

Astrology and Fortune-telling

Description: The lesson will explain about astrology and fortune-telling and the Islamic guidance on them.

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Objectives

- To learn about different types of common fortune-telling.
- To understand the role of *Jinn* in fortune-telling.
- To appreciate the seriousness of visiting fortunetellers and believing in them.
- To learn about astrology and horoscopes and the ruling on them.

Arabic Terms

- *Jinn* - A creation of Allah that was created before humankind from smokeless flame. They are referred to at times as spirit beings, banshees, poltergeists, phantoms and so forth.
- *Shirk* - a word that implies ascribing partners to Allah, or ascribing divine attributes to other than Allah, or believing that the source of power, harm and blessings comes from another besides Allah.
- *Kufr* - disbelief.
- *Tawheed* - The Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah with respect to His Lordship, His Names and Attributes and in His right to be worshipped.

People who practice these 'arts' are often called fortune-tellers, soothsayers, foreseeers, augurs, oracles, astrologers and palmists. They often claim the knowledge of the future and use various methods and mediums from which they claim to extract their information, like reading tea-leaves, drawing lines, writing numbers, palm-reading, casting horoscopes, crystal ball gazing, rattling bones, and throwing



sticks.

Do they truly know what they claim?

1. Some of them have no real knowledge. They go through a series of meaningless rituals and then make calculated general guesses. Some of their guesses may coincide with the truth. People tend to remember the few predictions that come true and forget about the many which do not.
2. Another group has contact with the *Jinn*. It usually involves the grave sin of *shirk*, and those involved tend to be more accurate in their information.

Role of *Jinn*

The evil *Jinn* can often be summoned by performing sacrilegious acts forbidden in the religion to aid their human partners in sin and disbelief. Once contact with the *Jinn* is made by fortune-tellers, the *Jinn* may inform them of certain events in the future. The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, described how the *Jinn* gather information about the future. He related that the *Jinn* were able to travel to the lower reaches of the heavens and listen in on some of the information about the future, which the angels pass among themselves. They would then return to the earth and feed the information to their human contacts. (*Bukhari*). From this it is clear that the *Jinn* do *not* have knowledge of the unseen, rather they steal words that they hear from the angels; in fact, the angels themselves do not have any knowledge of that until Allah tells them of it.

The *Jinn* are also able to inform their human contact of the future through another channel. When someone comes to a fortune-teller, the fortune-teller's *Jinn* gets information from the man's *Qareen* (the *jinn* assigned to every human being) of what plans he had made prior to his coming. So the fortune-teller is able to tell him that he will do this or that, or go here or there. By this method, the real fortune-teller is also able to learn about a stranger's past in vivid detail. He is able to tell a total stranger of his parents' names, where he was born, and his childhood.

Visiting Fortune-tellers

The Prophet laid down principles which clearly forbade any form of visitation of fortune-tellers. He said:

"The prayer of whoever approaches a fortune-teller and asks him about anything will not be accepted for 40 days and nights." (Muslim)

The punishment is for simply approaching a fortune-teller and asking him questions out of curiosity.

Belief in Fortune-tellers

Anyone who visits a fortune-teller *believing* that he knows the unseen and the future has committed *kufr* (disbelief). The Prophet said:

"Whosoever approaches a fortune-teller and believes what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad." (Abu Dawud)

Such a belief assigns to creation some of Allah's attributes with regard to the knowledge of the unseen and the future.

The same applies to anyone who reads the books and writings of fortune-tellers, listens to them on the Internet, radio, or the TV.

All the various methods used around the world by oracles, fortune-tellers, and the likes, are forbidden to Muslims.

Palm-reading, I-Ching, fortune cookies, tea leaves as well as Zodiacal signs and Bio-rhythm computer programs, all claim to inform those who believe in them about their future. However, Allah has stated in no uncertain terms that He alone knows the future:

"Indeed, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah alone. It is He who sends down the rain and knows the contents of the wombs. No one knows what he will earn tomorrow nor in which land he will die, but Allah is all-knowing and aware."(Quran 31:34)

Astrology

Astrology is the study of the relationship between the movements of the stars and their influence on people and events.

Astrology has dramatically spread in recent years. Books, magazines and newspapers are published, under various titles such as *What's in the Stars for You?*

A true Muslim should stay away from astrology as it presumes a relationship between stars, planets and events that take place on earth by which, the future can be predicted. It claims knowledge of the unseen based on speculations and conjectures when such knowledge belongs to Allah Alone. The stars and planets cannot be used as indicators of happiness, misery, life, or death. Allah, the Exalted, says in the Quran:

"(He Alone is) the All-Knower of the *ghayb* (unseen), and He reveals to none His *ghayb* (unseen), except to a Messenger (from mankind) whom He has chosen (He informs him of unseen as much as He likes), and then He makes a band of watching guards (angels) to march before him and after him." (Quran 72:26-27)

Belief in astrology and the casting of horoscopes are in clear opposition to Islamic teachings. Both claim knowledge of the future. The astrologer's claim is just as opposed to *tawhid* as the ordinary fortune-teller's. He claims that people's personalities are

determined by the stars, and their future actions and the events of their lives are written in the stars. The ordinary fortune-teller claims that the formation of tea leaves at the bottom of a cup, or lines in a palm tell him the same thing. In both cases individuals claim the ability to read in the physical formation of created objects knowledge of the unseen.

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