The bottom aman reads: "Oh God, send peace and blessings upon the Prophet of Mercy," and "(He is) the intercessor for the nation of Muhammad and his pure family." 

Hasan Üsküdar (d. 1145/1732), the calligrapher of the Suleymaniye Library's Yaza Bagıfası 265 (Cat. #10), was one of Hafiz Osman's foremost pupils. In contrast with the En'am-i şerif of his teacher, Hasan Üsküdar has included non-Qur'anic material prior to his ketebu, 14 or signature. In addition to the amans al-huma and the hilfe of the Prophet Muhammad, the calligrapher has included several pages of da'a, or supplications, as well as an en'am-i şerif, or litany of prayers recited daily by members of a Sufi order, suggesting a possible source of patronage for the manuscript. Hasan Üsküdar's hilfe şerif, ft. 49v-51, figures 10.3 and 10.4, is not placed in a circle, but consists of a simple text. It is the last hilfe I have found that was written this way. The aman at the bottom of ft. 49v reads: "This is the hilfe of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him." The text itself is in Arabic and reads:

"In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures. And this is his [Allâh's] description of the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him. He said: He was neither very tall, nor very short. Neither curly nor straight-haired. He was wavy haired. He was neither stocky, nor plump-cheeked. His face was round and fair-skinned with redness. His eyes were jet-black. He had a large back and shoulder-joints. His body was hairless. He had thick-set fingers and toes. He was a vigorous walker, and he did not turn aside except with his whole body. Between his shoulders was the Seal of Prophethood, and he was the Prophet of the Prophets. He was the most generous and open-handed of people. The most truthful of humanity in speech, and the richest of speech among people. He was the noblest of human company. Whoever saw him from afar stood awed by him. Whoever shared familiarity with him loved him. Whoever tried to describe him says: such as he was never seen before or after. Transmitted by Tirmidhi (num'a ha-Tirmidhi) in Musâkhi al-Masâbîh. 21"

The aman at the bottom of ft. 50v reads: "There is no power and no strength except with God Almighty." The text at the top of ft. 51 is written in Turkish. It reads: "Whoever writes this hilfe and looks at it, God will protect them from evil. Amen.

The ritual use of these images was an important feature of the En'am-i şerif. The Prophet's hilfe was not simply a decorative element, nor was it merely a devotional object, meant to inspire reverence. That these images were created to serve as a visual conduit of Divine grace is evident from the text surrounding a hilfe found in IUL 5786, ft. 161-161v, Cat. #23. Here, in a hadith narrated from 'Ali, the Prophet says:

"Whoever looks at my hilfe it is as if they see my beautiful face. God will protect them from Hell-fire, and grant them the Paradise of Firdaus. He will protect them from the torment of the grave, and on the Day of Judgment they will be clothed in the raincoat of Paradise." 22

Perhaps the most visually stunning hilfe şerif in our study is found in an En'am-i şerif produced by the calligrapher Mehmed Bostan (d. 1169/1756), in the year 1146/1733-34, TSM EH 395, ft. 77v-78, Cat. #13, figures 13.2 and 13.3. The manuscript was illuminated by an artist known only as Ahmed. The hilfe's opening presents us with two golden orbs each containing five lines of text. The golden bayat's setar and verse marks have been pricked to catch the light, while...

21Mishkâl al-Masâbîh is a compendium of canonical and other hadith written by Abu Muhammad al-Masâbi b. Maw'd b. Muhammad al-Farrâ b. Bâghwâl (d. 516 or 510 A.H.) and revised by Walî al-Îmâm Muhammad b. 'Abdallah al-Khatib al-Tirmâsi in 755 A.H. The text of this hilfe şerif, taken from Tirmidhi's account of 'Ali's narration, as found in the Mishkâl al-Masâbîh, appears to have been popular. It is repeated almost verbatim in many of the manuscripts in our study. See the TSM EH 380 (Cat. #11), ft. 77v-77r (figures 11.7 and 11.8); Halet Efendi 3 (Cat. #15, ft. 43v-45) (figures 13.4, 13.5, and 13.6); TSM EH 375 (Cat. #17, ft. 102v-103); Isârî Hâkî 1309 (Cat. #32) (figures 22, 30); IUL 5783 (Cat. #34, 87v-87r).
tiny floral arabesques glitter in the background. The circles themselves are surrounded by a base of royal blue, upon which floats a dainty net of tiny pink, yellow, white and blue flowers, red buds and golden rums. Above and below the umme, golden rectangles provide sumptuous relief for rows of crimson, mauve and pink blossoms.

The text itself is in Arabic. The verses read: “In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful…” “We sent that not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.” The main text differs from the previous descriptions and reads:

“The Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, was the most magnificent of those considered magnificent. His face shone pearl-like and similar to the full-moon. (6.78) Of luminous, lily-white complexion. He was large of head, and possessing a thick, dense beard. Taller than average, and shorter than a tall person. With expanded, not elevated cheeks. Gap-toothed.”

