THE NOTION OF ANIMISM: SOME VIEWS FROM PROPHETIC TRADITION AND WESTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Purpose of Study: The prophetic tradition (al-Sunnah) as the second authentic source for Muslims includes guidance that touches all aspects of life, from economics, politics, laws, anthropology, etc. Some Western anthropologists stressed on debating the notion of animism which is a belief that everything exists in the universe has soul, spirit and must be respected. In fact, animism had been revered by all religions, and this theory was introduced by Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) in the 19th century.

Methodology: This article discusses on animism from the perspectives of prophetic traditions and Western Anthropologist. By applying content analysis method, this article found that both parties have some similarities and differences. In lieu of this, Islam concluded that animism or the belief in the power of invisible spirits of people’s ancestors and the spirits of nature to influence the fortunes of humans on earth are blasphemous and deviant. While in view of Anthropologist, animism puts more emphasis on the uniqueness of each individual soul. Animists see themselves on roughly equal footing with other animals, plants, and natural forces, and subsequently, have a moral imperative to treat these agents with respect.

Implications/Applications: The implications for this kind of studies will open to discussions about anthropology through multi background and methods of data collection.

Keywords: Animism, Prophetic Tradition, Anthropology, Western Anthropologist.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the theory of animism through a preliminary study of comparison between the perspective of the Prophet's Sunnah and Western anthropologists. Animism theory was established in the 19th century by Edward Burnett Tylor (William H. Swatos & Peter Kivisto, 1998: 528 and Paul A. Erickson & Liam D. Murphy, 2013: 29). According to him, animism reflects the beliefs of primitive societies. The theory of animism has been introduced by E.B. Tylor in his book “Primitive Culture: Research into Development Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom,” which was first published on April 1871.

This theory is built on E.B. Tylor’s observations to the beliefs that existed in the primitive communities. As a result, he has found two significant theories. First, the belief that primitive humans are animism. Second, the evolution of religious theory that is animism as the oldest belief and the basis of the religions in the world. In this article, the authors chose several aspects in animism to see the similarities and differences between Sunnah and Western anthropologists’ perspective. This topic is important because it highlights the perspective of Islam through the Prophet's Sunnah in discussing the knowledge of sociology, particularly in anthropology.

METHODOLOGY

In general, this paper uses specific approaches to answer research questions. It requires qualitative data. The paper explains, interprets, conceptualizes, and shows an in-depth picture of human ethnography, behaviour, and beliefs. This keeps with the focus of this paper, which is to compare animism from two perspectives: Sunnah and Western anthropology. To this end, this paper collects data through a literature review, with reference to articles, books, and authoritative reading material related to animism. The method of data analysis is descriptive analysis. Because this study is comparative, and the method used is less controlled and susceptible to perceptual tendencies, the researcher attempts to be transparent in analysing the data.

DEFINITION OF ANIMISM

Animism is a term in anthropology, referring to ancient or primitive human’s belief (Harvey, 2006: 6). Etymologically, anthropologists agreed that the definition of animism derived from the Latin words animus or anima which mean soul, spirit or life (Tylor, 1871: 1: 391). According to the terminology, animism is the belief that everything that exists on this earth like stone, wood, wind, and others have a soul or spirit (Kamus Dewan, 2005: 62 and Dictionary of Theology, 2006: 27). Its nature is free from human and does not interfere and affect people’s lives (Hexham, 2002: 19, Haught, 1990: 19 and Caner, 2008: 21). People who believe in animism are called “animists” (Kamus Dewan, 2005: 62).
According to E.B. Tylor (1871: 1: 377), animism generally refers to a doctrine of the soul and spirit or philosophy of souls and spirits. Animism is also the belief about creatures with souls which comprises of two forms, namely the belief that humans have an immortal soul, even after death and the belief that the soul also exists in other creatures (Dhavamony, 2011: 66). Soul and spirit must be respected, thus, they will not interfere but rather help people in this life (Shadily, 2012, 62). The term animism in Arabic is called al-rūḥīyyah or al-iḥyāʿīyyah (Mukhtar, 2008: 956-957). ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nasīrī (2006: 404) in his book Mawsūʿat al-Yahūd, used the terms such as al-hayawiyyah, ʿayawiyat al-mādah and al-mabdaʿ al-hayawī in referring to animism. He said that all of these terms refer to the belief that considers nature has a range of spirits stored in something seen or unseen that could affect human life.

