

## FAZLUR RAHMAN'S TAFSIR THOUGHTS ABOUT SATAN AND EVIL

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**Abstract:** *This article discusses the re-interpretation of the use of satan and evil in the Qur'an which needs to receive a response and be addressed or understood through a neo-modernist interpretation which is transcendental-metaphysical in nature. Satan is often associated with the cause of evil, especially when humans who commit crimes are thought to be influenced or inspired by Satan. The relationship between Satan and evil seems to be inherent and related. A re-interpretation of meaning is needed so that the meaning of Satan and evil can be aligned with other scientific terms empirically and strengthen intellectuals in positioning the Qur'an as a source of inspiration. Methodologically, Fazlur Rahman's approach in analyzing the meaning of Satan and evil based on intellectual principles is to position the Qur'an as a holy book that is systematic, rational, experimental, and leads to scientific investigation. This pattern converges on the understanding of satan and evil in the Qur'an in two propositions. First, the use of satan and personal evil is influenced by the expressions of early Muslim society related to Makkiah verses. Secondly, the meaning of satan is a fundamental principle in the life system of advanced civilized society which is related to the verses of nature and character. These two propositions provide the conclusion that satan and evil are one of the terms in the Qur'an which have various meanings that emphasize the aspects of function and guidance according to the context and form of use of the chosen words.*

**Keywords:** *Evil, Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'an, Satan.*

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini membahas tentang re-interpretasi terhadap pemaknaan setan dan kejahatan dalam Al-Qur'an yang perlu mendapatkan respons dan disikapi atau dipahami melalui tafsir neo-modernisme yang bersifat transendental-metafisik. Setan acapkali dihubungkan dengan penyebab dari kejahatan, terutama saat manusia melakukan kejahatan dianggap terpengaruh atau mendapat bisikan setan. Hubungan antara setan dan kejahatan seakan melekat dan berkaitan. Padahal, diperlukan re-interpretasi makna agar pemaknaan setan dan kejahatan dapat disejajarkan dengan term ilmu pengetahuan lainnya secara empiris dan menguatkan sikap intelektual kalangan intelektual dalam memposisikan Al-Qur'an sebagai sumber inspirasi. Secara metodologis pendekatan Fazlur

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Rahman dalam mengurai makna setan dan kejahatan berdasarkan pada prinsip intelektual adalah dengan memposisikan Al-Qur'an sebagai kitab suci yang sistematis, rasional serta eksperimental dan mengarah kepenyelidikan ilmiah. Pola ini mengerucut pada pemahaman setan dan kejahatan dalam Al-Qur'an di dua proposisi. Pertama, pemaknaan setan dan iblis secara personal dipengaruhi oleh ungkapan masyarakat muslim awal yang berkaitan dengan ayat Makkiyyah. Kedua pemaknaan setan dalam prinsip fundamental di dalam tata kehidupan masyarakat peradaban maju yang berkaitan dengan ayat sifat dan karakter. Dua proposisi ini memberikan kesimpulan bahwa setan dan kejahatan merupakan salah satu term dalam Al-Qur'an yang memiliki pemaknaan beragam yang menekankan pada aspek fungsi dan petunjuk sesuai dengan konteks dan bentuk penggunaan kata yang dipilih.

**Kata-kata Kunci:** *Fazlur Rahman, Kejahatan, Major Themes of the Qur'an, Setan.*

## Introduction

The Al-Qur'an is a holy book that was revealed by Allah through the intercession of the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH so that it could be conveyed to his people.<sup>1</sup> The Al-Qur'an functions as a guide for all humans, an explanation of these instructions, and a differentiator between what is true. and vanity.<sup>2</sup>

The Qur'an provides a lot of information to humans, including warnings. One of these warnings is that humans need to be wary of *shayṭān*. *Shayṭān* is a real enemy of humans who tries to turn humans away from the truth. Satan also always causes disputes among humans until the Day of Judgment.<sup>3</sup> The Qur'an mentions:

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا

“And say to My servants: Let them speak better (true) words. The devil causes strife between them. The devil is a real enemy for humans.”<sup>4</sup> (Q.S. Al-Isra' [17]: 53

Through the verse above, Allah reminds humans to be careful with their words. Humans should always use their words to say good things to avoid misunderstandings that might cause disputes<sup>5</sup>. By guarding your words, peace will be created. However, satan does not remain silent, he plays his role, namely causing discord among humans.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, *shayṭān* is a real enemy of humans.