TSM EH 365 (Cat. #11) was illuminated by Salih in the year 1144/1731-32, although the manuscript was originally produced by the calligrapher Mehmet Hocaçade (d. 1106/1695) in 1094/1682-83. For the first time, in addition to the _hilji_ girfi of the Prophet Muhammad, TSM EH 365 incorporates _hiljes_ of the prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham, Issac, Joseph, Lot, David, Moses, Aaron, Jacob, Joseph, and Jesus, as well as the _hiljes_ of the four rightly-guided caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali (figures 11.1 through 11.11 except 11.7 and 11.8). All of these prophets and their genealogies are mentioned in _Surah al-An‘am_, and it is probable that this inclusion of their physical and moral descriptions had significance in terms of the mystical interpretation of this surah discussed in the previous chapter. According to this esoteric interpretation, in addition to the names of the prophets, _Surah al-An‘am _contains hidden within it the names of all souls who will be born up until the Day of Judgment. These _hiljes_ of the prophets will become an important feature of the _En’ام_ girfi, appearing in numerous manuscripts throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Unlike the _hilji_ girfi of the Prophet Muhammad which are written most often in Arabic, the language of the hadith, the texts of the prophets’ _hiljes_ are typically written in Ottoman Turkish. As there are many similarities among the various descriptions contained within the text, it is possible that the source of these descriptions may be an Ottoman version of the lives of the prophets. However, the increased use of Ottoman Turkish in these late eighteenth and nineteenth-century _En‘am_ girfi should also be seen as further evidence of the role these manuscripts played in supporting the Ottoman claim to the Caliphate.

II. The muhr.

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, an artist known to us only as Salih, illuminated TSM EH 365 (Cat. #11), a fifty year old _En‘am_ from the hand of calligrapher Mehmet Hocaçade (d. 1106/1695). The latter was a colleague of the more famous Hafez Osman; in fact, they shared the same calligraphy teacher, Suleyman Mustafa Beyrübi (d. 1097/1686). It is probable that Mehmet Hocaçade’s original _En‘am_ dated 1094/1682-83, consisted of Qur’anic surahs, _da‘a‘_, and perhaps the _asma al-khamsa_. Salih’s illuminated _En‘am_ girfi of 1144/1731-32, included the Prophet Muhammad’s _hilji_ girfi, the _hiljes_ of the prophets and the _nasihat_ caliphs, as well as a remarkable series of calligraphic and representational images, including a miniature painting of the Ka‘ba.

These images, appearing here for the first time, become ubiquitous in the late eighteenth and nineteenth-century _En‘am_ girfi: the _muhr khattin al-nabwati_, or Seal of Prophethood. (figure 11.9); a miniature painting of the Ka‘ba at

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26University of Victoria 95-014 (Cat. #41, pp. 316-333) (figures 16.73 through 16.86); IUL 5199 (Cat. #15, f. 12v-13r); IUL 5197 (Cat. #44, f. 63b-69) (miniature rounds bearing the prophets’ names); Dageibus Rehe 491 (Cat. #92, f. 63v-69, and 74v-75) (figures 23.5 through 23.14 and 23.19 through 23.22); Spencer Turk. 9 (Cat. #56, f. 48v-49v) including Hassas and Hussian) (figures 26.3 through 26.7); M&A Arab. 22 (Cat. #97, f. 160v-162) (figures 27.3 and 27.4); and IUL 9619 (Cat. #21, f. 50v-51) (figures 28.3 and 28.4).
Mecca, f. 80, (figure 11.11); and the muhr al-ahab al-kahf, or the Seal of the Companions of the Cave, also known as the Seal of the Seven Sleepers, f. 80v, (figure 11.12). The rest of this chapter will discuss the calligraphic images known as muhr, or seals, beginning with the related practice of ta'zir (in Arabic, 'as'wilat) which uses these images as protective talismans or amulets. The miniature paintings of the In'ezm-i perif will be discussed in Chapter Four.

II. The practice of ta'zir.

The inclusion of a variety of seals, or muhr, in the In'ezm-i perif begins with Salih's illumination of TSM EH 365 (Cat. #11) in 1144/1731-32, and continues steadily until the last of the manuscripts in our study, the University of Istanbul's IUL 5619 (Cat. #28), dated 1292/1875-76. Even the most cursory examination of the seals makes it obvious that these objects were meant to be used in ritual ways, as part of the Islamic practice of ta'zir which offers the believer healing and protection through the vehicle of balaqa, or Divine Grace. Throughout the Islamic world the act of writing sacred verse is commonly believed to strengthen and prolong the action of the spoken prayer. This phenomenon is perhaps best understood through the study of ta'zir, the writing and preparation of prescriptive amulets worn throughout the Islamic world. Before any further discussion of the various types of seals that appear in the In'ezm-i perif, it is important to examine the practice underlying their use.

Islamic spirituality and the practice of traditional medicine have been inseparably linked from the earliest period. In the Mukhtar al-Masabih, the Prophet is reported as saying: "There is a medicine for every disease, and when the medicine is applied to the disease it is cured by God's permission." 27


28 The Mukhtar al-Masabih is quoted as the source of the ildey perif found on f. 79r-77 of TSM EH 365 (Cat. #11), and this text is repeated in tiles throughout this study (see note 22 above). As it was obviously considered a reliable reference for our eighteenth-century author, I have shown it as a source of Salih for understanding the practice of ta'zir.


