she slept, she felt something coming onto her from above her or from within her.

Q. Was it coming onto her sexually?

A. She did not say sexually but she seemed to imply this. So I took her to my shaykh and we went through the same process. It was not so volatile as the other one, and the shaykh was able to remove the *jinnī* from her fairly easily.

Q. Did it speak?

A. It did not speak very much. The only thing I remember about this case was that the *jinnī* said that somebody had put something on her. But it did not want to disclose who did it.

Q. Could you describe a case which you handled?

Case 3

I will describe my first case for you.

Q. In that case, was the *jinnī* a Hindu or what?

A. About that case I don't know. A person gets caught up in the excitement of watching the whole process. When I was called to attend that particular case, I had already read a lot of material and I had gone through the steps, but I had not performed an exorcism on my own. I knew the basic *du'ās*.

Q. Had you memorized them or did you have them on tape?

A. Yes, I had memorized them and had gone through your book⁷⁰⁷ like the teeth of a comb. But I had not learned all there was to it. When a possessed person was brought to me for the first time, I felt as if I was not prepared.

Q. Were you studying under your shaykh at that time?

A. I did not study under him consistently. I attended one or two sessions in which he explained some details.

Q. What were the details that you learned from the shaykh about the method of exorcism that you could not have acquired from observation?

A. He gave us a step-by-step procedure which I memorized and which I explained to you previously.

Q. But did he tell you to do anything before going to exorcise?

A. He said to go through a period of fasting and to be consistent in performing *tahajjud*.⁷⁰⁸

Q. Was there a specified period of fasting?

A. I distinctly remember it to be forty days, but I never actually did a forty day fast, because I was never given evidence to support this particular issue. I did not really want to do it unless there was some sound basis for it. *Inshā Allāh*, one of these days I will find out about this issue and deal with it. I never expected something to come up. If someone with a *jinnī* is not attended to, then he is being oppressed. Therefore, when I was called upon, I had no choice but to respond. I had not done any fasting. I was just an occasional exorcist.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibn Taymiyyah's Essay on the Jinn*.

⁷⁰⁸ A highly recommended, voluntary prayer performed in the latter part of the night.

Q. Besides fasting and *tabajjud*, did the shaykh ask you to do anything, for example, to wear any special kinds of clothes, use any kind of perfume or anything else?

A. Not to my knowledge. I do not know whether he asked others to do so. We exorcise in the normal way by reciting *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and after it the *kalimah*.⁷⁰⁹

Q. Describe the exorcism concerning the sister.

A. On Friday morning as I was just going to school, a brother by the name of Amīn came and told me that his sister-in-law⁷¹⁰ has a *jinnī* in her and that we need to take it out. He and I were studying with the same shaykh, so we discussed the problem.⁷¹¹ I told him that I did not know whether I would be able to take it out. He reminded me that it was our communal obligation to help this girl, and that is why we were called upon. We had studied the book that you wrote, which mentions that it is compulsory to help those possessed, so I agreed to see what we could do, but I had not expected to actually perform the complete thing. I said that we would just have a look and maybe someone could perform *ruqyah* (incantation) for her. But when we went to see the sister, she was in the midst of having a fit.

Q. How was she?

A. She was lying on the bed. To show us what was happening they called her husband. When the husband went and touched her she went into a frenzy.

Q. Was she staring? Could she see him?

A. Her eyes were closed tightly the whole time. She only became alive and kicking when the husband⁷¹² came near her.

Q. Did the husband speak to her to let her know that he was present?

A. No. But he did speak once and I asked him to hold her. As he held her hand she started to become volatile. The first thing I did when I entered was to ascertain the situation. I then performed *ruqyah* by reciting *al-Fātiḥah* and *Āyah al-Kursī*, and I blew on her head.

Q. Please specify.

A. I recited *al-Fātiḥah*, *Āyah al-Kursī* and the last three *quls* (*al-Aḥad*, *Falaq* and *al-Nās*), and I blew over her from her head to her toe three times. She relaxed for a while. Then I asked what had been occurring. They told

⁷⁰⁹ The declaration of faith, in Arabic.

⁷¹⁰ Shireen, 23 years old.

⁷¹¹ Shaykh Bodi was out of the country at the time.

⁷¹² Ismā'īl 'Abdul, 30-years old, a car salesman.

me that when the husband comes inside the room, the *jinnī* comes up. I called the husband and asked him to talk to her. When he talked to her, she did not respond. When he came closer, she threatened him. And when he touched her, it started to get worse. As he held her hands she started to become volatile like a wild animal, so I folded up the mattress, wrapping her in it. She was in serious pain.

Q. Was she saying anything?

A. She was mumbling something like, “Move, I don’t want you,” something to that effect, but it was mostly incoherent speech. After about ten minutes, I told her brother-in-law Amīn that she seems to have a *jinnī* in her. He said, “Then let me attempt to remove it.” I reminded him that he had not done it before, but in discussing it, we agreed to do it together. We then got the mustard oil. I told the people in the room who were not clean or who did not have *wudu* to leave the room, explaining that later it could become dangerous if they were not clean. Then the brother and I went through the procedure. He held the hair and I tied the knots.

Q. So you did not hold her hands.

A. We did not hold her hands, but another sister was holding them. We put the mustard oil in a pot. I did not press anything because I felt shy before the sisters. We spoke to the patient.

Q. Were any of the shaykh’s cases women? If so, when he was treating them did he massage or press their body parts?

A. Yes, he did.

Q. Did he press their feet?

A. Yes, he did.

Q. Did you touch her?

A. I did not, except for slapping her.

Q. After you put the mustard oil in her hands and ears, closed the earlobes and the woman held her hands, what did the possessed sister do?

A. She was listening, and we were speaking to her even though her ears were closed. I asked her, “Can you hear me?” and she said, “Yes.” Then I asked, “Where do you come from?”

Q. Was her voice changed?

A. Yes, she was speaking as if she were young and spiteful.

Q. How was her facial expression?

A. She had a youthful expression. She was no longer tied and her voice was strong. We asked her a series of questions. We were reciting *Āyah al-Kursī* and the three *quls*. Then I got the water and recited the *kalimah* over it. I gave her the water to drink. I repeated the entire process, applying the

mustard oil, etc. Then she started answering us. However, the moment I asked, “Who sent you?” the *jinnī* left and did not answer. We had also tried this in the beginning, but it did not work.

Q. How do you know it left?

A. The sister came out of her trance and returned to her normal self.

Q. Did she open up her eyes?

A. Her eyes were open, but she was not responding to questions in the same manner in which she had previously. When we gave her the water and asked the *jinnī* where it came from, it said, “I came from Sou.” I asked it, “Where is Sou?” and it replied, “Up the road.” Then it specified that the place was New Grant, a town after St. Julian. Then I asked the *jinnī* why it had come, and she answered that it was because of her love for the husband. It was pretension. I told the *jinnī* that the man was married and had a wife, but it said, “I still like him.” When I asked it who had sent her, it suddenly went away. Then I repeated the process of exorcism over again.

