

THE ISLAMIC RULING ON WEARING CHARMS AMULETS OR TALISMANS

And Visiting
Fortune Tellers,
Soothsayers and
Astrologers



The Islamic Ruling on Wearing Charms, Amulets, or Talismans (Ta'wīdh or Tamīmah)

The practice of writing Qur'anic verses, supplications, remembrances or the names of Allāh upon pieces of paper or cloth and then placing them upon the body in the form of a necklace, bracelet, pouch or band has not been reported from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), nor from his Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ). Every Muslim knows that the finest religious example to be followed is the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) himself. So if the Prophet and his Companions did not use amulets as a means of protection and warding off evil, or as a means of bringing about good, then no Muslim after them should use them either. The Islamic religion was completed and perfected by Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى). Allāh stated in the Qur'an:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي
وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

“This day I have perfected for you your Religion, and I have completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islām as your religion.” (Al-Mā'idah, 5:3)

A religion that is complete and perfect requires no newly invented acts or rituals of worship. All praise is due to Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) who has sufficed the Muslims with what was revealed in the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah – and no one understood these two revelations better than the Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ). Furthermore, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

“Whoever does a deed that is not from our affair (i.e., our religion), then it is rejected.” (Bukhārī and Muslim)

This narration proves that an act of worship cannot be performed unless it is supported with evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah, upon the understanding of the Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ). Sometimes people will try and utilise Qur'anic verses and prophetic narrations out of context to support their religious innovations, but it is the understanding of the Companions that exposes their error. One should always ask: ‘Did the Companions do what we are being called to do?’ If the answer is: ‘No, they did not’, then likewise you should not do that deed either. Regarding the Companions, Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated in the Qur'an:

﴿فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ﴾

“So if they believe in the like of that which you [O Com-

panions of the Prophet] believe, then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition.” (Al-Baqarah, 2:137)

There is no doubt that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did permit invocations (i.e. ruqyah) to be recited upon a person who is afflicted with an illness, evil-eye or magic. This is done by way of Qur’anic recitation or supplication (du‘ā), but he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never authorised the hanging of Qur’anic amulets upon one’s body, or upon one’s riding beast, or in one’s home or work place. There is no authentic narration permitting their usage. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Show me your incantations (ruqyahs). There is no harm in the ruqyah that contains no shirk.” (Muslim, no. 2200)

The scholars are in agreement that invocations (ruqyah) are permissible so long as they agree with the aforementioned criteria, and that a person believes that ruqyah is a means that will only bring benefit by the permission and decree of Allāh (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ). It is established that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would seek refuge (protection) for Hasan and Husayn (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا), his two grandsons, by saying:

“I seek protection for you in the Perfect Words of Allāh from every devil and every beast and from every envious blameworthy eye.” (Al-Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd)

From this it should be clear that the hanging of Qur’anic verses and Islamic supplications on one’s body etc., is a forbidden innovation for which there is no authentic proof from the Qur’ān or Sunnah. If one wishes to seek protection, he should recite from the Book of Allāh and from the authentic supplications. As for what is commonplace in many Muslim communities wherein people hang amulets, charms or a Ta‘wīdh that are not from the Qur’ān, then that is even more dangerous, because it is considered shirk (i.e. a form of polytheism). And in another narration, he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Whoever wears an amulet has committed an act of polytheism.” (Al-Ṣaḥīḥah, no. 492)

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said:

“No necklace of a bowstring should be left on the neck of a camel, or any type of necklace except that it be cut off.” (Bukhārī and Muslim)

Here the Messenger is commanding that the amulets be removed. Ruwayfi‘ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to me:

“O Ruwayfi‘, perhaps you will have a long life, so inform the people that whoever ties a knot in his beard or wears a necklace of bowstring (i.e., an amulet) or purifies himself from defecation using animal dung or bone, then Muḥammad disassociates himself from him.” (Abū Dāwūd, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘, no. 7910)

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said:

“Whoever wears something [as an amulet] is left to it.”
(Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī)