In the pre-Islamic period the Arabs used beads, shells or coins as amulets and talismans to ward off evil and sickness and to assure prosperity. The Prophet forbade this practice as shirk, because it attributed power to something other than God. It was said, for example, that when the Prophet was asked about the use of a charm for one who was possessed, he replied: 'It pertains to the work of the devil.' 30 When the Companion 'Isa b. Hamza went to visit 'Abdullah b. 'Ukayl who was suffering from a disease, he asked the latter why he did not attach an amulet. "We seek refuge in God from that. God's messenger said that if anyone hangs anything on himself he will be left to it," came the reply. 31 However, numerous traditions attest to the Prophet Muhammad's recitation of Qur'anic verses and prayers as rajia, or protective words intended to heal the sick or avert malevolent spirits. For example according to the Prophet's wife 'A'isha: "During the Prophet's final illness he used to recite al-Ma'sudihata [the final two verses of Qur'an, Surah Fatih and Nas] and then blow his breath over his body." 32

These rajia, or prayers of protection, could include extra-Qur'anic material as well. According to the narration of 'Aun b. Malik al-Ash'ari: 'In the pre-Islamic period we used to apply spells, and we asked God's Messenger how he looked upon that. The Prophet replied: 'Submit your spells to me. There is no harm in spells so long as they involve no polytheism.' 33 Another narrator told how after the Prophet had prohibited spells some members of the family of 'Amr b. Hazm came and said, "Messenger of God, we had a spell proved efficacious which we applied for scorpion bite, but you have prohibited spells." They recited the rajia to him and the Prophet said: 'I see no harm in it. If any of you is able to benefit his brother, let him do so." 34 In fact, at least one hadith appears to argue in favour of an obligation, in certain cases, for the use of these protective verses.


According to 'Aisha: The Prophet gave command that we should use a spell against the evil eye.\footnote{Emphasis added. Buhari and Muslim in Mukhtār al-Masālikh, vol. 2, p. 946.}

Believing in the protective powers of sacred writing was another matter. Evidence suggests that the use of written 'izāwāw incorporating Qur'ānic passages and prayers may have begun during the lifetime of the Prophet. A hadith narrated in the Sunan of Abu Dawud relates how the Prophet once visited his wife Hafsa and found a woman, Ash-Shifa' daughter of Abdullah, teaching her to write. The Prophet commented that as Ash-Shifa was teaching his wife to write she might as well teach her a special spell or prayer of protection. "Why do you not teach this one the spell (naqz) for skin eruptions as you taught her writings?\footnote{Abu Dawud in Mukhtār al-Masālikh, vol. 2, p. 951.}

Although this story does not necessarily indicate that the Prophet himself used the written sacred text as a 'izāwāw, it does illustrate a positive connection between the spoken prayer and the written word. Additional evidence for the permissibility of writing 'izāwāw is found in a hadith narrated by 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb, who heard from his father, Abdullah ibn 'Amr, who heard it from his grandfather, 'Amr ibn al-As, that when they were fearful the Prophet used to teach them the words: ‘I seek refuge in Allah’s perfect words from His wrath, from the evil of His servants, from the whispered insinuations of devils lest they come to me.' According to the narrator, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr used to teach these words to those of his sons who had reached the age of reason, and used to write them and hang them upon those who had not.\footnote{Mukhtār al-Masālikh, vol. 1, p. 127, transmitted both by Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud (book of Tāhīr #189).}

The Islamic 'izāwāw is constructed using Qur'ānic verses as well as prayers and the Namāz, or Attributes of God.\footnote{The traditionally named ninety-nine Names, the ṣanā'a' al-husna, as well as other Names not usually included in this number.} An amulet may be said to be protective, while a talisman seeks some benefit. The Islamic concept of 'izāwāw incorporates both. 'izāwāw differ from pre-Islamic amulets and talismans in that the objects themselves are understood to be powerless; all power emanates from God. Ibn Hajar Haytami, the renowned sixteenth-century Shafi'i Imam, approved of the use of 'izāwāw, and explained that those who rejected this Islamic practice were doing so out of ignorance. According to Haytami, those who rejected the practice of 'izāwāw did so because they had misunderstood the Prophet’s injunctions against the pre-Islamic practice of hanging beads, coins or other objects for protection. Haytami cited a hadith in which the covenant of a man was unacceptable to the Prophet until he had removed the bead-type amulet he was wearing. The Prophet said, "Whoever hangs one has ascribed associates (shirk) to Allah." Haytami explained: "It is obligatory to interpret the above as referring to what they used to do of hanging a bead on themselves and calling it an "amulet" (tawāmi), and the like, believing it would protect them from calamities."\footnote{Plate 5 is from a 1996 Turkish exhibition of objects intended to ward off the evil eye, and cure ills. The various beads, bones and similar items surrounding the silver box, or Prophet’s handprint,\footnote{Are examples of Islamically unacceptable amulets.}

In the seventh/eighth century, the Shafi’i Imam Nawawi (d. 676/1277) argued in favour of the permissibility of Islamic 'izāwāw by citing the above-mentioned story of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr hanging written verses upon his children.\footnote{In his book Tāhīr al-Nabī, or the Medicine of the Prophet, the ninth/fifteenth-century scholar al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505) cited a hadith narrated by Tirmidhi in which Abu Khabara asked the Prophet if he knew of a 'izāwāw, or drug, or act of piety to be performed which was supererogatory to that which is ordained by God. The Prophet answered, "There exists only what is ordained by God." Therefore, the general consensus of opinion among orthodox scholars}

\textit{is a yourf al-hareb.} cited in The Reliance of the Traveller, translation, commentary and appendix by Noah H. K. S. Keeler, Brill: Leiden; Sanaa Books, 1993, p. 880.\footnote{For a discussion of this image see the following chapter.}


concerning the practice of using verses from the Qur'an as either an amulet or talisman is that it is lawful.46

