

SORCERY AND ITS MENACE AMONG MUSLIMS: ISLAMIC DA'WAH IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper is a contribution and a piece of Da'wah towards enlightening Muslims on the menace of sorcery and sorcerers. The work has highlighted some of the major reasons why some Muslims with weak Iman seek the help of sorcerers for worldly things thereby harming their fellow being. It is therefore, the application of Islamic Da'wah that would assist in reminding Muslims in avoiding the menace of sorcery. It has been discovered from the interview that sorcerers have destroyed many family relationships and created damage to some marriages, also economic backward to sorcery goers. The paper also found out that some sorcery goers do regret their actions after coming in contact with the truth. This study was conducted using a survey method, and data were collected through in-depth interviews. The results of this study showed the need for a sustainable Da'wah to combat the issue of sorcery and sorcerers that have become a menace among Muslims which have affected their Iman. The study recommended that there was an urgent need for engagement of various stakeholders in Nigeria and beyond, to checkmate the issue of sorcerers and their activities in the society.

Keywords: Sorcery, Sorcerers, Menace, Muslims, Da'wah



A. Introduction

Islam is a comprehensive way of life that covers every facet of human existence and offers direction for achieving success in both worlds. Islam is a divine faith made known to all of mankind by Allah (the Most-High), the Lord of all worlds (Ali, 1989). Through Da'wah, the religion was communicated to a large number of people who reacted favourably to the call of Islam and accepted it as a religion. Within ten years of its revelation, many nations, including both Arabs and non-Arabs, came under the control of Islam. The primary responsibility of Scholars who are the heirs of Prophets is Da'wah, which entails spreading the message of Islam to non-Muslims as well as instructing and guiding believers constantly (Poston, 1992). One of the important obligations of Muslims is to preach the truth and bring the unbelievers to Islam (Arnold, 1976). In order for people to guard against all un-Islamic trends in all of their manifestations, Allah (the Most-High) laid down the basic fundamentals for human guidance in the Qur'an. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is a universal Messenger to all of humanity in addition to being the seal of Prophets. Almighty Allah states in the Glorious Qur'an;

Muhammad (*Sal-Allaahu 'alayhe Wa Sallam*) is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of Allah and the Last (end) of the Prophets. and Allah is ever All-Aware of everything (Qur'an,33:40).

He also said;

And we have not sent You (O Muhammad *Sal-Allaahu 'alayhe Wa Sallam*) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to All mankind, but Most of men know not (Qur'an, 34:28).

Allah (the Most-High) have inspired His Prophet with the truth and sent to him the Qur'an in order to invite mankind to Islam and lead those who believe from the depths of darkness into light.

Allah has prepared for them a Severe torment. so, fear Allah and keep Your duty to him, O men of understanding who have believed! - Allah has indeed sent down to You a Reminder (this Qur'an). (and has also sent to you) a Messenger (Muhammad *Sal-Allaahu 'alayhe Wa Sallam*), who recites to You the Verses of Allah (the Qur'an) containing clear explanations, that He may take out, those who believe and do righteous good deeds from the darkness (of polytheism and disbelief) to the light (of Monotheism and true Faith). and Whosoever believes In Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will admit Him into Gardens under which rivers flow

(Paradise), to Dwell therein forever. Allah has indeed granted for Him an excellent provision (Qur'an, 65:10-11).

Islam is, therefore, a true universal religion and a light to all mankind as such its *Da'wah* is geared towards shaping humanity, both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Since Islam is the religion for the whole mankind, it is therefore imperative to invite and call the whole of mankind to follow its teachings and avoid any act that would jeopardise his Iman (faith).

In modern time, people turn to sorcerers to help them navigate life's numerous obstacles. Most of them, if not all of them, are aware that Allah is the One who can find a solution to any issue, especially one that has to do with spirituality or the unseen (*ghayb*). They are also aware that He is the only One who can assist us in meeting life's obstacles. They are also aware that using sorcery is wicked. Perhaps some of them are aware of the negative effects of consulting sorcerers and fortune tellers for assistance. Nonetheless, they become distracted while in a desperate situation.

In other words, individuals use sorcery as a means of escaping the harsh realities of life. They utilise sorcery because they disregard—or claim not to know—that man (the son of Adam) has been granted superiority over jinn, whom they employ for sorcery. They reject accepting that life comes with its own obstacles, difficulties, and tests. They therefore decide to handle things themselves.