Sa‘īd ibn Jubair (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: **“Whoever cuts an amulet from a person, it is like freeing a slave.”** Reported by Wakī’. The meaning of ‘it is like freeing a slave’, is that it is equal to that in reward. Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Bāz (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said in his commentary on this point: **“This is due to the fact that he will be freeing this servant from the Fire, and freedom from shirk is better than freedom from slavery.”** Shaykh Aḥmad al-Najmī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: **“We know from what has preceded that some people hang amulets on themselves or upon their children – and their hearts are attached to these amulets believing that they can avert evil and harm from them. How many people have we seen who are attached to these amulets? And were you to try and remove the amulet from one of them, he thinks that you are throwing him to his death! Some people hang amulets upon their animals claiming that they will ward off the evil eye and Jinn. All of it is impermissible for a Muslim to engage in because it is an attachment and reliance upon other than Allāh.”** From this brief discussion, it should be very clear to anyone who follows the proofs that the wearing of amulets and charms is not from the guidance of Islām. In reality these amulets only increase a person in weakness. Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saw a man wearing a brass ring. So he asked him: **“What is this?”** The man responded: **“A protection from an illness that weakens me.”** So the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Remove it, for it will not increase you except in weakness. Indeed if you were to die whilst wearing it, you would never prosper.” (Aḥmad, with an acceptable chain of narration. Ibn Hibbān, al-Ḥākim authenticated it, and Al-Dhahabī agreed upon it.)

Fortune Tellers, Soothsayers and Astrologers

A Muslim is not permitted to visit fortune tellers and soothsayers

– those who claim knowledge of the unseen and the future. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Whoever visits a fortune teller and consults him, then his prayer will not be accepted for forty days.” (Muslim, no. 2230)

It is also authentically reported that he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Whoever visits a fortune teller or a soothsayer and believes him has certainly disbelieved in what was revealed to Muḥammad.” (Abu Dāwūd, no. 3904)

The fortune tellers receive inspiration from the devilish Jinn, regardless of whether they perceive that or not. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“When Allāh decrees an affair in sheaven, the Angels strike their wings in submission to His statement, as if His voice were a chain being dragged upon smooth rocks and it penetrates them causing them to be terrified. Then, the eavesdroppers [from the Jinn] hear this order, and these eavesdroppers are one over the other. Thus, an eavesdropper hears a word which he will convey to one who is below him, and then the second will convey it to the one below him, until the last of them will convey it to the tongue of the magician or fortune teller. Sometimes a shooting star may strike the devil Jinn before he can convey it – and sometimes he may convey it to a magician or fortune teller before the shooting star strikes him – whereupon the magician, soothsayer or fortune teller adds to it a hundred lies. Then it is said by the people: ‘Did he not tell us such and such a thing on such and such a day?’ So the soothsayers are believed due to that statement that was heard from the heavens.” (Reported by Bukhārī, no. 4701, abridged)

This authentic narration clearly explains how the fortune tellers receive their information, and why it is vague, and mostly untrue. However, many people in their naivety remember the one true statement out of a hundred lies and thus develop a dangerous dependancy upon the soothsayer who in turn extracts money from his or her clients. It is not uncommon in these times to see soothsayers ascribing themselves to Islām who display outward piety. They take advantage of unsuspecting Muslims who do not know the seriousness of this affair. Therefore, a Muslim is required to know the Islamic creed and also know that which opposes it. It is obligatory to adhere to the guidance of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in stay-

ing away from those affairs that contradict one's faith in Allāh, the Majestic and Most High. No one knows the unseen or the future except Allāh, just as He commanded His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to proclaim:

﴿قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ
وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ﴾

“Say, [O Prophet], ‘I do not tell you that with me are the treasures of Allāh, nor that I know the unseen; nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me by inspiration.’” (Al-An‘ām, 6:50)

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) also stated:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ﴿٤٢﴾ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرَاهَا
﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّن يُخَشَاهَا ﴿٤٥﴾﴾

“They ask you [O Prophet] about the Hour, when will be its appointed time? You [O Prophet] have no knowledge to say anything about it. To your Lord belongs the knowledge of the term thereof. You [O Prophet] are only a warner for those who fear the Hour.” (Al-Nāzi‘āt, 79:42-45)

So, if the Prophet of Allāh himself did not know the unseen, how can anyone other than him?! Any information that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) conveyed about the unseen, such as the Hellfire, Paradise and the signs of the Last Hour were all by way of revelation from Allāh, the Most High. None can claim to receive revelation after his passing away. Anyone claiming knowledge of the unseen has opposed the Qur’ān, Sunnah and the consensus of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā‘ah of the early generations – they have claimed a right that is deserving only for Allāh, the Most High, since He is the only One who knows the unseen. Furthermore, fortune tellers, sorcerers and soothsayers seek the aid of the devils from amongst the Jinn to achieve their goals – and that is clear disbelief. So avoid these people and their methods. Trust in Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), seek His aid, His rescue and seek refuge with Him alone, and He will give you relief and a way out of your difficulties.

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