



Sihr (Black Magic) Done to Create Love or Separation Between Husband and Wife

(As-Sarf wal-Athf)



**A Compilation of the
Fatwas of the Scholars**



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◆ Question

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh. What is the ruling on doing sihr acts or “seyvinai” (black magic) to create separation or love between husband and wife? Also, what is the ruling on going to those who claim to treat sihr, and to non-Muslims?

◆ Answer

Wa alaikumus salam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

Summary: Such practices, used to create inclination or separation between husband and wife, really do exist (may Allah protect us). They are a part of sihr. The scholars call this “sarf and athf” and also “tiwalah”. The best treatment for this is that a person does ruqyah for himself with the Qur’an and the authentic duas. The Prophet ﷺ said that those who do not ask others to do ruqyah for them are among the seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without reckoning. If a person needs to ask someone else, he may ask a trustworthy person who has correct aqeedah (belief) and who recites only from the Qur’an and the Sunnah. But it is not allowed to go to those who deal in

mantras, amulets and black magic, or to those who hide their method of treatment, even if they call themselves Muslims. Going to a non-Muslim who claims to give “treatment” for sihr is even more serious.

◆ First: Do such practices really exist? What is their ruling?

Yes, they do exist. About separating husband and wife through sihr, Allah says:

﴿فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ﴾

“And from these two they learn that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they cannot harm anyone with it except by Allah’s permission.”

(Al-Baqarah: 102)

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«إن الرقى والتمائم والتولة شرك»

“Indeed, ruqyahs (that go against the Shariah), amulets and tiwalah (a type of magic done to win the husband’s love) are shirk.”

(Abu Dawud 3883, Ibn Majah 3530)

Ibn Mas’ud radiyallahu anhu explained “tiwalah” like this:

«شيء تصنعه النساء يتحبن إلى أزواجهن»

“It is something women do to make their husbands love them.”
(Sahih Ibn Hibban 6090; al-Albani graded it sahih in as-Sahihah 331)

Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen rahimahullah says:

“In the Shariah, sihr is of two types. The first: knots and spells, that is, recitations and talismans through which the sorcerer manages to make use of the devils (shayateen) for the harm he wants to cause to the bewitched person. But Allah the Most High has said:

“They cannot harm anyone with it except by Allah’s permission.” (Al-Baqarah: 102)

The second: medicines and herbs that affect the body of the bewitched person, his mind, his will and his inclination. So you find him turning away (from someone) and inclining (towards someone). This is what they call sarf (turning away) and athf (inclining). They make a man incline towards his wife or towards another woman, until he becomes like an animal that she leads wherever she wants. Sarf is the opposite of that (turning him away with dislike). It affects the body of the bewitched person by weakening him little by little until he dies; and his imagination, so that he imagines things to be different from what they really are; and his mind, and it may even lead to madness, and we seek refuge in Allah.

So sihr is of two types: (a) Shirk: this is the first type, which is done through the devils. The sorcerer worships them and seeks closeness to them, so that he can set them upon the bewitched person. (b) Transgression and sin (fisq): this is the second type, which is done through medicines, herbs and the like.”

(Majmu Fatawa wa Rasail Ibn Uthaymeen, vol. 9, p. 489)

Shaykh Ibn Baz rahimahullah says:

“As for tiwalah, it is a type of sihr. It is also called sarf and athf, and it is forbidden. Amulets (tamaim) are also forbidden. They are the hujub, and they are also called jawami and huruz (all names for amulets that people hang or tie for protection). This is because the Messenger ﷺ strongly forbade them, did not make any exception from them, called them shirk, and made dua against the one who hangs them.”

(Majmu Fatawa Ibn Baz, vol. 4, p. 332)

◆ Second: The ruling on going to one who hides his method of treatment, what he recites and the medicines he gives

It is not allowed at all to go to such people. For the ruqyah that the Shariah allows, it is a condition that its meaning is known.

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar rahimahullah says:

“The scholars have agreed that ruqyah is allowed when three conditions are met: (1) It should be with the words of Allah the Most High, or with His names and attributes.

(2) It should be in the Arabic language, or in another language whose meaning is understood.

(3) One should believe that the ruqyah does not have any effect by itself, but only by Allah the Most High.”

(Fath al-Bari, vol. 10, p. 195)

Shaykh Ibn Baz rahimahullah says:

“What is meant by the forbidden ruqyahs (in the hadith) is ruqyahs whose meaning is unknown, or ruqyahs that contain shirk. As for what is allowed, it is only the ruqyah of the Shariah, because the Prophet ﷺ said: “There is no harm in ruqyahs as long as they are not shirk,” and because he did ruqyah (for others) and ruqyah was also done for him (by others).”

(Majmu Fatawa Ibn Baz, vol. 4, p. 332)

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«اعرضوا عليّ رقاكم، لا بأس بالرقى ما لم يكن فيه شرك»

“Show me your ruqyahs. There is no harm in ruqyah as long as there is no shirk in it.”

(Sahih Muslim 2200)

The Prophet ﷺ asked for the ruqyahs to be shown to him. From this we understand that a ruqyah in which it is not known what is being recited is not accepted.