Q. Did you begin with the drinking of water?

A. I did not begin with water this time, but I went back to the process of using mustard oil and closing the ears. It came back again, so I recited *Āyah al-Kursī*. This time I asked it whether it was male or female. The answer was female. Then I asked her if she was a Muslim, and the answer was negative. I asked her if she knew about Allāh.

Q. In the course of the exorcisms with your shaykh, did any of the entities which spoke indicate that they were Muslims?

A. Yes, some of them did but some did not. He converted some of them to Islām. From what he has told us, he has converted a large number of *jinn*.

Q. But were some of them Muslims?

A. I am not sure. But the ones I observed were all non-Muslims and this one was also a non-Muslim. Actually, there were two *jinn* in the sister.

Q. So you asked if they knew Allāh?

A. They said, “Yes.” Then I asked them, “Do you fear the fire of Allāh?” and they answered, “Yes.” Then I said, “I am going to call you and put both of you in the fire and burn you.” They pleaded with me not to do so. I exclaimed, “Then we’ll ask Allāh to curse you, so come out.” And the response was, “I am coming out.” I said, “Leave the sister alone (and I used her name) and come out.” The response was, “I am coming out.”

Q. Was she talking in her own voice?

A. Yes, but it was a strong voice. Then I said, “You don’t want to come out.” And then I slapped her but not very hard as I do not like to slap at all. I said, “Come out now. I’ll beat you, I’ll hit you.” I slapped her again. Tears started to come out of the sister’s eyes, and she cried. Then they said,

“O.K., we are leaving.” Then I asked them to come out. I did not use the name of Allāh, as I did not have any experience in the field. She pretended to come out. We cut a piece of her hair and put it in a bottle.

Q. Was there a change in her?

A. Yes. We asked her husband, Faiz, to go inside and hold her hands; but when he held her hands, she went back into her earlier, frenzied state. Then I told the *jinnī* that it was pretending. I said to Amīn, “There are two inside there and they are giving us double talk.” To this day, I don’t know why I felt so. Then we went back over the same process again. I asked the same questions and inquired as to how many *jinn* were there. The answer was, “Two.” I asked them what religion they belonged to and they said they were Hindus. They were two female Hindu *jinn* who liked her husband. This time when we went through the process again of slapping them and making them cry, I asked them to come out in the name of Allāh, and – *al-ḥamdulillāh* – they both came out of the sister and have not been back since.

INTERVIEW NO. 17

LOCATION: Manama, Bahrain

DATE: Nov. 1990

NAME: Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Afghānī

DATE OF BIRTH: 1941

PLACE OF BIRTH: Afghanistan

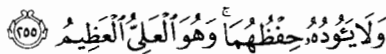
EDUCATION: MA from Wifāq al-Madāris al-Islāmiyyah in Pakistan, and studied *tajwīd* and *qirā'āt*, specialised in *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* Science. Taught at Anwār al-Islām Islamic University in Karachi, and in Makkah at Taḥfīz al-Qur'ān institute.

Q. When did you begin to treat possessed people?

A. When I began my studies of the Qur'ān in Hyderabad, one of my teachers was Shaykh 'Abdul-Quddūs, who was a specialist on the subject of the *jinn*. I had a great desire to know about this field. I always used to be in his service and I would ask him from time to time to teach me. Eventually, he made me his personal student in this field. I used to be present during his treatments and would assist him when necessary. However, I did not begin to treat anyone until I went to Karachi and after being given permission to exorcise by the shaykh.

Q. What did you learn from him?

A. I learned a variety of things, for example, the types of *jinn* and the different methods of dealing with them, including how to handle stubborn *jinn* without harming myself or the patient. Whenever a patient came, he recited over him some verses or chapters from the Qur'ān, especially *Āyah al-Kursī*, the last verse of *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* ("Do you think that We created you in jest...")⁷¹³ the *mu'awwidhatān*, and also either the first ten verses or all of *Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt*.⁷¹⁴ Sometimes he would repeat the same verse seven times for additional effect or parts of a verse, like in *Āyah al-Kursī*:



"He does not tire from guarding them and He is the
Transcendent, the Supreme."

Particular verses were recited for particular patients and sicknesses or the type of possessing *jinn*. *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* was recited seven, five, three or any odd number of times. I also found a number of books on this topic,

⁷¹³ Qur'ān, 23:115.

⁷¹⁴ Chapter 37.

some in Urdu and some in Arabic. However, what is gained by experience is often not found in these books. Methods explained in books often do not benefit the patients. My method is in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Q. You began exorcising people in Karachi in what year?

A. I began in approximately 1967. When I began, the *jinn* attacked me and caused me much pain and hurt; however, I did not fear them. I used to exorcise in Makkah. On one occasion, a *jinnī* tried to scare me by telling me that if I did not stop, it would hurt me on the spot. I quoted for it the Qur'ānic verse:

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ

“If Allāh causes harm to touch you, none can remove it
except He...”⁷¹⁵

About fifteen minutes later they caused my eldest son to fall off of the roof and break his leg. He had to spend a month and a half in the Zāhir hospital in Makkah. However, I did not stop. Instead, I told the *jinnī* that if something is written for me, it will happen no matter what. Now I do not have any more problems. Sometimes when a patient comes to my door, the *jinnī* will say, “Enough, I will leave.” They fear me somewhat.

Q. If a person comes to you, how can you tell if he is possessed or not? What are the symptoms?

A. I have found that the *jinn* attack humans out of carnal desire. Some male *jinn* love women and young girls, and some female *jinn* love unmarried men. They also attack out of enmity if some harm has befallen them. For example, if humans urinate or pour hot water or tea on them. They are in our houses, as Allāh says: “Verily, he and his tribe see you from a place where you cannot see them.”⁷¹⁶ They take many different forms, and we do not see them, although they see us. If we cause some harm to them, they seek severe revenge. First I take a promise from them to stay away from humans and the places they live, because Allāh sent them to deserts, mountains and uninhabited places. Occasionally, I manage to convince them to leave using reason, for example, saying, “You are creatures from fire and take many different forms. Because you can take a variety of different forms like insects, humans may not be aware of you and thus harm befalls you. After that you enter our homes and eat with us, than you blame us and attack us. The responsibility is yours.”

⁷¹⁵ Qur'ān, 6:17 and 10:107.

⁷¹⁶ Qur'ān, 7:27.

Q. My question was about how you can tell when a person is possessed.

A. His movements will be unnatural. He may fall down or he may speak unintelligibly; and when Qur'ānic verses are recited over him, the *jinnī* will talk using the patient's voice.

