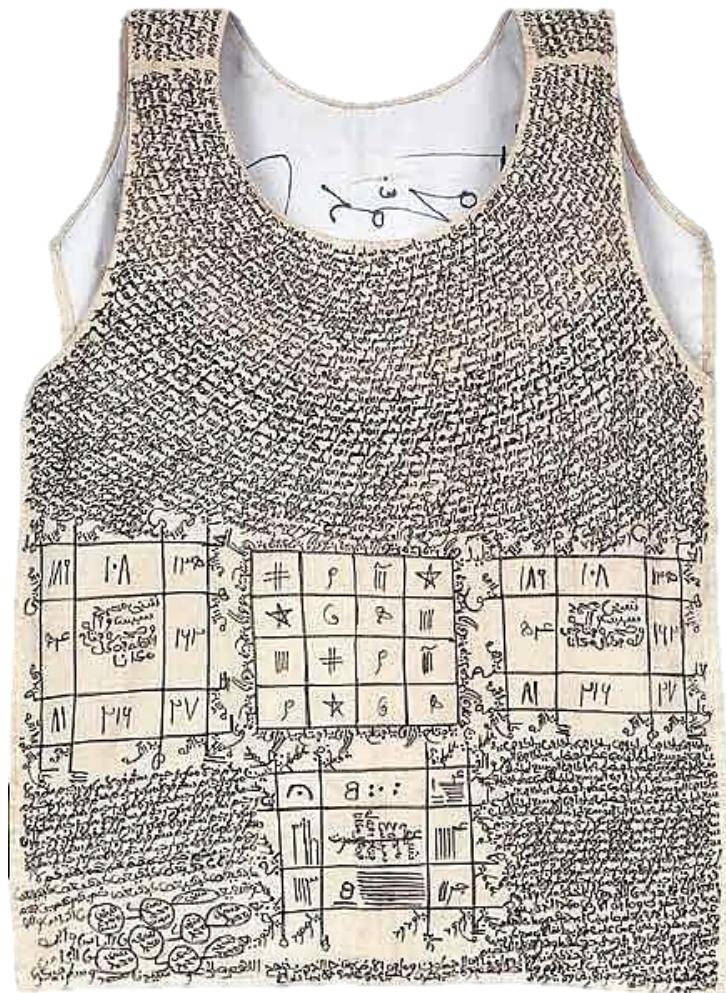


The Unseen World in the Ummah: Then and Now

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Introduction

In the prologue to the book of Job, Satan is given temporary permission by Yahweh to plague one man's family with sudden premature deaths, utter catastrophes, plaguing diseases for Job, a cursing wife and the visit of three condemning monotheistic friends. Added to Job's crisis was God's prolonged silence with him that only ended in a terrifying theophanic storm. Now imagine, however, that this rare, exceptional case was actually the default, unseen world for everyone, everywhere and for all of history. Imagine if Satan and his legions could do all this, not only to a Job, but to all humanity, all the time, especially from the invisible world of the spirits: witchcraft, sorcery, black and white magic, conjuring and enchantment – and always, with God being silent and distant, while sever, judgmental legalism –as per Job's 'three friends' - dominate all theological debates.¹ This, I suggest, is the closest biblical analogy I can offer to describe the unseen world of the Ummah which is the subject of our paper.

There are many names coined by social scientists and missiologists to describe the unseen, esoteric and spiritual phenomenon of this present paper: 'folk Islam' (i.e., Islam of the people), 'the unseen face of Islam' (Bill Musk), 'popular Islam' (Patrick Gaffney), 'low Islam' (Caleb Kim), 'animistic Islam' (Samuel Zwemer), 'folk religion in Islam' (Earl Grant), 'the occult in Islam' (Abdul al-Masih), 'syncretistic Islam' (Christine Schott), and 'Muslims and magic' (Rick Love). Most of these names are useful shorthand handles for our subject at hand.² As each description suggests, while each Muslim community may be committed to their version of orthopraxy, they are also deeply implicated in local spirit-beliefs and imported Ummah magic practices. These are practiced in very diverse communities and the practices can oscillate between tolerated orthopraxy and condemned heteropraxy or *bida'*. We are broaching the common yet unseen world of Islam.

Current Muslim practitioners in the spirit realm are designated by social scientists as Muslim shamans, healers, fortune tellers, magicians, spiritual guides, mystic masters, conjurers,

¹ This premise assumes that Satan's permission to curse Job and his family was, first, strictly temporary, second, only by divine permission, and third, a unique test that is not encountered again until Christ went to the cross. The ubiquitous spiritual warfare with demonic powers is not – as my Beninese colleagues frequently assume- identical to Job's crisis, in that Satan is profoundly bound by the Lordship of Christ, there is no Manichaean contest between good and black magic, there are no astral, zodiac or planetary powers, and Satanic curses are very limited by God's Providence. Magic, witchcraft and occult powers are founded on demonic lies, diabolic possessions and the terrors of encountering spiritual darkness. The only point here is that Job's case is exceptional yet very illustrative to our paper.

² A more accurate designation might be, 'magical, syncretistic, orthopraxic Islam' in that there are three active and common variables in most Islamic communities: a) a vast range of magical practices, b) the syncretism with local traditions and c) the necessary outward orthopraxy as practiced in the Ummah of each community. The title is too long, and since this form of Islam is ubiquitous and universal, I will follow Musk in calling it the 'unseen Islam' as supposed to the public and textbook Islam studied in the West.

sorcerers, medicine men, or exorcists. In the *Ummah*, they are routinely honoured as ‘imams’, but also called –according to regions- marabouts (from the Arabic *murabit*), murshids (Arabic for ‘guide’; i.e. Sufi guides), pirs or a Pir Baba (Persian for ‘old man’), sheikhs (Arabic for ‘old man’), alfas (Hausa), waganga³ (Swahili), and mullahs (Arabic for ‘learned’), among other regional names.⁴ For the sake of uniformity I will use ‘sheikh’ and ‘Unseen Islam’ in this text.⁵

The purpose of this missiological paper is to, first, attempt a general survey of the nature and impact of the Ummah’s spirit phenomena as witnessed in both their historic and current contexts. Secondly, to address the critical ‘so what?’ question, and ask, ‘it is possible for disciples of Christ to contextualise or indigenise or incarnate in any way to the teachings and/or practices of the unseen world of the Ummah? In order to describe the greater Islamic spiritual worldview (i.e. their *geistige Weltanschauung*⁶) several historic contexts need to be briefly summarised. This will be conceptualised through Venn diagrams. This includes visualising: 1) the impact of Muhammad’s identification with Quraysh supernaturalism and with the wider oriental Apocrypha⁷ culture; 2) the legacy of the growing Islamic supernaturalism during the caliphate centuries; and 3) the continuation of pre-modern Unseen Islam in contemporary Muslim communities. After this survey, the question will then be asked whether committed follower of Jesus can maintain any identity within a Muslim community which is in allegiance with various degrees of esoteric, occult magical practices.

At the outset, several disclaimers are in order. First, the spirit phenomena in the Ummah are significantly under-documented. The overwhelming majority of Muslim texts are studies dedicated to Islamic theology, to *dawa*, to political Sharia jurisprudence, to Islamic eschatology and to apologetics. Given that most spirit-practices rely on oral rituals,⁸ the ‘hidden side of Islam’ is exactly that in their literature. Even among Christian writers on Islam, our present subject is not common. Secondly, insofar that the unseen side of Islam is in many ways

³ Caleb Chul-Soo Kim refers to the *waganga* as Muslim shamans. See Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, *op. cit.*, *Islam among Swahili in East Africa*, Acton Publishers, Kenya, 2016.

⁴ Rahmed Rahal notes two further names in Tunisia: *moqaddim* (Sufi fraternity leader), *meddeb* (tutor or healer). *Coran et talismans: textes et pratiques magiques en milieu musulman*, Constant Hamès, (dir.) Karthala, 2007, p. 114. Also *hummdali* Turkish (‘masters’, ‘patrons’ to whom jinn are subservient), P.N Boratav, ‘Djinn’. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second edition, 1960-2007, p. 549.

⁵ See footnote 1 above. The ‘knowledge of the unseen’ is treated in Shari’a Law in Ahmed ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller: A classical Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, Amana Publications, 2008, (w60.), pp. 1015-1018. The disclaimer is that only Allah is the knower of the unseen and does not discloses to anyone (Surah 72.26), yet it then concedes that certain holy saints in the Qur’an did receive insight into the unseen, and thus all unseen insights are to be credited to Allah showing it to them. This is said as much in 72.27: Allah does disclose to a messenger he approves, and protects them with angels.

⁶ German for ‘spiritual worldview’ (*Weltanschauung*, i.e. beyond sensory perception; coined by Kant 1790) or ‘*Geistige Kosmos*’ following Karl Sederholm (1859) as supposed to Heidegger’s *Weltbild* (world picture, i.e. assumptions through perceptions).

⁷ By Apocryphal I include all Pseudepigrapha, Deutero-canonical, and Oriental hagiographic texts.

⁸ Louis Brennen, *Coran et talismans op. cit.*, p. 15.

heteropraxy, disputed, and esoteric in nature, the practices vary widely from region to region.⁹ At best, we must observe local contexts¹⁰ and comparatively suggest wider generalised inferences. Third, while the activities of magic and jinn spirits in the Ummah's *geistige Weltanschauung*¹¹ are ubiquitous they are not without strong internal protests from, often, educated or orthodox Muslim voices.¹² No single sheikh or protesting voice speaks for the entire Ummah. At best we speak of widespread practices which do not enjoy universal endorsement. Fourth, this paper requires conceptualising our subject using generalisations concerning the Ummah. Exceptions exist for everything presented but enough commonality exists to permit a broad view on the matter being researched. Finally, I am not an expert on sorcery, talismans, jinn cults, astrology, magic, zodiac signs or any occult phenomenon. I come merely as a historian, missiologist and researcher-teacher with some 30-years of experience principally in the Sahel region of French West Africa.