In the animist world, humans are considered as almost on par with animals, plants and the forces of nature. Therefore, it becomes a responsibility and moral obligation for animists to interact with and respect these elements. The reason is, humans are considered as part of nature, rather than a superior or disconnect from it. Likewise, the soul and spirit in the objects are believed to have extraordinary powers. The spirit is feared and respected. They believe that if the spirit is mad, it can be dangerous and bring disaster to them. On the contrary, if the spirit is happy and pleased, then it can lead to good fortune and luck (al-Sāmūk, 2002: 28). Thus, animism is the belief that living things like human beings, animals and plants, inanimate objects like metal, stone, diversity of geographical areas such as hills, deserts, valleys, jungles, caves, sea or natural phenomena such as lightning, rain and drought possess spirit or spirituality (Weiser, 2010: 34). According to anthropologists, there are branches of animism that are being supported by the concept and belief system as follows:

Table 1: The branches of Animism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRANCH OF ANIMISM</th>
<th>THE CONCEPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancestor Worship</td>
<td>Worship souls of the dead, whether the spirits of ancestors or others. Spirits of the dead are considered as still alive and able to bring good or harm to a living person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualism / Spiritism</td>
<td>Interaction between the souls of the dead and the living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamanism</td>
<td>Mediator and the experts of the spirit world, also known as shamans, healers, and fortune-teller (Christina Pratt, 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Worship</td>
<td>The worship of objects in the universe such as fire, sun, stars, trees, and so on. It also includes the worship of natural phenomena like thunder, lightning or storms. This stage is the foundation for the worship of many gods, or called polytheism (Noorkasiani et al., 2009: 118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism, Pre-Animism, Fetishism, Animatism</td>
<td>Worship certain objects and objects that are considered special and sacred. When the object is used or stored, it can be profitable, or good luck or spared from harm (Dhavamony, 2011, 70).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Worship</td>
<td>Worship a particular animal. The animal is honored for its purity, ability to bring security, good and benefit to them (Forlong, 2008: 85).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totemism</td>
<td>The faith of certain tribe that worships a particular animal because they consider it as the tribe symbol or deemed to have blood relation with them (Tylor, 1871: 1644 and Neal, A. G., 1985)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Animisms such as stated in the schedule are a form of respect and ritual to the souls and spirits that are believed to exist in all things in this universe. Therefore, it is further elaboration to the definition of animism mentioned earlier. The main elements that become the common ground for the isms are the soul and spirit. However, there are still other elements that can be associated with animism.

THE ELEMENTS IN ANIMISM

The most important element in animism is to believe that there is the existence of the soul or spirit in every creature. Next, it has formed other several elements that are synonymous and relevant to animism. Those elements are stated in the figure below:

![Figure 1: Elements of Animism](image_url)
Spirit is the element that gives life to living things. It is also referred to as the soul. The spirit or soul become keywords in animism. The spirits are considered to be in every creature and can be classified into several categories. First; in relation to the human spirit, which is the human soul as a vital element, ancestral spirits and evil spirits of the dead in a morbid condition such as murdered or childbirth. Second; spirits connected with natural objects such as waterfalls, boulders, large trees and strange, creepy places spirit, animal spirit and soul of objects in space. Third; spirits and powers in relation to natural phenomena such as lightning, thunder, and floods. Fourth; spirits in relation to social groups such as deities, spirits and demons and angels (Dhavamony, 2011: 67).

Animists honored spirits. This honour is done in order to avoid disturbance and seek help from them (Chopra, 2005: 3). The concept of spirit among primitive people is not the same as what is understood by modern society. Primitive society cannot imagine the existence of a spirit that is not material. For them, the spirit is built up of elements that are invisible, has form, age, and able to eat and drink. This perspective can be seen through the provision of food by primitive societies as an offering to the spirits (Hadiwijono, 2000: 46).

In addition, animists also believe in the existence of the spirit, the spirit that is in all living things and is believed to have certain powers (Kamus Dewan, 2005: 1433). In the study of anthropology, this belief is also known as dynamism. When compared, the concept of animism and dynamism do not have a significant disparity, but both appear to be alongside and mutually influenced each other (Hamid, 2003: 31). According to N. K. Ryan (1962: 29), spirit is different from soul because it is not congruent to human life. Furthermore, the human spirit is closely related to the heart, while the spirit in objects and inanimate objects represent spirits from outside that goes into it.

