102843 - He found out that his Shaykh deals with jinn

the question

A young man is studying with a sheikh who deals with jinn in order to treat the possessed people and those suffering from spells. This young man knew about this recently. Should he stop learning from this sheikh and leave the place? Bearing in mind that he has only few months left to complete his Qura'anic studies with him. What is the ruling on seeking knowledge through this sheikh and what is the ruling on the alms given to this student by his sheikh?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Dealing with the jinn is a serious issue, and is a door that leads to evil and mischief; how often have people are affected by this evil? It is sufficient for you to know that shirk only came to mankind through them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, telling us how Allaah taught His slaves: " 'I have created all My slaves with the inclination to worship Me alone, but the devils come to them and turn them away from their religion. They forbid to them that which I have permitted to them, and they tell them to associate others with Me for which I have not sent down any authority.'" Narrated by Muslim (2865).

There are believers and Muslims among the jinn, and also kaafirs and evildoers. But the fact that they are concealed from man means that we cannot be sure about any one of them, and gives us cause for concern about their tricks and treachery, especially with the spread of ignorance and bid'ah (innovation), which is the harbinger of shirk. Usually these creatures make man fall into that which is haraam, and bring only a little benefit.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And verily, there were men among mankind who took shelter with the males among the jinn, but they (jinn) increased them (mankind) in sin and transgression”

[al-Jinn 72:6]

Hence the fatwas of the scholars state that it is haraam to deal with the jinn at all – whether with the believers or the kaafirs among them – and it is essential not to take this matter lightly, so as to close the door to fitnah and confusion, and out of concern for those who have faith in Allaah.

It says in al-Insaaf by al-Mardaawi (10/351):

“As for the one who claims to have power over the jinn and claims that he can summon them and they obey him, he should not be denounced as a kaafir or executed, but he should be given a ta’zeer punishment.” He should be given a severe ta’zeer punishment that should not reach the extent of execution, according to the correct view of our madhhab; and it was said that his ta’zeer punishment may reach the extent of execution. End quote.

It says in al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah (14/18):

As for seeking help from anyone other than Allaah, it is either from humans or from the jinn. If it is seeking help from the jinn, then this is forbidden and it may be shirk and kufr. “And verily, there were men among mankind who took shelter with the males among the jinn, but they (jinn) increased them (mankind) in sin and transgression” [al-Jinn 72:6].

Shaykh al-Albaani said in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (hadeeth no. 2760):

This also includes some who appear outwardly to be righteous treating people by means of that which they call “spiritual medicine (al-tibb al-roohaani)”, whether that is in the ancient manner by contacting his qareen or jinn companion – as they used to do during the Jaahiliyyah – or it is done by means of what they call “summoning the spirits”. Similar to that in my opinion is hypnotism. All of these are means that are not acceptable in sharee’ah, because they all boil down to seeking the help of the jinn who were the cause of the mushrikeen going astray as it says in the Holy Qur’aan (interpretation of the meaning):

“And verily, there were men among mankind who took shelter with the males among the jinn, but they (jinn) increased them (mankind) in sin and transgression”

[al-Jinn 72:6]

The claims of some of those who seek their help, that they only seek the help of the righteous among them, are false claims, because they usually cannot mix with them and live with them in ways that will show whether they are righteous or not. We know from experience that most of the humans with whom you keep company turn out not to be good friends. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Verily, among your wives and your children there are enemies for you (who may stop you from the obedience of Allaah); therefore beware of them!”

[al-Taghaabun 64:14]

This has to do with people who can be seen, so what do you think about the jinn, concerning whom Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, he [Shaytaan] and Qabeeluhu (his soldiers from the jinn or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them” [al-A’raaf 7:27]? End quote.

We have previously quoted fatwas from the scholars on this topic, in the answers to the following questions: 10518, 11114 and 78546.

Secondly:

The first thing that the seeker of knowledge must do is to choose trustworthy scholars, people who are religiously-committed, trustworthy and pious. He should only acquire knowledge from those who are qualified, and those who are truly qualified are those who have the knowledge and act upon it, by obeying Allaah and adhering to His laws and commands. The teacher has the greatest effect on the student, so he should have the quality of fear of Allaah (taqwa).