1. The Impact of Arab Traditional Religion and Apocryphal Monotheism on the Unseen World of the Ummah Today

Muhammad's spiritual worldview (i.e. his *geistige Weltanschauung*) formed when he merged parts of two rival religious worldviews into his personal spiritual life: Arab traditional religion (hereafter, ATR) and oriental apocryphal monotheism (hereafter, OAM). The latter grew out of Jewish-Christian teachings of Scripture and circulated widely in oral form among the Arabs.¹³

Both the Quraysh and Muhammad had a rudimentary knowledge of Jewish-Christian sacred history and monotheism –called “tales of the ancients” seven times in the Meccan Surahs - yet their monotheistic knowledge was drawn exclusively from oral apocryphal sources; not from a direct encounter with the Bible (which was not translated into Arabic until 867 AD).¹⁴ This is inferred by, first, the frequent apocryphal material cited in the Qur'an (see chart below) and, secondly and conversely, by the utter lack of any direct Scriptural ‘special revelation’ in the

⁹ Indeed, we do well to see this tension more as a gradation than a polarisation between, say official vs popular, or ‘high versus low’, or formal versus informal, etc. Indeed, Muslims commonly affirm their orthodoxy in public and consult Sheikh practitioners in private. Our academic categories, therefore, are fluid in the life of every days Muslims. See Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, *op. cit.* Kim also refers to the boundaries between orthodox and popular Islam as ‘considerably fuzzy’ to most Muslims. p. 90.

¹⁰ Based on the literature reviews and personal research, the areas accentuated in this paper are North and West Africa, the Sufis in India, the Swahili in East Africa, and the Baahithiin in Indonesia.

¹¹ See footnote 5.

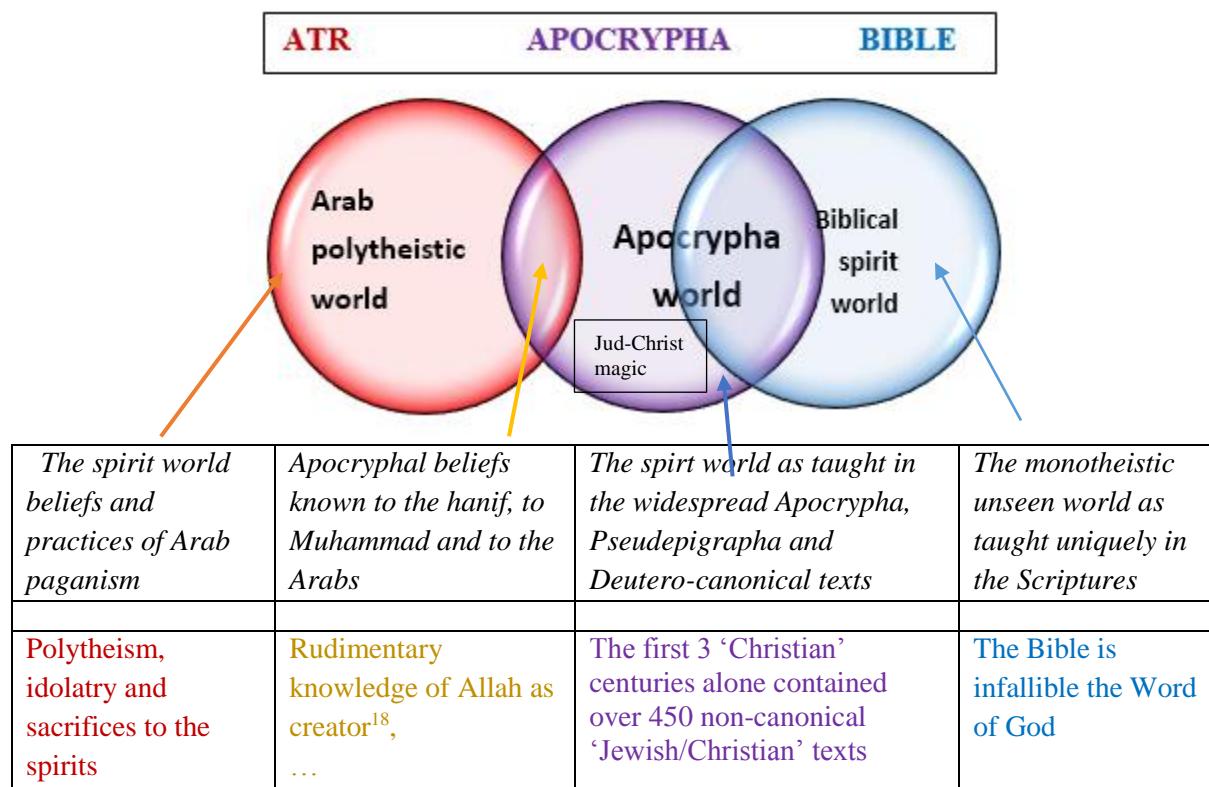
¹² Brenner, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹³ Caleb Kim notes: Muhammad “was still standing on the existing cultural worldview shared by other Arabs. His primary intention was not to change people's hearts but to establish a "reformed" religious "society" by challenging "corrupt" (*kafirun*) people, who happened to be pagan Arabs ...” (personal correspondence 2018). This text will work with the theory of the classical narrative of Muhammad, which cannot be verified or falsified but operates as historic truth in the Ummah.

¹⁴ Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151.

Qur'an.¹⁵ Both the Quraysh and Muhammad knew of the Bible but neither party 'knew the Bible'.¹⁶ Unwittingly, Muhammad mistook a popular collage of oral apocryphal monotheistic tales (which he cites generously) for authentic Scripture, a reality that was not revealed to him until he was deep into his 'prophetic' career in Medina –and then only to reject it in favour of what he had previously assumed to be the Islamic content of the 'Book'. It is the position of this paper that not until late in his life, did Muhammad ever encounter the genuine testimony of the unseen world of the Bible (namely the true Gospel). Muhammad chose to remain loyalty to his magic and jinn controlled worldview, even though he was seeking monotheistic answers from among esoteric apocryphal accounts.¹⁷ However, during his formative years, he never encountered the true gospel, the true Christ or the true Holy Spirit; rather he unwittingly embraced "another gospel, another spirit and another Jesus", as Paul describes such deviations in 2 Corinthians 11. What Muhammad did, has become the default for the entire Ummah.

These initial Meccan concepts can be illustrated using three linear Venn spheres.



¹⁵ 'Special revelation', revelation on God, man, creation, salvation, the spirit world, heaven and hell, etc. unique to the Bible.

¹⁶ Muslim theologians maintain that Muhammad was 'unlettered', (*al-ummi*) based on Surah 7.157. Elass however argues that it is far more likely to mean 'unscriptured' in that the four other plural reference to *ummi* in the Qur'an describe non-Jewish Gentiles without Scriptures (2:78; 3:20,75; 62:2) Mateen Elass, *Understanding the Koran*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004, p. 39.

¹⁷ And that would include illicit practices of magic among Jews, Christians and heretical movements.

¹⁸ The Quraysh testified that Allah created everything. Cf. Surah 29.61.

Allah's 3 daughters, astral worship, Hubal & Hilal,	Of Ibrahimic monotheism,	(gospels, epistles) classified as... ...apocryphal (<i>esoteric, hidden</i>) texts,	God is Triune angels, Satan, demons, darkness
Sooth-saying possessed poets, Jinn cult Pagan priests and priestesses	of the Bible (<i>Taurat, Injil</i>), and the people of the Book (Jews, Christians), of the biblical prophets: Nuh, Ibrahim, Ishaq, Ismail, Yusuf, Lut, Musa, Dawud, Suleiman, Yunus, Isa, <i>et al.</i>	deuterocanonical texts (<i>a second-canon</i>) Pseudepigrapha texts (<i>works falsely written in another person's name</i>).	The resurrection The eternal soul, Heaven & hell Jesus' incarnation, divinity, crucifixion, ascension and Lordship
<i>Sihr</i> : magic/ witchcraft ¹⁹	of angels, of demons and of Satan	All were hagiolatry texts containing Scriptural accounts with esoteric, gnostic, heretical, fictional, legendary and mythical material.	The indwelling divine Holy Spirit, gifts and power
Kaaba shrine	Known to the Quraysh as the “tales of the ancients”		The spiritual Body of Christ
Arab taboos	Ishmael is the father of the Arabs		The kingdom of heaven
demonic dreams			