And indeed, We have fully explained to mankind, In This Qur'an, Every kind of similitude, but Most mankind refuse (the Truth and Accept nothing) but disbelief (Qur'an, 17:89).

Since the earliest human cultures, sorcery has been believed in and practiced, and it still believed to plays a significant spiritual, religious and medicinal role in many cultures around the world today. Sorcery is often viewed with suspicion by the wider community, and is sometimes practiced in solitude and secrecy (Mauss, 1972).

B. Research Method

This study is carried out with a qualitative approach, focusing on observing works, literature, academic research, videos, digital sources, and historical archives. All data collected are analyzed through explanatory analysis methods, where the main approach is to use reason in understanding social phenomena, with historical, and sociological lenses.

C. Result and Discussion

Conceptualising Sorcery

Sorcery is masculine in gender. Like magic, it is a learned art. Sorcery, however, consists of the malevolent and malignant side of magic or medicine and it is always harmful for the victim and beneficial for the operator. Sorcery negates the wholly beneficent purpose of medicine whose peaceful and tranquil quality is utilized towards the accomplishment of healing. To this extent, there is a sense in which sorcery could be referred to as the exploitation and abuse of the knowledge of medicine and magic. It is for this reason that it is often referred to as black magic or bad medicine. Technically speaking, sorcery involves the use of poisonous ingredients (both physical and spiritual), introduced into food or drink and given to an unsuspecting victim, or introduced into someone's body without his/her knowledge or consent. Sorcery is the use of poisons, in a magical, antisocial and secret fashion. It usually takes the form of spells, curses and poisoning of an unsuspecting victim with medicinal substances (Danfulani, 2012: 3).

Sorcery is specifically associated with human agency and utilises supernatural means to achieve personal gains (e.g., good luck, health, fecundity) or inflict harm to others. Importantly, the association of sorcery with harmful intentions and selfishness suggests that such beliefs and practices may be associated with disruptions in societies' cooperative efforts by endorsing self-favoritism. On a population scale, widespread sorcery beliefs and practices have been shown to damage interpersonal cooperation and trust (Gershman, 2016).

The term "sorcerer" is typically used to describe someone who is thought to damage others through the anti-social, unlawful practise of magic, whereas the term "witch" refers to someone who is thought to harm others through the possession of a specific type of personality.

Sorcery is a practical, deliberate practice that entails magical actions and gives the practitioner personal power. The texts, techniques, rituals, or other elements of magic as they are understood in their culture must typically be learned by sorcerers; this knowledge is typically esoteric and not accessible to the general public (Kapferer, 1997).

Sorcery and magic are pervasive and common in Muslim communities all throughout the world (Rassool, 2018). The broad concepts of magic, sorcery, divination, or occultism encompass a variety of practises. Divination aims to "predict future events or gather information about things unseen," but magic or sorcery attempts to alter the course of events by often appealing to a supernatural force. A few of these include defence against bad spirits, the evil eye, demons, and wicked jinn, which are thought to bring "disease, poverty, and daily sorrows." Rituals that aim to provide "good fortune, health, higher status, honour, and power" are an alternative. Evocation, lottery, the manufacture of amulets, and other magical implements are some of the techniques (Savage-Smith, 2004). According to Kruk (2005), magic is a "vital element of everyday life and practise" in both the modern and mediaeval Islamic worlds, with the subject matter inspiring a staggering volume of literature.

Magic and sorcery are an attempt to understand, experience and influence the world using rituals, symbols, actions, gestures and language (Hutton, 1991). The Arabic word translated in this passage as "magic" is *sihr*. The etymological meaning of *sihr* suggests that, it is the turning of a thing from its true nature or form to something else which is unreal or a mere appearance.

Da'wah

According to Abu Ammar (2016), Da'wah, an Arabic term, means to invite. Essentially, Da'wah has two dimensions: external and internal. External Da'wah is to invite non-Muslims to Islam and teach them about Islamic beliefs and practices. Internal Da'wah is to teach Muslims about aspects of Islam.