*Shayṭān* is one of the most popular names among religious people, even those who are not religious. When one hears this name, various crimes and vices are

1 Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabābith fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2001), 2.

2 Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: PT. Sinergi Pustaka Indonesia, 2012), 402.

3 Akhmad Fauzan Dwi Cahyo, “Setan dan Kejahatan Menurut Fazlur Rahman (Telaah Atas Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an)” (Skripsi, Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2014), 2.

4 Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, 391.

5 Ismā'il bin Kathīr, *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* (Mesir: Dār al-Ṭaba'ah wa al-Nashr al-Islāmiyyah, 2002), 85.

6 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Qaḍī, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl 'an al-Ṣaḥābah wa al-Mufasssīrīn* (Mesir: Dar al-Salām, 2005), 13.

depicted in the human mind. Humans do not need to refer to language dictionaries or look for words of wisdom and explanations from anyone to know its general characteristics because this word has been understood by humans as a symbol of evil and even a form of evil so that it is like something sensory and real not imaginative and abstract.<sup>7</sup>

Evil is the opposite of good. Thus, every human being who commits evil is moving away from good. For example, someone who steals means he has been seduced by *shayṭān*. According to M. Dawam Raharjo in *the Encyclopedia of the Al-Qur'an*, a person who is unable to control his emotions because he is very angry can also be said to be possessed by a devil, this is a sign of evil and the personification is the devil.<sup>8</sup>

*Shayṭān* and evil are one of the main themes in *Major Themes of the Qur'an* by Fazlur Rahman. According to Fazlur Rahman, *shayṭān* or the devil is a form of personification that is always mentioned in the Qur'an as the principle of evil. In this paper, we will explain further about satan and evil from Fazlur Rahman's perspective on *the Major Themes of the Qur'an*.<sup>9</sup>

## **Fazlur Rahman and *The Major Themes of the Qur'an***

### **Short Biography**

Fazlur Rahman was born in Hazara, which is located in northwest Pakistan, on September 21, 1919. He was raised in a family environment belonging to the Hanafi school of thought which is more rationalist than other schools of thought, such as the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools.<sup>10</sup> Fazlur Rahman was raised by his father and mother in a religious family environment.<sup>11</sup>

His father was a traditional cleric who imparted basic religious education. Even though he was a traditionalist, his father was not like most of the ulama of his time who opposed and thought that modern education could undermine faith and morals. According to him, Islam must face the realities of modern life, not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity.<sup>12</sup>

At the age of ten Fazlur Rahman had memorized the Qur'an and at the age of fourteen, he began studying philosophy, Arabic, theology, tafsir, and hadith.<sup>13</sup>

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7 M. Quraish Shihab, *Yang Tersembunyi Jin, Iblis, Setan, dan Malaikat: dalam Al-Qur'an-As-Sunnah, Serta Wacana Pemikiran Ulama Masa Lalu dan Masa Kini* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 125-26.

8 Cahyo, "Setan dan Kejahatan Menurut Fazlur Rahman (Telaah Atas Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an)," 4.

9 Ahmad Syukri, *Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Kontemporer dalam Pandangan Fazlurrahman* (Jakarta: Gaung Persada Press, 2007), 2.

10 Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), 87.

11 Bawaihi Bawaihi, "Fazlur Rahman dan Pembaharuan Metodologi Tafsir Alquran," *Media Akademika* 28, no. 1 (2013): 137.

12 Cahyo, "Setan dan Kejahatan Menurut Fazlur Rahman (Telaah Atas Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an)," 21.

