115294 - Reading stories Containing Magic and Fantasy

the question

I am a student who is currently in England for my studies but Alhamdulillah I have no problem in practicing my religion, especially prayers. I know that reading storybooks involving magic and fantasy are not permissible especially given that they are a waste of time. However, does reading them take one out of the fold of Islam since magic is kufr (disbelief)?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Reading stories that contain magic and fantasy involves things concerning which there are some reservations.

Firstly:

They are spreading acts of sihr (witchcraft) and kufr, to the extent that they become like ordinary behaviour in civilized societies; in fact they depict such things as essential skills for individuals and societies that can be learned. They often depict the magician as a good and decent man who does good and spreads good among the people, and this is the most dangerous aspect of the matter; where something evil is presented as something good, where one no longer objects to it in one’s heart and no longer feels that magic and its practitioners are something abhorrent, and one no longer thinks of the seriousness of the sin involved before Allah. So how about when such stories become widespread and children and youngsters turn to them?

These negative outcomes have recently led many western education specialists to warn against the spread of magic stories in their societies, and many schools have banned these books from their libraries. There have been discussions about them in parliamentary debates in Britain, after they discovered some of the dangers that may result from their becoming widespread among people.

Secondly:

In most cases, these stories teach their readers about types of magic and sorcery and depict to them some of the secrets of magic,that make it easy for any reader to apply them and indulge in them. This also poses a great danger, because it may lead the reader to try to put into practice what he has read. It is not just the matter of reading a story for fun; rather there is the fear that some of these stories may influence their readers so they may be bewitched or harmed because of reading these incomprehensible words in these stories.

Hence Muslims should beware of allowing their children to read these stories, and societies should put a stop to the spread of this aspect of culture; they should focus instead on things that are important and beneficial in terms of science, arts and literature.

In Fatawa Noor ‘ala al-Darb by Shaykh Ibn Baz it says:

I hope that you can explain the prohibition on using and reading books of magic and astrology, because there are many such books, and some of my friends want to buy them, and they say that if they are not used for harmful purposes, there is nothing wrong with it. Please advise us, may Allah bless you.

The answer was:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah and his family and Companions, and those who follow him sincerely …

What the questioner says is correct. The Muslims should beware of books of magic and astrology, and those who find them should destroy them, because they are harmful to the Muslim and cause him to fall into shirk (polytheism). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever learns a branch of astrology has learned a branch of magic … And Allah says in His Book about the two angels (interpretation of the meaning):

“… 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).’” [2:102]

This indicates that learning magic and practising it is kufr (disbelief). So the Muslim must oppose books which teach magic and astrology, and destroy them wherever they are.

This is what is required. It is not permissible for a seeker of knowledge or anyone else to read them or learn what is in them. People other than seekers of knowledge also have no right to read them or learn what is in them, or to approve of them, because they lead to disbelief in Allah. What is required is to destroy them wherever they are. And the same applies to all books that teach magic and astrology - they must be destroyed. End quote.

To sum up: Just reading these stories is not kufr that puts one beyond the pale of Islam, so long as that is not done with the aim of learning magic and practising it. However, what is required is to warn against reading books of magic in general and to strive to destroy them if possible, and to beware of reading them or distributing them.

See also the answer to question no. 14011.

And Allah knows best.