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The Meaning of Majnun in the Quran: A Socio-Historical Study Based on Tafsir al-Misbah

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Abstract

Prophet Muhammad was known for his exemplary character even before he was appointed as a prophet and messenger. However, throughout his preaching mission, he frequently faced opposition, including accusations of being insane (*majnun*), which are recorded in the Quran as part of the polemical discourse of the disbelieving Quraysh. This raises a fundamental question: how could a person renowned for the highest moral character be ridiculed as insane? While exegetes generally interpret *majnun* as a form of insult, semantic and socio-historical analysis reveals a more complex dynamic of meaning. This article aims to uncover the meaning of *majnun* in the Quran through a socio-historical approach, with particular emphasis on the action and social dimensions embedded in the relevant verses. This study employs a qualitative method using content analysis, with *Tafsir al-Misbah* serving as the principal reference to strengthen the interpretation. The analysis shows that the term *majnun* in the Quran is used in three main contexts: Allah's refutation of the accusations made by the disbelieving Quraysh, insults directed at Prophet Muhammad, and insults directed at earlier prophets. The findings further demonstrate that *majnun* is not merely a pejorative label but also functions as part of the rhetorical strategy employed by opponents of the prophetic mission, reflecting the social and cultural conditions of Arab society at the time. These findings highlight the importance of interpreting pejorative terms in the Quran contextually, thereby enriching the understanding of the dynamics of Prophet Muhammad's preaching and its relevance to contemporary Quranic interpretation.

INTRODUCTION

The Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet sent by Allah to humankind. This is affirmed in Surah al-Ahzab [33]:40 through the term khatam al-nabiyyin, which means "the seal" or "the last prophet among the prophets." According to Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Misbah*, the term "*khatam*" derives from the word "*khatm*," which means to seal, stamp, or leave a mark on something. This term is also used to indicate an endpoint or final boundary, as in the expression "to complete the

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the Quran," which means to reach its final part.

Prophet Muhammad was sent to humankind with the mission of perfecting human morality. He brought an authentic (*sahih*) and upright (*mustaqim*) teaching and was sent as a *rahmat li al-'alamin* (mercy to all worlds), through which the influence of his message extended throughout the world. In the context of this historical influence, Michael H. Hart ranked Prophet Muhammad first among one hundred figures considered the most influential people of all time (Akhtar & Razaq, 2020).

This position is closely related to Prophet Muhammad's noble character in conveying the religion as a *rahmat li al-'alamin*. As a bearer of truth, Prophet Muhammad possessed human perfection (*al-kamal al-insani*), which was associated with the purity of the soul and manifested in noble qualities, such as intelligence, excellent character, forgiveness, and other virtues. In addition, he also possessed perfection in the prophetic dimension (*al-kamal al-nabawi*) (Kumalasari et al., 2024, p. 256). Prophet Muhammad also embodied the principal characteristics of prophethood, namely *siddiq* (truthfulness in words and actions), *amanah* (trustworthiness in fulfilling responsibilities), *tabligh* (conveying goodness to society), and *fatanah* (intelligence in guiding and managing society) (Elenia, 2023; Zahirah & Suhaedi, 2025).

The nobility of Prophet Muhammad's character had been demonstrated even before he was appointed as the bearer of God's message. This can be seen, among other instances, in the resolution of a dispute among the Quraysh tribes over who had the right to place the Black Stone (*Hajar Aswad*) during the renovation of the Kaʿbah. Prophet Muhammad proposed placing the Black Stone on a cloth and having the tribal leaders lift it together. This solution successfully resolved the dispute. Therefore, even before receiving his prophetic mission, Prophet Muhammad was already known by the title *al-Amin*, meaning the trustworthy (Alfarikh et al., 2021; Wahyuni & Rasyid, 2022).

Despite his noble character, when Prophet Muhammad began conveying God's message, he faced various forms of rejection and verbal abuse from the disbelieving Quraysh. These forms of opposition included harassment while he was worshipping, attempts to assassinate him, and openly expressed insults. One form of insult directed at Prophet Muhammad was labeling him as insane (Kouhanjani et al., 2024). This insult is recorded in the Quran through the use of the term *majnun*.