The practice of ta'zi' is a very specialized one, requiring extensive training and discipline on the part of the practitioner. Islamic medicine views mind, body and soul as one. Illnesses are states, neither good nor bad, that human beings pass through on their life's journey. According to the medieval scholar and Sufi, al-Ghazali (d. 1111), "Illness is one of the forms of experience by which humans arrive at a knowledge of God; as He says, 'Illnesses are my servants which I attach to my chosen friends."47 Diagnosing an individual's state, therefore, requires not only medical knowledge but what is described in Sufi terms as "knowledge of the heart." Prescribing a course of treatment requires knowledge of diet, the use of herbal medicines, and the ability to encourage behavioral modification as well as the use of prescriptive prayers and ta'zi'. It is the Sufi order, or tarikat, with its lengthy apprenticeship in a master/disciple relationship that offers both the necessary esoteric and exoteric training in the necessary and inter-related arts of Qur'anic interpretation, traditional medicine, psychology and calligraphy.48

While individual choices or the particular Qur'anic passages or prayers used in the creation of ta'zi' vary from order to order and from shaykh to shaykh, the principles behind the practice have remained basically the same as a result of the tarikats' traditional system of transmission of knowledge. The Sufi tarikat is based upon the sibila, or chain of transmission, from shaykh to disciple. In this way, the orders' teachings and practices are handed down from one

43Al-Ghazali quoted in Chabi, p. 11. This concept of illness as offering the potential for spiritual growth is currently receiving some attention in West, specifically in the field of psychology. See Kristen W. Waits, "Spiritual Emergency: concepts and implications for psychotherapy," Journal of Humanistic Psychology 34, no. 2, Spring 1994, pp. 22-51.
44According to Annemarie Schimmel, the fabrication of ta'zi' has been a major preoccupation of Sufi shaykhs in later times. See Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Chapel Hill, 1996, p. 238.
45The Istanbul University Library's HIL 6386, Cat. #50, dated 1257/1841-42, by calligrapher Abd al-Daim Nazifzade, contains the sibila of the calligrapher's branch of the order. The Suleymaniye Library's hmrnfl 1, Hakkı 1509, Cat. #22, and the Topkapi Sarayi's TSB IV 674, Cat. #23, were both written by Seyid Mehmet Hilmi, the student of Mustafa Izzet who was one of the foremost calligraphers of the 19th century, and a member of the Nazifzade order. The Suleymaniye Library's Dikiliakı Bahş 491, Cat. #25, by an unknown calligrapher, was originally part of a collection of a sède built to honour a Nazifzade saint.
46See the article by J. Chad, on "hijab" in E.L. 2nd ed. especially p. 361.
hidden, unlike the pre-Islamic amulets and talismans that were purposely worn in visible places. Plate 7 (and the detail in 7a)19 is an example of an amulet that was covered with inscriptions that were intended to protect the wearer, in this case possibly Sultan Bayazid I (d. 1389). This hidden aspect has two meanings, according to the Shaykh, "One meaning is that it protects or veils you from harm. At the same time it is also veiling the hidden power that the shaykh will try to work on you," he said.20

The word ta'κiz itself comes from the root word asa, meaning to take shelter, or protection. Shaykh Hisham also used the words hisyanas and hiri to further explain the meaning of the word ta'iz. Lane describes hisyanas as stemming from a pre-Islamic meaning of forbidden and protected pastureage.21 Hiri is described as an area or place of refuge or protection.22 According to Shaykh Hisham’s definition: "The ta'iz is a protection and a barricade put between the human being and whatever harm is going to come against them." He defined ruqya as the actual words that one recites over a person, the words used to save them from illness, fear, or mental stress. These ruqya are an integral part of the practice of ta'iz.23 Ta'iz, said the Shaykh, "are what you write and what you read [recite]."

An understanding of the concept of blurred distinction between the spoken and written word is central to the study of Islamic calligraphy in general and the use of ta'iz in particular. One has only to remember that the first word revealed in the Qur'an was ‘iμra’ which can mean either read or recite.24 The spoken word carries great weight in Islamic culture. For example, the authenticity of a hadith rests, in part, upon acceptance of its itsaif, or chain of verbal transmitters. In order to receive a teacher’s permission to transmit a

19Turkish undecorated from the Tomb of Bayazid I, TSEM 539, Istanbul.
20Unless stated otherwise, this and all further passages marked with quotation marks are taken from a November 1985 interview with Shaykh Hisham Kabbani.
22Lane, vol. 1, p. 545.
23Lane, vol. 1, p. 545.
the Prophet were collected first in the books of hadith and later in works specifically devoted to healing.

