

Investigating the Islamic Concept of Jinn

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Abstract:

This paper delves into the intricate concept of Jinn in Islam, examining their significance, portrayal, and cultural impact. Based on Islamic theology and literary sources, the research investigates the genesis, traits, and functions associated with Jinn in the context of Islamic belief systems. The dissertation explores the development of Jinn-related narratives, their interconnections with human existence, and the implications for religious practice and cultural understanding, drawing on a wide range of scholarly viewpoints. This research adds to a nuanced knowledge of the phenomena of Jinn within the Islamic tradition by thoroughly examining historical, religious, and cultural settings. It does this by illuminating the varied significance and continuing relevance of Jinn.

I will be answering my research questions through the use of semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. –

- How are Jinn depicted in Islamic scriptures?
- What is the Muslim perspective on the actual existence of Jinn?
- Have opinions about Jinn changed over the years among various generations?

In order to address two sets of respondents from two distinct age groups—25–35 and 55–65 in rural and urban settings, respectively—qualitative research approaches will be employed.

Drawing on qualitative research methods, the study delves into the cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors shaping individuals' beliefs and attitudes towards Jinn. By contrasting perspectives from town and city dwellers, the research aims to uncover understandings of how urbanization and modernization influence these perceptions. Findings reveal complex intersections between tradition, modernity, and religious interpretation, shedding light on the evolving significance of Jinn in contemporary society.

It also discusses the widely held beliefs about Jinn that are ingrained in Islamic culture and vary throughout generations. The study also focuses on how older and younger members of Muslim communities comprehend and hold ideas, attitudes, and understandings about Jinn. Additionally, it also looks at how modernization, technology development, and exposure to a variety of media portrayals have shaped younger generations' views of Jinn in the current period.

The dissertation adds to a better understanding of the dynamic nature of belief systems across Islamic societies and throws light on how tradition and modernity interact to shape conceptions of the supernatural through a comparative examination of the findings. In the end, this study offers insightful information about the persistence and development of cultural notions about Jinn, guiding conversations about the interplay of religion, culture, and generational dynamics in modern Muslim countries.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the concept of jinn is strongly associated with mythology and folklore from pre-Islamic Arabia and Islam. The term "Jinn" (also written "djinn" or "genie") refers to supernatural entities or spirits that are described in Islamic religion and are thought to reside in the hereafter. Jinn are widely believed in,

especially in areas where there is a sizable Muslim population. Local beliefs and folklore frequently accept their reality. Islamic customs and beliefs have a major influence on the conception of jinn. According to Islamic belief, jinn are made of smokeless fire and have free choice just like people do. They are regarded as one of Allah's creatures and are referenced in the Quran, the sacred book of Islam. Jinn are frequently connected to ghosts, paranormal activity, and unexplained events in India. Many people think that jinn can possess people, inflict diseases, bring good or bad luck, and, if placated, even grant wishes. These beliefs frequently give rise to a variety of rites, amulets, and talismans intended to interact with or ward off Jinn (Khalifa & Hardie 2005).

In certain regions of India, people who think they are Jinn-possessed seek the assistance of traditional healers or religious authorities for healing and exorcism. These practitioners evict the Jinn and heal the afflicted individual through rituals, Quranic recitations, and other means. Diverse parts of India may have diverse Jinn beliefs and customs due to regional traditions and customs. It's crucial to remember that, as in other regions of the world, opinions regarding jinn might differ greatly throughout people and groups in India. Some people may consider the presence and power of jinn to be superstitions or folklore, while others may hold deep convictions in these concepts. Still, the concept of Jinn remains a fascinating and culturally relevant feature of India's paranormal and religious milieu. In Islam, the phrase "possession" refers to the conviction that evil Jinn can momentarily, occasionally even permanently, affect or control a person's body and mind. It's frequently thought of as a type of psychological or spiritual ailment. The concept of possession is not unique to Islam; it is present in many other global cultures and faiths. Islamic tradition holds that involvement in banned or occult rituals, sins, and weak faith are just a few of the causes of possession. Severe behavioural changes, speaking in unknown languages, exhibiting strength beyond one's usual capacity, and severe mood swings are said to be signs of possession.

There are different varieties of Jinn according to the Sahih-Al-Bukhari:-

- **Jann:** They are the most prevalent kind of Jinn. They may live in groups, form families, and partake in a variety of activities, much like humans. Like humans, Jann can be nice or wicked, and they can have both positive and negative interactions with other people.
- **Ifrit:** renowned for their strength and cunning, Ifrit are formidable and disobedient Jinn. They are frequently connected to evil and mayhem. Ifrit are among the most hostile and dangerous of the Jinn, according to Islamic legend. They are able to hurt humans by possessing them.
- **Marid:** are regarded as a strong, disobedient kind of Jinn, comparable to Ifrit. They are frequently characterized as wild and unruly and are well recognized for their extraordinary strength. Marids are connected to the sea and are occasionally perceived as spirits of the water.
- **Si'lat:** are viewed as more charitable Jinn in general. They frequently provide many forms of assistance to people and are renowned for being protective and helpful. It is thought that the Silat live in isolated and deserted areas.
- **Ghul:** a kind of Jinn connected to death and gloom. They are frequently portrayed as being able to change into either humans or animals. Certain traditions hold that they consume the corpse's flesh.
- **Shaitan:** Although not a distinct kind of Jinn, it's vital to note that some Jinn have the capacity to turn wicked and act against humanity's best interests. Any Jinn or creature that has turned away from Allah and behaves malevolently is referred to as a "Shaitan."

- **Qarin:** A Qarin is a personal Jinn companion thought to exist for every human. It is stated that this Jinn follows a person from birth and has the power to affect their ideas and behaviour. The Qarin has the power to reward both virtue and vice (Sahih-al-Bukhari).

Different names are used to refer to Jinn according to their actions

Abu 'Umar ibn 'Abd Al-Barr said: According to the scholars of the Arabic language, there are different categories of Jinn, namely:

- When they mention the Jinn in general terms, they use the word **Jinni**;
- If the Jinn are one of those who live in houses with people, they call him '**Aamir (dweller)**', the plural of which is '**Ummaar**'
- If the Jinn are one of those who interact with children, they call them **Arwaah (spirits)**
- If the Jinn are wicked, then he is a **Shaytan(devil)**
- If he is worse than that, they call him **Marid (demon)** and
- If he is worse than that and is strong, they call him **Ifrit**, the plural of which is **Afarit** (Ameen, 2005).

Verses from the Qur'an

The **QURAN** mentions that one must clearly know what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible mental confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the ancient superstition and myths. Countless debates have ensued over the merging of the spatial planes that separate jinn and humans considering some individuals believe that these beings can form relationships with human(Rahman and Peshkova). They haven't come to this conclusion because they believe they have found all the facts and realities of the cosmos and as a result, the jinn are unreal. Nor can they assert to have any such knowledge. However, people have assumed without justification or evidence that the universe is made up just of what they can see, even though the size of the universe is much greater than that of a drop of water compared to the grandeur of the cosmos. In this instance, the belief that what one cannot see does not exist and that all that is must therefore be experienced serves as evidence of one's own mental limitations. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality. In the **Quran**, Allah says about the existence of jinn in various instances.

Some verses in the QUR'AN states about Jinn are as follows:-

- The making and existence of jinn is mentioned in the Quran in the following verses, like in **Surah Al Hijr verse 27** , Allah says:
"And the jinn We created before from scorching fire".
It is also mentioned in **Surah Rahman verse 15**:
"**And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire**".
- I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me. (**Surah Adh-Dhariyat 51:56**)
God's creation is not in vain and without purpose. According to this verse, both Jinn and human beings have been created so that they may worship God. Through this, they will grow, attain perfection, and have their needs fulfilled.
- When We said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam', they prostrated, but not Iblis. He was one of the Jinn so he transgressed against his Lord's command. Will you then take him and his offspring for

guardians in My stead, though they are your enemies? How evil a substitute for the wrongdoers! (Surah Al-Kahf 18:50)

According to Islam and in verses of the Quran, Satan or Iblis is not an angel; rather, he is a Jinn and made from fire; something which he himself testifies to in the following verse when God asks him why he did not prostrate to Adam: *'I am better than him,' he said. 'You created me from fire and You created him from clay.'*

- Certainly We have winnowed out for hell many of the Jinn and humans: they have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; indeed, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless. (Surah Al-A'raf 7:179)

This verse explains that the inmates of hell are those for whom the potential for receiving God's mercy has become invalidated. They are not affected by seeing God's signs as though their eyes don't see, and hearing the advice of people who are right does not have any effect on them as though their ears don't hear. Similarly, the proofs and arguments that their innate nature impresses upon them do not affect their state, or it is as though they do not possess intellect.