In the modern context, the term "insane" generally refers to a state of mental unwellness or mental disorder. In psychology, the term is often associated with psychosis, a condition that may be characterized by delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized thought and speech. Hallucinations refer to experiences of sensing or perceiving something that does not actually exist, whereas delusions refer to false beliefs that are maintained despite contradictory information. Disorganization refers to illogical or disordered patterns of thought and speech (Corcoran et al., 2020).

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), "*gila*" refers to impaired memory, mental illness, disturbed nerves, or abnormal thinking (Sahebalam et al., 2026). This definition represents the general understanding of the term "gila" within Indonesian society. However, applying this meaning directly to Prophet Muhammad becomes problematic because he was known for his noble character and exemplary personality. Prophet Muhammad cannot simply be understood through the categories of mental illness or irrationality as defined in the modern context, because various accounts of his life demonstrate that the Arab community recognized his honesty and integrity. From Michel Foucault's perspective, the labeling and construction of insanity have undergone changes in meaning over time (Portela & Silveira, 2026).

This condition raises an important question concerning the meaning intended by referring to Prophet Muhammad as *majnun*. Is the intended meaning truly identical

to the modern understanding of "insanity," or does the term convey a different meaning when examined in relation to the history and social conditions of Arab society during the time of Prophet Muhammad? This question provides the basis for the present study, which examines the meaning of *majnun* in the Quran by analyzing the socio-historical dimensions contained in the verses in which the term appears. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the concept of *majnun* in the Quran through a semantic approach.

Semantics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of meaning (Khair & Is, 2023). In understanding meaning through a semantic approach, several dimensions can be considered, including action and social dimensions. The action dimension concerns the action or conduct intended to be conveyed through the use of a particular word, whereas the social dimension refers to the social circumstances underlying the use of that word, including social structures, customs, norms, and other social conditions. Like individual words, Quranic verses also contain action and social dimensions. A verse conveys an intended action or message to its readers while simultaneously reflecting the social conditions surrounding the revelation of the verse. Therefore, in uncovering the meaning of *majnun* semantically, understanding its action and social dimensions is essential for obtaining a more comprehensive interpretation. This study analyzes the action and social dimensions contained in the Quranic verses involving *majnun* in order to reveal the meaning of the term in a more contextual manner.

Previous studies have examined the meaning of *majnun*. The first is an article entitled "Pengungkapan Kata Majnun Dalam Al-Quran" by Mukhlis Ansori Harahap, Uqbatul Khoir Rambe, and Fadhilah Is. The study employed a library research method. Its findings indicate that, etymologically, *majnun* refers to possession by jinn, an insane person, or someone lacking sound reasoning. Epistemologically, the term *majnun* is understood as a condition that prevents a person from distinguishing between good and evil or as a form of brain dysfunction that causes a person to lose the ability to think normally (Grey et al., 2018).

Another study is a thesis entitled "Analisis Semantik Kata *Majnun* Dalam Tafsir Departemen Agama RI" by Khoirun Ni'mah. This study also employed a library research method. The findings indicate that *majnun* has two meanings. First, it refers to possession by jinn within the context of Arab society, which had a strong tradition of and appreciation for poetry. Second, *majnun* is used to describe words or statements that cannot be understood (Khair & Is, 2023).

Furthermore, Fathuri conducted a thesis entitled "*Majnun* Dalam Al-Quran (Perspektif Michel Foucault)." This study also employed library research. Its findings indicate that the term *majnun* can be associated with two aspects. First, it is related to Prophet Muhammad's fear when he received revelation for the first time, which led to the perception that he was experiencing insanity. Second, the term originated from the accusations made by the disbelieving Quraysh against Prophet Muhammad in the context of his receiving and conveying the divine message.

To complement the review of previous studies, a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer was conducted to identify the research landscape and thematic relationships surrounding *majnun* and related concepts. The visualization provides an overview of the keywords and thematic connections that have emerged in the existing literature. Rather than relying solely on individual studies, the bibliometric mapping provides a broader representation of the research trends and areas of scholarly attention related to the topic. The results of this mapping are presented in Figure 1.

