

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(1)

عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "لا طيرة وخيرها الفأل". قالوا وما الفأل؟ قال "الكلمة الصالحة يسمعوها أحدكم". (متفق عليه)

*Abu Hurariah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'There are no bad omens [i.e. superstitious believes in omens are not valid] and the best of omens is al-faal [the optimism]. The companions enquired, 'what is al-faal?' He ﷺ replied, 'A good word that is heard by one of you' (which makes him feel better). (Bukhari and Muslim)*

"There are no bad omens" means that bad omens have no effect on the success of a person or his failure. Belief in 'bad omen' is invalid as God did not create anything which has the capacity to shield His mercy from reaching His servants.

Man by nature is afraid of failure. He does not want to be deprived of what he sees as a need. He feels insecure and would not be content with anything less than absolute control. This is how humans have behaved since the early period of their existence. The modern man is no exception.

The society wherein the Prophet ﷺ was born also suffered from this very disease. Their culture was littered with the examples of superstition. While on a journey, if one of them noticed a bird flying to his left, he would interpret this as a bad sign. He would become convinced that his venture would be met by failure. So he would become hopeless and return home.

Using birds to determine future was so rampant in their society that the very word used for 'bad-omen' (Tiyarah) in Arabic has its roots in the word used for *bird* (Tair). It seems that this was a tradition common in societies beyond Arabia too.

The English word “auspice” is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as “an observation of birds for omens.”

The Prophet ﷺ has made it clear in the Hadith above that such superstitious beliefs have no validity. Superstition is explained as a belief or notion that is

- a) not based on reason or knowledge, and
- b) suggests an ominous link between two events or things.

A superstitious mindset suffers from unnecessary anxiety and fear. It develops an unhealthy and confused personality which is vulnerable and gives into fictitious threats. The Prophet ﷺ then compared this mind set to a healthy mind-set which tries to remain positive.

Al-faal is translated as optimism or good omen. One tries to remain confident and upbeat even against the odds. The signs that he sees may not make any impact on the eventual outcome of his venture, but do certainly make a good impact on his morale. He feels energised as a result and moves towards his mission with hope and positivity.

‘A good word that one hears’, implies that a word or a statement that makes an individual feel optimistic. For example a father says to his enterpruner son who is worried about his venture, ‘something in me tells me that you will do well’. This makes the son feel positive about the days ahead; he goes for the venture and tries his best and with a lot more confidence. He is likely to succeed even if his business plan is not very good. Even if he does not do well in the venture, at least he was saved from unnecessary worry and anxiety.

A person should be careful to pay no attention to his or her thoughts regarding bad omens and superstitions. These do nothing except to cause worry and distress. Allah ﷻ controls the heavens and the earth. His decisions are not determined – nor are reflected – by the occurrences, to which sometimes we refer as bad omens. No such incident should make you despair. Instead with a clear mindset go forth and be engaged in the struggle of life and remain hopeful.

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

اَحْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِزْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ

وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ

فَإِنْ لَوْ تَفَتَّحَ عَمَلُ الشَّيْطَانِ

*'Take interest in that which is beneficial to you. Keep asking Allah for help and do not give up. If [then] something happens to you [e.g. you are unsuccessful], do not say: 'If only I had taken this step or the other, [I could have been able to avoid these troubles]'. Instead say: 'Allah so determined and did as He willed.' Surely, the word 'if only' [out of regret] opens the gates of satanic thoughts". (Muslim)*

A good word that is heard by one of you” means that rather than being disappointed, if you derive hope and optimism from an occurrence around you then there is no harm. This statement seems to be turning an ominous mindset to its opposite. Rather than despair, draw hope from what you hear. This concept is further elaborated in the following Hadith.

(2)

عن عبد الله بن عباس رضى الله عنهما قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يتفاؤل ولا يتطير و كان يحب الاسم الحسن". (شرح السنة للبغوي و الجامع الصغير للسيوطي)

*Ibn Abbas ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used al-fa'al (the good omen) but he ﷺ never used to take bad omen. And he ﷺ loved a good name'. (Sharh us-Sunnah)*

This narration has two parts. The first one clearly reinforces the concept discussed earlier, in regards to the bad-omen. This was not the practice of the Prophet ﷺ.

The second part relates to names. It can be understood as a part of the first statement. It would mean that the Prophet ﷺ liked good names. He would encourage parents to give their children good names. So if anyone hears that name he is pleased by its meanings.

It is also possible that the second part is an independent statement. The Prophet ﷺ liked the good names. It still serves as a reminder to the parents that they should chose such names for their children that have good meanings.

It was a noble practice of the Prophet ﷺ that when he ﷺ appointed individuals as an envoy he s asked about their names. If it pleased him, he would be glad, and his cheerfulness on that account was visible on his face. If he disliked his name, his displeasure on that account was visible on his face too. When he entered a village, he asked about its name, and if it pleased him, he would be pleased, and his cheerfulness on that account was visible on his face. But if he disliked its name, his displeasure on that account was visible on his face. (Abu Dawud)

'He ﷺ never used to take bad omen', is clear that in Islam the concept of bad omen is considered invalid and superstitious. The Prophet ﷺ never showed any regard to such practices. This is contrary to what is practiced in many modern societies around the globe. The concerned non-Muslim communities may validate such practices through mythological tales in their literature, but it is sad for Muslims, who have always been realistic and broad-minded, to have given into such beliefs.

The Hadith below is even more clear on this subject.

(3)

عن بريدة رضى الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان لا يتطير بشيء (أبو داود)

*Buraidh ﷺ said that the Prophet ﷺ never used to take bad omen from anything'.  
(Abu-Dawud)*

The Hadith states that nothing was treated as ominous by the Prophet ﷺ. It is appropriate here to give some examples of superstitious practices amongst Muslims. These are quoted from the work of Shaykh Mufit Abdul Rauf Sakharwi who has prepared a short booklet on this subject. One wonders how such beliefs can be acceptable to an ummah which prides itself of being on the footsteps of Muhammad Rasool Ullah ﷺ.

- Some women shy from the company of a woman whose children die young. They believe that they will be infected with this misfortune. This is totally wrong. It is very evil to say so and they are being sinful for behaving in this manner.
- It is generally believed that in the life of every person his third and eight, thirteenth and eighteenth, twenty first and thirty eighth, forty third and forty eighth years are difficult. This belief is without foundation.
- Many consider that a calamity or disease will descend when they hear a dog cry. It is a baseless belief.
- Many, especially amongst women, consider it wrong to adopt curative measures for small-pox and measles. Some suppose that these diseases are caused by ghosts and evil spirits, which is wrong.
- It is also wrong on the part of those who believe that if a new bride locks up her home or trunk, then that house becomes locked, meaning it becomes desolate.

- Some people believe that if anyone takes up a routine recital of surah an-Naas then he will be destroyed. This is an erroneous belief for, on the contrary, he will be delivered from distress. Others have similar unfounded beliefs regarding surah al-Jinn.
- Some believe that if a sharp spine of a hedgehog is placed in a house then as long as it is there, there will be quarrel among its people. Thus those who wish to cause dissention among a family place the spine of hedgehog in their house. However, this is a wrong notion.
- The ignorant do not sweep their house when one of the families embarks on a journey. This too is a figment of their imagination.
- Some believe that when a menstruating or pregnant woman dies she must be chained when she is buried otherwise she turns in to a witch and devours whoever she comes across. This is an idolatrous belief.
- It is supposed by some that if the right eye of a man or the left eye of a woman flutters, they will face some difficulty, but if it is the other way round it brings happiness. This is a wrong notion.
- Among some people the belief persists that it is ominous to utter the name of certain places or animals in the morning. This is sheer nonsense.
- It is a belief among some people that a journey begun on certain days is propitious and on other days inauspicious. These are idolatrous beliefs. Muslims must not entertain them.
- Many people suppose that if they get an itch on the palm it will bring them wealth and if the sole itches or a shoe is placed over another they will go on a journey. Such thinking is absurd.
- Some women expect guests when a crow cries loud at the parapet of their house; this is again nonsense.
- Some people believe by beating anyone with a wooden spoon will cause him to be avaricious and he tends to eat much. This belief is absolutely baseless.
- According to a superstition if anyone is hit accidentally by a broom he considers it bad and feels insulted. He then tells the other, 'I will throw salt in a well so that you will have wrinkles on your face'. This is a false belief.
- Some believe that if anyone is beaten with a broom his body withers down. Therefore, they exercise the broom so the disease is warded off. This too is a false belief.
- Some people feel very bad when they are called by someone from behind. They believe that this call from behind would render them unable to accomplish their task. This is an invalid belief.

- Some people feel uncomfortable when someone sneezes at a time when they are about to leave for a certain task. They fear that this means that their venture is to end up in a failure. This notion has no validity.
- Some people consider it bad to sweep at night, to blow off a candle or someone else clearing his throat. This superstition is false.

If you look around in the community you might be able to see many more examples of superstition. These are all against the noble traditions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Muslims should particularly try to avoid following such absurd beliefs.

#### (4)

وعن أنس رضى الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يعجبه إذا خرج لحاجة أن يسمع : يا راشد يا نجيع . (الترمذي)

*Anas reported that when the Prophet went out for some need, hearing [something like] ‘O Guided’ or ‘O Successful’ would please him’. (Tirmidhi)*

Confusion is a killer disease. It should be tackled at all levels. One should make his mind after consulting the expert advice available. The mashwarah or consulting those who are reliable, sincere, sympathetic and have expertise in the concerned area of life is an important tradition of Muslims.

Having made one's mind over an issue, one should not fear what may unfold around one. Instead one should interpret these occurrences in a positive light to draw hope. This is the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

Hearing a good name can be used to gain hope and optimism. At the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah (Dhul-Qa'dah 6 AH/March 628 CE) when the Muslim pilgrims were stopped by the hostile polytheist Makkah community, the Prophet and his companions suddenly found themselves without any option, other than to wage war, which the Prophet s did not want to do, or discuss a peace treaty. So the negotiations started.

The first round of talks was unsuccessful because of the irrational, inflexible and harsh approach of the Makkah envoy. This probably had some adverse impact on the companions of the Prophet. As the second round of negotiations started, the Prophet s first enquired about the name of the Makkah envoy. He s was informed

that his name was Sahl (peace). Upon this the Prophet ﷺ expressed his optimism, saying, 'surely Allah y has made our task easy'. As the terms of the treaty were signed, his view appeared not to be out of place.

'hearing ... would please him', means that the Prophet ﷺ would use this as al-faal; as a sign of hope and as an indication of success. This was to teach his ummah to remain positive and draw positivity from what is around them. He ﷺ had a very alert mind. Even when he was first informed of being a Prophet he did not jump to announcing it to the others. He ﷺ repeatedly asked Jibraeel ﷺ for clarity. This is something that is not hidden from those who have studied the seerah of the Prophet ﷺ.

(5)

عن قطن بن قبيصة عن أبيه رضى الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "العيافة والطرق والطيرة من الجبت" (أبو داود)

*Qutn b. Qabeesah ؓ narrated from his father that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Al-iyaaafah, Tarq and Tiyyarah are acts of devils'. (Abu-Dawud)*

The word “*Jibt*” is used in The Holy Qur’an in Surah Al-Nisaa (Ayah 51) of which the translation is:

*“Have you not seen those who have been given a share from the book? They believe in Jibt and Taghut” (04:51)*

*Jibt* is originally the name of an idol, but it is also used for every false god, as well as sorcery. *Tāghut* literally means ‘rebel’. It is also used for Satan, and for evil and falsehood. In regards to the origins of the word ‘*al-jibt*’, a number of linguists point out that it refers to the acts or matters which are most contemptible. The word was later used to refer to anything that is worshipped other than Allah ﷻ. Other scholars point out that the word was also used as a synonym for magic and sorcery.

In this Hadith certain superstitious practices have been referred to as ‘forms of idol-worship or sorcery’. Taking bad omen implies that a specific thing, time or place is responsible for a person’s failure or loss. This mindset is incorrect. The truth on the other hand is that benefit and loss is in the hands of Allah the

almighty alone. Only He is the controller of the heavens and the earth and all that goes on in them. Allah ﷻ is the Omnipotent and no incident or occurrence can force Him into anything. He, in His infinite wisdom, has never declared any of those superstitious beliefs to be true. His messenger has made it clear in this Hadith that ploys or tricks employed by man to fore-cast the future events are not part of God's plan.

A mindset, which is free of superstitious concerns, is a healthier mindset. It enables one to turn the tables against the odds and survive even in the most difficult situations. This is how a believer should be.

For predicting the future, numerous methods were common amongst the pre-Islam Arabs. Three such methods are mentioned in this Hadith, and negated, declared as a mere play-field of Satan. 'Iyaafah' was a method wherein birds were used, to work out the outcome of a venture under consideration. There were those who claimed to have mastered the art of 'al-iyaaafah'. It involved hushing birds to fly away and then interpreting the course of their flight, for which the name of the bird, the direction of flight selected by the bird, and the noise made in the course of their flight was all relevant data for working out the fate of an affair.

Tarq is what involved throwing pebbles on the ground to make a prediction, which was common amongst women. Some have said that this is the name of drawing lines in the ground. It hence is an act very close to what is known as 'Ilm Ramal' in some quarters. It is possible that lines were stretched and then pebbles were thrown on to them – similar to a practice that lives on in some contemporary societies. The Prophet ﷺ declared all these practices to be invalid, fake, void of any credibility and condemnable.