Da'wah is a *fard kifaya* (an obligation that rests upon the community, not the individual), if there are individuals within a community inviting people to Da'wah, then others within the community are relieved of the obligation. If no-one in the community issues the invitation, the sin falls on every individual within that community (Ammar, 2016). A person who performs Da'wah is known as a *da'i* (persons carrying out Da'wah duty). Although their effectiveness will vary according to their ability, all *da'i* (those carrying out Da'wah) should be, at the very least, familiar with the basic teachings of Islam (Ammar, 2016).

Technical meaning of *Da'wah*: It has two broad applications in this context: The first is with the meaning of Islam as a religion and the Message sent to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) that is the true call of worship to Allah alone and to be far from polytheism. It is the

comprehensive principle for the behavioural act of mankind as well as the establishment of rights and commandments. The second meaning is the extensive spread of Islam and the message of Allah to the People (Arrawi 1965). In the Qur'an, Almighty Allah says instructing the believers and guiding them to the successful way of calling to the Path of Allah:

Invite (mankind, O Muhammad) to the Way of Your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them In a Way that is better. Truly, Your Lord knows best who has gone astray from his path, and He is the best Aware of those who are guided (Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl:125).

Ibn Taimiyah sees *Da'wah* as belief and having trust in Allah, calling to the word of testimony with full identification of good application of the teaching of Islam which includes, consideration of the five compulsory daily Prayers, giving out of *Zakat*, Fasting the month of *Ramadan*, Pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah, as well as to believe in Allah, His Angel, His Books, His Messengers, Day of Resurrection after death, good and bad destiny and to worship Allah as if you are seeing Him (Ibn Taimiyyah nd). Shukri Ahmad Muwaffaq defined *Da'wah* as motivating people over doing good deed and keeping away from evil attitude, by bringing the people out from the darkness of *Kufr* to the Light of Islam (Shukri 1988). As a career, *Da'wah* should be carried out practically and verbally by a knowledgeable and qualified scholar and to be in accordance with the legitimate methods and strategies in line with the circumstances of those to be invited at anytime and anywhere.

Reasons Advance for Sorcery in the Society

Amidst some of the feasible motives, for which people resort to sorcerers and fortune-tellers, are discuss in the following headings; weakness of Iman, materialism and love of the world, hatred and jealousy and sense of insecurity. The most major factor is weakness of Iman (faith).

Weakness of Iman

The world we live in now is a temporary home. It is therefore rife with trials, tribulations, and tests. The development of true *Iman* (faith) occurs along the way. Then a powerful Iman is discovered and distinguished from a weak one. The difference between a true and false Iman is then established.

The son of Adam gets desperate during testing, trials, and tragedies. Depending on how much faith he places in Allah, this desperation is directed. Also, it depends on how often he thinks to himself about how many blessings Allah has bestowed him. Also, it relies on how quickly he regains his composure and endurance. When someone doesn't turn to God for help with whatever issue they are facing, their faith erodes. He loses patience and fails to recognise Allah's blessings upon him, which causes his faith to further deteriorate. When he views challenges as a form of punishment rather than a source of strength, he further falls victim to the devil. He turns into a gullible victim of the devil and of evil at that point. That's where mankind is deluded to pursue and realise his goals in order to live life to the fullest. He believes he can seek pleasure to the utmost, neglecting the fact that pleasure can only be fully realised in Paradise.

When a person's Iman is compromised, they begin to reject the teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) *Sunnah*. Also, he begins to doubt Allah's judgement and wisdom. Then he challenges Islam. In fact, despite the knowledge that this life is a place for trials, tests, and tribulations, he places all blame on others and on Allah rather than considering what he may have done wrong that may have contributed to his potential sorrow.

According to recorded history, neither the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) nor any of his companions ever briefly rejected any revelation found in the Qur'an or any instruction he gave. That was a result of their strong *Iman*, which they carried inside them. In light of this, there is no narration that mentions any of them dealing with Sir or having been a sorcerer. We lose sight of our duties in this world when our Iman falls. And we fall short of realising, appreciating, and upholding our life's mission. Then, we exhibit extreme materialism.

It's significant to note that frailty of Iman is one the causes why some people turn sorcery. The *Iman* is further weakened to the lowest degree by seeing sorcerers and fortune tellers. Hence, materialism and a love of the temporary world are major reasons why people seek the services of sorcerers.