Some of the things reported about such people who claim to treat sihr: placing something in a person's hand and then claiming to know whether he is affected or not, which is claiming knowledge of the unseen (ghaib); hiding what he recites; and saying "I will remove the sihr and the seyvinai" and then giving tablets without telling what is inside them. All these are the acts of fortune-tellers and sorcerers.

Shaykh Ibn Baz rahimahullah says:

"It is not allowed to go to the fortune-tellers (kuhhan), the sorcerers and the tricksters, or to anyone else like them. Rather, people must be warned about them, and they must be held back and stopped, because the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever goes to a soothsayer (arrafa) and asks him about anything, his prayer will not be accepted for forty nights" (narrated by Muslim). And he ﷺ said: "Whoever goes to a fortune-teller (kahin) or a soothsayer and believes what he says has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad ﷺ." And when he was asked about the fortune-tellers, he said: "Do not go to them." The fortune-tellers claim knowledge of the unseen through their devils. So it is not allowed to go to the fortune-tellers and soothsayers, nor to ask them about anything. Rather, this must be objected to, and the one who does it must be disciplined so that he does not go back to any of it. But he may go to the good people who are known for the ruqyah of the Shariah, and they can do ruqyah for him."

(Majmu Fatawa Ibn Baz, vol. 8, p. 158)

Hadith sources: Muslim 2230, Abu Dawud 3904, Muslim 537.

Note: Above, Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen rahimahullah said that the sorcerer makes use of the devils. Here, Shaykh Ibn Baz rahimahullah says that the fortune-tellers claim knowledge of the unseen, and that they depend on their devils for it. There is no contradiction between the two. The sorcerer worships the devils and harms others through them. The fortune-teller gets news through the devils and claims to know the unseen. What he claims is “knowledge of the unseen”; and no one knows the unseen except Allah. Both of them depend on the devils, and many times the same person does both. It is not the job of a Muslim to search for the details of how they do this; what the Qur’an and the Sunnah have told us is enough for us.

The “good people” the Shaykh mentioned are those who have correct aqeedah (tawheed and Sunnah), and who keep away from all types of shirk, such as seeking help from graves, tying amulets and sihr. According to the three conditions of Ibn Hajar rahimahullah mentioned earlier, they must do ruqyah only with the words of Allah, His names and attributes, and words whose meanings are known. One should not go for ruqyah to a person who is involved in shirk, even if he calls himself a Muslim.

The third condition mentioned by Ibn Hajar rahimahullah, that is, believing that “the ruqyah does not have any effect by itself; it benefits only by Allah,” is connected to the heart. How can we know whether the one doing ruqyah has this belief in his heart?

We have not been commanded to search into hearts. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِنِّي لَمْ أُؤْمَرْ أَنْ أَنْقُبَ عَنْ قُلُوبِ النَّاسِ وَلَا أَشُقَّ بُطُونَهُمْ»

“I have not been commanded to search into the hearts of people, nor to cut open their stomachs.”

(Bukhari 4351, Muslim 1064)

So, we judge only by what is apparent. Linking the cure to himself, like saying “there is a special power in my hand”, and guaranteeing a cure, are clear outward signs that he does not have the belief that “ruqyah benefits only by Allah”. Claiming knowledge of the unseen, and hiding what he recites and the things he gives from his own hand, are signs that he is on the way of the fortune-tellers; and we have already seen that one must not go to such people. Calling oneself a “Salafi” or “Ahlus Sunnah” is not the measure by itself; a person’s actions are the measure. If no fault is seen openly, but there is still doubt in the heart, one should follow this guidance of the Prophet ﷺ:

«دَعْ مَا يَرِيكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيكَ، فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ طُمَأْنِينَةٌ، وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ رَيْبَةٌ»

“Leave what makes you doubt for what does not make you doubt. For truth brings peace of mind, and lies bring doubt.”

(Tirmidhi 2518)

Safer and better than all of this is that a person does ruqyah for himself. A doubt may come up here: above, Shaykh Ibn Baz

rahimahullah said that “ruqyah was also done for the Prophet ﷺ (by others)”. At the same time, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي سَبْعُونَ أَلْفًا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ، هُمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَسْتَرْقُونَ، وَلَا يَتَطَيَّرُونَ، وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ»

“Seventy thousand people from my Ummah will enter Paradise without reckoning. They are those who do not ask (others) for ruqyah, who do not take bad omens, and who put their trust in their Lord.”

(Bukhari 6472)

There is no contradiction between the two. The word in the hadith is «لا يسترقون» (la yastarqoon). It does not mean “no one should do ruqyah for them”; rather, it means “they do not ask others to do ruqyah for them”. So if others come forward on their own and do ruqyah for them without their asking, that is not included in this. Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen rahimahullah says:

“His saying “la yastarqoon” means: they do not ask anyone to recite over them. So if you see that he (the sick person) is longing for you to recite over him, then recite over him, so that you do not put him in the awkward position of having to ask for it.”