## (6)

عن ابن مسعود رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "الطيرة شرك" قالها ثلثاً وما منا إلا ولكن الله يذهبه بالتوكل. (ابوداؤد، الترمذي)

*Abdullah b. Mas'ood رضى الله عنه reports from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that 'Taking bad omen is [a type of] Polytheism'. He repeated this sentence three times. So none of us feels affected by such thoughts but Allah y removes it by [one] expressing trust in God. (Abu-Dawud and al-Tirmidhi)*

Monotheism is believing in One God. Polytheism on the other hand is believing in more than one gods. One who finds himself overwhelmed by



superstitious thoughts and as a result gives into such fears, has by implication, lost his commitment to One God. This is as if he or she has accepted that there are forces – in the shape of things viewed as relevant– which can jeopardise the prospects of his or her success.

Allah ﷻ has made clear, through His Messengers, that His will is not manifested by any of the things that people take as bad omen. The only thing that makes an impact on a person's fortune is his own behaviour. Consider the story of the three Prophets, discussed in surah Yaseen (36:13-18)

*Cite to them the example of the People of the Town, when the messengers came to it, When We sent to them two (apostles), and they rejected both of them, so We confirmed them with a third one. So they said, "We are sent to you." They (the people of the Town) said, "You are no more than human beings like us, and the Rahman (the All-Merciful Allah) has not sent down any thing. You are but telling a lie." They (the messengers) said, "Our Lord knows that we are undoubtedly sent to you. Our obligation is no more than to convey the message clearly." They (the People of the Town) said, "We take you as a bad omen for us. If you do not desist, we will certainly stone you and you will be afflicted by a painful punishment from us." They said, "Your bad omen is with yourselves. (Do you take it as bad omen) if you are given a good counsel? Rather, you are a people who cross all limits."*

According to some reports the town mentioned in these verses is Antioch, where Eisa عليه السلام had sent these preachers. The Qur'an points out that people accused these Prophets of bringing them bad luck. This may have been because they began to experience some difficulty in terms of the heavenly provisions. It has been suggested that this was famine, lack of rain or some other wide spread disease, which had resulted from their earlier opposition to the Messengers of God. So they pointed the finger of blame towards the Prophets. The Prophets said to them that their bad luck was a direct result of their rebellion; their own behaviour. Their sinful approach was to blame for their misfortune.

'none of us feels affected ...', means that as humans we sometimes feel worried about something that we see. We have doubts and uneasy feeling about something that we witness or hear. So we find negativity generated in our minds by one thing or the other.

'but finds it removed by expressing his trust in God' means that by uttering a statement of trust in Allah ﷻ, one is able to remove the effects of passing thought. This Hadith does not mention any specific statement to express trust in God. It can be anything for example, 'La ilaha illallah' or 'أَمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ' meaning 'I believe in Allah'.

One report suggests ‘اللَّهُمَّ لَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا خَيْرُكَ وَلَا طَيْرَ إِلَّا طَيْرُكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ’ meaning ‘O Allah there is no good except the one that is from You and there is no bad luck except that what You decree, and there is no God but You’. (Ahmad) There is another dua which is mentioned in the Hadith no. 9 below.

(7)

عن ثوبان رضى الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "إن الرجل ليحرم الرزق بالذنب يصيبه ولا يرد القدر إلا الدعاء." (أحمد، والنسائي، وابن ماجه)

Thouban رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Because of sinning, one is deprived of the sustenance. Nothing alters al-Qadr (the pre-set divine plan) except supplication (to the Almighty). (Ahmad, Nasa’ie)

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’an:

*With Him are the keys of the Unseen. No one knows them but He. He knows what is in the land and the sea. No leaf ever falls but that He knows about it, and there is no grain in the dark layers of the earth, or anything fresh or dry that is not recorded in a manifest book. (06:59)*

This verse (and many others of its kind) support the view that everything that happens in the world was written in ‘The Manifest Book’ or ‘The Preserved Tablet’. This concept is further explained in a famous Hadith.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that I was riding with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he said to me: ‘Young man! I will teach you some words. Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him before you. If you ask, ask from Allah. If you seek help, seek help from Allah. Know that if mankind comes together to benefit you, they cannot benefit you unless Allah has written it for you, and if mankind comes together to harm you, they cannot harm you unless Allah has written it for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages dried’. (Tirmidhi)

This narration clearly states that all that happens in the world happens according to the pre-set destiny which is written and recorded, ‘the pens have been lifted and the pages dried’. This is referred to as ‘al-Qadr’. The question then is that how can sinning of a person deprive him of sustenance that was written for him and what does ‘nothing alters al-Qadr except dua’ mean.

The scholars of Hadith have answered this question in more than one way. Some have said that the sustenance (*rizq*) referred to in this Hadith is the sustenance of the here-after. As a result of sinning one is denied of the provisions of the hereafter.

Others have said that the *rizq* mentioned in this Hadith refers to the sustenance of this world. They then differ over the explanation. One group holds that the deprivation means 'denial of peace of mind'. The lack of *barakah* experienced as a result of sinning makes even that which is more appear less, and the contentment felt after an act of piety makes even less appear more.

Others have said that his struggle in life – as destined for him – is owed to the sinful lifestyle that he was to choose later. So the pre-set destiny had taken into account his choices and orientation. Was he to choose a pious lifestyle his fate would have been recorded differently. So the sin and its punishment both happens in accordance to the 'al-Qadr' or Taqdeer.

Some scholars have pointed out that the taqdeer is of two types. One is called 'Qadha mubram' (the confirmed or the absolute plan) and the other is called 'Qadah mu'allaq'. (the conditional plan). Nothing changes in the first type. However, the second one is the type which reflects the changing pattern of a person's behaviour. The Almighty Allah ﷻ gives one plan to the angels. However, once the angels record his sinful activities, the Almighty sends them instructions to withhold some of the favours originally written for him. Hence, even the angels do not feel sorry for his suffering. This is in accordance with the verse of the Qur'an, *'So, because they broke their pledge, We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...'*. (5:13)

Whatever explanation you agree with, the Hadith is clear that if there is anything that leads to deprivation and failure in life then that is the sinful activities of men. So one should worry more about staying away from the path of sin, than grieving over his interpretation of the natural events as ominous.

## (8)

عن عروة بن عامر رضى الله عنه قال ذكرت الطيرة عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال "أحسنها الفأل ولا ترد مسلما فإذا رأى أحدكم ما يكره فليقل "اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَأْتِنِي بِالْحَسَنَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا يَدْفَعُ السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ". (أبو داود)

Urwah b 'Amir رضي الله عنه reported that a mention of bad-omens was made in the presence of Rasool-ullah ﷺ. He ﷺ remarked, 'The best of omens is 'al-faal' (the optimism). However, never should the bad omen cause a Muslim to change his course. If one of you happens to see what upsets him he should say, 'O Allah, only You bring good and only You remove evil. There is no power and no strength except in Allah'. (Abu-Dawud)

"However, never should it cause a Muslim to change his course" means that it is not appropriate for a Muslim that when he intends to carry out a certain task he changes his course, or withdraws from it altogether, merely because of something that he sees as a bad omen. In another Hadith abandoning something merely because of superstition, out of fear of having drawn bad luck, is equated with polytheism, as explained earlier.

However, as a human being it is possible that one experiences some worry, or just a thought, of bad omen or *nahoosat*. This is possible so if this happens to one, he should not alter his course. Instead one should recite the prayer reported above, asking the Almighty Allah ﷻ for assistance, for ability and for ease. The Arabic text for this dua is also present in the above Hadith.

## (9)

عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رجل يارسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "إنا كنا في دار كثر فيها عددنا وأموالنا فتحولنا إلى دار قل فيها عددنا وأموالنا. فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم "ذروها ذميمة". (أبو داؤد)

Anas رضي الله عنه reported that someone asked the Prophet ﷺ: 'we were in a house where [we were thriving in good luck, as] our number and wealth had increased. We then moved over to a new house wherein our number and wealth has gone down? He ﷺ replied, 'Leave this house [which is] disliked'. (Abu-Dawud)

Sometimes the climate or the environment of a house does not suit a person or a family. In terms of suitability, there is a lot more to a house than what meets the eye. People have different set of families, friends, foes and needs. As individuals they are all different in terms of their physical and spiritual requirements. So what happens if a person feels that a certain house does not suite his needs or may be the cause of his ill fortune.

The Hadith above (no. 7) advises us that we should resort to the prayer and dua. However, within a house there are factors, as explained above, that are subtle yet real and factual. Hence, if this worry dominates the mind of a person he should consider moving out to another property. This is permissible and not necessarily viewed as superstition.

It nevertheless is important to note that a superstitious mind is never settled. So if one feels that he or she is suffering from such concerns one should resort to the dua above (reported under no. 7) in conjunction with the moving out to another property, if necessary.

Below are a few ahādith highlighting the steps that can be taken to earn blessings and divine mercy for a house-hold:

1: The Prophet ﷺ said, *'Observe some of your Salah in your houses and do not make them (like) graves'* (Bukhari and Muslim), meaning: pray in the houses and do not make them like graves, devoid of prayer. In another narration he ﷺ is reported to have also said, *'the best prayer of a man is in the house, except the obligatory prayer'* (which should be performed in the Masjids). (Bukhari and Muslim)

2: The Prophet ﷺ said, *'Do not make your homes like the graveyards, indeed the devils flee from the house in which surah Al-Baqarah is recited'* (Muslim)

3: The Prophet ﷺ also said, *'If a person recites the name of Allah upon entering his house and upon taking his meals, Satan says, addressing his followers: there is no place for you to stay here nor is there any food.'* But if one enters without mentioning the name of Allah, Satan says (to his followers); *'you have found (a place) to spend the night, and if he does not mention the name of Allah at the time of eating, Satan says: 'you have found (a place) to spend the night as well as food'.* (Muslim)

4: The Prophet ﷺ said, *'Angels (of mercy) do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture.'* (Muslim)

5: Aysha رضي الله عنها reported that Jibreel (Gabriel) عليه السلام made a promise to the Prophet ﷺ that he would visit him at a certain hour. That hour came and went but he did not visit the Prophet ﷺ while he ﷺ waited for him. The Prophet ﷺ had a staff in his hand, which he threw away and said, *'never has Allah or His Messengers (angels) ever failed to deliver their promise'*. Then he ﷺ cast a glance around (and by

chance) found a puppy under his cot. He said, 'Aysha! When did this dog enter here?' She said, by Allah, I do not know. He ﷺ commanded for the dog [to be removed]. Then Jibreel ﷺ came and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ complained to him, 'You had promised me and I waited for you but you did not show up'. There upon Jibreel ﷺ said, 'It was the dog in your house, which prevented me from visiting you. We (angels) do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture'. (Muslim)

## (10)

عن فروة بن مسيك رضى الله عنه قال قلت يا رسول الله عندنا أرض يقال لها آيين وهى أرض ريفنا وميرتنا وإن وباءها شديد فقال "دعها عنك فإن من القرف التلف". (أبو داود)

*Farwah b. Musaik* ﷺ reported that I asked the Prophet ﷺ, 'O Messenger of Allah we have land called Abyan, which is the land where we have our farms and where we grow and store our crops, but it is a very unhealthy area. The Prophet ﷺ said: Move out, for destruction comes from being near disease. (Abu-Dawud)

'but it is a very unhealthy area', means that it is an area where the outbursts of diseases is frequent. The harsh landscape and a moist atmosphere is ideal for nurturing unhealthy bacteria, resulting in people frequently becoming ill.

The solution suggested by the Prophet ﷺ was that they should move their grain market to a better area where there is a more favourable climate. This is because when plague spreads people are always affected. This is just a fact. It is something that is distinct from, and has no link with, superstition and bad omens. It is just like the fact that the fire burns and the water extinguishes the flames. It does so with the will of Allah ﷻ but that is how the law of nature operates.

On this note it should also be mentioned that if a plague spreads in an area then all those who reside in the affected area do not have permission to travel away from there. This is in addition to the fact that those who reside out with the affected townships are also not allowed to move in there. The resident within such areas must remain optimistic and have confidence in Allah ﷻ while staying in their Lord. Those who die amongst them shall die as martyrs (*shaheeds*) and placed in Paradise.

Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ was the second Caliph of Islam. He was appointed the leader of the faithful after Abu-Bakr ﷺ. He went out to ash-Sham. When he came

to a place called Sargh, near Tabuk, he heard that the plague had broken out in ash-Sham. Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf ؓ told him that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had said, "If you hear that a land has a plague in it, do not go forward to it. If it comes upon a land which you are in, do not depart in flight from it." Umar ؓ came back from Sargh and did not proceed to his intended destination. (Abu-Dawud)

## (11)

وعن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يقول الله تعالى: "أنا عند ظن عبدي بي، وأنا معه إذا ذكرني؛ فإن ذكرني في نفسه ذكرته في نفسي؛ وإن ذكرني في ملأ، ذكرته في ملأ خير منهم". (متفق عليه)

Abu Hurairah ؓ reported from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, 'the Almighty Allah ﷻ says, 'I treat My servant the way he hopes that I would treat him. I am with him whenever he remembers Me: if he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him in My heart; if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering far better than that gathering...' (Bukhari, Muslim)

This is a famous Hadith which is quoted by many scholars in many books. The part relevant here, which is worth noting when thinking about luck and fortune, is the sentence 'I treat my servant the way he hopes that I would treat him'. It is important that one, using all the tools available to him, tries his best to make the right choices. One is further advised to also have a positive approach to life. Keeping hope and remaining optimistic is important to earn a greater deal of divine blessings. Optimism and trust in Allah ﷻ is one more tool on the path of success and salvation.

It is equally important to note that optimism must be accompanied by the caution and endurance. The Prophet ﷺ said, "A wise man is the one who calls himself to account (and refrains from falling in to evil) and does noble deeds to benefit him after death; and the foolish person is the one who subdues himself to his temptations and desires and seeks from Allah the fulfilment of his vain desires". (Tirmidhi)

The Hadith mentioned above is part of a long Hadith. The meanings of the remaining text of this Hadith is as follows: 'if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I

draw near to him an arm's length; if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.'

