THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT IN THE WEST

From Antiquity to the Present

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Edited by

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Chapter 8

Magic, Marvel, and Miracle in Early Islamic Thought

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Introduction: The Western Study of Islamic Magic

The modern study of magic in Islam is intimately connected to the history of Orientalism as it developed during the course of the nineteenth century. During this period, anthropologists and scholars of religion identified magic with the primitive and irrational, set in opposition to true religion, reason, and empiricism.[1] For instance, in his account of the customs of Egyptians, the famed Arabic philologist, traveler, and English translator of *The Arabian Nights*, Edward Lane (d. 1876), observed that Arabs on the whole are a very superstitious people and that the most prominent of the superstitions among them is their belief in jinn. He gives examples of the practice of conjuring jinn, the use of jars and other vessels to bottle them, and the general Solomonic background to the art of subjugating jinn, all of which, he notes, help explain the marvelous tapestry of *The Arabian Nights*, replete as it is with magical transformations and the black arts of sorcery.[2]

In addition to the belief in supernatural spirits, as well as the omnipresent power of saints, one of the more remarkable superstitions for Lane was the use of written charms and amulets, the composition of which is "founded upon magic." These charms, he explains, commonly consist of particular Qurʾānic passages and the names of God, along with angels, jinn, prophets, and saints, all mixed with combinations of numerals and secret diagrams (Figure 8.1). Lane continues that "the most esteemed of all *'ḥegábs'* (or charms) is a *'muṣḥaf'* (or copy of the Ḳur-án)," which in its miniature form is worn by both men and women in an embroidered leather case and is used as a prophylactic against "disease, enchantment, the evil eye and a variety of other evils."[3]

It is not at all surprising that, in the course of his travels, Lane encountered such beliefs and practices. Indeed, the deployment of the Qurʾān for protective and curative purposes can be traced back to the earliest history of Islamic devotion. It is also true that the belief in jinn and their occult power is rooted

FIGURE 8.1. Print block amulet, ca. 11th century, 23 x 8.4 cm. The top of the amulet features a Solomonic seal. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978.546.32.

in the Qurʾān and the fabric of early Islamic cosmography. Similarly, the practice of shrine veneration and the acceptance and promotion of saintly miracles is intimately connected to the structures of religious authority and piety in Islamic history. To be sure, one can point to factions among the religious elite that, in various historical and geographical contexts, have debated the probity of beliefs and practices that Lane would have deemed superstitious. Yet, in the general framework of religious orthopraxy, Qurʾānic charms, a belief in jinn, and the visiting of tombs of prophets and saints have historically occupied a rather normative place in Islamic soteriology. The categorization of such religious practices and beliefs as manifestations of superstitious magic forms part of the broader epistemological foundations of Orientalism, which viewed the Orient in general and Islam in particular as decadent, effeminate, and irrational.

The anthropological encounter with native Muslims could also be largely substituted with a close reading of texts, particularly *The Arabian Nights*, considered in the development of Orientalism as a key for understanding the Muslim mind. The Orientalist Duncan Black Macdonald (d. 1943) notes in his Haskell lectures on comparative religion, which were delivered at the University of Chicago in 1906, that there still reigns across the Muslim world "an unquestioning faith in the magician." He continues by stating that the shell separating "the Oriental from the Unseen is still very thin," easily broken by the charms and amulets of magicians, for "the world of the *Arabian Nights* is still his world."[4] Throughout his scholarship, Macdonald drew extensively from *The Arabian Nights*, with its magical twists and turns, which he viewed as reflecting "the common soul of Islam." In his advice to missionaries, he notes that this collection of tales of powerful jinn and seductive enchantresses can actually "take the place of contact with the Muslim world," for unlike direct interactions with Muslims, it neither "misleads nor misinforms."[5]

There is, however, much about the Western study of Islam and magic that has both misled and misinformed. Part of this arises from the raw exoticism shaping the literary, artistic, and scholarly discourses of Orientalism, an exoticism that represents Muslims as blindly following religious law and ritual while maintaining practices rooted in pagan traditions of magic and superstition.[6] It is a common strategy in polemical interactions between differing religious communities to present what an opposing group views to be sacred as truly unlawful, irrational, or magical. What Orientalists or missionaries identified as magical rites would not necessarily constitute magic within the framework of Islamic devotion. Such is the case, for example, with the assertion in the first

edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1913–1934) that Muslims do not study the Qurʾān in order to understand it; rather, it is learned by heart for "the reward promised in the next world," and to "benefit by the virtue or *baraka* [blessing] of the divine word." This, the author concludes, is in keeping with "the mentality of Muḥammadan peoples with [their] strong belief in magic."[7] Recourse to the salvific power of the Qurʾān in its oral and written forms is thus reduced to a primitive belief in magic. Here, as elsewhere, the concept of magic is applied largely without consideration to autochthonous discourses on what constitutes the magical or the occult. Rather, the category is treated as though it has universal applicability with a common ontology of superstition, fakery, and ignorance that transcends the particularities of any given context.

Needless to say, for Islamic intellectual and cultural history, the line between magic and religion does not follow the same course that defined the Enlightenment, with its critique of magic as primitive superstition. To be sure, there are important examples of Muslim theologians who saw magic as nothing more than mere trickery; however, they did so largely within a religious framework that was designed to protect the singularity of miracles as the probative basis for determining the authenticity of prophets.

Similarly, although sorcery was generally considered a capital offense in juridical discourse, historically Muslim societies did not participate in anything akin to the persecution of witches and other "deviants" that shapes significant chapters in medieval and early modern European history. In the development of Islamic legal, philosophical, and theological discourses, the boundaries of magic prove to be incredibly porous. In certain contexts, magic is defined as the opposite of religion, akin to disbelief in and disobedience toward God. Yet, there are also traditions that were quite dominant in the formation of Islamic thought that view magic as not substantively distinct from miracle; rather, they advance magic as constituting an integral part of the natural fabric of the cosmos, as a mysterious force to be harnessed and controlled. This process of defining magic, marvel, and miracle fits into a larger pattern of demarcating internal divisions while maintaining external boundaries.

Early Background: Neither Poet nor Soothsayer

The categorization of magic as the opposite of religion can be found in the earliest stages of Islamic history. In an account preserved in several early Arabic sources, al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra (d. 1/622), an aristocratic opponent of the Muslim community in Mecca, heard the Prophet recite the Qurʾān. Recognizing that Muḥammad neither was possessed by a jinn (*majnūn*), nor

was he a poet (*shāʿir*), al-Walīd argued: "I have seen soothsayers (*kuhhān*) and he does not murmur (*zamzama*) like one, nor does he use rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) like one." Ultimately, al-Walīd settled on *sāḥir*, a term that signifies a sorcerer or magician to describe him.[8] In the exegetical tradition, al-Walīd's assessment is generally read as the occasion for the following Qurʾānic passage: "Then he turned away, full of pride. And he said, 'This is just magic imitated [from others], just the speech of a human being.'"[9] This critique fits into a rhetorical configuration in the Qurʾān, in which the opponents of Muḥammad and of the early Muslim community repeatedly refer to the revelation as clear or obvious magic (e.g., Q. 27:13, *hādhā siḥrun mubīn*).[10] In the ethical framework of the Qurʾān, such refrains of disbelief are matched with descriptions of the revelation as a clear scripture (*kitāb mubīn*) and the prophetic message as a clear warning (*nadhīr mubīn*).[11] Thus, in the binary logic of the revelation, what appears to unbelievers as *siḥr*, that is, magic, sorcery, or enchantment, is truly salvific guidance from God.

The charge of deceptive magic is leveled at the revelation, at the resurrection, at divine signs (*āyāt*), and at divine truth (*ḥaqq*).[12] Just as Muḥammad's prophecy is ridiculed, the Qurʾān relates that earlier disbelievers had rejected the miracles of Moses and Jesus as mere magic.[13] Similarly, accusations of sorcery are directly attributed to Muḥammad:

> A. L. R. These are the signs of the wise book. Is it a wonder to people that We have revealed to a man among them so that he should warn people – and give those who believe good tidings that they are on a sure footing before their lord? [But] those who disbelieve say, "He is clearly a sorcerer."[14]

This process of discursive maneuvering reflects how the categories of the licit and illicit are bound within a broader formulation of religious authority and authenticity, where magic is opposed to miracle and defined as inauthentic and specious in contrast to the legitimacy of divine truth. As these passages highlight, the Qurʾān makes every effort to reject for itself the label of magic or trickery in a rhetorical structure designed to establish its divine origin. It is not entirely surprising that Muḥammad's opponents in Mecca would have disparaged the revelation as magic or trickery, considering the strong oracular currents running throughout the body of the text. This oracular dimension is generally designed to foretell the end of time and the final judgment, drawing on various rhetorical strategies, including, most notably, oaths, enigmas, and mysterious letters that open many suras (e.g., the letters A. L. R. just cited).[15]

The Qurʾān speaks of magic as illicit and harmful and generally associates it with evil or trickery. The final two suras of the Qurʾān (113–114), known

as the suras of refuge (i.e., *al-muʿawwidhatān*), both begin with "Say: I seek refuge in the Lord (*qul aʿūdhu bi-rabb*)" and serve as prayers of protection against various evils, including, most notably, witchcraft. This is made explicit with the reference to the evil of women who blow on knots (*al-naffāthāt fī l-ʿuqad*, Q. 113:4). In the Qurʾān, the word *naffāthāt*, or blowing women, is a *hapax legomenon*.[16] However, its meaning (i.e., witches) is apparent from the various ancient traditions of guarding against magical knots, as reflected, for instance, in incantations preserved in the Akkadian *Maqlû* (*Burning*) tablets of ancient Mesopotamia.[17] The Akkadian *kiṣrū* (knots) is a cognate of *qṭar* and *qeṭrā* in Aramaic and Syriac and all three carry the sense of magical knots.[18] Thus, for instance, in the Bible, Daniel has the power to untie knots (*šĕrâ qiṭrîn*), meaning he can guard against witchcraft.[19]

