



THE RELIGIOUS AND MYSTICAL EXPRESSION OF HEALING IN
KHOREZM RINGS

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It is difficult to determine exactly when, where, and why people began wearing rings; however, one can only make assumptions about the fundamental ideas humans associated with them. Most likely, rings were connected to the disk of the sun and were believed to embody power, authority, and longevity; therefore, they were worn as amulets. Whether a ring was made of metal or stone was not of great importance. However, if a ring was crafted from gold or adorned with certain precious stones and endowed with specific magical properties, its invisible power was believed to be enhanced.

As a material object, the ring has fulfilled numerous functions and, since ancient times, has been intended for specific purposes. In particular, rings set with hard stones were used by their owners for writing on glass surfaces. Protractor rings were employed in astronomical observations. Spherical rings were crafted in association with zodiacal signs, planets, and other celestial symbols. There also existed poison rings, in which a toxic substance was placed in a small compartment beneath the precious stone. In perfume rings, a fragrant substance was stored under the stone, and when the stone was pressed, the scent was released into the surrounding air. Gift rings were presented to loved ones or friends. Votive or dedicatory rings were offered to temples as devotional gifts. Funerary rings were placed with the deceased and are frequently found in graves. Sacred rings, in turn, were transmitted from generation to generation and functioned as symbols of authority, power, and legitimacy.

On the basis of the British collections, a considerable number of studies have been published concerning the ways and practices of using rings among various peoples of the world. These scholars compiled numerous quotations from the works of classical authors and elucidated the ancient functions of rings as spiritual objects, amulets, and ritual implements. Among all types of rings, medical rings were considered the most valuable. Among many peoples, they were used to treat epilepsy, were applied to the eyes in cases of ophthalmia (eye diseases), or were placed on specific parts of the body as protection against scorpion and snake bites. Al-Biruni, in his works, notes the ineffectiveness of incantations recited against scorpion and snake bites. However, the existence of their beneficial effect is affirmed in the hadiths of al-Bukhari and al-Tirmidhi.

While studying Muslim rings, E. A. Wallis Budge⁷ distinguishes two principal types of inscriptions found on them. He notes that rings belonging to Sunni Muslims most often bear engraved the names of Allah, the name of the Prophet Muhammad, and the concept of Tawḥīd—the doctrine of the oneness of God. In contrast, on Persian rings, that is, on the

⁷ Бадж У. Амулет и суеверие. Глава 5. Лондон. 1930.-С.230



majority of rings used by Shi‘a Muslims, the names of ‘Alī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn are widely represented.

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In the collection of the Itchan Kala Museum in Khiva⁸, there are several rings that contain a cavity beneath the large central stone, specifically designed to hold written prayers. For the treatment of eye ailments, the supplication beginning with “Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm. Idhab ḥarrahā wa burūdahā wa wusūbahā kum bi-idn Allāh ta‘ālā, uskun bi-qudrat Allāh” was written and placed inside the ring, which was then pressed against the eye. Separate prayers were prepared for the right and left eyes.

For pain in the arm or hand, the supplication beginning with “Yā Yaḥyā khudh al-kitāba bi-quwwatin wa ātaynāhu al-ḥukma ṣabiyyan...” was placed inside bracelets or rings, or inscribed directly onto them. In such cases as well, distinct prayers were designated for the right and left arms. In addition, to become a beloved wife to one’s husband, the phrase “Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm” was written and placed inside a bracelet. Women who were unable to conceive likewise wrote this prayer and wore it bound to their arm, believing in its beneficial effect.

Conclusion. In conclusion, among the peoples of Central Asia as well as in many other cultures, rings were used not only as decorative objects but also as religious and mystical instruments of healing. They were associated with the solar disk and sacred forces and were believed to possess protective and apotropaic qualities. Rings made of gold or set with precious stones were considered to enhance magical power, offering protection against illness and granting health, strength, and vitality to the wearer. In this way, rings played a significant role in traditional medicine and religious practices.

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⁸ Хива Ичонқалъа музей фонди КП 190. 191, 1061, 1062, 1115, 1131, , 6349/1 263 рақамда 5 та узук 6530/4, 6538/1 рақамли узуклар



Es Seyyid Suleyman El Husayniy. Havas al-Qur'an: Kanz al-Khawas. Edited by Mustafa Varli. Istanbul: Esmā Publishing House, 2003, p. 18.