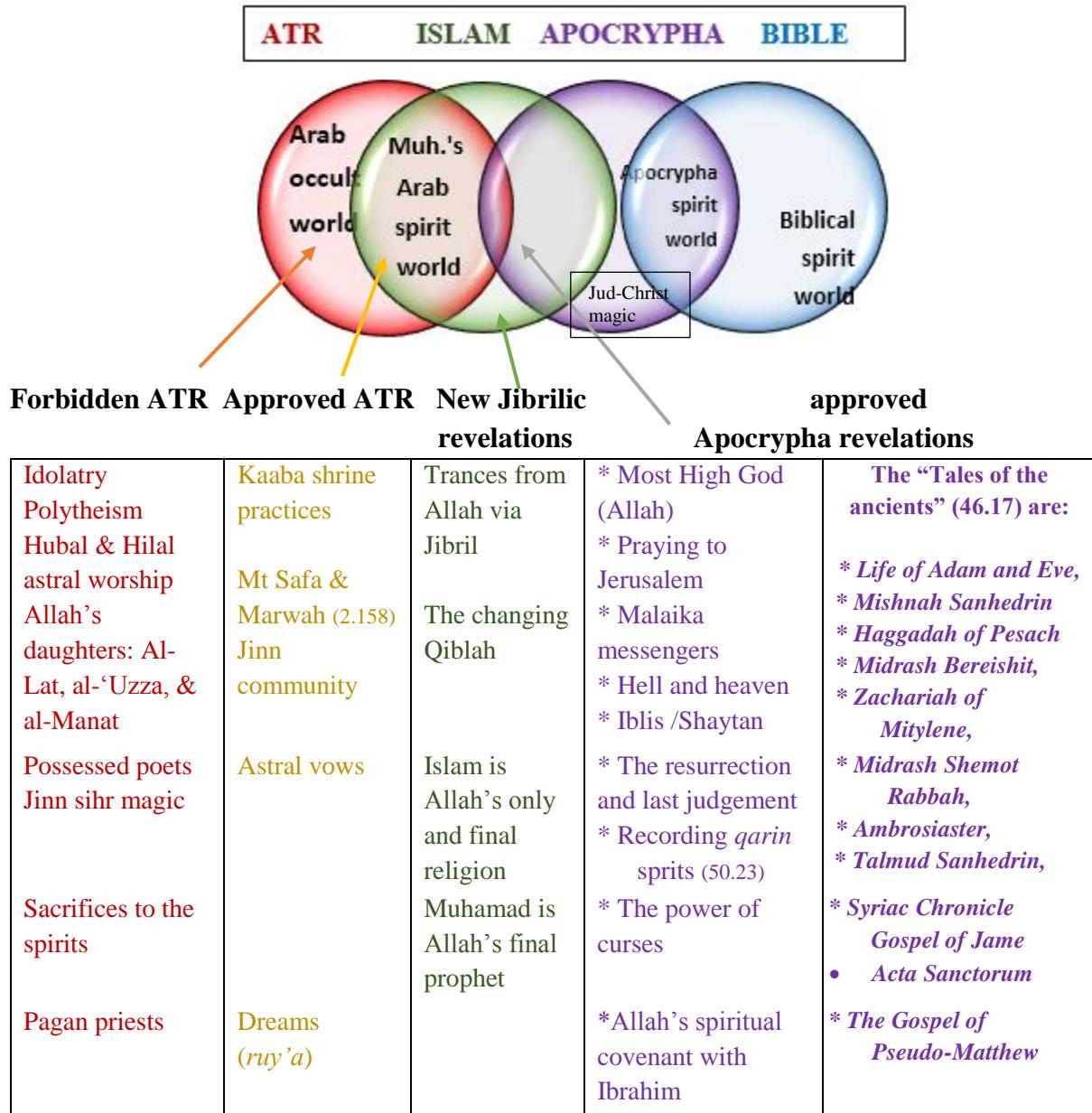
From a Christian perspective –and this is key to this paper’s scope - Muhammad’s emerging *geistige Weltanschauung* embraced as many traditional Arab magic practices as apocryphal²⁰ beliefs, and these latter ‘beliefs’ were highly esteemed by the small Arab *hanif* monotheist community to which Muhammad belonged.²¹ Whether intentionally and/or guided by Jibril, Muhammad fused selected beliefs and practices from ATR with OAM beliefs, and thus bequeathing his followers a most confused, eclectic, monotheistic-magical supernaturalism - although Muslim theologians will vigorously reject any such inference. As they see it, Muhammad appropriated nothing; everything is from Allah’s Eternal Tablet in heaven. There is

¹⁹ Sorcery magic (*s.h.r.*) is mentioned 58 times in 25 Qur’anic Surahs, chiefly (54x) in Mecca, and especially in the late Mecca period. See Hamès, *op. cit.*, p. 18. See Caleb Kim’s treatment on this in, ‘Sihiri among the Swahili Muslims in Zanzibar: An Anthropological Analysis of the Belief and Practice of “Witchcraft” in Zanzibar in Light of the Islamic View of Siḥr’, *Muslim Christian Encounter*, Vol. 6, No. 1, April, 2013, pp. 81-120. Torch Trinity Center for Islamic Studies Journal, Seoul, Korea.

²⁰ By ‘Apocryphal’ we mean all Pseudepigrapha, Deutero-canonical, and hagiographic texts.

²¹ See Ibn Ishaq’s *Sira*, §143b-144, pp. 99-103.

no Venn diagram in their explanation; just a direct download (*tanzil*) of the Qur'an from Allah via Jibril via Muhammad and that without even the agency of Muhammad's mind. This paper, however, assumes that Muhammad appropriated most of what he taught in the Qur'an from other sources. Notice below the position of Muhammad's worldview and what he (aka, his Allah or Jibril) forbids, approves and adds.



Arab taboos ²² demonic dreams (<i>hulm</i>) Illegitimate magic (<i>sahara</i>)	Legitimate magic (<i>mu'azzimun</i>) Harut & Marut (2.102)		* Allah's mandate to prophets * High honour to Jesus	* <i>Syriac Infancy Gospel</i> * <i>Infancy Gospel of Thomas</i> <i>Talmud Avodah Zarah</i>
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2.

The Legacy of the Growing Islamic Supernaturalism during the Caliphate Centuries

Muhammad's religious appropriation from the two dominant, competing worldviews (ATR and OAM) in his world would become the default for the Ummah for the next 14 centuries. As Muhammad did, so also subsequent generations of imams would do: syncretise with the traditional religions of new conquered or proselytised regions - while continuing to interact with various streams of Judeo-Christian monotheism. Muhammad became the model for everything which Muslims - and in particular the Sufis - wish to imitate.²³ What Muhammad did, imams have always continued to do: adding and/or 'islamising' new magical, spiritual and eventually mystic practices.²⁴

If Muhammad built a monotheistic dock on Arab pagan waters then both Sunni and Shia Muslims extended it into a theological pier in subsequent centuries, permitting certain Oriental-Asian spiritual practices and beliefs to safely dock in the Ummah - including additional apocryphal (*Isra 'iliyya*) and selected Biblical beliefs, - especially eschatology. Evidence for this is in the Sira, the hadiths, tafsir, and Shari'a laws.²⁵

Classical Islam would unapologetically come to endorse a magical reality within creation. In describing their monotheistic-magic *Weltanschauung*, Muslim theologians speak of both *mu'azzimun* (lawful Islamic magic) and *sahara* (unlawful, illicit magic) practices among Muslims. Both good and evil magic are part of classical Islamic theology in the Ummah.²⁶ As Islam expanded, so did the encounter with both 'good' and 'evil' magic of each subjugated or

²² Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, p. 40, §57-58. Allah/Muhammad mocks the superstition/taboos of Arabs about which camel, ewe or stallion to set free. (50.23)

²³ Fabrizio Speziale, *Soufisme, religion et médecine en Islam indien*, Karthala, 2010, p. 193.

²⁴ Kim notes "This attitude toward *sihiri* is not different from that of the first Muslims in the time of the prophet Muhammad." *Op. cit.*, 2013, p. 8.

²⁵ For examples from medieval Shafi'iite Sharia's law on the legitimacy of talismans, belief in jinn and amulets, see 'Protective or Healing Words (*ruqya*) and amulets', (w17.0) in the work of Al-Misri, *op. cit.*, pp. 979-880.

²⁶ See Abderrehmane Laksassi, 'Magie: le point de vue d'Ibn Khaldun' *Coran et talismans: textes et pratiques magiques en milieu musulman*, Karthala, 2007, pp. 95-112. Caleb Kim *op. cit.*, notes that "It is common belief among Swahili clerics that the use of Arabic magic in services to Muslims has nothing to do with being unfaithful to Allah nor with the sin of infidelity." (p. 66)

proselytised region. The magical reality of their world did not cause imams to reject classical Galenic medicine practiced widely in the Orient and India but imams remained faithful to both ‘prophetic medicine’ and Galenic medicine.²⁷

In their academic research, Abbasid and Andalusian Muslim scientists focused deeply on the role of magic and astrology, and for centuries their scholarly works were even read by Westerner academics. A.C. Crombie writes: “The spheres in which the Arabs made their most important and original contribution to the development of European science were alchemy²⁸, magic and astrology, and this was partly because of the different approach of the Arabs to the problems of the world of nature. … No sharp distinction was drawn between natural science and the magical or occult, for physical and occult causes were recognised as equally able to be responsible for physical phenomena.”²⁹ As such, the Islamic world failed to gain the mastery over nature which was later achieved in Europe during the Renaissance. Their pre-occupation, says Crombie, was with magical and astrological properties of natural objects and the search for moral symbols. Their internal rejection of Mu’tazilite rationalism led them to consider the causality of magic as superior to an Aristotelian analysis and explanation of natural science. What Arabs increasingly rejected, Christendom in Europe progressively accepted. The Renaissance in Western European left the Arab civilisations behind in a semi-magical world and moved on towards modernity.

The famous Maghreb historian Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) identified three active forms of magic in the Ummah: 1. sorcery (*sihr*: a secret power from within), 2. talismans (*al-talismat* or *mizaj* a secret power affecting human temperament through celestial powers, sacred objects and mystic numbers) and 3. conjuring (*ash-sha’wadha*: a secret power to deceive others).³⁰ In such a monotheistic-magical world, causation is complex: it could be Allah’s direct will through creation³¹, or Allah’s will through the jinn/Iblis, angels, or again, Allah’s will through a wide host of *baraka* magic.³² All three spheres were intensively studied as a unified sphere which included astrological phenomena, the beneficial and/or baneful powers of planets, zodiac signs, colours, the 28 positions of the moon, sacred numbers and sacred Qur’anic-hadiths verses. This knowledge was in turn associated with parts of the human body.³³ The primary occupation of the sheikhs was to discern spiritual causality in all these realms and then to prescribe spiritual or

²⁷ See Speziale, ‘Le savoir prophétique et les traditions des imams,’ *op. cit.*, pp. 193-204.

