

Dispelling Sorcery and Glad Tidings: Two Recipes and a Note from Şeyh Ğālib Dede

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Context

The practice of performing or commissioning sorcery is considered one of the gravest sins in Islām and is strictly prohibited and condemned. The Holy Qur'ān states that those who engage in sorcery shall have no share in the hereafter and emphasizes the necessity of seeking refuge in Allāh from their harm.¹ Prophet Muḥammed underscored that sorcery is among the seven gravest sins.² Likewise, just as he sought divine protection from every form of evil, he also sought refuge in Allāh to safeguard himself from the effects of sorcery. In this context, he would frequently recite *Sūrah al-Felāk*, *Sūrah an-Nās*, and *Āyah al-Kürsī* for protection.³

Evliyā Çelebi narrates that the Prophet Muḥammed, upon realizing that he had been afflicted by sorcery, followed the advice of the Rāhib Baḥīrā and purified himself in a river in Acre ('Akkā), invoking the name of Allāh. Through this act, he was ultimately freed from the spell. This account highlights the convergence of three significant elements in breaking sorcery: the recitation of Qur'ānic verses, prayer, and water. In this regard, the role of water as an instrument of physical and spiritual purification is undoubtedly a crucial aspect. These properties have rendered water a frequently employed medium in countering magic. Accordingly, various methods – such as reciting verses over water, immersing objects inscribed with Qur'ānic verses or prayers into water, and transferring spiritual energy into it – have been utilized with the aim of ensuring afflicted individuals' safe deliverance from the effects of sorcery.⁴

The religious and mystical background of sorcery has also engaged Sufi poets. Some Sufi leaders, who led various tariqas, devised different recipes that combined the elements of Qur'ānic verses or prayers and water, aiming to heal their disciples afflicted by sorcery or incurable diseases. One such Sufi poet was Mevlānā Celālüddīn-i Rūmī (1207-1273), the spiritual architect of the Mevleviyye, whose life, memories, and

¹ *Sūrah al-Baqara*, 2/102; *Sūrah al-Felāk*, 113/4.

² Buḥārī, *Veşâyā*, 23; *Hudūd*, 44.

³ Buḥārī, *Vekālet*, 10; *Fezā'ilü'l-Ḳur'ān*, 10.

⁴ Gülay Karaman, *Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Sihir*, PhD Thesis, Kocaeli University, Institute of Social Sciences, 2015, 342-343.

works have left a profound legacy. According to Aḥmed Eflākī's (d. 1360) *Menākıbu'l-‘Arıfîn*, Mevlānā Celālüddîn-i Rûmî cured a disciple suffering from malaria by casting a prayer into water.⁵

Şeyḥ Ğālib Dede (1757-1799), recognized as the last great poet of Ottoman literature, is also among the Mevlevî poets who provided remedies for repelling sorcery through two recipes that I have been able to identify. In the second *zahriyye*⁶ folio of the manuscript of *Hüsn ü ‘Aşk*, which Şeyḥ Ğālib prepared as a draft in his own handwriting and is currently cataloged in the Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Hâlet Efendi Eki, no. 171,⁷ one can find a recipe for “warding off sorcery” written by the poet himself (Transcription I). This recipe essentially serves as a *fevā’id* record (useful notes) authored by Şeyḥ Ğālib. The first recipe, written with the intention of protecting people from sorcery, consists of reciting *Āyah al-Kürsî* and *Sūrah al-‘Aşr* into a cup of water in a specific order and with a number of repetitions. Upon fulfilling the necessary conditions, the individual applying the recipe is instructed to touch a wall or the ground without wiping their hands on their garments. Şeyḥ Ğālib’s recipe integrates three key elements: “the protective power”⁸ of *Āyah al-Kürsî*, the emphasis

⁵ Aḥmed Eflākī: *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*. Translated by Tahsin Yazıcı. İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2006, 249.

⁶ *zahriyye* is the name given to the front side of the leaf where the main text begins, which usually contains the records of the owner of the book in manuscript books. Adam Gacek, *Arapça Elyazmaları İçin Rehber*, translated by Ali Benli and M. Cüneyt Kaya, İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2017, 174.

⁷ For the content of this copy of *Hüsn ü ‘Aşk*, prepared by Şeyḥ Ğālib, the following sources can be consulted: Şeyḥ Ğālib: *Hüsn ü Aşk*, edited by Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019; Mehmet Akif Gözitok, “Yazımdan Yayıma *Hüsn ü Aşk*’ın Serencâmı - I.” *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi (TUDED)* 60, no. 1 (2020): 263-288; Mehmet Akif Gözitok, *Yazımdan Yayıma *Hüsn ü Aşk*’ın Serencâmı - II.* *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 30, no. 2 (2020): 531-562.