Materialism and Love of the World

Materialism is one of the reasons people resort to sorcerers and fortune tellers for assistance. In contrast to spiritual or ethical principles, materialism is the interest in and desire

for money, possessions, etc. This is equivalent to loving the fleeting world. The son of Adam worships anything (other than Allah) that he mistakenly believes can fulfil his desired needs and wishes due to materialism and his love of the worldly world. All unlawful actions become legal if desires are worshipped.

Have You seen Him who takes his own lust (vain desires) as his *Ilah* (God), and Allah knowing (him as such), left Him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who Then will Guide Him after Allah? Will You not Then remember? (Qur'an, 45:23).

Once this occurs, nothing a sorcery goer does should surprise us. Upon reaching this stage, a sorcery goer seeks help from sorcerers and fortune-tellers to possess everything that the soul may desire in this world, i.e., wealth, fame, power, beauty, attraction, sex, etc.

It makes sense then that some of the most significant figures in the lives of the masses are said to have interacted with sorcery and fortune-tellers. Celebrities, sportsmen, politicians, public speakers, false religious figures, etc. are part of this. The majority of these people lose what they have obtained through sorcery as soon as its effects wear off. Not only do they lose everything, but they also endure a variety of humiliations, pains, and unexpected deaths.

The sorcery goer when observed critically, it will be realised that sorcery and fortune telling are all about achieving material success. None of them are connected to the next life. Nobody practises sorcery, deals with them, or tries to deal with them in order to enter the Hereafter (*Akhirah*)! To put it another way, nobody practises sorcery in order to enter the Paradise. This is due to the fact that the jinn who are summoned during sorcery and their allies (the sorcerers) are conscious of the fact that their actions would negate any share of benefits and good rewards awaiting mankind and jinn in the Hereafter. In relation to this, Allah says in *Surah al-Baqarah*:

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 own selves, if they but knew (Qur'an, 2:102).

Thus, some choose to be rich at all cost in this life. Some choose to be knowledgeable all they ever imagined in this life. Some choose to be honorable by all possible means in this life. Some choose to be rulers in this life etc. In the end, they can only attain what could have been theirs and would have come to them, even if they didn't deal with sorcery. But they

refused to endure the journey of life with a little bit of patience and gratification. When people compete for the gains of this temporal life, one of the common heart diseases you see among them is hatred and jealousy. And the more jealousy and hatred they develop, the more they engage in sorcery activities.

Hatred and Jealousy

Besides weakness of *Iman* and materialism, hatred and jealousy have been two of the main factors that push people to resort to sorcerers and fortune-tellers. Some people just can't stand to see in front of them anyone (they perceive to be) better than them, be it financially, socially, or intellectually. Of course, they are made to forget that people are created to be different in all aspects of life, even in the amount of bounties Allah bestows upon them. Since the devil has easy control over people with hatred and jealousy, as their *Iman* has weakened, he fuels more hatred and jealousy in their hearts to instigate more separation and unrest in human communities. The more kindness you show a person with hatred and jealousy, the more hatred he pays you with. There's nothing you can do to change them. The best you should do is to seek refuge in Allah from evil, and He will distance all evil from you.

These sorcery goers have forgotten that, sorcerers are the ones who create more conflicts among them in the families and communities. Neighbours may be seeing the same sorcerer, who instigates each of them against the other. This is true and real. And it happens among co-workers, siblings, bosses and their subordinates, spouses. Some people may be innocently living a normal life somewhere, someone, elsewhere, is busy; calculating and working on how to take such person to a sorcerer, just to see his downfall.

It's unfortunate, that people who do this fail to understand, that they gain nothing but loss. They incur loss upon loss. The only thing they gain is that they please *Iblis* at the expense of serving their purpose in life, for which they were created; that is to worship Allah alone, and not associate anyone or anything with Him in His divinity. As you've observed, people with hatred and jealousy suffer from insecurity, and that alone is another factor, for which some people see sorcerers and fortune tellers.

Sense of Insecurity

Nothing causes mankind to lose his mind as much as sense of insecurity does. This is because one of the greatest blessings Allah has bestowed upon mankind is security. However,

the best form of security is the inner security. Possessing all sorts of worldly possessions with lack of inner-security means mankind still have a lot to fix. However, possessing inner-security while lacking any of the worldly possessions give mankind happiness and satisfaction. Inner security is attained when one develops the belief that, no single cent or penny will enter his/her purse or go out of it, without the will and permission of Allah, the Almighty. Once mankind has this, he/she enjoys a good sleep. With mankind enjoy his days filled with countless blessings. Inner-security prevents mankind from greediness, oppression, injustice, telling lies, and all the other major moral inadequacies.

