

# Shakespearian and Quranic literary methods about Characteristics of White and Black Magic

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**Abstract:** The struggle between good and evil will go on forever. There are multiple occurrences of this conflict all along the timeline. Furthermore, how these manifestations demonstrate their abilities vary. "Magic" refers to one of the weapons used in that war. The bad guys initially employed magic to further their selfish ends at the expense of the good guys. It's called "*Black magic*" because it's so evil. The good guys have responded to this magic by developing their brand of magic to counteract the dark arts; they call it "*White Magic*." When it comes to undoing the damage caused by the evil power, white magic is all about the good guys fixing things.

This paper attempts to clarify the nature of magic by comparing two sources: Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the story of Harut and Marut, two angels from the Quran. The characters Prospero, Ariel, and Sycorax, who all dealt with magical works "*black and white*," will be presented in this research paper to provide the main definitions of magic, magical types "*white and black*," and applications of magic from Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest*. The story of the two angels, *Harut and Marut*, will then be used to present the magical elements of the Quran.

The study will also shed light on the Quran's perspective on the "Universal Law of God" (Sunna Takwiniyah) and whether or not it agrees with this principle. The research also looks into the solutions proposed by the Quran to counteract the threat of magic.

**Key Words:** Quran, Shakespeare, Harut & Marut, Tempest, Magic, Black and White

## Introduction

The eternal struggle between good and evil, which manifests in countless forms across the cosmos, is displayed in the life cycle at every instant. There is a mutual desire for victory on both sides. The human being is a microcosm of this never-ending struggle. Magic is discussed as a tactic in this conflict in academic papers. Since ancient times, Magic has been used as a tool in war. This study aims to draw attention to Magic as a central theme in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, analyse its function and impact in the play's various scenes, and draw parallels between these elements and the story of *Harut and Marut* from the Quran. The Magic of *The Tempest* is presented through the perspectives of three main characters. The good guys, represented by Prospero and Ariel, used white Magic for good causes, while the bad guys, represented by the witch Sycorax, used black Magic for evil purposes.

On the other hand, the Quran tells a fascinating tale about two angels named *Harut and Marut* and their unique connection to magic and how it helped them change the world for the better. Even if it was used to recover from black magic, the angels were sent by God to teach a lesson about the drawbacks of magic and their effects on human life. In addition, this study provides a Quranic perspective on the therapeutic potential of magic.

Magic is "the apparent power to influence events using mysterious or supernatural forces," according to the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford dictionary). Black Magic is the supposed invocation of malevolent spirits for malicious ends, while White Magic is used exclusively for good (Oxford dictionary).

Three characters in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* have encountered magical forces. Prospero is the first main character. Prospero, Milan's rightful and former duke, has been exiled to an island since his brother Antonio usurped his title. White magic from nature, not the black magic of evil men, is what Prospero practices.

Prospero is a leader with a good heart who never means any harm, not even to his enemies. Antonio claims Prospero is a traitor, but Prospero refuses to treat him that way. His humanity is blatantly evident in the way he acts. Another example of Prospero's goodness is when he tells Alonso that he doesn't have to apologize to Miranda and that no more reparations are necessary. The play ends on a high note, showcasing Prospero's wisdom, kindness, and justice. Prospero's power to conjure magical storms, banquets, and masques is essential

to his role as director of the elements, organizer of events, and manipulator of human conduct. A study on this topic was published in 2010 (Brook, Ninagawa, & Strehler).