Belief in the existence of unseen creatures is the most important element in animism. It is described in many versions and interpretations where animists believe that those creatures exist but cannot be seen with the naked eyes. Those creatures were named goblins, genies, ghosts, vampires, demons and so on. Spirits are believed to be able to influence a situation and have power in the real world (Halimi, 2008: 15 and Bane, 2012).

Magic and sacred elements are associated with animism. An animist believes that beings or objects around him are not the same in soul and spirit. In anthropology, the belief is known as dynamism, fetishism, totemism, and animatism. Some anthropologists consider these beliefs as the earliest form of animism. Therefore, it is called pre-animism (Hendrouspito, 2006: 33). Supernatural power stored in the creatures and objects can be explored and benefit the people in the form of magic (Rahmat, 1979: 32).

In animism, a person is believed to be able to connect the two dimensions, which are the real world and the spirit world. The bridge is a person called as a shaman. Shamanism is the belief that shamans are mediators or messengers between the human world and the spiritual world (Chopra, 2005: 3; 712-713). It is believed that he can cure diseases by improving the spirit of the patients. Allegedly, he is able to travel into the spiritual world with the aim to solve the problems faced by the community. Supernatural beings are believed to be able to visit the real world to give guidance to people and treat diseases of the human soul (Eliafe, 1972, 3:7). Besides shaman as the intermediary (spirit-medium), they are also called witch doctor, shamans, healers, saints, martial arts teacher, witches, shamans in the western or Kūhīn in Arabic.

The belief in supernatural beings has caused fear and respect among animists. If people made mistakes or acted blindly without complying with certain rules, then it will offend the spirits. In order to establish a good relationship between humans and supernatural beings, sacred prohibitions have been established. The concept of sacred prohibition is very similar to the taboo.

These elements are very significant and even debated in the concept of animism. Thus, Islam has put forward its own perspective on these elements and other issues in regard to the unseen, particularly through the Prophet’s Sunnah.

THE SOULS BY SUNNAH NABAWI

Animism deals with many spiritual aspects with regards to the spirit. Before embarking on a comparative discussion, the authors explain the Sunnah’s general perspective of spirit. The Malay word roh (soul) comes from the Arabic word “rūh” and the plural is called “arwāh” which means an element that gives life to human and animal. The term “rūh” in the Quran also refers to Quran itself, revelation, the Prophet ‘Īsā and the Angel Gabriel. Rūh is also called the “soul” and “breath”. In philosophy, the spirit is the antonym of “material objects”, while “rūhāni” is a thing that has a soul (Mustafa Ibrahim, nd: 380). Spirit, soul, and desire have a very close relationship, to the extent that they are considered as the same elements (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1975, 21). Spirit in one of the unseen elements and is not easily accessible by the human mind. There is no other way for man to know the nature and actuality of the spirit except by shariah explanation (Ibn Kathir, 1999: 5: 116).

Sunnah explains that the soul which is breathed into the body of a fetus is a new soul and has nothing to do with the souls of the dead. During sleep, the soul separates from the body, but the reality is not like one occurs during death. Souls of the dead would be in the barzakh and have nothing to do with this life. Punishment or reward in barzakh involves the spirit and the body. Spirits of the dead do not appear as ghosts or return to the world to intervene in people’s lives. Sunnah perspective deduction of the spirit as described is from authors’ induction analysis of hadiths in al-Kutub al-Sittah. The authors use the method of observation and induction (tataubbu’ and istiqra‘) on the topic and al-Hadith in al-Kutub al-Sittah. In addition to researching the hadith from thematic standpoint, the authors also use a few important keywords such as; rūh, arwāh, nafs and nasamah.
There are 41 categories of hadith with the different status that discuss the aspect of the soul. The authors have made a classification of the content of the *hadiths* and the details can be seen in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Num. of Hadith</th>
<th>The Hadith Distribution In al-Kutub al-Sittah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facts about soul must be derived from revelation (<em>al-Wahy</em>)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B 5 1 - 2 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Human and Animal Possess Soul</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M 3 3 1 2 3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soul Is an Invisible Entity and Can Only Be Seen When the Angel Claims It.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>AD - 2 1 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Spirit of God” (<em>Rūḥullāh</em>) refer to Adam and ‘Isa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>T 14 5 1 3 0 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Rūḥ al-Qudus” Is the Angel Gabriel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N 3 3 2 1 2 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soul at the First Stage of Human Creation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>IM 4 - 1 3 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit of the trend Fellow Man</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soul Split Up with Current Bodies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soul Is Claimed by The Angel and the Transmission of The Soul to Barzakh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Condition of The Deads in the Grave Is Soulless</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Destination of The Souls in The Barzakh Are Different According to Their Actions.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Souls in The Barzakh Do Not Travel Back to The World</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Thus, the Sunnah provides a clear picture of the soul. However, there are still many secrets about the soul that could not be grasped by human logic. In its hypothesis, the paper argues that there is a difference between the perspective of the Sunnah and Western anthropology about the beliefs of animism. The difference is fundamental because of the difference in the reference source; the Sunnah of Nabawi is based on revelation while Western anthropological theories are based on field studies and observations.