The final apotropaic verses in the Qurʾān also describe a search for protection against the one who whispers (*waswās*), which in the exegetical tradition is generally interpreted as the whispering temptation of the Devil, by way of demonic insinuation.[20] This may also be an allusion to the whispering or murmuring associated with magical incantations. In the Hebrew Bible, Isaiah warns against consulting magicians who chirp and whisper (*hamĕsapsĕpîm wĕ-hammahgîm*); they are contrasted with the Law (*tôrāh*), in which there is no magic (*ʾên-lô šāḥar*).[21] The term used is also a cognate with the Arabic *siḥr* (magic or sorcery) and with the Akkadian *saḫāru*, meaning to encircle with sorcery or magic.[22] The etymology of *siḥr* points to ancient Mesopotamian magical practices, a link that resonates with the Qurʾānic account of the residents of Babel obtaining knowledge of magic from the fallen angels Hārūt and Mārūt (Q. 2:102).[23]

Word Play

The word "magic" itself warrants further consideration. The Greek loanwords *magos* (a Persian priest) and *mageia* (a cognate with the English word "magic") were fused relatively early with Greek notions of black magic (e.g., *goēteia*).[24] In Aramaic, the association of the *magus* with sorcery (*ḥiršē*) finds expression in the Babylonian Talmud (e.g., Šab. 75a).[25] The history of the word reminds us that, as a discursive category, magic is often identified with the religious practices of others. However, although *majūs* in Arabic is generally associated with heretical dualism and fire worship, the word itself does not carry with it a sense of magic or sorcery; rather, it is used as a general term for Magians.[26] This signification is already attested in the Qurʾān, which refers to Magians (*majūs*) alongside Jews, Nazarenes, Sabeans, and

polytheists as separate groups that will be judged individually by God at the end of time (Q. 22:17).

A profound cosmographic reordering took place through the early absorption of Persian converts in the burgeoning Islamic urban centers. In addition to the historical record,[27] we can readily trace the impact of this encounter in the lexicographical residue with the importation of Persian loanwords into Arabic. A relevant example for our discussion of magic can be found in Arabic with *nīranj*, from the Middle Persian *nērang* [nylng]. This term originally signifies ritual directions or formulae, as expressed, for instance, in the Middle Persian commentary of the *Nērangestān*, which treats the valid means of performing rituals. The word is used to describe Avestan rites (*Abestāgīg nērang*, Dēnkard 7.7.2) and ritual directions for the *drōn* ceremony (*nērang ī drōn*), for the sacrifice (*nērang ī kardan*), and for consecrating water and bull's urine (*nērang ī āb ud pādyāb*).[28] The *Bundahišn* (*Primal Creation*) relates how the *gāhānīg nērang*, or sacred hymnic power of the *Gathas*, will smash the Foul Spirit (*Ganāg-mēnōy*) and the demon Āz.[29] Similarly, *nērang* signifies the recitation of the Avesta, with the aim of healing or warding off demons, in the sense of a ritual speech act designed to obtain beneficial results. However, in Arabic and in Early New Persian, *nīranj* often conveys a negative connotation, meaning charm, spell, or incantation, generally with a sense of illicit magic and trickery.

A similar process is at work with the Middle Persian *afsōn* ['pswn], which signifies an incantation or formulaic recitation often used to ward off evil or illness with the recitation of sacred Avestan words. For example, the Pahlavi *Rivāyat* accompanying the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* records a recitation for curing fever (*afsōn ī tab*) that includes Avestan formulae written in the Avestan script.[30] Similarly, the Pahlavi commentary (*zand*) on the *Wīdēwdād* of the Avesta describes *afsōn* as healing with the beneficent *manθra* or sacred word (*mānsarspand bēšāzēnēd*).[31] In the *Shāh-nāma* (*Book of Kings*) of Abū l-Qāsim Firdawsī (d. 411/1020), *afsun* continues to signify the enunciation of a sacred formula for warding off demons. However, in New Persian, the term also comes to evoke illicit magical practices.[32]

Other categories from pre-Islamic Persian cosmography are reinscribed in Islamic salvation history in what we might call an *interpretatio islamica*. Thus, for instance, the Arabic *shayāṭīn* (or demons) and jinn are often translated in Early New Persian as *dīv* and *parī*, cognates of the Middle Persian *dēw* and *parīg*. In Zoroastrian eschatology, *dēw*, written in Book Pahlavi with the arameogram ŠDYA, function as baleful adversaries in the battle between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, who represent the forces of good and evil, respectively. Similarly, the term *parīg* has the general sense of evil witches or sorceresses; they feature

as malevolent forces in the broader cosmological struggle for good. In addition to "demon," the New Persian *dīv* can also be used to translate the word jinn, a pattern of equivalence found, for instance, in early Persian translations and commentaries of the Qurʾān. In New Persian, however, the term *parī* soon sheds the negative connotations of witchcraft. Although they are also identified with jinn,[33] which in Islamic eschatology can be, like humans, either good-natured or wicked, the *parī* also have the general sense of angelic benevolent creatures from the realm of the spirits, akin to the English cognate fairy; thus, we have such common Persian appellations as Parīzād (fairy born) and Parīpaykar (fairy countenance).[34] In contrast, the Middle Persian *jādūg* (sorcerer) and *jādūgīh* (sorcery) generally maintain the same negative connotations in the New Persian cognate *jādū* for magic, witchcraft, and sorcery. As with the early Islamic association of *siḥr* with practices demarcated as ancient, foreign, or liminal, the Middle Persian *jādūgīh* also serves as a relational concept that is set in opposition to true religion (*dēn*). In the eschatological currents of the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* (*Memorial of Jāmāsp*), a late Zoroastrian world history, we read that although there are many followers of Ohrmazd, much of the world, which includes the Indians, Chinese, and Arabs (*tāzīgān*), as well as Turkestan and Barbary (*barbarestān*), sides with the evil Ahriman and openly practices witchcraft (*jādūgīh āškārag kunēnd*).[35] This process of marking religious others as in league with demonic sorcery is tied to a nearly ubiquitous practice among religious communities of identifying external boundaries while regulating internal divisions. The absorption and subsequent inscription of Persian vocabulary in Islamic cosmography is itself a testament to this process.

Magical Reasoning

Pre-Islamic Persian history, culture, and religious traditions profoundly shaped the development of Islamic civilization. This is expressed notably in the sheer number of Persian converts from the ranks of the religious elite and state administration. Throughout Islamic history, conversion has been a multidirectional process of transculturation: non-Muslims did not simply enter a fixed religious system; they were also active agents in its construction. What conversion meant beyond the circles of the urban elite remains largely unknown, although there is much to suggest that indigenous religious practices and beliefs developed side by side in the course of Islamization.

A telling example is found in the comments by the chief Ḥanafī jurist of Baghdad, Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370/981), in his legal exegesis, the *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, on the origins of magic. Commenting on Q. 2:102, a verse that

associates magic with ancient Babel, Jaṣṣāṣ relates the account of Bīwarāsb, the demon king of Babel:

> The ignorant masses and the women among us claim that Afarīdūn imprisoned Bīwarāsb in one of the highest mountains of Danbāwand and that he lives there chained and that magicians come to him there and they have learned magic (*siḥr*) from him and that one day he will escape and will conquer the world and that he is the Deceiver (*al-dajjāl*, i.e., the false messiah), whom the Prophet described and warned us about. I reckon that they also took this account from Magians.[36]

This is a reference to the famous story in Zoroastrian mythology of the ancient Persian king Frēdōn (Afarīdūn), who conquered the demon Bēwarāsp (Bīwarāsb); according to Jaṣṣāṣ, the Arabs also call him Ḍaḥḥāk, corresponding to the Middle Persian Dahāg, a cognate with the Avestan *aždahā* for "dragon" or "serpent." Elements of this story stretch back to the Avesta, in which Frēdōn slays Aži Dahāka.[37] Celebrated in Fīrdawsī's *Shāh-nāma*, details of this account have long featured in early Muslim sources. For instance, the foundational lexicography, the *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, composed by Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. ca. 170/786) and redacted by his companion al-Layth b. al-Muẓaffar (d. 187/803), relates that Bīwarāsb, known as Ḍaḥḥāk, was a sorcerer (*sāḥir*) imprisoned in Mount Damavand, and he was known as the "possessor of two serpents (*dhū l-ḥayyatayn*)," a reference to the serpents that grew out of his shoulders and that fed on human brains (Figure 8.2).[38]

Several of the accounts related by Jaṣṣāṣ have direct parallels in Zoroastrian scriptural material. As for the association of Dahāg with sorcery, we read in the *Dēnkard* (*Acts of Religion*), a ninth-century encyclopedia composed in Book Pahlavi, that Dahāg had spread sorcery throughout Babel (*jādūgīh andar Bābēl kard*), leading humankind into idol worship (*uzdēs-paristišnīh*).[39] Likewise, the *Bundahišn* identifies Dahāg as Bēwarāsp and relates that Frēdōn, unable to kill the demon, bound him to Mount Damavand.[40] Eschatological currents are also found in Zoroastrian material. Thus, for instance, we read a millenarian prediction in the *Bundahišn* that, at the end of the world, Dahāg will break free from his chains and cause immense destruction on earth through his demonic desire (*dēw-kāmagīh*).[41]

With Jaṣṣāṣ's account, we see the identification of Ḍaḥḥāk with the Dajjāl, the Deceiver who, in the early hadith corpus, plays a role akin to the anti-Christ in the eschatological unfolding of the end of time.[42] This equation of Ḍaḥḥāk with the Dajjāl can also be found in other early Muslim sources,[43] and it reflects a broader pattern of grafting pre-Islamic Persian history onto the