Failure to achieve this render one to sense of insecurity. Sense of insecurity leads mankind to desperation. Desperation comes in different forms. But the type of desperation, for which people see sorcerers include being desperate for attraction. For that, a lady who fails to see her natural beauty seeks sorcery to be seen pretty, the man who fails to see his natural strength seek to be seen strong and undefeatable, the businessman seeks to prosper at the expense of faith, and moral conduct, the lonely seeks to be loved without him socializing etc.

Sorcery and its Menace among Muslims

Umar Baba Sale avers that the menace of sorcery has become a thing of worry in a society where some people who want worldly things by hook or crook delve into unholy acts thereby mortgaging their faith to the detriment of worldly affairs. Sorcerers have made some of these people to engage in sodomy, lesbianism, rape of minor, sugar mummy and sugar daddy for them to get what they needed.

In an interview, Dalhatu Salihu claims that sorcerers and magicians have been accorded a level of admiration in society to the point that they even perform in public. These people occasionally hang out in vehicle parks and markets where they advertise their sinister goods and try to seduce unsuspecting people. These magicians and sorcerers frequently displayed their charms with snakes or knives. In order to persuade persons with adolescent Iman to agree with them, they use to stuff snakes inside some of their victims' trousers without the snake biting the victim or they use knives to either cut their stomachs or eyes.

In agreement with Dalhatu Salihu's claim, Kabiru asserts that some Muslims who have compromised their Iman often consult such individuals (magicians and sorcerers) whenever

they face challenges in order to determine how to handle them. Due to worldly conveniences, a lot of people are found in cemeteries at night either taking bath or performing certain rituals, while their fellow being are asleep.

On his part Isah Labara in an interview avers that many people today have been fooled into believing that sorcerers have the ability to meet their material needs, they use their victims to carry out all kinds of nefarious activities such as obtaining graveyard sand, menstrual blood, semen, human parts, or communion with jinn in order to fulfil their demands. Isah further states that some Muslims believe in sorcery and magic due to the prevalence of superstitious believe among Muslims. Instead of turning to Almighty Allah for help with their issues, they favour the path of the sorcerers, who are devil's proxies among the *Ummah*.

In an interview, Bashir Musa Ubale revealed that politicians today are among those who support sorcerers and their allies in our society. This is because certain politicians, even among Muslims, host or visit such cunning individuals and feel that doing so will grant them the political power they desire instead of Almighty Allah, who alone possesses all authority. Bashir goes on to state that there are incidences where politicians are found burying animals alive simply to comply with the rituals they are required to carry out. Sometimes they are deceived by dishonest people (sorcerers) who pose as *Mallam* (Islamic scholars) and offer them charms and amulets with the promise that it would protect them against their enemies or political opponents.

According to Jamila Yakubu Danladi in an in-depth interview avers that in modern times, women make up the bulk of sorcerers' and sorcery's clients. Women are frequently reported as sorcerer victims because they are more susceptible to being deceived by these evil forces living among us. Usually, women turn to these elements for help because they either want to exert control over their husbands or do not want their husbands to take another wife. Because to this, several marriages have been put in jeopardy, and some women have ended up being divorced when their husbands learned about their interactions with sorcerers.

Jamila also states that due to the devilish tendencies and nature, sorcerers don't care if a lady is his *Muharram* or not. The sorcerer's goal is to exterminate the Iman people, which is why, in certain instances, they have bathed anyone who approaches them naked with their

purportedly therapeutic concoction. They even bathe ladies, disregarding the possible religious repercussions.

It has been observed by the researchers that today even in the modern media sorcerers and magicians have been allowed to advertise their activities to the public without any fear thereby inviting people to patronise them for their worldly needs. This menace has created a lot of problems in the midst of the *Ummah* and to be addressed by Muslim leaders and well-to-do in society.