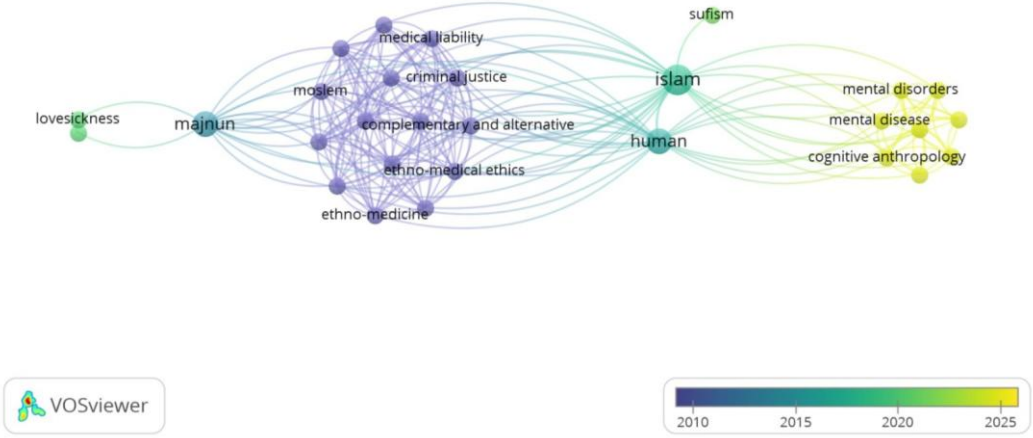


Figure 1. VOSviewer Visualization of Research on *Majnun* and Related Themes

The bibliometric visualization serves as an additional basis for identifying areas that remain insufficiently explored in previous research. In particular, the mapping is used to examine the extent to which semantic, socio-historical, action, and social dimensions are connected within existing studies of *majnun*. This analysis complements the findings of the previous literature review and provides a visual basis for positioning the present study within the existing body of research.

The present study differs from previous research in its use of a semantic approach based on the analysis of action and social dimensions, which have not been specifically employed in the previous studies. Through this analysis, the study seeks to identify the meaning of *majnun* in a more contextual manner. Thus, the *research gap* lies in the tendency of previous studies to emphasize the etymological and epistemological aspects of the term *majnun* through library research without examining in depth the action and social dimensions of the verses in which the term occurs. Consequently, the meaning of *majnun* has tended to be understood in a limited manner as an insult or possession by jinn, without sufficiently examining the broader socio-historical context underlying its use.

This article offers a *novelty* through the application of a semantic approach based on action and social dimensions to analyze the Quranic verses containing *majnun*. This approach not only highlights the linguistic aspects of the term but also connects it with the social, cultural, and rhetorical conditions of Prophet Muhammad's preaching context. Accordingly, this study seeks to provide a more contextual perspective on the interpretation of pejorative terms in the Quran. The findings have implications for the development of contemporary Quranic interpretation studies, particularly in understanding the use of pejorative terms in the Quran based on their social and historical contexts. In addition to enriching the study of Quranic semantics, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the dynamics of Prophet Muhammad's preaching and its relevance to contemporary social, cultural, and Islamic educational contexts.

The research problem in this article is formulated around the fundamental question of how the meaning of *majnun* in the Quran can be understood from a socio-historical perspective. Is the reference to Prophet Muhammad as *majnun* truly identical to the modern understanding of "insanity," or does it convey a different meaning associated with the social, cultural, and rhetorical conditions of Arab society at the time of revelation? This question arises from the gap between linguistic and exegetical studies, which tend to emphasize etymological and epistemological aspects, and the fact that the term *majnun* was used within a context of religious polemics characterized by significant social and historical dimensions. Therefore, this article aims to uncover the concept of *majnun* in the Quran through a semantic approach

that emphasizes the analysis of action and social dimensions. Using a qualitative method based on content analysis and employing *Tafsir al-Misbah* as one of the primary references, this article seeks to identify a more comprehensive and contextual meaning of *majnun*. The study is expected not only to enrich Quranic and exegetical scholarship but also to contribute theoretically to the study of Quranic semantics and practically to public understanding of the dynamics of Prophet Muhammad's preaching and its relevance to contemporary social and cultural life.

METHODS

This article was developed using a systematic methodological approach to comprehensively address the research questions. The selection of the research method, research design, data sources, analytical framework, and data analysis techniques was carefully determined to ensure the academic validity and theoretical and practical relevance of the findings.