Ariel is the name of the second persona. Ariel is a symbol of an ethereal spirit. He was locked up in a tree by the witch Sycorax until Prospero came and freed him. Since Ariel wants to be set free so badly, he has no problem doing what Prospero asks. Despite wanting his freedom in return, Ariel takes his job enthusiastically, quickly completing any tasks he is given and immediately reporting any activities he observes. Ariel first warns the audience about the plot to kill Prospero, and then he aids Prospero's enemies in getting what's coming to them. Ariel's submission is a significant symbol of Prospero's humanity because he enhances Prospero's function on the island and humanizes Prospero's action against his former enemies. Ariel is a compassionate and understanding being who is sometimes compared to an angel. He's helpful and helps Prospero take over the island and his domain. Prospero would have spent the rest of his life on the island, bitter and angry, if not for Ariel. "(Jamieson, 2019)"

The third persona is Sycorax. This witch ran things before Prospero arrived on the island. She was a sorceress with nefarious intentions. Sycorax's strength is explained away as the result of black magic and the supernatural. She has locked up the island's good spirits, including Ariel, in the trees (Rackin, 1990). In the *Tempest*, she is a symbol of the dark arts. Although she is never directly depicted onstage, her influence can be felt throughout the play thanks to her son and the magic that kept Ariel imprisoned until Prospero freed him.

In contrast, the Quran tells the tale of *Harut and Marut*, two angels who, after the death of the Prophet Solomon, taught white magic to humans so that they could counteract and ultimately eradicate the black magics of evil magicians. However, humans have a history of misapplying their knowledge in pursuit of unjust ends. Chapter 3 of the study focused on those particulars from both perspectives (AlMaududi, 2019). By providing interpretations of verses in the Quran, Al-Maududi alludes to the fact that Jewish culture, particularly its black sect, dealt with magic in fascinating and unusual ways. The level of interest appeared to be unprecedented. As a result, the Quran seeks to convey the concept that social misbehavior contributes to a general decline in ethics and morals.

After introducing the protagonists and antagonists, the article follows the magic in both stories. Shakespeare demonstrates in *The Tempest* that two characters can access white magic and use it for good. Prospero and the ghost Ariel are the protagonists. They've both been on the side of good in *Tempest*, fighting off Antonio and Alonso, the king of Milan, who are plotting to take the throne from Prospero. Prospero has set in motion a strategy to restore Ariel's rights after he has been released. Ariel gives the impression of obedience and loyalty to Prospero, and she carries out his directives for the best reasons. So, all of Prospero's success with magic has been positive. Despite their extensive knowledge of magic, neither Prospero nor Ariel ever used their powers for evil or to cause harm to others.

We can conclude white magic events through:

After the evil witch Sycorax has imprisoned Ariel and the other good spirits on the island using the black magic because they refused to do as she wished, Prospero frees them from their treetop prisons. The dialogue establishes Ariel as a symbol of white magic and its transformative power. Reading the text also verifies Ariel's submission to Prospero.

*"Ariel: All hail, great master! Grave sir, hail! I come  
To answer thy best pleasure, be 't to fly,  
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
On the curled cloud. To thy strong bidding, task  
Ariel and all his quality"* (Shakespeare, 2015)

The play's first lines reveal that Ariel is willing to do whatever Prospero asks of him. Ariel exemplifies the range of extraordinary skills attainable by a spirit of his caliber. Ariel uses "all his qualities" to indicate he can access various other shades. Prospero effectively rules a sizable portion of the afterlife through his influence over Ariel. In addition, Prospero and Ariel have performed numerous magical feats together.

At first, Prospero and Ariel conspire to cause a storm to expose the plot between Prospero's brother Antonio and King Alonso of Milan. The purpose of the storm wasn't to wipe them out but rather to bring them unwittingly to the island where they would meet Prospero.

Second, to give the King's son Ferdinand and Prospero's daughter Miranda a chance to fall in love, Prospero and Ariel arrange a meeting between them. The same happened when they failed to locate Antonio and Alonso on the island.

Third, Prospero and Ariel have helped save the ship's crew from the effects of the storm they created. On the other hand, when Prospero finally regains his usurped rights from his brother and returns to his kingdom at the end of *The Tempest*, he teaches the lesson that one should abandon all forms of magic to live an everyday life among the people (Shakespeare, 2015).

