

Approaches to Occultism in the Qur'an and the Sunnah

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Özet

Bu makalede Kur'an ve sünnetin Okültizm'e bakışı ele alınmakta; kehânet, fal, sihir gibi okültist yöntemler incelenerek İslâm inanç ve ahlâk esasları açısından değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okültizm, kehânet, sihir, fal, ilm-i nücüm.

I. Definition

Occultism is a general term, used for the movements which claim that one can get some information or can display extraordinary actions through using the inner skills or establishing relationships with the supernatural beings or events. The one who is occultic involved in movements can also claim that they can reach the knowledge of the truth and upper sentimental world, not by experimental methods and rational ways but by using some unusual methods.

Occultism was originated in the primitive societies which believe, above all, in the mythological beings, whilst they try to explain or understand the Nature and what happens in it; as a result of this, they show the false and secret reasons instead of the actual reasons. This method can also exhibit a convenient position with their ontology based on the mythology. Some occult methods appeared and were handed down through generations by transforming these methods into more systematic and more mysterious forms, such as in the Sumerian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian and the Indian civilisations. It is noted that in the beginning of Islam, the Arabic society had some important information of every kinds of occultism.

Some scholars such Ibn al-Nadim, Ibn Haldun, Tashkoprizadah or Katip Cheleby, have listed certain occult methods in their classifications of the Sciences. Among them, the most detailed one in the classifications of the sciences is that of Tashkoprizadah and he gives some of them under **the title of al-Firasah:** Such as ilm al-asarîr, ilm al-aktaf, ilm al-iyafah, ilm al-kiyafah al bashar, ilm al-ihtida fi al-bararî wa al-akfar, ilm al-riyafah, ilmu istinbat almaa-

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din, ilmu nuzul al 'gays, ilm al irafah wa ilm al-ikhtilaj; and under the title of **ilm al-ahkam al nujum**: ilm al ihtiyarat, ilm al ramil, ilm al fâl, ilm al-qur'a, ilm al tiyarah wa al-zajrah; and under the title of **ilm al sihr**: ilm al-kahanah, ilm al-niranjat, ilm al-khawas, ilm al-ruqyah, ilm al-azaim, ilm al-istikhdar, ilmu da'wah al kawakib, ilm al-filaktîrât, ilm al-khafah, ilm al hiyal al-Sasaniyyah, ilm al-kashf al-dakk wa izah al-shakk, ilm al-sha'bazah wa al-takhyilah, ilmu taalluq al-qalb, ilm al-isti'anah bi khawas al-adwiyah wa al-mufradaat¹.

In this article, we are only going to deal with the two most common of them, i.e., a soothsaying (kahanah) and magic (Sihr). The first one is performed by diviners who claim that they can inform about the invisible world and can do the same things what the prophets can do, the magicians, the latter kind of occultist on the other hand, claim that through magic, they can succeed in accomplishing some certain extraordinary things, and can perform some practices similar to the miracles. For instance, some pre-Islamic Arabs condemned the Prophet Muhammad as having been a divinator of the invisible world or a magician, since they perceived that the diviners and the magicians are equal to the prophets².

II. The Most Common Kinds of Occultism:

Divination (kahanah) and Magic (sihr)

A) Divination (Kahanah)

The term *Kahanah* (i.e., divination) is defined in the dictionaries as soothsaying, fortune-telling, looking at some objects like crystal ball³, while *kahin* is meant fortune-teller, divinator, as well as the person who looks at or is sustainer of the people, a scholar rooted in knowledge needing deep studies to achieve it, an astronomer\astrologer, and a physician⁴. It is claimed that *kahin*, etymologically, comes from Hebrew *Kohen*, Aramaic *Kahen*, or *Kahna*, Samaritan *Kawn*, and Akkadian *Ka'n*⁵, however, there are some distinctions between them and Arabic usage. For example, while in Judaism the word *Kohen* is meant as the person who serves and attends the temple services systematically like sacrificing acts, preaching, and comes after the *nabi* (prophet) and king in the religious hierarchy, the *kahin* (divinator) in Arabs is seen just as person who goes to the temple only for the purpose of the soothsaying.

¹ Tashkoprizadah, *Miftah al-Saadah*, Cairo 1968, 1/351-370

² Al-An'am, 7, Hud, 7; Al-Anbiyah, 3; Saba', 43; Al-Saffat, 15; Al-Zuhrûf, 30; Al-Tûr, 29; Al-Hâqqah, 42.

³ Ibn Al-Manzur, *Lisan Al-Arab*, "khn"; Firûzâbady, "khn".

⁴ Ibn Al-Asîr, *Al-Nihayah*, (ed., Mahmûd Muhammad Al-Tannahî), Cairo, IV, (undated) 215.

⁵ T. Fahd, "Kâhin", *EI (new edition)*, Leiden 1978, IV, 421; Jawad Ali, *Al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh Al-Arab Qabl Al-Islam*, Beirut 1980, VI, 756.