FIGURE 8.2. The demon king Ḍahhāk bound in chains on Mount Damavand with two brain-eating serpents that have grown out of his shoulders, Abū l-Qāsim Firdawsī (d. 411/1020), from a dispersed Ilkhānid manuscript, ca. 1335, known as the Demotte, or the Great Mongol *Shāh-nāma*. The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Per 104.3, reconstructed folio 11b.

arc of Islamic salvation. Likewise, the connection with magic is echoed in other material of the period, such as in the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* and the Sāmānid *Tafsīr-i Ṭabarī*, both of which recount that Ḍaḥḥāk seized control of the world through sorcery.[44]

Jaṣṣāṣ relates that these beliefs are held by "the ignorant masses and women among us," concluding that the material itself is taken from Zoroastrian sources. His account thus situates this particular cosmography of magic in the sphere of "popular," or non-elite, beliefs and practices associated with religious outsiders and evidently transposed by Persian converts into an Islamic soteriology. Yet, there is reason to suspect, given the appearance of similar material in other Islamic sources,[45] that what Jaṣṣāṣ imputes to the ignorant masses does not reflect popular currents as such; rather, this anecdote fits into Jaṣṣāṣ's larger theological rejection of the reality of magic. Working in the structure of Muʿtazilī theology, Jaṣṣāṣ develops a robust argument against the ontological power of magic, which he presents as nothing more than

sleight-of-hand deceit, enacted through tricks and illusions. In his treatment of the topic, Jaṣṣāṣ positions belief in magic on a par with ignorance. Thus, for instance, he argues that the masses foolishly believe that "a person can be transformed into an ass or a dog and that if they wish they can return to their original form and that people can mount ostrich eggs, brooms, or jars and fly in the air, passing from Iraq to India or to whatever regions they wish and then return all in one night."[46]

The rejection of the possibility of flying on brooms across the evening sky fits into Jaṣṣāṣ's larger attempt to theologically circumscribe and define the boundaries of the paranormal. Jaṣṣāṣ ridicules the masses, women, and the ignorant as foolishly believing in the power of magic. Rather, it is deception, trickery, and ignorance that form the basis of all magical activity. Jaṣṣāṣ's account presents optical illusions as things that appear as the opposite of what they really are, that are only produced when their true natures are hidden. He also discusses the deceptive acts of swindlers or tricksters (*mushaʿwidhūn*), who through legerdemain (i.e., *shaʿwadha*) practice various forms of trickery, such as changing thread into variegated colors, swallowing swords, and bringing dead birds back to life.[47] Included in his treatment of the topic is an anecdote concerning an automaton statute that guarded a royal sepulcher in the Levant, which, through secret mechanical levers connected to a staircase, decapitated all who tried to enter the king's burial chamber. In this regard, Jaṣṣāṣ's examples of magic as deception echo classical definitions of astonishment and wonder in the face of the unknown. For example, Jaṣṣāṣ's contemporary in Baghdad, the Muʿtazilī theologian Abū l-Ḥasan al-Rummānī (d. 384/994), describes astonishment (*taʿajjub*) as obscurity or confusion. Rummānī explains that it is normal for people to be astonished by that for which they do not know the cause (*sabab*), adding that the more the cause of something is obscured, the greater the sense of wonder becomes.[48] This definition of wonder can be found throughout Arabic writings on nature,[49] and it parallels the Arabic absorption of Greek learning that is reflected, in this particular instance, in the Platonic association of wonder with the development of philosophy.[50] Aristotle stresses this point in the opening to the *Metaphysica*, where he argues that it is through the act of being astonished that humankind begins to philosophize.[51]

Remaining astonished without uncovering the cause of the bewilderment is itself a form of ignorance. This is the foundation of Jaṣṣāṣ's argument that if magicians indeed had the power that they claimed to possess, in terms of the benefit and harm they could produce and their capacity to fly and their knowledge of the unseen, then they would surely be capable of killing kings,

unearthing vast treasures, and defeating entire countries. He concludes that this is simply not the case; rather, "the majority of [magicians] are greedy and deceptive, and try to steal dirhams by tricking people; they are poor and impoverished and we know they are not capable of anything."[52]

Normative Definitions

The difficulty with Jaṣṣāṣ's Muʿtazilī position on magic is that the broader soteriology of the Qurʾān and the prophetic Sunna affirm an array of supernatural phenomena that extend far beyond prophetic miracles. From the power of the unseen or occult (*ghayb*) to the workings of angels, demons, and jinn to the mysterious and malignant influence of the evil eye, reality is, in a fundamental sense, pregnant with the marvelous. Thus, for instance, despite his firm rejection of magic, Jaṣṣāṣ acknowledges the power of the evil eye and sanctions the prophylactic recitation of Qurʾānic verses and the names of God to ward off evil through the use of incantations (*ruqyā*, pl. *ruqā*).[53]

This entire discussion fits into a larger set of debates about the nature of miracles and their relationship to prophecy. Many Muslim theologians came to define the prophetic miracle, or *muʿjiza* (literally an act that incapacitates another from repeating or imitating), as a rupture with customary phenomena that only a prophet was capable of producing. This particular definition served as a probative basis for authenticating the claim to prophethood. Because the Prophet Muḥammad was recognized as the final prophet, or the seal of all the prophets, the door to further miraculous workings was closed, as it were, in any prophetic sense. However, in traditional Sunni theological circles, the wonderworking of holy men and women, known broadly as the *awliyāʾ*, the friends or saints of God, was generally grouped under the label of *karāmāt,* favor or gifts bestowed by God (compare with the Greek *charismata*). The various branches of Shiʿi theology distinguished the marvelous power of the Imams from the miraculous deeds achieved by the prophets often in very similar terms. However, as with magic, several Muʿtazilī theologians rejected the possibility of miraculous workings produced by anyone other than a prophet, regardless of what terminology was used to describe the phenomenon in question. This line of argument was designed to limit miracles to a distant prophetic age and thus to safeguard the miracle as a basis for establishing prophethood. Needless to say, the theological stance that neither magic nor saintly miracles had any ontological reality was a source of considerable debate, particularly as it competed with a vision of a cosmos that was filled with both wonder and enchantment.

The supernatural fabric governing Islamic theodicy gave the religious elite ample space to systematize a range of phenomena regulated within the sphere of the occult sciences (*ʿulūm al-ghayb*). This systematization forms part of a larger process of rationalizing magic and its power through epistemological structures and categories developed in natural science. In turn, much of the treatment of magic was profoundly shaped by the absorption and naturalization in Arabic letters of philosophical learning from Late Antiquity, specifically Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism.[54] In terms of the categorization of magic, particularly well known are the models advanced by such later authorities as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), and Ḥājjī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657), all of whom to some degree approach the various disciplines of magic through the rubrics of natural science and philosophy.[55]

The Ashʿarī theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī treats a broad range of occult sciences in various writings. In his voluminous Qurʾān commentary, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (*Keys to the Unseen*), Rāzī addresses the question of magic, focusing much of his attention on refuting the theologian al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) and the Muʿtazilī argument that magic is nothing other than trickery. He does this by affirming the scientific existence of occult forces through arguments rooted largely in Neo-Platonic natural philosophy on the relationship between the heavenly spheres, the human body, and the soul.[56] Under the broader rubric of enchantment or magic (*siḥr*), Rāzī lists a range of activities and phenomena that have real and measurable effects on the physical world. These include trickery and deceit, as well as the transformation of substances by harnessing occult forces in nature and commanding spirits through incantations and through the power of the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*).[57]

Rāzī elaborates further on an array of occult activities that fall under the broad category of *siḥr* in his theological summa, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya min al-ʿilm al-ilāhī* (*Sublime Pursuits in the Divine Science*).[58] These practices include: (1) judicial astrology (i.e., *aḥkām al-nujūm*); (2) purification of the rational soul, which is generated from celestial spirits (*al-arwāḥ al-falakiyya*), through spiritual exercises to obtain occult powers; (3) the use of the magical properties of mineral, plant, and animal medicaments[59]; (4) the deployment of incantations and charms to draw the aid of the lower spirits (*al-arwāḥ al-safaliyya*), which Rāzī identifies with jinn and demons[60]; (5) obtaining the aid of celestial spirits to produce phenomena that break with custom; (6) sleight of hand and deception, particularly through optical tricks; (7) automata and the marvels of hidden mechanisms; (8) the use of omens (*faʾl*) and divination (*zajr*), which itself consists of eight categories – physiognomy (*firāsa*), geomancy (*ʿilm al-raml*), palmoscopy (*ʿilm ikhtilāj al-aʿḍāʾ*, i.e., divination through the twitching of

limbs); omoplatoscopy or scapulomancy (*al-naẓar fī l-aktāf*, i.e., divination by examining the shoulder bones of animals), lithomancy (*ḍarb al-aḥjār*, which, according to Rāzī, is generally practiced by women), reading palms and footprints, augury through the flight and call of birds, and determining omens (*tafāʾul*) through the occurrence of various events;[61] (9) manipulating the foolish and those of little intellect by producing food and gaining their trust; and (10) employing various kinds of lies, tricks, and deceptions to instill fear in others and to gain control over them.