According to Shaykh Hisham, the practice of writing and carrying the prayers used by the Prophet to cure people began in the first century Hijra. The Shaykh explained how, "initially the adults and their followers began to write down the prayers used by the Prophet to cure people and give it to those who needed it so they might recite it." When non-Arabs began to embrace Islam the writing itself was perceived as containing baraka, or spiritual blessings and power emanating from God through pious individuals or sacred objects. The Shaykh described how during his lifetime the Prophet used to put his hands over those wishing to be healed. After his death, his wife 'Umm Salama used to take one of his hairs that she had kept and pass water over it, giving the water to the sick. His wife 'Aisha also used to allow people to wear the Prophet's cloak, and they would be cured. Citing these examples, and others from the Qur'an, the Shaykh explained how the concept evolved:

"People observed the example of the jilbab [cloak] of the Prophet, or the hair of the Prophet. They began to write verses of Qur'an on paper, or at that time skin, leather or palm leaves, and carry it with them because they were not able to read or recite it," he said. "They knew that baraka comes from the hair and the clothes of the Prophet. They remembered how in Suraat Yusaaf when the prophet Yusaf's father became blind from crying, Yusaf sent him his shirt and it cured him. That shirt carried baraka, or blessings by miraculous power. A shirt acted as a tariq, because it made a person to see. People also took the example of the coffin of Moses when Talut was fighting Jalut in the time of David. Talut asked for support and Allah sent him the relics of Moses in a box which was moving in front of the armies. In Islam these things are accepted. The idea that you take blessings or baraka from the things that prophets or pious people leave behind has many roots in Islam. From these early examples, people developed the idea that you can obtain blessings from carrying written verses of the Qur'an, or placing them on the walls of mosques or houses."

The 'ilm al-huruf, or the science of letters, is based upon the spiritual properties of the Arabic letters. It was developed in the third and fourth centuries Hijra/ninth and tenth centuries C. E. with the writings of such scholars as Muhammad ibn Harun ibn Rahibn (c. 215/830), and al-Kindi (d. 866/253). It reached its zenith with the works of al-Ghazali in the 5th/11th century. In his discussion of this practice, Shaykh Hisham explained the reason behind the development of system of abjad, the replacement of letters by numbers. He said:

"When people began to carry tariq on a large scale, written verses of Qur'an, there was the danger that they might drop the sacred words on the ground. Scholars such as al-Ghazali and many others in his time and before, began to use this technology, the knowledge of using numbers for letters. They began to put these tariq in squares, in various ways, in order to give it a shape and protect it from the evil eye."

At age twenty-six, following his first seclusion, Shaykh Hisham began his training in the use of tariq. Seclusion, or khuluk, is a common practice in many Sufi orders, and one which plays a role in the preparation of the student for advanced practices such as tariq. During this period the student is secluded from contact with anyone but his or her shaykh, spending the time in prayer and meditation. In the Naqshbandi order the purpose of the first seclusion is to gain control over the ego. Training in esoteric arts such as use of the tariq is withheld until after this seclusion in order to be sure that the student will not use the knowledge either to do evil or for personal gain. According to the Shaykh:


In this system, each letter is given its own numerical value. Each verse from the Qur'an then has a corresponding number, for example, the number 786 corresponds to the bismillah, the phrase, "In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

See, for example the tariq found in TSM 1FR 39a, ff. 100v-101r. Cat. #12. These six pages of primitve amulet each containing sixteen squares with numerals written on the diagonal.
"Knowledge of the use of ta’zîc has to be given directly by the shaykh through training, because without this training you can cause great harm. If you are not well trained enough to control yourself, you can harm people. Many people without training try to use some of the books that have been written on these matters. This is very dangerous, and that is why some practitioners become mentally ill themselves, or cause harm to other people. Some people use the information in books in a professional way, to get money, which is not permitted.

Working with ta’zîc can put the practitioner’s own health or safety in jeopardy. Shaykh Hisham described the patient’s illness or trouble as a burden which the practitioner must take upon him or herself in order to affect a cure.

“When you write the ta’zîc you must carry the person’s sickness like a burden. The sickness will be then be reflected upon you. If you are not able to carry the burden of the sickness and reflect it back, either outside in the air or in the ocean or the sea, then that sickness will harm you,” he explained.

When Shaykh Hisham gives someone a ta’zîc he first prays over it, then carefully folds it into a triangular shape, instructing the recipient not to open it. He tells them to cover it in seven folds of plastic wrap and sew it in a leather pouch. To open the ta’zîc is to negate its power. The Shaykh explained: "The ta’zîc is closed in a way that is hidden, you cannot see what it is. If you open the ta’zîc, the effect will go. After the shaykh reads [prays] on it, folds it and gives it to you, if you open it it is finished, there is no value for you."

Shaykh Hisham described the practice of ta’zîc as a meeting point between medicine and psychology, religion and metaphysics.

“All ta’zîc are based upon the existence of God,” he said. "Secondly, they are based upon the existence of a spiritual structure, the soul. And thirdly, that these souls can move from one place to another through the usage of the different Attributes of God. Under these Attributes will be serving angels and serving jinns who will serve those people who know how to use these Attributes.”

The Shaykh believes that all sickness is psychologically based. When questioned further he stated that the terms psychological and spiritual were interchangeable.

“When a person is psychologically sick,” he said, "the body secretes hormones in the glands which affect the whole balance of his system. When you have an unbalanced system you have problems. If you can balance the secretion of these glands by psychological or spiritual means then you have a balanced person with no more sickness. That is our aim in healing through energy and healing through recitations.”

To the Western mind, much of the work that Shaykh Hisham does may be seen as psychological in nature. Most people come to him with concerns that are no different than those presented to the average psychologist, minister, or family counselor. To these people the Shaykh lends a sympathetic ear and practical advice concerning changes in diet or lifestyle. Then, like a psychiatrist or psychologist, the Sufi shaykh makes a diagnosis on the basis of his knowledge and experience of the human condition. As part of the therapy he then chooses a word, or recitation that the person has to read in order to achieve a spiritual balance. Finally, the Shaykh chooses a specific prayer, recites it and breathes over a folded ta’zîc, and concludes the visit. Occasionally, a more challenging case will present itself - one in which Western concepts of psychology prove to be of limited value, and a more traditional approach is called for.