Although divination is an imported kind of sciences (*ulum al-Harijiyya*) into the Arabic mind⁶, it was compatible with the conception of Arab metaphysics, and was also so common in their usage, Arabs saw it as a fact that belonged to the world above the sentiments, and they accepted genies the most nearest beings to themselves. For this reason, they felt that there could be a relationship between genies and human-beings. According to them, genies are the helpers of God with the matters of the temporal world, and are more efficient than the gods themselves in the human life; Arabs also thought that genies would reach a more pleasant position by their help and, would protect themselves by their means. For this reason, the diviners as persons interacting with the spirits and ruling over them are the most important ones in Arab society⁷. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd states that belief in the relation between human-beings and genies in Arabs was the cultural foundation for the revelation of Islam, and he records that it was not difficult for an Arab to believe that an angel would bring certain revelations because they already believed the genies would inspire the poets and diviners in order to get some information by them, to. Yet Zayd attributes their rejection of the Revelation of Islam not to its nature but its contents⁸.

Arabs accepted that the diviners, like poets, would have some genies named *raiyy*, *tabi*, *sahip*, *mawla*, *waly* and *karin*, and that these genies could climb up the heavens to listen to the conversations of the angels and to transmit these news to the lowest genies so as to reach to the diviners in the world. For instance, Al-Jahiz, a well-known figure of the Arabic literature, recorded that Musaylimah, one of the early-false prophets, had a genie named Raiyyah⁹. Mawardi has given the names of some examples of diviners who had soothsaid about the Prophet's coming (*bash'air al-nubuwwah*) before he has come¹⁰. Diviners were using some kind of language consisting of stylistic rhymed prose, some expressions in short, harmonic words, and it was also complex and vague. They also confirmed their words swearing by the beings such the Earth, the Sky, the Moon, the Sun, night, and daytime. There had been a lot of he-diviners and she-diviners among the pre-Islamic Arabs. Of them the most ancient were the two prominent ones, the one was Shik, one handed, one-eyed and one-legged and half-man divinator, the other was Satih, having no bones in the body except the skull and who was claimed to be no other than a mass-meat rolled like clothes. Apart from these two, there had been, in this area, some famous diviners such as Hanafir b. Taw'am al-Himyari, Sawad b. Karib al Dawsî,

⁶ Jorci Zaidan, *Tārīkh Al-Tamaddun Al-Islamī*, Cairo 1902-1906, III, 19.

⁷ Jawad Ali, op.cit., VI, 705f.

⁸ Nasr Ebu Zeyd, *Ilahī Hūbām Tabiatī*, (trans in Turkish, M. Emin Maşalı), Istanbul 2001, 56-57

⁹ *Kitāb Al-Hayawan*, Beirut 1969, IV, 370

¹⁰ *A'lām Al-Nubuwwah*, Baghdad 1319, 103-10.

Turayfah, a she-divinator of Yaman, Sawdah binti Zuhrah, Zarah binti Zuhayr¹¹. Divinators had played a central role in the decisions in private and social life of pre Islamic era. They were often consulted for solving the conflicts of every kind of problems, interpretation of dreams, finding the lost things, fixing the crimes such as fornication, burglary and murdering, healing the sickmen, and when Arabs decided to declare a war against the other tribe, they consulted with them, or they could be considered as arbitrators in the solving of the familial conflicts. Divinators got a payment called Hulwan in turn of their performances. This was not a fixed-one. Nevertheless, it was believed that in the case of no paying to them, no news would become true that he soothsaid.

In The Qur'an, two verses, one is 29th of Surah Al-Tur, and the other is 42nd of al Haqqah mention the term divinator. In the first verse, it is said that the Prophet is not a divinator nor a possessed one (majnun), while the latter mentions that Qur'an is not an expression of a divinator but only a divine word sent down by Allah, so, these two verses purify the prophet's deeds off the divination. The Qur'an also informs that the devils reveal to their companions¹²; they have got some friends from human-beings¹³; they climb up the heavens to get some news from the angelic world¹⁴; then they land over the sinful and liars¹⁵, whisper each other some brilliant statements to deceive¹⁶. Therefore, we can say that the Qur'an admits that there has been a communication between divinators and genies/devils. As for the hadiths, too, for example, in one of them reported by Aishah, some certain angels descend down through the clouds, chat each other about what had happened in the upper-heavens, in the meanwhile, some of the devils listen stealthily to such a matter, and they add hundreds of things of themselves to these chats and transfer to their companions in the world¹⁷. The report of Abu Hurairah says that when the angels of the heavens were ordered to execute something, they move their wings to show their devotions; as the fear goes out of their hearts, they ask angels the muqarrabun about what Allah ordered, at this time some devils are also there to hear and steal up some words of them in order to communicate what they have heard to the lowest devils¹⁸. So the lowest devils made them reach to the divinators. In another report of Aishah, as the Prophet was asked about the claims of the divinators about telling of the invisible world, He replied that there has been no value of their sayings. Yet,

¹¹ Mas'ûdî, *Murûj Al-Zahab*, Cairo 1964, II, 172-193.

