

Amulet and Talisman in Divans of Khaqani and Hafez

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Abstract: Superstition is a spiritual and social event that narrates the story of the humans' dark periods in the past that has penetrated in the mind of the man and has affected on his thinking and actions. So that it has interwoven in his nature; indeed, wisdom and reasoning could not control the innate dominated by superstitions. One of the old superstitions is belief in evil eye and the solutions have been offered as amulet or talisman. Based on the common perception, amulet is a written piece or image that contains phrase with specific and secret effects used for eliminating evils which the person carries it. The addressees of these phrases are the residents of the unseen world such as evils and holy persons. The talismans are hung on the parts of bodies or clothes and sometimes are used as ring or necklace. The poets have referred to these conducts in their poems. This paper tries to investigate superstitions in the poems of the great poets.

Keywords: Superstitions, Amulet and talisman, Hafez, Khaqani.

Introduction

In the poor societies the people believe in superstitions more than the rich countries. But we should not imagine that the people do not believe in superstitions. For instance, in England the people believe in superstitions more than other people (Gokand, 1999). Some native beliefs in Iran are rooted in daily trials, family, religious and personal examinations and they are heritages of the Indian and Iranian races and even the primitives such as beliefs and legends on moon, sun, dragons, speaking with animals and plants and some others can be considered as superstitions and talisman. These foreigners with their dreadful gods, beliefs in offerings, goodness and evilness of some days, hours, effect of stars on human destiny influenced significantly Iranians life (Hedayat, 1977). Superstitions were of the main factors for avoiding realities; accordingly, Quran introduces fight with superstitions as one of the commissions of the prophet. He releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him (Muhammad), honor him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'an) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful.

Belief in amulet and talisman

Amulet and talisman in different cultures and religions have old record. From religious perspective this question is arisen that: When did superstitious affairs relate to writing pieces of miracles and prayers? In Muslim beliefs, amulet is a piece of prayers that protects the person. The content of an amulet is usually miracles of Quran or phrases that eliminate evils. The person embarrassments cover broad scopes. For instance, these amulets are used for elimination of fairies (Koleini, 1984), thieves (Tabarsi, 1972), tyrant rulers and sometimes they are used for treatment of the illnesses. The application of amulets has broad scope in Islamic culture that the name or part of the name of the person was written on it. Even in periods of Islamic civilization history the dervishes and Sufis wrote amulets and earned money. It is necessary to offer exact definition of amulet. Some scholars define it synonym of talisman. There are differences between amulet and talisman. First, talisman is more powerful than amulet; while in some cases, only reading of an amulet is advised and there is no advice on carrying it. Second, in most cases, amulets are more influential and talisman is used for treatment. Third, amulets belong to the mystics and religious leaders but the origin of talisman are unknown or they are rooted in other cultures. Fourth, in prayers, there are chapters on amulets separated than talismans. Perhaps, amulets and

talismans have the common roots but it does not mean they have the same meaning. So, it can be accepted that the amulet is the same as talisman. On other hand, none of the mentioned features could identify the border between amulet and talisman. Shaping of the term of amulet dates back the half of fourth century. It seems that this concept is rooted in the metaphor that used in third century one hundred years earlier. Hanad Ben Sari, the Sufi narrated a quotation from Omar Ben Khitab that everybody who covers the body of a poor he puts on the amulet on God (Sari Kufi, 1986). This metaphor should be meant as: When a person covers the body of a poor God covers his sins and the god amulet is unseen but reliable.

By passing of one hundred years this metaphor was used as the basic of the meaning of amulet. In the half of the fourth century this idea was progressed that all amulets are not materialistic and there are unseen amulets (Ben Haban, 1994). Such interpretations seen for the first time in this period do not refer to particular texts; but they are meant protection by citing the name of God. There is other metaphor based on likening of the Quran to amulet. The application of this interpretation can be traced in *Moralities of the men of Quran* (940) by Ojri. After referring to rituals for reading of Quran he reminds us that everybody who observes these rituals the Quran will be his amulet. In this example, undoubtedly, amulet is used in its figurative meaning that is the border of the lexical meaning and its application.

Hafez

These beliefs on the evil eye and the ways to prevent it have been reflected in the poems of Hafez.

The beautiful face confronted with evil eye

Hafez warns his beloved on the evil eyes of the people and the damage resulted of them and suggests her to protect herself:

Walk elegantly be secured of the evil eye.
I imagine you when you walk (Hafez, 1986).

Demanding God to protect him of evil eye

Hafez suggests reciting the name of God to protect against evil eye as an effective way when encountering with beautiful event or phenomenon (Hafez, 1986).