To Maryam Abdullahi Kyari in an interview posited that since sorcery encompasses shirk, it negates the sorcerer's positive deeds as one cannot become a sorcerer without following demons, killing for them, prostrating for jinns, asking jinns for assistance, calling to them, denying the Glorious Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), ingesting filthy foods, or engaging in other heinous activities. The Jinn and devils will obey him, serve him, and give him what he needs in exchange for his *Iman*, thereby associating partners with Allah. This will happen when he obeys Satan and associate's partners with Allah. Furthermore, sorcerers continually fabricate lies, have impure motives, and behave impudently. Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an;

Shall I Inform You (O people!) upon whom the *Shayatin* (devils) descend? They descend on Every lying (one who tells lies), sinful person (Ash Shuaraa: 221-222).

Mallam Sulaiman Bawa Argungu asserted in one of his lectures that sorcery separates between husband and wife, between a son and his father, creates hostilities between brother and friends. It dominates and erodes one's will power thereby making the bewitched perceive the harmful things as useful and vice-versa. The sorcerer makes one sees undesirable things in his house and his family but would be unable to correct it because he has been dispossessed of his will power. Sometimes sorcery kills, makes one sick, harm one's ability of reason, a hazy sense of imagination, and pernicious influence. That Almighty Allah states in the Glorious Qur'an;

They followed what the *Shayatin* (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) In the lifetime of Sulaiman (Solomon). Sulaiman did not disbelieve, but the *Shayatin* (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Harut and Marut, but neither of These two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, "We are Only 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 Allah'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 ownelves, if they but knew (Al-Baqarah: 102).

Maryam Abdullahi Kyari also averred that the engagement of sorcery to obtain unfair favours and hurt others is common among ignorant women and some vile and ignorant men. Many at times people seek the help of soothsayers whenever something happens their midst. This is done when something got loss, when someone is sick, when a lady stayed for long time without getting a spouse and when someone is been touched by jinn. These elements are always invited to investigate what is going as against the teachings of Islam. In a *Hadith*, Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said;

He is not of us, the one who sees evil omens, or the one the one whose behalf they are seen, or the one who practices soothsaying, or the one on whose behalf it is practiced; or the one who practices sorcery, or the one for whom sorcery is done (Majma' al-Zawa'id, 5/201).

In an in-depth interview, Halima Muhammad Nasidi averred that today sorcerers and their perilous deeds have caused a great deal of family discord, especially in polygamous households where the sorcerers incite rivalry between spouses. When one of the spouses requests their devilish assistance, they act in this way. The majority of the time, this occurs when a wife tries to earn the husband's favour over other wives. By convincing one of the wives that the husband is favouring the children of the other wife, the sorcerers took this opportunity to unleash and advertise their devilish act of destroying the Iman of Muslims. Some of these people ultimately come to regret their acts after learning the reality about the harm that sorcerers cause to those who mistakenly believe they can help them.

Islamic Da'wah as Solution to the Menace of Sorcery

Be mindful that the greatest of all sins is the one greatest in consequence. Perpetrating major sins is tantamount to waging war against Allah and his Messenger. Sins differ in their consequences and punishments according to differences in their degree of contradiction of

the purpose of creation and contrariness to the truth. In fact, Allah created the universe that He alone be worshipped without associating any partners with Him. He created the Heavens and the Earth in truth and in order to reward each soul for whatever it earned. Allah has also reformed the Earth by sending Messengers and revealing Noble Books. Therefore, whatever runs in contrary to these great aims is an abominable sin before Allah, for which He has promised a severe punishment in this world and the next. That is why the act of associating partners with Allah in acts of worship is regarded to be the greatest of major sins and its punishment is the most severe. Allah says,

Verily whoever sets up partners with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him and the fire will be his abode. And for the *Zalimun* (Polytheists, and wrongdoers) there are no helpers (Al-Ma'idah: 72).

Allah will also not accept intercession on behalf of one who associates partners with Him. This is because of the gravity of *Shirk*. Sorcery is one of the major sins, for it is disbelief in Allah and association of partners with Him. Allah has made it forbidden and the Messenger seriously warned against it. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

Keep away from the seven destructive sins!" They said, "What are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "Associating partners with Allah; practicing sorcery; taking a life, which Allah has made forbidden except for a just cause (according to Islamic Law); eating *Riba* (usury) eating up an orphan's wealth; fleeing from the battle field at the time of fighting (with the unbelievers); and accusing chaste women, who never think of anything that can touch their chastity and who are good believers, of fornication (Al-Bukhari & Muslim).