This is the level of the benevolence of our Creator and our Master, our Lord Allah ﷻ. So why should we worry about superstitious delusions?

(12)

عن سعد بن مالك رضى الله عنه إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال "لا هامة ولا عدوى ولا طيرة وإن تكن الطيرة في شيء ففي الدار والفرس والمرأة". (أبو داود)

Sa'd b. Malik رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'There is no Hāmah nor transmission of diseases [without the will of God] or bad omen. Was there a bad omen in anything it would be in the house, horse and the woman'. (Abu-Dawud)

There are four statements in this Hadith:

- There is no Haamah,
- Diseases do not transmit automatically from one person to another,
- There is no superstition,
- The importance of a few things in shaping life of a person.

The concept of superstition and its invalidity has been discussed in the ahādith that were mentioned earlier. This Hadith further re-enforces that principle. Let us ponder over the remaining three statements:

### Haamah:

This word is explained as having two connotations.

- a) It refers to the skull of a murdered man. The Arabs believed that if a man was murdered a bird comes out of his skull and goes into wild. (Some ignorant Muslims call it the murdered person's *rooh* as well.) It hovers over people's heads and wonders around complaining of being thirsty. This thirst is only quenched when the victim is avenged. So in order to quench the thirst of this bird, the victim's family would continue looking for an opportunity to avenge this killing and settle the score with the murderer. This mindset gave rise to wars that went on for decades, as tit



for tat murders would continue. The Prophet ﷺ declared this myth to be unfounded and untrue.

- b) Haamah is a synonym for 'owl'. The pre-Islam Arabs believed that if an owl was ever to call out from the parapet of a house it was a sign that the occupants of that house were soon to suffer great losses, leading to the house becoming desolate. The Prophet ﷺ declared this to be a tale that had no validity.

### **Contagious diseases:**

Disease cannot be passed on to anyone without the will of Allah ﷻ. It has been explained that everything happens with the will of Allah ﷻ alone. He is the Creator of the universe and everything is in His firm control. The Prophet ﷺ emphasised this over and over. He would say 'there is no contagious disease', and explained that everyone is treated individually by Allah ﷻ. It is not the case that when there is an outbreak of a disease Allah ﷻ loses control over it and then it spreads as far as it can. Even when a plague spreads, it happens so because of the will of Allah and the decree of the Creator.

Every individual is unique and special in the eyes of the Creator. When something happens to the one, it is not that his Creator could not protect him from what was going on around him. In deed what happens to him does so only after it is approved by his Lord. For further details check Hadith no 38. So the statement above in the Hadith means that diseases do not spread without the will of Allah, and that everyone one who falls ill does so, not because that God could not save him during an epidemic, but because, in His great wisdom, his Lord had allowed him to experience difficulty.

It is also worth noting here that nothing is more painful to a sensible person than for him to see other people suffer because of him. One who suffers from an ailment does so at a great cost. He or she deserves to be treated with all the care, love and affection. At this difficult stage in one's life if he or she is made to feel as the carrier of disease that is like adding insult to injury. It hence serves him better if he is reminded that others around him may fall ill, but only if that is written for them.

The Arabs in the pre-Islamic era suffered from many superstitious beliefs. In addition to many unfounded myths one was related to contagious disease. They believed that anyone who became in contact with someone diseased would also

become unwell. So the Prophet ﷺ made it clear that Allah the Almighty is in control. No one becomes unwell without the will of Allah ﷻ and no one passes on the disease to anyone without the divine approval. This statement of the Prophet was music to the ears of those who were suffering.

The Hadith does not mean that the concept of contagious or infectious disease is invalid and that in the world of cause and effects, germs and bacteria do not travel. This is not the case. The Prophet ﷺ at other occasions did show regard to the contagious diseases and advised his companions to abstain from coming in contact with people with certain health conditions. He gave specific instructions against travelling to regions where there was an epidemic. This subject will be discussed in more details under the Ahādith that follow.

### **The significance of a few things in shaping the quality of life:**

The third important statement here is about the house, horse and the women. The report here is very clear in pointing out that there is no concept of bad-omen in Islam, so none of the above carries any bad luck. However, it then goes on to say that if there was bad omen in anything it would have been in these three. The first part of the Hadith ‘there is no bad-omen’ without any exception makes it very clear that even the three do not carry any bad luck. Imam Tirmidhi r.a. has reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘there is no bad luck, and the barkah is often in three; the horse, the woman and the house’.

However, there yet remains the question that why were these three singled out. Ibn ul Mulaqqan r.a. says that ‘these three are the things that everyone has to put up with’. These happen to be the life partners of a person. So if these are not of the right type, that one is able to draw comfort and peace from, then his life becomes sorrowful. So these life-long companions should be selected with care and caution.

In another narration the concept of bad luck discussed in this Hadith is further elaborated. It has been reported by Abu-Buraidah ؓ that the companions of the Prophet ﷺ were once talking about the bad-luck in his presence. The Prophet ﷺ listened to them and commented, ‘the bad-luck of a house is that it is too small, not large enough for the needs of its occupants and that it has neighbours that are short-tempered. The bad-luck of a horse is that it does not comply with the instruction of the one who is on its back. As for the woman her bad omen is that she is unable to conceive a child, or has bad-manners’. (Musnad Abi-Hanifah)

Ayshah رضي الله عنها explained that the barakah of a woman is that marrying her does not place her husband under any burden nor is a demand of a large sum is made for her dower. (Ahmad)

(13)

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "لاعدوى ولاهامة ولاصفر".  
فقال أعرابي يارسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "فما بال الإبل تكون في الرمل لكأنها الظبأ فيخالطها  
البعير الأجرب فيجربها فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "فمن أعدى الأول؟" (البخاري)

*Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Disease do not transmit to one another, nor is there a Hāmah or Safar'. A nomadic Arab [who happened to be present at the time] asked: How is it that when camels are in the sand, [with as clear skins] as if they were gazelles and a mangy camel comes among them and it gives them mange? He replied: Who infected the first one?' (Bukhari)*

In this hadith the issue of contagious diseases is addressed. The Prophet ﷺ has repeated that the spread of diseases is dependent upon the will of Creator of the heavens and the earth. Until Allah ﷻ not allow a disease to spread from one person to another it will not. Health and sickness are both dependent on the will of Allah ﷻ.

When the Prophet ﷺ said that the diseases do not transmit from one to another it was clearly against the observations of the physicians. They knew that that disease did transmit from one to another. So it is difficult to imagine that the Prophet ﷺ was not aware of this observation, that he made this ruling in oblivion to how the reality was witnessed. Even if there was any such doubt, the Hadith above makes it clear that this concern was put across to him as an objection.

Because of this forceful re-iteration of the Prophet s ﷺ number of companions of the Prophet ﷺ (like sayyidah Ayshah رضي الله عنها) were of the opinion that there is no such thing as a contagious disease. This was also the opinion of numerous Muslim scholars. However, others because of the narrations, some of which are to follow soon, believed that contagious disease were also part of this world of cause and effect. To an extent that even the narrator of this Hadith is reported to agree to

this. Ma'mar, quoting al-Zuhri r.a., said : A man told me that Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated to him saying that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say: 'A diseased camel should not be brought with a healthy camel to drink water'. (Abu Dawud) This means that even Abu Hurairah understood that the Hadith meant that diseases do not transmit from one person to the other without the will of Allah ﷻ.

*Safar* can be translated as the second month of the Islamic year – where some people used to have specific such thoughts. This is something that nowadays may be compared to the way many people view *Muharram*, the first months of Islamic calendar. Muharram for some people is the month containing such bad-omen that they do not perform any celebrations, weddings, anniversaries etc. during this month. Others have similar attitude towards the month of *shawwal* or even Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. As mentioned previously the Prophet ﷺ has confirmed that these beliefs are baseless and not even remotely connected to Islam.

*Safar* can also refer to another mistaken belief of the Arabs. They believed that people carry a serpent in their bellies, which begins to eat them from inside when it is not fed and is hungry. So if one does not eat for a number of days the serpent may finish him or her from inside, causing death. The Prophet ﷺ negated this belief by declaring '*there is no Safar*'.

#### (14)

عن جابر رضي الله عنه قال إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أخذ بيد مجذوم فوضعها معه في القصعة وقال "كل ثقة بالله وتوكلا عليه". (ابن ماجه)

*Jabir رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ caught hold of the hand of man suffering from leprosy and placed it along with his hands in a plate of food and said, 'Eat [with me, as I have no fear of being affected by your disease] because of my trust in Allah and resignation to Him'. (Ibn Maajah)*

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani r.a. writes that a group of scholars, like Eisa b. Dinar r.a. were of the opinion that this Hadith sets the verdict on the issue of contagious diseases. They claim that all the other ahādith (like the ones that follow) are overruled. However, he then says that this is not the view of the majority. Majority are of the opinion that this Hadith only makes it clear that [for those who have a firm belief in Allah ﷻ and are sure that even if they were to fall ill it will not affect their trust in their Creator] it is permissible to mingle with the patients suffering from the contagious diseases.

The Prophet ﷺ himself set this standard of affection and love to those who suffer. This is a standard that the carers of the patients suffering from various diseases can follow. He ﷺ pronounced his trust in Allah ﷻ to remind those around him that it is the Almighty who is in control of the universe, and only He determines who is to fall ill. He is the Creator of the cause, and the cause can only affect when allowed by Him. His words can be repeated in the form of a supplication by those who worry about becoming contaminated while taking care.

(15)

عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "لاعدوى ولا طيرة ولا هامة ولا صفر وفر من المجذوم كما تفر من الأسد". (البخاري)

*Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Diseases are not transmitted to one another [without the will of God] nor is there bad omen or Hāmah or Safar, [yet] flee from the one who has leprosy as you flee away from a tiger. (Bukhārī)*

In contrast to the Ahādith above, in this hadith we are instructed to stay away from the sufferer of a certain contagious disease, a person who suffers from leprosy (a leper). There seems to be some tension within this Hadith as well. The latter part of the Hadith appears to contradict its opening sentence, which says 'diseases do not transmit to one another'. The scholars have explained this apparent tension in the meaning in a number of ways:

One explanation given is that it means that despite the fact that 'diseases do not transmit from one another', one should yet exercise caution when dealing with the contagious diseases and refrain from putting one's belief to a test. This is because in this world of cause and effect, normally, when a cause is adopted the effect follows. So although every individual who becomes ill does so with the will of Allah, and every individual who lives or dies is also because of the decree of Allah ﷻ, it yet does not mean that one should jump into a sinking boat. Similarly one should avoid taking risks in regards to his health in order to check whether Allah ta'ala can protect him against a contagious disease or not.

Another explanation given by the scholars of Hadith is that the final part of this Hadith is intended to highlight certain exceptions. What the Prophet ﷺ intended to say was that though majority of disease known during that age were not contagious there however were certain exceptions. One of which was leprosy.

Modern science has confirmed that there are many other types of diseases that are infectious- where a patient is most often infected due to meeting others who were affected. The list of such diseases that are considered 'infectious' is said to run into 100s. It is important when considering the cause of such emerging epidemics to bear in mind the following prophetic tradition:

*Abdullah b. Umar ؓ said, the Prophet ﷺ came to us and addressing us he said, ... 'never did fornication (adultery) spread amongst a people but [it was also accompanied by] the spread of such plagues and diseases that had not been witnessed in the generations that preceded them...' (Ibn Maajah)*

The modern lifestyle may itself be a cause of rise in the number of infectious diseases.

Another explanation given here is that ordinary people should exercise caution until they fully understand the concept of taqdeer i.e. the concept of pre-set destiny. One who is in uncertain whether he would be able to deal with the doubt in regards to the true cause of his ailment should continue to exercise caution. He must not freely mix people affected by the contagious diseases. However, one who is firm in terms of his trust in God may follow the example discussed in the Hadith number 14 above.

'Flee from the one who has leprosy' is explained by others differently. They say that it means that do not add to his sorrow and grief by enjoying life in his presence, because this may remind him of his ill-fortune, which will increase his grief. So if you want to enjoy life, do so away from his sight. This view nevertheless seems to be worthy of re-consideration, as the question would then be that why did the Prophet ﷺ specify leprosy. Should people suffering from other ailments not be treated the same way?

Just as this hadith warns against sitting close to someone affected by an infectious disease, there are other ahādith to the effect that if one hears about a plague in a certain area he should refrain from travelling there. The Commander of the faithful, Umar ؓ travelled towards al-Shaam. He was informed on the way that a plague had appeared in some areas of al-Sham, which Umar ؓ had intended to visit. He ؓ sought council of his companions about whether to proceed.

Abdul Rahman b. Awf ؓ reported a Hadith from the Prophet ﷺ which said, 'if you here about a plague in a city do not travel towards it. However, if you are already there do not try to leave'. Having heard this Hadith, Umar ؓ issued instructions to all his companions to prepare to return. Abu-Ubaydah ؓ, the commander of the Muslim forces that were taking care of the area, complained, saying to him, 'are you fleeing from the decree of Allah?', referring to the fact that whatever happens

in the world does so only according to al-Qadr; the pre-set destiny. To this Umar رضي الله عنه replied, 'Yes, we are fleeing from a decree of Allah ﷻ to another decree of His'.

This incident, in addition to confirming the above report – taking care when dealing with an infectious disease - further gives us some insight into the subject of al-Qadr (the divine decree). Planning and taking care is not against the belief in pre-set destiny. In fact being wise, exercising caution, taking necessary steps for protection are all part of the divine plan for the life on earth.

Leprosy is one of those seven diseases which were known to be contagious. This is a contagious disease, which affects the skin, mucous membranes, and nerves, causing discoloration and lumps on the skin and, in severe cases, disfigurement and deformities. In the modern world leprosy is mainly confined to tropical Africa and Asia. In the extreme form of this condition the entire shape of the limbs/skin changes. This can even result in amputation and necessary removal of limbs.