The above verse clearly states that jinn have the power to see humans and to take possessions on the humans. The only way to keep ourselves safe from the evil beings is to pray five times, to walk on the path which Allah and His messenger (P.B.U.H) has shown us, and to follow the teaching of Quran, Sunnah, and Hadith.

WHY DO JINN POSSESS HUMANS?

According to the believers in Jinn's affect, there are many reasons why Jinn disturb humans. It can be a revenge when someone disturbs them either by urinating or pouring hot water on them. It can be because the Jinn admire and have a very strong sexual desire for that person, so it wants to clinch its lust with him/her. It can be also because of other things such as anger, uncontrolled emotions, fear and following desires (Mefah,2018).

Satan and the evil jinn have no power to dispossess human beings of their will, but they do have power to course through their veins, to whisper suggestions into their hearts and minds. Thus the jinn can entice and harass human beings but they cannot compel them. If a Muslim intends a good deed, the jinn cannot erect a physical barrier to his carrying out that intention, still less take possession of his will and make him commit an evil deed instead, or postpone or not do the good deed. By whispering, the jinn can either divert the Muslim's attention from his intended action and cause him to do something else, or they can raise doubts about the Muslim's ability to carry out his intentions and get him to question their sincerity. Thus, essentially, what the jinn are capable of accomplishing is ambushing people and pressuring them to stray from their intended beneficial deeds. (Nadwi, 2016)

Signs of Jinn possession

- **Symptoms:** Although they can vary greatly, signs of jinn possession can include abrupt behavioural changes, speaking in tongues other than the possessed person's native tongue, superhuman strength, convulsions or seizures, and antipathy to religious books or symbols. (G. Hussein Rasool)
- **Diagnosis and Treatment:** To determine whether someone is possessed by a jinn, Muslims or spiritual healers are sometimes called. To ascertain whether jinn are involved, they may employ a variety of

techniques, including reciting passages from the Quran, interviewing the afflicted individual, or watching how they behave.

Ruqyah is essentially a kind of dua that includes various incantations and invocations along with the reading of specific verses from the Quran. Ruqyah is a tool to strengthen our Iman(faith) toward Allah Almighty in addition to providing protection from bodily and spiritual harm. It is stated that the passages recited in Ruqyah have healing properties. In particular, one can use Ruqyah to heal physical illnesses, the exorcism of Jinn, Sihr (black magic or witchcraft), and other physical ailments.

- As a beginning to the Ruqyah therapy, say Salawat, or salutations, upon the beloved Prophet, , as to start the first step of Ruqyah.
- Next, one can start reciting the following Ruqyah verses as loudly and clearly as they can, with complete focus and conviction. Say this three to seven times- Surah-al-Fatiha, Ayatul Kursi, Surah-al-Ikhlās, Surah-al-Falak, Surah-an-Nas, and other verses from the Quran are among them.
- In addition to blowing into the hands, one can also recite the verses from the Ruqyah and blow into a glass or jug of water. It could be necessary to hold one's mouth near the water, inhale, and exhale repeatedly over the object. It is possible to bathe in and consume the water that one has blown into.
- Place your hand on the victim's forehead or the area of their body that hurts, recite, and blow if you intend to recite Ruqyah on them.
- Listening to the Ruqyah verses is another option if one is unable to recite because of the menstrual cycle. But in addition to having a strong believe in Allah's assistance and in Allah alone, one must pay close attention to the recitations and comprehend their significance(Ramlan,2022).

Preventive measures- Additionally, it is observed that a portion of the Muslim population—both in urban and rural areas according to my respondents—uses amulets bestowed by Imams, does five times daily Namaaz (prayer to God), reads the Quran, and recites Surahs and Quranic passages in their daily life. They assert that by engaging in this regular activity, they will shield their family from sorcery, magic, and the evil eye. They also say that by doing this, they are able to purify their souls and are prevented from performing any wrongdoing. Overall, belief in jinn is an integral part of Islamic cosmology and spirituality, shaping various aspects of belief, ritual, and cultural practices within the Muslim community.

In this study, I will examine the similarities and discrepancies in how Muslims view the jinn.

- **Among the urban and sub-urban Muslim population.**

The idea of jinn ownership is present in both suburban and metropolitan places with substantial Muslim populations, although being more common in specific cultures and regions. In Muslim-majority cities, it is not rare to encounter people who believe that jinn could enter humans. There are others in suburban and urban areas who claim to be able to recognize and treat cases of jinn possession. These traditional healers and exorcists are often heavily involved in handling these kinds of cases. In the sub-urban areas Rather than being viewed as a psychological and physical illness (i.e. neurochemical imbalance that can be treated through medication and therapy), some Muslims attribute mental illness to metaphysical forces (i.e. jinn/devil-possession) brought about by the sufferer's sinful life and own weakness Rather than being viewed as a psychological and physical illness (i.e. neurochemical imbalance that can be treated through medication and therapy), some Muslims attribute mental illness to metaphysical forces (i.e. jinn/devil- possession) brought about by the sufferer's sinful life and own weakness Rather than being viewed as a psychological and physical illness (i.e. neurochemical imbalance that can be treated through medication and therapy), some Muslims attribute

mental illness to metaphysical forces (i.e. jinn/devil-possession) brought about by the sufferer's sinful life and own weakness. Rather than being viewed as a psychological and physical illness (i.e. neurochemical imbalance that can be treated through medication and therapy), some Muslims attribute mental illness to metaphysical forces (i.e. jinn/devil-possession) brought about by the sufferer's sinful life and own weakness. The idea of Jinn is present in both suburban and metropolitan cities with substantial Muslim population. In the Muslim populated areas, it is not rare to encounter people who believe in Jinn possession, however, it differs across different sets of people living in the rural and urban areas. According to F Islam and RA Campbell a part of Islamic communities view mental illness as jinn/devil possession because of the sufferer's sinful life and own weaknesses. Lower education, female gender and older age in the rural areas have been found to be the predictors of belief in supernatural origins rather than attributing it to psychological and physical illness.

On the contrary, urban areas typically offer better access to modern medical facilities and mental health treatments. Claims of jinn possession might be met with more scepticism in highly educated and urbanized areas. People may be more inclined to search for psychological or medical explanations for strange behaviour or symptoms. People who live in urban and suburban environments usually have diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews. It is important to keep in mind that there are significant differences in the belief in jinn possession among Muslims and those living in cities and suburbs. In addition, Jinn possession is a complex and culturally sensitive topic because it can be interpreted and understood differently by many individuals and societies. According to studies, suburban areas have a higher frequency of Jinn possessions than urban areas do. A higher number of population from rural area believed in the treatment by religious figure compared to those belonging to urban area. People belonging to rural area choose religious figure when asked about who could treat illness caused by Jinn, compared to people belonging to urban areas (Fawad, Kholood and Amna 2019). This is what I aim to look further in my research.

- **Inter-generational comparison of the notion of Jinn.**

The notion of Jinn, which are supernatural entities found in Islamic tradition, can shift between generations and even between individuals within those generations. A mix of personal, religious, and cultural influences influence these perceptions. Elderly people tend to believe in Jinn more than younger people do, especially if they were raised in traditional or rural environments. They might think of Jinn as strong, possibly evil entities that have the ability to affect people's life. Based on Islamic traditions, older, more pious people might have a stronger awareness of Jinn. They can view jinn as supernatural beings described in the Quran and Hadith that have the power to possess or harm individuals who follow immoral rituals or actions. Incorporating jinn-related superstitions into daily life, such as chanting certain prayers or taking care to fend off evil jinn, may also be more common among older generations.

Younger generations might be less convinced that jinn exist, particularly those who live in metropolitan, more secular settings. They might not consider jinn to be actual entities, but rather imaginary creatures or mythology. Younger people may look for logical explanations for phenomena that previous generations would attribute to jinn if they have access to contemporary knowledge and science. They tend to believe that anomalies or mental health disorders are the result of natural causes. The media that younger generations are exposed to includes TV dramas, movies, and video games, all of which frequently portray jinn as imaginary or mythical beings. This may skew their perspectives and make them see jinn less seriously. Rather than being actual creatures, they might view jinn as symbolic depictions of internal conflicts or temptations. A complex interaction of cultural, religious, and personal variables can influence

an individual's beliefs and views of jinn. My objective is to ascertain the intergenerational disparity in attitudes towards Jinn possessions through interviews with individuals spanning from 18 to 65 years old. These are a few of the components that my study highlights. And in order to understand more about the diverse perspectives Kolkata's Muslim community has on the existence of jinn, I would like to investigate the generational and urban-suburban divides.