13 Cahyo, 22.

Fazlur Rahman received his formal education at a madrasa in Lahore in 1933. Apart from that, Fazlur Rahman also studied religion from his father. Fazlur Rahman then continued his education at Punjab University, Lahore. He completed the BA (Bachelor of Art) program in 1940 and earned a Master's degree in Arabic in 1942. After a long adventure studying in his own country, Fazlur Rahman felt dissatisfied with his academic achievements. According to Fazlur Rahman, Pakistan is unable to create an adequate intellectual base. Fazlur Rahman also said that Islamic studies at various universities in the Middle East are as uncritical as those in the Indian Subcontinent. For this reason, Fazlur Rahman decided to continue his studies in the doctoral program at Oxford University, England in 1946. Fazlur Rahman studied philosophy and graduated in 1950.<sup>14</sup> Simultaneously with his studies, Fazlur Rahman also studied European languages. Among the languages he mastered were English, Latin, Greek, French, German, and Turkish, apart from Urdu, Arabic, and Persian.<sup>15</sup>

After completing his doctoral program, Fazlur Rahman did not immediately return to his country, but he became a lecturer at Durham University in England (1950—1958), then at the Institute of Islamic Studies—McGill University in Canada, where he served as Associate Professor of Philosophy. There Fazlur Rahman interacted intensely with the famous orientalist, W.C. Smith, who at that time held the position of Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, at McGill University. However, when the Pakistani Government passed into the hands of Ayyub Khan, Fazlur Rahman was called back to his country and he granted this request. After returning to Pakistan, Fazlur Rahman was appointed as Director of the Islamic Research Institute and as a member of the Ideological Advisor to the Government of Pakistan.<sup>16</sup>

Having these two important positions has allowed Fazlur Rahman to be intensely involved in defining Islam for his country to provide the answers that Muslims need at that time. However, Fazlur Rahman's efforts faced strong opposition from Pakistani traditionalist and fundamentalist groups. The peak was when the first two chapters of his book "Islam" were translated into Urdu and published in the journal *Fikr-o Nazr*. The main problem was around the nature of the revelation of the Al-Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman wrote that the Al-Qur'an as a whole is the word of Allah, and in the ordinary sense, is also all the words of Muḥammad. This incident forced Fazlur Rahman to leave his homeland again. Fazlur Rahman moved to Chicago in 1970 and was immediately appointed professor of Islamic studies at the University of Chicago. And this is where Fazlur Rahman gained intellectual freedom and composed his cool thoughts about Islam

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14 Moh. Afan Fadli, "Iblis Sebagai Musuh Manusia: Kajian Tafsir Al-Misbah" (Skripsi, Surabaya, UIN Sunan Ampel, 2015), 17.

15 Cahyo, "Setan dan Kejahatan Menurut Fazlur Rahman (Telaah Atas Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an)," 23-24.

16 Jazim Hamidi, Rosyidatul Fadillah, and Ali Manshur, *Metodoogi Tafsir Fazlur Rahman Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Hukum & Sosial* (Malang: Universitas Brawijaya Press, 2013), 14.

and many students from various Muslim countries studied Islam with him.<sup>17</sup>

Fazlur Rahman died on July 26 1988 after living in Chicago for approximately 18 years. Before his death, Fazlur Rahman suffered from chronic diabetes.<sup>18</sup> Then Fazlur Rahman had a serious heart attack and had to have surgery. The operation went smoothly, and only a few weeks later Fazlur Rahman was called by Allah.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Major Themes of the Qur'an***

*The Major Themes of the Qur'an* are the result of a long study in Fazlur Rahman. Fazlur Rahman's work is the result of re-writing the articles he worked on when he settled in Pakistan and after his move to Chicago.<sup>20</sup> According to Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, this work is an urgent answer to an introduction to the themes of the Qur'an that are not found in works written far by Muslim scholars and non-Muslim scholars so that people can recognize the theme above by letting the Scriptures talk to himself about him.<sup>21</sup>