## (16)

عن عمرو بن الشريد عن أبيه رضى الله عنهما قال كان في وفد ثقيف رجل مجذوم فأرسل اليه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إنا قد بايعناك فارجع". (مسلم)

*Amr b. Sharid رضي الله عنه narrates from his father that a man who had leprosy was in the deputation of Tha'qif tribe. [They came to Madinah, the City of the Prophet ﷺ, to give bai'ah; an oath of their allegiance.] The Prophet ﷺ sent this person a message asking him to return to his family and to say that 'certainly we have accepted your bai'ah'. (Muslim)*

Though modern research has shown that leprosy (or Hansen's disease) after a short treatment is no longer highly infectious, it nevertheless was a common belief that leprosy is contagious, that shaped a hostile social response to this disease in ancient civilizations.

In Talmud, leprosy is viewed as a form of Tzaraath, which serves as a punishment for sins. Torah records an incident where Miriam, the sister of Moses (Moosa عليه السلام) was struck with leprosy for becoming involved with slandering him (ﷺ).

This concept of punishment attached stigma to it. It was also believed to be highly contagious and sexually transmitted. This added fear to the earlier attached

stigma made the lives of individuals with leprosy unbearable. Miriam, in the above case, according to the Jewish traditions, was instructed by Moses (ﷺ) after Aaron (Haroon ﷺ) begged him for cure, according to Torah, to go into solitary confinement for a period of seven days for purification.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught that leprosy and similar diseases affected individuals, primarily not because they became in contact with others, but because such was the decree of Allah ﷻ. However, it was a general practice of the Prophet ﷺ to not challenge the cause and effect law of the universe, to test whether Allah ﷻ was able to do it otherwise. Hence, *he* ﷺ taught his followers not to test their faith in Allah ﷻ and exercise caution as much as possible.

Thaqeef, the tribe mentioned in the Hadith above, was a tribe that lived in and around the famous city of Tāif; the twin city of Makkah. In early days of Islam, people of Tāif, just like of Makkah, had demonstrated immense hostility towards the Prophet ﷺ. Even after the city of Makkah was taken over in the year 8<sup>th</sup> after Hijrah, resulting in great favours being extended to them by the Prophet ﷺ, the people of Tāif continued to oppose and show resistance against Islam and Muslims.

However, a wind of change blew in the last couple of years of the Prophet's ﷺ life. Groups from far corners of Arabia, having recognised the Truth, came to pronounce their belief in One God. They abandoned the worship of idols and statues that were carved by themselves and willingly entered in to Islam. This was referred to by the Qur'an as:

*(O Prophet,) When there comes Allah's help and the Victory, And you see people entering Allah's (approved) religion in multitudes, Then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him. Surely He is Ever-Relenting. (110:1-3)*

The Prophet ﷺ treated all those who came to him to pledge their allegiance to Allah ﷻ and to pronounce their belief with utmost affection and care. He was very hospitable to them and would encourage his companions to be gentle with these guests. His companions would often go hungry in order to make sure these guests had enough on their plates. These stories are well known.

During this period the Thaqeef clan also realised their mistake and they decided to renounce the idol-worship. They decided to send a delegate to the Prophet ﷺ to pledge their allegiance. As they arrived at Madinah the Prophet ﷺ was informed. They also had a member, who must have been a tribal leader, who was suffering from leprosy.



In the pre-Islam era leprosy was viewed as a curse and very infectious. People generally were afraid to share space with lepers. The news of this man's arrival made the Prophet ﷺ worried about his guests, who travelled from the other parts of Arabia and were either new to Islam or were there just to find out more. So the Prophet ﷺ instructed this person from the Thaqeef delegate to return home straight away. He ﷺ ensured him that his *bai'ah* (the oath of allegiance) had been accepted so he need not to worry. However, for the sake of everyone else, rather than coming to the Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ, he should return immediately.

In addition to a number of other lessons, this Hadith is an example of the Prophetic approach to social life. The overall welfare and well-being of the society is given precedence over the individual desires and interests. Since, the man returned home because of the prophetic instructions, he was not being negligent to value the Prophet's company, so was perfectly placed to win the divine grace even when returning from the Prophet's city. May peace of Allah and His blessings be upon the Prophet ﷺ, his family and all his companions.

(17)

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "لاعدوى ولاهامة ولا نوء ولا صفر". (مسلم)

Abu-Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'disease do not transmit [out of their own accord] nor is there Hāmah, Nau' or Safar'. (Muslim)

*The only new word in this Hadith is 'Nau'. This was a term associated with astrology. It was closely related to the fall of rain. Since astrological beliefs were so central to the pre-Islam living, the word nau' was had become a synonym for rain.*

*The Prophet ﷺ in this Hadith declared the belief in nau' to be as invalid as the concept of superstition and other baseless pagan myths. We will explain this term in some detail under the Hadith below.*

*Other narrations also include another word 'ghoul', which refers to ghosts and devils on the pathways in remote areas that cause trouble to the passersby. This was another folk-tale common amongst the pre-Islam Arabs. They believed that in remote areas, such as deserts, valleys and jungles, there resided genies that caused delusions to the travellers, resulting in them losing the track and ending up lost in the wild. So they would resort to further superstition for protection. On*

the course of their travel, if they happened to station in some remote area, they sought refuge of the chief of Jinns in that locality, from ghosts and any other danger that might be present. The Almighty refers to their fallacy in the Qur'an:

*And that some guys from human beings used to seek refuge with some guys of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance, (72:6)*

This call for protection made by the human-beings added to the arrogance of the Jinns, since they found human beings holding them in higher esteem. The Prophet ﷺ negated this false belief of theirs as well and declared, 'there is no ghoul'.

### (18)

عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "لو أمسك الله القطر عن عباده خمس سنين ثم أرسله لأصبحت طائفة من الناس كافرين يقولون "سقيننا بنوء المجدح". (النسائي)

*Abu Sa'eed ؓ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'If Allah ﷻ were to withhold rain for five years, and He then sent it, a group of men would yet become unbelievers by proclaiming: 'we had rain because of the nau' of al-Mijdah'. (Nas'ie)*

In Astrology the word 'nau' was used to refer to the setting of a star in such a way that another rises at the same time to occupy its orbit. This was called 'nau'. This phenomenon was said to be repeated 28 times a year. There were twenty-eight stars, each with a distinct name, and each star was said to occupy the orbit for thirteen nights, with the exception of a star called 'jab-ha' in Arabic, which lasted, according to their understanding, for fourteen nights. ( $28 \times 13 + 1 = 365$ )

In the days of *Jahilyyah* (pre-Islam era), Arabs thought that the 'nua' phenomenon only unfolds at a time when it is windy or raining. So they would say that this rain is because of the nau' of al-Thurayyā, or because of the nau' of al-Dabarān, or as mentioned in the Hadith above, some had said that the rain was because of the nau' of al-Mijdah, one of the 28 stars.

It is important to point out that this was a claim which stem out of the Arab's pre-occupation with Astrology and nothing to do with the Climate or the Environmental studies. Such claims stemmed from ignorance and often involved belief in zodiac signs. The concept of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, was missing altogether from their interpretation of what they saw as the heavenly events.

The Prophet ﷺ did not endorse their claim of such unfolding events in the heaven. Rather than teaching that these heavenly events were controlled by Allah ﷻ, which would have been more sensible if he ﷺ agreed with Astrology, He ﷺ declared such claims null and void. The Almighty, in this Hadith Qudsiy, ruled against making statements like, ‘we had rain because of the fall of al-Mijdah’ and instead asked His servants to say that ‘we had rain out of our Creators benevolence and mercy’.

As for the weather forecast and whether it is permissible to say that we had rain because of the unfolding of a certain natural phenomenon, that is permissible. However, we must not forget that the nature is nothing but a will of its Creator. So a more appropriate statement would still be the one reported in the Hadith, ‘we had rain out of our Creators benevolence and mercy’.

Consider the following verses from the Qur’an (46:24-8), which are related to the story of the people of ‘Aad’. They had witnessed the ‘natural phenomenon’ which normally produces rain but for them it had something else in store.

*So, when they saw it as a cloud proceeding towards their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud that will bring us rain.” No, it is the very thing you asked to hasten up — a wind in which there is a painful punishment, That will destroy everything with the command of its Lord! So they became such that nothing remained to be seen except their dwelling places.*

*This is how We punish the guilty people. And indeed We had established them in a powerful position in which We did not establish you (O people of Makkah), and had given to them ears and eyes and hearts, but neither their ears benefited them in the least, nor their eyes, nor their hearts, as they used to reject Allah’s signs; and they were encircled by what they used to ridicule.*

*And We have (also) destroyed (other) towns around you, while We had given to them a variety of signs, so that they might return (from disbelief). So, why is it that they were not helped by those whom they had taken as gods beside Allah in order to attain closeness (to Him)? Instead, they vanished from them. That was, in fact, their falsity and a thing they used to fabricate. (Al-Qu’ran 46:24-8)*

It is perfectly permissible to say that more trees means more rain. It is also permissible to say that more rainfall results the growth of more trees and more vegetation. In this world of cause and effect we are asked to appreciate the cause as well the Creator of the cause. The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘the one who is not grateful to other people [for their kindness] has also failed in showing gratefulness to Allah’.

Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه reported, a man said to the Prophet ﷺ, 'O Messenger of Allah, should I tie my camel and trust in Allah, or should I untie her and trust in Allah?' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Tie her and trust in Allah'. (Tirmidhi)

So there is no doubt in stating that to say that we have more rain because of some natural phenomenon, as long as we understand that this phenomenon is controlled by Allah ﷻ. The rainfall primarily is to do with the benevolence of the Creator. It is He who has created and continues to control the nature. He does what He likes, surely He is the Most-Wise and the Most-Merciful.

One who believes that the nature is not created or controlled by Allah ﷻ holds a belief that is contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is better for Muslims to say that Allah ﷻ is the one who bestowed upon us such and such grace.

### (19)

عن زيد بن خالد الجهني رضي الله عنه قال صلى لنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صلاة الصبح بالحديبية على أثر سماء كانت من الليل فلما إنصرف أقبل على الناس فقال هل تدرون ماذا قال ربكم قالوا الله ورسوله أعلم قال قال أصبح من عبادي مؤمن بي وكافر فأما من قال مطرنا بفضل الله ورحمته فذلك مؤمن بي كافر بالكوكب و أما من قال مطرنا بنوء كذا وكذا فذلك كافر بي مؤمن بالكوكب . (متفق عليه)

*Zaid b. Khalid al-Juhaniy رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ led us in the morning prayer at Hudaibiyah after rain which had fallen the night before. When he finished with the prayer he ﷺ turned to the people and said, 'Do you know what your Lord has said?' They replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best' [we have no knowledge about this]. The Prophet ﷺ then said, 'The Almighty said, 'among my servants there were those who [woke up] in the morning as believers in me, whereas the others [woke up] as disbelievers. As for those who say that the rain fell because of the grace and the mercy of our Lord; Allah, surely they maintained their belief in me and refused to believe in stars. However, others who proclaim that rainfall is owed to a change in such and such star then surely they [woke up] as having lost their faith in me and replaced it with their belief in stars'. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

This Hadith is one of the Hadith Qudsiy. A Hadith Qudsiy is a Hadith wherein the Prophet ﷺ reports a statement of the Almighty Allah ﷻ. These are not verses of the Qur'an, but are nevertheless an instruction from Allah ﷻ. In this Hadith one who puts his total belief in the astrological events is declared by Allah ﷻ to have renounced his faith in Him ﷻ altogether. This is should be treated as a stern warning by those who continue to promote Astrology amongst Muslims in one shape or the other. Even if they have their doubts they should discuss these with some learned persons, or at least refrain from spreading these to the others.

When it comes to Astrology, it is not even permissible to refer to what is known as 'astrological events' as a cause of an event on earth. Had this been permissible there would have been some appreciation shown to it in this Hadith. Instead the Hadith states very clearly, *'those who proclaim that rainfall is owed to a change in such and such star then surely they have lost their faith in [Allah ﷻ] and they have replaced [their belief in God] with a belief in stars'.*

The next few ahādith continue with this subject.

(20)

عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "ما أنزل الله من السماء من بركة إلا أصبح فريق من الناس بها كافرين. ينزل الله الغيث فيقولون بكوكب كذا وكذا". (مسلم)

Abu-Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Never does Allah send forth a blessing from the heavens except that some men turn out to be in denial of His grace. Allah ﷻ sends down the rain but they say it is because of such and such planet'. (Muslim)

This Hadith discusses a net effect of being engaged with Astrology. Those engaged with Astrology often try to explain every occurrence on earth as having some correlation with something that happens on other planets. They then try to make predictions about the future, but end up making wrong assumptions about the future. The Almighty Allah ﷻ states clearly in the Qur'an:

*Say, "No one in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the Unseen except Allah." And they do not know when they will be raised again. Rather, their knowledge has failed in respect of the Hereafter. Rather, they are in doubt about it. Rather, they are blind to it. (27:65-6)*

If you try to investigate if there are any benefits in studying Astrology you will discover that there is none other than just a token stimulation of mind. It only leads to a false notion of what governs the life on earth. The Prophet ﷺ described it here as, *'Allah causes the rainfall but they say 'it is because of such and such planet'*.

Astrology, in the Oxford Dictionary, is defined as *'the study of the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies interpreted as having an influence on human affairs and the natural world'*. Though some Astrologers work only with stars and constellations, western astrologers also work with the Sun, the Moon and the planets (including Pluto) within the Solar System. They nevertheless have not been able to prove any connection between the two.

Astrology is not only about studying the planets and the stars. It is more about the study of its 'influence' on human affairs and natural world. This is something which needs to be proven. This is a notion that has its roots in pre-civilisation era, yet despite man being aware of these ideas since ancient times, has not been able to prove anything. In fact all the Prophets condemned such mindset and opposed such claims. For Muslims this condemnation by the Prophets should be enough to understand the fallacy of the claims made by the astrologers.