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation delves into the intricate concept of Jinn in Islam, examining their significance, portrayal, and cultural impact. Based on Islamic theology and literary sources, the research investigates the genesis, traits, and functions associated with Jinn in the context of Islamic belief systems. The dissertation explores the development of Jinn-related narratives, their interconnections with human existence, and the implications for religious practice and cultural understanding, drawing on a wide range of scholarly viewpoints. This research adds to a nuanced knowledge of the phenomena of Jinn within the Islamic tradition by thoroughly examining historical, religious, and cultural settings. It does this by illuminating the varied significance and continuing relevance of Jinn.

Drawing on qualitative research methods, the study delves into the cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors shaping individuals' beliefs and attitudes towards Jinn. I have employed semi-structured interviews for this research. To reach out to two different groups of respondents in three different age ranges, 18-25, 25-45 and 45-65, respectively, in rural settings (Hirapur, District Howrah) and urban settings (Park Circus, Kolkata). In order to compare the respondents' perceptions on the existence of Jinn, ten people were chosen for the study: five from the rural area and five from the urban area. The respondents are both male and female that fit into the distinct age groups. The following research questions have been addressed through these semi-structured interviews:

- What is the Muslim view about the existence of Jinn in both urban and rural settings?
- Is there a generational difference in how Muslims understand the concept of jinn?

The sampling method used for this research is snowball sampling.

Semi-structured interviews are valuable because they can offer complex perspectives, encourage a cooperative relationship between the researcher and the participant, and advance a thorough comprehension of the topic. As the interviews are open-ended, it is possible to thoroughly explore a range of viewpoints, revealing previously unidentified themes and deepening our understanding.

DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
AGE	
18-25	4
25-45	3
45-65	3
GENDER	
MALE	4
FEMALE	6
LOCATION	
URBAN-PARK CIRCUS	5
RURAL- HIRAPUR	5
MARITAL STATUS	

MARRIED	7
NON-MARRIED	3
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
EMPLOYED	6
UNEMPLOYED	2
STUDENT	2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Possession and Jinn

In the article, **‘Possession and Jinn’** Najat Khalifa and Tim Hardie mentions there are numerous references to Jinn in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* (sayings of Prophet Mohammed). According to Islamic writings, jinn live alongside other creatures but form a world other than that of mankind. Though they see us they cannot be seen. Characteristics they share with human beings are intellect and freedom to choose between right and wrong and between good and bad, but according to the *Qur'an* their origin is different from that of man: **'And indeed, we created man from dried clay of altered mud and the Jinn we created a foretime from the smokeless flame of fire'**. Jinn tempt and seduce mankind to stray from Allah (God); Satan (shaitan, devil) is thought to be from their realm.

It is thought that jinn live in cemeteries, caves, abandoned areas, and the dark. They marry, have children, eat, drink, and die, yet unlike humans, they can change into different forms and move heavy objects across large distances very quickly, according to the *Qur'an*. The Prophet Solomon's scheme to conquer the Jinn and force them to carry out laborious duties requiring strength, cunning, and ability is mentioned in the *Qur'an*. According to Islamic texts, experiencing actual jinn possession might result in convulsions and incoherent speech. The possessed person lacks the ability to think or communicate for themselves. The therapist's job in cases of true possession is to drive out the Jinn; to do this, they must have a strong faith in Allah. One of two methods is typically employed for this: calling upon Allah, remembering him, and addressing his creations (**Ruqyah**); blowing into the person's mouth, cursing, and ordering the jinn to depart; or remembering God and reciting the *Qur'an* (**Dhikr**). Certain faith healers strike the possessed individual and say that the agony is coming from the Jinn.

Possession and Mental Health

POSSESSION AND MENTAL HEALTH” talks about how the mental illness is deeply shrouded in the culture of silence in Muslim communities. According to studies by F. Islam and R. A. Campbell, **"SATAN HAS AFFLICTED ME!** The article "Jinn Possession and Mental Health" discusses how Muslim communities' cultures of silence severely stigmatize mental illness. The stigma associated with mental illness often results in underreporting and misdiagnosis due to fear of misunderstanding by the community. Rather than seeing mental illness as a psychological and physical ailment, the Muslim society attributes it to metaphysical forces (jinn/devil possession) brought about by the sufferer's immoral behaviour and weakness. The concept that mental disease has supernatural roots has been found to be predicted by older age, feminine gender, and lower education levels. In many Islamic societies, reports of jinn possession in the present day are generally accepted as true. While some academics contend that the *Qur'an* addresses possession in relation to mental illness, others maintain that the belief is antithetical to Islam. Additionally, they point out that the *Qur'an* mentions Satan 88 times and refers to him by his true name, Iblis, ten times. Themes pertaining to Satan include his traits, deeds, and different instruments or tactics. He is portrayed as a liar, a rebel against humanity, a threat to God, and a test for people with sick

spiritual hearts. To convey how active and powerful he is in his actions, a wide array of verbs is used. Satan sows hatred, orders evil and sin, whispers, lies, guides, and threatens. The extent to which the idea of being Satan's brother or being tormented by Satan can be interpreted as a form of possession is an open question. He uses a variety of devices and tactics to ensnare people in drinking, gambling, and superstition. Satan is a skilled manipulator who deceives people by making false claims, seeming like a friend, and then abandoning them while promoting evil. Two themes seem to be related to insanity and crazy in regard to Satan: his capacity to trick God's prophets and spiritual lunacy brought on by sin. The scripture links two sins—squandering money and usury—directly to Satan. The phrase "brothers of Satan" refers to spendthrifts, and those who engage in usury are said to be risen on judgment day "like someone tormented by Satan's touch." It's unclear to what extent the notion of being Satan's brother or experiencing his pain qualifies as a type of possession.

Jinn, Sufi healing AND Medicine

In the article, 'A Brief Overview of *al Jinn* within Islamic Cosmology and Religiosity', Vivian A. Laughlin mentions about the primary duty of the Sufis, esteemed Islamic spiritual instructors, is to preserve and disseminate the deeper, hidden wisdom found in the Qur'an. The ultimate goal of life, according to Sufis, is to serve and follow Allah in order to imitate his divine qualities and win his favour. Healing the ill is one of the acts of service to humanity that Sufis value above all others. They employ a technique known as Sufi Healing. Sufis describe how they relate their rituals to Islam using the symbol of the circle. They consider the Islamic Law, or Shari'a, to be the earth's perimeter, encompassing and governing everything. They hold that the centre of this circle is Allah, or the Ultimate Truth (Haqiqa). The radius that joins the circle to the centre is what they regard as their tariqa, or route, which leads them to Allah. There are an unlimited number of tariqas (paths) that can lead to the ultimate truth, just as there are an infinite number of radii from the circle's periphery to its centre.

There are four kinds of healing methods that are widely recognized: (1) modern; (2) traditional (acupuncture, herb remedies, etc.); (3) spiritism (yoga, magnetism, hypnotism, breath exercise, etc.); and (4) Divine spiritual power. Some Sufi healers use the divine spiritual power method while working with the jinn. Sufi healers frequently communicate with jinn directly before driving them from patients. The combining of plant essences, called attars, is a fundamental component of Sufi medicine and forms the basis of aromatherapy. The powerful effect of various aromas on the spiritual and physical state has been brought to the highest level in Sufi medicine over the centuries through practice and study and has recently become an increasingly Western practice. Muslims also believe it is important to keep their bodies clean as the temple of God (Allah). They are constrained by dietary limitations, and even in the present era, they frequently turn to natural sources for the treatment of various ailments. These Islamic customs highlight how important it is to many Muslims to stay in line with both their cultural and religious traditions. Sufis are considered to have divine powers they have received from the jinn, since they serve as intermediaries, between humans and the jinn. Sufi Muslims are thought to possess the mystical knowledge required to be empowered for spiritual teaching, healing, and the use of natural medicines because of their intimate contact with and capacity to summon the jinn for spiritual strength.