In 1994, at a Naqshbandi centre in Montreal, the Shaykh was introduced to a middle-aged African woman whose family was concerned because she
insisted that she had been possessed by a jinn. Although the woman spoke only her native African dialect, the jinn apparently spoke Arabic, declaring loudly that it was not Muslim and would not leave the woman's body. A purely psychological assessment of the elderly woman might take into account the feelings of alienation and powerlessness experienced by an immigrant elder: the loneliness of a new country and difficulty of speaking a new language, the loss of support of the family back home and the growing independence of her young adult children as they make the adjustment to life in North America. Remedies offered by Western medicine might include family counseling or drug therapy, but would probably not address the woman's spiritual needs.  

The Shaykh spent more than an hour alternately talking to the woman and addressing the jinn. He splashed the woman with water and passed his staff back and forth over her, finally ordering the jinn to leave. When he was finished, he called me over and asked me to assist the woman in drying herself. I observed that the woman, who moments before had been screaming and thrashing about, now calmly got up, thanked the Shaykh, who gave her a ta'zir, and went home with her family. When later asked if he had had to write a special ta'zir for such a seemingly spectacular case, the Shaykh replied no, that the general ta'zir offered sufficient protection against jinn and other malevolent spirits. What had been specific to this case were the spoken prayers he had said over the woman and on the ta'zir before giving it to her. He explained:

"Allah mentioned in Holy Qur'an that there were two angels, Harut and Marut, and they were teaching magic. They were teaching people the knowledge of how to separate husband and wife, children and parents, communities. Through the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), Allah has taught us to counteract that power. By using many verses of Qur'an, and many other prayers we may stop all this black magic. We may stop the bad actions of some people against others."

Difficult cases require the performance of salat al-istikhara, the prayer of guidance or inspiration. For this, the Shaykh performs a ritual ablution before sleeping, and makes a two salat, or two cycle prayer, reciting a special du'a asking God's guidance in this specific case. He then goes to sleep on his right side. During the night he experiences a dream in which he receives information concerning the illness or psychological state of the patient. The Shaykh explained:

"The Prophet (S.A.W.) said, if you want to have inspiration I am leaving behind me the good dream, and the good dream is considered one-fourth a part of revelation. Through istikhara in the dream the shaykh can tell what kind of sickness the person is carrying."

The content of the ta'zir itself is dependent upon the diagnosis. Each illness or state requires the use of different names of God, different prayers. In order to make a diagnosis, the Shaykh relies first upon the earlier training he received as a medical student in Belgium. He said, "You have to have some medical knowledge at least, in order to know what kind of pain or sickness the person has." For special cases he relies upon the salat al-istikhara. Then, using the principles taught to him by his shaykh and grand shaykh, a collective knowledge reaching back through a chain of forty teachers ending with the Prophet Muhammad, Shaykh Hisham selects the proper combination of prayers, Qur'anic verses and Names of God. "What is important," he said, "is the combination, how to combine Names. The whole technology is based upon how to combine different Names, different Attributes in a way that they are effective."
Sometimes the Shaykh combines the use of both traditional and spiritual medicines.

"For example," he said, "in a case of cancer, sometimes we use onion juice, but with it you have to write for the person the first surah of some Qur’anic surahs. You have to write these surahs in saffron on a piece of paper and you put it in water overnight. The next day the saffron is dissolved in the water. The person drinks that water, and in many cases they are cured. In another case we might use different surahs, the first line of the surah, or the middle of the surah. I have saffron here at home, and I use it only for very severe cases. People drink that water and, insha’Allah [God-willing] they will be cured."

Plate 8 is an example of a nineteenth-century širkhʿ ī‘si, or healing bowl, that was similarly inscribed with verse from the Qur’an, and used with water in the treatment of various illnesses. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the ta‘zīṣ is dependent upon God and the faith of the practitioner, not the belief of the patient. Although he may view his previous medical training as an asset in diagnosing a patient’s illness, Shaykh Hisham’s faith rests with God and His Prophet. In his own words: "We believe that the cure is from Allāh, from God. Doctors nowadays, they give you a pill and you will be cured. God is the Curer, but the pill is the means. So too, in Islam, the ta‘zīṣ is the means, but God is the Curer."

Given this understanding of the principles and methods behind the practice of ta‘zīṣ, we may now turn to the seals, or mahr, found in our manuscripts.

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III. The mahr khutum al-nubuwat, or Seal of Prophethood.

One of the most frequently depicted images is the oval, or tear-shaped khutum al-nubuwat, or "Seal of Prophethood," that tradition says was located between the shoulders of the Prophet Muhammad. This seal is so important that some of the manuscripts have multiple versions. According to tradition, Abu Bakr said that anyone placing this seal in his shroud or grave "will never experience the pain of the grave, and God will forgive all his sins, great and small." The manuscripts themselves sometimes indicate a specific ritual use for the seals. For example, Hasan al-Rasib’s Ensīm al-qirf of 1254/1838-39, IUL 5197, ff. 123-123v, Cat. #19, included this explanation with the Seal of Prophethood:

"It is said that our Master Muhammad Mustafa, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'Whoever looks at this seal and rubs it on his eyes, they receive the same reward as if they recited the entire Qur’an one thousand times, as if they prayed one thousand years, as if they fed one thousand poor people, as if they bought one thousand ḥajj, the reward of one thousand Arafats, as if they fasted one thousand years, as if they made one thousand holland, or if they visited one thousand sick people, as if they prayed one thousand jama‘a prayers for the dead, as if they built one thousand bridges, as if they freed one thousand slaves, all these rewards Allāh gives to whoever looks at this seal.""
The same calligrapher’s En’âm-i penif of 1263/1846-47, IUL, 3756, f. 160. Cat. #21, includes with its Seal of the Prophet a hadith, narrated by ‘Ali:

“The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Anyone who writes my names and keeps them in his house will not find difficulty, or sickness, the evil eye, or magic, and poverty will never touch him.’”