Method and Research Design

This article employs a qualitative method with a content analysis design, as the study focuses on examining the meaning and context of the term *majnun* in the Quran. A qualitative approach was selected to explore the depth of meaning, while content analysis provides a systematic framework for examining the sacred text. According to Engkizar et al (2025); Wahyuna et al (2025) in *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, content analysis is appropriate for interpreting texts that contain rich and complex meanings. Therefore, this approach was adopted to enable the meaning of *majnun* to be understood interpretively and contextually.

Data Sources

The primary data source is the Quran as the primary textual source, particularly the verses containing the term *majnun*. Secondary data were obtained from classical and contemporary Quranic commentaries, with *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab serving as the principal reference. Additional data were drawn from relevant journal articles, books, encyclopedias, and previous studies, including research by (Fadhil & Sebgag, 2021; Nabiel, 2021). These sources were selected because they provide a strong textual, interpretive, and academic foundation for enriching the analysis.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework employed in this study is a semantic approach consisting of two main dimensions: the action dimension and the social dimension. The action dimension focuses on the intended action conveyed by a word or verse, whereas the social dimension examines the social, cultural, and rhetorical conditions underlying the use of the term. Lemon & Hayes (2020); Namira et al (2023), in *Semantics*, emphasizes that semantic analysis should consider social context to achieve a comprehensive understanding of meaning. This analytical framework is appropriate because it enables the meaning of *majnun* to be examined contextually, not only from a linguistic perspective but also from a socio-historical perspective.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis was conducted through several stages: identifying Quranic verses containing the term *majnun*, classifying the contexts in which the term is used, conducting semantic analysis based on the action and social dimensions, interpreting relevant exegetical explanations to strengthen the analysis, and synthesizing the findings to formulate a comprehensive understanding of *majnun*. These stages follow the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman in *Qualitative Data Analysis*, which emphasizes systematic data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This procedure was adopted because it provides a structured analytical process through which the findings can be academically justified (Bingham, 2023; Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019; Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Meaning of *Majnun*

The term *majnun* is generally understood as "*mad*" or "*insane*" in many contemporary translations of the Quran. Morphologically, *majnun* is an *ism al-maf'ul* derived from *janna–yajunnu–junnan*. In *Lisan al-'Arab*, Ibn Manzur explains that the word *janna* conveys the meanings of covering, concealing, or serving as a barrier or veil for something. Meanwhile, al-Raghib al-Asfahani, in *Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'an*, explains that the word is associated with the meaning of *satru al-shay'i 'ani al-hassah*, namely, the concealment of something from the senses. A similar meaning is found in *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, which explains that the root *j-n-n* is associated with the meaning of covering or something that conceals (Khair & Is, 2023).

The use of the root *janna* and its various derivatives in Arabic demonstrates a range of meanings that remain semantically related to the concepts of "covering" or "concealing." In the Quran, for example, the expression *janna 'alayhi* means *satara 'alayhi*, namely, to cover or conceal something. This meaning can be found in Q.S. al-An'am [6]: 76:

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ ٱلَّيْلُ رَءَا كَوْكَبًا ۖ قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ لَآ أُحِبُّ ٱلْءَافِلِينَ

Meaning: *When the night covered him, he saw a star. He said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said, 'I do not like those that set.*

In this verse, the word *janna* indicates the condition in which the night covers or conceals something from view. Another derivative of the same root is *al-janan*, which means the heart. The heart is referred to by this term because it is something hidden and cannot be directly perceived by the senses (Galsgaard, 2021). Another derivative is *al-mijann* and *al-mijannah*, which refer to a shield or something used to protect a person from attack. Something that protects a person from weapons is also referred to as *junnah*. This meaning appears in Q.S. al-Mujadalah [58]: 16:

ٱتَّخَذُوٓا۟ أَيْمَٰنَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا۟ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

Meaning: *They have taken their oaths as a shield, thus they hindered others from the way of Allah. Therefore, they will have a humiliating punishment.*

The term *junnah* in this verse means a shield. In its context, the oaths were used by the hypocrites as a means of concealing their lies. Another derivative is *al-jannah*, referring to a garden containing trees that cover the surface of the ground. In another sense, *al-jannah* is also used to denote something concealed or a garden whose leaves cover one another. There is also the term *al-janin*, referring to a child still in the womb and concealed from view. Its plural form is *ajinnah*. The same root also gives rise to the term *jinnah*, which may refer to the jinn, as found in Q.S. al-Nas [114]: 6:

مِنَ ٱلْجِنَّةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ

Meaning: *From among the jinn and humankind.*

In its semantic development, *jinnah* is also related to *al-junun*, meaning insanity. *Al-junun* is understood as a condition that obstructs the relationship between the soul and the intellect. *Mu'jam al-Wasit* defines it as a condition involving the loss or impairment of the intellect, whereas *Kamus al-'Asri* defines it as insanity (Akib et al., 2022). Based on this meaning, *majnun* came to be used to refer to a person experiencing insanity because such a condition was understood as a state in which the intellect was concealed or obstructed, preventing a person from thinking normally. Al-Naisaburi also explains that *majnun* may refer to someone who is frequently insulted or stoned, wears tattered clothing, or behaves in ways that deviate from socially accepted customs and norms.

The term *majnun* also has several semantically related terms, including *al-ahmaq*, referring to a foolish or stupid person; *al-ma'tuh*, referring to someone who has experienced insanity since birth; *al-akhraq*, referring to someone who is unable to manage matters properly; *al-ma'iq*, derived from *maqa–yamuqu*; as well as *al-raqi'* and

al-marqa'an, which are used to refer to a foolish person who destroys his or her own reasoning. Thus, the term *majnun* encompasses a relatively broad semantic field and does not merely refer to a psychological condition that would be described in modern terminology as insanity.

The use of the term *majnun* is also not always associated with insanity or irrationality. In the context of pre-Islamic Arab society and the prophetic period, the term could be used to indicate a condition in which a person was believed to be possessed or influenced by the jinn. Al-Raghib al-Asfahani explains that *al-junun* refers to something that creates a barrier between the soul and the intellect. The expression *junna fulan* may also mean that a person has been afflicted or possessed by the jinn, just as a person may be afflicted by a particular illness. The term is used in this context in Q.S. al-A'raf [7]: 184, Q.S. al-Mu'minun [23]: 25 and 70, and Q.S. Saba' [34]: 8 and 46.

In the pre-Islamic and prophetic periods, the label *majnun* was also associated with beliefs concerning supernatural beings, particularly the jinn. A person believed to receive whispers or messages from supernatural beings such as spirits, gods, or jinn was thought to possess the ability to provide information about the past or the future. At least three groups were commonly associated with such abilities in Arab conceptions: poets, *kahin* or soothsayers, and fortune-tellers. They were believed to possess certain abilities because they received assistance from supernatural beings. Within this belief system, the Quran also describes the attempts of the jinn to steal news from heaven (Engkizar et al., 2019).

One group that held an important position in Arab society was poets. The word for poetry is related to *sha'ara*, meaning to know or become aware, while in its subsequent usage *shi'r* refers to poetry. The poetic tradition had developed long before Islam and continued to be a popular form of literary expression after the advent of Islam. Arab society, particularly the Arabs of northern Arabia, was known for its poetic abilities. Such abilities were even demonstrated through competitions held at various gatherings and marketplaces, one of which was the 'Ukaz market. Poems considered outstanding received recognition and, according to various accounts, were preserved in prestigious places. This tradition demonstrates the high level of literary ability among Arab society (Haikal et al., 2023).

The poetic tradition also became part of the identity and pride of a tribe. A poet played a role in praising and defending the honor of his tribe. This condition was closely related to the strong tribal bonds based on blood relations and lineage. When a person demonstrated exceptional ability in composing poetry, the community could grant him considerable recognition. Poets were regarded as symbols of the defense of tribal honor because they could defend their tribe against ridicule or insults delivered by poets from other tribes.

The social status of poets in Arab society was also highly respected. In addition to defending tribal honor and encouraging the community in times of struggle, poets could influence the selection of tribal leaders and serve as mediators in efforts to establish peace between tribes. Within the beliefs of the society at that time, a poet's ability to produce beautiful poetry was even associated with whispers or assistance from the jinn.

In addition to poets, *kahin* and fortune-tellers were also associated with the term *majnun*. *Kahin* is derived from *kahana–yakhunu–kahanah*, referring to a person who communicates hidden information or claims knowledge of the unseen. Meanwhile, a person who reports information about the future is referred to as an *'arraf*. Some sources treat the two terms as synonymous because both are associated with knowledge of hidden matters, whereas other sources distinguish them according to the object of the knowledge conveyed. In the Arab conception, such abilities were

believed to have been acquired through contact with supernatural beings (Khair & Is, 2023).