Q. Is a different voice than the patient's used?

A. The patient speaks and the *jinnī* uses his voice. However, the patient may not know Arabic, for example, but that is what it speaks. Sometime back I was treating an Arab Bahraini patient in 'Īsā Town and he began to speak in a language which I could not recognise. Someone who was assisting me said that it was not English but that it may be Korean. So I brought a Korean maid who confirmed this. Later on, it was pointed out that the man did not know a single word of Korean. A female *jinnī* which had possessed him was speaking. When I recite over them the verses and the patient does not speak, I repeat the verses over and over again until the *jinnī* leaves the patient. If it returns again and refuses to speak, I warn and advise the *jinnī* that it is not permissible for it to possess humans. Then I may ask it questions about its name and religion. Sometimes it refuses to speak and just leaves.

Q. When the *jinn* leave, do they exit from any particular part of the patient's body?

A. They leave from all over the body. They are able to leave from all of the pores of the body from which sweat is secreted. As to its entrance, it is recorded in a ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) that whenever the believer drinks or eats he should mention the name of Allāh. This is because the devil eats with us. Thus, the *jinnī* is able to enter the body from even the mouth. There is also another ḥadīth mentioned in *Zād al-Mā'ād* stating that when a person sleeps, he enters through the mouth and leaves from the anus. They are also able to leave from under the fingernails and the roots of the hair because they are like air.

Q. Can it be determined when the *jinn* leaves by movements in various parts of the patient's body?

A. Yes. When the attack is on particular body parts, only those parts will move. For example, if it is leaving from the hand, one will find it moving strangely while the remainder of the body is still. When it leaves, the patient is usually in a state of confusion. Occasionally, the patient feels that what is bothering him has left, but sometimes he is totally unaware.

Q. What is the percentage of cases of possessed women?

A. Women and children are in the majority. According to authentic ḥadīths, the *jinn* occupy human homes (especially the lavatories) and women are usually at home all of the time. They clean the house and lavatories and thus come in contact with *jinn* more often.

Q. Can you describe your standard method of exorcism?

A. I order the patient to sit facing the *qiblah* (i.e. Makkah) and draw a line in front of him. As for women, I do not treat them except in the presence of one of their male relatives.

Q. How do you draw the line?

A. I draw a line based upon the *ḥadīth* of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd in which the Prophet (ﷺ) drew a line for him to stay behind. He went with a group of *jinn* and conveyed the message of Islām to them and then returned. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd reported that he could see the Prophet (ﷺ) and he heard their voices. The Prophet (ﷺ) had told him that if he crossed the line, he would not have seen him until the Day of Judgement.⁷¹⁷ Consequently, I also draw a line in a circle around the patient and say the prayer, “*Bismillāh billadhī lā yaḍurruhu shay’un fis samā’i wal-arḍ wa huwa al-samī’ al-‘alīm.*” (“In the name of He who nothing in the heavens or earth can harm, and He hears and knows all things.”)⁷¹⁸ as a shield for myself and the patient. And I say, “*‘Āmantu billāhi waḥdahu wa kafartu bil-jibti wal-ṭāghūt wastamsaktu bil-urwatil-wuthqā lanfiṣāma labā wallābus samī’ al-‘alīm.*” (“I believe in Allāh alone, disbelieve in magic [*jibt*] and false gods [*ṭāghūt*] and hold firmly to the most trustworthy handhold [i.e. Islām] that never breaks. And Allāh hears and knows all things.”) and “*A‘ūdhu bika mina al-shirk.*” (“I seek refuge in You from committing idolatry.”) Then I begin with some verses, either from *Sūrah al-Jinn*, *Āyah al-Kursī*, the *mu‘awwidhatān*, *Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt*, *Sūrah al-Raḥmān* or *Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn*. When I recite, the *jinn* either leaves the patient or it presents itself by speaking.

Q. How do you know which parts of the body are affected?

A. I know by the unusual movements of the body parts or by the presence of unexplained excessive heat in that part of the body. The *jinn* are created from fire so when they attack humans, the person sweats a lot, even in winter. The exorcist may also feel the heat.

Q. Regarding men, do you grab hold of any part of their bodies during the exorcism?

A. With men I am free, but I do not touch women. Their relatives will

⁷¹⁷ Collected by Imām Aḥmad by two different chains of narration, both of them weak. One chain has in it Ahū Zayd mawlā ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth, who is of unknown reliability (*majhūl al-‘ayn*). The other has in it ‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn ‘Abdillāh, who was classified as weak. See *Taqrīb al-Taḥdīb*, p. 642, no. 8108, and p. 401, no. 4734. These reports contradict authentic reports in which Ibn Mas‘ūd was asked if he accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) the night he met the *jinn*, and he explicitly said, “No.” See *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 244, nos. 903 and 906.

⁷¹⁸ See verse 256 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) in which is stated: “...Whoever rejects false gods [*ṭāghūt*] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks; and Allāh hears and knows all things.” See verse 51 of *Sūrah al-Nisā’* for reference to belief in magic [*jibt*] and false gods (*ṭāghūt*).

hold them if necessary. I am not extreme in striking; however, some of my students are very rough. They hit patients with sandals and sticks. I also used to hit, but I have given up this practice. I found that some of the *jinn* were Muslims, while others, although not Muslims were open to Islām. When I treated them with advice and recitation, they left more easily, and some of them accepted Islām.

Q. Can more than one *jinnī* possess a single person at the same time?

A. People say so, but I have not experienced it. Some people pretend to be possessed and make all types of wild claims.

Q. What is the ratio of male *jinn* possessing females to male *jinn* possessing males and vice-versa?

A. If the possession is due to enmity, the ratios are the same, but if it is due to love, then it is always greater with the opposite sex.

SUDANESE EXORCISTS

The following information is based on interviews with eleven exorcists from the northern regions of Sudan. One was from the village of Dalasa el Shurab, 4 miles east of the city of Gadref. Another was from the village of El Sherif al A'gib, 3 miles southeast of Gadref. Three worked in the *masīd*⁷¹⁹ of Om Dawan Ban as teachers of the Qur'ān and religious healers. Two lived in Kadabass, about 25 miles northwest of Atbara, and one lived in El Baneyea el Sadgabb, about 5 miles east of Al Fau. Another lived in Rhabuk, and the last two in the capital, Omdurman.⁷²⁰

AGE

The average age of the *faqīrs* (exorcists) was 52 (eight of them were older than 50).

EDUCATION

Only three had formal education. The youngest had taken a two-year course in psychology at Cairo University, Khartoum branch, another was a school teacher and the third, a university law graduate. The remainder received their education in *khuluwas*, a curriculum confined to Qur'ānic studies and religious healing.

REASONS FOR BEGINNING

Seven of them were sons of exorcists. The older shaykhs took great care to hand over their knowledge and skill to their heirs in order to ensure the continuity of the family's spiritual heritage.

