223174 - Extraordinary events that happen at the hands of non-Muslims are a test and a trial

the question

What is the ruling on the following incidents?
1. A priest or monk puts the cross on the face of a blind Muslim child, and speaks in the name of Christ, and he sprinkles water on him, and he gains his sight. Is this not real, and is it only acting, or is it real and did he use magic to restore the child’s sight, or does it happen by the wisdom of Allah?
2. A Christian nun called upon a dead saint, asking him to heal her of Parkinson’s disease, and he answered her prayer. Please note that he was dead, and the disease disappeared and she was healed. Is this a lie or a true story?
What should we Muslims do and believe when we see disbelievers, such as priests and monks, treating the sick with the cross, and in the name of Christ, then healing takes place? Should we say that it is magic and charlatanry and tricks, or should we say that it is acting, or should we say that this healing came from Allah alone, based on divine wisdom and as a test for the believers?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If you hear or see such stories, reports and cases, then remember two important things, that should be constantly borne in mind:

1.

Remember the Dajjaal, who is mentioned in mutawaatir hadiths which tell us that he will emerge at the end of time; the books of Saheeh and Sunans are filled with such reports, in which it is

proven that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, will cause a number of apparently extraordinary feats to occur at his hands, as a test to people, to see whether they will follow him or reject him, because fitnah and trials cannot occur except through such great extraordinary feats, to the extent of raising the dead, causing crops to grow, bringing down rain, talking to animals, and so on. After that, will you believe any proponent of falsehood who claims to confirm his falsehood with some extraordinary feats?

Can anyone other than the Dajjaal – among these practitioners of magic, charlatans, priests, monks, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus and atheists, and others who we see today performing extraordinary feats – can all of these people be stronger in influence and do greater extraordinary feats and performances, than the Dajjaal, such that we would believe in their religions and reject the Dajjaal?

Imam ash-Shaatibi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Not every extraordinary feat that occurs at the hands of the human being is a karaamah (miracle). Rather some of them may be karaamaat, whilst others are not.

To explain with examples: those who try to control things by concentrating their thoughts, and those who deal with astrology, may perform extraordinary feats, but it is all darkness upon darkness, and there is no way it could be sound or valid

If it involves focusing one's thoughts on a thing until those thoughts have an impact on it, that is not proven by any religious text, and there is no basis for it at all. Rather the basis for that is philosophical and it has no basis in religious teaching. Even if this extraordinary feat, having an impact on the object, happens, that does not prove that it is sound or valid. It may even have a visible impact in the form of killing or wounding, and that impact may be reached by means of magic or the evil eye, and the like, but that does not prove that it is sound or valid. Rather it is completely invalid and is pure transgression. The common folk are usually deceived by that, as are many of the elite.

End quote from al-Muwaafaqaat (2/444-446)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

You will find that in many such cases, their evidence to support their belief that someone is a wali or close friend of Allah is that he foretold some future events, or performed some extraordinary feats, such as pointing to a person and he died, or flying through the air to Makkah or elsewhere, or walking on water, or filling a vessel out of thin air, or spending some time in the unseen, or sometimes disappearing from people's view, or people sought his help when he was absent or dead, then they saw him come and meet their needs, or telling people what has been stolen from them, or telling them how an absent loved one is doing, or healing a sick person, and so on.

There is nothing in any of these cases to indicate that the one who does them is a wali or close friend of Allah. Rather the close friends of Allah are unanimously agreed that if a man flies through the air or walks on water, no one should be deceived by him until he examines how closely he follows the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the extent to which he complies with his commands and prohibitions.

The karaamaat (miracles) of the awliya' (close friends of Allah) are greater than these things. Even though the one who does these extraordinary feats may be a wali or close friend of Allah, he may also be an enemy of Allah, because these extraordinary feats may be done by many of the disbelievers, polytheists, people of the Book and hypocrites, or they may be done by followers of innovation and may even be done by the devils.

So it is not permissible to think that everyone who performs some of these feats is a close friend of Allah. Rather the close friends of Allah are to be recognised by their attributes, deeds and character as indicated by the Qur'an and Sunnah, and they are to be recognised by the light of faith and the Qur'an, and the level of faith they have in their hearts, and how they comply with the outward teachings of Islam.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (11/213)

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said:

Among the various types of polytheists – such as the polytheists of the Arabs, and the polytheists of the Indians, Turks, Greeks and others – there are those who strive to seek knowledge, practice asceticism and engage in worship, but they are not following the Messengers, and they do not believe in the message they brought or accept what they told people, and they do not obey their commands. Such people are not believers and are not close friends of Allah; rather the devils become their close companions, and they descend upon them. So (these charlatans) may disclose some matters of the unseen to people, and they have extraordinary feats that are akin to magic. They are of the same ilk as the soothsayers and magicians upon whom the devils descend. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Shall I inform you (O people!) upon whom the Shayaateen (devils) descend?”

[ash-Shu‘ara’ 26:221].

All of those who claim to be able to predict the future and perform extraordinary feats, if they are not following the Messengers, are inevitably lying, the devils are inevitably lying to them, and among their deeds there are inevitably actions that constitute sin and immorality, such as some type of shirk, wrongdoing, shameful deeds, exaggeration or innovation in worship. Therefore the devils descend upon them and become their close companions, and they become close friends of the Shaytaan, not close friends of the Most Gracious. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whosoever turns away (blinds himself) from the remembrance of the Most Beneficent (Allah) (i.e. this Quran and worship of Allah), We appoint for him Shaitan (Satan devil) to be a Qareen (an intimate companion) to him”

[az-Zukhruf 43:36].

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (11/172)

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Extraordinary feats may be granted to a heretic by way of letting him get carried away and

become misguided, just as they may be granted to one who is strong and true in faith by way of honour and blessing. The only way to know the difference between them is by seeing which of them is following the Qur'an and Sunnah.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (12/385)

Secondly:

With regard to this issue, most – if not all – of what is circulated in the media today and what people see with their own eyes, that they think of as extraordinary feats, is nothing but tricks, deceit and optical illusions, or acting, no more and no less, to the point that believing that such things are extraordinary feats is very naive and foolish. There are dozens of research-based documentaries that explain these tricks and tell it as it is, explaining the methods of acting used by those who are involved in these so-called feats. The most recent example is what happened to one of the most famous magicians, who flew through the air before an audience, but soon the media showed what really happened, which was that he was suspended by very fine yet very strong threads that were barely visible to the eye.

For more information, please see: Talbees Iblees by Ibn al-Jawzi (p. 340-342)

We have also previously explained on our website that it is haraam to seek ruqyah from non-Muslims, especially priests and monks. Please see the following questions: 180492 and 147094

Conclusion:

Most of what appears of extraordinary feats performed by people other than the righteous slaves of Allah is only tricks, deceit and acting. If any such thing happens for real, then it is more akin to the actions of magicians and soothsayers, or happens with the help of the jinn and the Shaytaan. The most that can be said of any of them is that he is like the Dajjal – then what?!

And Allah knows best.