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* contains hints of black magic, but the only evidence pointing in that direction is the witch Sycorax. If the good spirits on the island, led by Ariel, disobeyed her orders to engage in unethical or unfair activities, she could imprison them all in the trees. On the island, Sycorax personified everything terrible. Ariel's comments made that abundantly clear. How Sycorax managed to lock Ariel up is detailed below.

*“PROSPERO: Thy groans of ever angry bears. It was a torment. Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts to lay upon the damned, which Sycorax could not again undo. It was mine art, When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape the pine and let thee out  
Ariel: I thank thee, master”* (Shakespeare, 2015)

After examining the supernatural in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, we'll discuss the magical elements in the tale of the angels *Harut and Marut*.

Although the noble Quran alludes to magic in several places, the verse in which the story of *Harut and Marut* is told stands out as particularly interesting and controversial (Ibn Kathir, 2003). It's the only place in the Quran where good and evil use magic to fight each other. The Baqarah Surah verses state:

"They (Jew) follow what the devils relate of Solomon's kingdom. Solomon never disbelieved, but the devils did. They instruct people in witchcraft which was certainly not revealed to the two angels, Harut and Marut, at Babylon. Yet these two [angels] never taught anyone without first declaring, 'We are but a temptation to evil, so do not renounce your faith.' From these two, people learned what they would use to cause discord between a man and his wife. However, with that knowledge they can harm no one except by God's leave. Indeed, they learn what harms them and brings them no profit. They knew full well that whoever contracted such a deal would have no share in the life to come. Vile indeed is what they had sold their souls for, if they but knew it". (Ali, 2001).

This is the only place in the Quran where the story of *Harut and Marut* is mentioned. The verse claims that Allah sent two angels to earth and that these two have been given the ability to use magic to defend themselves from dark forces. They intended to help people by rescuing them from black magic using white magic. The people were also warned not to use the magic for malicious purposes but ignored the angels' warnings. According to Qutb, the Qur'an makes the truth about these two angels crystal clear. They were conducting a trial of faith. (Qutb, 2012)

On the other hand, the sorcery is treated as a disbelief in Holy Qur'an and accused devils of it when it says: "*Solomon never disbelieved, but the devils did. They instruct people in witchcraft*" (Ali, 2001). As Qutb said, infidelity is a natural consequence of magic of any kind. He continued that witchcraft, black magic, and sorcery are demonic inventions that erode man's trust in God. The logical conclusion is to ignore his deeds and deny him heavenly rewards (Qutb, 2012).

The two angels' actions are justified by the Qur'an on the grounds that they informed the people of the nature of their mission and provided them with adequate warning. It says: "*Yet these two angels never taught anyone without first declaring, We are but a temptation to evil, so do not renounce your faith*" (Ali, 2001). The experiment of the angles stimulated part of people to think negatively. They didn't care of the angles' directions that the magic can be used to bad things which should be avoided. The Quran attests to the fact that certain people persevered in learning and employing sorcery, succumbing to temptation and doing evil. It says: "*From these two, people learned what they would use to cause discord between a man and his wife*". (Ali, 2001)

It has to face facts about magic, as Sayed Qutb puts it. By saying that some challenges in the physical and spiritual sphere will remain beyond human knowledge and must be considered when attempting to understand life, he confirms the impact of magic on humanity. (2012)

Hence, the Quran emphasizes being aware of and conscious of abstract and metaphysical facts beyond the material. Then, Sayed Qutb said that science has yet to be able to explain these powers or how they came to be, despite their presence and their implications. This applies to the plethora of other psychic phenomena that scientists argue over but have yet to fully explain, either because there is a lack of reliable data or because empirical methods cannot prove such events. (Qutb, 2012).

In addition to demonstrating the Jews' rejection of the supernatural revelations that bolstered their scriptures, this passage also pointed out how myths and traditions said that Solomon engaged in witchcraft and sorcery and owed all of his extraordinary powers to these practices (Qutb, 2012).