Ibrahim ؑ is reported in the Qur'an that on a day of national festival, when the people were leaving for a carnival, *'he cast a look at the stars, And then said, "I feel indisposed" (37:88-9)*. The commentators of the Qur'an did not understand this verse, *'he cast a look at the stars'*, as an approval for Astrology. Instead they say that Ibrahim treated the people in a way they could understand. His people, like many other uneducated nations, were firm believers in Astrology. So he looked towards the stars, as if he was trying to read his fate, and said that he was going to be unwell. This made them convinced that though Ibrahim ؑ appeared to be well and solemn he might become unwell during the course of the day.

Ibrahim ؑ did not believe in Astrology, but as it was the prevalent custom of the day, he would often pretended to credit this in order to prove its fallacy. Consider the verses below:

*Thus We showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he might be firm in belief. So, when the night enveloped him, he saw a star. He said, "This is my Lord." But, when it vanished, he said, "I do not like those who vanish."*

*Later, when he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord." But, when it vanished, he said, "Had my Lord not guided me, I would have been among those gone astray."*

*Thereafter, when he saw the sun rising, he said, "This is my Lord. This is greater." Again, when it vanished, he said, "O my people, I disown whatever you associate with Allah. I have,*

*indeed, turned my face straight towards the One who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of those who associate partners with Allah.” (Al-Qur’an 75-79)*

(21)

عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "من إقتبس علما من النجوم إقتبس شعبة من السحر زاد ما زاد". (أحمد, أبو داؤد, ابن ماجه)

Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Whoever learns Astrology learns a branch of sorcery, more of it by learning as much more’. (Abu-Dawud, Ahmad, Ibn Majah)

Sorcery is defined as ‘the art, practices, or spells of magic, especially black magic, by which it is sought to harness occult forces or evil spirits in order to produce supernatural effects in the world’. This is a definition which in Arabic is stated as

"مزاولة النفوس الخبيثة لأفعال و أقوال، يترتب عليها أمور خارقة للعادة".

Another expression is:

"هو عقد و رُقَى و كلام يتكلم به الساحر، أو يكتبه، أو يعمل شيئا يؤثر في بدن المسحور، أو قلبه أو عقله، من غير مباشرة".

In the Qur’an, (2:102) the sorcery or magic is referred to as ‘what harmed [people] and did no good to them’ and as ‘that with which they could cause separation between a man and his wife’. Practicing sorcery is strictly forbidden in Islam. Qurtubi r.a. has reported from all four the Imams that they viewed practiced sorcery equal to denouncing one’s faith. This is because, referring to sorcery, the Almighty Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’an:

*They followed what the devils used to recite in the reign of Sulaiman (Solomon); and it was not Sulaiman who became an infidel, but the devils did become infidels, teaching people magic, and what had been sent down to the two angels, Harut and Marut, in Babylon. And these two did not teach anyone without first having said (to him), “We are but a trial, so do not go infidel.” (2:102)*

About sorcery, Hasan al-Bisriy r.a. is reported to have said, ‘whomever Allah ﷻ intends to protect sorcery causes no harm to him at all. And when Allah ﷻ wants

to afflict someone with a test he removes the barrier between him and the spell cast on him by a sorcerer, so such is troubled'. A person who studies sorcery and practices it undertakes the study of something that causes harm to him and does not benefit. Sorcery is a mean to cause harm to people, and a sorcerer's primary intention is evil, as he intends to overpower other people. So people hate him too, and in the hereafter there awaits for him a painful punishment prepared by the Lord of mankind.

In the Hadith above, the Prophet ﷺ has equated Astrology with sorcery. He ﷺ has described studying Astrology as the study of sorcery, about which the Qur'an says, '[this] is but a trial do not go infidel'.

Studying Astrology may be viewed as an innocent study of a book, however, it is forbidden for Muslims. Same is true from the Christian and Jewish perspective. So on this subject Abrahamic faiths all speak in unison. The prohibition of studying Astrology is primarily due to the confusion it creates in regards to divinity. There is no factual evidence to support the arguments laid by the astrologers. Hence, the more one is engaged in this study the further he or she is from the path of obedience and piety. If one died in such a state, only Allah ﷻ knows how sever will be their punishment and their abode in the hereafter.

## (22)

وعن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " من اقتبس بابا من علم النجوم لغير ما ذكر الله فقد اقتبس شعبة من السحر المنجم كاهن والكاهن ساحر والساحر كافر " . رواه رزين . وعن قتادة قال : خلق الله تعالى هذه النجوم لثلاث جعلها زينة للسماء ورجوما للشياطين وعلامات يهتدى بها فمن تأول فيها بغير ذلك أخطأ وأضاع نصيبه وتكلف ما لا يعلم " . رواه البخاري تعليقا وفي رواية رزين : " تكلف ما لا يعنيه وما لا علم له به وما عجز عن علمه الأنبياء والملائكة " .

*Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'whoever learns a chapter from the science of the stars (Astrology) for something other than what reminds one of Allah ﷻ surely learns a part of magic. An astrologer is a sorcerer, a sorcerer is a magician and a magician is out of the fold of Islam. (Razin)*

*Qatadah رضي الله عنه said, 'Allah ﷻ has created the stars for three reasons.*

- *In order to make them an adornment for the heavens,*
- *In order to repel the devils through them, and*



- *In order to make them signs to navigate with.*

*Anyone who interprets these stars in any other way has indeed erred, wasted his time and took up a task that he knew nothing about. In another narration he is reported to have also said, 'he took up a task that was of no benefit to him, he had no knowledge of and something that even the Prophets and the angels could not understand'.*

The term for Astrology in Arabic is '*ilm un-nujum*' which is similar to the term that is used for Astronomy. Occasionally one may find himself confused over the two disciplines (if Astronomy can be referred to as an academic discipline). However, Astronomy in no way is connected with the Astrology. Astronomy is *the scientific study of the universe and of objects that exist naturally in space, such as the moon, the sun, planets, and stars*. This is a branch of natural sciences and in no way is connected with astrology. Studying Astronomy is a subject that Muslims have been very interested in since the early days of Islam.

This is what Abu-Qatadah رضي الله عنه said that Allah ﷻ has created the stars for the reasons mentioned above. These are signs to navigate with. The companions of the Prophet ﷺ would study the stars and were aware of its importance in navigation and for working out the prayer times. In one Hadith the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have prayed Isha salah at a time when the moon of the third night of a month would set. A report regarding a prophecy in the biblical literature, translated into Arabic, regarding the key features of the last ummah states that *they will observe stars and the movement of the moon and sun*. This is what the Muslims did for the sake of their daily prayers and fasting. So studying Astronomy is praiseworthy, whereas studying Astrology is condemned.

About Astrology Qatadah رضي الله عنه said that these claims are invalid, as these cannot be substantiated in any way; through scientific observation, a credible mathematic calculation or an authentic report from divine. This is something that no Prophet claimed nor was it taught by the angles. Unlike some forms of horoscope which at least had validity at some stage in human history, as a Prophet had been taught something similar in the form of his miracle, and unlike sorcery which was taught by the angels Harut and Marut, as mentioned in the Qur'an (2:102). This statement makes belief in Astrology even worse than a belief in sorcery or horoscope.

Creation of the stars as an adornment of the heavens refers to the concept discussed in the verse of surah al-Mulk (67:05). Repelling devils through stars is a concept that will be discussed later.

وعن حفصة رضي الله عنها قالت : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " من أتى عرافا فسأله عن شيء لم تقبل له صلاة أربعين ليلة " . رواه مسلم

Hafsah رضي الله عنها reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, one who visits a fortune-teller and enquires from him about a matter, his forty days of prayers are not accepted.' (Muslim)

The term used for the fortune-teller is 'Arraaf'. This is a broader term which is used for all forms of fortune-telling, whether they practice sorcery (Kaahin), Astrology (Munajjim) or claim knowledge of the unseen and hidden matters by drawing lines in the sand (Rammaal). They all claim to be able to see in the future, whereas the Almighty Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an that 'no one knows the unseen' (27:65) unless Allah ﷻ selects someone from men or the angles (22:75). Others who claim to know the unseen are merely shooting in the air or receive some glimpses through the devils:

*"Shall I inform you (O people!) upon whom the Shayâtin (devils) descend? They descend on every lying (one who tells lies), sinful person who gives ear (to the devils and they pour what they may have heard of the unseen from the angels), and most of them are liars. (Ash-Shu'ara 26:221-3)*

Anyone who claims to have been able to see the future, out-with the grace of the Almighty, using tools which are condemned by the Prophets, in fact is challenging the will of God. He simply is claiming that he or she has been able to acquire the knowledge of the unseen and of the specific events in the future, through his own doing, which is not possible.

Informing people of the unseen was a sign given to the Messengers of Allah. They said to people that they were appointed by the Creator of the heavens and the earth to guide them. They said that God spoke to them and informed them of the matters hidden from the eye. This was a unique feature of the life and works of almost all the Prophets. Anyone claiming to know the unseen, other than the Prophets, causes a lot of confusion to mankind. Not only such an imposter manipulates his influence, causing much harm to his subjects, he further makes the task of the Prophets more difficult, by creating distrust in the hearts of people against those who claim to know the unseen.

For these reasons the fortune tellers are declared as enemies to Allah and His Messengers. Anyone who visits them, helps them increase their influence, supports them or confirms their claims also shares the divine disapproval. It is important that such fraudsters are never taken seriously. Anyone who visits them earns such deprivation and condemnation that whenever He appears before his Creator in Salah he is also ignored. This goes on for the period reported in this Hadith as 'forty days'. The only solution for anyone who happens to err in this regard is a true and sincere repentance.

(24)

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "من أتى عرافاً أو كاهناً فصدق به يقول فقد كفر بما أنزل على محمد" (أحمد ، والحاكم)

*Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'one who came to a fortune-teller (or a sorcerer) and confirmed what he says (to him) has indeed renounced his belief in what was revealed to Muhammad ﷺ. (Ahmad, Haakim)*

The Hadith above had warned against visiting the sorcerers and fortune tellers. It was clear in stating that this is prohibited. One who yet pays such people a visit and confirms their claims and conforms to their demands has indeed demonstrated his distrust in what Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught.

Though it can be argued that this Hadith may be another account of the same noble statement of the Prophet ﷺ, it nevertheless goes a step further, for the one who demonstrates more ignorance. The Hadith above had warned that one who visits a sorcerer his forty days of Salah loses value in the eyes of Allah ﷻ. This Hadith states that one who also confirms the statements made by a sorcerer has in fact renounced his faith. This would mean that his earlier acts of charity and ibādah would all be invalidated as a result. May Allah ﷻ protect us all from erring in this regard.

This is a problem that is common to many Muslim societies. People often complain about being told that an evil spell has been casted upon them, their family or business. They often say that 'a wise-man', 'a guru' or simply 'someone trust-worthy' has told them that it was done by a relative. This mentally blows out many. They live with constant hatred against another Muslim who is often a relative or neighbour. They then start treating them with hatred and animosity. For people who suffer from such disease, there is trouble in this world as well as the hereafter. Consider below:

- Often people in these situations are already suffering, either physically, emotionally or financially. This may have a cause that can be addressed and tackled if looked at rationally, leading to the pain or trouble being removed, but they do not consider this option. They just live with the pain and continue to suffer unnecessarily, unable to make the right choices, because of the confusion resulting from 'the advice' given by these fortune-tellers.
- In addition to constant living in pain, they hold others to blame for their suffering. This gives rise to jealousy and envy in their minds against those whom they hold responsible. As the others flourish it adds to their agony.
- Often these fortune-tellers point fingers of blame towards the immediate relatives of the sufferers. This sometimes leads to family breakups, adding insult to injury and spreading the suffering to the others rather than containing and eliminating it.
- There is no reward for such people in the hereafter either. Even if they were unable to find cure for their pain, were they to exercise patience and a trust in their Creator, for them would be lofty dwellings in Paradise. However, visiting sorcerers and confirming their diagnosis pushes them further away from the mercy of Allah ﷻ.

There is little doubt in the fact that rather than making any positive contribution to human existence (with the exception of short-lived entertainment in the form of TV shows and fantasy writings) the sorcerers and magicians can be held responsible for a lot of pain and suffering in the world, which is found normally amongst those who believe in them. How true are the words of Allah ﷻ in the Qur'an:

*'They used to learn what harmed them and did no good to them'.*

(25)

عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما قال: تليت هذه الآية عند رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - : {يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا} فقام سعد بن أبي وقاص فقال: يا رسول الله ادع الله أن يجعلني مستجاب الدعوة فقال له النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - "يا سعد، أظب مطعمك تكن مستجاب الدعوة، والذي نفس محمد بيده إن العبد ليقتذف اللقمة الحرام في جوفه ما يتقبل منه عمل أربعين يومًا وأيا عبد نبت لحمه من السحت والربا فالنار أولى به". (الطبراني في الأوسط)

*Ibn Abbas ؓ reported that the following verse was recited in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ, 'O mankind, eat permissible good things out of what lies in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Shaitan'. Sa'd b. Abu Waqqas ؓ stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah that may He make me amongst those whose prayers are answered'. The Prophet ﷺ [responded to him and] said, 'O Sa'd, ensure that your food intake is pure you will become the one whose prayers are answered. By the one in whose hands is the life of Muhammad, surely, a man puts in a morsel of food in his stomach out of what is declared unlawful and as a result forty days of his worship is not accepted. And whoever has his body grow out of what is forbidden or interest, then the fire of Hell deserves such body most'. (Tabarani)*

If a food or drink is offered by a fortune teller, or if he extends invitation to a meal, accepting that invitation is also prohibited. The earnings of a fortune teller are all impure and Harām. Take this authentic incident from the life of Abu Bakr ؓ;

*One of his slaves used to bring him food every day which was bought from his earnings and Abu Bakr ؓ would always ask to check the source of his income. One day, Abu-Bakr ؓ started eating the food without inquiring about the source of income. The slave asked Abu Bakr ؓ that he did not ask him about the source of income this time. So Abu Bakr ؓ then asked him to which the slave replied that in the days of ignorance, he would be a pretend fortune teller and charged people for this service; and told him that the food he was eating was from the income earned through fortune telling; and that a past customer made the payment recently for his fortune telling services. Abu Bakr ؓ at once put his finger in his mouth and vomited out all the food in his stomach.*

In this report, Abu Bakr ؓ is seen going to extreme length in order to protect his body from a morsel of food paid for by the sorcery income. One who constantly feeds himself and his family with such Haram and forbidden source of income, how can such enjoy the proximity with the Creator and how can he expect for his prayers to be answered? Let alone being a religious leader, such may even fail to be a sincere Muslim.