It was narrated that Ibraaheem al-Nakha’i said:

When they came to a man to acquire knowledge from him, they would look at his character, his prayer and his situation, then they would take knowledge from him. Al-Jaami' li Akhlaaq al-Raawi (1/127).

The scholars stated that this is especially important with regard to learning the Qur'aan.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Tibyaan fi Adaab Hamalat al-Qur'aan (p. 13):

It should not be learned except from one who is fully qualified and whose religious commitment is apparent, whose knowledge is proven to be sound and whose piety is well known. Muhammad ibn Sireen, Maalik ibn Anas and others among the salaf said: This knowledge has to do with religion, so look to whom you take your religion from. End quote.

Al-Zarnooji (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Ta'leem al-Muta'allim (p. 7):

He should choose the most knowledgeable, the most pious and the oldest, as Abu Haneefah chose Hammaad ibn Abi Sulaymaan after much thinking and consideration, and he said: I found him to be a patient, forbearing and dignified old man. End quote.

Ibn Jamaa'ah al-Kinaani said in his book Tadhkirah al-Saami' wa'l-Mutakallim (p. 133):

The seeker of knowledge should look and pray istikhaarah, asking Allaah for guidance concerning the one from whom he will take knowledge and learn good attitude and manners; if possible he should be one who is fully qualified, and is proven to be kind, compassionate and chivalrous, and who is well known for his chastity and piety, and who is well versed and has deep understanding.

The student should not continue to learn when there is a shortcoming in (the teacher's) piety or religious commitment, or his attitude is not good. It was narrated from one of the salaf: This knowledge has to do with religion, so look to whom you take your religion from.

If you explore the lives of the earlier and later generations, you will find that the student usually only benefits and succeeds if the Shaykh is clearly sincere towards his students.

Even if you look at books, you will find that you will benefit from books authored by those who are more pious and have less interest in worldly gains. End quote.

Thirdly:

Our advice to this seeker of knowledge is to leave this teacher who uses the services of the jinn – if there is certain proof of that – and he should not learn anything from him of knowledge, attitude or religion. That is the most cautious approach, to be on the safe side, if he is able to make up what he has missed and complete his studies with a Shaykh who follows the Sunnah and is righteous.

But if there are no righteous people in his city who can do that for him, then what we think is that he should complete the short time that remains of his studies, if the situation is as described and he only uses the jinn for treating those who are bewitched or sick, and he is not known to practice sihr (witchcraft) or harm the Muslims, or transgress against their wealth or honour. The basic principle according to the scholars is that one may be pardoned for continuing that which one may not be pardoned for starting. Although we would tell a seeker of knowledge not to begin studying with a Shaykh who follows bid'ah, or who is obviously deviant in his knowledge or action, in cases such as this, there is a concession allowing him to continue these studies until he finishes, especially since the remaining time is very short, and especially since he cannot find an alternative teacher in his city who is a righteous follower of the Sunnah.

But what we have said here should also be balanced against the fact that this Shaykh may be following the opinion of those who say that it is permissible to employ the jinn with regard to permissible matters, such as those mentioned in the question; he may be excused for following that (weak) view and in that case we cannot say that he is a follower of bid'ah (innovation) or is misguided.

Although some of Ahl al-Sunnah are of this view, the correct view is that which we mentioned first of all, which is that it is forbidden to employ the services of the jinn at all. But the correct view concerning the issue is one thing, and finding an excuse for those who follow a weaker view is something else.

Fourthly:

Our advice concerning the charity is also to try to do without it, and always look for ways of earning a living by yourself, without falling short in seeking knowledge or spending all your time and effort in seeking a living. Rather you should be moderate and refrain from taking that which is in people’s hands (i.e., by earning your living by your own efforts), and strive to learn about issues of religion, and thus you will attain the pleasure of Allaah.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allaah will make a path to Paradise easy for him.” Narrated by Muslim (2699).

But if a seeker of knowledge cannot earn enough to live on and he has no choice but to accept charity given by this teacher, there is no sin on him, in sha Allaah, if he takes it.

And Allaah knows best.