²⁸ From the Arab *al-kimiya*.

²⁹ Crombie, A.C., *Augustine to Galileo: The History of Science A.D. 400-1650*. Harvard University Press, 1953., p. 8, 35, 39. Speziale notes that Indian Sufi masters studied the laws of nature to discern the symbolic value of superior truths and by so doing to know the divine signs of Allah. *Op. cit.* p. 20.

³⁰ Lakhssasi, *op. cit.*, p. 97. Ibn Khaldun explained a talisman as an electuary of mystic elements from the earth, from space, from water and from rocks. (Speziale, *op. cit.*, p. 206).

³¹ Or ‘voluntarism’.

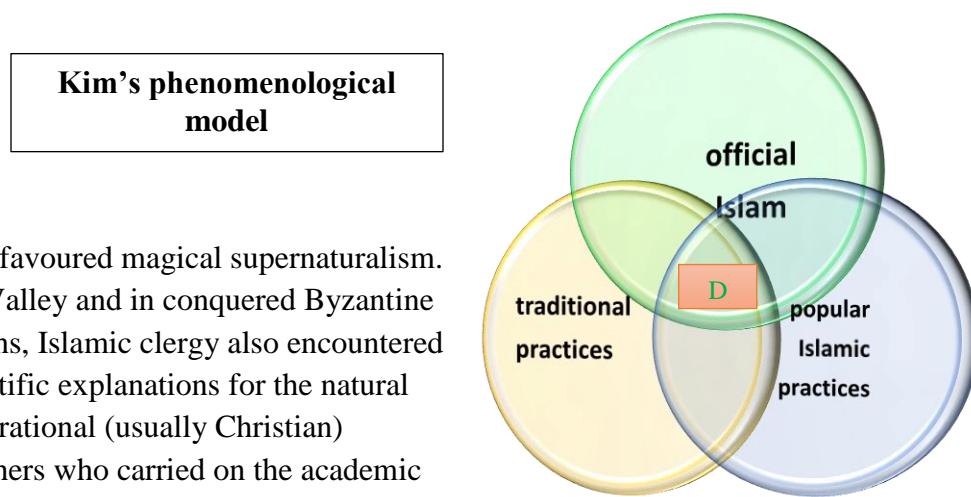
³² Kim notes that “According to the Qur’an, there seem to be three major causal agents for human afflictions: devils (38:41), people themselves (that is, their disbelief; 4:79), and Allah (2:155-156). *Op. cit.*, 2013, p. 15. See also ‘Sihr’, T. Fahd, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second edition, 1960-2017, p. 567. Fadh notes that Ibn Khaldun bases ‘white magic’ on Greek philosophers, on astrology on the Bible, and on the Qur’an.

³³ Speziale, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

physical remedies. This led to a vast market of talismans³⁴, amulets, charms and ‘spiritual scientific’ studies of which the Qur’an was the supreme talisman.³⁵

The monotheistic-magic world spread with the expanse of the Ummah. During the 14 caliphate centuries, the forces of Islam progressively conquered (or spread to) the Middle East, North, West and East Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, Central Asia, Southern Asia, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe. In each area, magical practices and beliefs were encountered; some were rejected, some were embraced, still others were ‘islamised’. For example, Caleb Kim notes that “Swahili Islam is overall a result of historical religio-cultural amalgamation of African traditions and Islam; thus, many customs in Swahili society mirror the characteristics of the total synthesis.”³⁶

Kim illustrates this Swahili-Islamic Phenomena as follows (below):³⁷ By ‘traditional practices’ Kim means “autochthonous religious traditions” among the Swahili. By ‘popular Islamic practices’ Kim refers to “non-dogmatic practices such as Sufi *tariqa*, saint worship, and Arab magic and astrology.” The **D** represents the “domain of total syncretism”.³⁸



Not all encounters favoured magical supernaturalism. In both the Indus Valley and in conquered Byzantine and Persian domains, Islamic clergy also encountered non-magical, scientific explanations for the natural world, either from rational (usually Christian) scientific philosophers who carried on the academic traditions of Aristotelian rationalism or the brilliant,

³⁴ According to Shafi’ite Sharia law, a talisman is legitimate if a) it cites the Qur’an, Allah’s names and attributes, b) it is written or said in Arabic, and c) its’ effectiveness is credited to Allah’s power. Al-Misri, *op. cit.*, (W17.1) p. 879.

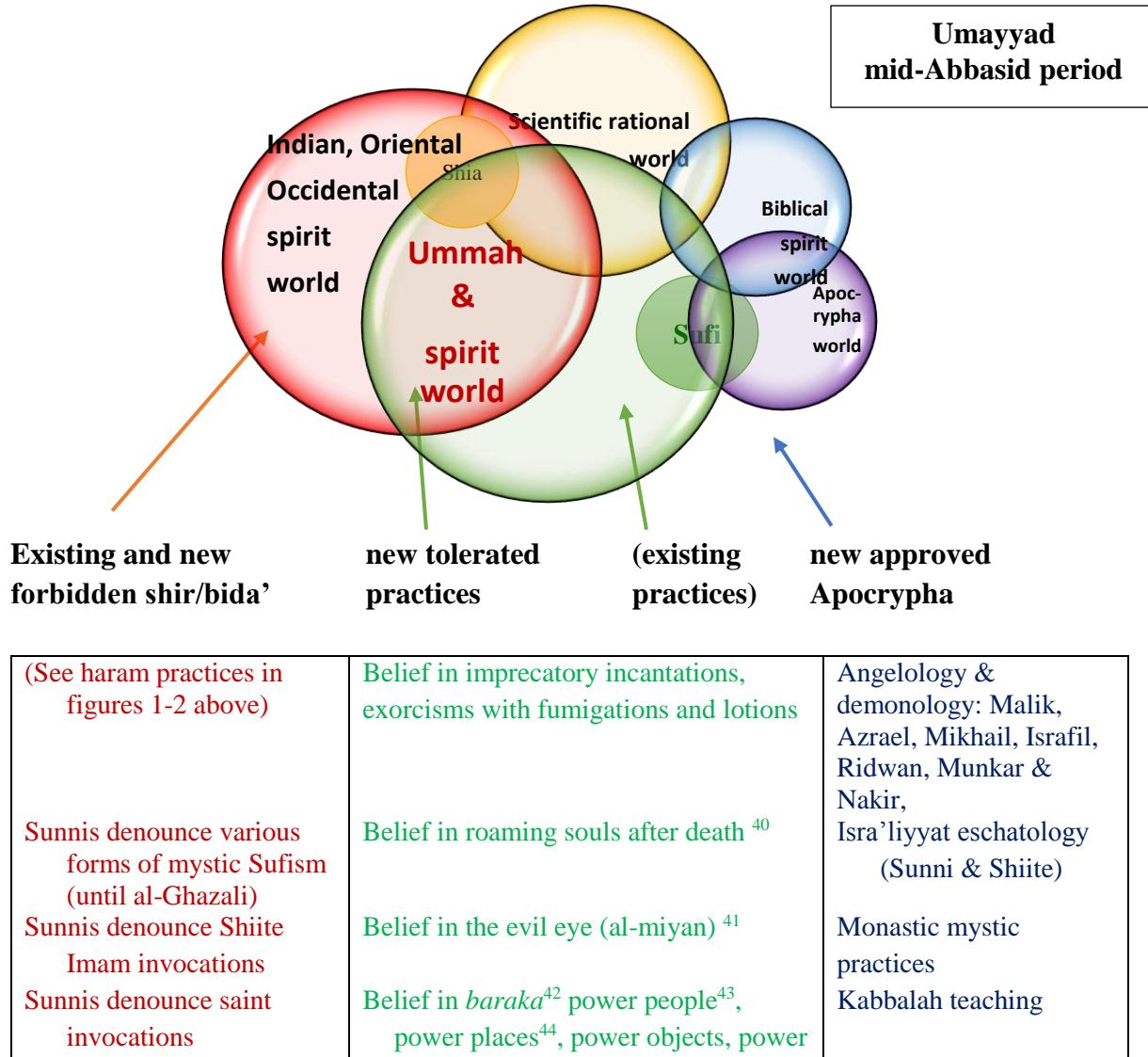
³⁵ For a display and brief description of historic talismans, see Yasmine Al-Saleh, November 2010 entry for the Met Museum at www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tali/hd_tali.htm. 29 Surahs begin with 14 Arabic letters, which constitute half of the Arabic alphabet. Then again, Surah 1 has 7 verses, corresponding with the 7 planets, 7 climates, 7 days, etc. (Speziale, pp. 207-209)

³⁶ Caleb Kim, ‘Sihiri among the Swahili Muslims in Zanzibar: An Anthropological Analysis of the Belief and Practice of “Witchcraft” in Zanzibar in Light of the Islamic View of Siḥr’, *Muslim Christian Encounter*, Vol. 6, No. 1, April, 2013, pp. 81-120. Torch Trinity Center for Islamic Studies Journal, Seoul, Korea, P. 1.

³⁷ Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, ‘Indigenization of Islam in the Swahili Context’, *Islam Among the Swahili*, Acton Publishers, 2016, p. 61.

