175599 - Ruling on playing with ouija boards

the question

I recently found out about a game that is very common in our country, which is called Ouija. Does this game come under the heading of witchcraft and interacting with the jinn?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The ouija board game poses a danger to the religious commitment and life of the player. With regard to his religious commitment, that is because it involves calling upon and addressing the jinn, responding to them, believing their words, and being afraid of going against their orders. The ruling on playing this game is no different than the ruling on going to fortune tellers and soothsayers, because of what happens of the player asking the jinn about matters that are unseen or unknown to him. With regard to the danger that it poses to his life, that is because of what has happened of many people being affected by mental illness, anxiety and fear that ruined their lives. Hence there have been many statements from psychologists and there is unanimous agreement on the necessity of getting rid of this game and not trying it out, let alone playing it and becoming attached to it.

In brief, it consists of a board on which are written all the numbers and letters, and at the top of the board are written the words Yes, No, and Goodbye. Each board is written in the language of the local people and there is a disc in the middle of the board, the edges of which are held by a minimum of two players. The game begins by calling upon “Ouija”, and it is clear in the minds of the players that they are now calling upon a spirit or a jinn, according to the player’s belief, and he is asked about things that are unknown to them of events that have taken place, and the disc moves towards the numbers and letters in order to spell out the answer to the question. If the question is about a specific date, the disc, with their fingers on it, moves towards the numbers in

order to answer the question. Similarly, if the question is about a name or an event, then the disc moves towards the letters in order to spell out the answer to the question. Or the answer may be Yes or No, so the disc moves towards one of them. The players cannot choose to exit the game until they ask permission from “Ouija”, then if the disk moves towards the word No, they cannot leave the game, but if it moves towards the word Yes, then they can leave, whereupon they have to thank him, then when the players have thanked him, the disc moves towards the word Goodbye.

Some people try to take the matter lightly and make it merely a game for fun, but in fact it is extremely serious. What appears to be the case is that the word “Ouija” is the name of one of the jinn – a king or someone else– and he sends one of his troops to move the disk towards the numbers and letters to spell out the answers. There are some people who believe that this movement comes from the devil-companions (qareen) of the players, and that what they ask about is known to them only or is known in the realm of the jinn. There are others – Western doctors and scientists – who believe that the phenomenon of the disk’s movement is what is called “unconscious movement”; what is meant is that the mind is able, under the influence of certain emotions, to move the muscles of the body unconsciously, without the individual being aware of this movement, so it appears to him as if the spirits are moving the pointer under his hand.

What is established in the mind of the Muslim is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade going to soothsayers and said that “they are nothing.” And he said that if a person goes to them, even if he does not believe in them, then no prayer will be accepted from him for forty days, and that whoever goes to them and believes in them has committed an act of disbelief.

We have discussed all of this – with the relevant evidence – in the answers to questions no. 8291 and 60431 .

It is not permissible for the Muslim to seek the help of the jinn to find out unknown and unseen matters, even if he does not seek to draw close to them by doing acts of worship or obedience to them. Merely seeking their help is prohibited.

Because the jinn benefit from the humans who play this game, the jinn submit, in a sense, to the players, by telling them the unknown matters they ask about. The human also submits to the jinn in a sense. It is sufficient to note that they dare not leave the game without seeking the permission of “Ouija”, otherwise they think and believe that they will be harmed. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “And on the Day when He will gather them (all) together (and say): ‘O you assembly of jinns! Many did you mislead of men,’ and their Auliya (friends and helpers, etc.) amongst men will say: ‘Our Lord! We benefited one from the other, but now we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us’” [al-An‘aam 6:128]. The sin and disbelief that affect the player before and during the game, and afterwards, is what Allah, may He be exalted, mentions in the verse (interpretation of the meaning): “And verily, there were men among mankind who took shelter with the masculine among the jinns, but they (jinns) increased them (mankind) in sin and disbelief” [al-Jinn 72:6].

With regard to the ruling on seeking the help of the jinn, please see the answers to questions no. 11114 and 78546.

Conclusion:

It is haraam for the Muslim to play the Ouija board game, even if in fact it involves no more than unconscious movements, because the player actually and intentionally calls upon the jinn, which comes under the heading of seeking the help of the jinn and the ruling on going to fortune tellers and soothsayers. All of these are haraam things. We have discussed this above and in the answers referred to.

And Allah knows best.