**ANIMISM FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PERSPECTIVES OF SUNNAH AND WESTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST**

In this section, the authors compare the various aspects of animism and related matters, from the perspective of Western anthropologists and Sunnah.

### i. Source of Information about Souls

Western anthropologist E. B. Tylor proposed the theory of animism based on data collection through empirical studies. He made a series of expeditions to many parts of the world such as Latin America, Africa and Australia (John Scott, 2007; 186). Based on his observations of the indigenous, primitives and isolated communities, he found that they shared the same belief that is believing in the spiritual world (Harvey, 2006; 7). Evolution theory and the origin of religions were formulated based on ethnographic records and drawings of the primitive tribes (Sutardi, 2007; 25).

**Sunnah perspective:** Sunnah also discusses sociology, particularly in the field of anthropology. Facts about the unseen are proposed in accordance with *sumiyyat* sources that are the Quran and Sunnah. The most important element in animism is the spirit and soul. Therefore, people should not make theories and assumptions about the soul except through revelation (Dhavamony, 2011; 67). Prophet Muhammad was asked by the Jews about the nature of the soul and its features. He kept silent until the revelation of the verse (Al-Isrā’ 17: 85):

> “And they ask you about the soul. Say: “The Soul is of the affair of my Lord; and mankind has not been given of knowledge but little.” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Tirmidhī).

Information about the soul has been told by Allah and His Messengers and need to be believed by the believer. According to al-Rāzī (1999; 21: 382), God has made it clear that the soul exists and its formation and influence in giving life to the body comes with His Will. Despite limited specific knowledge on the soul, it does not mean that it does not exist. Thus, the tendency to describe the nature of the soul according to own understanding by relying on assumptions, imaginations, stories, and dreams in order to unveil the unseen matters is beyond useless.

### ii. Two-Dimensional World

According to anthropologists, the animists believe in the existence of two worlds that are the real world and the unseen world. E. B. Tylor argued that the events of the life, death, dreams, and nightmares make the primitive people aware of the
existence of the unseen (Tylor, 1873: 1: 428). This is because they can see the soul of their dead ancestors, animals, plants, and the environment in their dreams, as seen in the real world.

**Sunnah perspective:** Sunnah also recognizes the existence of the two-dimensional worlds. The principle of Iman more fundamental towards the unseen. Similar and basic issues that are discussed in animism and Sunnah is the matter of spirit and supernatural creatures. Sunnah acknowledges the existence of spirits and supernatural beings such as jinn and angels. The description of supernatural beings described in the Sunnah is very different to the ones highlighted in the forms of animism on supernatural beings.

### iii. Religion and The Oldest Belief

Western anthropologists argue that the emergence of the earliest religions is in line with their realization that the world is not only inhabited by physical beings, but it is also inhabited by spiritual beings called the soul or spirit. E. B. Tylor argued that animism is the simplest human belief and the essence of all religions (Harvey, 2006: 7). As proof, believing in spirit and supernatural creatures can be found in all religions. He established that the theory of religious evolution was expanded in line with civilization. The Evolutionary Origins of Religious according to Tylor begins with animism, polytheism, and dynamism and ends with monotheism. Nevertheless, he was not debating whether this evolution will end up with atheism. Rahmat S. H (1979: 4-7) interpreted based on the Tylor’s evolution theory by stating that animism starts with believing in the existence of the spiritual realm. The primitive people are said to continue to believe in the existence of ghosts, spirit and honouring the spirits of the ancestors. The life of primitive society expanded and expanded on the economic and social standpoint. Consequently, they no longer had to go into the jungle to collect fruit and hunting wild animals. People began farming and raising animals. This leads to the emergence of polytheistic beliefs. From polytheism, the human belief continued to shrink until it comes to trust monotheism, worship only one God. According to Taylor, the religion of monotheism is the final result of the development of human intelligence and building trust. The belief began to develop with animism, polytheism and ended up with monotheism.