³⁸ Kim, *op. cit.* pp. 60-61.

innovative science and mathematics of Indus Valley philosophers Bhaskara and Brahmagupta.³⁹ This new intellectual infusion into Muslim centres of learning led to the flourishing of Islamic Mu'tazilite rational philosophy during the brief era of intellectual, scientific openness (*ijtihad*). This ever-more complex Umayyad-Abbasid period (661-1100) could be illustrated as such:



³⁹ Alok Kumar and Scott Montgomery, 'Islamic Science's India Connection', 18-23, 2017, Aramco World.

⁴⁰ According to al-Ghazali. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philip notes in *the Exorcist Traditional in Islam*, (1997) that orthodox theologians deny that the human soul after death can communicate or influence the living beings once they leave the body. (Quoted in Kim, *op. cit.* p. 138)

⁴¹ Bukhari Hadith 71:634-636. See also Lakhssasi, *Coran et talismans*, 2007, pp. 98-99, who notes that the evil eye belief is a phenomenon both ancient and universal.

⁴² Rick Love's work on 'Folk Islam' *Muslim, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 2000, pp. 19-38 give an excellent survey of 'powers, power people, objects, places and times' as observed among Baahithiin Muslims in Indonesia, as does Clifford Geertz in *Islam Observed*. 1971.

⁴³ See names in the second paragraph in the introduction. Hamès, *Coran et talismans*, 2007, p. 41.

⁴⁴ Even as early as Ibn Ishaq (d. 768) Mecca is portrayed as a spiritual 'place of power'. An evil king drops dead for profaning the Kaaba. 46-47, §73.

<p>Sunnis denounce shrine worship⁴⁷</p>	<p>spirits⁴⁵, power times & power rituals⁴⁶ (After Ghazali) Belief in Sufi mystics: places, objects⁴⁸, spirits, times & rituals⁴⁹ <u>Shiite-Sunni belief in saint invoking</u> power people: places, objects, spirits, times & rituals⁵⁰ <u>Shiite belief in Imam invoking</u> people, places, objects, spirits, times & rituals⁵¹ <u>Christian saint worship</u>⁵² <u>Dreams of Muhammad</u>⁵³</p>	<p>Ifrit (strong demonic jinn) appear in the Hadiths</p>
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⁴⁵ For the Shafi’ite Sharia endorsement of good ‘Muslim’ jinn, see *Al-Misri*, op. cit., ‘The Jinn’, (w22.0), pp. 897-898.

⁴⁶ “There is no disease which Allah has created, except that he also created its treatment.” Bukhari Hadith 71.582.

⁴⁷ See the Shafi’ite Sharia Law condemnation of ‘praying towards tombs’, *al-Misri*, op. cit., (w21.0), pp. 896-897

⁴⁸ Speziale notes that specific Sufi invocation poems are also talismans for healing, where the poem is washed off tablets and then drunk during a prescribed ritual that combines salat prayers and yoga like rituals. *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁴⁹ The evolving history of Sufism was deeply marked by both Oriental Christian monastic movements and after 977 AD the Indian mystic communities. For a study of how Greek Galenic medicine (after Galen d. AD 210 and called *yunani* in Arabic) and Islamic ‘prophetic medicine’ (after Muhammad and called *tibb-i nabawi*) merged in Indian Sufism, see Fabrizio Speziale’s *Soufisme, religion et médecine en Islam indien*, Karthala, 2010. Speziale argues that Sufis were masters in both sciences and that they were also the median between Hinduism and Classical Islam in India (29). The Shattariyya Sufis were particularly known for their occult science (35). For a Christian response to Sufism see Matthew Friedman, *Union with God in Christ, Early Christian and Wesleyan Spirituality as an Approach to Islamic Mysticism*, 2017. For Shafi’ite Sharia Law endorsements of Sufi *dhikr* devotion, reciting Allah’s names, etc. see Al-Misri, ‘The Merit of Wirds,’ *op. cit.*, (w.20), p. 896.

⁵⁰ See Kim, *op. cit.* p. 64; See examples of Waswahili prayers at graveyards and tombs of dead Muslims saints for *baraka* blessings. See also John Gilchrist, *Sufi Muslim Saints of Indian and South Africa*, 1997.

⁵¹ In particular the prayers offered at the tomb of Imam Ghazi Miyan (d. 1032) during the Urs festival in Bahraich, India and at the Tomb of Imam Data Ganj Baksh (d. 1077) in Lahore, Pakistan, or during festivals at the tomb of Iranian Imam Abdul l’Qadir Jilani (d. 1166) in Iraq, and at the Tomb of Imam Khwaja Chishti (d. 1236), in Ajmer, India. See John Gilchrist, *Sufi Muslim Saints of India & South Africa* (1997).

⁵² The 14th century Church of St Nikola in Mankedonski, Brod, Macedonia has both Christian and Muslim icons and contains the tomb of a Bektashi Sufi saint; both Muslims and Christians pray there together, especially on the day of Saint George. See this and two other Macedonian case studies in the chapter of Glen Bowman, ‘Orthodox Muslims Interactions at “Mixed Shrines” in Macedonia’, *Eastern Christians in Anthropological Perspective*, Chris Hann and Hermann Goltz, ed., University of California Press, 2010, pp. 195-218.

⁵³ See Pierre Lory, *L’interprétation des rêves dans la culture musulman*, pp. 75-94. Dreams play a high role in Muhammad’s revelations as does his interpretation. Later Sunni Hadiths record Muhammad’s dreams predicting the chronology of the first four caliphs. Ibn Ishaq records how a dream solved the dilemma of whether to wash the body of Muhammad before his burial. A. Guillaume, P. 688. Islam recognises three forms of dreams: the soul in auto-communicating, Satanic dreams and dreams sent by Allah. (Lory 79, Bukhari book 87). Bukhari 87:112 “good dreams are .. 46th part of prophesy.”

Talismans (*al-talismat or taweez*)⁵⁴

From the death of al-Ghazali (1111 AD), through the collapse of the Abbasid era (1248) and through the era of the Ottoman caliphate (1300-1924), two new major changes begin to define the greater *geistige Weltanschauung* in the Ummah: first, the total extermination of rational, Mu'tazilite reasoning led to a stagnate, if not a fossilised monotheistic-magical worldview.

Second, newer spiritual cultic offshoots illicitly spawned out of the theological stagnation: among others, the Shiite Zaidis (already since the 8th c.), the Shiite Isma'ilis (also since 8th c.), the Druze (since 1016 AD), the Alavi Bohras (since 1093), the Nizaris Isma'ilis (since 1094), the Alawis (since 10th c.), the Ahmadis, (since 19th c.), Babiism (since 1844), and Baha'ism (since 1863).

A second outgrowth from the theological stagnation were the various branches of Sufism, some beginning as early as the eighth century.⁵⁵ Among others, austere, sober Sufism⁵⁶ (8th - 9th c.), rapturous Sufism⁵⁷ (8th-10th c.), esoteric orthodox Sufism⁵⁸ (9th-11th c.), saint-invoking Sufism⁵⁹

⁵⁴ According to Spezziale, the talismanic art of conjuring demons is believed by Muslims to have been given to Adam by Allah, and which was eventually transmitted down to the Greek Pythagoras, and then into Greek apocryphal texts attributes to Plato, Aristotle and Ptolemy. In time Islam would re-absorb what had originally been 'Islamic'. *Op. cit.*, p. 205. Adam also received from Allah the 'power' to discern the names and numeric value of all living creatures. (206)

⁵⁵ H.A.R. Gibb credits the Sufi movements of rescuing Islam by bursting the bounds of orthodox disciplines, and of converting Sub-Saharan Africa, Indonesia, Central Asia and China. H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, London: Oxford University Press, 1949. Spezziale notes that Indian Sufism claims an *isnad*-chain of spiritual authority back to Salman al-Farisi, the first Persian convert to Islam while Muhammad was in Medina. *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ Austere, sober Sufi masters: Al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 728), Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 767) who developed a mystic *tafsir* of Qur'an, and then Ja'far al-Aqid (d. 765) who created four-levels of *tafsir* for the Qur'an, Shaqiq al-Bakhi (d. 810) who developed stages of ascent to Allah, and Abu Sa'id Kharraz (d. 890) who developed 7-stages of ascent to Allah.

⁵⁷ The 'rapturous' Sufis were austere in their lifestyle but ecstatic in their zeal for Allah, bold in mystic communion, and passionate in seeking an intoxicating, spiritual rapturous union with Allah and his divine names. Many were martyred. Among these famous masters are Rabi'ah (d. 801), Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 873), and Al-Hallaj (d. 922).

⁵⁸ Orthodox esoteric Sufis added classical Islam practices and formed Sufi fraternities, led by a spiritual Sufi Sheikh and often located outside of cities. This movement would develop Sufi symbolic mystical language. Sufi master Sahl-al-Tustari (d. 896) will introduce neo-Platonic ideas of Allah as 'light' and the universe radiating his illuminated being. See also Al-Harith al-Muhasibi (d. 857), Al-Junayd (d. 910), Niffari (d. 985), and Qadiriya fraternities (since 1160).

⁵⁹ Sufi master Al-Tirmidhi (d. 932) developed the belief that sheikhs were saints, healers, magicians, miracle workers, pillars, and intercessors. Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240) the Andalusian theosophist, developed the 'Light of Muhammad' which was said to be found in Sufi masters. Theosophy is a collection of mystical and occultist philosophies concerning, or seeking direct knowledge of, the presumed mysteries of life and nature, particularly of the nature of divinity and the origin and purpose of the universe.

(10th- 11th c.), integrated Sufism⁶⁰ (11th – 12th c.), and poetic Sufism⁶¹ (12th – 13th c.). Each movement and each mystic expression is a case study in itself in its unique *geistige Weltanschauung*. Such a panorama lies beyond the scope of this present paper. However, it is noteworthy that each of the above cultic movements had its point of departure from a Shiite branch in the Ummah, while all the Sufi mystic movements sprang from Sunni communities.