Based on the discussion above, *majnun* is etymologically associated with the meaning of something that is covered, concealed, or obstructed. The interpretation of *majnun* as "a mad person" developed from the notion that the intellect or thoughts of such a person are concealed or obstructed, preventing normal reasoning. In the context of pre-Islamic Arab society and the prophetic period, the term was also associated with poets, soothsayers, and fortune-tellers who were believed to receive whispers from supernatural beings. Therefore, the meaning of *majnun* cannot be understood in isolation but must be situated within its linguistic, social, and historical contexts.

The Development of the Meaning of Insanity

In the development of the language, *majnun* came to be understood as a mad or insane person. However, the concept of "insanity" itself has undergone changes in meaning alongside developments in society and civilization. The understanding of insanity is not static but is influenced by the social constructions, knowledge systems, and structures of power that develop within a particular historical period.

In Michel Foucault's discussion, for example, insanity during the Renaissance occupied a different position from that which it held in subsequent periods. During this period, people considered insane could still live within society, and insanity was even associated with reasoning, truth, and wisdom. Individuals labeled as insane could be positioned as figures who, through their unusual behavior, conveyed truth or served as guardians of morality. However, in subsequent developments, some people considered insane began to be excluded from social life. One of the images used in Foucault's analysis is the *ship of fools*, which represents the exclusion of people considered insane from society (Santoso et al., 2020).

This transformation became increasingly visible with the emergence of the industrial era and the development of social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and insanity. Growing social awareness led to various forms of control over groups considered problematic. One such measure was the establishment of correctional houses, which were used to accommodate various groups, including the unemployed, people considered lazy, the sick, homeless people, and those regarded as insane. Unlike the *ship of fools*, which represents exclusion, correctional houses functioned more as spaces for confining groups considered disruptive to social order.

These correctional houses were later associated with the *Hospital General*. Although its name resembles that of a healthcare institution, the building was not initially a hospital in the modern sense. Foucault described it as an institution with a semi-judicial function situated between the police and the courts. Such institutions possessed extensive authority and became part of a mechanism of social control. From Foucault's perspective, the emergence of such institutions was associated with the economic and social problems developing during that period (Meler, 2020).

In subsequent developments, people considered insane were not only confined but also displayed and treated in inhumane ways. During the eighteenth century, some forms of confinement began to change. However, such changes did not apply equally to all groups. People considered insane continued to be placed in closed institutions and increasingly constructed as a group characterized by psychological problems and particular traits.

During the nineteenth century, the development of psychology and psychiatry increasingly reinforced the distinction between people considered "sane" and "insane." Insanity, which had previously been associated with bodily illness, gradually came to be understood more as a matter of memory, psychological conditions, and behavior. From a social perspective, the label "insane" could also function as a

marker indicating that an individual was perceived as being outside the norms of a particular group. Thus, the statement "he is insane" or "he is not sane" does not merely refer to an individual condition but may also indicate a process through which a person is categorized as being outside the social boundaries of a particular group.

The discussion above demonstrates that the meaning of insanity has developed in accordance with changes in civilization and social construction. During the Renaissance, people considered insane could still live within society and were even associated with symbols of reasoning and truth. In subsequent periods, they were increasingly placed in confinement institutions as part of mechanisms of social control. Later, the development of psychology and psychiatry situated insanity within the framework of psychological and mental disorders.

In the Indonesian context, the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* defines "gila" as, among other things, impaired memory, mental illness, or a condition in which the nerves are disturbed and thinking becomes abnormal. In Nasikhin et al (2022) discussion, mental disturbance refers to abnormal conditions involving either physical or mental aspects. Daradjat distinguishes between mental disturbance and mental illness based on the individual's level of awareness. A person experiencing a mental disturbance may still retain awareness of themselves, whereas mental illness is understood as involving a more severe disturbance of consciousness.

Mental disorders may be influenced by various predisposing and precipitating factors involving biological, psychological, and social aspects. Such disorders can occur among different groups within society. Factors examined in studies of mental disorders include unemployment, a previous history of mental disorders, introverted personality traits, a tendency to internalize problems, and adverse experiences such as abuse and conflict. Thus, the concept of insanity in modern developments is not only associated with social judgment but has also been situated within psychological, social, and mental health frameworks.