¹² Al-An'am, 121.

¹³ Al-Nisâ, 338; Al-Zuhruf, 36

¹⁴ Al-Jinn, 9.

¹⁵ Al-Shuâra', 222.

¹⁶ Al-An'am, 112.

¹⁷ Bukharî, "Bad Al-Khalq", 6.

¹⁸ Bukharî, "Tafsîr Al-Qur'an", 15/1; 34/1; İbn Majah, "Muqaddimah", 13.

He was asked: "but sometimes theirs are true, He answered that they would be the statements whispered by the devils, adding them hundreds of lies, to their diviners¹⁹. In the report of Ibn Abbas, it is said that genies/ devils would communicate to their diviners, adding nine lies to one true thing²⁰.

Even though Islamic Scholars saw the divination as an inheritance of the past, they tried to find out its nature by objective methods. Fahrudin al Razi classified them into two divisions; the one is natural (Fitri), coming out of the selfish characters, while the other is a skilled one (muktasab) within time, just like azaim (communication with genies), dawa't al kawakib (contacting with stars)²¹. Hattabi and Ibn Asir did the same classification too²². The most of the Muslim scholars defined the divination as "relating of human spirits with the abstract beings like genies and devils, and to get information from about what would happen in the future-time²³. Of the leading ones who relates the divination to the human-selfish characters (hawas al nufus al-insaniyyah) was Ibn Haldun. According to him, a human-self (nafs) can have a feature of communication with the high spirituality after it clears itself off the humankind. For him, it was the prophets that take position in its pioneer point; they, by their nature, get revelations, ascending from the humankind to the angelic world, without using any means, or without being helped by anyone. The persons who are weaker in nature than the prophets, try to contact with the abstract beings by means of crystal ball, animal bones, rhymed words or acting like birds and other animals. Since the self-nature of latter is more deficient than that of previous-ones, they are defect and false too²⁴.

However we can understand that there has been some kind of communication between the diviners and genies as mentioned by the Qur'an, hadiths and Muslim scholars, yet, there have been two distinctive ideas, namely, whether this fact had belonged to the pre-prophetic era or, continued also in the post-prophetic era. According to the most of the Muslim scholars, the fact that the genies had stolen something up of the heaven had been occurred in the pre-prophetic era but after Him no longer continued and His prophethood has surpassed over it. Who hold this opinion , in order to confirm their thesis, get some arguments of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. For instance, of the Qur'an they have some verses as proofs, saying of the fact that devils would like to reach the heavens to steal up something but find it filled with some certain rough guards or

¹⁹ Bukharî, "Tibb", 46; "Tawheed" 57; "Adab" 117; Muslim, "Salam" 122, 123.

²⁰ Tirmizhî, "Tafsîr Al-Qur'an", 72/2.

²¹ F. Râzî, *Al-Sirr Al-Maktûm fî Asrâr Al-Nujûm, -nûcûm*, (Istanbul) Süleymaniye Libr., Damad İbrahim Paşa Dept. nr. 845, fols. 5a-5b.

²² cf.; Hattabî, *Maalîm Al-Sunnah*, Beirut 1991, IV, 212; İbn Al-Asîr, op. cit, IV, 214-215.

²³ Tashkoprizada, op.cit., I, 364; Katib Chelebi, *Kashf, Al-Zunûn*, Tehran 1967, I, 1524

²⁴ *Al-Muqadimah*, Cairo 1981, I, 411-413.

filled with long-fire flames, or saying that some flames are sent over them to prevent off the stealing of news²⁵, being stoned by throwing over them some stars²⁶, or the heaven is protected from the disobeyed devils, or they were prevented to listen to the assembly of the supreme beings (malai a'la), and saying that, in every of their attempts, they were made escaped off there at this point²⁷; of the sunnah they proofed of some hadiths saying that genie's stealing of the news was prevented after the Prophet's journey to Taif²⁸, and the divination had come to the end after the prophethood of Muhammad²⁹. Some scholars, amongst of whom was Ibn Haldun, believed that the news genies have stolen was not of the revelation³⁰ but of the temporal events to occur on the earth, and so there have been a continuation of the divination after the prophet too. Before the prophethood, genies were stealing of the news easily without sending any long fire flames against them³¹, yet after the prophethood, they were in difficulty of doing so, because of the shihabs sent to them. Ibn Haldun proves that during the prophethood the divination through the stealing of the heavens was prevented but, the divinations based on imagination would continue; after the prophethood, the situation has come back to the first form as in the pre-prophetic era³².

Islam severely rejected the divination and forbade it, since it saw that way as not in accordance with tawheed, and saw as the alternative of the revelation³³. According to Islam, only God has the knowledge of the invisible world, for instance, the Qur'an informs us that genies would not know the invisible world³⁴ and that the invisible world can only be known by Allah³⁵, and that genies could communicate with the liars and sinful³⁶ and that they deceive each other by brilliant and exaggerated words³⁷ and so it states that the news given by diviners is not trustable. Abu Hanifah, expressing his ideas in the perspective of these Qur'anic evidences, states that whoever declares that he/she knows what was in the hearts without helping of any revelation (so that he/she has got a knowledge of the invisible world) , would be a person who claims that he/she has

²⁵ Al-Hijr, 18; Al-Sâffât, 10; Al-Jinn, 8-9.