He refers to a miracle of Quran and suggests reading it:

Where the friends are gathered together.
Read the miracle and place it above your head.
O, my God this blossom that is in my charge.
Protect her of the evil eyes of the jealous.
We drink the wine from the cup.
Be secured of the evil eye that we are drunken.
I hope you be secured of the evil eye.
You are a coquettish beloved.

Burning wild rue

Burning of wild rue that was accompanied by reading the words and rituals is effective in eliminating evil eye. Burning wild rue is rooted in mythical beliefs of ancient Iran. It was believed that the smell of wild rue is one of the blessings of Ormuzd and it protects the man against demons and evils:

I am eager and interested where that cypress like beloved is?
To convert my body to wild rue of fire of her face.
There is no need to cupbearer and cup; open your veil.
I brought the fire of your face to dance as wild rue.

Placing the cheap objects among the expensive ones

According to the folk beliefs, placing the cheap objects among the expensive ones prevents the effect of evil eyes and protects the expensive objects:

It is the place of bleeding in the heart of ruby.
Of this being cheated that market is like broken pottery.
You see the gem and ignore the bead.
It is not converted to gem ignore it.
Come back since prevents the evil eye of your face.
O, you as a blossom that carry the thorn.

Khaqani

Amulet: This year from the Mustafa soil I brought you
The musky soil for amulet.

This couplet is about the journey of Khaqani to Mecca that had brought some soil of the prophet tomb.

This amulet is your army and these holy names protect you.

There is light of heavens in these names.

(The holy names are the traits of God that the interpreters sometimes count them ninety nine and sometimes one hundred names that extracted from Quran).

O, farewell Kiblah that now for pain of separation

I brought some soil of Medina for amulet and remedy.

The poet calls the soil of Media as remedy of the pain and amulet.

Necklace with talisman

The chain containing talisman and amulet that is wore on the neck to prevent the evil eye (Dehkhoda, 1996).

Sometimes the poet introduces his poems as a necklace on the neck of the great poets such as Hessian Ben Sabet Ansari and Ashi Ben Qyes Ben Jendel.

I offered my essence of soul as the gift

It is a great gift that there is

Necklace of talisman besides it (Dehkhoda, 1996).

In the following couplet the poet suggests the praising of one of the great scholars as the necklace with talisman that Abu Tama began to stammering when he heard it.

Figures

It consists of miracles, verses and prayers for protection against the disasters and evil eyes that is tied on the arm or shoulders.

The figure, amulet and talisman that not prevent the death

Return them to the witch and enchanter (Dehkhoda, 1996).

Khaqani tried every solution to treatment of his son and wrote prayers and employed amulets and talismans but he could not find any solution. He refers to different kinds of amulets and talismans and introduces them magic.

He calls eight words of the praised person as seven figures.

Each eight word of his name.

Is seven figures for me (Dehkhoda, 1996).

Also, in the following couplet he calls eight heavens as seven figures.

In the baldric of the hurries.

There are figures of eight heavens (Dehkhoda, 1996).

The poets refer to holiness of number seven.

Baldric

It is a kind of amulet that was placed on the neck or shoulder of the children or the adults. It looked like a cross used for protection against evil eye or demonic creatures. Sometimes it was made of spangles with rings of iron, gold or silver that the name of "Allah" was cured on it. The spangles were placed in a line tied as cross on the neck or shoulders (Hedayat, 1977). In Khaqain poems the followings are interfered about using of the baldric:

First, it was placed on the body by hats or put in the pocket and every part has own ornaments.

Take out the golden baldric on his body.

And take out the amulet in his pocket.

Second: as before said it was curved:

Last night when the sun was in the east.

The new moon was as (Shamisa, 2008).

Third: the baldric belonged to the children and perhaps it was a luxurious thing that offered by a great person:

At night the stars are like the baldric of the children.

They show the divine blessings.

In this couplet the constellations are likened to the baldric of the children and the stars are likened to the sliver rings.

Four: sometimes the baldric is used as the place for hanging different amulets.

Hanging objects

The second part of the amulets is hangings objects other than written pieces of the prayers. These amulets have inanimate, plant or animalistic origin.

1-Amulets with plant origins

The beads and inanimate black or white shells or iron objects:

1-1-beads

It was the shield of the beads of your servants

And released from any mortality

The body and wisdom are beads on his arm

The man and fairy are the rings of his hair (Shamisa, 2008).

This couplet praises the prophet (peace be upon him) and the poet calls the man and fairy as ring on his hair for showing respect.

Metal blades

It is pieces of iron, copper or bronze that the names, talismans or prayers are written on it to protect the children from evil eyes or illness.

If the iron blade did not eliminate the evil eye.

Take out the string of the amulet and give back the blade.

Every baldric ornamented with gold.

Combined by gold and made of blade of iron.

You saw the new moon as baldric hanging in the sky.