*The Major Themes of the Qur'an* systematically display the eight main themes of the Qur'an.<sup>22</sup> The following are the main themes of the Qur'an in *the Major Themes of the Qur'an*: 1. God; 2. Humans as Individuals; 3. Human Members of Society; 4. Universe; 5. Prophethood and Revelation; 6. Eschatology; 7. Satan and Evil; 8. The Birth of the Muslim Society. Apart from that, Fazlur Rahman also included Appendix I regarding the religious situation faced by Muslims in the city of Mecca and Appendix II regarding the people of the book and the diversity of religions.<sup>23</sup>

Fazlur Rahman's thinking in the field of Al-Qur'an exegesis emphasizes a rational approach compared to the conventional approach among exegetes. Methodologically aware, Fazlur Rahman's thinking about the Al-Qur'an which introduces the thematic method has been emphasized in his work *The Major Themes of the Qur'an*. The working stage of the method uses synthetic steps of various themes, which emphasizes the logical rather than chronological nature.<sup>24</sup>

*The Major Themes of the Qur'an* is a representation of contemporary

17 Hamidi, Fadillah, and Manshur, 20.

18 Muḥammad Shahrūr, *Naḥwa Uṣūl Jadīdah lil Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Damaskus: Al-Aḥālī lil Ṭaba'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2000), 37.

19 Taufik Adnan Amal, *Islam dan Tantangan Modernitas* (Bandung: Mizan, 1989), 111.

20 Sa'dullah Assa'idi, *Pemahaman Tematik Menurut Fazlur Rahman* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2013), 55.

21 Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, *Tema-Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an (Fazlur Rahman)* (Yogyakarta: Makalah, 2018), 1.

22 Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (Oxford: Oneworld Publicant. 2003), 86.

23 Rofiuddin, "Setan dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Sebuah Kajian Tematik)" (Skripsi, Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2016), 52, <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/20298/>.

24 Habib Hermawan, "Jin, Setan, dan Iblis dalam Tafsir Departemen Agama RI" (Skripsi, Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2017), 12, <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/31313/>.

interpretations, which because it is observed on the foundation of adequate methodological methodology, it appears that the presentation is always empirical dimension so that it is easy to apply both in the plain of mind and plain of deeds.<sup>25</sup> As a contemporary interpretation work, the thought of Fazlur Rahman relates to the study of the Qur'an which is seen by Muslims as moral teachings, guidance for humanity, and not just a source of law.<sup>26</sup>

### Synthetic-Logical Approach

Fazlur Rahman said that synthetic exposure just as the only way that give readers true ideals of the Qur'an as God's command to humans.<sup>27</sup> Fazlur Rahman offers a systematic interpretation method to explore the content of the Qur'an which according to him has not been raised by previous scholars.<sup>28</sup> The method presupposes the need for a socio-historical search as well as the specific legal differentiation of verses from the moral ideal, namely the fundamental purpose of the universal which is the true message of the Qur'an.<sup>29</sup>

According to Fazlur Rahman, the verses of the Qur'an cannot be understood literally as understood by classical interpretations. For him, understanding the Qur'an by taking the literal meaning will keep someone from the instructions that the Qur'an wants to give. The message that the Qur'an wants to convey is the moral value behind the literal expression. Therefore, the verses of the Qur'an must be better understood in the framework of the moral message they contain.<sup>30</sup>

### Interpretive Style

Fazlur Rahman is a Muslim scholar whose peak academic career served as a professor of Islamic Philosophy at the University of Chicago.<sup>31</sup> His educational background, which was formed in a modern academic environment, has certainly greatly influenced Fazlur Rahman in forming his rationality which is different from Muslim scholars from his home country, Pakistan, who tend to still be traditionalists.<sup>32</sup>

Fazlur Rahman is known for his deep mastery in the fields of Islamic

25 Mu'ammarr Zayn Qadafy, *Asbabun Nuzul dari Mikro Hingga Makro (Sebuah Kajian Epistemologis Seri Ulumul Qur'an Kontemporer)* (Yogyakarta: Azna Books, 2015), 32.

26 Assa'idi, *Pemahaman Tematik Menurut Fazlur Rahman*, 77.

27 Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes Of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989), ix.

28 Fadli, "Iblis Sebagai Musuh Manusia: Kajian Tafsir Al-Misbah," 12.

29 Sibawaihi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Fazlur Rahman* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2007), 121.

