

What is Sorcery?

An excerpt from our publication

The Ruling of Sorcery, Fortune Telling, & Related Issues

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The 'Arab term for sorcery is *Sihr*. Linguistically *Sihr* is everything whose reason for existing is delicate and enveloped. Due to this cause, the last part of the night is *Sahr* because it is cloaked and shrouded in darkness. Therefore, everything whose influence is subtle and shrouded from people can linguistically be referred to as *Sihr*. For instance, the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said:

إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ لَسِحْرًا

“...Some eloquent speech is effective as magic.”¹

This suggests that eloquent speech can leave an impression upon the soul and have an effect on it just as sorcery can have an effect on it; except that eloquence is not forbidden. *Nameemah*, which is the manner of spreading talk between people with the objective to deliberately induce corruption and tribulation, is also called *Sihr*. This is taken from the words of the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ.

أَلَا أُنبئُكُمْ مَا الْعِضَةُ هِيَ النَّمِيمَةُ الْقَالَةُ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

“Shall I not tell you what “*al-‘Adhhu*” is? It is *Nameemah* which is to spread talk between the people (which makes them hate each other).”²

The word ‘*al-‘Adhhu*’ in this *Hadeeth* means *Sihr*. *Nameemah* is called *Sihr* because it operates in a similar manner to sorcery. It spreads corruption between people, and it instigates hatred in the hearts. Even though *Nameemah* is not *Sihr*, it carries the linguistic connotation of the word.

Sihr, or sorcery as defined by Islaamic law, consists of charms or incantations that are composed to cause illness, death, loss of mental stability, separate spouses from each other, or prevent a man from acts of intimacy with his wife.

¹ Saheeh Bukhaaree vol. 7 no. 5325 Kitaabut-Tibb

² Saheeh Muslim #4718 Kitaabul-Birr

Allaah ﷻ says:

﴿ وَمِن شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴾

“And from the evil of those who practice witchcraft when they blow in the knots.”

[Sooratul Falaq (113):4]

This verse is referring to evil of sorcerers. The sorcerers tie knots of thread and then blow spittle upon them while seeking the help of *Shaytaan*. By the permission of Allaah, this process allows the sorcerers to bring forth the ill affects of death, illness, separation between a man and his love ones, or prevent him intimacy with his spouse. [End of Shaykh Fawzaan's words.]

