40924 - Advice to a fortune teller who reads coffee cups

the question

A woman reads coffee cups [i.e., reads the grounds left behind in a cup of Arabic coffee – akin to the western practice of fortunetelling by reading tea-leaves – Translator], and she advertises her name in one of the immoral magazines. I hope you can offer some advice.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This question involves two issues:

1 – The ruling on this action.

Undoubtedly fortunetelling, witchcraft and astrology are among the most serious of evil actions and corruption on earth and harming the Muslims unlawfully.

The scholars differed as to whether the fortuneteller is to be regarded as a kaafir who is beyond the pale of Islam, or whether it is a lesser form of kufr. Those who say that this makes him a kaafir quoted as evidence the hadeeth narrated by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (9171), which says that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever comes to a fortune-teller or soothsayer and believes him has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad.” *Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 5942.*

This also involves claiming to have knowledge of the unseen, and whoever claims to have knowledge of the unseen is a kaafir. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“(He Alone is) the All-Knower of the Ghayb (Unseen), and He reveals to none His Ghayb (Unseen).”

27. Except to a Messenger (from mankind) whom He has chosen (He informs him of the Unseen as

much as He likes)” [al-Jinn 72:25-26]

“Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (Unseen) except Allaah” [al-Naml 27:65]

2 – Our advice to this woman who does this thing is that she should give it up and keep away from it, and repent to Allaah, because this action is one of the major sins that doom a person to Hell. She should fear Allaah and not annoy the Muslims by means of this evil action. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, they bear (on themselves) the crime of slander and plain sin” [al-Ahzaab 33:58]

So she has to repent to Allaah from this action before the Angel of Death comes to her suddenly and the time for regret is over. She has to turn to her Lord, in Whose hand is all benefit and harm, in all her affairs, and not let the Shaytaan trick her and lead her to Hell – we seek refuge in Allaah.

Her actions are a source of temptation and trial to those Muslims who are weak in faith. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, those who put into trial the believing men and believing women (by torturing them and burning them), and then do not turn in repentance (to Allaah), then they will have the torment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the burning Fire” [al-Burooj 85:10]

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Astrology, palm-reading, reading coffee cups, divination, and other things practised by fortunetellers and practitioners of witchcraft are all sciences of jaahiliyyah which are forbidden by Allaah and His Messenger, and are actions which Islam came to declare false and warn against doing them or going to those who do them and asking them about anything or believing what they say – because that is knowledge of the unseen which Allaah has kept to Himself.

Our advice to everyone who has anything to do with these things is to repent to Allaah and seek His forgiveness, and to put their trust in Allaah Alone in all their affairs, whilst also taking the

appropriate means as prescribed or permitted in sharee'ah. They should give up these things and keep away from them, and beware of asking these people anything or believing them, in obedience to Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and so as to protect their religious beliefs and commitment, and for fear of the anger of Allaah, and so as to keep away from the things that lead to shirk and kufr, which if a person dies believing such things he will be a loser in this world and in the Hereafter. *Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 2/120-122*

We should also note here that whatever this woman takes in payment for this evil and haraam work is haraam income, because of the hadeeth narrated in Saheeh al-Bukhaari (2237) and Saheeh Muslim (1567) from Abu Mas'ood al-Ansaari (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade the price of a dog, the wages of a prostitute and the payment made to a fortuneteller.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on this hadeeth (10/490): Al-Baghawi, one of our companions, and al-Qaadi 'Iyaad said: the Muslims are agreed that the payment made to a fortuneteller is haraam, because it is payment for something forbidden, and because it consuming people's wealth unlawfully.