(26)

عَنْ كَعْبِ بْنِ عُجْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "يَا كَعْبُ بْنُ عُجْرَةَ الصَّلَاةُ بُرْهَانٌ وَالصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ حَصِينَةٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْخَطِيئَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِئُ الْمَاءُ النَّارَ يَا كَعْبُ بْنُ عُجْرَةَ إِنَّهُ لَا يَرْبُو لَحْمٌ نَبَتَ مِنْ سُحْتٍ إِلَّا كَانَتْ النَّارُ أَوْلَى بِهِ". (الترمذي)

*Ka`b b Ujrah   relates that the Prophet   said to him, "O Ka`b b. Ujrah! The Salah is a proof, fasting is a strong shield and charity eliminates the sin as does water extinguish the fire. O Ka`b b Ujrah! No flesh grows out of haram (unlawful) food except that the fire of Hell is entitled to it most". (Tirmidhi)*

Ka'b b. Ujrah   reports that the Prophet   spoke to him and addressed him individually at length. He   gave him advice and showed affection to him. The above report is only a part of that long Hadith. In this the Prophet   has warned him against Harām. The flesh which grows out of Harām will not enter Paradise. This means that for its removal the person will have to suffer in the Hell-Fire. May Allah   protect us all.

It is important to note that anything that is destined towards Jahannam in the hereafter is void of peace and tranquillity in this world as well. It brings pain, suffering and trouble in this world too. So the flesh grown out of Harām will also lead to an increase in troubles, anxiety, loss of hope and suffering in this world. The only protection against this way of life is Salah, fasting and charity.

(27)

عن معاوية بن الحكم رضى الله عنه قال قلت يا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "أمورا كنا نصنعها في الجاهلية كنا نأتى الكهان قال "فلاتأتوا الكهان" قال قلت كنا نتطير. قال "ذلك شيء يجده أحدكم في نفسه فلا يصدنكم". قال قلت ومنا رجال يخطون خطا. قال "كان نبي من الأنبياء يخط فمن وافق خطه فذاك". (مسلم)

*Mu'awiyah b. al-Hakam   reported that 'I said to the Messenger of Allah  , we had certain practices common amongst us during the age of ignorance. We visited fortune-tellers. The Prophet   said, 'Do not visit them'. Mu'awiyah   says that I then said, 'we were superstitious (treated certain things as bad omen)'. He   said, 'That is [just] a mere feeling that one of you has, so it must not prevent*

*you [from anything]'. He ﷺ says, I said 'we have men amongst us who draw lines [to predict the future]'. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'there was a Prophet who used to draw lines (as he had been taught by Allah ﷻ to do so). So if a person is able to draw lines like him [which can only be per chance] then that is it. (Muslim)*

In this Hadith the Prophet ﷺ has asked for the cultural traits to be re-adjusted. Even if sorcery, magic or Astrology is part of a culture or certain cultural practice revolve around such beliefs, these should be amended. Halloween comes to mind at this moment. Other cultures, especially the Chinese and those which originate from eastern Asian states, may have similar festivals too. Muslims living in these societies may have a lot more work to do. Though sadly, even the Muslim societies in Muslim lands do not have a very good record. Superstition, bad-omen and horoscope are rife even amongst them. May Allah ﷻ have mercy on us all and may He give us ability to free and cleanse ourselves from such dogma.

There is mention of a Prophet who used to draw lines and through those lines he used to work out the future events. This was a miracle of his, which was a sign of his divine appointment. This is similar to the miracle of Eisa ﷺ that, in the words of the Qur'an, he said to his people, *'and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your homes. In this there is surely a sign for you'*. (03:49) Just as the miracle of Eisa ﷺ cannot be replicated by anyone after him, it is not possible to replicate the miracle of the Prophet mentioned in this Hadith.

The name of the Prophet mentioned in this Hadith is said to Daniyal ﷺ. Others have said him to be Prophet Armiah. Some are of the opinion that this was Idrees ﷺ. However, the Prophet ﷺ did not mention any name, so it does not make any difference.

What was the nature of these lines is also not clear. Could it be in the form of a horoscope? There is no mention of Astrology in this Hadith. Khattabi r.a. says I saw a man drawing lines for this purpose. He had a young boy with him. He asked the boy to draw many lines in the sand, which he did. He then recited a couplet or two, and instructed the boy to start wiping two lines at a time. Towards the end if two lines were left, he would interpret it as a sign of prosperity and fortune. But if there was only one line left this was said to indicate trouble and hardship. This is a practice that has no substance. It is certainly not divine and mounts to 'shooting in the air' and a mere conjecture.

This account of Khattabi r.a. suggests a rather simple and straight forward approach. There is no sophisticated and complex mechanism, which can only be mastered through understanding diagrams and charts. When a simple practice is forbidden how about the one that is complex but invalid? These diagrams and

charts are not confirmed scientifically or otherwise. Mastering these charts requires intense study and commitment – leading to a further waste of time. The prophetic instruction, as explained earlier, is that every moment spent studying this subject is a moment spent in sin. So how can the practice of those who draw complicated patterns (horoscope) be of divine nature or even blessed?

The last sentence of the Hadith, *'if someone is able to draw lines like him then that is it'*, is discussed by the scholars of Hadith. Though it is clear that any lines that are drawn in a manner not corresponding to how the said Prophet drew, will be of no point, the question however is regarding the implication of the words used in this sentence. The Hadith could have simply said that 'this is not permissible'.

Ainie r.a. says that the sentence points towards a logic reason of why this practice is forbidden. It means that one who could draw lines the same way as did the said Prophet could claim to be able to do it right, which would have been permissible. If one cannot be sure about having matched the method of the said Prophet how can he claim to have drawn the right conclusions? Since he cannot, it would not be permissible.

Ibn ul Arabi r.a. says that it means that drawing lines for this purpose is Harām. This is because no one can claim with any degree of certainty if his lines match those of the said Prophet. However, our Nabi ﷺ did not use the word 'Haram' for this practice in case he was misunderstood. As such a statement could have been misunderstood as to say that the drawing of lines by the said Prophet was also Harām.

Khattabi r.a. says that it means that the Prophet ﷺ is warning people not to try to imitate the miracle of a Prophet. This is because no one can ever claim to be able to match a miracle of a Messenger of Allah.

Ibn Abbas ؓ says that the lines mentioned in this Hadith are the lines that are drawn by a physiognomist. Physiognomy is the art of determining character or personal characteristics of a person from the form or features of the body, especially of the face. It is also called anthroposcopy. This is a talent that people do not take seriously, nor do they value it any more.



عن عائشة رضى الله عنها قالت سألت أناس رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن الكهان فقال لهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إنهم ليسوا بشيء". قالوا يا رسول الله صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم فإنهم يحدثون أحيانا بشيء يكون. فقال لهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "تلك الكلمة من الحق يخطفها الجني فيقرها في أذن وليه قر الدجاجة فيخلطون فيها أكثر من مائة كذبة". (متفق عليه)

*Ayisha ؓ narrates that some people asked the Prophet ﷺ about the fore-tellers. The Prophet ﷺ said to them, 'they are worth nothing' (i.e. they are liars). The people then said, 'O Messenger of Allah! sometimes they [the fore-tellers] forecast something which comes out to be true. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'That word which comes to be true is what a jinn snatches away by stealing and then pours it in the ear of his fore-teller [with a sound] similar to the cackle of a hen, and then they add to it one-hundred lies.' (Bukhari and Muslim)*

Qadhi Ayadh r.a. says that the Arab had three types of fortune-tellers.

1. There were some who had formed allegiance and friendship with the devils and jinns. For them Jinns tried to eavesdrop the conversation between the angels in lofty places, and where they heard something about the future, they would convey it to their human friends. This was stopped upon the rise of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a Messenger of Allah ﷻ. Jinns could not longer rise high enough to listen to what was being discussed between the angels. This is reported in the Qur'an, 'And that we sought (to reach) the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames, And that we used to sit at places therein to listen; but if one will (try to) listen now, he will find a flame in ambush for him'. (72:8-9)
2. A devil friend of a sorcerer informs him about something that is unfolding in a far away land, or something that was meant to be private and personal for someone. When the sorcerer tells a man something that was only known to him, the man is left speechless. This is something that is not impossible and can happen, as devils often see mankind when humans are not able to see them. The Almighty says in the Qur'an, 'Indeed, Satan sees you - he and his company - from where you do not see them' (7:27). However, it is possible that a sorcerer makes false claims against another person, as they can tell lies too. However, the Prophet ﷺ did not give Muslims permission to listen to fortune-tellers, as he ﷺ has given sever warnings against those who visit them.

3. Using some skills like Astrology, horoscope etc. which is something that some people are able to utilise to make right predictions about the future, although their claims primarily are mere shots in the air. They utilise practices that are forbidden in religion. They make claims about the future, which they have no knowledge of.

All three types mentioned above are referred to as sorcery, even if they prefer another name for themselves. Islam does not approve any of them and has condemned these practices and declared looking into these practices as forbidden for its followers. (Al-Minhāj lin-Nawawī)

'... similar to the cackle of hen', is explained as to the sound made by hen while pecking along with the chicks. This similitude is said to imply that the words are constantly repeated until understood. Another opinion is that it means that the words are conveyed without any understanding. Another opinion is that the similarity is not in terms of the sound made by hen. Instead it refers to the mating amongst the birds, and refers to the coming together of the two; the Jinns and the sorcerer.

(29)

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول : " إن الملائكة تنزل في العنان وهو السحاب فتذكر الأمر قضي في السماء فتسترق الشياطين السمع فتوحيه إلى الكهان فيكذبون معها مائة كذبة من عند أنفسهم " . ( البخاري )

Aysha رضي الله عنها reported that she heard the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم say, 'the angels come down to the clouds and discuss the matters decreed in the heavens. The devils eavesdrop to their conversation and having picked up something out of what they hear they pass it on to the sorcerers. They then add hundred lies to this from their own selves'. (Bukhari)

'They then add a hundred lies to it', refers to the stories fabricated by these fortune tellers. They have one sentence transmitted to them by the Jinns, which they steal from the angels, and then they add their own predictions to make it sound like a complete narrative. Later, when one thing happens in accordance to their prediction, they use it as an evidence for their credibility. People are then deceived based on that one thing happening as it had been fore-told.

عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم "الرؤيا الصالحة جزء من ستة وأربعين جزءاً من النبوة". (متفق عليه)

Anas رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'A good dream is one portion out of the forty six portions of prophet-hood'. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Prophet-hood is such a divine grace that cannot be earned. Allah selects whomever He chooses to be a Messenger of His. He then speaks to such individuals directly or indirectly. His revelations take many shapes and forms. Such are led to the Right Path and are protected by the divine grace.

Our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the last of the Prophets. His miracle (the Qur'an) and his teachings (the Sunnah) live on. These are available in a pristine form as these were on the first day. So there is no need of a new Prophet. However, individuals continue to experience confusion at various stages in life and as a result long for insights into life. The divine grace continues to rescue the righteous from the pitches of the darkness and show them the way out of the bewilderment. The Almighty Allah ﷻ says:

*Allah is Protector of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light...*  
(Al-Quran 02:257)

Dreaming is that subtle way through which the Almighty Allah ﷻ continues to reveal the truth to His servants. The Hadith does not mean that the prophet-hood continues after the Messenger of Allah Muhammad ﷺ. one small portion of anything cannot be equal to its total. For example, not everyone who says 'Allah-u-Akbar' can be viewed as a muadhin, calling adhan. Similarly, one who rides a donkey cannot claim to be a pilot of a Boeing 747, despite that they both control a moving body-mass in order to travel from point A to B.

The Prophet ﷺ in another Hadith has said that *al-Iman* (the Islamic faith) consists of over seventy parts. The best of it is to say 'there is no God but Allah' and the lowest is to remove a harmful substance from the path of other people. This does not mean that any Christian, Atheist or Hindu who happens to remove the harmful substance from the path of other people, by the virtue of this charitable act, becomes a Muslim. Nor does it mean that by *merely saying* 'there is no God but Allah', one becomes a Muslim even when he or she refuses to take Muhammad ﷺ as the Messenger of Allah.

As for the number 'one out of forty six', this is difficult to explain logically with conviction. This number is similar to the number of *rak'ats* in daily prayers for which no conclusive explanation is given except that it simply is a command. The number forty six appears to be a reference to 'a large number'. The Prophet ﷺ is saying that out of so many portions of Prophethood one is dreams. This view seems to be supported by the fact that some other accounts of this narration or similar ahādith refer to other numbers like 26, 76 and 24.

Some scholars however, have attempted to explain this by pointing out that the number 46 refers to the ratio of the period when the Prophet s received divine revelation in the form of dreams in comparison to his total period of revelations. He ﷺ lived in this world for 23 years, after receiving the first divine message as a Prophet. Out of these 23 years, for the first six months all he had was true dreams. If you compare six months with the total period of the divine revelation (23 years) it comes out to be 1/46. So this is what the Prophet ﷺ has referred to in the Hadith above.