²⁶ Al-Mulk, 5.

²⁷ Al-Sâffât, 6-9.

²⁸ Bukhârî, "Tafseer" 72/1; Muslim, "Salât", 149.

²⁹ Bayhaqî, *Dalail*, Beirut 1985, II, 237.

³⁰ Al-Hijr 9.

³¹ Mawardî, *A'lâm Al-Nubuwwah*, 103.

³² Al-Muqaddimah, I, 413.

³³ For instance, it is clear that the Prophet Muhammad is seen as an arbitrator as the contrary of the jahiliyyah; cf., Nisâ, 59, 65; Al-Maidah, 49.

³⁴ Saba', 14.

³⁵ Al-An'am, 59; Yunus, 20; Hudd, 123; Al-Nahl, 77; Al-Naml, 65.

³⁶ Al-Shuarâ, 222.

³⁷ Al-An'am, 112.

a divine knowledge, so by this way commit a cardinal sin, and will be deserving the Fire³⁸. On the other hand, Ahmad b. Hanbal, citing an event in one of his works, which mentions that Muawiyah b. al-Hakam al Sulamy states that they applied to the diviners in the pre-Islamic era and they saw the flying of the birds as inauspiciousness, and declares that The Prophet was asked about that, and He forbade both of them³⁹. Hence, it is declared that the Prophet severely forbade the divination seen as the alternate to the revelation and whoever applies to the diviners to get knowledge, would be seen as the rejecter of the revelation sent to the Prophet Muhammad⁴⁰ and his worships would not be acceptable within forty days⁴¹, he would not enter in the Paradise⁴², and also be seen the Hulwan, which is paid for the divination, as prohibited-one (haram).⁴³

B) Magic (Sihir)

Magic, (sihir), a noun from the root shir meaning "to show something different from what it is, to remove something, to distort, to disorder, to deceive, to distract somebody's attention, to make someone paid attention, to make someone feel attracted", means a trick, deception, and hidden affairs⁴⁴. Yet magic is practiced in different ways, it is difficult for him to have an embracing definition. For this reason, Muslim scholars explained its nature, introducing its way or showing its place in the religion, rather than defining it perfectly⁴⁵. For example, Ragib al Isfahani records that magic covers trick and deception through dexterity, delusion and expression of guilt words⁴⁶, while Abul Baka defines it as practices and situations which the evil spirits exhibit and which are rural to others⁴⁷, even Jassas and Fahrudin al-Razi express it as every kind of practice showing something in a manner of unreality to deceive mankind, or as being secret how to be done⁴⁸. Ibn Haldun and Tashkoprizadah try to explain the term magic by comparing it with talisman, Ibn Haldun says that talisman is to be effect by applying

³⁸ Beyazîzade, "Al-Usul Al-Munifâh", Istanbul 1996, 86.

³⁹ Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, III, 443; V, 447-448

⁴⁰ Abu Davud, "Tibb" 21; Tirmizhi, "Taharah" 102; Ibn Majah, "Taharah", 122; Ahmad b. Hanbal, op.cit., II, 408, 429, 476.

⁴¹ Muslim, "Salam" 125.

⁴² Ahmad b. Hanbal, op. cit., III, 14.

⁴³ Bukharî, "Manaqib Al-Ansar, 26; Ahmad b. Hanbal, op. cit, IV, 118

⁴⁴ Ibn Al-Asîr, op. cit. "Shr"; Ibn Manzûr, op. cit., "Shr"; Firûzâbâdî, op. cit., "Shr".

⁴⁵ cf., Râgîb, *Al-Mufradât*, "Shr"; Ab Al-Baqâ', *Al-Kulliyât*, Beirut 1993, 510; Jassas, *Âhkâm Al-Qur'an*, 1335, I, 51-57; Râzî, *Mafâtîh Al-Ghayb*, Beirut 1934, III, 187; Tahanawî, *Kashshaf*, Istanbul 1984, I, 648; Ibn Haldun, op. cit., III, 1147-1158; Tashkoprizada, op. cit., I, 364-370.

⁴⁶ Raghîb, "Shr".

⁴⁷ Abu Al-Baqâ', op. cit., 510.

⁴⁸ Jassas, op.cit., I, 51-57; Razi, op. cit., III, 187.

to the divine helpers, and to be effect without it, is magic itself⁴⁹. Yet, Tashkopri-zadah says that magic is a science that studies the celestial events, features of the celestial beings and their relations with the events to happen in the world, while it is the talisman that studies how to reunite the efficient celestial powers with the passive terrestrial beings in any convenient times in order to do a practice or effect willed⁵⁰.