30 Abdul Mustaqim, *Madzahibut Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Nun Pustaka, 2003), 104.

31 Hadi Prayitno and Aminul Qodat, "Konsep Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman Tentang Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia," *Al-Fikri: Jurnal Studi dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (September 2, 2019): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jspi.v2i2.5150>.

32 Muhammad Ramadhan, "Pemikiran Teologi Fazlur Rahman," *Jurnal Theologia* 25, no. 2 (2014): 127–52.

philosophy and Western philosophy<sup>33</sup>, which encourages him to present thematic interpretations of the Al-Qur'an with philosophical reflections. Thus, based on Fazlur Rahman's scientific background, it can be said that the style in his interpretation is hermeneutical-philosophical.<sup>34</sup> In his work, Fazlur Rahman prefers universal significance to the textual meaning seen in local historical events. According to him, this method must be taken so that the basic messages of the Qur'an can be actualized for modern society.

### **Satan and Evil in *the Major Themes of the Qur'an***

Crime (*sharr*) or goodness (*khayr*) is included in the deeds that are shown by humans individually and collectively.<sup>35</sup> In the theme of satan and this evil will be discussed the principle of crimes that are often Scienced by the Qur'an as satan or satan.<sup>36</sup>

Sa'dullah Assa'idi states that the words of satan and evil are the expression of "nature" for human deeds that do not meet the norms of God's teachings that have been revealed. The word devil (*shayṭān*) means "always far" from goodness, "burning anger" so he is said to be a creature created by fire.<sup>37</sup> In the Qur'an, especially in the letters revealed in Mecca, repeatedly the word devil is mentioned in its plural form.<sup>38</sup> As Fazlur Rahman quoted the word of Allah in the Qur'an, Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 14 and Q.S. Al-An'ām [6]: 112.

The term devil in the plural form above is figurative of the actions of a man of *munāfiq* and the appearance of people who are hostile and contrary to the mission of every teaching of the prophets.<sup>39</sup> Thus the term demons refers metaphorically to humans.

In addition to the Qur'an, the term devil is metaphorical to humans, so is it the same as *jinn*? Sa'dullah Assa'idi said that the term satan is also addressed to *jinn*, as well as humans, *jinn* also have the opportunity to commit evil.<sup>40</sup> The difference is that if the evil deeds of humans can be easily understood or understood in the empirical world, then the evil deeds of the genie are not the case.<sup>41</sup> As Allah said in the Qur'an:

33 Fahrurudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an (Tema-Tema Kontroversional)* (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Ppres, 2005), 6.

34 Syahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an dan Hadits* (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2010), 1.

35 Mohamed Tariq Ekeramodien Kahn, "Shaytan: A Clear Enemy," *Insights Magazine*, 2015, 42.

36 Ahmad Khoerudin Aziz, "Setan dalam Alquran (Studi Kritis Tentang Makna Setan Perspektif Tafsir Anwar Al-Tanzil Wa Asrar Al-Ta'wil)," *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi al-Quran dan al-Hadis* 5, no. 02 (December 1, 2017): 429–52, <https://doi.org/10.24235/sqh.v5i02.4349>.

37 Hermawan, "Jin, Setan, dan Iblis dalam Tafsir Departemen Agama RI." 54.

38 Fazlur Rahman, *Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an*, trans. Anas Mahyuddin (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 1996), 178.

39 Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 2002), 3.

40 Imam Musbikin, *Istanthiq Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), 18.

41 Assa'idi, *Pemahaman Tematik Menurut Fazlur Rahman*, 233.

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَهَا مُلْدَّتٍ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا ۖ وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شُهَابًا رَصَدًا

*“And we (jinn) have tried to know (the secret) of the sky, so we get it full of the strong guard and fire arrows, and we (jinn) used to occupy several places in the sky to steal hearing (news). But now who (trying) stealing (like that) will find fire arrows that lurk (to burn it)”<sup>42</sup> (Q.S. Al-Jin [72]: 8–9).*

This is also by the repeated statements in the Qur’an that the devils (in the plural) secretly tried to steal news from the sky but they have driven away Q.S. Al-Hijr [15]: 17) and Q.S. Al-Mulk [67]: 5.

