

The Ruling on Selling Amulets and Talismans

All praise be to Allāh and may peace and blessings be upon His Messenger and upon all his family and Companions. As for what follows:

The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Legal Rulings read the following question from His Excellency, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Interior, to His Eminence, the Director, the text of which is as follows:

Q "The aforementioned presents to the Government of the District of Riyadh an application for permission to sell amulets and talismans in the market, as the Board of Ordering Good and Forbidding Evil has requested him to obtain a permit from your Excellency, once the applicant has satisfied the rules and conditions laid down to protect citizens from exploitation. I request by this communication of ours that you will look into this matter and determine whether it is possible to grant permission for those who fulfill the conditions laid down in this matter.

With salutations to Your Excellency."

The Committee replied as follows:

A verdict has already been given prohibiting the writing of the Qur'an, or Prophetic sayings or the like on such things as paper or dishes and then covering them with water which is then drunk by a sick person, hoping to be cured of his illness. This practice - according to what we know - has not been confirmed from the Prophet ﷺ, nor from the Well-Guided Caliphs, nor from the Companions, may Allāh be pleased with them. And all goodness comes from following his guidance ﷺ, the guidance of his Caliphs what the rest of his Companions followed, may Allāh be pleased with them.

What follows is the text of that verdict:

The Prophet ﷺ permitted incantations from the Qur'an, from words of remembrance (of Allāh) and from supplications, so long as they did not contain *Shirk* or words whose meanings are not understood. This is based upon what was narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, on the authority of 'Awf bin Malik, who said: We used to make incantations in the pre-Islamic ignorance and so we said: "O Messenger of Allāh! What do you think of this?" He said:

«اغْرِضُوا عَلَيَّ رُقَاكُمْ لَا بَأْسَ بِالرُّقَى مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ شِرْكًَا»

«Show me your incantations; there is no objection to those incantations which do not contain *Shirk*.»^[1]

Muslim
4079

The scholars are in agreement that incantations are permissible so long as they are in keeping with the above mentioned criteria and so long as it is believed that they are a cause that provides no result unless it be by the Decree of Allāh, the Most High. As for hanging something around the neck or attaching it to any part of the body, if it is not from the Qur'an, then it is forbidden; indeed, it is *Shirk*, as it is narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, on the authority of 'Imran bin Husain, may Allāh be pleased with him, that: The Prophet ﷺ saw a man who had a brass ring on his arm. He asked him:

«مَا هَذَا»

«What is this?»

The man answered: "I am wearing it for cephalic weakness." He replied:

«انزِعْهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَزِيدُكَ إِلَّا وَهْنًا، فَإِنَّكَ لَوْ مِتَّ وَهِيَ عَلَيْكَ مَا أَفْلَحْتَ أَبَدًا»

«Remove it, for it will not increase you in anything except weakness, and if you should die while you are wearing it, you

[1] Muslim no. 2200 and Abu Dawud no. 3886.

مسند احمد
19/40

- would never be successful.»^[1]

And Imam Ahmad also narrated on the authority of 'Uqbah bin 'Amr, may Allāh be pleased with him, from the Prophet ﷺ that he said:

«مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ تَمِيمَةً فَلَا أَمَّ اللَّهُ لَهُ، وَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ وَدَعَةً فَلَا وَدَعَ اللَّهُ لَهُ»

«Whoever wore an amulet, Allāh will not protect him and whoever wore seashells as a talisman, Allāh will not keep him safe.»^[2]

It is also narrated by Imam Ahmad:

«مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ تَمِيمَةً فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ»

«He who wears an amulet commits Shirk.»^[3]

It is reported by Imams Ahmad and Abu Dawud on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud, may Allāh be pleased with him, that he said: I heard Allāh's Messenger ﷺ saying:

«إِنَّ الرُّفْيَ وَالشَّمَائِمَ وَالسُّوَالَهَ شِرْكٌ»

«Verily, incantations, amulets and Tiwalah (spells) are all forms of Shirk.»^[4]

If what is worn contains Qur'anic Verses, the correct view is that it is also prohibited for three reasons:

1. Based upon the general understanding of the *Hadiths* of the Prophet ﷺ which forbid wearing amulets, and there is no evidence for any exceptions from this.
2. Prevention of *harm*, for it will lead to the wearing amulets which do not contain Qur'anic Verses.

[1] Ibn Majah no. 3531 and Ahmad 4:445
 [2] Ahmad 4:154 and Abu Ya'la no. 1759. See *Majma'uz-Zawa'id* 5:103.
 [3] Ahmad 4:154 and Al-Hakim 4:417.
 [4] Ahmad 1:381, Abu Dawud no. 3883 and Ibn Majah no. 3530.

Ahmed
34/33

3. That those things which are so worn will be subjected to dishonor when a person answers the call of nature while wearing it, or cleans his private parts, or performs sexual intercourse and so on.

As for the practice of writing Surahs or Verses from the Qur'an on tablets, dishes or sheets of paper and then washing them in water or saffron or other things and then drinking the wash water, in the hope of receiving blessings, or an increase in knowledge, or an expansion of wealth, or good health, or vitality or the like, it has not been confirmed from the Prophet ﷺ that he did such things for himself or for others, nor that he permitted it for any of his Companions, may Allāh be pleased with them, nor that he allowed it for his people, although the reasons that might warrant that existed. Nor has it been recorded in any authentic narration - to our knowledge - from any of the Companions, may Allāh be pleased with them, that they did it or permitted others to do it. Based upon this, it is better to abandon such practices and to do without them, in favor of those incantations from the Qur'an and the beautiful Names of Allāh which have been endorsed by the Shari'ah^[1] and those remembrances of Allāh and Prophetic supplications and the like, which have been authentically reported and whose meanings are understood and which are free from Shirk.

In this way one might draw nearer to Allāh, the Most High through the practice of what is legal, in the hope of attaining reward and that Allāh might relieve him of his sorrow, remove his afflictions and bless him with useful knowledge. This is sufficient, and whoever suffices himself with what Allāh has made legal for him, Allāh will cause him to be needless of other than that. And Allāh is the Granter of success.

Based upon this, this man should not be given a license to sell incantations or talismans; rather, he should be prevented from selling them. And may peace and blessings be upon our

[1] Shari'ah: Islamic law.