126677 - Mobile phone messages which spread fortune-telling

the question

Its normal nowadays to recieve sms which says, choose amoung the following numbers/sigs/letters and we'll send u back a reply to tell u abt something in future or abt ur personality. Its basically a game that's played, nothing from 'ilm of future telling. Like i may e.g just sit down, write a few symbols and associate one sentence abt future life to each symbol n ask people to choose one of the symbols n then tell them wat it meant. Its all meant for sake of fun. No practicing fortune teller is involved. No logic or reasoning is involved, just the luck of the person which symbol he chooses and wat sort of a reply he gets. Does it come under the category of "going to a fortune teller out of curiosty..." Because people reply to these symbols as they r curious to know wat each symbol means even though its just for fun. I just wana know if these should b avoided, am i sinning by responding to such smses?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Knowledge of the unseen is one of the things that Allaah has kept for Himself and which is only for Him and not for anyone else, whether it be an angel who is close to Him or a Prophet who was sent. He discloses what He will to some of His Messenger of some matters of the unseen, when and as He wills.

There are a number of verses and hadeeths which speak of that.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And to Allaah belongs the Ghaib (Unseen) of the heavens and the earth, and to Him return all affairs (for decision)”

[Hood 11:123]

“Say: The Unseen belongs to Allaah Alone, so wait you, verily, I am with you among those who wait (for Allaah’s Judgement)”

[Yoonus 10:20]

“Say: Allaah knows best how long they stayed. With Him is (the knowledge of) the Unseen of the heavens and the earth”

[al-Kahf 18:26]

“Nor will Allaah disclose to you the secrets of the Ghayb (Unseen)”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:179]

And Allaah said to His Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him) (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): ‘I don’t tell you that with me are the treasures of Allaah, nor (that) I know the Unseen’”

[al-An’aam 6:50]

al-Tabari said: (it means) it means: tell these people who deny your Prophethood: I am not telling you that I am the Lord to whom belong the stores of Heaven and earth and thus know unseen and hidden things, which no one knows except the Lord to Whom nothing is hidden, so you can disbelieve me; because no one can be a Lord except the One Who has sovereignty over all things and in Whose hand are all things, and from Whom no secret thing is hidden. That is Allaah, beside Whom there is no other god.

Tafseer al-Tabari (11/371).

And Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning),

“Say: ‘None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (Unseen) except Allaah’”

[al-Naml 27:65]

al-Qurtubi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

There is befitting for Allaah to state that an attribute is not for people and is for Him and then share this attribute with a partner. ... Have you not seen the words of Allaah: “Say: ‘None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (Unseen) except Allaah’”[al-Naml 27:65]and “None can reveal its time but Him” [al-A’raaf 7:187]? All of these are things the knowledge of which Allaah has kept to Himself and no one has any share of that with Him. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qurtubi (4/17)

What you are asking about comes under the heading of fortune-telling and speculation about what might happen and falsehood. It is a major sin and an action that leads to doom.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said:

Those who go to fortunetellers fall into three categories:

1 – The one who goes to a fortuneteller and asks him things without believing in what he says. This is haraam, and the punishment of the one who does that is that his prayers are not accepted for forty days, as it is narrated in Saheeh Muslim (2230), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever goes to a fortuneteller and asks him about something, his prayer will not be accepted for forty days.”

2 – When a person goes to a fortuneteller and asks him about something and believes what he says. This is disbelief in Allaah (kufr), because he is believing the fortuneteller’s claim to have knowledge of the unseen, and believing a human’s being claim to have knowledge of the unseen constitutes disbelief in the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghayb (Unseen) except Allaah”

[al-Naml 27:65].

Hence it says in the saheeh hadeeth: “Whoever goes to a fortuneteller and believes what he says has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).”

3 – When he goes to a fortuneteller and asks him questions so that he can explain to the people what he is really doing, which is deceiving people and leading them astray. There is nothing wrong with this. The evidence for that is the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went to Ibn Sayyaad. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) though of something to himself. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) asked him what he was thinking of and he said, “Al-dukh” meaning al-dukhaan (smoke). End quote.

Majmoo’ Fataawa wa Rasaa’il al-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 2/184

What is mentioned in the question about these messages being a kind of game is not correct; rather it is blatant fortune-telling, lying and charlatanry. Moreover, even if we assume that this is correct, this is not the matter of games and entertainment; rather it is a matter of religion, and it is the issue of faith and disbelief. How can we accept for the foolish to play with people's religions and beliefs, like the one who is mentioned in the question??!

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“If you ask them (about this), they declare: ‘We were only talking idly and joking.’ Say: ‘Was it at Allaah (عز و جل), and His Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that you were mocking?’”

66. Make no excuse; you disbelieved after you had believed”

[al-Tawbah 9:65-66]

Moreover, those who are sending these messages are not intending these efforts as merely a game; rather they are aiming to consume people wealth unlawfully, to spread misguidance and to propagate lying and fortune-telling. These things have nothing to do with playing for entertainment at all, except in the mind of one who intends thereby to make a mockery of the

signs of Allaah.

You have to keep away from these evil people and their misguidance. Beware of corresponding with them or cooperating with them, or agreeing with them or mixing with them under any circumstances, because Allaah says in His Book (interpretation of the meaning):

“And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this Qur’aan) that when you hear the Verses of Allaah being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them. Surely, Allaah will collect the hypocrites and disbelievers all together in Hell”

[al-Nisa’ 4:140].

We advise you to hasten to repent to Allaah if you thought well of these charlatans at any time or if you joined them in their falsehood, even if that was on the basis that it was a game. Part of making your repentance complete is that you should advise those of your brothers who you know are engaging in this matter of the Islamic ruling on it and the danger it poses to their religious commitment and faith.

We ask Allaah to make us and you steadfast in faith and to protect us from the evil of fitnah, both apparent and hidden.

Please see also question number 32863.