7190 - Can a man harm his beautiful wife with the “evil eye”?

the question

I have a question about ayn. If a man were to say to his wife that she looks beautiful should he always say mashaa’Allah, or is this excessive?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

the “evil eye” is real, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The evil eye is real, and if anything were to overtake the divine decree (al-qadar) it would be the evil eye.”

(Narrated by Muslim, 2188, from the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas).

Al-Bukhari (5048) and Muslim (2187) narrated the first part of this hadith from Abu Hurayrah.

Secondly:

the evil eye usually comes from people who are jealous or envious (hasad).

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

Everyone who gives the evil eye is jealous, but not everyone who is jealous gives the evil eye… then he said:

It begins when the person likes something, then his evil soul dwells on the matter, and by continually looking at the person who has the thing of which he feels jealous, he directs his venom towards him. A person may put the evil eye on himself, or he may put the evil eye on someone else without intending to, because it is is a part of his nature. This is the worst type of human

being. Our companions and other fuqahaa' said: if someone is known for this, he should be detained by the imaam (leader), who should spend on him and provide for him until he dies. This idea is absolutely correct… (Zaad al-Ma'aad, 4/167).

In the hadith, it says, "A'oodhu bi kalimaat-Illaah it-taamah min kulli shaytaanin wa haammah wa min kulli 'aynin laammah (I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah from every devil and vermin and from every envious eye)."

Narrated by al-Bukhari (3191) from the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas.

The meaning of "vermin" (haammah) is lethally poisonous animals and insects.

The meaning of "envious" (laammah) is that which causes harm because of jealousy (hasad).

Thirdly:

Although it is correct that the evil eye comes from people who feel jealous (hasad), it may also come from a person who is not jealous but merely likes something, because of the hadith: "Whoever among you sees something in himself or in his possessions or in his brother that he likes, let him pray for blessing for it, because the evil eye is real."

Narrated by Ibn al-Sunni in 'Aml al-Yawm wa'l-Laylah, p. 168; and by al-Haakim, 4/216. Classed as saheeh by al-Albani in al-Kalim al-Tayyib, 244.

This hadith explains that a person may harm himself or his wealth – and no one feels jealous of himself – but he may harm himself with the evil eye by admiring himself, so it is even more possible that he may harm his wife in the same way.

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

And a man may put the evil eye on himself. (Zaa'd al-Ma'aad, 4/167).

Fourthly:

a man may harm his wife with the evil eye by looking at her and noticing her beauty and admiring her, even if he does not actually say to her “You are beautiful.” It is mustahabb for him to say, “Allahumma baarik fihaa (O Allah, bless her).”

It was reported from Abu Umaamah ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf that his father told him that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went out and they travelled with him towards Makkah until they reached Shi’b al-Khazzaar in al-Juhfah. Sahl ibn Hunayf washed himself, and he was a white man with a handsome body and skin. ‘Aamir ibn Rabee’ah, the brother of Bani ‘Udayy ibn Ka’b, looked at him when he was washing, and said, “I have never seen anything like this, not even the skin of a virgin in seclusion!” (this was a metaphor for the intense whiteness of his skin). Then Sahl suffered a seizure (an epileptic fit, in which he fell to the ground). He was brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it was said, “O Messenger of Allah, do you know what has happened to Sahl? By Allah, he cannot raise his head and he will not wake up.” He said, “Do you accuse anyone with regard to him?” They said, “‘Aamir ibn Rabee’ah looked at him.” So the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called ‘Aamir and spoke angrily with him, saying, “Would any of you like to kill his brother? If you see something that you like, why do you not pray for blessing for it?” Then he said to him (‘Aamir), “Do ghusl for him.” So he washed his face, hands, elbows, the soles of his feet and inside his izaar (lower garment) from a vessel, then that water was poured over him (Sahl) – a man poured it over his head and back from behind, tilting the vessel. This was done to him, then Sahl went on with the people and there was nothing wrong with him.

(Al-Musnad, 3/486. Al-Haythami said: the men of Ahmad are the men of saheeh. Al-Majma’, 5/107).

Fifthly:

When they like something, some people say “Ma sha’ Allah laa quwwata illa Billaah (That which Allah wills (will come to pass)! There is no power but with Allah)”. They take as evidence for this an aayah in Soorat al-Kahf and a hadith.

The aayah in question is (interpretation of the meaning):

“It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden: ‘That which Allah wills (will come to pass)! There is no power but with Allah!’” [Al-Kahf 18:39]. But this is not evidence (daleel), because the subject of the aayah has nothing to do with hasad (envy); in fact, Allah destroyed his garden because of his kufr and transgression.

The hadith in question was reported from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him), saying that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Whoever sees something that he likes, and says, ‘Ma sha Allah laa quwwata illa Billaah’, the evil eye will not affect him.” But this hadith is da’eef jiddan (very weak)!

Al-Haythami said: this was narrated by al-Bazzaar from the report of Abu Bakr al-Hudhali, who is da’eef jiddan (very weak).

(Majma’ al-Zawaa’id, 5/21).

And Allah knows best.