⁸ 2/255: “Allāh! There is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission? He fully knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge-except what He wills to reveal. His Seat encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Greatest.” (*Sūrah al-Bakara/Āyah al-Kürsî*) Mustafa Khattab, *The Clear Quran*, <https://quran.com/2> (Access Date: March 31, 2025).

on “grave loss”⁹ (*hüsr/hüsrân*) in the second verse of *al-‘Aşr*, and the physical and spiritual purifying/permeating properties of water, all converging on a shared foundation.

Şeyh Ğâlib’s second recipe for protection against sorcery is found in the first *zahriyye* folio of a manuscript copy of *Tercüme-i Şevâkıb*, cataloged in the Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Hâlet Efendi Eki, no. 47 (Transcription II). This recipe, like the first, is a *fevâ’id* record penned in Ğâlib Dede’s own handwriting. In this second recipe, the poet exclusively employs *Âyah al-Kürsî*, this time accompanied by seventy radish seeds. While the first recipe requires the water recited over to be consumed, in the second recipe, one is supposed to do *ğusl*¹⁰ washing with water over which *Âyah al-Kürsî* has been recited and purified. Furthermore, it is stated that this method has been confirmed through experience.

Above Şeyh Ğâlib’s second recipe, yet another *fevâ’id* record is encountered (Transcription III). In this note, Ğâlib Dede announces the date on which he became the sheikh of Galata Mevlevihanesi. The exact date when Ğâlib became the sheikh of Galata Mevlevihanesi is explicitly documented in *Tezkire-i Şu‘arâ-yı Mevleviyye*, authored by his disciple and close companion, Esrâr Dede.¹¹ However, the fact that this information was personally conveyed by the poet elevates Şeyh Ğâlib Dede’s *fevâ’id* to the status of a valuable historical document.

Finally, when considering the significance of Şeyh Ğâlib’s *fevâ’id* records, the recipes he composed for repelling sorcery, in particular, are seen as reflecting a different aspect of his persona, distinct from his identity as a poet. The third record, in which he

⁹ 103/1-3: “By the passage of time! Surely humanity is in *grave loss*, except those who have faith, do good, and urge each other to the truth, and urge each other to perseverance.” (*Sûrah al-‘Aşr*) Mustafa Khattab, *ibid*, <https://quran.com/103> (Access Date: March 31, 2025).

¹⁰ The term *ğusl*, which literally means “to wash” in dictionary definitions, is used in Islamic terminology to refer to a religious obligation that entails washing the entire body thoroughly, ensuring no dry area remains, as a required act of purification. Mehmet Şener, “Gusl”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul, 1996, 14/213-214.

¹¹ “... Çelebi Elhâc Muḥammed Emîn Efendi’ müzüñ bi’l-fi’l irâde-i ‘inâyetleriyle Ğalaṭa’ya şeyḫ olmaları emîr-nâmeleri şudûr ve külâh-ı sa‘âdet-i destgâhları destâr-ı gîsû-dâr-ı meşîḫatle tevsîm olınıp biñ iki yüz beş Şevvâl-i Şerîfinüñ toḫuzıncı cum‘a irtesi günü (9 Şevvâl 1205) mesned-i irşâda iclâs olındılar.” Esrâr Dede: *Tezkire-i Şu‘arâ-yı Mevleviyye*, edited by İlhan Genç, Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2000, 383.

notes his appointment as the sheikh of the Galata Mevlevihanesi, vividly illustrates the joy he experienced at that moment.

Transcription I (Recipe I)

Li-def'i's-sihr

āyetü'l-kürsī 'aded 1

sūretü'l- 'Aşr 'aded 3

yine āyetü'l-kürsī 'aded 1

sūretü'l- 'Aşr 'aded 4

yine āyetü'l-kürsī 'aded 1

bir fincān şuya okuyub içilür

*içüren ve içen ellerini esbābına sürmeye dīvāra yāḥud toprağa [süre]*¹²

*m*¹³

Translation I

For dispelling sorcery,

one should recite *Āyah al-Kürsī* over a cup of water once,

followed by *sūrah al- 'Aşr* three times,

then *Āyah al-Kürsī* once more,

sūrah al- 'Aşr four times,

and finally *Āyah al-Kürsī* one last time.

[All these] are prayed over a cup of water and drunk.

