

## Witchcraft or Magic

Sihr (witchcraft or magic) is a word referring to something hidden. It is real and there are kinds of witchcraft that may affect people psychologically and physically, so that they become sick and die, or husbands and wives are separated. Its effects happen by the will of Allaah. It is a devilish action, most of which is only achieved by means of shirk and drawing close to the jinn and shayaateen (devils) by means of that which they love, and it is based on associating others with Allaah (shirk).

There are doctors who are also practitioners of witchcraft, who treat people by means of seeking the help of the jinn. They claim to have knowledge of the sickness with no need to identify it, and they prescribe for the patient foods and drinks that bring him closer to his allies among the devils. He may tell them to slaughter a pig whilst saying "Bismillaah" over it, or to slaughter a permissible animal without saying "Bismillaah", or when saying the name of one of the devils.

This is kufr or disbelief in Allaah, and it is not permissible under any circumstances to go to people like these. The hadd punishment for these people is execution. It has been proven from three of the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) that the practitioners of witchcraft are to be put to death.

The Standing Committee was asked a question about this matter, in which it was said:

Please note that in Zambia there is a Muslim man who claims that he has with him a jinn, and the people come to him and ask him to treat their sicknesses, and this jinn states what their treatment should be. Is that permissible?

They replied:

It is not permissible for that man to use the jinn, and it is not permissible for the people to go to him seeking treatment for sickness through his using the jinn, or to meet any other need by this means.

Seeking treatment through human medical doctors and using permissible medicines is sufficient and means that there is no need for that, and it keeps people safe from the sorcery of the magicians.

It was narrated in a saheeh report that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and asks him about something, his prayer will not be accepted for forty days." Narrated by Muslim.

And it was narrated by the authors of *al-Sunan* and by al-Haakim, who classed it as saheeh, that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever goes to a soothsayer and believes what he says has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad."

This man and his companions from among the jinn are regarded as being among the fortune-tellers and soothsayers, so it is not permissible to ask them anything or to believe them.

*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 1/408, 409

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz said:

Given that there are so many charlatans lately, who claim to be doctors and to treat people by means of magic and witchcraft, and they have become widespread in some countries and they exploit the naïveté of the ignorant, I thought that in the spirit of sincerity towards Allaah and His slaves, that I should explain the grave danger that this poses to Islam and the Muslims, because it involves dependence on something other than Allaah and going against His command and the command of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), so I say, seeking the help of Allaah:

It is permissible to seek treatment according to scholarly consensus. The Muslim may go to a doctor to seek treatment for internal diseases, injuries, nervous complaints, etc, so that he can identify the disease and treat it in an appropriate manner, using medicines that are permissible according to sharee'ah, based on his knowledge of medicine, because this comes under the heading of using the ordinary means, and it is not contrary to the idea of putting one's trust in Allaah. Allaah has sent down the disease but He has also sent down with it the cure; those who know it know it and those who do not do not. But Allaah has not created the healing for His slaves in that which He has forbidden to them, so it is not permissible for the sick person to go to a soothsayer who claims to know the unseen, in order to find out from them what is wrong with him. And it is not permissible for him to believe what they tell him, because they speak of the unseen without knowledge, or they summon the jinn and seek their help in doing what they want. The ruling on these people is that they are kaafirs and misguided, because they claim to have knowledge of the unseen. Muslim narrated in his *Saheeh* that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and asks him about something, his prayer will not be accepted for forty days." And it was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever goes to a soothsayer and believes what he says has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." Narrated by Abu Dawood and by the four authors of *al-Sunan*; classed as saheeh by al-Haakim who narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever goes to

a fortune-teller or soothsayer and believes what he says has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).” And it was narrated that ‘Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “He does not belong to us who observes bird omens or has that done for him, or who seeks divination or who has that done for him, or who practices witchcraft or has that done for him. Whoever goes to a soothsayer and believes what he says has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).” Narrated by al-Bazaar with a jayyid isnaad.