Arabs got the magic from the abroad just like divination. For this reason they were not well-known in magic as much as Egyptians and Syriacs were. Even, this subject was not popular so much as irafah and divination. It was Jews that were dealing with magic more respectively. Nevertheless, Muslim, the famous scholar of the hadiths wrote that Arabs of Najran instructed magics⁵¹, while Ibn Kasir records that Jurhums, like the ancient Egyptians, made men fear by artificial serpents, and that Yemenites had believed that they could protect their castles against Persians via talismans⁵².

Al-Sihr in the Perspective of the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the words from the root "shr, are cited 63 times, and three of them mean dawn time. The statements dealing with magic, more respectively, take place in the verses about Moses and Aaron (33 times), and then about Muhammad (17 times). Most of the verses which consist of magic include all the expressions said by deniers in order to reject the prophecies of the Prophets, or to declare that things to be shown as miracles to the peoples are deceitful. So, Qur'an informs us that the people of Samud condemned the Prophet Saleh being charmed; People of Aykah made the same condemnation over the prophet Shuayb⁵³; Pharaoh and his staff did say that to Moses, and even condemning him as being magician⁵⁴, and that Israelites had claimed that Jesus Christ applied to perform the magic⁵⁵, and that Meccan pagans have condemned the Prophet Muhammad being magician or charmed one⁵⁶, all that, Qur'an continues to say, are just a calumny, and it states that the deniers have been behaving to the prophets by this manner.

When we study the verses concerning this subject, it is possible to find out

⁴⁹ Ibn Haldun, op. cit., III, 1149.

⁵⁰ Tashkoprizada, op. cit., I, 364-370.

⁵¹ Muslim, "Zuhd", 73.

⁵² Ibn Kasir, *Al-Bidayah*, Beirut 1981, II, 181, 217.

⁵³ *Al-Shu'ara'*, 153-154, 185-187.

⁵⁴ *Al-Isrâ*, 101; *Al-Naml*, 13; *Al-Qasass*, 36,48; *Ghafir*, 24; *Al-Zuhruf*, 43/46-50; *Al-Zariyat*, 39.

⁵⁵ *Al-Maidah*, 110; *A-Saff*, 6

⁵⁶ *Al-An'am*, 7; *Yunus*, 2; *Hûd*, 7; *Al-Hijr*, 14-15; *Al-Isrâ*, 47; *Al-Anbiyâ*, 3; *Al-Mu'minûn*, 89; *Al-Furqan*, 8; *Saba'*, 43; *Al-Saffât*, 15; *Sâd*, 4; *Al-Zuhruf*, 30; *Al-Zâriyât*, 52

that there are three main type of the magic:

1. Magic in the time of Moses

This type of magic is just Moses applied to the Magicians before The Pharaoh, and considered as, mostly, illusionism, or a practice in order to provide magic. When the Prophet Moses and his brother, the Prophet Aaron, were sent to the Pharaoh and his followers to communicate the divine messages, the Pharaoh wanted him to do miracle; as Moses left his stick on the ground, showed him a stick becoming a dragon, even as taking his hand out of his pocket, showed him a hand becoming pure white. On these events, the Pharaoh condemned Moses being magician, and on this, his men, having collected skillful magicians of that environment, suggested that they could break the magic of Moses. The Pharaoh, gathering the magicians around himself, declared that he would reward them, if they would be successful. Then Moses said to the magicians that what they did has been only a calumny against Allah, and he warned them that if they would continue to do so, they would suffer from the divine punishment. Moses gave a first chance to the magicians to practice, and they threw their ropes and sticks in order to make their arts and amused the eyes of the peoples. Succeedingly, as soon as Moses threw his stick, it has caught and swallowed all the magic instruments used by the magicians, so it was found out that all the shows of the magicians are just a trick. Then the magicians bowed down , saying " We believed in the Lord of Moses, Aaron⁵⁷.

The Qur'an defines all the doings of the magicians before Moses, as a trick, a deceitfulness (kayd)⁵⁸, an invention⁵⁹ a calumny⁶⁰, a false⁶¹ a cruelty⁶², a deception⁶³ and showing as if were happened (tahyil)⁶⁴ and also declares that this magic has been appeared out as false⁶⁵, informing that magicians could always harm themselves⁶⁶, and they would never succeed⁶⁷. Here, what we have to pay attention is the fact that Moses is not a magician and nor a responder by magic, as claimed by the Pharaoh⁶⁸. In fact, he shows, by the permission of Allah, a

⁵⁷ Al-A'râf, 106-122; Al-Shuarâ, 31-48.

⁵⁸ Tâhâ, 60, 64, 69

⁵⁹ Al-A'râf 7/117; Al-Shuarâ 45.

⁶⁰ Tâhâ, 61.

⁶¹ Al-A'râf, 105, 106; Yûnus, 76, 77, 81.

⁶² Al-A'râf, 103.

⁶³ Al-A'râf, 116.

⁶⁴ Tâhâ, 66.