Day-to-day existence in Post partition Delhi with the Jinn

Anand Vivek Taneja describes in his piece **Jinnealogy** how, in modern Delhi, long-lived jinn serve as messengers, bringing together people who were born millennia apart. Medieval notions of justice meet contemporary bureaucratic methods in the form of petitions left for jinn-saints in a collapsed medieval palace. The ruins of Firoz Shah Kotla are located close to the center of the contemporary conurbation of

Delhi, a short distance south of the "Old City." These include crumbling masonry buildings with subterranean passageways and chambers, as well as massive medieval fortress walls surrounding lawns and trees. Even though Firoz Shah Kotla was formerly a fortified palace complex dating back to the fourteenth century, most visitors do not consider it to be a historical "monument" or a fortress. They consider the monument to be a dargah, or Muslim saint shrine, despite the informational boards outside its gates and the fact that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is in charge of it. A highly unique dargah in Delhi's modern setting is Firoz Shah Kotla. The majority of dargahs are constructed around a Muslim holy man's revered grave. The time-worn ruins of a medieval sultan's palace make up Firoz Shah Kotla. There was a strong belief among the dargah's followers, many of whom had been attending for more than 20 years that *jinnatke asarat*, or the jinn's impacts and effects, are more important than graves. There is evidence that Firoz Shah Kotla was a revered location almost a century ago, but for the majority of people including those who visit frequently today it was a place of bewitchment and terror that should be approached with caution. Firoz Shah Kotla has a long history of being connected to jinn. In 1977, a few months after the 1975–1977 Emergency ended, Firoz Shah Kotla rose to prominence as a dargah rather than just a marginal one. The place came to light soon after the Emergency in 1977, when an old man named Ludo Shah moved to the Firoz Shah Kotla, and told his followers that there was some energy in the form of a jinn who grants wishes. After that people with such faith started coming here to pray and find solutions to their problems. Thursday is considered blessed, as the jinn is considered happy and benevolent on this day. Therefore, every Thursday, people from Delhi and beyond come to the Firoz Shah Kotla with letters, candles, sheets, rice, etc., to reveal their most private secrets and ask for protection. People who turn to such beliefs to find solutions to their problems flock to this fort because they think it is the home of jinn. In addition, individuals who are thought to be under the control of bad spirits are sent here. It may surprise you to learn that some people vouch for it. Every Thursday night, the jinn-saints congregate here to read petitions; some of them are able to move every ten minutes between India and Pakistan; others depart when the ruins get too crowded. The majority of visitors to Firoz Shah Kotla are working class and originate from relatively particular regions, such Jamna Par (across the river) in East Delhi, Old Delhi/Shahjahanabad and its former suburbs, including Paharganj. People from East Delhi frequently have ties to the Old City through their families. In the 1960s and 1970s, they were either driven from the increasingly crowded Old City to the more proximate areas of East Delhi, or they were taken by force to the slum colonies located well across the river. The first jinn-saint one encountered when entering Firoz Shah Kotla was also known by the name Nanhe Miyan. A tiny cove off what would have been the citadel's main entrance gate is his unique location. A few unique named jinns had gained a great deal of notoriety among the women. They were Shah Dariya, Shah Sikandar, Zain Khan, Sadar e Jahan, Nanhe Miyan, and Chahaltan; nevertheless, Shaikh Saddu attained the greatest level of notoriety. The "ministry" of the jinn operates differently from contemporary bureaucracy. The majority of believers include their address, a passport-size photo, and a letter of petition outlining their worries. All across the ruins, photocopies of letters abound, seemingly at the behest of several government office divisions. In order to get his request granted, the believer is supposed to journey through the ruins till seven Friday evenings. For people who can't afford to travel often and who have their address with them at all times. The adoration of jinn at Firoz Shah Kotla exhibits an oscillating pattern of compassion and malevolence. An essential component of Firoz Shah Kotla's experience is facing and conquering fear, particularly in the dim underground passageways beneath the mosque that set it apart from other dargah locations. Distinct from other dargahs, which are areas of embodied light, Firoz Shah Kotla's spaces are frequently shady,

dim, and subterranean. These underground rooms are other worldly places of sensory confusion and even horror on Thursday afternoons, lit only by the faint glow of tiny candles discernible through the dense incense.

At Firoz Shah Kotla, bearing testimony and carrying out justice are intrinsically related. According to the jinneological narrative connected to Firoz Shah Kotla, the jinn who render judgment are also witnesses, just like the sahabi jinn who saw the Prophet's life. They are witnesses to different eras and states of existence. The experiences of persons who visit this dargah, their sufferings, the memories they have of it, and their lives, are not included in the histories of the postcolonial city. Perhaps the resort to the jinn is an emphasis on the authenticity of the witness if Firoz Shah Kotla is a court, a place of justice.

Jinn and Occult Practices

Jinn are inextricably linked to the practise of both legal Qur'anic magic and illegal black magic (sihir), according to Dawn Perlmutter's article **The Politics of Muslim Magic**. While Qur'anic magic calls upon God's guidance to drive out devils, black magic is thought to be used by individuals who have mastered the ability to conjure wicked jinn for their own benefit. It is possible to label well-meaning spiritual healers as witches or sorcerers who do not use Qur'anic therapeutic techniques. Qur'anic healing techniques are only practiced by qualified individuals in Saudi Arabia, who are typically natives chosen by the religious authorities. Foreigners, whether or not they were engaged in Qur'anic medicine, make up the majority of those decapitated and arrested for sorcery and witch craft. Comprehensive Islamic treatises exist on countering black magic, encompassing complete exorcism procedures and purifying rites for demolishing amulets and other magical objects. Ironically, counteracting a spell's effects also falls under the category of magical practices—albeit ones that are legalized.

In defiance of laws, a whole sector of professional exorcists has emerged to fulfill the demand for Qur'anic healing among Muslims in the West and the Middle East. These exorcists openly advertise on the Internet, use Facebook and Twitter, and post thousands of videos on YouTube demonstrating healing techniques and publicizing actual exorcisms. Qur'anic magic has sometimes been used as a cover for abusive, quasi-medical activities. Afghanistan has hospitals with psychiatric units, but a prevalent practice there is to bind mentally sick people to shrines for forty days in order to ritually exorcise the jinn that are "possessing" them. Patients sleep on the ground, are given a restricted diet consisting only of bread and black pepper, and are not allowed to change clothes. Individuals who do not make it through the treatments are interred in clay mounds surrounding the shrine. Muslim medical professionals acknowledge both physical and mental disorders, although some are more likely to believe that mysterious cases are the result of possession.

Has Psychiatry replaced the notion of Jinn Possession?

Throughout history, the idea of jinn, which is common in Islamic tradition and many other civilizations, has been employed to explain a variety of difficult-to-understand events. But as science has progressed, many of the phenomena that were formerly ascribed to jinn can now be explained by psychological and scientific frameworks. Here are a few particular instances. According to The Scientific Research Committee - IslamToday.net a person suffering from **Sleep paralysis** is characterized by the inability to move, speak, or cry out. Typically, the person is lying in a supine position and is either about to sleep or has just woken up from sleep. Many people lament their inability to recite Ayat-al-Kursi when they attempt to do so. People with this illness typically experience overwhelming sensations of terror or dread and often attempt, but are unable, to cry out. They are abruptly freed from the immobility after a few seconds or minutes, but they could still feel anxious for a while. This sensation, which many individuals feel when

they go to sleep or wake up, can be uncomfortable. Some have described it as feeling as though someone is sitting on their chest. Here are some common secondary signs of this condition: sensations of choking or suffocation a sensation of having your shoulders or chest pressed against, hearing footsteps, voices, or hammering or bashing on walls are common auditory hallucinations. Visual hallucinations, usually involving entities or shadowy figures surrounding or in close proximity to the bed, a terrifying sensation of evil or fear rising, enveloping, bodily shaking or a ringing or rumbling sound in the ears. It is the sensation of being awake and simultaneously in a dreamlike condition. To prevent one from waking up and acting out of fantasies, the brain turns off the signals that the muscles send when one is sleeping. This is to protect oneself from self-harm in sleep. For whatever reason, sleep paralysis sufferers have a sense of paralysis because they awaken before their brains allow voluntary control of their muscles to return. Some of the secondary symptoms of this condition, which is extremely genuine and terrifying, can be experienced by the partially conscious person as a result of this uncomfortable and understandably frightening sensation. According to a number of recent polls, 25–30% of people have at least occasionally encountered a mild type of sleep paralysis, and 20–30% of those individuals have had it multiple times. On the other hand, one should consult a doctor if this is a recurring issue that is keeping them from sleeping. For this illness, there are literally numerous medicines and therapies available. In order to alleviate this problem, doctors advise adopting a regular sleep pattern and avoiding sleep deprivation.

Naila Chowdhury in her work- **Neuropsychiatric condition or jinn possession?** (2022) mentions that according to Utz there are four types of symptoms associated with jinn ownership. First, there are changes in personality, such as abrupt mood swings, uncontrollably sobbing or laughing, sadness, or social disengagement. Physical alterations include analgesia, catatonia, abnormal strength, psychosomatic pain, convulsions, and altered vocal patterns. Thirdly, there could be cognitive abnormalities including abnormal knowledge, glossolalia (speaking an unknown language), unconsciousness, sleeplessness, or recurrent nightmares. Last but not least, there could be spiritual shifts that include a strong response to recitations of the Qur'an and holy water or a loss of faith. Apart from the symptoms mentioned above, people may associate jinn possession with a wide range of behaviours or physical problems. For instance, Saudi Arabian faith healers have reported that the most common symptoms include paralysis, tremors/abnormal movements, insomnia, convulsions, psychotic disturbances, and altered consciousness; in Iran, however, the most common symptoms have been reported to be altered consciousness, auditory hallucinations, abnormal physical sensations, paralysis, inappropriate laughter/crying, and voice/muteness changes.