Sorcery destroys good deeds of the sorcerer because it contains shirk, for one cannot become a sorcerer unless he has sought nearness to devils by obeying them, slaughtering for them, prostrating for a jinn, seeking aid from devils, calling unto them, disbelieving the Qur'an, eating impure things, or perpetrating some other abominable acts. When he associates partners with Allah and obeys Satan, the Jinn and devils will obey him, serve him and provide him with his need in return for his associating partners with Allah. Further, the sorcerers always tell lies, have dirty minds and commit sins insolently. Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an:

Shall I Inform You (O people!) upon whom the *Shayatin* (devils) descend? They descend on Every lying (one who tells lies), sinful person (Ash Shuraa, 221-222).

Sorcery is widespread among ignorant women and some despicable and ignorant men who use this vicious means to win undue favour and inflict harm on others. As for the bewitched person, he is regarded as the wronged one and Allah will come to his aid. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah said,

He is not of us, the one who sees evil omens, or the one the one whose behalf they are seen, or the one who practices soothsaying, or the one on whose behalf it is practiced; or the one who practices sorcery, or the one for whom sorcery is done (At-Tabarani).

An-Nasaa'i also reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

Whoever ties a knot and blows into it has practiced sorcery, and whosoever practiced sorcery has associated partners with Allah. Whoever wears anything for protection (i.e. talismans, pendants etc.) will be entrusted to it (Sunna Al-Nasa'i, Hadith No. 4079).

Allah also says:

And throw that which is In Your Right hand! it will swallow up that which they have made. that which they have made is Only a magician's trick, and the magician will never be successful, no matter whatever amount (of skill) He may attain (Taa Haa: 69).

Sorcery according to the scholars does have a real impact with Allah's leave. That is why Allah enjoined seeking refuge against it. As for the legal ruling concerning sorcerers in this world, they should be killed if evidence is established that they practice sorcery. That is the opinion of Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, and Ahmed. Imam Ahmad said, "Capital punishment for the sorcerer has been authentically reported from three companions of the Prophet. It is reported from Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he wrote, "Kill every sorcerer and sorceress." Bujaalah (a sub-narrator) said, "Then we killed three sorceresses." It is also authentically reported from Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) "That she ordered a maid of hers to be killed because she did sorcery on her." Jundub bin Ka'ab (may Allah be pleased with him) was also authentically reported that he beheaded a magician who was playing his magic in front of Waleed and said "Let him use his magic for his own benefit now."

The Killing of sorcerers is for the purpose of protecting people from their harm and evil, in order to uproot all its manifestations from the Islamic society and to preserve the purity of Muslims' belief, their intellect, and properties. Islam also encourages good and fights evil. Executing sorcerers is therefore the correct opinion of the scholars, even if he shows repentance because the companions did not ask the sorcerers to repent before they killed them. Further, most sorcerers are liars. If a sorcerer is given a chance to repent, he is unlikely to be truthful. If he is however truthful in his heart his repentance will benefit him before Allah but that does not save him from being executed because he has practiced a malicious and wicked act.

There are some ignorant people who do not have a clear perception of the lying and deceitful sorcerers and are confused by these devils' acts, like flying in the sky, walking on water, healing the sick, or informing of hidden things and it becomes as said, thereby making these ignorant people believe falsely that the sorcerer is a *Waliy* of Allah. It can even lead to worshipping him besides Allah and seeking his benefit and protection. The Islamic Shariah has however distinguished between friends of Allah and friends of *Shaytaan*. Friends of Allah are those who maintain the limits of Allah, adhere to his injunctions inwardly and outwardly and observe the prayer. Allah says:

No doubt! Verily, the *Awliya'* of Allah (i.e. those who believe in the oneness of Allah and fear Allah much; abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden, and love Allah much; perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained.), no fear shall overcome them, nor shall they grieve. (Those who believe in the Oneness of Allah), and used to fear Allah much (by abstaining from evil deeds and by doing righteous deeds (Yunus: 52-63).

Further, it is not a prerequisite for being Allah's *Waliy* to perform supernatural acts that the ignorant people regard as miracles while they are satanic works in actual sense with which devils serve them in order to mislead people. Do not therefore be carried away by the feats of these magicians. If you look at their adherence to Islamic injunctions you will find that they do not attend *Jumu'ah* or congregational prayers; they do not listen to the Qur'an. They only spread immorality and listen to music. Allah says:

They are the party of Satan. Verily, it is the party of Satan that will be the losers! (Al-Mujaadilah: 19).