EXPERIENCE

The duration of their healing practice ranged from 5 to 35 years, with an average of 21 years.⁷²¹

CONCEPTS

1) One type of *jinn* was referred to as *al-rīḥ al-aswad* (black wind) and was believed to affect the mind. Another type was called *al-rīḥ al-aḥmar* (red wind) and was believed to attack different parts of the body.

⁷¹⁹ In Sudan there are twelve major institutions dating back to the 17th century and hundreds of minor centres. These centres are famous for Qur'ānic studies and the treatment of mental disturbances in particular. The traditional name for a religious centre is "*masīd*," an inflection of the word *masjid* in the Sudanese dialect. (*Fugara Techniques of Mental Healing*, p. 19.)

⁷²⁰ *Fugara Techniques of Mental Healing*, p. 29.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

2) Three of the exorcists believed that a possessed person was always unaware of his environment, while two insisted that he always was aware. The remainder felt that it depended upon different, interrelated factors.

SIGNS OF POSSESSION

According to *faqīrs*, the main signs of possession were speaking with a loud voice, quick speech, incoherent speech, uncoordinated movement of the limbs and staring in odd directions.

REASON FOR POSSESSION

When humans harm the *jinn*, the harm is reciprocated. For example, according to one *faqīr*, if a patient inadvertently stepped on filth and tread on a *jinnī's* baby residing there, the parents would retaliate.

METHOD OF TREATMENT

1) All of the exorcists conducted interviews with the patients when they were brought in. Six of them directly addressed their patients whenever possible, and the other five investigated cases through the patient's relatives. Two preferred to interview patients alone, seven insisted on the relatives of the patient being present, and two were not particular. The initial interview was to determine if the patient was possessed or under mental stress.

2) The exorcist would lightly touch the aching part of the body with his hand or, in the case of female patients, with a stick. Qur'ānic verses were recited, punctuated by blowing, which was directed at the point of pain. This process is referred to in Sudan as '*azīmah*'. Eight of the *faqīrs* only administered '*azīmah*' at sunset or sunrise, while three applied it at any time. All considered piety and ritual purity (*tahārah*) to be requirements for '*azīmah*' to be successful, except one exorcist who only stipulated piety.

3) Qur'ānic verses were written on a tablet or on the inner surface of a white bowl and washed with water. The resultant solution, called *miḥāyah*, was given to patients to drink or to rub over their bodies.

4) Sometimes, Qur'ānic verses or their numerical symbols (according to *abjad*) were written on a blank sheet of white paper, which was then folded in a special manner and put on a red hot coal to burn without flames. The patient was then put under a large sheet of cloth so that he would inhale the rising fumes. This method is locally known as *bakhūr*.

5) Some Qur'ānic verses (*Āyāt al-shifā'*) for healing were written on a sheet of white paper, which was then folded into a rectangle or a square. The folded paper was then covered in thick cloth, leather or tin, and it was hung around the patient's ankle or waist or placed loosely around his throat so

that the amulet rested on his breast. The larger size amulet, called a *ḥijāb*, was most often administered as a sealing treatment after recovery. The smaller size, called a *waraqah*, was used prior to recovery.

6) All of the shaykhs flogged patients who were violent, disobedient and troublesome. Their legs and backs were usually struck an average of six times in a single session. One of the exorcists explained that the experienced and learned exorcists hit the possessing *jinnī* directly and compel it to leave the patient's body. Another suggested that the healing blessing of the exorcist enters the patient's body through his hand and the whip. The remaining nine considered it useful to inhibit undesirable behaviour on the part of the patient.

7) Six of the exorcists deprived mad patients of milk, meat and their by-products, and three of the six also forbade salt. The other five exorcists allowed the normal diet of the *masīd*, which consisted of meat, fresh vegetables, potatoes and occasionally milk.

8) Improved patients were also encouraged by eight of the *faqīrs* to attend *dbikr* gatherings and to take part in rhythmic, dance-like activities.

9) When patients were completely out of their minds and were too hyperactive to deal with, they were first tied to a pillar in the *masīd* by iron chains. When they settled down and proved themselves harmless, they were allowed to move about in fetters, called *al-qayd*. After recovery, they were set free.⁷²²

⁷²² *Fuqara Techniques of Mental Healing*, pp. 40-75.

INDEX OF QUR'ĀNIC VERSES AND AḤADĪTH

A

Abdullāh ibn al-Walīd related that when a group of Jews asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about his [angelic] companion and he told them that it was Jibrīl, they said, “Jibrīl! The one who descends with war, fighting and punishment. He is our enemy... p. 37

Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās related an incident told to him by another companion of the Prophet. He said that while they were sitting at night with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), a [falling] meteor gave off a dazzling light, so the Prophet (ﷺ) asked them... p. 69

Abū al-Dardā’ narrated, “Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) stood up [in prayer] and we heard him say, ‘I seek refuge in Allāh from you.’ Then he reached out his hand as if he were catching something, and he said three times, ‘I curse you by...’ p. 134

Abū al-Mālīh’s father quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “Do not say, ‘May Satan be degraded,’ for surely, he will grow until he becomes the size of a house and he will say, ‘By my power, I will possess him.’ Say instead, ‘Bismillāh’... p. 141

Abū Dharr quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying, “When any of you stands for prayer, it should be towards something that shields him, equivalent [in height] to the back of a saddle, otherwise his prayer will be broken... p. 72

Abū Rāfi‘ said, “I saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) call the adhān in the ear of [his grandson]... p. 145

Abū Salamah quoted ‘Ā’ishah as saying, “Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) [once] said to me, ‘O ‘Ā’ishah, here is Gabriel greeting you with peace.’ I said, ‘And may... p. 30

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī said, “While we were on a journey, we dismounted at a place, whereupon a servant girl came to us and said, ‘The chief of our tribe has been stung by a scorpion and our men are not present. Is there anyone... p. 137

“*Adh-hibil bā’sa rabban-nāsi washfi anta al-shāfi lā shifā’a illā shifā’uka shifā’an lā yughādiru saqamā.*” (“Remove the suffering, O Lord of mankind... p. 146

All that is in the heavens and earth prostrate to Allāh, whether crawling creatures or angels; none are arrogant. They fear their Lord, high above them... p. 42

‘Ā’ishah also said that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to instruct the possessor of the evil eye to perform ablution (*wuḍu’*) and then for the one suffering to bathe from... p. 149

Allāh, the Exalted and Glorious, has appointed an angel as the caretaker of the womb that says, ‘My Lord, it is like an oily drop; my Lord, it is now like a leech; my Lord, it has become like a chewed clump.’ Then, if Allāh wishes... p. 43

Allāh, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and earth belong to Him. Who can... p. 138

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) put me in charge of the *zakāb* of Ramaḍān... p. 67

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) stood up [in prayer] and we heard him say, ‘I seek refuge in Allāh from you.’ Then he reached out his hand as if he were catching hold of something, and he said thrice, ‘I curse you by Allāh’s curse.’... p. 64