Possession is included as a type of dissociative disorder in both the **International Classification of Diseases (ICD)** and the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)**. The definition of possession trance disorder according to ICD-11 is "trance states in which the individual's behaviour or movements are perceived as being controlled by the possessing agent, and in which there is a marked alteration in the individual's state of consciousness and the individual's customary sense of personal identity is replaced by an external "possessing" identity." The diagnosis must also satisfy the following requirements: duration; impairment of functionality or source of suffering; occurrence outside of conditions that are considered normal in the culture; and exclusion of other possible causes. The patient must experience recurring episodes or a single episode lasting longer than seven days during the timeframe. Furthermore, symptoms occurring in culturally expected situations could be explained by patients who are more suggestible being subconsciously influenced by the information they have been exposed to. Therefore, if signs of possession only occur during exorcisms or spiritual rituals, this would

not meet the criteria of the ICD-11. Exorcisms, spiritual rituals, and other cultural or religious acts that promote a transient possession trance state would not be sufficient in diagnosing possession trance disorder because episodes must also be involuntary and undesired in order to meet the criteria.

According to ICD-11, experiences of possession trance disorders can be brought on by severe emotional strain, trauma, home discord, or interpersonal dispute pertaining to religion or culture. Young individuals and religious figures are also more likely to experience these diseases. Although the symptoms, duration, and intensity of episodes can also vary greatly, patients frequently report feeling exhausted following an episode. Dissociative identity disorder, formerly known as multiple personality disorder, and other dissociative disorders differ significantly from possession trance disorder in that the patient reports that the new identity that has taken over their body and mind is external, as opposed to an identity or symptoms that have occurred from an internal source.

Numerous neurological or psychiatric disorders, such as epilepsy, delirium, Tourette's syndrome, schizophrenia spectrum disorders, mood disorders, emotionally unstable personality disorder, stress disorders, OCD, and psychosomatic disorder, have also been linked to jinn possession in addition to dissociative disorders. In their assessment of the literature on jinn possession, Lim et al. (2015) discovered that 66% of patients who reported being possessed had a definitive medical diagnosis; of these, 45% had been diagnosed with schizophrenia spectrum disorder and nearly one-third with mood disorder. In contrast, more than half of the patients in Lim et al.'s (2018) study on patients who presented with jinn possession had a diagnosis of a mood disorder, nearly a quarter had an anxiety disorder or OCD, and just 8% had a diagnosis of schizophrenia or a comparable condition. Hallucinations, which are typically aural in nature and can give patients the feeling that jinn are speaking to or about them, are one of the most prevalent symptoms of schizophrenia. According to a study by Lim et al., 87.2% of patients who claimed to be possessed also reported having hallucinations, with auditory hallucinations being the most common. A cluster or collection of co-occurring, largely unchanging symptoms observed in a particular cultural group, community, or situation is referred to as a cultural syndrome. The culture may or may not acknowledge the syndrome as a disease. Ghaziuddin contends that because beliefs about possession are common across many religions, jinn possession is not a theological disorder as it is commonly portrayed but rather a cultural syndrome. In addition, people who report possession from various religious backgrounds within the same nation exhibit comparable manifestations, indicating that the illness is more likely the product of their common culture than a religious phenomena. According to Rassool, Muslim patients are more prone to experience psychosomatic symptoms. This could be because, in certain Muslim communities, there is stigma associated with mental health issues, which causes distress to manifest as a socially acceptable physical symptom rather than a mental health issue.

Even though the idea of jinn is still important to many cultures, modern knowledge typically uses scientific and psychological frameworks to explain experiences that are traditionally connected to jinn. This change is a reflection of the continuous advancement of human knowledge and the progressive substitution of scientific explanations for supernatural ones.

Gender and Possession- Understanding Jinn possession and women

According to Tahia Rahman and Dr. Peshkova's paper, **The Duality of Spirit Possession and Mental Illnesses in Islam**, Muslim women are more likely to experience possession since it is assumed that they are much weaker emotionally, physically, and psychologically. According to "Spirits Are like Microbes": Islamic Revival and the Definition of Morality in Moroccan Exorcism, Moroccan Muslim women are said to be emotionally irrational and that the jinn's affinity for blood makes their menstruation culpable for

their possession. The jinn will weaken a Muslim lady "before it enters her and this is when its seed can get inside her," according to the Faqih Lluís and Dieste interview. A jinn that literally resides at the entrance of the fallopian tubes or vagina and blocks sperm from entering causes infertility. This is the reason why a woman's stomach develops and swells as though she is pregnant, even though there is nothing inside. Moroccan Muslim women are targeted as a result of their bodily functions or the inability of their bodily functions whether that involved menstruation or their fertility. Once the jinn retreats into her body, it can take complete control of her body by a strictly physical procedure. In certain Moroccan situations, a woman's ability to "repulse the husband" by expelling a black liquid is utilized to determine whether or not she is possessed. This dark fluid is said to have been created by the jinn luring the Muslim woman in order to prevent her from engaging in sexual relations with anybody but the jinn.

Postpartum depression and specific mother and infant behaviours are frequently linked to jinn possession. In *Cultural Variations in Interpretation of Postnatal Illness: Jinn Possession Amongst Muslim Communities*, Hanely and Brown have conducted interviews with Muslim women in Muslim communities to learn about their postpartum experiences. These mothers talk about a range of emotions, such as sadness and tears as well as self-blame, guilt, rage, and loss. Because they believe their lifestyle puts them at danger for possession, many Muslim women are unable to establish coping methods and instead tend to burden themselves with self-blame. There have been rumours that the baby's behaviour can be influenced by the jinn. The baby may exhibit signs of restlessness or vocalization. Muslim women who are expecting are thought to be susceptible to possession as being pregnant weakens and exposes them. Most of these Muslim women also experienced a lack of support from their husbands and families, and some of them felt obligated to have children even if they didn't want to, or that they should have them regardless of how ill they felt. These moms would take precautionary measures, such as wearing modest clothing, remaining indoors when it was dark, covering their hair with scarves, or lighting incense, in attempt to protect themselves before giving birth. The jinn may occasionally be inherited by family members during the course of their ancestry and genealogy. Women must make preparations since they are aware that no matter what they do in advance, they will eventually become affected by familial jinn, which are seen to be unavoidable and cannot be avoided. Sheikhs in this Arabian Gulf state used "therapeutic body pastes concocted from frankincense, sand, charcoal, and spices mixed with oil, water, or animal's urine" as one of the exorcism techniques used on Muslim women. Other methods of exorcism included reciting passages from the Quran, sacrificing animals, and leaving sacrifices like cash, gold, or priceless gemstones.

Gender-wise, women were more likely than men to think that Jinn exists, which is consistent with previous study (Khalifa et al, 2011). Additionally, they were more likely than men to name religious leaders as the authority on healing for illnesses that were thought to be caused by Jinn. These findings, nevertheless, might be connected to overall variations in educational achievement. In South Asia, gender differences in access to healthcare and education are not unusual (Fikree & Pasha, 2004). Women are therefore thought to be easier to possess than men in any given situation (T Hardie et al, 2012)

This dissertation has identified a significant gap in the existing literature pertaining to the generational disparity in perceptions of jinn, highlighting the need for further research to comprehensively explore and understand the nuanced evolution of this cultural notion across different age groups. In my dissertation, I fill in the gap that I was unable to find in the body of current literature by focusing on the generational differences in perceptions of jinn.

CHAPTER-1

CONNECTIONS ACROSS LANDSCAPES: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF RURAL AND URBAN BELIEF SYSTEMS

Faith in the presence and perception of jinn, the supernatural entities found in Islam, is present in a wide range of cultural and geographical contexts, encompassing both urban and rural settings. These ideas may have a deeper historical foundation in rural areas due to customs and folklore that are frequently passed down through the generations. Even if traditional beliefs may have declined somewhat in metropolitan areas due to modernization and urbanization, many individuals still hold onto these ideas, occasionally fusing them with newer understandings. All things considered, the similar perspectives on jinn perception demonstrate the long-lasting impact of religious and cultural customs on people's perspectives, wherever they may be.

People I've spoken with in both urban and rural areas—Park Circus and Hirapur, respectively—have demonstrated the persistence of a similar belief system over many generations. Even while there is a little percentage decline in urban areas, people still hold firmly held beliefs. Still, there are members of the general public, religious authorities, and imams who maintain their belief in jinn possession, Islamic exorcism, and black magic. Muslims have strong opinions regarding jinn because the Quran refers to them as supernatural beings. They thus perform particular rites, offer prayers, and even put on amulets as protection. A broad summation of the interviews is derived from the homogenous belief system on how Jinn is viewed in rural and urban environments.