Neither black nor white magic is sanctioned by the Quran, even if Muslims resort to white magic to counteract the effects of black magic. Many verses in the Quran refer to this. In Falaq Surah, God teaches how to seek refuge in Him from the evil of the conjuring witches (Ali, 2001). (Ali, 2001). According to Taha Surah, the magician would fail no matter how skilled he becomes. (Ali, 2001).

Both verses refer to magic works of witches which use for evil cases.

Magic opposites to Universal Law "Sunna Takwiniyah in Arabic"

On the other hand, the Quran outlines a fundamental principle concerning the laws of the cosmos, known as "Sunna Takwiniyah," which magic attempts to alter, distort, or disorganize to create its effects. That is why the Quran stresses the importance of avoiding messing with the laws of nature. This suggests that when Allah created the cosmos, He also created its laws. Breaking these laws, even in good faith, is never acceptable. Surah Fatir provides an explanation for this in the Quran. This statement is unequivocal: "Can they expect anything other than the way of the doubters of old?" God's ways are unchanging; they never deviate from the norm. (Ali, 2001).

Sayed Qutb has also proven that God's law is immutable and that life and events are not random. Consistent laws restrict alterations. The show is discussed here, proving that God's laws are unchanging and that the Holy Qur'an calls people's attention to this fact (Qutb, 2012).

Instead of using magic, Quran recommends Alternatives which are invocations and prayers that Quran mentioned to prevent or to get rid of black magic or other troubles like Surat AlFalaq which is obviously mentioned the fact of the danger of magic on the mankind and other beings. "Say: *I seek refuge in the Lord of the Daybreak, (1) from the evil of anything that He has created; (2) from the evil of darkness when it gathers; (3) from the evil of the conjuring witches; (4) from the evil of the envious when he envies. (5)*" (Ali, 2006). Moreover, the verses of Mumnoon Surah mentions, "And say: My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from suggestions of the evil ones, And I seek refuge in Thee, my Lord, lest they be present with me" (Ali, 2006).

Similarities are founded through reviewing both works. They can be briefed:

The societies of *Harut & Marut* and Shakespeare's *Tempest* were fascinated by Magic and the effects of the supernatural. There is an apparent fascination with Magic in Jewish and Shakespearean cultures.

Second, to rid the world of black Magic, the two angels *Harut and Marut* in the Quran and Prospero in *The Tempest* emphasize the excellent aspects of white Magic.

Finally, when the Quranic account of *Harut, Marut*, and Prospero's argument in *The Tempest* suggests and advises us to forsake all forms of Magic to live everyday life, we find parallelism. At the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero teaches his audience that they must abandon all forms of Magic to have everyday lives among the people (Shakespeare, 2015). As depicted in the tale of *Harut and Marut*, the Quran contains verses that advise believers to abandon the use of Magic altogether.

Fourth, both *the Quran* and *Tempest* have provided insight into the adverse effects of black Magic. The narrative of the two Angles in the Quran illustrates the dangers inherent in magical knowledge in the hands of those who would use it for malicious use. The adverse effects of *Sycorax*, who locked up the good spirits and turned the island into a place of wickedness, were also emphasized in *The Tempest*.

## Conclusion

Both *the Harut and Marut* in the *Quran* and *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare have been found to feature magical elements. Black and white magic is topics that have been explored from the perspective of both. While Shakespeare's *The Tempest* uses white magic to counter black magic or reap its benefits, *the Quran* categorically forbids the use of magic to address problems. The angels *Harut and Marut* are used in *the Quran* to illustrate why magic is not an excellent approach to determining one's fate and why one should instead try to live everyday life. The study also sheds light on a little-known fact about *the Quran*: it refuses to amend or violate Universal Law because doing so would disrupt the usual lifeline. There are then numerous shared characteristics between the two disciplines studied.

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