



Magic in Islam

Michael Muhammad Knight

Download now

Read Online ➔

Magic in Islam

Michael Muhammad Knight

Magic in Islam Michael Muhammad Knight

The progenitor of "Muslim punk rock" and one of today's freshest spiritual voices pushes back against the common assumption that the historic faiths have no occult or magical tradition in this richly learned historical and personal journey through the practice of magic in Islam.

Magic in Islam offers a look at magical and occult technologies throughout Muslim history, starting with Islam's earliest and most canonical sources. In addition to providing a highly accessible introduction to magic as it is defined, practiced, condemned, and defended within Muslim traditions, *Magic in Islam* challenges common assumptions about organized religion.

Michael Muhammad Knight's deeply original book fills a gap within existing literature on the place of magic in Islamic traditions and opens a new window on Islam for general readers and students of religion alike. In doing so, the book counters and complicates widespread perceptions of Islam, as well as of magic as it is practiced outside of European contexts.

Magic in Islam also challenges our view of "organized religions" as clearly defined systems that can be reduced to checklists of key doctrines, texts, and rules. As a result, *Magic in Islam* throws a monkey wrench into the conventions of the "intro to Islam" genre, threatening to flip popular notions of a religion's "center" and "margins."

Magic in Islam Details

Date : Published May 24th 2016 by TarcherPerigee

ISBN : 9780399176708

Author : Michael Muhammad Knight

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Religion, Islam, Nonfiction, History, Spirituality

 [Download Magic in Islam ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Magic in Islam ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Magic in Islam Michael Muhammad Knight

From Reader Review Magic in Islam for online ebook

Lamar Coleman says

A good but wandering read. I had the privilege of being a student of Knight's, and the book basically mimics how he teaches. All of the information provided is very thought provoking, and tons of research has been poured into this. He talks about the same historical Islamic figures repeatedly, but he knows his stuff. Also, he walks the walk. He practices both what most would consider orthodox Islam and carries some magic tokens with him regularly. It's the real deal.

Vika Gardner says

Knight, adding to his works that address Islam in the United States, examines some of the intersections of "magic" (a slippery term he addresses), "science" (a term that can be equally slippery), and Islam, notably without normative boundary defending. The work is somewhat less personal than some of his other works, but his ability to draw from wide-ranging Muslim and academic authors makes this informative for those in Islamic studies, although it may be somewhat off-putting for those less knowledgeable about the various understandings of Muslim history and religious undertakings.

Knight frequently uses the metaphor of holes or tunnels in the boundaries or fences of constructed orthodoxies, showing that even some of the medieval or early modern scholars who are held up as "orthodox" or "rational" were also engaged in knowledge systems that today might be labeled as "esoteric" or even "occult". For this alone, I wish I could add this book to the required reading list of Muslims everywhere.

Knight sidesteps contemporary constructions of science out of the Qur'an (called "ijaz" or "ilmyi i'jaz"), and even pushes denials of evolution off onto Christians, leaving the reader incorrectly presuming that such narratives don't have a Muslim voice as well. He also solidly locates these narratives in Saudi constructions, despite their thorough infusions throughout much of the Muslim world. These enter the conversation in his discussions of "rationalism" and "modernity" as elements that are often juxtaposed with "magic".

Well worth a read, especially if you're trying to break out of presentations of a rigidly bounded "Islam".

John says

interesting research

J.M. Hushour says

Thinking this was a history of how folks of all stripes thought about and thought they used magic in an Islamic context, I perhaps should've looked at the title more closely. This is very much not what I thought it was and very much a study of what it means within the religion itself. It thus devolves rather quickly into a light, Quranic exegesis which is too bad because the author seems to have set out to make a nice, anti-polemical work. Instead, he succumbs to the same weaknesses that many religious studies do, an over-

reliance on justification, minutiae, and little of actual, practical phenomena. Much time is spent on what hadith- and the isnad-obsessed thought about what Muhammad thought, numerology, and other things that would perhaps be of an interest to anyone who knows what those terms I just used mean, but, otherwise, will be likely more confusing than not to anyone else.

Avery says

Two recent books on Islam present the good and ugly sides of postmodernism and critical studies. The first, "What is Islam?" by Shahab Ahmed, aims to disrupt academia's pseudo-metaphysics and give us a vision of Islam as the complex, deep product of historical continuity. This book does exactly the opposite: it highlights academic research which can be used to disrupt Islam's own historical continuity, insists on radical skepticism of any and all claims no matter their origin, and leaves the reader fairly confused by the end.

M. M. Knight views Islam from the eagle eye perspective of the postmodern scholar, as a convert who does not really know what he is looking at and feels like nobody else can claim to have such knowledge either. He provides a wealth of interesting historical examples to try to blur the boundaries of "magic" and "Islam". When he succeeds he provides insight, specifically regarding the power of dreams in Sunni tradition, and an endorsement of the orthodoxy of some aspects of lettrism -- lacking, however, any suggestion of how that orthodoxy might work as part of a larger metaphysics.