### (31)

عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " لم يبق من النبوة إلا المبشرات " قالوا : وما المبشرات ؟ قال : " الرؤيا الصالحة " . (البخاري)

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Nothing is left of prophethood except glad tidings." Those with him asked, "What are the glad tidings?" He ﷺ replied, "Good dreams." (Bukhari)

A believer while enduring hardship on the path of righteousness is rewarded with a tap on his back from the divine. This takes many shapes. One of which is that he is shown such dreams that make him feel satisfied. He may see the Prophets, angels and even Jannah in his or her dream. This makes him feel appreciated and results in his energies and commitment revitalized.

Imam Muhammad b. Seerin said that dreams are of three types:

Firstly, dreams wherein one sees the image of the worries and concerns that continue to occupy his mind during the day. Having worried about the tax bill all day he sees a heavy bill landing at his door step, or the tax man knocking at his door. This type of dreams are called '*Hadith un-nafs*', the ones which can be equated to murmuring allowed. It does not require an interpretation, nor does it have any meaning.

People who suffer from a phobia or paranoia about something may experience certain dreams being repeated. For example some people see themselves surrounded by dangers, being chased by dogs or in a room full of snakes. They may experience such dreams frequently and become even more anxious or paranoid. Sometimes this makes the individuals feel helpless, hopeless and prone to further exploitation of Satan. If only people realized that their repeated experience of such dreams have nothing to do with the divine. They are not doomed, under a spell of magic nor do they face any imminent danger. If only they could ignore such dreams and put their trust in Allah ta'ala they would stop having dreams that were bothering.

The second type of dreams is what broadly constitutes to nightmares. Satan is keen to cause as much trouble to man as he is capable of. This devil continues to instill fear in his mind even when he is asleep. So one sees things in his or her dream that make him scared and fearful, often leading to a disturbance in sleep. This type of dreams also has no meaning nor does it require an interpretation. Ask yourself a question upon waking up from sleep, 'did this dream scare me?', 'was I scared when I woke up from sleep?' If the answer is yes, then stop worrying about such a dream altogether. Just say '*lā haoula walā quwwata illā billāh*' and forget about it, putting it behind as an unwanted experience and move on in life.

The third type is what the Hadith above refers to as '*al-mubashshirāt*'. These are dreams which remove confusion, give hope and bestow assurance. This is like a believer has a dream of visiting the heavens, meeting the Prophets, overseeing an event, coming across animals or plants, or he is shown a few glimpses of the future or is warned of approaching dangers. This helps him to mend his ways or gives him more confidence in his righteous approach to life. This is the type of dreams that may require an interpretation.

(32)

وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " من رآني في المنام فقد رآني فإن الشيطان لا يتمثل في صورتي " (متفق عليه)

*Abu Hurairah ؓ reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'One who saw me in a dream has in deed seen myself. Surely, Satan is not able to take my appearance'. (Bukhāri and Muslim)*

The dreams are an important part of the divine plan. The mind does not always see in the night what occupies it during the day. The dreams are manifestation of the mind receiving influence from the sources that reside out with the person's body. One example of this is that seeing the Prophet ﷺ in one's dream is in effect seeing the Prophet ﷺ in real.

Allah ﷻ has made the realm of dreams such that the Prophet ﷺ cannot be treated as a mere delusion. Seeing the Prophet ﷺ in one's dream is a great honor. One who sees the Prophet ﷺ in his or her dream is assured that he or she will receive his intercession on the Day of Judgment. It is nevertheless important that one may notice a reflection of his level of piety on the noble persona of the Prophet ﷺ shown to him.

One may see that the Prophet ﷺ does not appear to be very handsome, without a beard, dressed in a manner that he did not approve of, or even commanding the viewer to indulge into something sinful. This means that the viewer needs to concentrate on his or her conduct in daily life. If he heard him ask for something prohibited in Islam, he should not act upon it without an interpretation.

Islam is nothing but the noble teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. Whatever he instructed people while he ﷺ lived amongst them is an important part of Islam. If one hears him in one's dream say something which does not conform to what he is instructed in real life, is subject to interpretation. Anything forbidden in Islam cannot become permissible even when asked by the Prophet ﷺ in a dream, as that is only a reflection of one's shortcomings in general life.

It is also important to point out that if one sees the Almighty God in a dream that does not necessarily mean that he or she has seen God the Almighty. This is because Satan is able to manipulate the minds of believers, appearing to them as their Lord in their dreams. God is the Creator of evil, as well as of virtue and good. As He ﷻ feeds the good and virtue He also feeds the vice and the devils.

Allah ﷻ has created Satan as a test for mankind. Satan receives his energy and strength from God the Almighty too. He draws his strength from what Allah ﷻ has created. So the creation of devils, and later their survival and continuity, is all owed to the Almighty Allah ﷻ. So as people receive guidance from Allah ﷻ, those who go astray also do so with the consent and approval from God. The Prophet ﷺ used to remind in his sermons, 'one whom Allah guides cannot be led astray by anyone, and the one whom Allah ﷻ causes to be led astray cannot be guided by anyone'. So if Satan appears to someone in his dream and claim to be God, that does not equate to a challenge to the Almighty, since 'leading astray' is one of the attributes of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ on the other hand is created by the Almighty Allah ﷻ as a beacon of light, a source of guidance and as a symbol of the Right Path. Satan cannot take the appearance of the Prophet ﷺ since that will give him an upper hand,

against the forces of good, and may cause confusion for the mankind. The Hadith above is clear that one who sees the Prophet ﷺ in his dream has indeed seen the Prophet ﷺ.

(33)

عَنْ الْبَرَاءِ بْنِ عَازِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِذَا أَخَذْتَ مَضْجَعَكَ فَتَوَضَّأْ وَضُوءَكَ لِلصَّلَاةِ ثُمَّ اضْطَجِعْ عَلَى شِقِّكَ الْأَيْمَنِ ثُمَّ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَيْكَ وَأَلْجَأْتُ ظَهْرِي إِلَيْكَ رَغْبَةً وَرَهْبَةً إِلَيْكَ لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ آمَنْتُ بِكِتَابِكَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْتَ وَبِنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ وَاجْعَلْهُنَّ مِنْ آخِرِ كَلَامِكَ فَإِنْ مِتَّ مِنْ لَيْلَتِكَ مِتَّ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ " . قَالَ فَرَدَّدْتُهُنَّ لَأَسْتَذْكِرَهُنَّ فَقُلْتُ آمَنْتُ بِرَسُولِكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ قَالَ " قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ " . (البخاري)

*Al-Bara' b. 'Azib* رضي الله عنه reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: 'When you go to bed, perform ablution as is done for Salah; then lie down upon the right side and recite:" O Allah, I turn my face towards You and entrust my affair to You. I retreat unto You for protection with hope in You and fear of You. There is no resort and no deliverer (from hardship) but You alone. I affirm my faith in Your books which You revealed and in Your Messengers whom You sent." Make this as the last word of yours (when you go to sleep) and in case you die during that night, you would die upon Fitra (upon Islam). And as I repeated these words in order to commit them to memory, I said:" I affirm my faith in Your Messenger (Rasul) whom You sent." He ﷺ said: Say:" I affirm my faith in the Apostle (Nabi) whom Thou sent." (Bukhari)

The Hadith above describes the etiquettes of going to bed. The Prophet ﷺ in this Hadith has mentioned the following manners of going to sleep:

- To perform a thorough ablution, (just like it is done before the daily prayers)
- To lie turned on to one's right side, and
- To sleep having recited the Sunnah *dhikr*, (duas and prayers)

We have discussed the rules on tahārah, purity and cleanliness in another series of 40 hadith on tahārah. Sleeping on one's right side is recommended in this Hadith. This however, is not necessary, as we also find a subtle instruction on sleeping on the left side in another Hadith.

The experts on sleep issues describe sleeping on the side to be 'the healthiest positions' for sleep. *'Not only does it allow air to pass freely through the body's passages, it also deters stomach reflux, where digestive acid travels back from the stomach causing a burning pain – a common problem for those who sleep on their back'*, the director of the Edinburgh Sleep Centre and a leading expert on sleep disorders was quoted in a leading UK daily. Keeping your arms on the side is described to be 'an all-round excellent position that should suit everyone', another expert was quoted. He said this was because *'this position maintains a neutral spine, allowing it to lengthen. Also, breathing is not compromised and all of the body functions work well.'*

The Prophet ﷺ has also recommended to lie turned on to one's right side. Once in this state in the bed, one should recite the above dua. There are numerous duas that are reported from the Prophet ﷺ for the bed time. In this Hadith the Prophet ﷺ has taught a specific dua, which if recited carefully, pondering over the meanings, should help one relax. This is because there is a mention of handing over one's affairs to the Almighty.

An important point to note in this Hadith is that when the narrator of this Hadith repeated the dua, after being taught by the Prophet ﷺ, he made a mistake towards the end of it. Instead of saying '*bi-nabiyyik*' he recited '*bi-rasoolik*', which as all those who understand these two words would confirm, made no major difference to the meanings. However, the Prophet ﷺ yet corrected him and asked him to recite the dua as instructed.

This aspect of the hadith needs attention. It suggests that while reciting a dua, or any other form of *dhikr*, one should try to confine himself to the words selected by the Prophet ﷺ. It is important to note that this bed-time dua is not compulsory. It is a mere *adab* (good practice) and not an obligation. If restricting oneself to the reported words of the Prophet ﷺ was so important here, how important would it be to remain loyal to the words of the Prophet ﷺ in daily prescribed prayers. This is the reason why the scholars recommend that one should avoid adding extra words to the prescribed prayers in obligatory *Salah*. There, it is more important to remain firmly adherent to the phrases transmitted through authentic reports from the Prophet ﷺ.

Scholars differ over whether performing *Salah* in one's own language is permissible. The majority do not consider this to be an option. The Hadith above can be used to illustrate the delicate nature of this debate. When permission to alter a reported word with its closest synonym was refused, how can substituting it with a totally different language be allowed? There are other views in this debate as well, which are also based on the Hadith and *sunnah*.



وعن أبي قتادة رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " الرؤيا الصالحة من الله والحلم من الشيطان فإذا رأى أحدكم ما يحب فلا يحدث به إلا من يحب وإذا رأى ما يكره فليتعوذ بالله من شرها ومن شر الشيطان وليتفل ثلاثا ولا يحدث بها أحدا فإنها لن تضره " (البخاري)

Abu-Qatadah رضي الله عنه said, 'the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'the good dream is from Allah and bad dreams are from Satan. So if one of you sees a dream that he is pleased with he should not mention it to anyone other than the one he is pleased with. And when he sees a dream that he does not like he should seek refuge with Allah ﷻ from its harm and from the evil of Satan. He should also spit thrice and not mention it to anyone. It shall never cause any harm to him. (Bukhari)

In the famous story of Yusuf عليه السلام, as reported in the Qur'an, his father Ya'qoob عليه السلام is reported to have advised him to not relate his dream to his half-brothers who were envious to him:

*when Yusuf said to his father, "My father, I saw (in dream) eleven stars and the Sun and the Moon; I saw them all fallen prostrate before me." He said, "My son, do not relate your dream to your brothers, lest they should devise a plan against you. Surely, Satan is an open enemy for mankind. (Al-Qur'an 12:3-4)*

Like a loving and caring father, the Prophet ﷺ has also taught his ummah to not relate their good dreams to people that may harbor envy against them. This is to protect them from the evil plotting of their enemies. This advice of the Prophet ﷺ reinforces the statement in another Hadith, mentioned in the chapter on Tahārah where the Prophet ﷺ said, 'I am to you like a father to his children'.

In another Hadith the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, 'if one of you has a dream he should not relate it to anyone except the one who is a close friend and is genuine in friendship'. He also said, 'narrate it only to the one who understands the dreams and is able to offer advice'. This is recommended to help one with the knowledge of the unseen. Otherwise an unwise may not fully appreciate the extent of the dream and may propose a course of action which is harmful.

All dreams are from Allah ﷻ, whether good or bad. However, the good dreams are particularly a gift and a blessing. The bad dreams are meant only as a test and trouble, just like Satan, which was created by the Almighty to be a test for mankind. Hence, these are referred to as 'the bad dreams are from Satan', i.e. the

bad dreams are a creation of the Almighty; a creation which is from the type of Satan. Some scholars have said that the '*bad dreams are from Satan*', means that these have no meanings. These are mere whispers from Satan.

(35)

وعن جابر رضى الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " إذا رأى أحدكم الرؤيا يكرهها فليصق عن يساره ثلاثا وليستعذ بالله من الشيطان ثلاثا وليتحول عن جنبه الذي كان عليه " .  
(مسلم)

*Jabir ؓ reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "when one of you sees a dream which he does not like, he should spit on his left side three times, seek refuge with Allah from Satan thrice, and change the side which he had been lying upon". (Muslim)*

Hafiz Ibn Hajar r.a. states in his famous work 'Fath ul-Bāri' that the summary of what is advised to the one who has a good dream are three things:

- To appreciate such a dream and be thankful to Allah ﷻ
- To take it as a glad tiding and assurance,
- To relate this dream only to those who are his friends and care about his or her well being, avoiding all those who may be harboring enmity or hatred.

