

EVIL SPIRITS AND THE EVIL EYE IN TURKISH LORE

Corresponding to the lore among our Turkish friends connected with saints is that relating to *jinn*s or evil spirits and the evil eye.

Turkish *jinn*s of modern times differ from their cousins, the *genii* of Arabian Nights stories, in that they work only harm to men. Anatolians have no trouble with the belief in a personal devil and his demon legions which is the background of what we find in the Gospels on this subject. To the ordinary people of the country, earth and air and sky are peopled with spirits malign as well as benign, and to neutralize the one is quite as important as to utilize the other.

An old *hoja*, venerable in beard and robe of fur, once informed me that God first created the holy angels, then the devilish *jinn*s of seventy-two classes corresponding to the seventy-two races of men, and finally God created man with character and possibilities partly angelic and partly devilish. The nature of *jinn*s may be understood from the fact that one day after the afternoon call to prayer they destroyed 80,000 prophets. This was before the creation of man! How there could be 80,000 prophets before the creation of man is a question that perhaps never occurred to the *hoja*, and if one should put it before him it might seem like needless homiletic nicety. For this offense Allah wiped the *jinn*s out; that is, he wiped them out of *sight*, and now they are seldom allowed to appear to human eyes. There is also a gruesome fear of ghosts, especially in case of a recent death or in the neighborhood of a cemetery. *Jinn*s are to be expected on moors, by rushing streams or roaring mills, in dark corners and lonely places, where they lurk to work harm to the unwary.

this relic over night, and pronounced quite rational in the morning. The office of exorcist has been of much importance in the eastern churches, and prayers for the banning or exorcism of evil spirits are in constant use. At the baptism of an infant the priest recites prayers over the water to purge it of such evil presence, and blows toward the four points of the compass across the font for the same purpose. Twice a year or more the priests sprinkle each house of their congregation with holy water to drive away lurking spirits, and that precautions may never be omitted, sacred pictures are hung upon the house walls. These pictures are of saints of the church, and are hung first for forty days in the church to hallow them. Then they are put upon the wall of a humble house, and little lamps filled with pure olive oil are often kept alight before them, especially at the sacred seasons in the calendar.

A village woodman of Moslem faith living not far from my home thought his companions called him to rise and go as usual to the forest. Though it was night, he set out, and followed a phantom leader a dozen miles with bare and bleeding feet, until he came to a place known as God's valley, and there he saw a big meeting of *jinn*s,—thousands of them, a veritable pandemonium. A venerable person was at their head, as king, a sort of Beelzebub, and the sight finally overcame the woodman and drove him away. His phantom leader then brought him to a point near his home and left him, but after that experience the man was epileptic and dumb. His friends took him to a famous holy man to "read" over him. This was done, and the dumb man was relieved to such an extent that he spoke and related his story as given here, but he continued subject to epileptic attacks about once a month. One of my acquaintance, a Georgian by race, claims to be a successful exorcist, and tells me of various cases he has cured. His standard remedy is to write a passage from the Law of Moses, the Psalms, the Gospels or the Koran, and bind it on the neck of the patient.

Dervishes and others are believed to call up familiar

spirits. Compare the difficult passage concerning the woman of Endor, (1 Sam. 28:7-25). A dervish searches his sacred volumes amid the ruins of some deserted village or old castle, and endeavors to learn from familiar spirits where to look for buried treasure. The custom must be very common, for every foreigner is believed to be able to locate hidden treasure in this way. My Georgian friend is a professional *jinnji*, who claims to deal with familiar spirits, to wield occult powers and to exorcise demons. He has invited me to be present and witness his ceremony of exorcism at some convenient opportunity. But he has even more earnestly proposed that we should join forces, form a partnership and by combining our skill, endeavor to locate hidden treasure in certain Hittite ruins on a site with which we are both familiar, and with the supposition on his part that there is a good prospect of our locating buried treasure of fabulous value. If a robbery has been committed a dervish or *hoja* may be summoned, who for a small fee will "read" over a cup of water in which some member of the family, preferably a child, may then see black *jinnns*, and from them learn such information as whether the thieves were male or female young or old, tall or short, fair or swarthy, departed to the east or west, and the like. Acting on this information the parties then endeavor to track the thieves and recover their property. This experiment was tried by a constable, whose young son saw three *jinnns* in the water,—but they did not catch the thieves. Gipsies often have recourse to the same means, and would hardly continue it if they did not find some satisfactory reward in doing so.

Near us is an important coast and commercial city, and the governor of the district is the absolute ruler of a quarter million people. I once called on the governor in company with the official inspector of agriculture, a Greek gentleman with a European education. As I walked with the inspector through the governor's vineyard, my attention was attracted by a "tink, tink" sound, which I soon found came from a tiny windmill set up on

a pole. Each revolution of the wheel raised a little tin rod which dropped and produced the tinkling noise. What was the purpose of the wind-mill and its little noise? To keep the evil eye off the vineyard, by fixing its attention upon the unusual sight and sound of the little mill.