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was the most generous person, and his generosity would be the greatest during Ramaḍān when Jibrīl met him. Jibrīl used to meet him... p. 36

Allāh’s Messenger commanded us to do seven things and prohibited us from doing... p. 128

Allāh chooses messengers from the angels and from men. For Allāh is He who... p. 27

Allāh cured me... p. 114

Allāh has not made a cure for your sickness in what He has prohibited. p.126

Allāh has sent down both disease and cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourselves with medicine, but do not use anything prohibited.” p.126

Allāh is the creator of all things. p. 10

“Among the *jinnah* and men.” p. 51

A Muslim is a brother to every other Muslim, he does not leave him in harm nor does he harm him.' p. 129

And [I seek refuge] from the evil of the witches who blow on knots.
p. 113

And among His signs is that He created for you [men] mates from among yourselves in order that you may live with them in tranquillity, and He has put between... p. 86

And I blew in him from My spirit. p. 13

And if Satan causes you to forget, do not remain in the company of transgressors... p. 235

And in his absence Moses' people made out of their ornaments the statue of a calf which mooed. Could they not see that it neither spoke to them nor showed... p. 108

And I swear by the self-recriminating soul. p. 14

And mention in the scripture [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from the family to a place facing east. She placed a screen between herself and them. Then we sent to her Our angel, who appeared before her in the form of... p. 33

And Satan proved his idea true on them, and they all followed him except a group of those who believed. p. 223

And Satan will say when the matter is decided, 'It was Allāh who gave you a truthful promise. I too promised you, but I broke my promise to you. I had no... p. 96

And surely those who disbelieve will almost make you slip with their eyes when they hear the Reminder [i.e., the Qur'ān], and they say, 'Surely, he is a madman... p. 252

And there are among us Muslims [in submission to Allāh] and others who deviate from justice, and whoever accepts Islām has sought out the right path... p. 78

And they assign daughters to Allāh – Glory be to Him!- and for themselves whatever... p. 28

And they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters, Glory be to Him, for He is far... p. 28

And they have invented kinship between Him and the angels [*jinnah*]; but the angels [*jinnah*] know that they will be brought before Him [for judgement]... p. 52

And they made into females the angels who are themselves servants of the Most Merciful [i.e., Allāh]. Did they witness their creation? Their evidence will be... p. 35

And those [angels] who distribute and apportion by [Allāh's] command. p. 41

And thus We revealed to you by Our command a scripture...” p. 9

And We have guarded it [i.e., the heavens] from every cursed devil, except the one who is able to snatch a hearing. And he is pursued by a brightly burning... p. 70

And We reveal within the Qur'ān healing and mercy... p. 249

And when We told the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam,' they prostrated, except Iblīs. He was one of the *jinn*, so he broke his Lord's command. Will you then take him and his children as protectors besides Me? And they are enemies... p. 60

And when We told the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam,' they prostrated, except Iblīs. He was one of the *jinn*... p. 62

And whoever turns away from My remembrance will have a wretched life, and We will gather him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. p. 247

And whoever turns away from remembrance of the Most Merciful [i.e., Allāh], We appoint for him a devil as a companion. p. 247

An *Ifrīt* from among the *jinn* said, 'I will bring it for you... p. 78

An *Ifrīt* from among the *jinn* said, 'I will bring it to you before you can get up from your place. Verily, I am strong... p. 79

As long as any one of you is waiting for prayer, he is in prayer, and the angels [continue to] say, 'O Allāh, be merciful to him and forgive him,' as long as he does... p. 45

'Awf ibn Mālik al-Ashja'ī said, "We used to make incantations during the times of ignorance, so we said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, what is your opinion on this matter?' He replied, 'Let me hear your incantations, for incantations which... p. 125

“*A‘ūdhu bi kalimātil-lāhī-tāmmāti min kulli shayṭānin wa hāmmatin wa min kulli ‘aynin lāmmah.*” (“I seek refuge with the perfect words of Allāh from every devil... p. 146

“*A‘ūdhu billāhi min al-shayṭān min nafkhibi wa nafathibi wa hamzihi.*” (“I seek refuge in Allāh from the pride, poetry and touch of Satan, the cursed. p. 143

B

Because You have sent me astray, I will surely sit in wait against them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path. Then I will come at them from their front and from behind... p. 207

Behold, two [recording angels] appointed to learn and note [his doings], one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is... p. 45

Behold, two [recording angels] appointed to learn and note [man’s doing], one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is... p. 40

“*Bismillāhi alladhī lā yaḍurru ma‘asmibi shay’un.*” (“In the name of Allāh, with whose name nothing is harmed.”) p. 263

“*Bismillāhi arqīka min kulli shay’in yu’dhīka, min sharri kulli nafsin aw ‘aynin ḥāsīdin, Allāhu yashfīka. Bismillāhi arqīk.*” (“In the name of Allāh I exorcise you from... p. 146

“*Bismillāhi walajnā wa bismillāhi kharajnā wa ‘alallāhi rabbinā tawakkalnā.*” (“In Allāh’s name we entered and with Allāh’s name we left, and in Allāh... p. 292

“*Bismillāhi yubrīka wa min kulli dā’in yashfīka wa min sharri ḥāsīdin idhā ḥasad wa sharri kulli dhī ‘ayn.*” (“In the name of Allāh, may He make you well and may He cure you from every ill, from the evil of the jealous when they envy... p. 145

“*Bismillāh tawwakaltu ‘alallāh, lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh,*” (“In the name of Allāh. I have put my trust in Allāh. There is no movement or power... p. 291

But, verily the record of the righteous is [preserved] in ‘*illiyyīn*. And what will explain... p. 48

But it was the devils who disbelieved by teaching the people magic and what was revealed to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. However, the two would not teach anyone until after they had warned them, saying, 'Surely... p. 39

But Satan made him forget to remember his Lord, and he remained in prison for a few [more] years. p. 235

But verily, watching over you [are appointed angels], kind and honourable, writing down [your deeds]. p. 44

but when he saw it moving like a snake [*jāmm*], he turned back in retreat... p. 51

By those [angels] who arrange the implementation of [Allāh's] command... p. 41

C

Can you not see that We have set the devils on the disbelievers, excitedly prodding them[to sin and disbelief]. p. 104

D

Do not kill yourselves [*anfusakum*] p. 9

Do not make your houses like graveyards. Verily, the devil flees from a house in which... p. 140

Do not offer prayer in camel pens, because they are [created] from the devils. p. 73

E

Each [person] has a succession of angels in front of him and behind him, protecting him by Allāh's command. p. 228

Each one of you is collected in his mother's womb for forty days, then becomes like a leech for a similar period. Then Allāh sends an angel and orders him to record four things: his livelihood, his life span, his deeds, and whether... p. 43

Eat olive oil and anoint yourselves with it; for verily, it is a blessed tree.
p. 245