Sa’dullah Assa’idi said that when viewed in terms of the ability to do or not based on God’s commands, actually *jinn* is a kind of creature that is more or less parallel to humans.<sup>43</sup> As Fazlur Rahman also said: *“That the jinn is a creation more or less parallel to humankind except that the former is made of fire whereas the latter is made of “baked clay” is affirmed by the Qur’an (7: 12; 55: 14–15). The Qur’an also states (18: 50) that the devil (Iblis) was “of the jinn and he disobeyed the command of his Lord.”<sup>44</sup>*

Fazlur Rahman said that *jinn* are a kind of creature that is more or less equal to humans. However, the *jinn* was created from the fire of humans from the ground (Q.S. Al-A’rāf [7]: 15, Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 14–15). The Qur’an also said that the devil was a *jinn* and he hung up his Lord (Q.S. Al-Kahf [18]: 50). Apart from that, the Qur’an also describes the ability to do good among the *jinn* (Q.S. Al-Aḥqāf [46]: 29–31):

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنصَتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِن بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ يَقَوْمَنَا أَحْبَبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمَنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّن عَذَابِ النَّارِ

*“And (remember) when We presented to you (Mubammad) a group of jinn who were listening to (the reading of) the Qur’an, then when they attended (the reading) they said, ‘Be quiet! (to hear it)’ So when it was finished, they returned to their people (to) give warning; They said, ‘O our people! Indeed, we have heard the Book (Al-Qur’an) that was revealed after Moses, confirming (books) that came before, guiding to the truth, and the straight path; O our people! Accept (the call of) the person (Mubammad) who calls to Allah. And believe in Him, He will surely forgive your sins, and deliver you from the painful punishment” (Q.S. Al-Aḥqāf [46]: 29–31).*

The treatments of Allah are above when compared to Q.S. Al-Jinn [72]: 8–9 are certainly very different because the *jinn*s are explained in Q.S. Al-Aḥqāf [46]: 29–31 did not commit crimes. At the beginning of Q.S. Al-Jin, expressed his amazement at the great teachings of the Qur’an. Fazlur Rahman said that one thing that was interesting to us was that there was no statement either in Q.S. Al-Jin or in Q.S.

42 Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya*, 843.

43 Assa’idi, *Pemahaman Tematik Menurut Fazlur Rahman*, 233.

44 Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur’an*, 121.



Al-Aḥqāf above that the Prophet Muhammad could directly listen to or see the *jinn*, only Allah was the one who told the Prophet Muhammad what was said and carried out by the *jinn*. In addition, Fazlur Rahman also said that it is difficult to believe in the opinion that according to the Qur'an, all or almost all *jinn* are “devil troops” or angels who are driven from heaven, although it seems when compared to humans, the *jinn* is more tends to crime.<sup>45</sup>

According to Fazlur Rahman, the Qur'an never mentioned the messenger of Allah for the *jinn* class directly and from their group.<sup>46</sup> From the statements that they believe in the Prophet Musa and the Prophet Muhammad and they serve as the servants of the Prophet Sulaiman, Fazlur Rahman concluded that by ignoring their greater tendencies toward evil and stupidity even though they were fierce and have physical strength that including the ability to disappear, the *jinn*s are no different from humans.<sup>47</sup>

In the Qur'an, the mention of *jinn* is declared together with humans (see Q.S. Al-An'ām [6]: 130; Q.S. Al-A'rāf [7]: 38 and 179; Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 88; Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17; Q.S. Fuṣṣilat [41]: 25 and 29; Q.S. Al-Aḥqāf [46]: 18; Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 33, 39, 56, and 74), meaning that there is harmony between two symptoms It is possible to interact, which is the element of metaphysical symptoms in the genie and humans.<sup>48</sup> While in the evolutionary event, the first thing that was created was *jinn* from humans (Q.S. Al-Ḥijr [15]: 27 and Q.S. Al-A'rāf [7]: 12), because it happened before Islam came, there were Arabs worship *jinn* (Q.S. Saba' [34]: 41 and Q.S. Al-An'ām [6]: 100).<sup>49</sup>

