
EVIDENCE CONFIRMING THE KAAFIR STATUS OF A FORTUNE-TELLER

1. Imam Ahmad narrated in his Musnad (9171) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever comes to a fortune-teller or soothsayer and believes him has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad." i.e. The one who asks a soothsayer a question, believing that he tells the truth and that he knows the unseen, has committed an act of kufr, because he has gone against the Qur'aan in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Say: "None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (Unseen) except Allaah" [al-Naml 27:65].
2. The Prophet (ﷺ) also said in another hadith narrated by Muslim that: "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and asks him about something and believes him, his prayers will not be accepted for forty days".
3. Knowledge of the unseen is something that Allaah has kept for Himself, as is indicated by the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And with Him are the keys of the Ghayb (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record" [al-An'aam 6:59]

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained these keys as referring to five things which are mentioned in Soorat Luqmaan, where Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, Allaah, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allaah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things)" [Luqmaan 31:34].

Al-Bukhaari narrated in his Saheeh (hadeeth no.4477) that Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "Whoever tells you that he knows what will happen tomorrow is lying." The she recited, "No person knows what he will earn tomorrow."

What fortune-tellers say of things that will happen in the future has nothing to do with the unseen or with knowledge of the unseen, and it is not knowledge of what will happen in the future. Rather they are liars who make false claims. But the Prophet (ﷺ) has told us that they steal knowledge of that which Allaah has revealed to His angels. It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: Some people asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about fortune-tellers, and he said: "They are nothing." They said: O

Messenger of Allaah, they say something and it comes true. The Prophet (صلى وسلم عليه الله) said: "That is a word of truth which the jinni snatches and cackles into the ear of his familiar like the cackling of a hen, and they mix more than one hundred lies with it." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7561).

The Prophet (صلى وسلم عليه الله) explained how the jinn steal this word. He said: "...when our Lord, may His name be blessed and exalted, decrees some matter, the bearers of the Throne glorify Him, then the people of heaven who are closest to them glorify Him, until the tasbeeh reaches the people of the lowest heaven. Then those who are nearest to the bearers of the Throne say: What did your Lord say? And they tell them what He said. And the people of heaven ask one another for the news, until the news reaches the lowest heaven. Then the eavesdropping jinn snatch what they can and convey it to their familiars. What they narrated as they heard it is true, but they add lies to it." Narrated by Muslim (2229).

From this, it is clear that the jinn do not have knowledge of the unseen, rather they steal words that they hear from the angels, but the angels themselves do not have any knowledge of that unless Allaah tells them of it. After they are told of it, it is no longer regarded as unseen in the absolute sense, but before that, they are like anyone else in creation and do not know anything of the unseen. This depends on Allaah's telling them of it. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“(He Alone is) the All-Knower of the Ghayb (Unseen), and He reveals to none His Ghayb (Unseen)”

[al-Jinn 72:26].

4. Shaykh Ibn Baaz (**may Allaah have mercy on him**) was asked: Is it permissible to pray behind an imam who is a charlatan and a liar, knowing that some of them recite Qur'aan well?

He replied:

If the imam is a charlatan who claims to have knowledge of the unseen or who does false and evil things, then it is not permissible to appoint him as an imam or to pray behind him, because the one who claims to have knowledge of the unseen is a kaafir – we ask Allaah to keep us safe and sound. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghayb (Unseen) except Allaah, nor can they perceive when they shall be resurrected” [al-Naml 27:65]

The same applies to the one who practises witchcraft – he comes under the same ruling as the kuffaar, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“They followed what the Shayaateen (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime Sulaymaan (Solomon). Sulaymaan did not disbelieve, but the Shayaateen disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Hararoot and Maaroot, but neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such thing) till they had said, ‘We are for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this magic from us).’ [al-Baqarah 2:102]

However, if he commits some sins but does not do any of the actions that constitute kufr such as witchcraft or claiming to have knowledge of the unseen, then prayers offered behind him are valid, but it is better to look for another imam who is of good character and is righteous, so as to be on the safe side with regard to your religious commitment. But as for the one who calls on someone other than Allaah or seeks the help of the dead and asks them for support, no one should pray behind him, because by doing those things he is a kaafir, as these are the actions of the mushrikeen whom the Prophet (ﷺ) fought in Makkah and elsewhere. We ask Allaah to set the affairs of the Muslims straight and to enable them understand their religion properly, and appoint the best of them in charge of their affairs, for He is All-hearing, Ever Near. [Fataawa Ibn Baaz (9/278)].