![Figure 2: The Evolution of Human Belief by E. B. Tylor](image)

**Sunnah perspective:** Sunnah proposes information that is totally different than western anthropology theory. Allah Almighty created His servants in a state of pure from shirk. Imam Muslim narrated from ‘Iyāḍ bin Ḥimār that the Prophet said in a hadith Qudsi:

> “Behold, my Lord commanded me that I should teach you which you do not know and which He has taught me today. (He has instructed thus): The property which I have conferred upon them is lawful for them. I have created My servants as one having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah but it is Satan who turns them away from the right religion and he makes unlawful what has been declared lawful for them ad he commands them to ascribe partnership with Re, although he has no justification for that.” (Narrated by Muslim).

Provided with the purity will guide people to worship only Allah SWT. This has been clearly proved and reinforced with arguments from the Quran and the authentic hadiths of the Prophet PBUH. Idolatry, apostasy, and the deviation of faith began to appear in a few centuries after the creation of Adam (al-Qaffārī, 1992: 14). Some western scholars like Adamson Hoebel and Andrew Lang also accept that the original human beliefs acknowledge the concept of oneness and supreme God (The High God Concept). They believe that the deviations from monotheism to polytheism is due to the belief in deities that is lower than the highest god. It starts with the “idea of creating myth” and “Ancient Adam” in humans. According to Andrew Lang, distortion is caused by the human passion to create myths and fables that are great and did not achieve the intention to entertain their audiences. Then people created stories about gods and goddesses, spirits, ghosts, demons and so on. These elements were portrayed as characters in the story and sometimes filled with philosophy and ideology of the writer. In this development, a reference to the Almighty God is also visible, although still vague. People tend to concentrate on the gods and goddesses created by man himself while the true God is left behind (Adamson Hoebel, 1958: 553).

Sunnah does not deny that there is a phenomenon of humans who changed from their original nature (fitrah), from faithful to shirk. This situation is not because of evolution, but the man had strayed from the right path because of certain factors. Sunnah also noted the historical fact that shirk in the form of ancestor worship began to appear in the time of Prophet Noah. His people worship their pious leaders through the worship of idols. Al-Bukhārī (no. 4920) narrated that Ibn ‘Abbās said that Wadd, Suwā’, Yaghūth Ya’ūq and Nasr (The name of idols) is the name of the righteous people during the time of Noah. When they died, the devil whispered to their people, “build statues in their events and give them (statues) with their
names.” Finally, they did it. However, the idols were not worshiped until the community (the generation that built the idols) have died and knowledge had disappeared, then the idols are worshipped in the end.

Figure 3: Pattern Change Trust Some People According to Sunnah Perspective

IV. Spirit Form

Animists believe that the spirit has face, legs, hands, age and consume food. Spirit also sometimes can be seen with the naked eyes even though it is made up of invisible entity. Thus, he was offered dish and sacrifices in the form of animals, food and some other objects (R.P. Suyono, 2008:93-98).

**Sunnah perspective:** Sunnah says the spirit is an element of mass. There has been no statement and news of the appearance or shape in detail. Umm Salamah said:

“The Messenger of Allah entered upon Abu Salamah (after he had died), and his eyes were wide open. He closed his eyes, then he said: ‘When the soul is taken, the sight follows it.’” (Narrated by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Mājah).

This hadith made it clear that the soul has a figure. The act of removing something does not happen unless the object of mass. In addition, vision does not follow unless it can be viewed and has mass (al-Bassām, 2003: 3: 156 and al-ʻUthaymīn, 1992: 3: 106). In the perception of the researcher, only this hadith clearly describes to us the identity of the soul.

V. Classification of Good Spirits and Evil Spirit

In animism as described by western anthropologists, the spirit can be categorized into two, namely good spirits and evil spirits (Sutardi, 2007: 24). Good spirits are worshipped for example the spirits of ancestors that are believed to have links with the living (Robert S. Ellwood & Gregory D. Alles, 2009: 14). The spirits were not on the same level. There are the most powerful and respected spirits, for instance, the tribe leaders or kings. Regularly, there would be a change in worshipping from a spirit to another.