Regard those who perform such a supernatural act as charlatans / swindlers who are disbelievers in Allah. There are others who are considered to be the same as sorcerers. These are soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and astrologers; and those who make writings on the sand. They all claim the knowledge of the unseen, thereby becoming *Kuffar*. Allah says:

Say: None in the Heavens and the Earth knows the Ghaib (unseen) except Allah (An-Naml: 65).

Therefore, whoever believes them in their claim has also become a *Kafir*. The Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

Whoever visits a soothsayer and believes in what he says has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad (Abu Dawood, *Hadith* No. 3904).

Magical spells and sorcery can be prevented by having trust in Allah, supplicating to Him, reciting the Qur'an and authentic *Athkar*, perfection of *Tawhid*, keeping away from shirk and waging war against malicious people. Allah says:

O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islamic religion) and follow not the footsteps of *Shaytan* (Satan). Verily, he is to you a plain enemy (Al-Baqarah: 208).

Almighty Allah also says:

And obey Allah and the Messenger and beware and fear Allah. Then if you turn away then you should know that it is our Messenger's duty to convey (the message) in the clearest way." (Al-Maa'idah: 92).

He further says;

And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him (At-Talaq: 3).

The Noble Prophet said,

Supplication benefits in things that have happened and things that have not yet happened

Burning its books can also prevent magic and sorcery. Whenever a magical spell is established, the instruments of that spell should be burnt if they are found, as done by the Prophet when *Labid ibn Al-A'sam*, the Jew, did a magic spell on him. The Prophet brought the instrument of the spell out of *B'ir dharwaan* and burnt it. As regards the cure of magic, it is constant supplication to Allah. 'Aisha said,

It was narrated that 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: A spell was put on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) until he imagined that he had done a thing when he had not done it. One day he made *du'a* then he said: "Do you know that Allah has shown me in what lies my cure? Two men came to me and one of them sat at my head and the other at my feet. One of them said to the other, 'What is ailing the man?' He said: 'He has been bewitched.' He said: "Who has bewitched him?' He said: 'Labeed ibn al-A'sam.' He said, 'With what?' He said: 'With a comb, the hair that is stuck to it, and the skin of pollen of a male date palm. He said: 'Where is it?' He said, 'In the well of *Dharwaan*.'" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went out to the well, then he came back and said to 'Aisha when he came back: "Its date palms are like the heads of devils." I said: "Did you take it out?" He said: "No. Allah has healed me, and I feared that that might bring evil upon the people." Then the well was filled in (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith No. 3268).

It should however be noted that the kind of magical spell that affected the Prophet did not in any way affect his divine immunity or deliverance of his message. It was just a mere harm done to him from which Allah cured him. Magical spells are also cured by continuous recitation of *Suratul-Fatihah*, *Suratul-Falaq*, *Suratun-Nas*, *Suratul-Ikhlās*, and *Ayatul-Kursi*, for all these *Suwah* weaken the effect of the spell whether the victim himself recites it or recited on him by a righteous person. It is unlawful to cure one magical spell with another, for Allah does not allow the cure of this *Ummah* by that which He has forbidden them. Nevertheless, it is permissible to cure oneself of magical spells with lawful medicaments, herbs and the like.

D. Conclusion

The above un-Islamic trends were still being practiced by some ignorant people among Muslims who contravene many of the laws laid down by Islam and continued to participate in sorcery and sorcerers to make sacrifices and libation to various objects with the aim of obtaining certain gains as against the teachings of Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Others even failed to observe the rituals of Islam through ignorance or neglect it. Think of someone who frequents sorcerers and fortune-tellers, you will find out, that one of the reasons mentioned in this article is among factors which influence him to do so. The first and most important thing to do, is to avoid sorcery and abstain from going to sorcerers. It will be better to work hard and strengthening one's faith and trust in Allah. Once this is rightly fixed, the remaining can be easily handled, by Allah.

Sorcery can never earn you what is not destined for you. However, you can always attain what's divinely destined for you through righteous ways, without the need to resort to sorcerer. The effort some Muslims put into sorcery, if it is to be used righteously, they would get what they get through sorcery (because it's destined for them). They will also get, in addition to that, the company and the Ultimate Pleasure of Allah.

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