Most of the rest of the book is a mess. A mountain of academic articles are cited regarding the formation of orthodoxy in early Islamic history. One might expect Knight to dig in deep regarding "magical Islam in practice" in far flung places like Morocco, Pakistan or Indonesia. In fact there is literally zero discussion of this, other than a stray note that the Islam of Africans captured as slaves was possibly "syncretic" (a word Knight wants to avoid). We do get a very long chapter about scientific, rationalist and Masonic themes found in Nation of Islam teaching, which was educational but not really what I think of when I think about the topic of "magic in Islam".

The reason for all this mess is because Knight wants Islam to be a certain way, namely to give him a specific answer about how to achieve social justice, and he feels that the actually existing tradition falls short of his desires. Hence the desire for total disruption, not only of secular structures, but of any and all structures -- the best hope for reintroducing magic to Islam seems to involve allowing Derrida and Deleuze to take the place of Sunni commentators.

I have not read Knight's book "Why I Am a Five Percenter" but he also gives a description of the Five Percenters in this book and I think I can already guess his argument. Namely, he can choose to define "Five Percenters" however he pleases, so why not identify as one?

Jennifer says

I wanted to read this book from the second I learned of its existence from my friend Matt's goodreads feed. It wasn't at the bookstore and I was pondering a special order when I saw it at the library. (Though now that I've read it, I'm pretty sure I'm still going to need my own copy.)

The best thing about this book is how it interrogates the meanings of the words "magic" and "Islam." Knight pushes at the boundaries and examines what is intended to stay inside and outside. For instance, I think I learned about as much about the history of Christianity as I did about Islam, because both, existing in the

same times and at nearly the same places, had similar world views about things like what and where the stars were, and how they related to Earth. And as those views changed along with the writings of new philosophers and scientists which would have been read by all the cultures in the area at the time (given time for translation and percolation).

I really could go on and on and on, and on...

This was exactly the book I didn't know I wanted until it was there. I need to put a copy on order right now.

A. David Lewis says

Not quite the "gonzo" work one might expect, the book is still quite daring in its propositions of magic's centrality to the environments of Islam, then and now. More sober than soaring, Knight's words have the heft of deep research and strength of bridge-building to all of them. Challenging notions of "pure" or "true" Islam, he has made something very strong and concrete out of something very amorphous, a spell unto itself.

Ashur says

I am pretty much exactly Knight's target audience for this exact book. I love nonfiction that isn't quite a dissertation but isn't exactly not a dissertation. Please note that this quite different than what Knight typically produces and has become famous for; my tastes are kind of weird so it may or may not be your cup of tea.

Joseph Carrabis says

Magic in Islam was a welcome challenge to me as I discovered how ignorant I am of a major population's belief system. It was a joy because the cultural anthropologist in me saw so many connections to belief systems I've studied previously. Wonderful stuff!

Omar Ali says

A hot mess of a book, but still worth reading. Michael Knight is now a postmodern conventionally educated scholar, and that is beginning to show. He has obviously read VERY widely and the book contains countless extremely interesting tidbits about magic and magical ideas in Islamicate tradition. But all of this wonderful research is embedded within a curious postmodern framework that can be off-putting and irrelevant to the story. The story he COULD have told is the story of magic and related ideas in the history of Islam and Islamicate culture. THAT story would have been a fascinating and interesting tour through a history that is not well known, especially to outsiders and Western-educated Muslims (like us). And he provides some of that and that is why the book is worth reading. But he is also eager to "correct" our supposed misconceptions about religion and history and too much pleading takes up too much space in this book. Then again, many people seem to want that kind of "mandatory re-education/rectification of names", so maybe you will like that part too. But personally, I would have preferred more historical details, fewer lectures about orientalism and "the clash of civilizations".

Best new bit of information for me: that Ibn ul Arabi claimed he had sex with the Arabic letters in paradise. I

wish i knew more about the context of that particular quote. But like many fascinating little details in the book, Michael mentions it and moves on. He has clearly read a lot, I wish he had spent more time presenting the information he has collected and less time lecturing us about how "opening space for new fields of knowledge potentially decenters traditions of jurisprudence, even forcing increased opening of an Islam outside normative Muslim legal traditions" and suchlike. Sure, that would be nice. But let us hear the story first, then we can figure out what it means for magic to be (as he describes it) "deconstructive". Not that I disagree with his project of "engagement and deep intersection", just that I wanted more of the facts, less of the postmodern interpretation.

Sarah Karbassi says

Honestly, at least 70% of this book went way over my head. Way. I expected that though. I was able to glean that a) Religions are more than their texts. They exist through the living people who practice them and are always changing, a protean nature that they share with languages. b) Religions do not exist in isolation. Through their practitioners religions are constantly interacting with one another as well as with other traditions often considered less legitimate or superstitious. c) The demarcation between religion and magic, religion and superstition is generally quite silly and has mostly to do with the preferences of the powerful.

Ibrahim says

I've been waiting a while for a book like this. Read it in a single night.