The earliest example I have found of the Seal of Prophethood, in an En’âm-i penif, is by the hand of Sâlih in 1144/1731. TSM EH 365, f.77v, Cat. #11, (figure 11.9) Here, an inscribed, tear-shaped seal rests upon a bower of pink roses. The text is simple, and very similar to those images that will follow:

“There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God. God is One, no partner has He. Anywhere you turn, you will be victorious.”

The University of Victoria’s Seal of Prophethood, LVic 95-014, p. 336, (Cat. #16) (figure 16, 91), is typical of those that will follow. The names are written in white ink on a gold background, surrounded by silver and pink/red borders. It reads: “This is the Seal of the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa, may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him.” The central motif is an extended, oval-shaped seal with white writing on a gold background, surrounded by orange/red and gold borders. The inscription on the seal reads:

“Allah is One. He has no associate. There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Everywhere you turn, you are victorious. This is the Seal of Prophethood, and he is the Seal of the Prophets, peace be upon him.”

The seal itself forms the central portion of a three-panel device. The top half of the seal is placed against a background of crimson red with the words: “Ya Manaf! (O Most Gracious), Ya Hanif! (O Most Tender)” written in white ink.

Below this, the background colour changes to black with a golden arabesque. Appearing to pierce the seal from above is a golden triangle, framed in silver. Below the seal is a golden rectangle bordered in peach and red. The two outer panels each contain two cartouches of text written in black ink on a gold background, bordered with silver. They read: “Victory is from God, and the near ...” “He is the bringer of light, O Muhammad.” “This is the Seal of Prophethood, and he is the Seal of the Prophets.”

IV. The muhr al-ashab al-kahf, or the Seal of the Companions of the Cave, (The Seal of the Seven Sleepers).

In 1144/1731-32, the illuminator Sâlih included a Seal of the Seven Sleepers in his embellishment of Mehmet Hocaâdez’s earlier En’âm-i penif. TSM EH 365, f. 80v, Cat. #12, (figure 11.12) Appearing here for the first time, this seal, which is used for gaining, rep, sustenance or even riches, will become an important feature in later versions of the manuscript. In this earliest version, the names of the seven youths and their dog: Yambilika, Makahalina, Masalmina, Marmus, Dabarmus, Shadhinus, Kafashatatayusus, and Qustmar, are simply inscribed within a circle, and illustrated in much the same way as the manuscript’s many hilâs have been decorated.

Known in Arabic as al-ashab al-kahf, or the companions of the cave, the seal refers to the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, a story familiar throughout Christendom in the Middle Ages. Seven youths and their dog fell asleep in a cave near Ephesus, on the west-coast of Asia Minor during the time of Christianity’s persecution by the Roman Empire. The young men awoke several hundred years later to find a much-changed world, with Christianity the state religion. The Qur’anic version warns against arguments based upon the details of

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*Originally produced by Mehmed Hocaâdez in 1731/1732.
* These two Names of God are mentioned in hadith, and are not part of the ‘seven a-
the story, saying that only God knows the truth of such things. Instead, the Qur'an treats the story as a parable, with the importance of trust in God being the main point. Prosperity and success, or ru'ya, the object or goal of the Seal of the Seven Sleepers, can only come through trust in God. The actual names of the Seven Sleepers are not mentioned in the Qur'an, but variations are given in a number of traditions. The name of their dog, Qutmir, is usually included in the ta'asit. In the case of one manuscript, that of an unknown calligrapher, dated 1291/1874-75, the dog's name actually plays the central role.\textsuperscript{38} M\&A Arab 22, f. 163, (Cat. #27), (figure 27.7)

Later versions of the Seal of the Seven Sleepers are more elaborate. For example, in UVic 95-014, p. 354, Cat. #16, (figure 16.109), the Seal of the Seven Sleepers begins to include Qur'anic text along with the names of the sleepers. The text of the outer circle of the ta'asit reads:

"But if they turn away, say: 'Allah sufficeth me: There is no god but He, on him is my (trust)'.\textsuperscript{96} He is the Lord of the Throne Supreme.\textsuperscript{97} Praise be to Allah, our Creator, and the Creator of Angels and Spirit.\textsuperscript{98}

The inner circle of the ta'asit bears the names of the Seven Sleepers, given here as Yamlikha, Malehafina, Mathalina, Marmush, Dalbarmush, Shadranush, Kafashatsush, and their dog Qutmir.