⁶⁵ Al-A'râf, 118

⁶⁶ Tâhâ, 61.

⁶⁷ Yûnus, 77, 81; Tâhâ, 69.

⁶⁸ Tâhâ, 71; Al-Shuarâ, 49.

clear proof making all the practices of the magicians ineffective and putting out that all of them are deceitful. If what the Pharaoh and his followers claimed had been true, above all the magicians would have perceived this and would have never declared their belief in the message Moses had come with. In one of the verses on the subject, the fact that their practices were considered as "the grand magic"⁶⁹ shows us that all what happened was some what influensive magic done by the skillful magicians in this environment, but nevertheless, what was done by them was quickly cleared off by the miracles of Moses.

2. The Babylonian Magic

That of Babylonians was a kind of magic done by them through applying for the helping of the celestial powers. That kind of magic, which had been practiced in the period of the Prophet Suleiman, is only mentioned in the 102nd verse of the surah of al Bakarah. Here Jews are criticized because they think that Suleiman the prophet's reign is based on the magic, and it says that not Suleiman but who taught magic to the peoples were the disbeliever (or shayateen/devils), and that someone was learning something harmful to the society and something functioning as dividing the husband off the wife, however it is stated that they would not harm anyone but only by the permission of Allah, and it might be better for themselves if they would believe in their prophets instead.

The parts of this verses, which deal with the magic consists of the followers of them, and also Harut and Marut. In the sources, it is said that the devils mentioned in the verses could be some devils of human beings or genies, and that by the statement of "their followers might be meant jews of Sulaimanic or Muhammadan periods, and "by Harut and Marut" could be thought of two angels or two kings in Babylonia, or two tribes of the humankind or genies.

There have been different ideas done up to the meaning on these words. They who interpreted that term Shayateen/ devils has meant the jin kind, and Harut and Marut could be two angels, concluded that the magic could be celestial one. The most of the interpreters, among whom were al-Tabarî and al-Maturidî, had the same opinion⁷⁰, while the ones who adapted the idea that devils are of humankind and Harut and Marut are just two kings, or thought that magic is of the human in origin. The Mutazilites and some Sunni theologians are defending this idea⁷¹.

⁶⁹ Al-A'râf, 116.

⁷⁰ Tabarî, *Jâmi' Al-Bayan*, I, 455; Matûridî, *Kitab Al-Tawheed*, Istanbul 1979, 189; Razî, op. cit., III, 199-200.

⁷¹ cf., Qurtubî, *Al-Jâmi'*, Cairo 1996, II, 48, 57; Âlûsî, *Rûh Al-Maânî*, I, 532, 539; Muhammad Asad, *Kur'an Mesajı*, (trans. in Turkish, Ahmed Erturk, Cahit Koytak) Istanbul 1996, I, 28; Süleyman Ateş, *Yüce Kur'an'm Çağdaş Tefsiri*, Istanbul 1988, I, 203.

The description of the magic cited in the 102nd verse of Al-Bakarah as something which is taught, is a separator of husband and wife and also a harmful thing leads us to think that it might have some reality. But, the fact that the same practices or the results could be achieved also through some unfixed or baseless technical, and some unfounded things can also be taught, and especially description of the magic in the verse as unbelief, confirms the falsehood of magic.

3. The Verse of al-Falaq concerning with Magic

It is ordered in the Surah of al-Falaq that we have to seek refuge to Allah because of the evil-doings of who breathes over the knots⁷². The given surah mentions naffasat, meaning "blowers." In the time of the Prophet Muhammad, there had been someone who were breathing the prayers which they recited over the strings, and knotting them, by this way, committing the magic. Ibn Haldun recorded that he passed by such persons in Egypt⁷³. The expression "who blow over the knots", according to Kurayb b. Abu Muslim, must be also understood metaphorically as women who pervert, by various coquetry and amorous glances, the men's mind⁷⁴; therefore, basing on this meaning, it is also said that term naffasat could be meant who try to attempt to shake the will-powers of the peoples as well as the magicians. And these persons broke down the spirituality of the peoples by the means of false news, calumnies and gossips, and make them anxious and get them means for their desires.

This kind of interpretation seems both in accordance with the classification of Fahrudin al-Razi⁷⁵ who considers the gossip within the limits of magic, and with the word "Hâsid" of the following verse of al-Falaq.

Some interpreters criticized this kind of interpretation on the term naffasat, having suggested that because this is in contradiction with the reason of the occasion (sabab al nuzul) of al-Alaq and of al-Nâs, and also with the reports concerning with the news that Muhammad was also charmed and they concluded that magic can also have somewhat truth. There have been two various reports one coming from Aisha⁷⁶, the other Zayd b. Arkam⁷⁷, which cited that the Prophet was charmed, in both of which is mentioned that some one, especially, named Labîd b. A'sam charmed the prophet Muhammad, and as the result of this charm, the Prophet started to imagine to having pretended of what he

⁷² Al-Falaq, 4.

⁷³ Ibn Haldun, op.cit., III, 1152.

