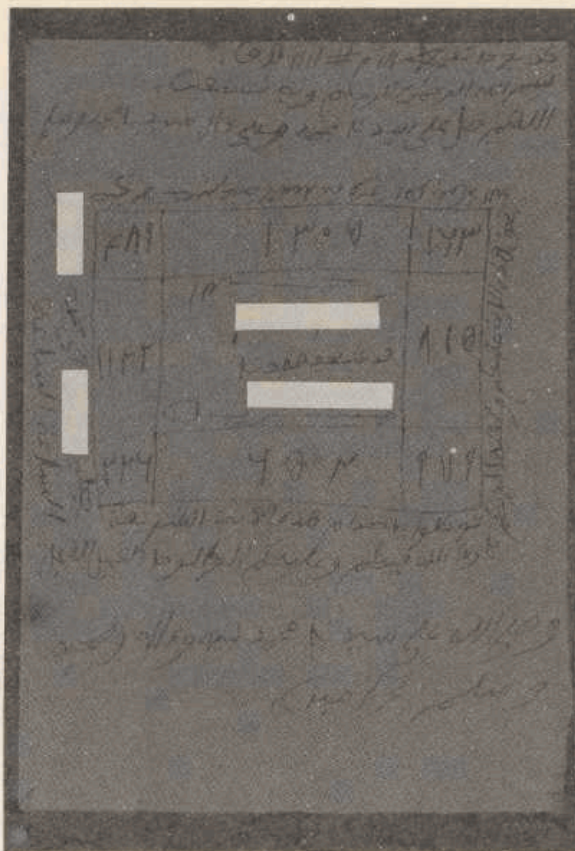


informant, the Prophet once should have said: "Take whatever where for whatever what." Generally, however, a marabout will restrict himself to the verses indicated in the books on magic or to what he has learned from his teacher in this field.

In the case we are examining the marabout takes a section of *sūra* 12, verse 30: "Indeed he has smitten her to the heart with love"⁸. The passage of the *sūra* "Yusuf" from which this is taken, tells how Joseph, with his extreme beauty, infatuated the wife of his Egyptian master.⁹ Suitable words therefore for an amulet which aims to provide its owner with the love and attachment of a woman.

Once the marabout decided which part of the Qur'an he wants to use, he scribbles it down and begins to calculate the numerical value of these words. In Islamic magic the power of the words is closely associated with numbers. In accordance with one of the basic premises of the old Jewish Cabala: "Jedes Wort ist eine Zahl, und jede Zahl ist ein Wort" (Ahrens 1917: 202), each letter in the Arabic alphabet has its own numerical value.¹⁰ After some calculation the marabout finds that the numerical value of the chosen part of *sūra* 12, verse 30 is 1957. Finding this value enables him, as we will see, to determine the exact content and shape which the various components in the process of amulet-making have to take. First, however, the marabout fixes on the basis of his calculations the appropriate time for the actual writing of the amulet and for the invocation of the spirits.

For every act of magic, for all "maraboutage," there is a time: a time for "good work" and a time for "bad work"¹¹. Each of the twelve hours of the day, and those of the night, has a different



The amulet-paper (the name of the man and the name of the woman are obliterated)

character. The so called "planet-hours." Seven "planets" (i.e., the sun, the moon, and the planets Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn) each exert a particular time of the day, or the night, a special influence which is important for the manu-

8 Pickthall's translation (The Glorious Koran. A Bi-lingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction, and Notes. Marmaduke Pickthall. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976).

9 Kriss und Kriss (1962: 108) write about a love-amulet in which the second part of *sūra* 12, verse 32, is used and conclude: "Bezeichnenderweise wurde gerade jener Vers aus der Sure Yusuf gewählt, der davon berichtet, wie die geladenen Frauen so sehr von Josephs Schönheit geblendet wurden, daß sie alle in Liebe zu ihm entbrannten." Doutté (1909: 254-255) writing about an amulet 'pour faire naître l'amour', mentions the following words used in the invocation: "Ô Une Telle, accorde ton amour à Un Tel, comme Zouleikha a aimé Joseph, sur lui soit le salut! . . ."

10 See, in connection with the numerical value and its calculation, Ahrens 1917: 201-203; Doutté 1909: 174-179; Kriss und Kriss 1962: 71 ff.; Marty 1914: 339-341. The last two references contain a list in which each letter of the Arabic alphabet and its corresponding number is given.

11 "Bad work" is, as the marabout explains, all maraboutage of which the objective is to bring a loss upon another person. But, he immediately adds, one can have reason to act as such - even have reason to kill someone with the help of magic. Someone who always does evil and who has been warned at least three times by a marabout that he acts against the will of God, has to fear magical reprisals. Besides this, there is a whole field of magic which is looked upon as reprehensible. So the magical fabrication of money or gold is morally condemned. One has to work for his money. - On the attitudes of orthodox Islam concerning black magic see, i.a., Macdonald 1934, Doutté 1909: 336-341 (and 280-304, where a few examples of magical practices to harm someone are given). However, as Trimmingham (1959: 116) states: "Clerics in West Africa are confused as to whether it is the method employed, or the intention, or both, that matters. The boundary between black and white magic in Islam is rather vague. Since the powers and methods employed for both are the same, clergy are regarded as practioners of the one and the other."