The stars are like silver amulets in the endless sky (Shamisa, 2008).

Amulets and talismans with plant origin

Talismans that were written on the skin of squash or leaves of the trees and they were hanged on the arms of the ill child for treatment. The orpine is famous amulet with plant origin.

Orpine

This plant has thick leaves with pink and sometimes white flowers and it was used as herbal plant and also amulet in the old medicine and some physicians believed that the if the stems of this plant are hanged on the arm of the children they are protected against epilepsy and common people believed that an amulet made of the wood of this plant prevents fear to sleep in the children.

Khaqani has referred to orpine in his poetical imagery:

The altar of the Caesar of your ally is feast of your messiah face.

Your hair is its orpine as cross.

Like orpine on the arm of the child.

I hang cross on my neck intentionally (Shamisa, 2008).

The following couplets depict the medicinal effect of this plant that used for treatment of epilepsy:

The world places cross on the stars like orpine.

The kiblah has gained property of orpine.

The effect of orpine and Christian cross is false.

Although you are Christians but you are in mistake (Shamisa, 2008).

The amulets with animalistic origin

The skin of deer and the tooth of snake and claw of the wolf, lion and horn of deer and the eye of the animal slaughtered in the Muslim feast have animalistic origin and they were used for eliminating evil eye.

He was not benefitted by the cypress baldric.

Return the lion claw and the horn of the deer.

Yet the claw of wolf is used for prevention of evil eye and fear in some villages.

The amulets used as soaked

It was common to write the amulet with water of saffron and washed it with water of rain and the resulted liquid was called the holy liquid. This liquid was drunk for eliminating the evils and securing of the houses and healing of the wounds. Perhaps it was used for treatment of the mad men or the person who was dying. Khaqani refers to praising of the prophet as holy liquid for healing of his inner fatigues and wounds:

When his heart is restless and fatigue due to the events.

The praising of Mohammad is healing liquid for him.

In the following couplets the poet refers to compound of the healing liquid:

Now make a liquid I brought compound of saffron for you.
The men of the tyrant demon.
Made a compound of the soil of his court.
Amulet was used for establishing peace and security:
A world is scared and I am peaceful.
In Khorasan by the amulet made of miracles of Quran.
Mostofi has explained in book one of the explanation of the problems of Khaqani that the amulet was used for treatment of infertility:
I made an amulet of saffron.
To cure the infertility (Shamisa, 2008).

The amulet used as burnt for smelling

The common amulet used as burnt is wild rue that is used for elimination of the evil eye. Burning of the wild rue was done by signing the folk songs. The amount of smoke resulted of burning depicts the severity of evil eye. According to the medical texts wild rue was used in different ways for treatments of illness. Khaqani has composed poems with this concept:

Whenever your face and ambition is protected from evil eye.
The pupils of those eyes are your wild rue.
This old woman offers wild rue of her heart.
To eliminate the evil eye due to her generosity.
In the feast he dances and sings.
As wild rue when it is burning.
When that amulet is ineffective.
Say the old woman to give back it (Shamisa, 2008).
In some ceremonies of Christians, they burn frankincense to smell nice odor besides the dead persons in their funerals.

Conclusion

Nowadays superstition is one of the problems of the human society. Perhaps the superstition as manmade phenomenon is the only problem that is common after centuries in spite of progress and revolutions in the societies. We can observe the heritage of superstitions in the communities.

Khaqani and Hafez for creating of feeling of sympathy and empathy with people and for avoiding far fetch reasoning have referred to superstitions and established emotional relationship with their readers. They indicate that their addressees are not the aristocrats but their addressees are common people. Unlimited examples of the superstitions and folk beliefs in the poems of these poets depict that they paid attention to the customs, beliefs and folktales and contemplation on the realities of the life. The poets believed in evil eyes, amulets and talismans and their effect on the life and the ways eliminating evil eyes and evils and they have referred to the evil eyes and evil conducts and offered the solutions of them; but application of the evil eye, its effects and the ways to prevent it is different based on the concept and content of the poems but what is common is that evil eye and its effect is due to perfection and superiority of the individuals and they believe that if the people conceal his victory and perfection they will be secured of evil eye. Some of them have gone beyond and consider evil eye as divine wrath that prevents vision of mankind and the only way to prevent it is trust on God and accompaniment by good people. They believe in wild rue and reading miracles to protection against evil eye. But divine power is the only eliminator of evil eye. Besides different words used by Muslims for these concepts it can be referred to amulet as the common application in the Islam world that it is used by writing of miracles, prayers, divine names, the name of angles, words, symbols and known and unknown words on the akin, paper, textile and metal that is placed in the small bags. These bags are hanged on the neck or placed in the garment or hanged on the walls. Sometimes the people read these words by own rituals.

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