The version of the seal found in the Er'âm-ar geyf written by Mustafa Nazif in 1288/1903-94, is the most elaborate. Pirişvüyad 43, f. 59v, Cat. #18, (figure 18.111) It consists of seven circles of gold alternating with black and red script, above a background of blue and gold covered with an arabesque of multi-coloured flowers. The top unamed contains the names of the Seven Sleepers and

their dog: "Yamlikha, Malehafina, Mathalina, Marmush, Dalbarmush, Shadranush, Kafashatsush, Qutmir." The bottom unamed reads: "O You who are Kind, be kind with us. Be sparing and clement with us. You are the Mighty, save us from Your Overwhelming Might." The first circle reads:

"There is no god but God, the King, the Truth. There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God. There is no god but God, Adam is the Chosen of God. There is no god but God, Noah is the Protected of God. There is no god but God, Abraham is the Friend of God. There is no god but God, Ismail is the Sacrifice of God. There is no god but God, Moses is the One Who Spoke to God.\textsuperscript{97} There is no god but God, Solomon is the Trusted of God. There is no god but God, Jesus is the Spirit of God."

The second circle (in red) contains verse from the Qur'an. The first verse, 3:18-19, is said to refer to the "evil-eye."\textsuperscript{82} and is frequently used to avert the same in these manuscripts.

"In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful...And the unbelievers would almost trip thee up with their eyes when they hear the Message, and they say: 'Surely he is possessed!' But it is nothing less than a Message to all the worlds.\textsuperscript{99}...There is no god but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise. The religion before Allah is Islam."\textsuperscript{74}

The third circle (in black) contains the famous ayat al-kursi, a Qur'anic verse frequently read for protection. Al-Suyutî notes in his Tibb al-Nahi, "The Prophet...ordained us to protect ourselves from the evil "of what He has created"\textsuperscript{94}" by...reciting the verse of the Chair (ayat al-kursi).\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{38}Identical with RUL 9619, f. 73, Cat. #28.
\textsuperscript{39}See al-Suyutî, Tibb al-Nahi, p. 153. The evil-eye will be discussed in the section that follows.
\textsuperscript{40}M\&A Arab 22, f. 163-64.
\textsuperscript{41}13:2.
\textsuperscript{42}al-Suyutî, p. 148.
"Allah! There is no other god but He, - the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Supporter of all. No slumber can seize him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there that intercedes with His presence except as He permits? He knows what is apparent to His creatures as before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He wills. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feedeth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory)."

The fourth circle (in red) consists of a series of repeated tilism, or mystical words of power. The word tilism is thought to be of foreign origin, either Greek, Persian or Ethiopic. It is the source of our own word "talisman." The fifth circle (in black) repeats the shahada: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God," five times. The sixth and centre circle (in black) repeats the phrase: "God is Most High," three times.

Later versions of the Seal of the Seven Sleepers are somewhat abbreviated. For example, in Mustafa Hilmi’s En’ám-i qerfi dated 1289/1872, calligraphic roundels for each of the Seven Sleepers are included along with those of the al-ashura al-malakshara, the "Ten Promised Paradise." Spencer Turk 9, ff. 45v-56, Cat. #50. Three years later, an En’ám-i qerfi by an unknown calligrapher, copies this idea using the same roundels for the names of the Seven Sleepers, and combining them with the names of the "Ten Promised Paradise." IUL 5649, f60v-71, Cat. #28. Finally, an undated En’ám-i qerfi by an unknown artist, includes the names of the Sleepers along with a list of the mukhalifat al-Rasul, the relics of the Prophet. Dijumula Baba 491, f. 76v, Cat. #25. (figure 25. 26).

VI. The muhr shifa ‘a al-Qur’an, or the Seals of Qur’anic Healing.

These seals, which may also be called ta’zir, are intended to provide protection for those who look at them, or wear them, against whatever ill may befall them, either through physical or mental illness, or accident, or through the intentional ill-will of those who practice the "secret arts." In addition to providing this protection, such images were meant to serve as prototypes that might be copied and distributed. See, for example, the very first ta’zir in our manuscripts, found in Mustafa Mir’s En’ám-i qerfi dated 1144/1731-32, TSM EH 394, ff. 56v-57, Cat. #12, (figure 12.1) where the text around the outside roads:

(Inc Ottoman Turkish) This (a’t‘iz) is for whatever you may ask for in this life and in the next. Anyone may write this (a’t‘iz) and carry it... No matter what your need or reason for making this request with Allah’s permission it will happen.”

The University of Victoria’s manuscript contains three such Seals of Qur’anic Healing. Two of them, UVic 95-014, p. 338 and p. 355, Cat. #16 (figures 16.93 and 16.110), are directed against the evil eye, while the third, p. 339 (figure 16.94) is against physical illness. The three a’t‘iz are identical in style, only the content differs slightly.

VI.1. The ta‘zir used against the Evil Eye.

Numerous hadith attest to the existence and power of the evil-eye. According to Muslim’s Sahih, the Prophet said, "The influence of the evil-eye is a fact; if anything would precede the destiny (qadar), it would be the influence of an evil-eye..." The evil-eye is said to come from a spiteful or jealous human or jinn. The possessor of the evil-eye need not be aware of its existence, or even be in the same place as the one afflicted. In the Muslim world any appreciative comment toward a person, their belongings, and especially their children may be seen as suspect, and, according to an order of the Prophet, must be immediately

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75 Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-salam, vol. 3, p. 1192.
76 Muhammad Al-Akili, Natural Healing with the Medicine of the Prophet from the Book of the Preventions of the Hereafter by means the Qiyasat al-fursat, p. 122-123.