Hirapur village in Howrah district is located in the state of West Bengal, India. It's situated near Howrah city, approximately 12kms to the northwest. While in Hirapur, I noticed a number of traits that I believed would be essential to my work. Among them include the absence of pucca roads, inadequate transit options, network challenges, deficiency in education, and electrical troubles. Here, the majority of people live in poorly constructed homes, with farming and animal husbandry serving as their primary sources of income. On the contrary, Park circus is a prominent locality in Kolkata, West Bengal and is situated in the central part of the city. Park circus is bustling with activity featuring shops, restaurants, cultural institutions, and mosques. It is the Hub of commercial activity with numerous business establishments lining its streets. The area is also home to educational institutions, hospitals, religious sites, and recreational spaces, making it a dynamic and vibrant part of Kolkata. The following similarities can be seen when examining the belief systems of the inhabitants of these two utterly different environments.

When asked about the existence of jinn in Islam, my respondents—both from rural and urban areas—replied that everyone believes in it, just as humans on Earth, the existence of jinn as a distinct being created by Allah from the smokeless fire. They can indeed possess humans if they become attracted to them and they do have particular abilities. The Quran's reference to Jinn has a profound impact on Muslims. Even if there are more accounts of jinn possession in rural areas than in urban ones, respondents from both regions concur on the existence of jinn possession. Additionally, according to my respondents, women are more prone than males to get possessed. I've learned from my interviews that pregnant women and younger women are more susceptible to being possessed by a jinn for a variety of reasons. When questioned about preventive measures, seven out of ten respondents stated that they use various amulets that have been handed to them by imams and wrapped around their homes to ward off evil energy and jinn. Every one of my respondents recite Quranic Verses (Ayatul kursi, Surah Yaseen, Surah al Kahf, Surah al Jinn are some of the common ones), perform five times of prayer, and use the holy Zamzam water as a symbol of

protection from evil. Four of my respondents also added that they have performed Hajj pilgrimage that had given them safety and tranquility after suffering from paranormal activities at home.

The religious leaders and the Imams play a very significant role in their daily lives. All of the people I spoke with stated that the religious leaders are well-versed in Islam and serve as a source of guidance for the general public. As such, they should be open to recommendations and solutions for any problems that may arise periodically. For any paranormal activity they encounter, the respondents stated they get in touch with their local mosque's Imam right away. When I conducted interviews with residents of the Park Circus neighbourhood, they talked of Dargahs like the Moulali Dargah in Entally and Masjids like the Gulam Rasool Masjid and Arathdar Masjid, where they go to the Imams for seeking assistance. However, in Hirapur, people also seek assistance from the maulvis and the adjacent masjid (name not specified). They also spoke of a great believe in the pir babas, who are thought to have the potential to communicate with the Jinn and aid the inhabitants. The religious leaders acts as healers as they know the Ruqyah process which is needed if one is deemed to be possessed. Some of the Imams do not take any fee for carrying out the process and some charge a fixed rate for every session.

My respondents also mentioned about sanitation and hygiene in their homes as they believe that homes should be kept clean because it is said that Jinn like hanging out in dirty, gloomy locations. Additionally, they stated that since Jinn feeds on human hair and nails, it should not be thrown carelessly around the house, the home space should be well lit, and that no area of the house should be left unoccupied because Jinn will take up residence in any area that remains unoccupied for longer than 41 days. While taking my interviews, I have observed that my respondents both from the urban and the rural mostly talked about women and jinn possession. According to their claims, Jinn is drawn to women for a variety of reasons, the most prevalent ones being long hair, strong-smelling oils and fragrances, attraction based on physical attributes such as the body and face, and dwelling in desolate, dark environments. In order to protect the female family members, people in both situations take preventative steps or provide them with a set of guidelines. The following are some of the DOs and DON'TS that my respondents addressed: women should trim their nails every seven days and properly dispose them off; they should not comb their long hair in unknown or dark places; they are advised not to use strong perfume or ittar while menstruating; women are asked to tie up their long hair if they leave the house during Maghrib (dusk); in certain cases, pregnant women are even advised not to use strong, potent oils or perfumes; they should maintain their personal hygiene; wear clean clothes; recite verses from the Quran; and offer namaz according to the daily timings. Some of my female respondents that I spoke with showed me amulets that their husbands or fathers had given them as protection against negative energy and for general health.

Through my interviews, I have learned about the existence of the pure and good Jinn who exist solely to aid and shield mankind from harm and evil, as addition to the evil and malignant Jinn. The stories from both the settings talks about the possession of good jinn. As per the responses I received, the benevolent ones help the humans to be away from the harmful ones, they also communicate with the religious leaders, healers and Imams and work for them, and help them to get any information they desire. One of my responses, for instance, stated that after being assigned to Jamshedpur for work and given an apartment to live in with his family, he approached the Masjid Imam to verify if the location was secure for his family. According to my respondent, the imam sent his Jinn, who genuinely works for him, there to check if the house was attracting any negative energy. The Imam sensed negative energy in the air, so he gave them amulets to tie around the new residence, and to their child for protection.

When I inquired that Do animals see and feel Jinn? All of them agreed to this and even added that there are a number of Jinn who disguises themselves into certain specific animals. The people I interviewed told that dogs have a powerful sense of emotion and they can detect very quickly if there is a Jinn around them. Snakes and reptiles are believed to be disguised as harmful Jinn, black and the yellow ones are commonly believed to be wicked. White cats are believed to be the good and the harmless ones, and on the other hand the black cats are regarded as evil. Other animals regarded as form of Jinn include scorpions and lizards. They also added that killing a lizard is equivalent to good deed in Islam, and killing snakes at night is prohibited in the rural areas.

These were some of the notable similarities I found from both my locations. All my respondents believe that Jinn are powerful than humans as they possess some remarkable power which humans do not have. Jinn can easily travel to places in a fraction of minute, they can take different shapes and forms- both in the form of animals and human and the most important thing is they can completely possess and control the minds of human being if once they get attracted to them. The following section discusses some of the most terrifying true accounts of possession that were provided by the possessed individuals, as well as their acquaintances, neighbours, and personal family:

MY PREGNANT WIFE WAS POSSESSED!

A case from the rural areas of Hirapur, district Howrah West Bengal

Rehana was four months along in her first pregnancy. She was a straightforward girl who looked after the family, was devout, and enjoyed life. She adored using hair oil and potent perfumes. She did not know how to recite the Quran, but she used to pray five times a day for her health. One evening, her family was enjoying their evening tea when they heard a huge bang coming from the second floor, like someone was falling down the stairs. They hurried to investigate and saw Rehana was lying on the ground with her hair hanging loose, reciting the Quran with ease and constancy. They were taken aback to witness it, since she had never in her life recited the Quran. The mosque's Imam was contacted right away to investigate the issue. She was apprehensive and hesitant to talk when the Imam arrived. After he read aloud a few verses from the Quran and made an effort to communicate, she responded—in a masculine voice—that she was under the jinn's control. The jinn claimed that she had applied oil to her hair during the Maghrib Azaan (call for prayer), and that she had done so with the windows open, attracting the attention of a malevolent Jinn that was about to possess her. However, the Jinn that was actually in possession of the woman came running, grabbed her hair, and forced her to recite the Quran while dragging her down from the second story of the house. The jinn went on to say that its only intention was to shield her from the bad one and even gave her advice not to use certain scents and perfumes while she was pregnant. After the woman regained consciousness, she was asked to recite verses from the Quran every day for her wellbeing and was given amulets for protection by the Imam. It was claimed that she was possessed by a good Jinn, who typically take possession of individuals to shield them from harmful Jinn and humans.

I LIVED WITH A JINN FOR THREE DAYS!

A case from the urban area of Park circus, Kolkata West Bengal

When this happened to Sarah, she was a tenth grader getting ready for her board examinations. Since one of her aunts was quite sick, her family had arranged to meet her relatives one day. She was menstruating at the time, so she got ready, applied a potent perfume, and left her long hair open. She started feeling lightheaded when she arrived at her aunt's house during the Maghrib (dusk), and she felt nauseous the

entire evening. When she returned home at night, she started eating as soon as she got there and consumed more than she should have for the day. When her younger sister entered her room, she was seen to be fixedly gazing out the window while her books were lying in front of her. She was in so much pain that her eyes went crimson, and when her parents came to talk to her, she screamed. They promptly summoned a religious leader from nearby. She started acting violently and aggressively and using foul words when the leader spoke to her. She was possessed by a wicked jinn, according to the leader, who eventually managed to speak with her. The jinn was drawn to her long hair and potent perfume and desired to be with her forever. She was confined to a dark room for three days, with only her mother able to provide her with food, drink, and other necessities because she would get aggressive if she encountered any males she didn't know. The Imam was summoned on the fourth day, and after completing the entire Ruqyah procedure (exorcism), he gave her amulets, was instructed to cut off her hair, and was advised to spend time with her parents only. Later, when questioned about the entire affair, she said that she could only remember leaving for her relatives' house at Maghrib. Even now, there is a persistent belief that women's long hair, attractive features, and usage of potent oils and perfumes draw malevolent jinn to them. Thus, in order to prevent it, people must cover their heads or tie their hair back during the Azaan or the call for the prayer as evil jinn tend to get attracted mostly during Maghrib.