With regard to the ultimate power of magic, Rāzī explains that within the structure of Sunnī theology, as represented here by the *ahl al-Sunna*, a magician is indeed able to fly through the air and transform a person into an ass or an ass into a person through the recitation of specific incantations and charms. The power animating such magical feats – as well as that behind astrological forces and talismans – rests solely with God.[62] Likewise, Rāzī holds the same to be true for astrological forces and the talismans used to harness them.[63] This view of absolute divine power is entirely congruent with broader currents in Ashʿarī theodicy that relate to the absolutely transcendent nature and omnipotence of God in the face of all creation, including the existence of evil.[64] Yet both in juridical and theological terms, the lawfulness of magic in general and astrology in particular was a topic of considerable debate. The occult is a field of study that Rāzī, nonetheless, appears to have both promoted and explored in great depth. This is reflected in the work generally ascribed to him on astrological and talismanic arts, *al-Sirr al-maktūm fī mukhāṭabat al-nujūm* (*The Occult Secret on Discoursing with the Stars*),[65] which includes various prophylactic recipes to protect against sorcery and other afflictions, as well as directions on how to harness celestial and earthly powers, such as the planets and the jinn.[66]

As for the lawfulness of magic, Rāzī, in his commentary on the Qurʾān, argues that there is nothing inherently wrong with studying the various branches of the occult, for it is through such pursuits that one is able to distinguish magic from miracle; furthermore, it is from such study that knowledge of the licit and illicit use of magic is obtained.[67] A similar epistemological rationale guides his examination of celestial and talismanic magic in *al-Sirr al-maktūm*.[68] Additionally, in the course of *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, Rāzī argues that rational structures govern a variety of talismanic and divinatory practices.[69] Justifying his examination of the topic, Rāzī further argues that those who practice this art should have a full knowledge of how these affairs work, so that the magical procedures enacted will not be riddled with errors.[70]

This argument fits into Rāzī's larger rationalization of occult learning as a licit branch of the natural sciences. For Rāzī, magic, along with the miracles

of saints and prophets, forms part of the fabric of the cosmos. Such a view holds that the ability to harness magical or miraculous powers hinges on the internal senses of the *nafs* – the soul or psyche (Greek *psukhē*). These paranormal workings relate to a broader hierarchical system of natural forces and faculties. Central to Rāzī's exposition is the role of the estimative faculty (*al-quwwa al-wahmiyya*, Latin *vis aestimativa*), which can be manipulated by the rational soul of the intellect to produce ruptures with customary phenomena.[71]

Rāzī's rationalization builds on the psychological system of the imagination developed by the famed Persian philosopher Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), known in the Latin West as Avicenna. For Ibn Sīnā, the estimative faculty is the highest of the internal senses of the soul and can be used to influence other bodies without any physical intermediary, solely through its own power, which in its most perfected form is linked to prophecy.[72] Ultimately, the faculties of the intellect form the natural basis for the thaumaturgic capacity of the soul to act directly on other bodies or other souls through a form of paranormal causation.[73] For both Ibn Sīnā and Rāzī, prophetic miracles are the realization of this natural capacity within the form of an individual who, through inherent disposition, has obtained a level of intellectual and spiritual perfection in both a theoretical and a practical expression.[74]

Such a framework makes distinguishing miracle from magic a rather difficult endeavor. Rāzī raises a series of doubts about the validity of miracles as a rational basis for a demonstrable proof of prophethood. He further questions how one can ascertain with utter certainty that it was God, and not demons or jinn, who was responsible for the miraculous acts of the prophets.[75] To address this problem, Rāzī advances the a priori argument that the spread of Islam was inherently good and beneficial to humankind and in its own right can confirm the legitimacy of Muḥammad as a divinely guided prophet.[76] In such a structure, the focus on prophecy solely in moral terms, rather than on miraculous phenomena, strips magic of any inherent evil quality.[77] This hinges on a line of inquiry advanced by Ibn Sīnā that the only phenomenological difference between magic and miracle is the natural disposition of the soul toward either good or evil.[78] This vision of the ontological status of the prophetic miracle was also taken up by the Ashʿarī theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).[79] As a force in nature, the occult can thus be used to achieve both beneficial and harmful results. Thus, for Rāzī the study of magic is entirely legitimate, as the question is not the field itself, but the ends to which it is used. Needless to say, this kind of argumentation was not universally accepted, even among fellow Ashʿarī theologians.[80]

On Subjugating Occult Forces

Although we can trace a strong current of condemnation toward various forms of magic in normative branches of Islamic law and theology, there is a sizable corpus of writing that seeks to legitimize the study and practice of occult sciences. Furthermore, other than the general limitations governing access to writing and literacy in premodern societies, historically the dissemination of this material was not restricted to any particular region or context of production; additionally, this body of writing was supported by courts as well as by religious authorities. For instance, although much separates the two works in terms of scope, Rāzī's *al-Sirr al-maktūm* has long been associated with the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (*The Goal of the Sage*),[81] a grimoire of astral magic and talismanic arts that appears to have been written by the Andalusian religious scholar Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964).[82] The *Ghāya* circulated in its Arabic original well beyond al-Andalus and North Africa and exists in numerous manuscripts, a testament to its continued popularity.[83] During the reign of Alfonso X (r. 1252–1284), it was translated into Spanish under the title *Picatrix*. The work was then subsequently translated into Latin and as such represents the movement of Arabic writings on astral magic to the West.[84]

With its strong emphasis on planetary influences, the *Ghāya* offers a testament to the spread of Hellenistic philosophy, Hermeticism, alchemy, and Mesopotamian astrology, along with Indic astronomic traditions.[85] The cosmological system of astral influences detailed in the *Ghāya* builds heavily on the Arabic reception of Neo-Platonic thought, particularly the power of the soul and the interconnections governing the relationship between the celestial and earthly spheres.[86] In this framework, the *Ghāya* divides magic (*siḥr*) into theoretical (*ʿilmī*) and practical (*ʿamalī*) domains connecting the heavens and the earth,[87] and it defines magic as a phenomenon whose cause (*sabab*) is hidden from the majority of intellects and is difficult to discover.[88] This nominal definition speaks both to an emphasis on the esoteric and secret nature of the occult and to earlier philosophical approaches to wonder and astonishment.

As for its broader thaumaturgy of the soul and the categorization of magic as a legitimate branch of natural science, the *Ghāya* appears to have drawn directly from the encyclopedic, epistolary writings of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, the Brothers of Purity, writings that were composed during the middle of the fourth/tenth century.[89] Although the identity of the authors and the composition of the letters has been a matter of some scholarly dispute, the general consensus is that the Ikhwān were a coterie of Ismāʿīlī intellectuals based in Basra and Baghdad.[90] The Ikhwān locate the study of the occult as a branch

of natural science that includes alchemy (*kīmīyāʾ*), judicial astrology (*aḥkām al-nujūm*), magic and talismans (*al-siḥr wa-l-ṭillasmāt*), medicine (*ṭibb*), and the ascetic discipline (*tajrīd*) of the soul.[91] Central to this exposition is their theory of the universal soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyya*), which emanates throughout existence. This vision of creation also posits the capacity of the rational soul to influence other bodies. Thus, for instance, charms (*ruqā*), spells (*nushar*), and incantations (*ʿazāʾim*) draw their power from subtle spiritual influences (*āthār laṭīfa ruḥāniyya*) that emanate from the rational soul and influence the bestial soul (*al-nafs al-bahīmiyya*).[92] As for the question of legitimacy, the Ikhwān argue that it is ultimately the moral or ethical value that determines the lawfulness of magic. In this regard, they categorize prophetic miracles as examples of licit magic (*al-siḥr al-ḥilāl*), for such prodigious signs call humankind to God, whereas any spell or enchantment that instills doubt or leads people away from God is illicit (*ḥarām*), invalid (*bāṭil*), and has no basis.[93]

This theoretical work on magic and the occult intersects with a diverse range of socio-religious practices, which include among other facets the figure of the *muʿazzim*, the conjurer or enchanter, who can summon and control occult forces. The practice of subjugating such occult forces is given prophetic sanction through the figure of King Solomon and his power over demons and jinn (Figure 8.3). The most famous conjurer of the Umayyad period was Ibn Hilāl of Kūfa. Known as the *makhdūm*, the one who is served by the jinn, Ibn Hilāl features in early belletristic and historical writing as a contemporary of and sometime rival to the Umayyad commander of Iraq, Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714). Ibn Hilāl could conjure jinn and had the power of teleportation, a skill that allowed him to travel vast distances in an instance. Much of the early polemical material on the controversial mystic, thaumaturge, and itinerant preacher al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) also focuses on his ability to summon demons and jinn. This motif is also expressed in the famed religious scholar Abū Yaʿqūb Sirāj al-Dīn al-Sakkākī (d. 626/1229), who is known to have performed marvels through occult forces when he was a minister for the Mongol Emperor Chatagai Khan (d. 642/1244?). These three conjurers all shared run-ins with the authorities, which for Ḥallāj and Sakkākī ultimately led to their demise.

