92810 - It is not permissible to treat witchcraft with witchcraft

the question

It is permissible to go to a practitioner of witchcraft in order to treat witchcraft (undo a spell)?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible to treat witchcraft with witchcraft, rather witchcraft is to be treated by means of the Holy Qur'aan and du'aa's that have been narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and permissible remedies. As for witchcraft, it is kufr and apostasy, and puts one beyond the pale of Islam. It is not permissible to engage in it or to go to a practitioner of witchcraft seeking a cure. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about al-nashrah, which is undoing a spell or treating witchcraft. He said: "That is the work of the shaytaan." Narrated by Abu Dawood (3868) and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in Fataawa Imam al-Mufteen (p. 207, 208):

Al-Nashrah means undoing a spell that has been cast, and is of two types: one of which is undoing the spell by means of another spell. This is the one that is the work of the shaytaan, because witchcraft is his work, so the one who does the nashrah and the one for whom it is done draw near to him by means of things that he likes, and so he cancels out what he did to the one on whom the spell was cast. The second type is nashrah by means of ruqyah, ta'awwudhaat (prayers seeking refuge with Allaah) and permissible du'aa's and remedies. This is permissible and is in fact mustahabb. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Qawl al-Mufeed (2/70):

In this hadeeth the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stated the ruling on nashrah (undoing spells) and stated that it is the work of the shaytaan, so it goes without saying

that it is haraam. Rather this is more emphatic than saying that it is haraam, because connecting it to the work of the devils implies that it is abhorrent and repulsive, so it is haraam. End quote.

After reading this clear statement from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), there is no room for the opinion of anyone else, no matter who he is. It is not permissible to suggest that there is a dispute on an issue between the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and any scholar or faqeeh.

One of the scholars narrated from Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab that he thought it was permissible to undo a spell by means of another spell as a case of necessity. But the words of Ibn al-Musayyab (may Allaah have mercy on him) do not clearly indicate that it is permissible to undo a spell by means of another spell, rather it may be understood that he meant undoing it by permissible means. Nevertheless, Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) responded to this by saying in al-Qawl al-Mufeed (2/73): But whatever the case, even if Ibn al-Musayyab thought that it was permissible – and even if there were someone greater than Ibn al-Musayyab whose view is not evidence in and of itself says that it is permissible – that does not mean that it is permissible according to the ruling of Allaah until it is checked against the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about nashrah (undoing spells) and he said: "It is the work of the shaytaan." End quote.

Some of them understood Imam Ahmad's saying that nashrah was permissible as meaning that he allowed undoing a spell by means of another spell. But in fact he was speaking about the ruqyah that is prescribed in Islam and is permissible.

Shaykh Sulaymaan ibn 'Abd-Allaah said in Tafseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed (419): Similarly, that which is narrated from Imam Ahmad about nashrah being permissible is to be understood as referring to undoing spells by means of ruqyahs that are prescribed in Islam. Those who think that he regarded undoing spells by means of witchcraft as permissible are mistaken, because there is nothing in his words to indicate that, rather when he was asked about a man who undid spells he said: Some people allow a concession with regard to that. Then they told him that he puts water in the pan and disappears into it. He waved his hand and said: I do not know what that is. It was said to him:

Do you think that such a person’s help may be sought? He said: I do not know what that is. This clearly shows that nashrah is forbidden when it is done in a bad way, so how about the fact that he is the one who narrated the hadeeth, “It is the work of the shaytaan”? But because the word nashrah (undoing spells) may refer to both that which is permissible and that which is the work of the shaytaan, and they saw that he regarded nashrah as permissible, they thought that he regarded as permissible that which is the work of the shaytaan, but he is far above doing such a thing. End quote.

Many of the scholars clearly stated that it is haraam to undo a spell by means of witchcraft, and that necessity does not make that permissible.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: Even though the Muslims disputed about the permissibility of using as remedies haraam things such as dead meat and pork, they did not dispute about the fact that it is not permissible to treat sickness by means of kufr and shirk under any circumstances, because that is haraam in all cases. This is not like uttering words of kufr and shirk under compulsion, which is only permitted if he has strong faith in his heart. Speaking such words only has an effect when he also believes that in his heart, but if he says them when he still believes in his heart, it does not have any effect. If the shaytaan knows that the one who is speaking to him does not mean what he is saying then he will not help him. Moreover one may have no choice but to speak to him, but there is no need to go through this route to help the one who is afflicted for two reasons :

1 – This way may have no effect at all, and may make it even worse.

2 – In what is true (and permissible) there is enough so that we have no need of that which is false.

End quote from Majmoo’ al-Fataawa (19/61).

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Some of the Hanbalis said that it is permissible to treat witchcraft with witchcraft in cases of

necessity, but the other view is that it is not permissible, and this second view is the one that is correct. … Witchcraft is haraam and constitutes kufr. Would anyone do an act of kufr in order to help people who are sick or bewitched?

End quote from Fataawa wa Rasaa'il al-Shaykh Muahmmad ibn Ibraaheem (1/165).

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen al-Mukhtaar al-Shanqeeti said: The correct view that should not be ignored with regard to this matter is that there is nothing wrong with undoing witchcraft if that is done by means of the Qur'aan, such as al-Mi'wadhatayn, Aayat al-Kursiy and other verses which it is permissible to use as ruqyahs. But if it is done by means of witchcraft or foreign phrases or things that cannot be understood, or by some other thing that is not permissible, then this is not allowed. This is clear and is the correct view, in sha Allaah. End quote from Adwa' al-Bayaan (4/465).