A BATTLE AGAINST THE JINN

A case from the Park circus area, Shamsul Huda road Kolkata, West Bengal

Mumtaz, one of my oldest respondents, is 65 years old, and has been battling a potentially fatal illness for the past six years. Although she was raised in a rural location, she moved to an urban one for her health. She is devout; she has completed three Hajj pilgrimages, prays daily, recite the Quran, fasts once a week, and leads religious gatherings for women on the weekends. It all began when she and her husband lived in Uluberia, Howrah, where she developed a serious illness and a deficiency of blood. After being brought to a hospital, she run all of the tests that the doctor advised, and the results were all normal. While the doctors worked to diagnose the issue, they discovered that she was healthy internally, with the exception of her normal diabetes and low blood pressure. She was prescribed medication for it, but over time, her condition continued to deteriorate. Her sons, who were living in the main city of Kolkata, took her to some of the greatest doctors in the city, both in Chennai and Kolkata, but they were unable to identify the true cause of her illness. Following this, they made the decision to consult a religious figure for information regarding her health. When she attempted to speak with my respondent in a restricted space, she passed out and an alternate voice appeared inside of her. She felt like she could hear voices inside of her. The well-known religious figure Haji Maa told her family that she was living with a Jinn that wanted to stay with her till she passed away. She went on to say that despite the family's best efforts to determine the true cause of her illness, my respondent continues to become ill because the Jinn causes the blood shortage. After this they consulted a number of Imams and religious healers and they confirmed the same. The Jinn has supposedly possessed her when she was staying in Uluberia with her husband, and reportedly had no malicious intentions but refused to leave her. They went on to say that the jinn is strong and that healing her from it will take a long time. She added that they are still trying to find for a solution to this whole scenario and even consulting doctors from different states as her health is terribly bad. In the present day, she is bed ridden and she stays here with her daughter who takes care of her and her dietary plans given by the doctor.

Her family and the rural neighbours claim that because of the evil energy in her home, she became possessed by a jinn that currently resides with her.

BOUND BY SHADOWS: A NEWLYWED'S STRUGGLE WITH A JINN

A case from the rural areas of Hirapur, Howrah district

This unusual case was narrated by one of my respondents Azharuddin, age 37 who currently stays in Hirapur with his family (wife and children). He told me how for months it was a struggle for him and his wife after they got married, as his wife was possessed by a Jinn. His wife Ayesha was 21 years old when she got married to him. Despite her desire to further her education, her parents forced her into an early marriage. She moved to her in-laws' home in Hirapur from Bankura. She was a timid girl who worked all day and took care of the necessities of the family. She began feeling ill after only one week of marriage, but when she went to the doctor, they were unable to identify the cause. My respondent also mentioned that once they got married, his wife would eventually stop talking to him and they would not have any sexual intimacy. After a few days, he attempted to contact her, but everything in the house began to break. The pottery would tumble out of the showcase, the lights would flicker, and they would hear strange noises all throughout their house. They were terrified and unsure about the cause of this incident. On the advice of his friends and family, he invited a religious leader to his house for dinner and a conversation about the issue. The well-known Imam Sahib wanted to speak with the wife, but as soon as he began doing so, he discovered that she was being possessed by an evil jinn that had fallen in love with her. Ifrit, the powerful jinn, was the one who usually engaged in sexual intercourse with humans. Every time the husband attempted to engage with his wife, the jinn would become enraged and cause chaos in the house since he claimed to love her and would not permit him to speak to her or have sex with her. The Imam guided them through a phase of months that took to get rid of the Jinn. Ayesha was given holy water to drink, certain rituals to perform, amulets and was asked to not leave home for a long span of time. Nobody was permitted to pay them a visit or visit their house. After several months, they were able to get rid of the Jinn and moved right away to a new place to live.

Such occurrences are allegedly widespread in the nation's rural areas, when the Jinn becomes attracted to women and desires to engage in sexual activity with them. Thus, according to my respondents, women are instructed to wear headscarves and to cover themselves suitably when leaving their homes. These were some of the actual cases of jinn possession that my respondents shared with me.

The fundamental belief in the presence and power of jinn is constant, even though the precise manifestations and customs associated with them may differ in rural and urban environments. This shared understanding highlights the lasting significance of jinn in Islamic culture, showing the persistent character of these supernatural beings in Muslim imagination that transcends geographical bounds. The belief in jinn continues to be widespread and essential to Islamic belief systems, despite the different socio-cultural landscapes and environmental conditions.

ORIGINAL PAPER

“Satan Has Afflicted Me!” Jinn-Possession and Mental
Illness in the Qur'an

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Illness in the Qur’an In this paper, I want to comparatively analyse the conception of Ji

CHAPTER-2

A GENERATIONAL GAP VIEWING THE JINN?

It is true that views on the concept of Jinn in Islam vary throughout generations. The concept of jinn may be more conventional and culturally embedded in the minds of older generations, who frequently view them as creatures endowed with supernatural abilities that are firmly embedded in religion stories and folklore. Younger generations may view the concept of jinn more symbolically or reject it completely as superstition, having been affected by modernism and rationalism. The range of viewpoints within any given age is seen in the fact that some members of younger generations, maybe as a result of their cultural upbringing or personal experiences, still hold a strong belief in jinn, while others may view the idea with interest or scepticism.

Since I conducted interviews with three groups of respondents, ages 18-25, 25-45 and 45 to 65 both in rural and urban settings, respectively, there is a significant difference in the views of the older and younger generations who live in urban and rural areas respectively.

Traditional Interpretation (Older Generation): A large number of elderly Muslims maintain a traditional interpretation of jinn as supernatural entities that Allah created out of smokeless fire. They have grown up hearing tales and cautions about the evils and abilities of jinn, with prayers or passages from the Quran being cited to emphasize the need for protection. The second generation, who moved into urban areas, does not firmly believe in the presence of jinn. They acknowledge the existence of supernatural beings, but they do not accept it since they do not believe they have seen any actual exorcisms in urban settings. However, the elder generation maintains a strong conviction in this, claiming to have seen everything in their childhood days.

Contemporary Interpretation (Younger Generation): Muslims in the contemporary times, particularly those who reside in metropolitan and multicultural settings, may see the idea of jinn from a more sceptical or symbolic standpoint. Rather of seeing jinn as actual creatures, they can see them as symbolic representations of social issues or personal hardships. Stories about jinn may be seen as folklore rather than unchangeable facts by this age, which may be more affected by scientific explanations. The media and film depictions of Jinn have an impact on this generation as well. They frequently combine the idea of genies, ghosts, and spirits with the reality of jinn. They try Ouija boards and Planchettes (a method of communicating with the dead) because they are more intrigued by the communication with the spirits as they watch it in the contemporary movies.

Cultural Influence: Views on jinn are also greatly influenced by cultural backgrounds. Certain civilizations have a strong belief in jinn that permeates daily life, with rituals and actions meant to either placate or fend against them. On the other hand, belief in jinn may be viewed as superstitious or out of date in more secular or Westernized settings. Modern ideals have been westernized, and reason and science have taken the place of the notion of jinn possession. Unlike their elder counterparts, the younger generation looks to psychiatric or medical assistance instead of seeking guidance from religious experts and Imams.

Religious Education: A person's comprehension of jinn can also be influenced by the kind and extent of their religious education. While those who have been exposed to less religious teachings may have a more shallow grasp or may even reject the concept entirely, those who have received a more thorough education in Islam may have a greater appreciation for the theological relevance of jinn within Islamic theology. Since the younger generation is more likely to have an education that is Westernized, the media and older generations' narrative drawings are where they learn about Jinn. Individuals who received their religious instruction at Islamic madrasas (found primarily in rural regions) had a sophisticated comprehension of the Islamic notion of Jinn as compared to individuals who seek westernised education.