“Everyone of you has been assigned a companion from the *jinn*.” The Ṣaḥābah asked, “Even you, O Messenger of Allāh?” and the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Even me, except Allāh has helped me against him and he has submitted... p. 74

Every soul [*nafs*] will taste death... p. 11

Every soul will taste death. p. 17

Everything [that exists] will perish except His[i.e., Allāh’s] face. p. 56

Everything in the world will vanish... p. 56

Everything in the world will vanish leaving only the face of your Lord, the Glorious, the Noble. p. 17

Everything will perish except His face. p. 17

Except [if you have a] debt. Jibrīl just confided it to me. p. 21

F

Fasting is a shield [*junnab*] (from desire). p. 50

For each [person] there are [angels] in succession before and behind him. They guard him by Allāh’s command... p. 44

For such He has written in their hearts faith and aided them with a spirit [*rūḥ*] from Himself... p. 9

From it We created you, into it We will return you, and from it We will bring you forth again. p. 48

H

He [i.e., Abraham] said, “Can you see whom you have been worshipping, you and your forefathers? For they are [all] enemies to me, except the Lord of all the worlds, who created me and guides me. p. 61

He [i.e., Moses] said, ‘You throw [first].’ So when they threw, they bewitched the people’s eyes and struck terror into them, and they displayed great magic. p. 116

He [i.e., Muḥammad] has been taught by one mighty in power [i.e., Gabriel], endued with beauty... p. 32

He [i.e., Satan] and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them. p. 64

He [i.e., Satan] said, ‘By Your power, I will surely mislead them all, except Your sincere, chosen servants. p. 233

He [i.e., the Prophet] did not speak from his own desires. What he said was revelation. p. 200

He does not tire from guarding them and He is the Transcendent, the Supreme. p. 308

He has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is only over those who take him as a patron and who join... p. 104

He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and on earth, all of it is from Him... p. 13

He is the Irresistible, far above His servants. He sets guardians over you until, when death comes to one of you, then Our angels take his soul without fail. p. 46

He is the Irresistible, high above His servants, and He sends protectors over you... p. 229

He reported that when Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited incantation, the ‘Amr ibn Ḥazm family came to him and said, “We know an incantation which we... p. 127

He stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting by a man who continued to eat without... p. 75

How can I enjoy when the horn blower has placed it in his mouth, inclined his forehead and turned his ear to hear, awaiting the command to blow... p. 38

How can you disbelieve in Allāh when you were dead and He brought you to life, then He will cause you to die, then he will bring you back to life? p. 18

I

I [i.e., Prophet Sulaymān] found her [i.e., the Queen of Sheba] and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allāh. And Satan had made their deeds fair-seeming to them and barred them from the path [of truth]...
p. 210

I commend her and her offspring to Your protection from Satan, the rejected. p. 83

I created you before and you were nothing. p. 11

If Allāh causes harm to touch you, none can remove... p. 308

If a man enters his house and remembers Allāh while entering and while eating, Satan says [to his companion], 'There is no place to pass the night and no dinner.' p. 81

If any one of you eats, let him eat with his right [hand], and if he drinks let him do so with his right... p. 75

If one of you goes to his wife and says, '*Allāhumma jannibnā al-shayṭān wa jannib al-shayṭān mā razaqtanā*,' ['O Allāh, keep Satan away from us and keep Satan away from what (offspring) You have bestowed upon us,'] and they have a child... p. 147

If one of you sees a dream which pleases him, it is from Allāh, so let him praise Allāh and speak about it. But if he sees other things which he dislikes, it is from Satan, so let him seek refuge in Allāh and not mention it to anyone and it will not harm... p. 80

If only you trusted in Allāh as He should be trusted, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds, who leave their nests in the morning hungry... p. 242

If Satan touches you, seek refuge in Allāh, for verily, He is the Hearer and Knower. p. 142

If the *ghīlān* appear and transform themselves before you, call the *adhān*.
p. 79

If We revealed this Qur'ān on a mountain, you would see it humbly crumbling out of fear of Allāh. p. 249

If you hear a rooster crow, ask Allāh for His grace, for it has seen an angel.
p. 30

If you hear the barking of a dog or the braying of a donkey at night, seek refuge in Allāh from Satan... p. 63

I have been allowed to speak about one of the throne bearers. The distance between his earlobe and shoulder is [what a bird would fly in] seven hundred years. p. 32

I have been given the Qur'ān and something similar to it along with it. p. 101

I have not created the *jinn* and mankind except for My worship. p. 56

Incantation is not allowed except for the evil eye or the sting of a scorpion. p. 252

In it [i.e. Paradise] they will not taste death beyond the first death... p. 18

I saw Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) do three things which no one before or after me saw. I went with him on a trip. On the way we passed by a woman sitting at the roadside with a young boy... p. 94

I saw him descending from the heavens and his great size filled the space between the earth and the sky. p. 32

I seek refuge in Your power. There is no god besides You, [You are the One] who does not die, while the *jinn* and mankind die... p. 57

It is Allāh that takes the souls [*anfus*] at death, and those that do not die He takes during their sleep. Those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He holds back [from returning to this life], and the rest He releases [back to their bodies]... p. 11

It is He who revealed to you the Book in truth, confirming previous [scriptures], and it is He who... p. 102

It is We who created you and gave you shape. And we told the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves to Adam,' and they prostrated themselves, except Iblīs. He refused to be of those prostrate... p. 57

It should not leave a mark... p. 198

It was the devils who disbelieved by teaching the people magic and what was revealed to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. However, the two would not teach anyone anything until after they had warned them, saying... p. 113

K

Keep to my Sunnah and that of the rightly-guided caliphs after me. Bite onto it with your molars, and beware of innovations, for verily, they are all [forms of] heresy... p. 201

L

Last night I saw [in a dream] two men approaching me. One of them said. 'The person who will light the Hellfire is Mālik, the guardian of Hell; and I am Gabriel and this is Michael. p. 49

Likewise, We have made for every prophet an enemy, devils [Shayāṭīn] from among mankind and the *jinn*. p. 78

M

Madīnah has in it a group of *jinn* who became Muslims, so whoever sees any snakes [in their homes] should request them to leave three times. If any of them appear after that... p. 72

Maidens of Paradise whom no man or *jinn* before had deflowered. p. 77

Making the angels messengers, with wings two and three and four: He increases in the creation as He wills... p. 31

[Moses] said, 'No, you throw [first].' And all of a sudden their magic caused their ropes and staffs... p. 117

N

None made me forget it except Satan, and amazingly it took its way back to the sea. p. 236

Now ask them their opinion, 'Does your Lord have [only] daughters and they have sons? Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses? p. 35

O

O Allāh, forgive me, have mercy upon me and admit me to *al-rafiq al-a'lā*.
p. 20

O Allāh, surely I seek refuge in You from evil male and female *jinn*...
p. 76

O Lord, You have caused us to die twice and... p. 17

O mankind, there has come to you from your Lord a good advice and healing for what is in your chests... p. 249