Despite the patently liminal status of magical practices, there exists a vast corpus on the occult arts, which also gives further insight into the spheres in which magic was enacted. There is much to suggest that the religious elite not only circulated such literature but also used it to harness occult powers. In this regard, the example of Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Ṭabasī (d. 482/1089), who lived much of his life in Nishapur, is particularly illustrative. Ṭabasī features in

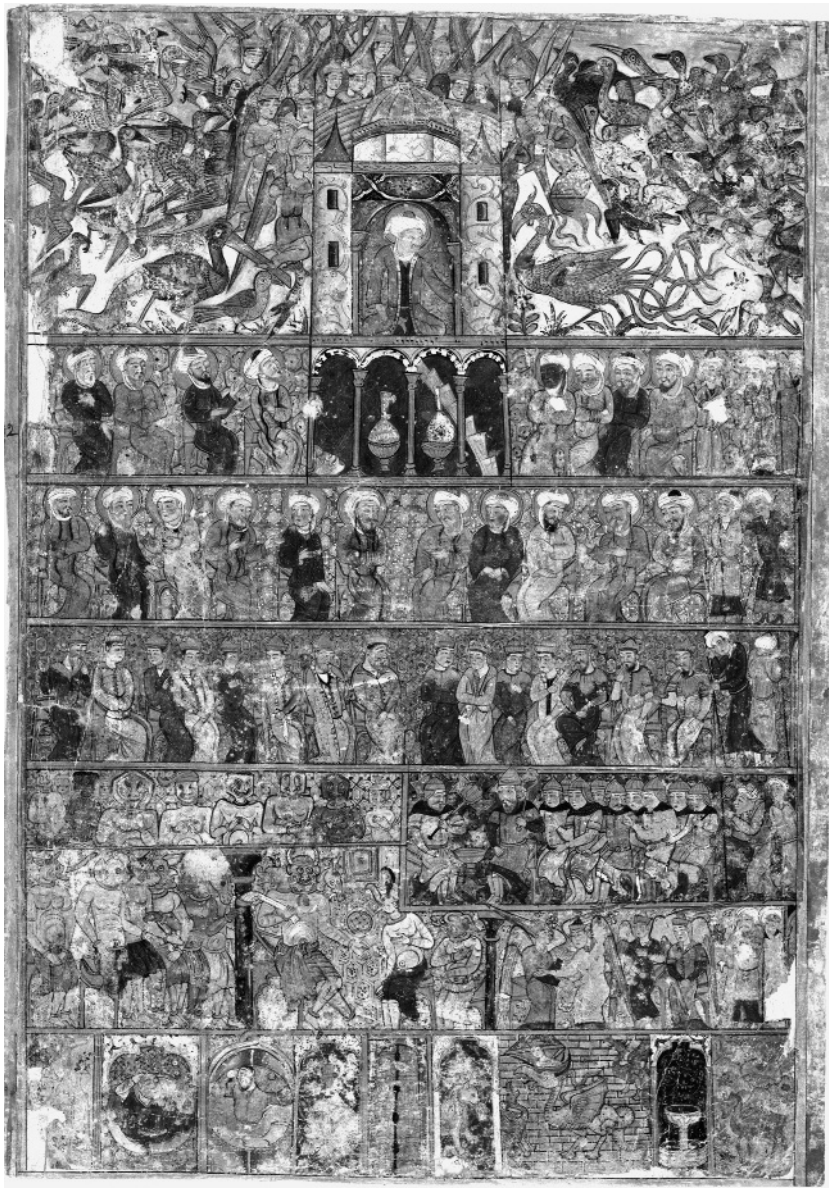

FIGURE 8.3. Solomon enthroned above the orders of humankind and the jinn, from the poem the *Sulaymān-nāma* (*The Book of Solomon*), ca. 1500. The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, T 406, f. 1b. The poem was composed by Firdawsī-i Rūmī for the Ottoman sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), as was this particular manuscript. The painting represents both Solomon's power over the jinn, as well as his ability, also affirmed in the Qur'ān, to understand the speech of birds.

Rāzī's *Sirr al-maktūm* as one of many authorities cited on the occult.[94] However, Ṭabasī was also known to be a trusted religious authority trained in Shāfiʿī law and Ashʿarī theology, a pious ascetic, and a Sufi, who composed numerous works and delivered lectures in madrasas of the region.[95]

Nonetheless, Ṭabasī is most famous for *al-Shāmil fī l-baḥr al-kāmil* (*The Comprehensive Compendium to the Entire Sea*), a treatise on subjugating demons and jinn through incantations, spells, and talismans.[96] One of the primary focuses of the work is explaining how to subjugate various spirits, demons, and jinn. According to Ṭabasī, there are two methods of doing so. The first is illicit and prohibited magic founded on disbelief; the other is completely licit, as it is based on profound piety, probity, purity, and ascetic seclusion, turning from the temptations of creation and devoting oneself to God.[97] This particular classification not only legitimates the various occult practices detailed in Ṭabasī's book of spells, but it also situates them in a broader setting of mystical devotion and asceticism. The *Shāmil* offers a testament to the interconnections that tie thaumaturgy and mystical devotion together. On this point, Ṭabasī argues that masters of this art have attained the rank of saints, and he offers several examples, including most prominently the mystic Ḥallāj. Ṭabasī also includes here Ibn Hilāl, who had befriended the Devil and obtained from him the power of incantation. We are told that Ibn Hilāl gained such a mastery over the occult arts that he was able to transport a man from Baghdad to Samarqand and back again in a single night.[98]

The *Shāmil* offers instructions for the preparation of various incantations that usually prescribe a combination of written and recited formulae. The incantations (*ʿazīma*, pl. *ʿazāʾim*) are designed to impose obligation on spirits, forcing them into submission in order to obtain supernatural powers through their aid.[99] Central to this process is the preparation of charms referred to as *khawātīm* (sg. *khātim*, literally seal or ring).[100] These are written on various mediums, such as paper, parchment, or leather hides, or they are engraved on tablets, metal disks, or signet rings. Instructions for drawing magical symbols and figural forms feature throughout the *Shāmil*. Also frequently used is the magic circle (*mandal*), which is drawn when casting various spells.

The incantations generally invoke otherworldly powers, holy figures, or sacred objects. In addition to the jinn, this often includes addressing the divine names of God, an array of angels, and the entire host of Islamic prophets from Adam to Muḥammad. However, dark forces are also called on and are featured in a colorful demonology that focuses on Iblīs (the Devil) and his countless progeny, represented most prominently with his daughter ʿAyna, who had married a jinni and was known by enchanters as the Lady Queen

FIGURE 8.4. A diagram of a magic seal (*khātim*) for casting an incantation to inflict harm on others, Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Ṭabasī (d. 482/1089), *al-Shāmil fī l-baḥr al-kāmil*. Princeton University, Islamic MSS, New Series, no. 160, fol. 37b. The anthropomorphic diagram, representing the object of the incantation, is surrounded by apocalyptic Qur'ānic verses referencing particular body parts of the damned (Q. 2:7, 12:23, 12:24, 12:30, 36:8–36:9, 36:65).

(*al-sayyida al-malika*). Like other books of spells, the incantations prescribed in the collection are used to obtain a variety of ends (Figure 8.4). Spells to ward off illness, demon possession, the evil eye, and sorcerers are prominent, as are love potions and charms for seduction.

Needless to say, the juridical and theological probity of many of these practices would be questionable in normative frameworks of Islamic theology and orthopraxy. Invoking the names of demonic forces would appear to be at odds with strict monotheism; similarly, the demonology detailed in the work speaks to a profoundly dualistic vision of the cosmos. Yet the fact that this material was produced by and circulated among the religious elite in the region also gives room for pause.

FIGURE 8.5. Bronze cast talismanic pendant, ca. 10th century, Nishapur, Iran, diam. 2.4 cm, thick. 0.5 cm © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 40.170.245. The zodiac signs of Leo and Scorpio feature beneath three Solomonic seals and are surrounded by pseudo-writing that resembles the expression "There is no deity but God" in Arabic script.

Many of Ṭabasī's spells call for amulets and charms to be buried in certain locations or to be hung from particular areas of the home. The practice of trapping demons and jinn within vessels to be buried is a procedure used in many of the incantations. The application of spices, drugs, and various medicaments also features prominently. The archeological evidence both in the region during this period and broadly throughout the diverse landscapes of Islamic religious devotion points to the widespread use of amulets, charms, magical vessels, and clothing marked with various talismanic and astrological symbols, as well as Qurʾānic verses and supplications (Figure 8.5). Many of the talismanic practices described in the *Shāmil* find parallels today in diverse contexts; this is attested in an array of anthropological scholarship on the modern period, as well as by primary sources in Arabic and a host of vernacular dialects. The ubiquity of manuals on talismans, spells, and amulets and their circulation in premodern Islamic manuscript culture further adumbrates the religious networks across which this material traveled and was used.[101]

Exorcism, Charisma, and Religious Authority

Another field of the occult that directly intersects with the religious elite can be found in the diverse practices of exorcism. The religious literature on exorcism makes a concerted effort to distinguish licit religious practices from sorcery. In traditionalist circles, the arguments for the lawfulness of exorcism by the Ḥanbalī reformist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) are rather illuminating. Along with an array of other intercessory practices, such as astrology, the veneration of saints, and shrine visitation, the Damascene scholar takes a particularly tough stance on the abuses of enchanters: he states that they make oaths to jinn and demons; their incantations are based on disbelief and polytheism; they write material from the Qurʾān in blood and other impurities in an attempt to please demons; they steal money from the ignorant; and furthermore, many of them are not truly capable of defending against jinn and end up actually harming those who seek their help.[102] Although his critique is clearly polemical, much of it appears to be based on actual practices developed by professional enchanters.