Those who offer and drink the water should not rub their hands on their garments but a wall or the ground.

Completed.

¹² Şeyḫ Gālib, *Ḥüsn ü 'Aşk*, Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Hālet Efendi Eki, no. 171, (Şeyḫ Gālib Dede's handwriting), II^p.

¹³ In manuscripts, the letter *mīm* (m/م) at the end of texts signifies the end of the text in question. This letter is an abbreviation of the expression *temme/temmet* (completed/finished). Adam Gacek, *ibid*, 71.

Transcription II (Recipe II)

Āyetü'l-kürsī 'aded 70

turb tohmı 'aded 70

her birine bir āyetü'l-kürsī okuyub

bir miqdār şuyla bir toprak tencerede kaynadub

ba 'de't-taşfiyye tohmı atub

şuyı bir gügüm şuya katub

anuñla ğusl olına def'-i sihr içün mücerrebdür¹⁴

Translation II

Āyah al-Kürsī should be recited 70 times over 70 radish seeds,
these seeds are then boiled in a clay pot with a certain amount of water,
after the radish seeds are removed
the water is added to a jug,
the *ğusl* bath is then performed using this water.
It is confirmed by experience to dispel sorcery.

Transcription III (Glad Tidings)

*Biñ iki yüz beş senesi şevvāl-i şerīfün toközuncı sebt ğüni Ğalaṭa meşīḥatiyle müşerref
olduḳ*

erenler sırrıyla şafāsıyla be-kām eyleye

āmīn

fī 9 şevvāl 1205¹⁵ (June 11, 1791)

¹⁴ Derviş Maḥmūd-ı Meşnevī-h^vān, *Tercüme-i Şevāķīb*, Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Hālet Efendi Eki, no. 47, I^a. This recipe was written in Şeyḫ Ğalīb Dede's handwriting. However the person who wrote the copy of *Tercüme-i Şevāķīb* is İbn Hızır Elḥāc Muḥammed al-Ḳonevī.

Translation III

On Saturday, 11 June 1791,
we were honored with the title of sheikh of Galata (Mevlevihanesi),
may the saints be blessed with divine secret and delight.
Amen.

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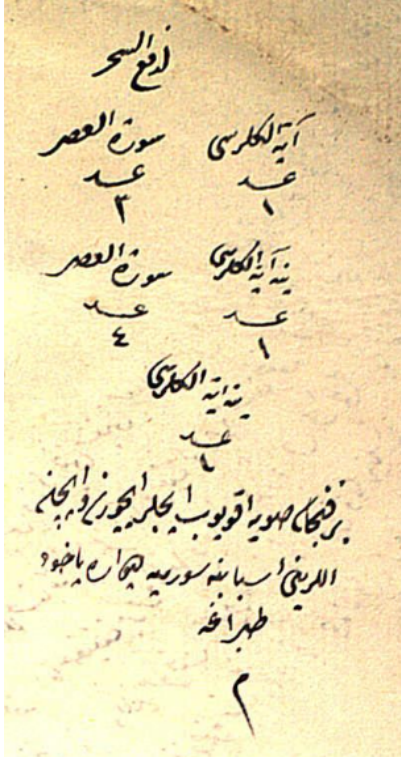
¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I^a.

Şeyh Gâlib: *Hüsn ü 'Aşk*. Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Hâlet Efendi Eki, no. 171.

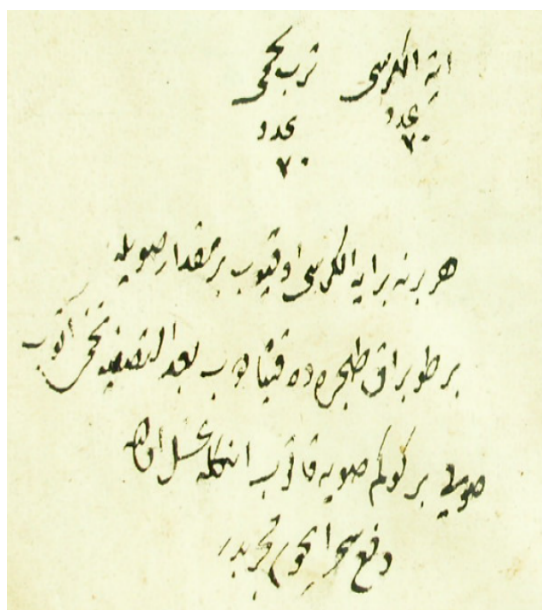
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Facsimilia

Recipe I



Recipe II



Glad Tidings