And if one experiences a dream which he is not happy with or causes worry and alarm, he should do the following: (same for both genders)

- Seek refuge with the Almighty from the evil portrayed in the dream,
- Seek refuge with the Almighty from the evil of Satan and his progeny,
- Gently spit drily over his left shoulder thrice upon becoming awake,
- Avoid sharing this dream with anyone at all,
- He should rise from sleep and engage in Salāh,
- If choosing to sleep instead, he should turn over on to his other side,
- Some scholars have said that he should recite aāyah al-Kursiyy (al-Qur'an 2:255). (If opting for the Salāh, one may recite this aāyah in the prayer, after surah al-Fātihah)

'He should spit on his left side three times', means that he should gently blow to his left side, over his shoulder, in such a way that traces of his saliva also falls on his left shoulder. This is where the Satan tries to inject the evil whispers from. So the practice is prescribed to help one repel the devil. This blow humiliates the Satan. The traces of saliva, which is blessed with the mention of dhikr (aāyah al-kursiyy) also serves as a form of ruqi'yah for the affected body.

'turning over to the other side' is a form of 'al-faal', which was discussed in the Hadith no. 1. This is a form of optimism. It helps one feel that his situation has now transformed so there is no cause of worry any more.

(36)

وعن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " إذا اقترب الزمان لم يكذب  
يكذب رؤيا المؤمن ورؤيا المؤمن جزء من ستة وأربعين جزءا من النبوة وما كان من النبوة فإنه لا  
يكذب " (متفق عليه )

*Abu Hurairah ؓ reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'when the time draws closer, the dreams of the faithful shall rarely be untrue, and the dreams of the faithful is one of the forty-six parts of prophet-hood. Surely what is a part of the prophet-hood cannot be false'. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

'when the time draws closer', is explained to mean that near the end of time, when the Day of Judgment will draw close. Others have said that it means when the time of a believer's death draws closer. It can also mean that when the barakah of the time is taken away, and the days and nights appear to pass by rather speedily. This is when the believers start to see dreams which are rarely untrue.

In an age of fitnah, those who guard themselves against evil and those who remain firm on the Right Path are rewarded. This is a glad-tiding for them to receive signs in this world too. For this they do not have to wait until the hereafter. Those who have an interest about knowing the future should take this channel. They should preserve their senses from being polluted by evil and Harām, so they may receive divine blessings. May Allah ﷻ forgive our shortcomings and may He be protect us from evil and falsehood.

(37)

وعن ابن عمر رضى الله عنهما أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " من أفرى الفرى أن يري  
الرجل عينيه ما لم تريا " . ( البخاري )

*Ibn Umar ؓ reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Indeed out of the worst lies is that a person makes a false claim to have had a dream which he did not." (Bukhari)*

Since we have discussed earlier that dreams are an important way of receiving signs from the divine, it is important that its purity and sanity is guarded. Through dreams the Prophets, and the pious men are guided. So the one who fabricates a dream and claims to have seen which he or she did not, in fact has given a false testimony against Allah the Almighty. This is worse than giving a false testimony against another human being. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an, 'Who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah? Such people will be presented before their Lord, and the witnesses will say, "These are the ones who lied against their Lord. Lo! the curse of Allah lies on the unjust'. (11:18).

He ﷺ also said, 'Whoever claims to have a dream which he did not, will be ordered (on the Day of Judgment) to tie two barley grains together, which he will never be able to do. And if somebody eavesdrop on some people's conversation which they didn't want him to hear or they tried to keep away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection; and whosoever makes a picture (of a being with a soul) will be punished on the Day of Resurrection and (will) be ordered to put a soul in it, which he will not be able to do." (Bukhari)

(38)

عن جابر رضى الله عنه قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يعلمنا الإستخارة في الأمور كلها كالسورة من القرآن، يقول إذا هم أحدكم بالأمر، فليركع ركعتين من غير الفريضة ثم ليقل: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ، وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ، وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ. اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي، أَوْ قَالَ: «عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ، فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي» أَوْ قَالَ: «عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ، فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي، وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ، وَاقْدُرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ رَضِّنِي بِهِ» قَالَ: وَيُسَمَّى حَاجَتَهُ. (البخاري)

Jabir رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ would teach us al-istikhārah for all our affairs as he would teach us a surah from the Qur'an. He said: 'If one of you is deliberating over an act, he should pray two rak'ats of non-obligatory Salāh and supplicate: "O Allah, I consult You as You are All-Knowing and I appeal to You to give me power as You are Omnipotent, I ask You for Your great favour, for You

have power and I do not, you have knowledge and I don't, [indeed] You know all of the hidden matters . O Allah! If you know that this matter (then the person reciting the dua should mention the matter for which he is seeking Allah's Guidance) is good for me in my religion, my livelihood, and for my life in the Hereafter, (or he said: 'for my present and future life,') then make it (easy) for me. And if you know that this matter is not good for me in my religion, my livelihood and my life in the Hereafter, (or he said: 'for my present and future life,') then keep it away from me and take me away from it and choose what is good for me wherever it is and please me with it." (Bukhari)

*Istikhārah* is Sunnah and the Hadith above teaches its correct method. This is an important Sunnah as the Prophet ﷺ would teach this to his companions with as much care and concern as he had for teaching them the Qur'an.

*Istikhārah* literally means 'to ask for good' or 'to seek betterment'. *Istikhārah* is a dua, like many other *duas*. The only difference is that there is nothing to suggest that one who asks Allah ﷻ for guidance, his *dua* is turned down. Seeking guidance is one such *dua* which is always accepted and the individual is shown the path.

There nevertheless are circumstances wherein *duas* are not accepted. The Prophet ﷺ once mentioned the case of a man who, having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty and who spreads out his hands to the heavens, pleading to his Creator : "O Lord! O Lord!" - while his food is unlawful, his drink unlawful, his clothing unlawful, and he is nourished unlawfully. He ﷺ said, 'how can he be answered'. (Muslim). So make an effort to avoid money earned through unlawful means.

Make *dua* to Allah ﷻ with certainty that your *dua* will be responded to, and know that Allah does not answer a *dua* that originates from a negligent, inattentive heart." (Tirmidhi) He ﷺ also said, 'the *dua* of one of you is answered so long as he is not impatient and says, 'I made *dua* but it was not answered.' (Bukhari and Muslim).

Another important lesson to learn from this Hadith is that there is no mention of performing this *Salāh* before going to sleep. This is not necessary. However, those who would prefer clearer signs should resort to this form of *istikhārah* (i.e. before sleep), but remember that the dream you have during sleep after an *Istikhārah* *Salāh* may not be connected. There is a chance that the dream is pointing towards another matter of concern. It is also important to understand that the dreams sometimes are not what they seem. Often dreams require an interpretation, which can only be done by an expert.

Interpreting dreams is a complex and delicate task. This ability is primarily a divine gift – not an acquired skill – which is bestowed by the Almighty upon whomever He chooses. Ya'qoob ؑ is quoted in the Qur'an to have said to his son Yusuf ؑ, '... your Lord will choose you and teach you the correct interpretation of events, and will perfect His bounty upon you'.

In addition to dreams, there are other ways of generating hope as well, as discussed in the earlier part of this booklet. This could be hearing a good name upon waking from sleep, or hearing a verse of the Qur'an, one of the names of Allah ﷻ or a piece of poetry that can give one hope and show the way forward. Not to forget that seeking advice from the elders and consulting those with more experience is also an important part of *Istikhārah*.

The Almighty Allah ﷻ instructed the Prophet ﷺ, 'and consult [your companions] in matter' (03:159). There is no one more capable of receiving divine instructions than the Best-of-Mankind ﷺ, yet he was given instructions to not proceed alone. Though the scholars explain this verse as a command that may have been intended only to show the benevolence of Allah ﷻ to the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and an indication of Him having forgiven them after they erred in the battle of Uhud, it nevertheless sets a tradition for this ummah in regards to consultation and *mashwarah*.

The Hadith is very clear in stating that *Istikhārah* is something that the individuals do for themselves. No one has a monopoly over *Istikhārah* nor is it recommended that the task is designated to the others. The elders or the more pious can be asked for *dua* and consulted in complicated matters. However, individuals themselves should perform *istikhārah* for their affairs.

Another important point to discuss here is that *Istikhārah* is only a *dua*. It should not be taken as a guarantee of protection from troubles and hardship. consider the following report:

Ali ؑ said, 'for every man there are [appointed] angels who guard him, so a wall does not fall on top of him nor does he roll into a well or be stamped over by an animal. [They guard him] until the preset destiny takes over, which he was destined to, then the guarding angles move away from him and he is afflicted with whatever trouble God had willed'. (Abu-Dawud in his work on 'Al-Qadr')

عن علي رضي الله عنه قال لكل عبد حفظة  
يحفظونه لا يختر عليه حائط او يتردى في بئر  
او تصيبه دابة حتى إذا جاء القدر الذي  
قدر له خلت عنه الحفظة فأصابه ما شاء الله  
أن يصيبه. (ابوداؤد في القدر)

Sometimes, one finds himself in trouble despite exercising caution in making a choice. In such circumstances one should resort to patience and *dua*. Remaining positive and waiting for an affliction to be removed is a great act of piety. The Prophet ﷺ said, '*Beg Allah ﷻ for His grace, and the most rewarding act of worship is to wait for the moment when the afflictions are removed*'. (Tirimidhi)

While going through a difficult period in life, things sometimes seem so hopeless that one does not even see the life at the end of the tunnel. This is where one's faith is tested. So those who yet go on to cope with the struggles of life are indeed great warriors. This is what the Prophet ﷺ has referred to as '*the most rewarding act of worship is to wait for the moment when the afflictions are removed*'.

Ibn Rajab r.a. said, 'the implication of mentioning prosperity straight after hardship, and ease straight after struggle, (in the Qur'an 94:5-6) is that when the pain increases, magnifies and becomes intense one begins to lose hope of receiving any help from other people. At this point his mind finds no one to attach his hopes with other than the Creator, which is the essence of 'trust in Allah'. This 'trust in Allah' (*tawakkul*) is the best and the most effective strategy for all your needs to be fulfilled, because Allah ﷻ is sufficient for the one who places his trust in Him. The Almighty says in the Qur'an '*And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him*'. (65:3)

Fudhail b. Ayadh r.a. said, 'when you lose hope from the creation to an extent that you do not expect anything from them, your Lord will grant you everything'.

Wahb b. Munabbah r.a. said, a man worshipped Allah ﷻ for a long period of time. He then had a need, which he prayed for. So he observed fasts for seventy weeks, eating only 11 dates in every one of these weeks. He then begged Allah ﷻ for his needs, and was not granted. So he said to himself, 'the only person to blame is yourself. Had you any good in you, surely your Lord would have fulfilled your need'. At this point an angel appeared before him and said, 'O son of Adam, this one moment of yours was better for you than all your worship. And Allah ta'ala has fulfilled your need too'.

The Almighty Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

*If We give man a taste of Our mercy and then take it away from him, he becomes highly desperate, utterly ungrateful. And if We give him a taste of comfort after a hardship has touched him, he will say, "Evils have gone away from me", (and thus) He will become over-exulting, boastful, Except those who are patient and do good deeds. Such people will have Allah's forgiveness and a great reward. (11:9-11)*

And ponder over the following verses too:

*As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." No! But you do not honour the orphan, And do not encourage one another to feed the needy. And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp, And love wealth, an excessive love. (89:15-20)*

(39)

عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ سَعَادَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ اسْتِخَارَتُهُ اللَّهَ وَمِنْ سَعَادَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ رِضَاهُ بِمَا قَضَاهُ اللَّهُ وَمِنْ شِقْوَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ تَرْكُهُ اسْتِخَارَةَ اللَّهَ وَمِنْ شِقْوَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ سَخَطُهُ بِمَا قَضَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ (أحمد)

Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'out of fortune of man is that he consults Allah ﷻ [in his affairs] and out of his fortune is that he is happy with whatever Allah y chooses for him. And a sign of man's doom is him abandoning istikharah from Allah ﷻ and out of his doom is to feel upset over what Allah y has decreed'. (Ahmad)

One feature of the moral decay that the mankind will suffer near the end of time, as warned by the Prophet ﷺ, is that everyone will be content with his own views. There will be little or no regard for the divine or Prophetic instructions, in fact people will openly bad-mouth and criticise the earlier generations.

In such climate of distrust and rebellion against the heavenly instructions, one who remains confident of his roots and loyal to the Almighty, shows more confidence in the Lord than in his own 'wisdom', consulting Him and pleading before Him to show him the way throughout his life, surely is the fortunate one, and the one who can expect to be placed amongst the successful. This attitude in life is a sign of his fortune and good luck. This is against those who never ponder over the purpose of their existence and are always busy seeking to indulge more and more in what satisfies their lust and what keeps them entertained.

Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an:

*There is no compulsion in Faith. The correct way has become distinct from the erroneous. Now, whoever rejects the Taghut (the Rebel, the Satan) and believes in Allah has a firm grasp on the strongest ring that never breaks. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (256) Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He brings them out of the depths of darkness into the light. As for those who disbelieve, their friends are the Rebels. They bring them out*



*from the light into the depths of darkness. Those are people of the Fire. There they will remain forever. (2:256-7)*

(40)

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَمْرًا قَالَ: " اللَّهُمَّ خِرْ لِي  
وَاخْتَرْ لِي " (شعب الإيمان)

*Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq ؓ said that when the Prophet ﷺ intended to perform a task he first used to supplicate by saying 'My Lord choose for me and make a selection for me'. (Baihaqi)*

The proper *Istikhārah* which the Prophet ﷺ taught includes a good wudhu, a two *rak'ats* of *Salāh* and a *dua* which is of fair length. However, there often are situations in life when one feels compelled to make a spontaneous decision. This is when the above *dua* should be recited. Unlike the *dua* above, where even the choice of words – taught by the Prophet ﷺ – is important, as the Hadith says that the Prophet ﷺ taught *Istikhārah* as he would teach a surah of the Qur'an, the short *dua* mentioned in this Hadith appears to be rather a plea for help. Hence, if one finds him or herself unable to recall the specific words, one may choose to say this *dua* in his own words, 'My Lord! Chose for me and make a selection for me'. However, learning the words of the Prophet ﷺ always carries more effects, more merits and more blessings.