In contrast to what he terms polytheistic and illicit forms of commanding spirits, Ibn Taymiyya roots the lawful practice of exorcism in the actions of the prophets, from Solomon to Muḥammad, who defended humankind against demons. He offers numerous examples in the Sunna of the Prophet and the early Companions, concluding that, if done properly, exorcism is both lawful and righteous. The licit method of casting out demons and jinn is based solely on the power of God, as articulated by the divine names, the Qurʾān, and prophetically sanctioned formulae.[103] According to Ibn Taymiyya, the throne verse (Q. 2:255) is particularly efficacious and has been shown by countless authorities to have the proven ability of defending the soul against demons and to aid the possessed.[104]

In addition to reciting sacred formulae, Ibn Taymiyya advises striking the possessed repeatedly. Drawing on the personal experience of countless exorcisms that he personally performed, Ibn Taymiyya recommends hitting the afflicted hundreds of times with a cane and explains that it is the evil spirit that cries out in agony, not the body of the possessed, and that no harm will come to the person afflicted.[105] The Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), a chief disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, relates that he saw his master perform numerous such exorcisms. On some occasions, Ibn Taymiyya could cast out the spirit merely by commanding it to leave. Often, however, the spirit would be much more recalcitrant and his master would take to striking the body of the possessed with a rod. During one such intervention, Ibn Taymiyya

related, "I struck the possessed with a rod on the veins of his neck until my very hands grew tired from so much striking. Those present thought that the possessed would surely die from this abuse." Ibn Taymiyya succeeded in casting the demon out of the man's body by reciting from the Qurʾān, invoking the name of God and the Prophet, and arguing directly with the evil spirit. As for the severe physical punishment, Ibn Taymiyya concludes that the man gained consciousness once the spirit had left and did not feel anything from all of the beating.[106]

Underlying the antagonistic engagement with demons and jinn is the rejection of any form of appeal for assistance or intercession to powers other than God. On this point, Ibn Taymiyya ridicules many of the wonders ascribed to Sufi saints (*awliyāʾ*), which he says the ignorant believe to be divine miracles (*karāmāt*); rather, he explains, these are demonic deceptions worked not by the divinely guided, but by the misled followers of demons.[107] This fits into Ibn Taymiyya's larger critique of the veneration of saints and the visitation of shrines, a critique that is directed, in great measure, at the intercessory structures of Ashʿarī theology. Additionally, Ibn Taymiyya takes aim at the theory that prophetic miracles are not ontologically distinct from magic, a theory developed, as we saw earlier in the chapter, by the likes of the philosopher Ibn Sīnā and the Ashʿarī theologians Ghazālī and Rāzī.[108] Likewise, in his broad rejection of astrology and other occult practices,[109] Ibn Taymiyya attacks Rāzī's *al-Sirr al-maktūm* as a work of magic based on worshiping stars and seeking the intercession of spirits to obtain illicit powers. Furthermore, he argues that the cataclysmic Mongol invasions and mass devastation that followed were brought on as a divine punishment for the apostasy, hypocrisy, and heresy that had run rampant among Muslims living in Eastern lands. Ibn Taymiyya singles out as an example of this excess Rāzī's *al-Sirr al-maktūm*, which he claims calls for worshiping stars and teaches people how to work magic. In this vein, Ibn Taymiyya argues that the Mongol sacking of Baghdad in 656/1258 and the consequent collapse of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate was a divine retribution for the promotion and cultivation of the magical arts.[110]

In contrast to various occult practices deemed illicit, Ibn Taymiyya embraces the use of the Qurʾān, in both its written and oral forms, as a means of warding off illness and protecting against evil. Among the practices Ibn Taymiyya promotes is the ingestion of Qurʾānic verses for their curative power.[111] Similar uses of the Qurʾān are also detailed in occult writings, as in Ṭabasī's *Shāmil*, a fact that highlights the difficulty of distinguishing unlawful magic from sanctioned religious practice in normative terms. In a similar vein, Ibn Taymiyya rejects the use of unknown symbols or words commonly found on charms,

incantations, and talismans as illicit, even if they are accompanied by Qurʾānic verses. He reasons that because the meaning is unknown, such material could very well consist of demonic or polytheistic statements that contravene the tenets of Islamic monotheism.[112] This position is in marked contrast to Ṭabasī, who includes in his book of spells countless incantations recited and written in an unintelligible language. In this context of unintelligible ciphers, it is of note that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī developed a theoretical basis for the use of unknown phrases and symbols as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of talismans.[113]

The nearly ubiquitous use of amulets and charms written with Qurʾānic material further demonstrates the difficulty of delineating the boundaries of magic in Islamic soteriology. Such deployments of the Qurʾān should not be considered magical in the sense of being unlawful or irreligious, for the source of their power lies precisely in their divine nature. The phrase "Qurʾānic theurgy" may well help describe the copious literature on the special properties of the Qurʾān promoted by the likes of Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Būnī (d. 622/1225) and ʿAbd Allāh al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1367). This body of writing advances the occult power of the Qurʾān and the names of God, deployed through talismans, charms, magic squares, numerology, and mystical letters (*ḥurūf*) (Figure 8.6). Also found in such works are various recipes for ingesting the Qurʾān.[114]

From an early period, religious authorities in traditionalist circles, generally referred to as the people of tradition (*ahl al-ḥadīth*), actively promoted Qurʾānic theurgy within the normative bounds of piety and devotion. The descriptions contained in the hadith corpus on how to prepare Qurʾānic amulets, charms, and recipes for ingesting the Qurʾān indicate as much. Particularly illuminating in this regard are reports in the collections on juridical questions (*masāʾil*) posed to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and redacted by his son ʿAbd Allāh (d. 290/903) and his disciples; these reports give further insight into how various material and corporeal engagements with scripture crossed into a domestic domain. ʿAbd Allāh recounts that his father wrote out amulets containing Qurʾānic material to be worn on the body. Likewise, the student of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889), recounts that he saw a young son of his master wearing a leather amulet around his neck. Often parents attached such amulets to their children as preventative measures to guard against the evil eye. This is made explicit when Sijistānī follows with a question he put to Ibn Ḥanbal concerning the lawfulness of a charm (*ruqya*) to guard against the evil eye. Ibn Ḥanbal responds that he sees no problem with such a practice. Sijistānī also inquires about the practice of Qurʾānic ingestion or erasure, to

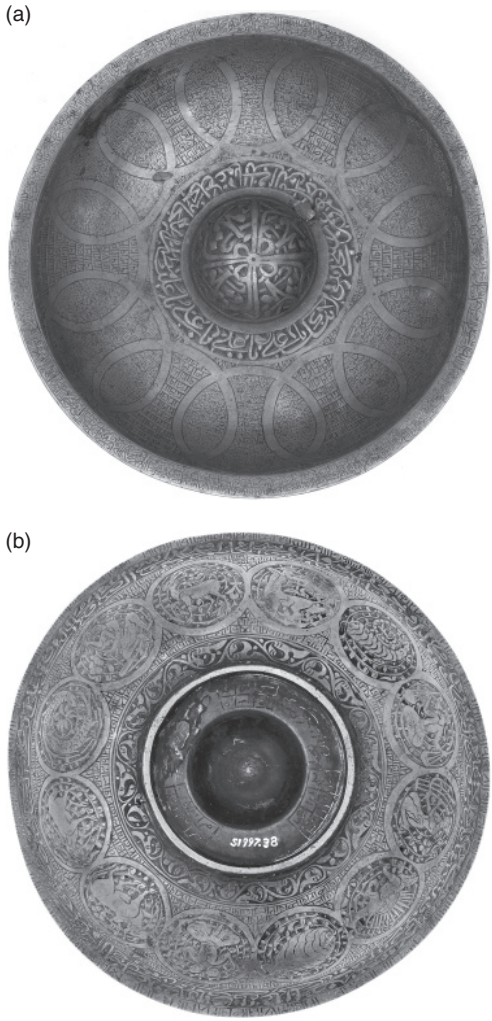

FIGURE 8.6. Divination bowl, mid-16th century, Iranian, engraved copper, 5.7 × 19.8 cm. The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC, S1997.38. The inside of the bowl (a) contains ciphers in the form of magic numbers and Arabic prayers. The central calligraphic band consists of an Arabic invocation to Imam ʿAlī, referred to here as the manifestation of marvels (*maẓhar al-ʿajā'ib*). The bowl's outer body (b) is decorated with the twelve signs of the zodiac, as well as magic squares and numbers and invocations to the Prophet Muḥammad and various Shīʿī Imams.

which Ibn Ḥanbal replies that there is also no issue with ingesting the Qurʾān dissolved in water or using that water to perform ritual ablution and that he has never heard of there being a problem with it.[115] This is a practice also affirmed by ʿAbd Allāh in his discussion of his father's use of amulets.

The charismatic presence in the written and oral forms of the Qurʾān fits into a larger topography of sacred materiality, which included a range of physical objects and locations invested with intercessory powers. The conceptual link between Qurʾānic theurgy and a sacred landscape populated with powerful relics is readily apparent in ʿAbd Allāh's treatment of the subject. Continuing with his discussion of amulets and erasure, ʿAbd Allāh relates that his father, Ibn Ḥanbal, was in possession of a hair from the Prophet and that his father would put it to his mouth and kiss it. His father would also place it on his head and eyes, submerge it in water, and then drink that water. ʿAbd Allāh also relates that Abū Yaʿqūb, the grandson of the ʿAbbāsid caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775), sent the famed bowl of the Prophet to his father and that his father washed it in a cistern and then drank from it, adding, "On more than one occasion, I saw [my father] drink the water from the Zamzam well [of Mecca] in order to be cured by it and he would wash his hands and face with it."[116] Taken as a whole, this account links the various intercessory engagements with the Qurʾān to a wider universe of sacred matter that is to be directly touched and ingested.