O my Lord, because You sent me astray, I will surely beautify the path of error for them [i.e., mankind] on earth... p. 207

O my servants, I have made oppression forbidden to Myself and prohibited it among you, so do not oppress each other. p. 244

On another occasion, 'Ā'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported that she saw him place his hand on the mane of Diḥyah al-Kalbī's horse while talking to him... p. 34

One day he said to his student, 'Aṭā' ibn Abī Rabāh, "Should I show you a woman from among the people of Paradise? p. 105

One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black. p. 34

One of the causes for the destruction of my nation of followers will be [assassination by] stabbing and the plague, which is harassment from your enemies among the *jinn*... p. 83

One of the kicks of Satan. p. 83

One should neither hurt himself nor others. p. 197

On that day, no question will be asked of man or *jānn* as to his sins.
p. 51

O peaceful soul, return to your Lord. p. 14

Oppression is darkness on the Day of judgement. p. 244

Our Lord, some of us took pleasure one from the other, and we have

reached the term which You appointed for us. p. 232

R

Rebellious devil, cursed by Allāh, said, 'I will surely take a definite portion of Your servants and mislead them. I will create in them false desires and order them to slit the ears of cattle and to deface the creation of Allāh... p. 223

Recite over her incantations, for she has [the effect of] the glance [*al-nazrah*]. p. 123

Remember| when your Lord said to the angels, 'Surely, I will make on earth a *khalīfah*... p. 29

Remember when Our servant Ayyūb cried out to his Lord, 'Satan has afflicted [*'massanī*], literally, 'touched']... p. 98

S

Satan appears before me in my prayer and I choked him and felt the coldness of his saliva on my hand... p. 55

Satan pricks with his finger every newborn child of Adam's descendants. They all begin screaming from Satan's jab, except Mary and her son [i.e. Jesus]. p. 82

Satan will come to one of you and say, 'Who created this and that?' until he asks, 'Who created your Lord?' When he comes to that, one should seek refuge in Allāh and stop [such idle thoughts]. p. 81

Say, 'I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of what He has created...and from the evil... p. 122

Say, 'It has been revealed to me that a group of *jinn* listened and said, "Verily, we have heard a marvellous Qur'ān. p. 51

Say, 'It has been revealed to me that a group of *jinn* listened and said, "Verily, we have heard a marvellous Qur'ān. It guides unto righteousness so we have believed in it... p. 77

Say, 'My Lord, I seek refuge in You from the prodding of the devils, and I seek refuge in You, my Lord, from their presence. p. 142

Say, the Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will take your souls. Then you will be returned to your Lord. p. 46

Say: 'The spirit [*nafs*] is from my Lord's command [*amr*]. p. 12

Share in their wealth and children... p. 239

So the angels prostrated all together, except Iblīs, who was haughty and became one of the disbelievers. p. 59

Suhayl reported that his father sent him to the Ḥārithah clan along with someone. On the way there, a voice from an enclosure called him by his name. p. 144

Surely, Allāh forbids you to swear by your fathers. So whoever has to take an oath, let him do so by Allāh or be quiet. p. 212

Surely, every soul has a protector over it. p. 228

Surely, I can see the devils among the *jinn* and among mankind fleeing from 'Umar. p. 104

Surely, the [angel on the] left raises the pen [from the record] of a Muslim who commits an error for six hours. If he repents and asks Allāh's forgiveness, the deed is cast aside... p. 45

Surely, these *ḥushūsh* are inhabited. p. 227

Surely, they are being punished right now, and not for major offences. One of them was not careful to protect himself from the splash of his urine, and the other used to spread rumours. p. 21

Surely, We revealed the Book to you in truth that you may judge between people by what Allāh has shown you. So do not plead for the treacherous. p. 100

T

Tell me the strangest thing which your female *jinn*... p. 77

The angels and The Spirit ascend to Him in a day whose length is like fifty thousand years. p. 42

The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or pictures or statues of living creatures. p. 44

The angels say [to Allāh], ‘That man intends to do evil.’ And He is more vigilant than them. He replies, ‘Watch him. If he commits evil, record it in kind; but if he abandons it, record for him one good deed. For surely he gave it up for My sake. p. 41

The angels were created from light, the *jinn* from fire and Adam from what has already been described to you. p. 29

The angels were created from light and the *jinn* from a flame of fire [*mārij min nār*]. p. 55

The believer’s soul [becomes] a bird which feeds upon the fruits of the trees in Paradise, until Allāh returns it to its body on the day he is resurrected. p. 21

The companion, Ibn Mas‘ūd, said, ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘An emissary from the *jinn* came to me [and asked me to accompany him], so I went with him and recited the Qur’ān to them.’ p. 74

The companion, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw Angel Gabriel (Jibrīl) in his natural state in which he had six hundred wings, each of which filled the horizon. And there were multicoloured drops like pearls and coral falling... p. 31

The effect of the evil eye [*al-‘ayn*] is real, for if there were anything which could overtake destiny, it would have... p. 122

The effect of the evil eye is real, for if there were anything which could overtake destiny, it would have been [the effect of] the evil eye. So if you are asked to take a bath... p. 149

The evil eye is real. It may put a man in the grave and a camel in a pot. p. 242

Their magic caused it to appear to him that... p. 115

The living and the dead are not alike. Allāh makes whomever He wishes hear, but you cannot make those in their graves hear. p. 26

Then, by Your might, I will mislead them all. p. 207

Then Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and sorrow. He said, ‘O my people, did your Lord not make you a good promise? Did the promise seem to you too long in coming? Or did you wish that your Lord’s punishment... p. 109

The Prophet (ﷺ) stated that bedding of fire would be spread for them to lie on and a door to Hell would be opened, allowing its scorching winds to roast them until the Resurrection and the grave would squeeze them until their ribs... p. 22

The Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishah, also reported that whenever any of the members of the household fell ill, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to blow over them by reciting the *mu'awwidhatān*. p. 143

There are three types of *jinn*: one type which flies in the air all of the time, another type which exists as snakes and dogs, and an earthbound type which resides in... p. 68

The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils. p. 97

The trustworthy angel (*rūb*) descended with it [i.e., the Qur'ān] p. 9

The uncle of Khārijah ibn al-Ṣalt reported that he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and embraced Islām. During his return journey, he came across a tribe which had among... p. 136

They bewitched the people's eyes... p. 114

They will continue in falsehood] until when death comes to one of them, he says, 'O my Lord, send me back so that I may do righteousness in the things that I neglected.' But no! It is only a word he says, and behind them is a barrier [*barzakh*]... p. 24

They will cry out: 'O Mālik! Let your Lord put an end to us.' He will say, 'Surely you will stay [as you are]. p. 38

Those are the ones against whom is justified the sentence among the previous generations of *jinn* and men that have passed away. Surely, they are the losers. p. 56