The existence of the devil in the story of Adam's event is the same age as humans even though it was in the form of a *jinn* before Adam was created.<sup>50</sup> According to Fazlur Rahman, this shows an important moral reality that the struggle between virtue and evil is a reality for humans. Thus the devil is the development of the command of Allah and as a person of humans is not a match for Allah because Allah is beyond its reach. Satan makes humans the target of temptation and humans can also conquer or be conquered. Fazlur Rahman said that based on the Qur'an intensely giving a warning to humans humans must fight against satan.<sup>51</sup>

Fazlur Rahman said that an important idea that could be taken from the Qur'an was that “*the activities of satan are all pervasive in the human sphere and that man*

45 Rahman, Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an, 178-80.

46 Hasan Hanafi, Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2009), 32.

47 Rahman, Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an, 180.

48 Muhammad Husain, “Penafsiran T.M Hasbi As-Shidieqy Tentang Setan dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'anul Majid An-Nur” (Skripsi, Kediri, IAIN Kediri, 2019), 42, <https://etheses.iainkediri.ac.id/3655/>.

49 Assa'idi, Pemahama Tematik Menurut Fazlur Rahman, 235.

50 Misbah Hudri, “Telaah Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman Tentang Setan dan Kejahatan,” *Al-Wajid: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Quran dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (July 1, 2021): 285–302, <https://doi.org/10.30863/alwajid.v2i1.1666>.

51 Rahman, Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an, 181.

*must constantly be alert and on his guard.*<sup>52</sup> Alarm for humans to be alert and be careful because demons will continue to be active to enter every joint of human life.<sup>53</sup> If humans are not in case it will be easily provoked by devil seduction. Fazlur Rahman said that every human being is open to the temptation or persuasion of satan, but humans who have piety (people who are on guard against moral danger) will not be lulled in evil and they will soon be aware of satan's deception.<sup>54</sup>

Fazlur Rahman explained that basically the activity of the devil was to make humans confused for a while covering their inner awareness. From the attack. In this case Allah said:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَنٌ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ

*“Indeed, you (the devil) are not powerful for my servants, except those who follow you, that is, the people who are misguided.”*<sup>55</sup> (Q.S. Al-Hijr [15]: 42).

According to Fazlur Rahman, the grip of the devil was weak, only the devil was seen as strong because there was weakness, the absence of moral courage, and the absence of vigilance. Al-Qur'an explains that satan's activity to empower humans starts from his despair.<sup>56</sup> “He (Allah) said, ‘O satan! Why do you (not join in) bowing down with them?’; He (Iblis) said, ‘I will never bow down to man whom You have created from dry clay from black mud which was given shape’; He (Allah) said, ‘(Then) get out of heaven, for indeed you are cursed; and indeed the curse will remain on you until the Day of Resurrection’; He (the devil) said, ‘O my Lord, (if that is so) then grant me a reprieve until the day (humanity) is resurrected’; Allah said, ‘(Okay) then indeed you are among those who have been given a reprieve; until the appointed day (Doomsday)’; He (Iblis) said, ‘My Lord, because You have decided that I am misguided, I will certainly make (evil) seem beautiful to them on earth, and I will lead them all astray; except Your servants who are chosen among them’” (Q.S. Al-Hijr [15]: 32–40; See also Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 12–17).

The Qur'an also says that believers fight in the path of Allah while those who disbelieve fight in the path of *ṭāghūt*, therefore, O Muslims, fight the friends of satan because satan's tactics are weak (See Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]:76). Starting from the awareness that evil is weak while the truth is strong, a firm belief was born based on the Qur'an that falsehood and evil will be defeated (See Q.S. Al-Mujādalah [58]: 19; Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 6; Q.S. Al-Mujādalah [58]: 22). Thus, it is not satan's power that is dangerous for humans, but rather the attitude of humans themselves who do not optimize their strength to the maximum to resist satan's seduction.

