

A bu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Whoever goes to a fortune teller or soothsayer and believes what he says disbelieves in what has been revealed to Muhammad.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿With Him are the keys to what lies beyond the reach of human perception: none knows them but He. He knows all that the land and sea contain; not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, nor anything fresh or dry but is recorded in a clear book.﴾ (6: 59)
- ﴿We have indeed set up in the heavens constellations, and endowed them with beauty for all to behold, (16) and We have guarded them from every cursed devil, (17) so that anyone who tries to eavesdrop is pursued by a flame clear to see.﴾ (15: 16-18)
- ﴿Say: 'None in the heavens or earth knows what is hidden except God. Nor can they ever perceive when they shall be raised from the dead'. (65) Indeed the total sum of their knowledge stops short of comprehending the Hereafter. Nay, they are in doubt of it. Nay, they are blind to it.﴾ (27: 65-66)
- ﴿Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He it is who sends down rain; and He knows what the wombs contain; whereas no one knows what they will earn tomorrow, and no one knows in what land they will die. God alone is omniscient and takes cognisance of all things.﴾ (31: 34)

The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that whoever goes to a fortune teller or anyone who claims to know what God has kept for Himself, and believes him in what he says, his action takes him to disbelief. It may even take him totally outside the religion of Islam or bring him very close to such.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3904; al-Tirmidhī, 135; al-Nasāī, 9017; Ibn Mājah, 639.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns his community against believing fortune tellers and other liars who claim to know things beyond the human world. He tells us that whoever goes to any such person who has contact with the jinn, learning from them what they might have heard about future events that no human being can learn, or others who use various means of deception, such as horoscopes or star readings, etc. and believes their claims actually disbelieves in God and His Messenger.



Such a person is an unbeliever because his action implies disbelief in what God says: 'None in the heavens or earth knows what is hidden except God'. (27: 65) However, the person who believes such people, thinking that what they say is something that humans may learn, unaware that it is something that God has kept for Himself, may not be considered as an unbeliever.



God has made this a part of the trial that distinguishes believers from unbelievers. A fortune teller may come up with some true information. An ignorant person who notes this will imagine that the fortune teller truly knows the future. Yet the reality is different. Some of his companions asked the Prophet about fortune tellers. He said: 'They are nothing'. They said: 'Messenger of God, sometimes they say something and it turns out to be true'. He said: 'That is a word he hears from a jinni. The jinni would have snatched it and knocks it into his crony's ear like the clucking of a hen, but they mix with it more than a hundred lies'.⁽¹⁾



The jinn used to climb up towards the sky, mounting one on the back of another, thus enabling the top one to listen stealthily to angels. He would then pass what he heard to the one below him and it went down until it reached the one who whispered it to the fortune teller, and the fortune teller then added to it. At the dawn of Islam, as the Qur'an was being revealed, the skies were guarded and shooting flames were sent on the jinn. The only thing left to them was their stealthy listening and what the top jinni snatches and passes on before the shooting flame hits him. This is referred to in the Qur'an: 'We have adorned the skies nearest to the earth with stars, (6) and have made them secure against every rebellious devil. (7) Thus, they cannot eavesdrop on the ones on high, but shall be repelled from all sides, (8) driven away, with lasting suffering in store for them. (9) If any of them stealthily snatches away a fragment, he will be pursued by a piercing flame'.⁽²⁾ (37: 6-10)



A person who goes to a fortune teller or a similar claimer out of curiosity and does not believe what he says ruins his good deeds for forty nights. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever goes to a fortune teller and asks him about something, none of his prayers will be accepted for forty nights'.⁽³⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5884.

2 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, Vol. 10, p. 216.

3 Related by Muslim, 2230.

Implementation



In olden days, people would go to a fortune teller. Today, with easier ways of communication, the fortune teller comes to you on your smart phone or a website, or a news item you read or listen to, or a horoscope you consult. The ways of fortune telling today are numerous, but they all constitute lies and deception. All of them must be shunned.



Included in fortune telling is the practice when a person goes to someone who claims to use a method to cure illness. He asks his visitor for a piece of his clothing, or asks his name and his mother's name, then writes for him some symbols or incomprehensible words or gives him a charm or something similar. Such people are also false fortune tellers and they must not be consulted.



People are of two types: followers of God's messengers and followers of fortune tellers. No person can follow both. Indeed, a person removes himself away from God's Messenger (peace be upon him) by as much as he draws closer to a fortune teller. He denies God's Messenger in as much as he believes the fortune teller.⁽¹⁾



The essence of faith is that a person believes in God alone, submitting himself totally to Him, looking for none else, entertaining no hope of benefit or protection from harm by anyone other than Him.



Beware of going to fortune tellers of any type and believing them. This means loss of faith and disbelief in the religion of Islam.



The hadith makes clear that believing fortune tellers means disbelief in Islam, and that going to them without believing them is a major sin. It is not permissible for a Muslim to visit them or visit their websites, either in earnest or in jest.



Accept what God has given you. Know that what God has concealed from us is only for our own comfort. Therefore, we must not try to remove the curtain from what has been concealed, because this will only increase our burdens and problems.

1 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān min Maşāyid al-Shayṭān*, Vol. 1, p. 253.