Through my interviews, I have observed a gap in the perceptions of Jinn in older and younger generations. I obtained a variety of answers when I interviewed respondents from each of the three age groups. In both rural and urban places, the elder population is adamant that Jinn, with their diverse abilities, may easily possess humans and govern human existence. As stated in chapter 1, some of my respondents have even personally seen jinn possession in their families. In both rural and urban environments, the younger generation, ages 18 to 25, acknowledged the existence of jinn but expressed uncertainty regarding its presence in their daily lives. Nearly all of my younger respondents stated that media representations or their elders were the sources from when they first learned about the idea of Jinn. The urban respondents to my questions also included cinematic representation of Jinn in movies like Dabbe: The Curse of Jinn, Dabbe: The Possession, and the 2018 Bollywood film Pari, which was directed by Prosit Roy, which discussed the existence and possession of Jinn. The younger respondents from the urban areas tend to believe that in earlier times when science and technology was not advanced, people perceived mental illnesses as jinn possession. According to one of my respondents, who is currently pursuing Psychology Honours at the graduation level, the idea of Jinn possession has been largely replaced in modern times by science and psychiatry as indicators of mental illness, such as depression, schizophrenia, which can result in hallucinations, multiple personality disorders, and many more. When questioned about the idea of jinn in Islam, one of my other respondents, a statistics professor at Techno India, categorically denied that jinn existed and added that it is a kind of fairytale that the older generation uses to frighten the younger generation. He also stated that since he has never seen a real-life ghost, he does not believe in jinn and any kind of possession. Several other respondents to my inquiries also shared a similar response, stating that while they had heard of the concept of Jinn, they did not consider it to be true—rather, they saw it as terrifying tales rather than real-life entities.

The disparity in the views get more clear when asked about the concept of sleep paralysis- which is a temporarily inability to move or speak while falling asleep or upon waking from a deep sleep. When I questioned my subjects about whether they have experienced sleep paralysis or not, 8 out of 10 respondents experienced it, and some of them experience it on a regular basis. According to the elder generation, when a malicious Jinn tries to wake someone up in their sleep, it causes sleep paralysis. The Jinn usually sits on the victim's chest and binds their hands, impeding their ability to move or communicate. They also mentioned how they are able to cope with the circumstances by repeatedly reciting verses from the Quran. On the other hand, my younger urban respondents claimed that irregular sleep patterns or nightmares during sleep are the causes of sleep paralysis. They clarified that sleep paralysis does not actually occur; rather, it is the inability to move or speak during a dream state that prevents a person from hurting themselves or other people while they are asleep.

Another difference I observed in my interview is the younger generation is not aware of the fact that Jinn can be both benevolent or malevolent. Unlike the elder generation who affirms that Jinn can be both good

and evil, they claim that Jinn can only cause harm to humanity and that they are wicked. A number of my respondents further asserted that humans desire to perform certain things that are deemed wrong; the Jinn is not the one inhabiting the human or guiding their minds. My elder subjects asserted that the victim of Jinn possession could only receive assistance from religious authorities, imams, maulvis, and pirs when questioned about advice from them on this matter. The other half of my respondents prioritize mental illness and said that they would see a doctor first for any problem before seeing a religious leader for an opinion if they wanted one. Even more, two of my respondents expressed doubt about religious professors' actual capacity to speak with the Jinn and assist the general mass. The respondents who did not attend religious events expressed uncertainty regarding the existence of Jinn and its possession, while those who did so attested to the existence of a distinct entity possessing significant powers and living like humans on Earth.

While interviewing members of three age groups, these were some of the most notable differences discovered. The notion of Jinn is prevalent among Muslims, however, in modern times, there is a constant struggle between accepting the existence of Jinn and finding solutions through scientific and medical advancements. I want to put forward an incident shared by my subject that illustrate a dilemma about this concept of Jinn and how it has caused them to wrestle with decisions in their life.

BEHIND THE MASK: THE GIRL WHO WAS NOT POSSESSED

A case from Beck Bagan, Park Circus, Kolkata

This story was narrated by my respondent Farheen age 30, currently a civil engineer. This incident occurred while she was a student and friends with Rezwana, a girl in her class. Rezwana was an enthusiastic girl who was highly social and good at her studies. She would boldly talk to everyone and interact with professors, according to Farheen, who said that they had been friends since class 5. She would assist everyone in class and keep herself occupied with her regular studies. Rezwana began acting differently toward everyone in class ten, which was not how she usually behaved. She would rather be by herself in class; she wouldn't talk to anyone and wouldn't answer questions. Rezwana would never even talk to her parents; instead, she would always hide herself in her room, as her parents confirmed when Farheen went to tell them about it. She refused to let anyone into her room, and a few days later, she also stopped eating. She would skip meals, refuse to eat throughout the day, and refuse to go to sleep at night. Everyone in the house was quite concerned about her, the elders suggested they speak with an Imam from a local masjid as they thought she was possessed. However, her parents insisted on seeing a doctor first, and after they did, the physician claimed there was nothing wrong with her. They were advised by one of the school teachers to consult a therapist to know what she was going through. Rezwana took a lot of time to open up in front of the doctor, when after a number of sessions, the therapist explained the whole scenario to her parents. Her academics were the source of her terrible depression. Her parents put a lot of pressure on her to do well in school and receive excellent grades while she prepared for her boards. Upon observing the extensive syllabus, she realized she lacked guidance and was afraid of performing poorly in her exams and disappointing her parents. She would obsess over this all day, which made her stop talking to her family, friends, and even eating. Rezwana was prescribed some modest sleep aids, instructed to meditate, and given activities to relieve tension. She also continued to attend her therapist's appointments. It was suggested to her parents that she should not be given stress about anything and should use her own initiative to study for her exams.

This incident demonstrated that people are not always possessed and that they legitimately require medical assistance to cope with life's challenges. Everyone experiences stress, which eventually wears them out and alters their behaviour patterns.

As a result of cultural and religious influences, older generations might continue to hold a stronger belief in the existence of jinn, but younger generations are more likely to view the idea with skepticism or disbelief, which reflects broader societal shifts towards spirituality and the paranormal.

CONCLUSION

My understanding of how Islam portrays Jinn has improved as a result of my research on the Islamic idea of Jinn. This has also assisted me in understanding the many Muslim perspectives on the actual existence of jinn. There is a significant difference in the way that different groups of respondents, living in urban and rural environments and representing three different age groups, view jinn and exorcism. Through a comparative analysis of the data, the dissertation advances knowledge about the dynamic character of belief systems across Islamic civilizations and sheds light on how tradition and modernity interact to influence perceptions of the supernatural. This research facilitates discussions about the relationship between religion, culture, and generational dynamics by providing informative data regarding the emergence and persistence of cultural ideas about Jinn in India.

Chapter 1- CONNECTIONS ACROSS LANDSCAPES: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF RURAL AND URBAN BELIEF SYSTEMS talks about the similar beliefs of the Muslim population across generational cohorts living in city and town areas. The fundamental assumption regarding the presence and power of Jinn is the same in rural and urban environments. Perceptions of the supernatural and unseen in Islamic culture are still shaped by the concept of jinn, whether they are understood in the context of contemporary life or through the prism of tradition and folklore. The chapter discusses a number of related ideas, including the Quran's reference of Jinn existence, Jinn possession, exorcism, precautions to be taken against the evil Jinn's protection, etc. It also highlights some of the real life Islamic exorcisms and Jinn possession of my respondents. Therefore, even in the modern era, some have asserted that certain instances cannot be explained by science or technology, which is the point they turn to Imams and religious authorities for advice.

Chapter 2- A GENERATIONAL GAP VIEWING THE JINN? talks about the disparities in their belief system across different age groups living in rural and urban settings. Different generations and cultural backgrounds have quite different perspectives on and interpretations of jinn. Older generations, steeped in customs and folklore, frequently perceive jinn as strong spiritual entities that should either be feared or revered. Younger generations may view them as legendary creatures or completely disregard them as superstition, especially in more secular or urbanized nations. It also mentions about how the younger generation in the urban areas are more dependent on medicine and science rather than on Religious Imams and scholars as compared to the elder generation. In general, depending on cultural, religious, and individual views, there might be significant differences in how different generations comprehend and interpret jinn. The younger generation, who have been exposed to Western culture, says they do not think that jinn exist, in contrast to the elder generation. The younger generation is inquisitive and is open to experience Jinn encounters to believe its existence in the real world.

To sum up, this dissertation examined the various dimensions of Islamic ideas related to jinn, delving into their historical background, functions, and importance in Islamic theology and cultural settings. I have gotten a deeper understanding of Jinn and shed light on their mysterious nature by thoroughly examining

religious writings, scholarly interpretations, and cultural expressions. The present study not only advances the scholarly conversation on Islamic theology but also cultivates a more profound understanding of the diverse range of views that comprise the Islamic worldview. The enigmatic appeal of jinn endures as I wrap up this investigation, beckoning more academic study and guaranteeing their continued existence in the complex tapestry of Islamic philosophy and practice.

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