Natural disasters have been associated with the spirits who are angry. They consider volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, floods, lightning, fire and so on come from anger of evil spirits or the wrath of good spirits which were not honoured. People need to be careful in their lives and not to do things that can offend these unseen creatures because it will lead to bad things happen such as diseases, natural disasters and so on (Othman, 2003: 326). Spirit of someone who is ill and not taken care of, treated and managed well after his death is believed to be antu buta (blind ghost) (Hermansyah, 2010: 48). If it is not taken care of, it can turn into a ghost which is thought to spread disease or cause a person to become insane (Bane, 2012: 158).

**Sunnah perspective:** Sunnah does not classify spirits of the dead into the spirit of good and evil based on their interference in the affairs of human life. Sunnah just stated that the good souls are the soul of believers who are obedient to Allah when they were alive. While evil souls are not the souls which reject and disobey Allah. Examples of these classifications as stated in a hadith that rūh ṭayyibah and rūh khabīthah. Abu Huraira reported:

*When the soul of a believer would go out (of his body) it would be received by two angels who would take it to the sky. Hammad (one of the narrators in the chain of transmitters) mentioned the sweetness of its odour, (and further said) that the dwellers of the sky say: Here comes the pious soul from the side of the earth Let there be blessings of Allah upon the body in which it resides. And it is carried (by the angels) to its Lord, the Exalted and Glorious. He would say: Take it to its destined end. And if he is a nonbeliever and as it (the soul) leaves the body-Hammad made a mention of its foul smell and of its being cursed-the dwellers of the sky say: There comes a dirty soul from the side of the earth, and it would be said: Take it to its destined end. Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger put a thin cloth which was with him upon his nose while making a mention (of the foul smell) of the soul of a non-believer.* (Narrated by Muslim).

However, if the meaning of the spirit is related to the jinn who are spiritual, then the classification can be done. Many authentic hadiths explaining that jinn helped humankind for specific purposes such as witchcraft and fortune-telling. Meanwhile, the jinn can lead people astray by using temptations of the spiritual aspect, and also can harm humans.
physically and mentally. When talking about spirits and demons, Ibn Taymiah (1995, 21: 15 and 25: 240) also used the term “evil spirits” to the *jinn* and Satan in some places in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*. Ibn Taymiah.

vi. Correlation Between the Spirit of the Dead and the Living

Belief in spirits born out of a sense of dependency to communicate with spirits with the aim of preventing evil, eliminate misfortune and bring prosperity (Dhavamony, 2011: 67). “Spiritualism” is the belief that spirits of the dead can communicate with the living. According to the Kamus Dewan (2005: 1521), “spiritualism” is a belief that spirits of the dead can communicate with the living, especially through meditation. This belief exists in various forms all over the world (Chopra, 2005: 3: 743).

Communication with spirits can be made in the form of worshipping the spirit individually or in masses. For this purpose, a ritual is performed by family members at the family shrine. In addition, the role of the healer or shaman is also used to interpret the will of the spirit or convey messages from family members who are still alive (Dhavamony, 2011: 68). Accordingly, modern animist movement uses modern equipment to bring the spirits of the dead, to dialogue, to ask for help, spiritual surgery and others. According to ‘Ali Sa’id al-’Ubaydî (2006: 1: 13-17), the definition of “modern animism” chosen by him is one modern movement that combines people of various faiths and different ideologies. They are unanimous in believing in the existence and immortality of the soul. They believe that the spirit can be summoned and dialogue. The fundamental doctrine of the soul and the details are varied based on each stream. On the surface, this movement seeks to take advantage and experience from the spirit and for the benefit of humanity. However, in reality, it is a movement to destroy all of the revealed religion using a variety of medium.

**Sunnah perspective:** After the soul parted from the dead body, it is no longer has a relationship with the living, except in dreams. In some hadith the Prophet told the story of ‘Abd Allāh bin ‘Amr bin Ḥarām, father of Jābir, who was killed in the Battle of Uhud. He pleaded to Allah to return to the world, but it was not granted. Allah does not allow the spirit which is in the *barzakh* to return to the world. If the souls of the dead could return to the world, the spirits of the martyrs are worthier and more fit to be discharged compared with the spirits of ordinary people who have not given any service to Islam. Prophet Muhammad said:

> Nobody who enters Paradise likes to go back to the world except a martyr. Indeed, he likes to go back to the world. He said, “so that I may be martyred ten times in the path of Allah.” That is because he has seen the glory given to him by God. (Narrated by al-Tirmidhî).