⁷⁴ Râzî, op. cit., XXXII, 179.

⁷⁵ ibid., III, 193.

⁷⁶ *Musnad*, VI, 57,63, 96, Bukharî, "Tibb" 47; Muslim, "Salam" 43; Ibn Mâjah, "Tibb" 45.

⁷⁷ *Musnad*, IV, 367; Nasâî, "Tahrim" 20.

really did not do, and also cited that two angels had come to the prophet to inform him that a charm committed against him and thrown in to a well named Zarwan. In a part of the report coming from Aishah, it is not stated that Labîd was a Jew, is recorded that the Prophet of Allah himself had gone to the well, having taking with some of his companions. On the other hand in the report of Zayd b. Arkam there is an information saying of that "some companions of the Prophet had been sent over there". In addition to these, in the report of Aisha while there are some expressions about the pretending of the prophet, it is not recorded in the report of Zayd; yet, in another variant of the report coming from Aisha as cited in Musnad of Ahmad b. Hanbal it is stated that the Prophet's sickness has lasted six months, however, in that of Zayd cited that when the string had been come out of the well and being undo the knots, the Prophet felt relieved as if he had been saved off his bonds and bandages.

The reports concerning of being charmed of the Prophet can be criticized by the textual criticism in the methodology of the Hadith, as well as they can be considered by their contents in contradiction with the nature and the requirements of the Prophet's messages. Since, to assert that a prophet who gets revelations from Allah could be fell under the effects of the magic may be understood both to have an admission of that some human elements could be mixed within the divine revelation, and may justify the claims of the rejecters of Islam asserting that the Prophet of Allah has been charmed. However, in many verses of the Qur'an the Prophet is said of as he is under the protection of Allah, and recorded that the fact that the revelation had been gradually sent down in his heart has been taken into consideration⁷⁸. Some early scholars such as Abu Bakr al-Asam, Jassas, Kady Abduljabbar, and some late scholars such as Qasîmî, Muhammad Abduh, Sayed Qutb and Muhammad Izzat Darwaza, considering these features, refused the report saying that the Prophet was charmed⁷⁹.

Some of them cited that so called charming over the Prophet might have been occurred in Medinah, however in some report coming from Hasan al-Basrî, Ata, İkrimah, Jabir b. Abdullah and Kurayb b. Abu Muslim, citing that these surahs were revealed in Meccah, they also recorded some reason, saying that with khabar al wahed, we could not perform in practice especially in the matters of the belief. On the contrary of this the most of the scholars regarded the reports as sound (saheeh) and said that the magic had influenced not the mind and the heart of the Prophet but his body, and this is not an obstacle to the idea of the protection of the Prophet by Allah, so in the result they concluded that he

⁷⁸ Al-Nisâ', 113; Al-Maidah, 42, 67; Al-Furqan, 32; Al-Shuara', 153, 185.

⁷⁹ Maturidî, *Ta'wîlât Al-Qur'an*, (Istanbul) Hacı Selim Ağa Libr, nr. 40, fol., 907^a; Jassas, op, cit., I, 60; Jamaladdin Al-Qasîmî, *Mahasin Al-Tawil*, Beirut 1978, XVII, 304; Muhammad Abduh, *Tafsiru Juz'i Amma'*, Cairo 1904, s 181-183, Sayed Qutb, *Fî Zihlâl Al-Qur'an*, Beirut 1985, VI, 4008; Darwazah, *Al-Tafsîr Al Hadîs* (trans., in Turkish Şaban Karataş), Istanbul 1997, I, 199.

was charmed⁸⁰. However in some of the verses under the subject, there cited some expressions that the Prophet imagined something to have pretended even though he did not do and this situation lasted at least six months. In fact, this is only an occasion directly related with his mind. Indeed, some of the scholars, following a conciliatory attitude, state that the Prophet might have been charmed, being related with the consideration of his enemies, but with the protection by Allah, he was not influenced by their magic. Never the less this interpretation also include some conclusions regarding that magic did not occur, as cited in the hadiths, and by this way the Prophet did not enter under any influence so, it is in unity with the first idea⁸¹.

A prophet, according to the Abrahamic Religions, receives his revelations from Allah (God) and communicates it to the people, and he shows miracles to prove its truths. To get revelation (i.e., get information from the invisible world) and to show some miracles are two main features differing them from other people. As for divinator and magician, they are two persons, one asserting that he/she informs from the invisible world, and the other is in a position of being an alternate-one to the prophets, claiming that he can possess over the beings or on the events. For this reason, when dealt with the miracles in Islam, it is especially be taken into account that magic is not an alternate to the miracle.