To keep the evil eye from a child, blue beads are put upon it; to avert it from a field, garden, tree or threshing floor, a skull of some animal is erected on a pole; to counteract its influence on a mill, a great placard with the words "wonder of God" is nailed to the roof; to protect a dwelling, a bunch of garlic or a pair of deer's antlers is fixed in a conspicuous place; to prevent milk from souring, bits of charcoal are laid upon it; to protect a camel, its saddle is made of a particular kind of wood; and so forward *ad infinitum*. People's notions and fears of the evil eye vary with their environment and the degree of their intelligence, but there is no marked difference traceable to religious connection.

I was once asked by a villager whom I had never seen before to tie a knot on a string he had wound around his wrist. It seems he had malaria, attributed it to some evil influence, and thought he might use me to bind the spell. His notion was, perhaps, not that I would hold an acceptable brief for him with the superhuman powers, but that I as a Christian, would be so *unacceptable* as to attract the evil being, and release him. I would thus render a service similar to that performed by a skull planted on a pole in a garden, whose unsightliness transfixes the evil eye, and leaves the tender plants to grow without harm.

Just as a bridal couple entered their new home I once observed an old woman smashing an earthen dish at their feet. Her idea was that as we see human life we may safely infer that there are superhuman and inhuman forces at work which are likely to smash something. It is better, therefore, to get the start of them, to keep them quiet by doing their work for them, and lose the value of a cheap dish rather than endanger the

health or property of the new household. If such a superstition is not a survival of devil worship, I know not how to account for it.

On the whole, the power most trusted, whether as a prophylactic against or as a remedy for the ill effects of evil spirits or evil eyes, is "reading," that is, reciting from some of the sacred books. If a sheep does not come in from its pasturage at nightfall, read to protect it. Then if a wolf pursues, it cannot catch the sheep; if it catches, cannot bite it; if it bites, cannot pull its teeth out; and the sheep will reach home dragging the wolf as its victim, or rather as the victim of the powerful reading. If the charm does not work,—God knows best.

For many people, almost the whole life is passed in bondage to this fear. They are especially anxious for young and tender plants and animals, and tell how often they have seen such an object helpless and beloved overtaken by some "stroke." A foreigner soon learns not to praise children, or even a driver's horses, without adding an expression like "wonder of God" to avert the evil eye which might be attracted by the praise. Some have supposed that Orientals were indifferent to children because they do not express affection of them in the presence of strangers and resent such expressions from strangers. Really Orientals love their children exceedingly well, but they dread the awful bewitching. They fear to leave a baby alone in a house, lest *jinn*s get it, but a measure of protection is attributed to the presence of a broom. Native Christians sometimes fix a cross composed of sticks of wood over the chimney of the house to prevent witches from flying down and strangling the little children. A driver on the road is easily troubled about his horses, lest they suffer from some evil glance. If he tells you his trouble, you may recommend him to blow or spit gently toward any person he suspects, and he will probably tell you that he does so every time he sees any reason for suspicion, but the charm doesn't always seem to work perfectly. It is

always dangerous to whistle, for you may summon evil spirits by doing so.

Some persons claim to exercise the power of the evil eye. One man, boasting of his accomplishment, called the attention of another to the third camel of a passing caravan, and immediately the beast stumbled and fell. Its saddle, however, was made of the right kind of wood, and the animal rose and went on its way without further harm. Usually one does not like such a reputation, and may have his life made miserable by possessing it. People come and cut slivers from the threshold of a person thus feared, to use by way of antidote, and I have heard of old women whose thresholds would be so cut away in consequence that it would be necessary to renew the wood several times a year. If milk from a cow unaccountably sours, the owner will not sell any more, unless perhaps he ventures to do so after tying a powerful writing wrapped up in leather to the horn of his cow. Greek miners, serfs under Turkish feudalism, sometimes quake at a vision of phantom men, tall, large and hairy. A miner then knows that he has found a rich vein of ore, and further that he has not long to live. And to pass from things below to things above earth, an eclipse of the sun or moon is habitually attributed to a *jinn* or dragon trying to swallow the heavenly luminary. The people then get out at once with guns, tin pans, and anything than can make a noise, and try to intimidate and frighten away the awful monster. The sun and moon are always saved, and people rejoice that their efforts have been successful.

People seriously fear to be cursed, and probably at bottom the reason is that they fear curses will release the power of evil spirits, or will neutralize all the intercession and influence of beneficent spirits. Evil beings are too many and too strong to be treated with impunity. Life in the Orient is sombre. Even its music is in minor keys and mournful. Our fellow human beings pass their days in bondage unto fear.

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NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS

A Moslem Student of Hinduism

A recent number of the *Hindustan Review* (Madras) gives an appreciation of Khan Abdul Aziz, M. A., of Allahabad University, who has passed the examinations in Sanskrit and shown a truly catholic spirit through his studies of a non-Islamic faith.