The Shāfiʿī jurist and historian Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) records a parallel version of this report, also related on the authority of ʿAbd Allāh. However, he adds that ʿAbd Allāh asked his father about the legality of touching the pomegranate-shaped handle of the Prophet's *minbar*, as well as the tomb of the Prophet, to which Ibn Ḥanbal replied that he saw no harm in such practices.[117] A similar statement can be found in ʿAbd Allāh's transmission of his father's *Kitāb al-ʿIlal wa-maʿrifat al-rijāl* (*The Book of Hadith Errors and Knowledge of Hadith Transmitters*). Here Ibn Ḥanbal grants permission to those who seek divine blessing, or *baraka*, from the tomb or the *minbar* of the Prophet by touching or kissing it in order to draw themselves closer to God.[118]

As for Dhahabī, he prefaces this report with the rhetorical question, "[W]here is the obstinate disowner (*al-mutanaṭṭiʿ al-munkir*) of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal now?" This is not only an allusion to the prophetic hadith "those who are obstinate perish" (*halaka l-mutanaṭṭiʿūn*),[119] but it is also a cryptic jab at Dhahabī's former teacher, the Ḥanbalī jurist Ibn Taymiyya, who wrote extensively against those who visited shrines for the intercessory benefits associated with them. Ibn Taymiyya claimed that the early religious authorities

agreed that it was illicit to touch or kiss the tomb of the Prophet, and he concluded that the reason for this was "to protect monotheism (*tawḥīd*), for making tombs into mosques is one of the foundations of attributing partners to God (*min uṣūl al-shirk bi-llāh*)."[120] In explicit contradistinction with Ibn Taymiyya, Dhahabī comes out in support of shrine veneration and sees particular merit in making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet and the intercessory blessings gained from sacred matter associated with him.[121] By quoting Ibn Ḥanbal in support of these intercessory practices, Dhahabī characterizes Ibn Taymiyya's position on shrine visitation as a radical break with earlier Ḥanbalī juridical praxis. This was also a line of attack that Dhahabī's student, the Ashʿarī theologian and Shāfiʿī judge of Damascus, Taqī l-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī l-Subkī (d. 756/1355), took against Ibn Taymiyya in an entire treatise, entitled *Shifāʾ al-siqām fī ziyārat khayr al-anām* (*The Cure for the Ill in Visiting the Best of Humankind*), which was dedicated to defending the practice.[122]

Ibn Taymiyya's censure of shrine visitation was repugnant to many and famously served as the basis for his final imprisonment, which led to his death. In his writings on the topic, Ibn Taymiyya set out a highly sophisticated treatment of shrine pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) that is much more complex than an outright ban on visiting tombs.[123] At a theological level, however, his main concern with seeking intercession from the tombs of saints and prophets was that it invests created matter (*makhlūq*) with divine power and thereby runs afoul of strict monotheism.[124] It is the specific implication of material mediation that was problematic for Ibn Taymiyya. To be sure, there is an internal consistency between his aversion to drawing on relics and tombs for their intercessory power and his support of ingesting verses of the Qurʾān for similar ends; for Ibn Taymiyya, the Qurʾān is uncreated divine speech and thus is theologically distinct from the necessarily temporal manifestations of relics and shrines.[125] Ibn Taymiyya's chief pupil, Ibn Qayyim, advanced a similar resistance to shrine veneration. Likewise, he promoted the Qurʾān's charismatic power in his *al-Ṭibb al-nabawwī*, an influential treatment of prophetic medicine in which he advances the legitimacy of amulets written with Qurʾānic verses and draws on the authority of Ibn Taymiyya and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, whom he claims both employed such amulets. He further argues that the act of writing verses of the Qurʾān in ink, immersing the paper in water, and then drinking the water was also a tradition accepted by the early community (*salaf*).[126]

One is hard-pressed to find urban centers across the lands of Islam in the premodern period without active cultures of shrine visitation. Likewise, various manifestations of Qurʾānic theurgy, from charms and amulets to inscriptions on bowls and garments are equally ubiquitous, intersecting with ancient attitudes

toward divine language and sacred writing. Both spheres of religious performance build on the power of *baraka* (divine blessing or charisma) obtained through sacred matter. Just as tomb visitation evoked censure in certain traditionalist circles, so too did the talismanic use of the Qurʾān in charms and amulets.[127] The same holds true for magic in its sundry manifestations, which reveals a good deal about how the boundaries of the licit and the illicit have historically been defined and negotiated. In the modern period, faced with diverse discourses of demystification, the spheres of the magical and the enchanted have undergone significant reconfigurations in the expressions of Islamic piety, devotion, and learning. For Muslim societies, the process of modernization, with its roots in European colonialism and post-Enlightenment thought, as well as in Islamic reformism, has challenged and reconfigured an array of historically traditional practices, often viewing them as being based on ignorance and superstition. This can be seen, for instance, rather prominently in critiques or correctives leveled by a range of Muslim authorities toward such activities as exorcism, shrine devotion, and the preparation of amulets. As we have seen in this chapter, many of these debates are rooted in classical Islamic thought; however, they take on profoundly distinct expressions in the context of modern Islamic reform. Yet through it all, in the competing poles of normativity, magic, marvel, and miracle ultimately function as normative categories designed not only to understand the world but also to shape it.

Notes

1. See Styers, *Making Magic*, 14–17; Francis, "Magic and Divination," 625–628.
2. Lane, *Account*, 222–223.
3. Ibid., 247.
4. Macdonald, *Religious Attitude*, 126.
5. Macdonald, "Concluding Study," 216; cited in Bodine, "Magic Carpet to Islam," 4.
6. Examples are legion. See, for instance, Mauchamp, *La sorcellerie au Maróc*, 86–98; Westermarck, *Pagan Survivals*; Donaldson, *Wild Rue*, 64, 130.
7. Brunot, "Maktab," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed.; see Travis Zadeh, *Vernacular Qurʾan*, 8–9.
8. Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* 1:288–1:289.
9. Q. 74:23–74:25, "*thumma adbara wa'stakbara*, *fa-qāla in hādha illā siḥrun yuʾtharu, in hādhā illā qawlu l-bashari*." On the exegetical tradition, see, for instance, Zarkashī (d. 794/1392), *Burhān* 1:110–1:111. Cf. Wāḥidī (d. 486/1076), *Asbāb* 468; ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d. 211/826–827), *Tafsīr* 2:328–2:329; Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Jāmiʿ* 23:429, on the authority of ʿIkrima (d. 105/723–724), and more broadly, 23:429–23:432.

10. On the occurrence of words with the root *s-ḥ-r* in the Qurʾān, see Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Qurʾanic Usage*, 425–426.
11. On *kitāb mubīn*, see Q. 5:15, 6:59, 10:61, 11:6, 12:1, 26:2, 27:2, 27:75, 28:2, 34:3, 43:2, 44:2; on *nadhīr mubīn*, see Q. 11:25, 15:89, 22:49, 26:115, 29:50, 38:70, 46:9, 51:50–51:51, 67:26, 71:2. As for the self-reflexivity in the Qurʾān vis-à-vis the conception of *kitāb*, see Madigan, *Qurʾân's Self-Image*, 53–77.
12. Q. 6:7, 11:7, 37:15, 54:2, 34:43, 46:7, 43:30, respectively.
13. On Moses, see Q. 10:76, 27:13; on Jesus, see Q. 5:110, 61:6.
14. Q. 10:1–10:2, *"alif, lām, rāʾ, tilka āyātu l-kitābi l-ḥakīm. a-kāna lil-nāsi ʿajaban an awḥaynā ilā rajulin minhum an andhiri l-nāsa wa-bashshiri l-ladhīna āmanū anna lahum qadama ṣidqin ʿinda rabbihim, qāla l-kāfirūna inna hādhā l-sāḥirun mubīn."*
15. See Stewart, "Mysterious Letters."
16. See Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Qurʾanic Usage*, 952–953.
17. See Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft*, 288.
18. CAD 8(k):437, 1a; see Smith, *Thesaurus*, 2:3591, col. 1.
19. See Dan. 5:6, 5:11–5:12, 5:16. Wolters, "Untying the King's Knots," 117–122; Paul, "The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1–6," 61–62.
20. Q. 114:4, cf. Q. 20:120; Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Qurʾanic Usage*, 1027.
21. Isa. 8:19–8:20. See Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 148–149; Jeffers, *Magic and Divination*, 170.
22. CAD 15(s):46, 3d.
23. See Vajda, "Hārūt wa Mārūt," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.
24. See Benveniste, *Les mages*, 11–12; de Jong, *Zoroastrianism*, 221–222, 387–403.
25. See Secunda, "Studying with a Magus," 151–152.
26. The Arabic lexicographers generally view the word as Persian in origin but do not associate it with magic as such; see Ibn Fāris, *Muʿjam* 5:297; Ibn al-Manẓūr, *Lisān* 6:214–6:215.
27. On the impact of this process in early Arabic historiographical discourse, see Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran*.
28. See, for instance, *Nērangestān*, *Fragard* 1, ch. 2, para. 15, ch. 10, paras. 14, 28, etc.; Boyce, "'Pādyāb' and 'Nērang,'" 284–285.
29. *Bundahišn* 387, para. 34.30.
30. *Pahl. Riv.* 1:228–1:229, ch. 63, paras. 1, 5, cf. 1:198–1:199, ch. 56, paras. 6, 11.
31. *Pahl. Ven.* 170, ch. 7, para. 44; cf. *Pahl. Riv.* 2:250.
32. See Omidsalar, "Magic ii. In Literature and Folklore in the Islamic Period," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
33. E.g., Ṭabarī (attrib.), *Tarjuma-i Tafsīr-i Ṭabarī* 7:1946; see also, Zadeh, *Vernacular Qurʾan*, 528.
34. See Asmussen, "De-Demonization," 116–117.
35. *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 50–51, ch. 8, paras. 1, 4; cf. Shapira, *Studies in Zoroastrian Exegesis*, 180–181.
36. Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām* 1:53. Cf. Bīrūnī (d. ca. 442/1050), *Jamāhir* 185–186.

