

Applying Historical Semantics in Analyzing the Meaning of "Sheitan" and "Iblis" in Qur'an and Criticizing the Viewpoints of Classical lexicographers

Vol. 12, No. 6, Tome 66
pp. 533-565
January & February 2022

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Abstract

The two concepts satan/Iblis are considered as the most important concepts in the Qur'an, as they have a major role in the system of guidance/misguidance which is the main purpose of sending prophets and revealing the Qur'an. Providing an incorrect understanding can lead to a misunderstanding of the function of Satan in this system. This study tries to use the etymology by paying attention to the linguistic context of the Qur'an, to provide a clearer explanation of these two concepts and to examine the views of the lexicographers. It observed that the word "Sheitan" derived from "štn" that means enemy, competition ... coming from magic. However, despite emphasizing "štn" as the source of "Sheitan", the lexicographers have emphasized the meaning of the root "št" - deviate and turn aside- and have placed the focus of meaning on Satan's own condition in being misguided. The combination of words in the meanings of enmity, discord, obstruction and magic with this word in the Qur'an confirms the results of etymological studies and shows that the focus of the meaning is on the effect of Satan on human misguidance and not his own condition. Regarding the word Iblis, the lexicographers have expressed two theories of derivation from the "bls" meaning despair or loanword in the meaning of mixed and inspector. Studies show that "Iblis" does not related to the meanings of mixed and inspector, but is a Greek word in the original sense of a liar and a special name for one of the Satans.

Keywords: Satan, sheitan, Iblis, Quran, etymology, lexicographers, enemy

Received: 14 June 2020
Received in revised form: 19 October 2020
Accepted: 3 December 2020

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1. Introduction

The two concepts of Satan and Satan are among the central concepts in the system of guidance /misguidance, which is one of the most important semantic systems of the Qur'an. Therefore, it is very important to have a correct understanding of these concepts.

Explaining these concepts has always been of interest to Arabic lexicographers from the classical Arabic period to the present. In addition to explaining the concepts of "Iblis" and Satan and expressing the relationship between these two concepts, they have tried to explain the role of Satan in misleading man. The difference in the explanation of these concepts starts from determining the root and source of their derivation and leads to the expression of different meanings for each of these words.

The present article tries to determine the connection between the two concepts of "Iblis" and Satan by discovering the root and origin of the derivation of these two words and to achieve a meaning consistent with the system of guidance/misguidance in the Qur'an. Based on the Qur'an's emphasis on Satan's enmity with man and the purpose of the Qur'an, which is to guide human beings, the meaning of these two words seems to be focused on the influence of Satan on man's misguidance. Contrary to the opinion of classical lexicologists who have considered the meaning of these two words only related to the situation of the Satan himself.

2. Literature Review

Classical lexicographers have studied the meaning of the words "Iblis" and Satan like other Qur'anic words. However, a research background with a radiological approach in the tradition of Qur'anic studies found under the topic "Foreign words in the Qur'an" in which the influence of other languages on the Arabic language, the presence of non-Arabic words in the Qur'an and the meaning and origin of these words are examined.

AL-Jawaliqi (1942), as the author of the first independent work on foreign words in the Qur'an about the word "Iblis", has suggested the possibility of being non-Arabic, but has not mentioned the meaning and origin of this word. Ibn al-Jawzi (1987) also only said that the word Iblis is non-Arabic. Al-Jawaliqi and Ibn Al-Jozi did not mention the word Satan. Others, while examining the origin of the derivation of some Qur'anic words, have also referred to the two words "Iblis" and "Satan", such as Al-Anisi (1932), Al-Muḥibbī (1994), Belasi (2001) and Kamal Aldin (2008). The views of these lexicologists reviewed in this article.

Husseini (2017) while researching the concept of "Satan's mass" has studied this word in Hebrew and Syriac. Asgari (2010) in an independent study related to the word devil has not studied this word in Semitic and Afro-Asiatic languages. Citing lexical opinions, poetic evidence, and pre-Islamic Arabic culture, he considered the word to be Arabic in the sense of a rope.

The difference between this study and the above studies is that the two words "Iblis" and "Satan" studied in all branches of the Semitic language, as well as in Afro-Asiatic and Nostratic. After obtaining the root, the source of derivation and the exact meanings of these two words, the use of these two words in the Qur'an also examined and the views of classical lexicographers criticized.

3. Methodology

First, a report on the meanings of these two words was presented in classical Arabic sources, after that the mentioned words were followed in ancient languages to obtain the main root, the origin of derivation and semantic changes of these concepts. After that, the results of etymology analyzed according to the Qur'anic uses of these words and their companions in the Qur'an.

By studying the mentioned roots in Semitic, Afro-Asiatic and Nostratic languages, the process of semantic changes and meanings in the main root of these words obtained, the possibility of being loan worn examined and the opinion of classical lexicologists reviewed and supplemented.

4. Results

In all Semitic languages, the word "Satan" derived from the root "šṭn". Even in the Akkadian language, which is the oldest Semitic language, there is a consonant "n" in the root, and in all cases of using this root without the consonant "n" does not indicate the connection of this root with the word Satan in Arabic.

The main meaning of "šṭn" is enmity, competition, war, obstruction, misleading and magic, which is not mentioned in classical lexical sources. The meaning of deviation from the right path, sin, bending, turning away, negligence, Neglect, etc., which is known in classical lexical sources as related to the root of "šṭn", is related to "šṭṭ".

The meaning of "burning" in Syriac language, which is not related to the concept of the Satan and the meaning of a snake or an ugly plant, also transferred from the culture to this word.

Examining the Qur'anic applications of "šṭn" and "šṭṭ" and studying the attributes and deeds such as enmity, "Nazgh", "Rijz", cursing, teaching of magic etc., attributed to Satan, confirms the results of etymological studies. It shows that the dominant view of the Qur'an on the function of Satan towards man and his place in the system of guidance-misguidance.

Classical lexicographers have proposed two theories for the word "Iblis", derived from the Arabic word "bles" meaning despair and being loan word in the meaning of mixed and inspected. Etymological studies show that "Iblis" is a Greek word that has changed into Arabic and has nothing to do with "bls" in Arabic. The meanings of mixed and inspecting, which considered by classical lexicographers, belong to Assyrian and Aramaic Targum.

"Iblis" is a special name for a genie means liar. Who disobeyed God's command and cursed. Then he became an enemy of human being and a barrier against them, and thus that genie and all those who had a similar act described as "Satan / Satans"