(Sharh Riyad as-Salihin, Ibn Uthaymeen, vol. 1, p. 50)

The Prophet ﷺ never asked anyone, “Do ruqyah for me.” Jibreel alaihis salam came on his own and did ruqyah for the Prophet ﷺ (Muslim 2186). When the Prophet ﷺ was sick, he used to do

ruqyah for himself; and when his pain became severe, Aishah radiyallahu anha came forward on her own and did ruqyah for him. Aishah radiyallahu anha narrates:

«أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا اشْتَكَى يَقْرَأُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بِالْمُعَوِّذَاتِ وَيَنْفُثُ،
فَلَمَّا اشْتَدَّ وَجَعُهُ كُنْتُ أَقْرَأُ عَلَيْهِ، وَأَمْسَحُ بِيَدِهِ رَجَاءَ بَرَكَتِهَا»

“Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fell sick, he would recite the Mu’awwidhat over himself and blow lightly. When his pain became severe, I used to recite over him and wipe him with his own hand, hoping for its blessing.”

(Bukhari 5016, Muslim 2192)

So, it is from the Sunnah that a relative or a friend comes forward on his own and recites the Qur’an and the authentic duas for a sick person. But it is a different matter when a person makes himself a permanent “ruqyah man” and runs it as a separate “treatment centre” that people go looking for, as a business with sessions, fees

and the sale of medicines. About this, Ash-Shaykh Abdullah ibn Abdur-Raheem al-Bukhari hafidhahullah says:

“The Prophet ﷺ had sihr done on him, and he did not ask so-and-so or anyone else to recite over him. And the scholars of tafseer have agreed that the reason for the revelation of the two Surahs, the Mu’awwidhatain, was the sihr done on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. And it is well known that among the Companions radiyallahu anhum there were some who were affected by jinn possession and fits. But it has not been reported (from them) that Zaid or Amr would come and give himself fully to reciting over so-and-so, and along with reciting, prescribe for him: ‘Take this, drink this, eat this, do this’, and say ‘there must be one session, two sessions, ten, twenty, thirty-five’, and then pockets get filled with money.”

(Shaykh Abdullah al-Bukhari hafidhahullah, from the audio recording of an answer he gave to a question)

The full fatwa of Shaykh al-Bukhari hafidhahullah can be seen in another article under the title “Confirming Sihr and Jinn Affliction, and the Claim of ‘Experience’”, inshaAllah.

◆ Third: The ruling on going to a non-Muslim who claims to treat sihr

In medical treatment for physical illnesses such as fever, diabetes and surgery, it is allowed to go to a non-Muslim doctor, as long as he is trustworthy.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim rahimahullah says:

“In the Prophet ﷺ hiring Abdullah ibn Uraiqit ad-Du’ali as a guide at the time of the Hijrah, while he was a kafir, there is proof that it is allowed to turn to a kafir in medicine, eye treatment, medicines, writing, accounts, assessing defects (in goods) and the like, as long as it is not a position of responsibility that must be given only to upright Muslims. Just being a kafir does not mean that he cannot be trusted in anything at all, for there is nothing more dangerous than guiding on the road, especially on a road like the road of the Hijrah.”

(Bada’i al-Fawa’id, vol. 3, p. 208)

This permission is only for medical treatment of known physical illnesses. This type of “treatment”, such as removing sihr, detecting it, or creating love or separation, is not medical treatment for physical illness. A non-Muslim does not do ruqyah with the words of Allah or with His names. So only one of two things remains: shirk mantras that they recite to seek closeness to their “gods”, or sihr and seeking the help of devils. So going to him is like going to a sorcerer or a fortune-teller; it is a major sin. And if one believes what he says, he has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad ﷺ. His being famous among people, and people saying “it worked from experience”, do not make it halal. Sometimes a cure may happen at the hands of a sorcerer as a test. We must look at the ruling of the Shariah, not at experience.

That getting cured at their hands is not a proof that their method is correct is shown by this statement of Shaykh Ibn Baz rahimahullah:

“It is not allowed for a Muslim to go to these fortune-tellers, sorcerers or soothsayers, who are the ones who claim to know matters of the unseen, or to ask them. The sick person may be cured due to many causes, and he may not be cured. Not every sick person gets cured. He may be treated with a medicine that does not suit his illness, and his appointed time (of death) may have come, so the medicines will not benefit. The benefit of medicines depends on the appointed time not having come, as Allah the Mighty and Majestic says: “And Allah will never delay a soul when its appointed time has come.” But when the appointed time comes, medicines do not benefit.”

(Majmu Fatawa Ibn Baz, vol. 8, p. 119)

◆ Treatment According to the Shariah

Doing ruqyah with the Qur'an and the authentic duas through known people of Ahlus Sunnah, using known permissible medicines, and putting one's trust in Allah and making dua to Him. The explanations of the scholars about these can be seen in the separate article that follows this one, “Shareeah Treatment for Sihr (Including Sarf and Athf)”, inshaAllah.

Ya Rabb! Grant cure to the sick among the Muslims! Unite husbands and wives in obeying You!

And Allah knows best. May Allah send His praise and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon all his family and companions.

Compiled by: Muhammad Aslam.

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