"As a school boy the Khan Sahib was irresistibly drawn to the study of Sanskrit language and literature. Fortunately for him he had as his teacher of Sanskrit a Brahmin Pandit of great erudition and wide sympathies who not only helped him along the slippery places but instilled into his mind a love for Sanskrit literature. The Khan Sahib was an apt pupil and made such progress in his studies that even as a school boy he was quite capable of holding his own against any student of the F. A. class. In those days students from these parts appeared in Sanskrit for the examinations of the Oriental Faculty of the Punjab University. The Khan Sahib whose devotion to Sanskrit amounted almost to a passion made up his mind, soon after passing the entrance examination, to appear for the Prajna (proficiency in Sanskrit language and literature) examination. This is the more remarkable for being a Mohammedan he had to battle against prejudice and other difficulties such as depending, in the absence of a teacher, on his own unaided efforts and the notes supplied to him by a friend who, being a Brahmin, enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being taught by Brahmin Pandits. Being a diligent student the Khan Sahib's efforts were crowned with success, for he was placed second in order of merit in the Prajna examination of that year.

"In 1896 while reading for the degree examination he obtained the first prize for a speech in Sanskrit delivered in connection with the Nagpur Oration Competition—the text of his speech being IX—22 verse of the Bhagwad Gita."

"It is pleasing to note that he has distinguished himself in a branch of Sanskrit learning which is beyond the powers of many a well-read gentleman of our country and which recalls to memory the achievements of Abul Fazl and Faizi whose predilection for Sanskrit literature and philosophy earned for them the undying hatred of the orthodox portion of the Mohammedan community of the days of Akbar. The times have, however, happily changed, for the Mohammedan community of today feels justly proud of the distinction achieved by one of its members. But there is a public side to it and we fully endorse what a high government official says regarding the Khan Sahib's success. "Separation between your own great community of Mohammedans and the Hindus can never be so great again when a Mohammedan has made such a bridge and shown to much appreciation of Hindu learning."

The Decadence of Islam

Mohammedans, like the Hindus, are becoming increasingly tinged with the pessimistic view that the golden age is past and gone. We have been reading a book just published, by a Moslem, on the *History and Problems of Moslem Education in Bengal*. The author tells how

"from the numerous schools and academies of Granada, Baghdad, and Damascus, the Mussulmans once taught the world the gentle lessons of philosophy and the practical teachings of stern science. . . . To think of those palmy days of Islâm and the present fallen condition of the Mussulmans in India. Arts and letters are almost dead; science and philosophy have taken shelter in other lands; faith has lost her grip; even the spirit of Islâm, in which the Moslem lived and died, is fast waning in our midst. Nowhere has this fall been so complete as in this presidency. We are hopelessly fallen, and have managed to forget our glorious history and the lofty ideals of Islâm. Our ideal has no longer the same charm for us. Our history does no longer animate us to the same spirit of world activity. If ever a people stood in need of human sympathies and co-operation, of government aid and patronage, it is we, the Mussulmans of Bengal. Poor in education, lost in power, shut out from all legitimate and noble vocations of life by force of circumstances and stress of competition, and, lastly, reduced to the lowest stage of penury, we find ourselves hopelessly lost in the battle of life. And all this is due to our want of proper training and education."

A German Appeal to Mohammedans in Africa

According to the *New York Times* the following letter was written by Captain Falkenstein to Chief Isa, a Mohammedan teacher who has great influence in East Africa on the border between Lake Nyasa and Rhodesia. According to the newspaper the letter was written both in Arabic and in the native tongue of the people. The text was as follows:

"First, greetings, and then I inform thee that thy letter has reached me here. I have received thy news. The Holy War has now spread over the entire world. The Holy War is being preached in Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Tripoli, Afghanistan, Beluchistan, Persia, half of India, the Sudan, and the land of the Nubians—in fact, all over the world.

"The Mohammedans are fighting with the Germans and Austrians against English, French, Italians, Serbians, and Japanese. Everywhere the enemy is being defeated. The Turks, under the Padishah of Stamboul, have beaten the Russians many times. They have sunk many English and French ships. The French are nearly driven out of Morocco, and in Tripoli the Italians have been soundly defeated by the Mohammedans. Our Russian enemies and the English have been driven out of Persia. The English have fled from Afghanistan and Beluchistan.

"Now the children of the Padishah are coming into power. There are soldiers of the Holy War in the Punjab and in India. Everywhere the Germans and the Austrians have beaten the French and the Russians. In fact, the Russians and the French are practically beaten to a standstill. The English are not yet entirely defeated, but they have lost a great many of their soldiers and a great many of their warships have been sunk. More than 500 of their steamers have been sunk.

"Here in East Africa our soldiers have struck the English railroad in several places and torn up the tracks. Our Askaris have blown up three railroad bridges. Many railway coaches have been destroyed. Some Englishmen and many English Askaris have fallen. The Belgian Askaris have been defeated everywhere. Many of them have fallen and many have surrendered. There are many German Askaris here in Nyasaland now. With them are many Mohammedans, and we plan to strike a great blow.

"Now, every Mohammedan knows that he must die. But he also