These ahaadeeth demonstrate that it is forbidden to go to soothsayers, fortune-tellers, witches and the like, and ask them questions and believe them, and a warning is issued to those who do that. Community leaders and those in positions of power and authority must forbid going to fortune-tellers, soothsayers and the like, and not allow anyone who deals in such things to operate in the marketplaces or elsewhere. They should denounce them emphatically, and denounce those who go to them. We should not be deceived by the fact that they may get things right sometimes, or by the fact that many people go to them, because they are ignorant and the people should not be deceived by them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade going to them, asking them questions and believing them, because that is a great evil, a serious danger and leads to bad consequences, and because they are immoral liars. These ahaadeeth also indicate that soothsayers and witches are also kaafirs, because they claim to have knowledge of the unseen, which is kufr, and because they only reach their goals by serving the jinn and worshipping them instead of Allaah, which is kufr or disbelief in Him and associating others with Him (shirk). The one who believes them and their claims to have knowledge of the unseen is like them. Everyone who goes to these people and deals with them, is disowned by the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). It is not permissible for the Muslim to accept what they claim is a kind of treatment, such as their muttering mumbo-jumbo or pouring lead and other kinds of nonsense that they do. This is a kind of sorcery and deception of the people. Whoever accepts that is helping them in their falsehood and kufr.

*Majmoo’ Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 3/274-281.*

Secondly:

With regard to witchcraft (sihr), it is real and is not an illusion, and it may have an effect by Allaah’s leave.

Al-Quraafi said: *Sihr* is real, and the person against whom it is done may die, or his nature or habits may be changed, even if he does not deal with it himself. This was the view of al-Shaafa’i and Ibn Hanbal...

*Al-Furooq*, 4/149.

The Mu'tazalis, Qadaris and some of the scholars held a different view, but no attention should be paid to that. Al-Quraafi and others mentioned that the Sahaabah were unanimously agreed that it is real before there appeared those who denied that.

The evidence of Ahl al-Sunnah concerning that is as follows:

1. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“but the Shayaateen (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Haaroot and Maaroot, but neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, “We are for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this magic from us).” And from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between man and his wife, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allaah’s Leave. And they learn that which harms them and profits them not”*

*[al-Baqarah 2:102]*

This verse clearly indicates what we are trying to say, which is that sihr (witchcraft) is real, and that the practitioner of witchcraft may create a division between a man and his wife thereby, and that he may harm people by means of his witchcraft, but he cannot do any harm except by Allaah’s leave.

2. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“And from the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knots”*  
*[al-Falaq 113:4]*

*“those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knots”* refers to female witches whose witchcraft involved tying knots then blowing into them. If witchcraft were not something real, Allaah would not have commanded us to seek refuge from it.

3. Further evidence is provided by the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was bewitched by the Jew Labeed ibn al-A'sam. This is a saheeh hadeeth that was narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: The witchcraft which can cause sickness, lethargy, mental sickness, love, hatred and delusions is something that does exist and is known by the masses. Many people know it from experience.

*Al-Tafseer al-Qayyim*, p. 571

Thirdly:

There are many kinds of witchcraft, including illusions and deceiving the eyes. But not all sihr is like that. Some of the scholars listed different kinds of witchcraft, and counted eight kinds, the most well known of which are:

1. Knots and incantations

i.e., reciting words and mumbo-jumbo by means of which the witch is able to use the devils to do what he wants of harming the person being bewitched. But Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"... but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allaah's Leave"*

[*al-Baqarah 2:102*]

2. Sleight of hand.

They become skilled in this by means of practice and training to do things quickly, and bring out something hidden.

For example, the magician may bring a dove and strange it in front of the audience, then he hits it with his hand and it gets up and flies.

But in fact there was a kind of anaesthetic in his hand and he made it smell it and made the audience think that he had strangled it and killed it, then when he hits it, he wakes it up from that stupor.

3. Bewitching the eyes.

This is very common among the liars; the magician does not really put a sword in his body, rather he bewitches the eyes of the audience, and puts the sword by his side, but the bewitched people think that he puts it through his middle.

These tricksters have become well known among us, because among the audience there are those who protected themselves with Qur'aan and dhikr, and remembered Allaah a great deal whilst sitting in the gathering watching the magician, so they saw what really happened, unlike what those who were bewitched saw.

4. Using chemicals

This is done well by those who know how substances react with one another, thus producing a substance that is not affected by some other substances, such as the Sufi Rifaa'iyah who make people think that they are not affected by fire, when in fact they coat themselves with some fireproof substances. Shaykh al-

Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) challenged them to wash with hot water before entering the fire and they refused because this would have exposed their deceit.

And there are many other things that the practitioners of witchcraft do, which could not happen unless Allaah decreed it.

See *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, 1/146; *Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen*, 2/178; *al-Sihr* by Shaykh 'Umar al-Ashqar.