Those who devour interest rise up like one stumbling from Satan's touch. p. 92

Those who disbelieve take pleasure and eat as animals do, and the Fire will be their home. p. 233

Those who reject the Message when it comes to them [are known]. And indeed, it is a Book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before it and behind it. It is sent down by the Most Wise, Most Praised. p. 102

To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. How could

He have a son when He has no consort? He created all things and He has full knowledge of all things. That is Allāh, your Lord! There is no god but He... p. 28

True, there were men among humans who sought refuge from men among the *jinn*, but they only increased them in folly. p. 76

Truffles are a form of manna [*mann*] and their water is a cure for the eye. p. 148

Two angels come to him, make him sit up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He [the believing soul] will reply, 'My Lord is Allāh.' p. 49

U

Ubayy ibn Ka'b said, "Allāh's Messenger asked me, 'O Abul-Mundhir, do you know which verse of Allāh's Book is the greatest relative to you?' I replied... p. 138

Uqbah ibn 'Āmir reported that a group of ten men approached Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) to pledge their allegiance to him. He accepted the oath of allegiance from nine... p. 194

Uthmān ibn Abul-'Ās al-Thaqafī reported that when he complained to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) about a pain which he felt in his body from the time he accepted Islam... p. 141

V

Verily, Allāh has sent down disease and medication, and [He has] made a treatment for every disease. So treat [your sicknesses] but do not treat [them] with what is prohibited. p. 198

Verily, an 'Ifrīt from among the *jinn* tried to break my prayer last night by spitting on me... p. 78

Verily, I know some words which would cause his anger to subside if he said them. He should say, '*A'ūdhu billābi min al-shayṭān al-rajīm.*' ['I seek refuge in Allāh from Satan, the cursed.'] p. 142

Verily, I will precede you to the fountain [in Paradise]. Whoever passes by me will drink and never again experience thirst. Some people whom I will know, and who... p. 25

Verily, Satan flows in the bloodstream of Adam's descendants. p. 80

Verily, some forms of speech are magic [*siḥr*]. p. 111

Verily, the dreams which a man sees in his sleep are of three types: a dream from the Most Merciful [Allāh], a sad dream from Satan, and a subconscious dream. p. 80

Verily, the soul [*nasamah*] of the true believer becomes a bird in the trees of Paradise. p. 10

Verily, the soul persistently commands evil. p. 14

Verily, this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit [*al-Rūḥ al-Amīn*]. p. 36

Verily, We created mankind from dried clay, from black putrid mud. And We created the *jinn* before... p. 55

Verily, We have revealed the Reminder [i.e., the Qur'ān] to you [O Muḥammad] so that you may explain to the people what has been revealed to them... p. 100

Verily, when a believer is about to die, angels of mercy come to him... They take his soul to the souls of other believers, who are happier to meet him than one of... p. 23

Verily, when the soul of [a dead] believer soars up to the heavens, the souls of the other believers come to greet it, seeking news about their acquaintances among... p. 25

Verily, you cannot make the dead hear and you cannot make the deaf hear the call when they turn their backs and retreat. p. 26

W

We [i.e., the *jinn*] had sought out the heavens, but found it filled with strong guardians and meteors. We used to sit on high places in order to listen, but whoever... p. 70

We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs and supported him with the Holy Spirit [*Rūḥ al-Qudus*]. p. 36

We have honoured the children of Adam, carried them on the land and on the sea, provided them with good things and greatly preferred them over

much of what We have created. p. 232

We have only revealed the Book to you in order that you clarify for them the things about which they differ... p. 100

We revealed in stages of the Qur'ān that which is a healing and mercy for believers. But for the unjust... p. 135

We revealed in the Qur'ān what is a healing and mercy for the believers. p. 218

We will not punish [the wayward] until a messenger has been sent [to them]. p. 133

Whatever the Prophet gives you, take it; and whatever he has forbidden you, leave it. p. 200

What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you? He replied, 'I am better than he. You created me from fire and created him from clay. p. 59

When a believer is leaving this world and entering the next, angels with faces shining brightly like the sun descend from the heavens carrying a shroud... p. 47

When a dead man is buried, two bluish-black angels will come to him. One of them is called Munkar and the other Nakīr. They will ask, 'What did you used to say about this man?' If he was a believer, he will reply, 'He is the servant... p. 39

When a man dies, all of his deeds cease, except in three [cases]: charity of continuous blessing, beneficial knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for him. p. 24

When a man dies, his acts cease. p. 212

When night falls, keep your children in your homes because the devils spread out in that hour... p. 257

When the *adhān* is made, Satan runs away and breaks wind to drown it out. When it is finished, he returns, but when the *iqāmah* is proclaimed, he again turns and runs away. p. 144

When the last two verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah are read in a home for three consecutive nights, the devil will not come near it. p. 140

When the Messenger of Allāh appointed me as governor of al-Ṭā'if,

something began to appear to me in my ṣalāh so that I wouldn't know how many *rak'abs* I had prayed. p. 151

When the Prophet (ﷺ) and a group of his companions set out for the 'Ukāz market... p. 71

When they saw him, they exalted him and cut their hands [in amazement] and cried out, 'Allāh forbid! This is not a man! This can only be a noble angel. p. 33

When you go to sleep, put out your lamps, because Satan may guide something like this [rat]... p. 82

When you hear a donkey braying, seek refuge in Allāh from Satan, for he has seen a devil. p. 64

When your brethren were killed [on the day of Uḥud], Allāh placed their souls inside green birds which drink from the rivers of Paradise and eat from its fruits... p. 20

Whoever believes a fortune-teller has disbelieved in the religion that Muḥammad brought. p. 234

Whoever has sworn by other than Allāh has associated partners [with Allāh]. p. 212

Whoever relieves a believer of one of the tragedies of this life, Allāh will relieve him of one... p. 129

Whoever says '*Lā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahu lā sharīka lah, labul-mulku wa labul-ḥamdu wa huwa 'alā kulli shay'in Qadīr,*' ('There is no god but Allāh, Who is alone without partner; the dominion and praise are His, and He is able to do all things,')... p. 147

Whoever sees evil should change it with his hand. If he is unable, he should change it with his tongue. And if he is unable to do [even that], he should hate it in his heart... p. 241

Whoever takes seven [Madinite] '*ajwah*' dates in the morning, neither magic nor poison will hurt him that day. p. 148

Whoever visits a fortune-teller, his prayer will not be accepted for 40 days. p. 234

Will you then take him [i.e., Satan] and his children as protectors besides Me? And they are enemies to you! p. 77

Wā'il al-Ḥaḍramī reported that Ṭāriq ibn Suwayd al-Ju'fī questioned Allāh's Messenger (r) about wine. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade its use and expressed hatred that it should be prepared. Ṭāriq remarked, "But I prepare it as medicine." p. 126

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You will have no authority over My servants, except those among the misguided who follow you. p. 233

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