The many forms of Islamic mysticism, and chiefly in Sufism, belong to the realm of spiritual science (*al-‘ulum ar-ruhaniyya*) and include therapeutic magic, in that *ruhaniyya* engages both angels and the jinn. Kim notes that among the Waswahili, Suri *muridi* go into ecstasy and experience trances ... mentioning the names of Allah and other phrases, with over-breathing and physical exercise that induce trance and possession. Some appear to be possessed by spirits.”⁶² This includes the desire to be transported into the celestial realm through visions or dreams. Sufism considers the spiritual soul voyages of the sleeping, pious Muslim (Surah 39.42) as legitimate if it directs the soul to the Qur’anic ‘Preserved Tablets’ and is administered by an angel sent from Allah.⁶³ Even Muhammad’s *miraj* dream took him into the seven heavens to see the greatest monotheistic prophets. In the dream-spirit world, the soul can communicate with universal realities, writes ibn Khaldun, and if Allah permits, when the person wakes, the dream is downloaded symbolically into the imagination of the waking mind. This validates not only mystical contact with Muhammad and other prophets but also with deceased Muslim saints.⁶⁴. Indeed, death and sleep are very closely linked in Surah 39.42. However, it is the prerogative of the Sufi masters to interpret the mystic dream of a *murid*-disciple, even as Muhammad interpreted the dreams of his disciples. These soul-dreams – and their interpretations - are particularly cherished among Sufi masters for communing with ‘the Prophet’.⁶⁵

The eventual outcome of this expanding 13-century legacy, as illustrated in the Venn diagram below, suggests the following later developments: a) the growth, increase and departure of various Shiite movements, b) the inclusion of Sufism into mainstream Sunni Ummah, c) the Sunni rejection of Mu’tazilite and rational philosophy and d) the decreased cross-pollination with any form of Jewish-Christian monotheism.

⁶⁰ The Asherite imam Al-Ghazali (d. 1111) spiritualised Shari’ah obedience, and combined Sufi sobriety and fraternity movement. He closed philosophical ijtihad (openness) but opened Sufi theology of ‘tasting’ Allah into classical Islam.

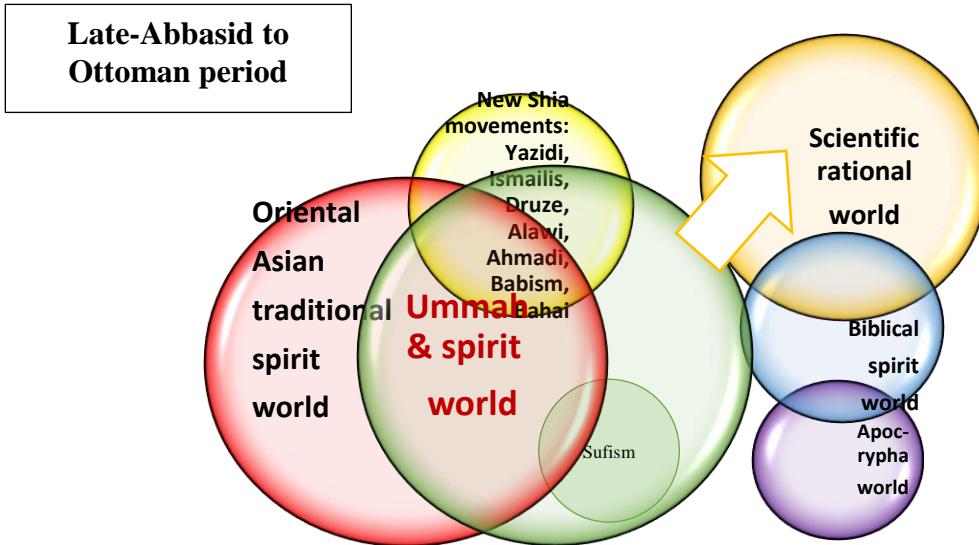
⁶¹ Poetic Sufis became masters in divine-sensual imagery, ecstatic trances, pantheistic theosophy, and spiritual aesthetic symbolisms. See Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235: Arab) and the famous Persian Sufi writers: Omar (d. 1120), Nizami (d. 1203), Rumi (d. 1273), Sadi (d. 1291) Hafiz (d. 1389) and Jami (d.1492).

⁶² Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁶³ Pierre Lory, ‘L’interprétation des rêves dans la culture musulmane’, *Coran et talismans*, 2007, pp. 85.

⁶⁴ Which is a form of necromancy. See Lory, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁶⁵ Lory, *op. cit.*, p. 89. See also Friedman ‘Ascension, Vision, and Transformation in Sufism’, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-171.

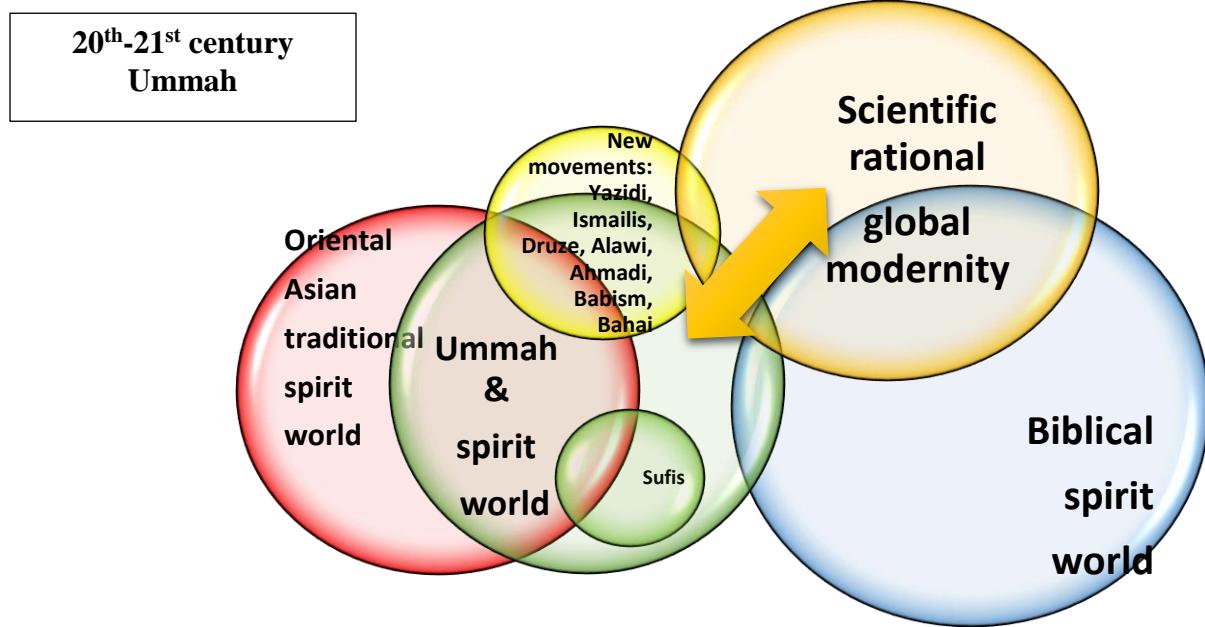


3. Continuation of Pre-modern ‘Common’ Islam

The monotheistic dock that Muhammad built into Arab paganism, became like a pier into Oriental, Indian, Asian and Occidental worlds, and today it is like a monotheistic port having harboured spiritual practices from all religious traditions for over 14 centuries. However, overshadowing this ubiquitous pre-modern monotheistic-magical world is the recent political invasion of the ‘rational’ philosophy in the form of European mercantilism, European colonisation, European nationalism, Western world wars, and more recently Western-led globalisation.

Three historic events significantly and theologically altered the relation between the ‘pre-modern’ Ummah and the ‘modern’ West: first, Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1789 with soldiers and Enlightenment scientists. Second, Turkey made a radical break with the Ottoman caliphate and sultanate in 1923-24, moving towards European secularism. Third, both Iranian Shiites and Saudi Wahhabi Sunnis began to export their militant, pre-modern interpretation of their faith in 1979, renewing the classical clash between orthodox Islamic theologies and forms of Westernisation. All three events have deeply shaped the often violent, global tensions between the Ummah and now globalised (post) modernity. That said, the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the Ummah have not changed their worldview from their classical monotheistic-magical *geistige Weltanschauung*. It is precisely that which we wish to survey.

The present context of the Ummah vis-à-vis the globalised West, its own dissenting movements, its internal Sufi movements and the oriental-Asian-traditional world could be summarised as follows:



4. The most defining features of the Unseen World in the Ummah today

1. **A World of Magic.** While the dominant spiritual worldview of the Ummah is as much monotheism as it is magical, the imams remain deeply divided over the extent of permitted versus forbidden magic. Either way, magic plays a dominant role in the *Geistige Weltanschauung*. Western-trained missiologists speak of the need to recognise the ‘excluded middle’ in a non-Western worldviews. When speaking of Muslims they do well to call it the ‘excluded magical middle’. Indeed, it is impossible to speak of the Ummah’s *geistige Weltanschauung* in anything less than Allah’s invisible realm of ‘magic’ on earth.
2. **A Distant God.** To approach Muhammad’s Allah, Muslims must engage in an oration with an isolated divinity who is non-relational, esoteric, distant and only known mystically –and that to only a few. Allah does not reveal himself to anyone through personal names but rather through secret, sacred numeric decoding of his 99 attributes or

through mystic symbolic dreams to selected saints.⁶⁶ Caleb Kim writes, “the biggest discrepancy that exists within Islamic theology is, simply put, that the almighty God is not perceived to be personal enough to protect believers from all kinds of dangers in earthly life; it is people's responsibility to protect themselves from them by "obeying" whatever is provided from the Islamic system. This has in history been leading many Muslims, including mystics, to looking for ways out; for intellectuals Sufism was an answer while for ordinary people syncretistic approaches to their problems” was their answer.⁶⁷ There is no pastoral-Fatherly ministry between Muhammad's Allah and hurting souls in the Ummah.

