192645 - Ruling on wearing Shamballa bracelets

the question

Why are Shamballa bracelets haram to wear ?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Shamballa bracelets are a well-known type of bracelets that are usually worn on the wrists, but may also be made into earrings and necklaces. They are made out of small beads in various colours. They are usually made of elastic or leather, and no metal wire is used to put the beads together. Recently they have become “big business”, with the introduction of gold and diamonds. There are many pictures of them on the Internet for anyone who wants to find out about the different types.

The problem is that the word Shamballa has many important and serious meanings in Buddhism, and in Tibet and India. It is a word that has profound religious and doctrinal significance; in fact the word originated from Buddhist spiritual concepts in those lands. In their view it refers to a hidden fabulous kingdom in a hidden realm somewhere in Asia, beyond the mountains of the Himalayas. This word is mentioned in very ancient texts in those civilisations. The Buddhists passed down a number of depictions that embodied their concept of that kingdom, which is regarded as the source of happiness for all people, the light of which will shine upon all those who believe in it in all regions of the world.

Hence when this idea was transmitted to the west, some people tried to embody this myth by means of certain symbols which would attract some special spiritual experiences of that blessed kingdom. So they made bracelets that were called after that fabulous kingdom of Shamballa, and these bracelets became a symbol of spiritual happiness, enlightenment and peace that people are looking for. Those who make them and trade in them believe that they have the power to bring

about changes in the person who wears them and the people around him. Each of the colours of the beads in those bracelets is connected to a particular spiritual meaning which would take too long to explain and describe. We found this information and more by searching on the Internet.

The Muslim – in contrast to this spiritual backdrop – believes that the hidden realm is the realm of the unseen of which Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has told us in His holy Book, and our Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has told us about it in his saheeh Sunnah. Anything other than that comes under the heading of notions and ideas made up by human beings which have no sound basis, and are usually based on dreams and visions, or mumbo-jumbo made up by the leaders of idolatrous religions, especially the esoteric traditions. This has been one of the most significant causes of humanity's becoming bogged down in the mire of fables and myths, which distracted them from focusing on the real issues of daily life, and the cause and effect on the basis of which the universe was created. Thus these mythical beliefs became like shackles that prevented the human mind from understanding the reality of what surrounds him, and from understanding the message of his Lord, Who asks him to not be (emotionally) attached to any means or measures, let alone idolatrous myths and notions. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Have they not travelled through the land, and have they hearts wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind"

[al-Hajj 22:46].

Because the ignorant were drowning in their idolatry and myths, the religion of Tawheed (affirmation of the Oneness of Allah) came to do away with people's attachment to such measures, and to teach them to limit their belief, with regard to matters of the unseen, solely to that which is with Allah and what He has decreed for His slaves. Whatever Allah wills happens and whatever He does not will does not happen. The ways of falsehood are contrary to that, in contrast to the path of truth which comes from Allah, as He, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“That is because Allah He is the Truth (the only True God of all that exists, Who has no partners or rivals with Him), and what they (the polytheists) invoke besides Him, it is Batil (falsehood) And verily, Allah He is the Most High, the Most Great”

[al-Hajj 22:62]

“That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, while those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allah set forth their parables for mankind”

[Muhammad 47:3]

“Follow what has been sent down unto you from your Lord (the Quran and Prophet Muhammads Sunnah), and follow not any Awliya (protectors and helpers, etc. who order you to associate partners in worship with Allah), besides Him (Allah). Little do you remember!”

[al-A‘raaf 7:3].

To sum up:

If these Shamballa bracelets worn are out of a belief in what they may attract of spiritual happiness or influence on one’s life and death – even if one believes that that comes about by Allah’s leave – then one has fallen into minor shirk, because taking measures for which there is no scientific or shar‘i proof is one of the means that lead to shirk (association of others with Allah), which is haraam. It was proven from ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir al-Juhani (may Allah be pleased with him) that some people came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he accepted the oath of allegiance from nine of them and not from one man. They said: O Messenger of Allah, you accepted the allegiance of nine and not from one. He said: “He is wearing an amulet.” So he put his hand in (his garment) and broke it, then he accepted his oath of allegiance and said: “Whoever wears an amulet has associated others with Allah (shirk).”.

Narrated by Ahmad in al-Musnad (28/638); the commentators in the edition published by Mu’sasat ar-Risaalah said: Its isnaaq is qawiy.

According to another version of the hadeeth of ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir al-Juhani (may Allah be pleased with him) that is marfoo‘:“Whoever wears an amulet, may Allah never fulfill his wish and whoever wears a seashell, may Allah never protect him from what he fears.”

Narrated by Ahmad in al-Musnad (28/623). Al-Mundhiri said: Its isnaad is jayyid. At-Targheeb wa’t-Tarheeb (4.239). The word translated here as seashells refers to white shells that come from the sea, in which there is a groove or split like that in a date stone; they are worn to ward off the evil eye.

“may Allah never protect him from what he fears” i.e., may he never find protection and peace, or may what he fears never be warded off from him.

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

These two things – amulets and seashells – are regarded as major sins, which is what is implied by the warning mentioned in these hadeeths, especially since they describe it as shirk. But I have not seen anyone who stated that in a clear way; rather they stated what may be understood. Yes, it may be interpreted as referring to what they used to do of wearing pearls – which they called amulets – and the like, thinking that it would ward off harm from them. Undoubtedly this belief is ignorance and misguidance, and it is a major sin, because even if it is not shirk, then it leads to it, because no one can bring benefit or cause harm, or prevent harm and ward it off, except Allah, may He be exalted.

End quote from az-Zawaajir (1/273)

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa’imah (vol. 2, 1/121):

Wearing necklaces or earrings or strings in order to alleviate or ward off calamity is haraam and is shirk, no matter what kind they are, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade and disavowed the one who did that. That is because it is putting one’s trust in something other than Allah, may He be glorified, and what we must do is put our trust in Allah alone, for He is the only one who can bring benefit, ward off harm and grant healing.

‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz, Saalih al-Fawzaan, ‘Abd al-‘Azeez Aal ash-Shaykh, Bakr Abu Zayd

For more information, please see fatwas no. 192206 and 138578

And Allah knows best.