If the soul was the soul of the believers and the favored, he no longer wanted to go back to the world. The evil spirit was preoccupied with the painful punishment in the *barzakh*. *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah* believes that the punishment in the *barzakh* is true based on the Quran and Sunnah. However, they conflicted whether it is applied to the body or soul. [First] Ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî and al-Karrâmiyyah take the opinion from the story of the question in the grave happen to the body only. God makes them the ability to listen and understand and feel pleasure and torment. [Second] Ibn Hazm and Ibn Hubayrah of the opinion that the questioning happens to the spirit only. [Third] majority of the scholars disagree with them and believes that the soul returned to the body or a part of the body (al-‘Asqalânî, 1960, 3: 235).

Here, Sunnah perspective has clearly shown that the souls of the dead cannot come back to the world. So, what is it that appear in various forms such as light, figure, smoke, animal, and so on when the spirits of the dead are summoned? Where does the voice hear during the ritual to bring the spirit come from? Sunnah says all of that is the interferences of jinn and demons that can incarnate in the form of other creatures like human being, snake or a black dog.

vii. The Destinations of Soul After Death

Animists believe that the souls of the dead possessed not only living things but also inanimate objects. It is said that the soul is also found in rocks, large trees, weapons, traditional musical instrument and so on. The spirits are celebrated in order to return the favour, to avoid disturbance and to avoid their anger.

Mariasusai Dhavamony (2011, 69) concludes that there are three forms of beliefs about the conditions and whereabouts of the soul after the death of the body as follows:

1. The soul floats over the surface of the earth and interacts with human life such as visiting his home.
2. The concept of rebirth, reawakening of the dead creatures, also known as reincarnation (Chopra, 2005: 3: 647) or *tanassukh al-arwah* (Chopra, 2005: 3: 748). It appears again in the form of humans, animals or plants.
3. Belief in the existence of different dimension as a place for spirits to reside like on islands, the underworld or mountains. The spirits continue their life similar to worldly life, given rewards or punishments in accordance with the actions while living in the world.

**Sunnah perspective:** According to the Sunnah, the destination of the soul is no longer in this world among humans. The souls of the dead are in the *barzakh*, which is a totally different dimension from this world. Islamic scholars agreed that the souls are in the *barzakh*. However, they differ in determining the specific place where the souls reside. Ibn Abī al-‘Izz al-

The authors chose the opinion that the souls of the faithful are in ‘Illyyîn that is a place in the seventh sky, while the souls of the unbelievers and unjust are in Sijîn – the seventh layer of the earth. In addition, the position of the believers in ‘Illyyîn are also varied (Ibn Qayyim, 1975: 115). The highest-ranking is the position of the soul of the Prophet Muhammad and the soul of other Prophets. Their positions are also different based on their status in the eyes of Allah. Abû Hurayrah reported that the Prophet said:

“When the believer is dying, the angels of mercy come to him with white silk and say: “Come out content and with the pleasure of Allah upon you to the mercy of Allah, fragrance and a Lord Who is not angry; So it comes out like the best fragrance of musk. They pass him from one to another until they bring him to the gate of heaven, where they say, How good is this fragrance that has come to you from the Earth! Then the souls of the believers come to him and they rejoice more over him than any one of you rejoices when his absent loved one comes to him. They ask him: ‘What happened to so-and-so, what happened to so-and-so?’” They say: “Let him be, for he was in the hardship of the world. When he says, ‘Did he not come here?’ They say: ‘He was taken to the pit (of Hell).’ Come out discontent, subject of Divine wrath, to the punishment of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime; so it comes out like the foulest stench of a corpse. They bring him to the gates of the Earth, where they say: ‘How foul is this stench!’ Then they bring him to the souls of the disbelievers.” (Narrated by al-Nasa’î)

viii. Public Perceptions Toward Animism

In reviewing religion, anthropologists do not focus their attention on the truth about any ideology based on confidence and belief but focus on the existence, theology, and the reality-based on empirical-oriented research (Sutardi, 2007: 22). In the study of theology, there are religions that contain animism elements such as the worship of spirits, the belief in magic, and the summoning of spirit, and so on. The religions in the world which are affected with elements of animism are Shinto, Serer, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Paganism and Neopaganism. Most animism elements have disappeared with the emergence of religions, but it is fundamental to the Japanese Shinto religion (Shadily, 2012: 62). According to the observation done by researchers, some of the Muslims are also affected by elements of animism such as in Shi’ism and extremist Sufism.