52 Mansur, Metodologi Tafsir Kontemporer (Menimbang Tawaran Metodologi Tafsir Emansipatoris) (Yogyakarta: Interpena, 2011), 19.

53 Amin Abdullah, “Metode Kontemporer dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an: Kesalingketerkaitan Asbabun Al-Nuzul Al-Qadim dan Al-Jadid dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Kontemporer,” Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadits 13, no. 1 (2012): 3.

54 Rahman, Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an, 182.

55 Kementerian Agama RI, Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya, 358.

56 Rahman, Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an, 182.

According to Fazlur Rahman, satan's tricks in his desperation are counterproductive. Because of satan's tricks which will harm humans and the futility of humans if they follow him, the Qur'an often calls on humans not to "follow satan's footsteps", because satan's footsteps can only push humans to their destruction and he is humanity's enemy.<sup>57</sup> The real. So, satan's "trace" is every crime committed by humans, for example, waste, corruption, war, and so on. The Qur'an says: "*O people! Eat what is lawful and good from the earth, but do not follow the steps of satan because satan is your real enemy*" (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 168).<sup>58</sup>

There are two aspects to the idea that humans can follow satan's "footsteps", including the following: first, satan never forces humans to commit crimes, but he tries to tempt the humans who are his targets. Second, satan's footsteps can only lead humans to destruction. In this case, humans need to recognize the devil's footsteps so that they can avoid destruction.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the real problem lies within humans themselves because it is the opposition of good to evil, ignorance to knowledge and strength to powerlessness. The key to human defense against satan's temptations is piety. Fazlur Rahman explained that *taqwa* is a kind of light within humans, a spiritual fire that humans must ignite within themselves so that they can differentiate between what is true and false, things that are real from things that are imaginary, and so on.

### **Characteristics of Fazlur Rahman's Interpretation in the *Major Themes of the Qur'an* with the Themes of Satan and Evil**

In general, the characteristics of Fazlur Rahman's interpretation of the concept of satan and evil are as follows:<sup>60</sup>

- 1 In interpreting the verses, Fazlur Rahman did not use or refer to the history that is generally used by other commentators to support their interpretation of these verses about satan and evil.
- 2 Fazlur Rahman's model of interpretation which has its color in explaining the concept of satan and evil is an interpretation packaged in a story or narrative, namely Fazlur Rahman lets the Qur'an speak for itself, while his interpretation is only used to connect different concepts related to satan. and crime. Sometimes Fazlur Rahman only includes the name of the surah.
- 3 In interpreting verses about satan and evil, Fazlur Rahman integrates the concepts of Makkiyyah and Madaniyyah. Even though he did not refer to the history of *asbāb al-nuzūl* verses about satan and evil in his interpre-

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57 Hamidi, Fadillah, and Manshur, *Metodoogi Tafsir Fazlur Rahman Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Hukum & Sosial*, 113 .

58 Rahman, *Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an*, 185-86.

59 Richard E. Plamer, *Hermeneutika, Teori Baru Mengenai Interpretasi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2005), 22.

60 Cahyo, "Setan dan Kejahatan Menurut Fazlur Rahman (Telaah Atas Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an)," 47-48.

tation, this does not mean that Fazlur Rahman abandoned the historical aspect in interpreting verses about satan and evil.

## **Conclusion**

Fazlur Rahman is one of the contemporary Islamic thinkers from Pakistan. *Major Themes of the Qur'an* is the result of a long study by Fazlur Rahman. Fazlur Rahman's work is the result of rewriting his articles which he did while living in Pakistan and after moving to Chicago. According to Fazlur Rahman, satan is only a force that inflames evil tendencies in humans. Meanwhile, satan's "trace" means every crime committed by humans. Fazlur Rahman's model of interpretation which has its color in explaining the concept of satan and evil is an interpretation packaged in a story or narrative, namely Fazlur Rahman lets the Qur'an speak for itself, while his interpretation is only used to connect different concepts related to satan. and crime. Sometimes Fazlur Rahman only includes the name of the surah.

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