Majnun in the Quran

The term *majnun* occurs 11 times in the Quran, namely in Q.S. al-Hijr [15]: 6, al-Shu'ara' [26]: 27, al-Saffat [37]: 36, al-Dukhan [44]: 14, al-Dhariyat [51]: 39 and 52, al-Ṭur [52]: 29, al-Qamar [54]: 9, al-Qalam [68]: 2 and 51, and al-Takwir [81]: 22. Based on their contexts, these verses can be grouped into three main categories: accusations or insults directed at the Prophet Muhammad; Allah's refutation of the accusation of *majnun* directed at the Prophet Muhammad; and accusations of *majnun* directed at prophets who preceded Muhammad, particularly the Prophet Noah and the Prophet Moses.

Majnun as an Insult Directed at the Prophet Muhammad

One of the verses that uses the term *majnun* as an insult directed at the Prophet Muhammad is Q.S. al-Qalam [68]: 51:

وَإِن يَكَادُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَٰرِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُواْ ٱلذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُۥ لَمَجْنُونٌ

Meaning: *And indeed, those who disbelieve almost make you stumble with their eyes when they hear the Quran, and they say, 'Indeed, he is surely insane.*

According to Shihab in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, the verse provides reassurance for the Prophet Muhammad to remain patient and steadfast in facing the attitude of his people. The verse depicts the behavior of the polytheists of Mecca, who continuously harassed, obstructed, and attempted to stop the Prophet Muhammad's preaching. This attitude emerged particularly when they heard the Quran (*al-dhikr*). The accusation of *majnun* was used as a form of verbal attack intended to distance the community from the Prophet Muhammad and the teachings he conveyed (Fatahudin et al., 2019).

The term *layuzliqunaka* in this verse is associated by some scholars with *azlaqa–yuzliqu*, meaning to cause someone to slip or fall. Accordingly, the expression can be understood as depicting an attempt by the polytheists to bring down the Prophet

Muhammad. Some Quranic recitation scholars read it as *layazliqunaka*, associated with the word *zaliqa*, meaning to move someone from their position. In this context, the accusation of *majnun* formed part of the polytheists' efforts to undermine the Prophet Muhammad's position within society.

This context reveals both an action dimension and a social dimension. The action dimension is evident in the use of the label *majnun* as a verbal strategy intended to influence people to distance themselves from the Prophet Muhammad. The accusation was accompanied by harassment and pressure aimed at weakening his preaching. Meanwhile, the social dimension is evident in the conflict between the Prophet Muhammad and the Meccan polytheists, who rejected the teachings of Islam. Thus, the term *majnun* in this verse does not merely indicate an assessment of an individual's condition but also functions as a social label used within a context of religious conflict.

***Majnun* as a Refutation of the Accusation against the Prophet Muhammad**

The use of the term *majnun* to refute the accusation against the Prophet Muhammad is found, among other places, in Q.S. al-Takwir [81]: 22:

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُم بِمَجۡنُونٖ

Meaning: *And your companion is not insane.*

Shihab explains that this verse affirms the position of the Prophet Muhammad while simultaneously rejecting the accusation of *majnun* previously made by the polytheists. The reference to the Prophet Muhammad as *sahibukum*, or "your companion," indicates the closeness and familiarity between him and the Quraysh community. The Prophet Muhammad was not a stranger to them. They had known him in their everyday lives and were familiar with his character even before he received revelation.

The verse also emphasizes that the Prophet Muhammad truly saw the Angel Gabriel in the clear horizon. The figure seen by the Prophet was not a jinn or a devil, as alleged by the Quraysh, but the Angel Gabriel as the bearer of revelation. The Quran conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad was likewise not the speech of Satan. In this context, the accusation that the Prophet Muhammad was *majnun* was also associated with the allegation that he obtained information from supernatural beings, similar to the beliefs surrounding *kahin* and fortune-tellers.

Thus, Q.S. al-Takwir [81]: 22 is closely connected with the preceding and subsequent verses in refuting various accusations against the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet is portrayed as someone whom the Quraysh already knew to be trustworthy. Therefore, the accusation of *majnun* was not only refuted through a direct statement but also through the Prophet Muhammad's established social reputation among his community.