Sunnah perspective: As a religion which always stressed on the purity of the faith, Islam, through the Quran and the Sunnah as its medium, explains the forms of shirk and ways to prevent it. In this article, authors only focus on Sunnah methodology to eradicate animism to the grassroots.

Sunnah takes a firm perception in this matter. Sunnah says that an animism is a form of idolatry, falsehood, deviant and superstition. The theories about the soul, spirit and supernatural beings submitted by western anthropologists contradict with each other. Their hypotheses through observations to the indigenous communities were not consistent. Thus, the Sunnah suggests some special methods to prevent Muslims from being involved or influenced by elements of animism.

1. Praying to other things like the soul of the dead, jinn, nature’s spirit and so on is an act of associating partners to Allah SWT.
2. Extremism like glorifying ancestors, tribe leaders, or saints either during they are alive or after they are dead are prohibited.
3. No magic or sacred being in talismans and amulets. The souls of the dead do not reside in inanimate objects. Truthfully, those amulets, talismans, charms and so on do not bring any benefits to its owners. Sometimes they are possessed with Jinn or Satan which also called as khadam.
4. Individuals who are involved in shamanism like witches, soothsayer, fortune-tellers, shaman, witch doctor, and so on are the mediator who directly interacts with Jinn and Satan.
5. Sunnah bans social system which practices sacred prohibitions, belief in jinx, cursed and taboo. This system is not logic and it is solely to educate people with scare tactics.

Based on the comparison done between the two perspectives, it can be concluded that almost all aspects are different. Common ground can only be agreed on the recognition of the existence of the unseen and the real world; and the classification of the good and evil spirits. The details can be found in the table below:

CONCLUSION

The theory of animism is still hotly debated by Muslim and western anthropology scholars. Based on this comparative article between the theory of western anthropologists and Sunnah, it can be concluded that there is only a slight similarity between the two perspectives on animism. The difference is even more noticeable and it is hard to search for common ground. Therefore, Islam through Quran and Sunnah oppose all forms of isms that conflicted with revelation upon the sanctity and purity of faith.
## Table 3: Animism between Sunnah and Western Anthropologists Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Comparison Aspect</th>
<th>Western Anthropologist</th>
<th>Sunnah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Source of Data About Religion, Spirit and The Unseen</td>
<td>Data collected from empirical studies. Observations made to the oldest communities in the world.</td>
<td>Data about the spirit of the unseen and must be guided by the Quran and Hadith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Two-Dimensional Nature</td>
<td>Recognizes the existence of two worlds; the real and the unseen with its own perspective.</td>
<td>Recognizes the existence of two worlds; the real and the unseen with its own perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Religion and The Oldest Belief</td>
<td>Animism is the oldest belief and the basis of all religions.</td>
<td>Monotheism is the belief of human origin. Shirk in various forms such as animism appear later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Form of Spirit</td>
<td>The form and features of the spirit is very similar to the living.</td>
<td>Spirit is an invisible entity. Many differences with the living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Classification of Good and Evil Spirits</td>
<td>Spirits are classified into good and evil by its character and its role for the living.</td>
<td>Spirit are classified into good and evil according to their deeds when they were alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Correlation Between the Spirit of the Dead and the Living</td>
<td>Spirit can still be connected, cause good or ill to people who are alive.</td>
<td>There is no relationship between the spirit and the people who are alive except in dreams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Destination of the Soul After Death</td>
<td>After parting with the body, spirits float the surface of the earth, transmit to a new body or in the unseen.</td>
<td>Souls are in the barzakh. Their location varies based on their practice when they were alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Public Perceptions Toward Animism</td>
<td>Not concerned about the ideological truth. Many religions influenced by animism.</td>
<td>Reject animism. It is polytheistic and deviant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Analysis on Comparison between Sunnah and the Western Anthropologists’ Perspective

## REFERENCES