III. Conclusion

Allah almighty completed his religion and this religion prohibited the divination along with many other things of pre-Islamic era (jahiliyyah /ignorant age). Since the revelation has come to the end by the Prophet's death, new requirements needed for the social life would be done, under the leading of the reason, by some methods like analogy (qiyas) and juridical opinions (ijtihad) from now on⁸². Therefore, Islam eliminates magic, fortune-telling, considering omen looking at the balls and all the divination. This attitude was kept also during the first four caliphs with a great sensitivity. For instance, the first caliph, Abu Bakr, of whose servant made him eat a food, having been bought by the money earned for the divination before his embracing Islam, was so much sensitive on the matter that he vomited all the food from his stomach by inserting his hand into

⁸⁰ Ibn Qutaibah, *Ta'wihu Muhtalif Al-Hadis*, Cairo 1966, 178-186; Maturîdî, fol. 907^a; Qadî Iyad, *Al-Shifa'*, Cairo 1977, II, 865-868; Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Tafsir Al-Muawwizatayn*, (ed. Dâr Al-Hadis), undated., 44-51.

⁸¹ Hadîdî, *Ismat Al-Anbiyâ*, Cairo 1979, 100-104. For more information on this subject see; Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, op. cit., 46-51; Mizzî, *Tahzîb Al-Kamal*, Beirut 1992, XIX, 332-354; Ibn Hajar, *Fath Al-Bârî*, X, 226-227; Ali Osman Ateş, *Kur'an ve Hadislere Göre Cin ve Büyü*, İstanbul 1995, 274-277, 292-294.

⁸² Bukharî, "Manaqib Al-Ansar, 26; Ahmad b. Hanbal, op. cit., IV, 118.

his mouth⁸³. The second caliph, Omar, too, sending a letter to the governor of Egypt, ordered him to follow all people who practice divination and magic in that area and to punish them all⁸⁴.

As studying of the verses of the Qur'an dealing with the magic, on the other hand, it is seen as a conclusion that magic is regarded as a fictitious, deceitful, invented event, entrapment, instigation, lie and false performance, having been informing that they are presented as the alternate of the reality and true knowledge, and all the practices of the magicians would be shown as in vain, and at last it is declared that they will never succeed. In addition to these, it is also understood that magic in the Qur'an is considered as a fact of the social life and, most of all, is taken into account in the point of moral and creed view many forms of it are seen as in accordance with the unity of Allah (tawheed) while some of them are thought immoral attitudes like tricks or forgery.

In the paralleling idea of the Qur'anic approach, it is declared in the hadiths that it is as one of the destroying-seven cardinal sins⁸⁵, there magic, along with fortune telling and the divination⁸⁶, is prohibited too. A Muslim jurist who deals with the subject in the perspective of public order, proves that magic that resulted in disbelief and rejection would be seen as equal with the apostasy (irtidat), and for all kinds of the magic resulting not in that way, concluded by him that we have to punish according to the extent which harms the social life⁸⁷.

In conclusion, magic and divination are two different activities carried out in various ways, and so, must be considered on this point. A false religion reflecting the mysterious-magic forms based on the influences of the stars (talisman), a metaphysical conception taking place of the result of then degeneration of that religion, and also magician who regards his magic as the alternative to the prophetic miracles, can be understood as false prophets seen often in the history. It can be said that the forms of magic, basing on shabaza, have no direct relationship with the faith but they are performances dealing with the practical and the moral life, and on this basis, it seems that by some mysterious skillfulness and knowledge, some deceptions, some corruption and damaging of people are occurred. On the other hand, some forms of magic could be seen as an effort of humankind to perceive the secret event of the Natural life or as the paranormal phenomena. It is known that some certain occasions that could not be known their reasons may happen and that these are named sometimes as magic. But the

⁸³ Bukharî, op. cit., 26

⁸⁴ M. Hamidullah, *Al-Wasaiq Al-Siyasiyyah*, Beirut 1983, 509-510.

⁸⁵ Bukharî, "Wasaya" 23; "Tibb" 48; Muslim, "Iman" 145.

⁸⁶ Abu Dâvûd Al-Tayalisi, *Al-Musnad*, 50.

⁸⁷ cf., *Al-Muwatta'*, "Uqûl" 19; Shafiî, *Al-Umm*, Bulaq 1903, I, 226-227; Jassass, op. cit., I, 61-72; Ibn Qudâmah, *Al-Mughnî*, Riyadh, (undated), VIII, 151.

fact that they are not repeated again, may prevent to think that they might be regarded as the situations confirmed by the science. This makes the researchers avoid from the conclusion of that magic is a paranormal phenomena science tolerates.

Islam does not tolerate the magic and the divination, on the contrary, it completely prohibits them all. Religious scholars, following this prohibition, oppose to the magic and the divination. But we could hardly say that they/the occultists are successful on this subject. Yet, throughout the history, even though having a decreasing field of performances, we could not see that this field is destroyed all. Despite of the harsh attitudes of the religious scholars towards them, the magicians and the diviners keep the magic and the divination live among the peoples as the alternate religions. We can sadly witness that this Pre-Islamic custom have been returned and made revived in the various classes of the society. Even today, we see, from time to time, that among the great statesmen of the world appreciate them, as happened in the history. Sometimes, being exhibited in the journals, and being a subject of a book shows us that the subject wins a great communality over the religious people and the high society.