3. **A World of Jinn.** The jinn play a prominent complex causal role in the Ummah's *Weltanschauung*, way beyond that of demons in Jewish or Christian theology. Kim notes that “practically, the jinn world exists with the human world in Muslim societies.”⁶⁸ Their alleged capacity to help or harm, heal or hurt, direct or deceive, please or plague people makes placating them a necessary responsibility.⁶⁹ Kim cites Ibn-Al-Qayyim in remarking that “Muslim scholars tend to view jinn possession as a result of being religiously unfaithful to the Islamic faith.”⁷⁰ Such threats of possible possession holds many to outward orthopraxy. Muslims are told that as of birth, a jinn is attached to them; eating, sleeping, living, thinking, etc. with them.⁷¹ The jinn are said to inflict people through polluted water, spoiled food, contact with blood, touching something impure at dusk, rising at night unclothed, a pallor, or contact with animal excrements.⁷² Based on frequent Qur'anic references, the growing belief in the jinn's power expand widely into dozens of Hadith references and lore in the wider Ummah's ‘unseen world’.⁷³ The jinn are viewed as serious actors in daily life, the cause of almost every ill, and - as their power is viewed as mostly detrimental - the sheikhs are continuously engaged in the necessary and complex rituals of exorcism and/or healing.⁷⁴
4. **A World of Talismans.** Insofar as magic is perceived as highly effective, talismans and charms are widespread. Each sheikh is a specialist with his prior apprenticeship in secrets concerning sacred numerology, sacred coding in Arabic letters - especially of Allah's

⁶⁶ That this Islamic form of Kabbalah teaching stems directly from late Middle Age Judaism confirms how Muslims scholars appropriated esoteric Islam-friendly features from other monotheistic traditions, the way Muhammad did from Oriental Apocryphal oral sources.

⁶⁷ Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, East African expert Swahili phenomenological Islam, as per personal correspondence February 2nd, 2018. Cf. his phenomenology work on possession cults in *Islam among the Swahili in East Africa*, 2016.

⁶⁸ Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁶⁹ Kim notes that “Jinn are like brokers that go between people who lean on the jinn's power to achieve their malicious goals. Although jinn are perceived to be the source of spiritual power, it is actually people who buy and use the power against one another.” *Op. cit.*, 2013, p. 10.

⁷⁰ Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁷¹ A deformed variant of each child have a guardian angel. See Speziale, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁷² Rahal, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-145

⁷³ Following visions of seeing the jinn as reported by Sufi saints over the centuries, jinn are associated with dogs, reptiles, rats, Speziale, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁷⁴ For an extensive study on the role of the jinn in the Qur'an and Hadiths, see Kim's ‘Muslim beliefs in Jinn’, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-104.

attributes and Muhammad's name - secret knowledge of the angels, the jinn, the planetary spheres, astrology and many selected Qur'anic verses.⁷⁵ These talismans are said to bring about a vast range of positive or negative effects on other people, forces and nature.⁷⁶ According to Ahmed Rahal research in Tunisia, talismans are either 'invocative' (*du'aiyya*) destined for one's use during one's *du'a* prayers or 'adjuratory' (*qasamiyya*), that is in order to mediate with the spirits. The former invocations include Qur'anic phrases selected for their power and presented as requests to Allah. The later adjurations include incantations ('azima), esoteric formulas, angelic names and sacred numbers. These are cited, first, in order to divine the spirits' names (*hisab*), then to interrogate them (*istintaq*), and then finally to 'capture' the spirits and command them to perform specific requests.⁷⁷

Rahal specifically researched a famous 1845 Tunisian talismanic manual, divided into seven days. Each ill (illness or trouble) is diagnosed according to the day on which it happened, the planet and zodiac signs of the day, the four archangels⁷⁸ and sometimes the jinn linked to that day, as well as the sacred perfume and sacred metal. Each illness is first diagnosed according to sacred numerology and then the cure prescribed for that day's illness. This remedy includes washing off the chalk of prescribed qur'anic verses and mixing it with other oils and elements for lotions and for perfumes in fumigations. Each day then has its prescribed adjuration, whereby the sheikh commands the rebel jinn to withdraw from the suffering client. Each day also has its sacred illustrated magic cubic seal (*khatim*) and special sacrifice of a specific rooster.⁷⁹

5. **A World needing protection from spirits.** The Qur'an's last brief three Surahs (112-114) are considered powerful talismans, given to Muhammad by Allah when he was ill and suffering from 'sorcery-magic'. Recited in the right way, these three Surahs promise to be antidotes and counter-powers to undo the cursed knots through one's recitation,

⁷⁵ Kim notes that certain shaman are reputed to even contact the supernatural underworld by incarnating the spirits. *Op. cit.* p. 16. Speziale notes that Indian Sufi talisman Sheikhs have a wide diverse repertoire of accompanying perfumes, precious stones, animal skins, shirts, metal blades, metals, dishes, etc. *Op. cit.*, p. 210. K. A. Nizami notes that there are three concepts of jinn in Indian Islamic texts: 1. orthodox accounts of the jinn from the Qur'an (and appear as air-like, snake-like, human-like, and animal-like creatures), 2. Popular superstition accounts (with supernatural powers over places, kings) and 3. Rationalistic accounts made by Sayyid Ahmad Khan who sought to demythologise 'jinn' as desert Bedouin. See 'Djinn' *Encyclopedia of Islam*, p. 549.

⁷⁶ Lakhssassi, *op. cit.*, p.102.

⁷⁷ Rahal, *op. cit.*, p. 115. This is not unlike the mechanism of commanding the genie (jinn) released from the bottle based on the Qur'anic narrative of Suleiman sealing a jinn in a brass jar/lamp and popularised in the Story of Aladdin in *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. For Internet examples of *ruqyah* ('sympathetic magic' or exorcisms) see <http://ruqyahverses.com/>

⁷⁸ Mika'il, Israfil, Zara'il and Jibril who are the lords over the angels, and sometimes linked to the four first Rashidun caliphs after Muhammad. Cf. Rahal, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

⁷⁹ Rahal, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-145. Talismans are also covered with Arabic names of Allah, Muhammad, the prophets, the seal of Solomon, archangels, kings of the jinn, astral and zodiac signs, and geomancy signs. Speziale, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

breath and saliva.⁸⁰ This incantation *ruqiya* is a form of exorcism of evil from a person. It is also used against the ‘evil eye’ (Bukhari 7.634) Many selected ayaat are considered having special *bakara* talisman powers.⁸¹ Some ayaat are for Baraka blessings, others are for cursing one’s opponents. As Ibn Khaldun concludes: the sheikhs can extract and manipulate spiritual powers from various sources and through their formulas (astrology, numerology, lotions, fumigations, rituals, etc.) cause the jinn to react under their command.⁸² Rahal notes that a highly developed angelology and demonology is foundational to talisman practices, which can manipulate the powers of the seven planets, the jinn of the air, fire, earth and water and grasp the hierarchy of the spirits. Moreover the Sheikhs can discern the numerical value of each of Allah’s names and use them in their talismans.

6. **A World of few Miracles.** Miracles are the direct actions of Allah through prophets in order to attest to his message. People cannot perform miracles; only Allah can.⁸³ Miracles are limited to the prophetic era although Allah can yet perform prodigious signs of grace through very holy sheikhs.⁸⁴

5. Disciples of Jesus vis-à-vis “a different spirit”⁸⁵

1. **Caution with Islamic Magic.** Islam has a significant appreciation for ‘therapeutic-magic’, especially in the use of talismans, charms and healing theurgist rituals to do magic and manipulate the spirits. The Qur’an recounts how Musa and especially Suleyman engaged in it. Even though the Qur’anic Pharaoh charges Musa with magical sleight of hand, the triumph of Musa’s ‘good’ magic is recognised as coming from Allah, and it caused a remarkable conversion among its witnesses, proving that Islamic magic eclipses any form of local magic (S. 20.71 & 26.49)⁸⁶. This could be called a conversion to Islam by magic.⁸⁷ Even though in Exodus 7 Pharaoh called Moses’ wonders and divine signs ‘magic’, Scripture says that the miracles were supernatural signs under the auspices of Moses, and not of him practicing ‘white magic’. Moses no sooner practiced magic than

⁸⁰ Hamès, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁸¹ The following ayaat are considered to have special magical talisman powers (Surah 1, 2.1-4, 2.102, 2.163-164, 2.255, 2.285-286; 3:18; Surah 6, 7.54-56; 16.98; 17.82; the Seven Sleepers in Surah 18; S. 23.115-118; Surah 36 Ya-Sin; 37:10; Surah 44 and 55, 59.23-24; Surah 67, 83.1-10; Surah 77 and 78; 104.1-2; 107.4-5, and of course Surahs 112-114.)

⁸² Rahal, *op. cit.* p. 141.

⁸³ Lakhassi *op. cit.* pp. 103-104

⁸⁴ Lakhassi, *op. cit.*, pp. 111.

⁸⁵ 2 Corinthians 11:4: “...if you receive a different spirit from the one you received...”

⁸⁶ Hamès, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27. Kim illustrates among the Shungwaya Swahili how the Middle East and Arab magic, astrology and divination deeply fascinated them and that it was the primary reason that they gravitated to embracing Islam. *Op. cit.* p. 52.