The action dimension of the verse is evident in the Quran's effort to refute the label *majnun* directed at the Prophet Muhammad. Its social dimension is reflected in the relationship between the Prophet and the Quraysh community, who had known him before his prophethood. The accusation emerged within the context of opposition to the preaching and new teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad.

***Majnun* as an Insult Directed at the Prophet Moses**

The term *majnun* is also used to describe an accusation directed at a prophet who preceded Muhammad, namely the Prophet Moses. This occurs in Q.S. al-Shu'ara' [26]: 27:

قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمُ ٱلَّذِيٓ أُرۡسِلَ إِلَيۡكُمۡ لَمَجۡنُونٞ

Meaning: *Pharaoh said, 'Indeed, your messenger who has been sent to you is surely insane.*

According to Shihab, this verse relates to the dialogue between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh. Moses called upon Pharaoh to worship Allah as the One and Only God. However, Pharaoh rejected this call and attempted to divert the

discussion by bringing up various matters concerning Moses' past. Moses then responded to these accusations and explained that he had been chosen and sent by Allah.

When Moses explained that the God whom he worshipped was the God who created and governed the heavens, the earth, and everything between them, this statement contradicted Pharaoh's claim to power. Pharaoh then responded by calling Moses *majnun*. The label was used when Pharaoh was unable to accept or substantively refute the argument presented by Moses. The accusation was also directed toward his followers in an attempt to influence them not to accept Moses' preaching.

This verse demonstrates both an action dimension and a social dimension. The action dimension is evident in the use of the label *majnun* as a strategy to undermine Moses' position before Pharaoh's followers. By calling Moses insane, Pharaoh attempted to create the impression that Moses' teachings were irrational and unworthy of being followed. Meanwhile, the social dimension concerns the power relationship between Pharaoh as a ruler and Moses as the bearer of a divine message calling for changes to a power structure that oppressed the Children of Israel (Lin et al., 2022).

Based on the verses examined, the term *majnun* in the Quran, within the contexts discussed, is predominantly used as an accusation or label directed at the prophets rather than as a neutral description of their psychological condition. Unlike the use of *majnun* in certain social contexts of Arab society, where it was associated with possession by jinn or contact with supernatural beings, the Quran uses the term within the context of polemical encounters between prophets and communities that rejected their messages.

Therefore, the meaning of *majnun* in the Quran needs to be understood based on the discourse and social relations surrounding its use. The term does not merely refer to "insanity" in the modern psychological sense but functions as a label used by those who rejected the prophetic message to discredit its bearer. In the cases of the Prophet Muhammad and the Prophet Moses, the label *majnun* emerged as part of the response of groups that rejected a new message because it conflicted with their established beliefs and social interests. Therefore, an analysis of the term *majnun* demonstrates that its meaning in the Quran cannot be separated from its linguistic, historical, social, and religious-polemical contexts (Nadimah, 2018; Rothman & Coyle, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The concept of *majnun* in the Quran indicates that the term has two primary meanings. First, it refers to a state in which the mind is considered to be obstructed, preventing a person from thinking clearly and leading to the designation of being insane. Second, it refers to possession by jinn, which in Arab tradition was associated with the ability to acquire knowledge of the unseen. The meaning of "insanity" has shifted over time, and by the nineteenth century, it had come to be understood as a disorder of the mind and psyche. In the Quran, the term *majnun* is used as a form of rejection of Prophet Muhammad's message, as illustrated in Q.S. al-Qalam [68]: 51 and Q.S. al-Shu'ara [26]: 27. Thus, the objective of this article has been achieved, namely, to uncover the meaning of *majnun* more contextually through a socio-historical analysis that emphasizes the action and social dimensions.

In terms of novelty, this article offers a semantic approach based on the action and social dimensions, which has not been systematically applied in previous studies. This approach provides a new perspective for understanding pejorative terms in the Quran, moving beyond merely etymological or epistemological meanings. The implications of this article are to enrich contemporary Quranic interpretation,

strengthen the study of Quranic semantics, and provide a practical contribution to society's understanding of the dynamics of Prophet Muhammad's preaching. By interpreting pejorative terms such as *majnun* contextually, Muslims can develop a deeper appreciation of the prophetic figure and better understand the rhetorical strategies employed by opponents of the prophetic mission at that time. This perspective is relevant to strengthening social, cultural, and Islamic educational understanding in the modern era.

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