9338 - The Rifaa’is who stab themselves with knives but are not affected by it

the question

What is your opinion of those who call themselves daraaweesh (pl. of darweesh or “dervish”) and stab themselves with knives, daggers, etc? Whilst they do that, before they say “Ya Allaah (O Allaah)”, they say, “Ya Rifaa’i (O Rifaa’i).” What is the shar’i view of this? Is there any evidence (daleel) for what they do? May Allaah reward you with good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

They are liars and cheats. There is no basis for their actions. In fact they are tricksters who use things to deceive the people so that the people will think that they are stabbing themselves when that is not really the case. It is a trick whereby they deceive the eye and bewitch people. This is like what Allaah said about the sorcerers of Pharaoh, that they were trying to frighten the people and that they bewitched their eyes. The point is that it is not permissible to believe in this kind of people – evildoers and deceivers – who have no basis for what they do. They are liars and tricksters who deceive people. When they call upon al-Rifaa’i, or anybody else, this is shirk akbar (major shirk), as is the case of one who says “O Rifaa’i” or “O Messenger of Allaah, grant us victory: or “intercede for us” or “O ‘Ali” or “O Seedi” or “O Husayn” or “Ya Seedi al-Badawi” and so on. All of that is shirk akbar and it is all worship of people or things other than Allaah. All of that is like the actions of those who worship graves, and those who worshipped al-Laat and al-‘Uzza and their ilk. It is shirk akbar – we seek refuge in Allaah from that. When these people stab themselves with daggers and knives, it is trickery and deception which has no basis; by doing this they are liars and evildoers. The authorities – if there are Muslim rulers in their countries – have to put a stop to this, and they must punish them and discipline them until they repent from their evil actions.