⁸⁷ See Anne Regourd, ‘Due coupes magico-thérapeutiques ...’ *Coran et talismans*, Karthala, 2007, pp. 309-346.

did Jesus or the apostles. The response of Peter to the ‘Christian magician’ Simon Magus in Samaria (Acts 8) and the burning of the magical, occult and talisman objects during Paul’s stay in Ephesus (Acts 19) categorically establish God’s rejection of any participation in or endorsement of any form of magic. It is impossible for followers of Jesus to contextualise with any expression of magic in the Ummah. Indeed, there is no euphemistic category of ‘good, white magic’ with which Christians may engage. Even though Islamic ‘healing’ ceremonies are richly cloaked in worship to Allah, they do so “as if they were obligated, to prove themselves to be legitimately Muslims” notes Kim.⁸⁸ The Bible unequivocally denounces all magic as demonic.

2. **Caution with vindicating Muhammad.** Muhammad was repeatedly charged with being a poet possessed by a jinn spirit (8 times), a magician (57 times), a fortune teller (2x) and a liar (43 times cf. illusionist), in that his modus operandi seemed indistinguishable from that of Arab possessed poets.⁸⁹ While Christ himself was accused of being demon possessed (Matt. 12), it was not because of his psychological conduct or spirit trances but rather because of his supernatural and divine powers to heal everyone, to exorcise all demons and to master nature. Muhammad had none of these miraculous powers but rather all the qualities known to possession poets – which were unknown to Jesus.

In Bukhari 7:658-661 the Hadith notes that Muhammad was under a powerful delusional influence of sorcery-magic or witchcraft, and for which he had to seek a cure.⁹⁰ In Hadith 7:662, Muhammad’s speech is spoken of “as effective as magic.”⁹¹ His defence against being a possessed poet was threefold: a) my monotheistic message is strikingly different from other poets – and thus a miraculous sign from Allah. b) I offered you the Qur’an freely – unlike any other professional poet. c) All true monotheistic prophets were accused of practicing magic, hence ‘I am validated by the accusations’.⁹² Christian do well to not vindicate Muhammad’s embattled ‘poetic-prophetic’ status in Mecca by any comparison to Jesus, in that no claim between these two men is interchangeable. Our second caution is that the veneration of Muhammad - especially during the *maulidi* ceremonies - and belief in his intercessions cannot be described as anything less than idolatrous.⁹³

3. **Caution with Hagiolatry.** Islam seeks to discern the legitimacy of magic by two criteria: first, whether it seems to compete with allegiance to Allah or whether it gives glory to

⁸⁸ Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 69/

⁸⁹ Constance Hamès p. 20

⁹⁰ The Hadiths of Bukhari (d. 870) were not canonised until just before his death, some 240 years after the death of Muhammad, making them a direct testimony of the Islam practiced two centuries after the closing of the Qur'an in AD 632. Apparently the bewitchment was from Jew and occurred in 628 and lasted 40 days. Cf. Fadhl, *op. cit.* p. 569.

⁹¹ See also sihr as both ‘white’ and ‘black’ magic and the “falsification of the reality of things and of actions”, in ‘Sihr’, T. Fahd, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second edition, 1960-2017, p. 567.

⁹² Hamès, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁹³ Kim, *op. cit.* p. 68. See examples among the Waswahili.

Allah; secondly, it asks: ‘is the practitioner a pious Muslim?’ The more pious he is viewed as being, the more his magical practices are viewed as legitimate.⁹⁴ The direct comparison to the alleged miraculous powers of ‘saints’ in Christian history should strike us immediately. We do well to neither endorse Christianity through hagiolatry nor Islam *mutandis mutatis* through the same. The incidental testimonies of ‘Christian sheikhs’ or ‘Christian marabouts’ needs to be treated as contemporary examples of Simon Magus.

4. **Caution with endorsing Islamic Dreams.** The belief that Allah uses dreams to communicate providential direction to individuals traces back to both the Qur'an and the hadiths. Allah spoke through dreams to Ibrahim (37.102-105), to Yusuf (12.36) and removes the soul from bodies while people sleep –allowing them to visit other celestial regions. (39.42)⁹⁵. Satan, however is also believed to have the power to do the same. This requires a careful Islamic science of interpretations. As such, new religious Sufi orders, like the 18th century Maghreb imam, at-Tijani, began with a dream in which Muhammad appeared to him and commanded him to begin a new fraternity. Dreams are also well noted in Scripture but used exclusively in the New Testament as signs of miraculous divine announcement or personal direction⁹⁶, not for starting a new ‘pure church’, as is claimed by certain founders of Africa Initiated Churches.⁹⁷ The frequency of dreams about Jesus are now commonly reported and often (but not always) lead to conversion, however spiritual dreams about Muhammad are not unknown either.
5. **Caution with Jinn Explanations.** The jinn, along with Iblis/Shaytan and certain angels are considered to have magical knowledge into which they can initiate their sheikhs. The fallen angels most commented on are Harut and Marut, originally the names of two Persian/Indus mythological spirit beings who have powers to seduce wives and thus destroy marriages. (cf. S. 2.102)⁹⁸ Scripture does not recognise three spirit communities: angels, demons and jinn, but only two: angels and fallen angels/demons. As such, Christians must correctly see all jinn as demons, and consequently conclude that the conjuring of the jinn in talisman rituals be seen as demonic activity.
6. **Caution with Islamic Names of Allah.** The common use of Allah’s attributes in magic is based on the belief that there is magical value to each of Allah’s attributes, and this special knowledge is known to sheikhs. Every letter in the ‘beautiful names’ of Allah has a numeric spiritual value. These, in turn, are displayed in magical squares and linked to

⁹⁴ Brenner, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁹⁵ Lory, *op. cit.*, p. 84

⁹⁶ Joseph’s dream of direction to marry and flee twice, Zachariah and Mary’s dream, Cornelius and Peter’s dream to meet, Paul’s call and Macedonian vision.

⁹⁷ Among others, *Christianisme Céleste* (Benin), *église renaissance des hommes en Christ* (Benin).

⁹⁸ Harmès *op. cit.*, 36; Similar accounts of Haruk & Manuk are found in *Midrash Abkir* (G. Vajda, *E.I.2*, III, 244). According to Ibn Hisham, 1991, 2, 106, Walid, Meccan chief of ‘Abd ash-Sham, concluded Muhammad had these magical powers to separate wives from their men. (For a further apocryphal equivalence see *Book of Enoch*, VII, 1.ff).

astrological prescriptions. These are used widely and universally in the production of talismans. Scripture considers spiritual magical numerology of God's names, astrology, zodiac signs and talismans as spurious and/or diabolic.⁹⁹

7. **Caution with Islamic therapeutic practitioners.** Many sheikhs in the Ummah's *geistige Weltanschauung* mix homeopathy, talismans, incantations, conjurations and astrology as medicinal wisdom.¹⁰⁰ This would include occult practices. Christians do well to not defend any therapeutic-magic practiced by imams in the Ummah as a possible form of pastoral care. Imams are far closer in practice to shamans than to Christian pastors. However, Kim observes in his East African case study, that "... there seems to be a missional mandate assigned especially for Christians who desire to build a meaningful relationship with Zanzibaris; it is to seek a deep understanding of them, with a sympathetic attitude towards common human predicaments, rather than a superficial knowledge of their culture and religion."¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The 'house' of the Ummah is exceedingly dark and the doors and windows are very open to syncretism. Most of the unseen world of Islam is starkly monotheistic, deeply magical, highly syncretistic with local customs and yet outwardly orthopraxic. As a direct outcome of their (idolatrous?) veneration of Muhammad, they devoutly do what he did: integrate tradition magical religion with an 'apocryphal' form of monotheism of each generation. The magic-Islamic worldview of Muhammad, as such, reached towards Semitic monotheism but only grasped the eclectic world of the oral apocrypha. It never grasped the knowledge the unseen world of the Bible; nor can it.

The unseen worlds of the Bible and the Qur'an are as different as oil and water. Yet what Muhammad did, imams and sheikhs continue to do. Always reaching for monotheistic affirmation from Jews and Christians, but only left grasping apocryphal-like platitudes from dialogical, inter-faith councils. If the magic-jinn-worldview of Islam cannot grasp the unseen world of the Bible, how then can 'Muslim Followers of Christ' possibly integrate their new Biblical identity into Muslim communities which hold deep allegiances with Islam's occult unseen world?

Indeed this is the decisive question: How can disciples of Christ living in diverse Muslim communities fully exercise their new collective spiritual 'Body identity' vis-à-vis the unseen world of the Ummah, as described in this paper? How can they still embrace their former

⁹⁹ Daniel 2:27-28, Isaiah 8.19, 47.13-14, Deut. 18.10-14, Micah 5.12, Lev. 19.26, 20.6. Numerology, especially that which follows Pythagoras, combines mysticism with mathematics to construct a quotient about the future of one's life. This is a form of finding out the destiny or powers of names, which is a form of divination.

¹⁰⁰ Hamès *op. cit.*, p. 44. Anne Regourd, in her French text, refers to this as "« magico-thérapeutique pratiques » *op. cit.*. Cf. alchemist practices in Rosicrucianism.

¹⁰¹ Kim, *op. cit.* 2013, p. 18.

‘Muslim’ identity in Islamic communities, which hold such complex allegiances with the unseen magical-spirit world of Islam?

Therefore, the collective identity of Christ’s Body is God’s light mandated to be put “on a stand, and give light to all in the house” and that in full contrast to the darkened ‘house’ of the Ummah that is governed by monotheistic-magic, jinn, syncretism, - and even the occult - and all of that under the patronage of devout, outward orthopraxy. May God grant that the collective, spiritual identity of Christ’s followers be increasingly ‘a city set on a hill which cannot be hid’.

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