37. See Skjærvø, "Aždahā," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
38. Khalīl, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* 8:104; cf. Firdawsī, *Shāh-nāma* 1:83–1:84, ll. 464–481.
39. *Dēnkard* para. 7.4.72, translated in Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre*, 57.
40. *Bundahišn* 342, ch. 29, para. 13.
41. Ibid., 372, ch. 33, para. 40.
42. See Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, 92ff.
43. E.g., *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* 60.
44. Ibid., 50; Ṭabarī (attrib.), *Tarjuma-i Tafsīr-i Ṭabarī* 5:1151.
45. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 1:201–1:211.
46. Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām* 1:54.
47. Ibid., 1:55; on *shaʿwadha*, see Bosworth, *Mediaeval Islamic Underworld*, vol. 2, 333.
48. As quoted by Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *Itqān* 2:99.
49. See Travis Zadeh, "The Wiles of Creation," 32–43.
50. Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d2–155d4.
51. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 982b12–982b13.
52. Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām* 1:59.
53. Ibid., 5:379.
54. On this historical process, see Sabra, "The Appropriation and Subsequent Naturalization"; and more broadly, Gutas, *Greek Thought*. For the Hermetic tradition, see van Bladel, *Arabic Hermes*.
55. See Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* 3:221–3:234; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* 1:655–1:664; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf* 1:12, 1:15; Fahd, "Siḥr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; Fahd, "Le monde du sorcier en Islam"; Asatrian, "Ibn Khaldūn on Magic and the Occult."
56. Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* 3:224–3:225.
57. Ibid., 3:223–3:230; treated in Macdonald, "Siḥr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed.
58. Rāzī, *Maṭālib* 8:143–8:146. This is an expanded version of the eight categories found in Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ*; it leaves out the eighth category, that is, sowing discord through slander (*namīma*), and expands the seventh, that is, tricking the foolish, into two separate fields. Missing from the *Mafātīḥ* is the discussion of divination, the eighth category in the *Maṭālib*.
59. By way of example, Rāzī cites a work by Ibn Waḥshiyya, presumably his book of poisons, *Kitāb al-Sumūm*, ed. Levey.
60. Rāzī notes that he examines the topic of lower spirits, the jinn, and demons earlier in his summa; see *Maṭālib* 7:315–7:331.
61. Rāzī examines the topic of physiognomy, along with other related divinatory practices in greater depth in a separate study; see Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Firāsa* 100–108; see Ḥājjī Khalīfa's classifications of *firāsa* in *Kashf* 1:15; also see Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 39–40, 188–195 (divination by casting stones), 196–204 (geomancy), 369ff (physiognomy), 393–395 (palmistry), 397–402 (palmoscopy), 440–446 (augury by flight of birds), 438–439 (*zajr*).
62. Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* 3:230–3:231.

63. Ibid., 13:62, 14:128.
64. Ashʿarī, *Lumāʿ* 47, 71, paras. 107, 170. For Rāzī on theodicy, see Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 146, 160–169. More broadly, see von Grunebaum, "Observations on the Muslim Concept of Evil"; Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought*, 16–31.
65. Although the text clearly references Rāzī as its author, the medieval reception of *al-Sirr al-maktūm* raised questions concerning its provenance. Relatively early on, there circulated theories that Rāzī did not author the collection, or if he did, he did not believe what was contained in the collection and repented and repudiated the work; see Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370), *Ṭabaqāt* 8:87; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* 1:367; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf* 2:990–2:991; cf. Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Wafayāt* 4:249; for a further overview of the classical reception of the work, see al-ʿAlwānī, *Imām* 211–214. See also Maʿṣūmī, "Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his Critics," 362–363. On the work and its ascription to Rāzī, I follow Ullmann, who upholds its authenticity, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 388–390. Furthermore, the metaphysical and cosmological positions, particularly on the psyche, are internally consistent with Rāzī's Neo-Platonism and his reception of Avicennan philosophy, pointing either to the authenticity of the ascription or to a writer who was profoundly engaged with Rāzī's thought and terminology. See also Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 8; Vesel, "Occult Sciences." On the Persian translation, see Vesel, "The Persian Translation of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's *al-Sirr al-maktūm*."
66. The text itself remains only in manuscript and lithograph. The nineteenth-century lithograph published in Cairo is incomplete: al-Rāzī, *al-Sirr al-maktūm*, cited hereafter. For the contents of the work, see Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, vol. 5, 282–284 (ms. Berlin 5886/Pet. 207).
67. Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* 3:231–3:232. Ibn Kathīr heavily criticizes Rāzī for this very argument: *Tafsīr* 1:366–1:367.
68. Rāzī, *Sirr* 1–5 (ms. 5886, fols. 1b–3a).
69. Rāzī, *Maṭālib* 8:179–8:185, cf. 8:187–8:196.
70. Ibid., 8:184–8:185, cf. 8:179.
71. See Rāzī, *Maṭālib* 8:137, 8:144; Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* 3:225; Rāzī, *Sirr* 11–12. The treatment here of Rāzī's theology of the soul draws from Zadeh, "Commanding Demons and Jinn," 152–154.
72. Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Nafs* 200–201, para. 4.4; see also Marmura, "Avicenna's Psychological Proof."
73. See Hall, "Intellect, Soul and Body," 68–69.
74. Rāzī, *Maṭālib* 8:121–8:123. See also Abrahamov, "Religion Versus Philosophy," 420–424; Marmura, "Avicenna's Psychological Proof."
75. Rāzī, *Maṭālib* 8:46, 8:50.
76. Ibid., 8:122.
77. Ibid., 8:137; Rāzī, *Mabāḥith* 2:424.

78. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt* 4:156–4:157; see Rāzī's commentary, *Sharḥ al-ishārāt* 2:661.
79. See Griffel, "al-Ǧazālī's Concept of Prophecy," 110–113.
80. See, for instance, Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 290–291; Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* 1:16, 1:29, 1:39.
81. Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* 1:660; Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), *Ṣubḥ* 1:474. On the broader astrological parallels between the two, see Vesel, "Le *Sirr al-maktūm*."
82. See Fierro, "Bāṭinism in al-Andalus," 92–102.
83. Ps-Majrīṭī, *Picatrix* ix–x; Sezgin, *GAS* 4:297.
84. See Pingree, "Between the *Ghāya* and *Picatrix*," 27–28.
85. Pingree, "Some of the Sources," 2–3.
86. Ps-Majrīṭī, *Ghāya* 3–6, trans. 4–7.
87. Ibid., 8–9, trans. 9. Cf. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* 4:313.
88. Ps-Majrīṭī, *Ghāya* 7, trans. 8.
89. See Fierro, "Bāṭinism in al-Andalus," 106–108; Ps-Majrīṭī, *Picatrix* lix–lxi; Pingree, "Some of the Sources," 3; Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *On Magic*, 15–16.
90. El-Bizri, "Prologue," 3–13.
91. Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Rasāʾil* 4:286–4:287, trans. 95–96, cf. 13–14.
92. Ibid., 4:309, trans. 153.
93. Ibid., 4:313–4:315, cf. 330–331.
94. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 390. The following examination of Ṭabasī and the *Shāmil* is treated in further depth in Zadeh, "Commanding Demons and Jinn," 144–151.
95. See Fārisī, *Muntakhab* 61; Samʿānī, *Ansāb* 8:209. See also Yāqūt, *Buldān* 4:20; Dhahabī, *Siyar* 18:588. On the intellectual history of the religious elite of Nishapur during this period, see Bulliet, *Patricians*, as well as Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qurʾan*, 331–359.
96. The complete title as given in the work itself is *al-Shāmil fī l-baḥr al-kāmil fī l-dawr al-ʿāmil fī uṣ ūl al-taʿzīm wa-qawāʿid al-tanjīm* (*The Comprehensive Compendium to the Entire Sea for the Governing Element in the Foundations of Enchantment and the Rules for Casting Spells*). On Ṭabasī's use of the word *tanjīm* to signify casting spells and the technical meaning of astrological determinations or prognostication, see Zadeh "Commanding Demons and Jinn," 147–148.
97. Ṭabasī, *Shāmil* fols. 2a–2b.
98. Ibid., fols. 4b–5a.
99. On the etymology of *ʿazīma*, see Ibn al-Manẓūr, *Lisān* 12:400.
100. See Allan, "Khātam, khātim," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; Porter, "Islamic Seals"; Stevenson, "Some Specimens," 112–114.
101. For examples of amulets and talismanic seals from the region during this period, see Allan, *Nishapur*, 60–61, 68–70.
102. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 19:35, 19:45–19:46; Shiblī, *Ākām* 102–103.
103. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 19:42, 19:56–19:59; Ibn Taymiyya, *Ṣafadiyya* 1:169.
104. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 19:55.

105. Ibid., 19:60; Shiblī, *Ākām* 112–113.
106. Ibn Qayyim, *Ṭibb* 52–53.
107. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 19:55.
108. Ibn Taymiyya, *Ṣafadiyya* 1:136–1:138, 1:142–1:143, 1:171.
109. See Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya on Astrology."
110. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 13:180–13:181; Ibn Taymiyya, *Bayān talbīs* 3:53–3:55; Ibn Taymiyya, *Ṣafadiyya* 1:66–1:70, 172. See also Ibn Qayyim, *Badāʾiʿ* 1:758.
111. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 27:340–27:342; Shiblī, *Ākām* 104; Ibn Qayyim, *Ṭibb* 277–278.
112. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 19:61.
113. Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* 1:161; Rāzī, *Maṭālib* 8:183–8:184.
114. See, for instance, Būnī, *Shams* 218; Yāfiʿī, *Durr* 11; on Būnī, see Francis, *Islamic Symbols*.
115. Sijistānī, *Masāʾil* 349.
116. ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad, *Masāʾil* 447; Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat* 9:183–9:184.
117. Dhahabī, *Siyar* 4:484–4:485.
118. Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal* 2:492.
119. See, for instance, Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 2:1128–2:1129.
120. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 27:223; cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb* 11–13, 27.
121. Dhahabī, *Siyar* 4:485, editor's note, n. 1.
122. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Subkī, *Shifāʾ* 202–232, esp. 205–209; Taylor, *In the Vicinity*, 195–218.
123. Taylor, *In the Vicinity*, 168–194.
124. Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb* 21–12; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ* 27:340–27:342.
125. See Zadeh, "Fire Cannot Harm It," 61–63.
126. Ibn Qayyim, *Ṭibb* 277–278.
127. Zadeh, "Touching and Ingesting," 465–466.

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