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn 'Abd-Allaah ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling on treating witchcraft with witchcraft in cases of necessity. He replied: It is not permissible to treat witchcraft with witchcraft, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about nashrah (undoing spells) and he said: "It is the work of the shaytaan." Nashrah (undoing spells) means treating witchcraft with witchcraft. And because undoing spells by means of witchcraft involves calling upon the jinn and seeking their help, and this is major shirk. Hence Allaah tells us that the two angels said to those who wanted to learn from them (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)'"

[al-Baqarah 2:102].

Before this, Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"They followed what the Shayaateen (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime of Sulaymaan (Solomon). Sulaymaan did not disbelieve, but the Shayaateen (devils) disbelieved,

teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Haaroot and Maaroot”

[al-Baqarah 2:102]

Then Allaah says (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).’ And from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between man and his wife, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allaah’s Leave. And they learn that which harms them and profits them not. And indeed they knew that the buyers of it (magic) would have no share in the Hereafter. And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their ownselves, if they but knew.

103. And if they had believed and guarded themselves from evil and kept their duty to Allaah, far better would have been the reward from their Lord, if they but knew!”

[al-Baqarah 2:102, 103]

In these two verses there is a warning against learning witchcraft or teaching it, expressed in several ways such as: stating that it is the work of the shaytaan; learning it is kufr that annuls faith; it may result in separation between a man and his wife, which is one of the worst kinds of wrongdoing and corruption on earth; no harm or anything else happens except by the will of Allaah, i.e., His universal will; this learning will harm them and not benefit them; and the one who does that has no share of goodness with Allaah, and this is a very stern warning which should deter anyone from learning or teaching witchcraft; Allaah condemns them for learning this witchcraft as He says “And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their ownselves”; and Allaah tells them that this deed annuls faith and piety. From all of the above it is clear to every Muslim how strictly forbidden it is to learn or teach witchcraft, and how much evil and harm there is in it, and in addition to that it is kufr after having believed, and apostasy from Islam. We seek refuge with Allaah from that. So we must beware of it. It is sufficient for the Muslim to treat problems in the manner prescribed in sharee’ah and with permissible remedies, instead of treating

it with that which Allaah has forbidden in sharee'ah. And Allaah is the Source of strength. End quote. Majallat al-Da'wah, dated 10/11/1414 AH.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling on undoing spells.

He replied: The correct view on undoing spells for one who has been bewitched is that the issue falls into two categories:

1 – When it is done by means of the Holy Qur'aan, du'aa's that are prescribed in sharee'ah and permissible remedies. There is nothing wrong with this because they serve an interest and do not have any negative consequences, and they may in fact be required because they are beneficial and not harmful.

2 – When the spell is undone by means of something haraam such as undoing the spell by means of another spell. This is a subject concerning which there was a difference of scholarly opinion, and some scholars allowed it in the case of necessity.

And some scholars forbade it because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about nashrah (undoing spells) and he said: "It is the work of the shaytaan." Narrated by Abu Dawood and its isnaad is jayyid. Based on that, undoing spells with spells is haraam, and the person must turn to Allaah by making du'aa' and humbly beseeching Him to remove the harm. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor)"

[al-Baqarah 2:186]

"Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls on Him, and Who removes the evil, and makes you inheritors of the earth, generations after generations? Is there any ilaah (god) with Allaah? Little is that you remember!"

[al-Naml 27:62]

And Allaah is the Source of strength. End quote from Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (1/238, 239).

The Standing Committee was asked about the ruling on undoing a spell with another spell and they replied:

That is not permissible, and the basic principle concerning that is that which was narrated by Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawood from Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked about nashrah (undoing spells) and he said: “That is the work of the Shaytaan.”

Natural remedies and remedies prescribed in sharee’ah are sufficient: “Allaah has not sent down any disease but He has also sent down a cure; those who know it know it, and those who do not know it do not know it.” The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) enjoined treating disease, but he forbade treating disease with haraam things. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Treat disease, but do not treat disease with haraam things.” And it was narrated that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah does not put your healing in something haraam.” End quote.

Fataawa Muhimmah li ‘Umoom al-Ummah (107, 106).

Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Jibreen (may Allaah preserve him) said:

It is not permissible to undo a spell with another spell, by asking the practitioner of witchcraft to undo his work which is witchcraft, because that implies approval of him and his work, when in fact he is to be executed once it is known and proven that he is a practitioner of witchcraft. The hadd punishment is striking with the sword. Similarly, it is not permissible to go to another practitioner of witchcraft to ask him to undo that spell, because that also implies approval of him, which is like approving of his actions. End quote.

Shaykh Saalih al-Faqzaan (may Allaah preserve him) was asked about the ruling on undoing a spell

with another spell. He replied:

As for undoing a spell with another spell, many scholars have stated that this is not permissible, because treatment should only be with that which is halaal and permissible. Allaah does not put the healing of the Muslims in that which He has forbidden to them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Treat sickness but do not treat it with anything that is haraam.”

And it was narrated that Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: Allaah has not put your cure in something that He has forbidden to you. Among the most forbidden things is witchcraft, so it is not permissible to treat sickness with it or to undo spells with it. Rather spells are to be undone by means of permissible remedies, Qur’aanic verses and du’aa’s narrated in the Sunnah. This is how spells may be undone. End quote from al-Muntaqa min Fataawa Fadeelat al-Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan (2/132, 133).