

OMENS AND SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS

Bad omens and superstitious beliefs are unlawful and were greatly condemned by the Holy Prophet of Islam (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam). The Pre-Islamic Arabs were a greatly superstitious people, but the Messenger of *Allah* (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) abolished all these beliefs and ideas and established pure monotheism in the Arabian Peninsula. A people engrossed in the worst idolatry and superstitions were turned suddenly into a band of Angels as if by the touch of a magic wand.

It is unlawful to take bad omens from the sound of animals and from knockings of doors. Had there been any bad omen, it would have been in houses, horses and women that are the objects of taste for men.

The following are some of the superstitions of the pagans that were abolished by the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam).

1. *Hamah* is the name of an animal or bird. The Pre-Islamic Arabs believed that the soul of a man who was killed by another takes the form of a bird and cries over the grave of the dead man saying: “*Give me drink (of blood).*” It remains crying for days and nights till men of his family and tribe avenge the blood of the dead man. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) abolished this superstitious belief.
2. *Safar* is also a superstitious belief, which the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) abolished like the former one. The pagans believed that after the month of Muharram calamities and disasters befall on men. Some say that the Pre-Islamic Arabs believed that there are worms in bellies, which bite men and produce jaundice.
3. The Pre-Islamic Arabs believed that owing to the change of stars, rain falls down. Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) abolished this belief and said that rain is not dependent on change of

stars or moon, but it is the decree of Almighty **Allah**. Therefore, the Almighty **Allah** is to be praised for rain and not stars.

4. When a Pre-Islamic Arab cherished an intention to get an object and was unable to get it, he would not enter into his house by the front door but enter it by the back door and continue in doing so for a year. There is a reference to this in the Holy Quraan: *“But righteousness is this that one should guard against evil and go into the house by their doors.”* (2:189)
5. When a Pre-Islamic Arab desired to make a journey or to take a wife, or to engage in a warfare, or to undertake other important tasks, he used to draw out arrows, on one of which was written, *“My Lord has commended me”*, on another, *“My Lord has forbidden me”*, while a third arrow remained blank. The Holy Quraan speaks of such superstitions: *“And that which has been slaughtered on the altars, and that you seek a division by means of the divining arrows: all that is an abomination.”* (5:3)
6. The Pre-Islamic Arabs used to set free certain animals in honour of their idols believing that they would get prosperity by such liberation. The Holy Quraan speaks of such practice: *“Allah has not ordained (the making of) Bahirah or a Saibah or a Hami”* (5: 103) *Bahirah* is a she-camel having her ear slit. *Saibah* signifies any beast which having brought forth females at 10 successive births was set at liberty to pasture where she liked and was not used for riding, nor was her milk taken. *Hami* is a stallion camel that was considered unlawful for riding or being used as a beast of burden.
7. The Arabs had faith in the existence of evil spirits whom they would conjure up in solitary places. To these spirits, they attributed certain kinds of diseases. They said that the Queen Sheba’s mother was a Jinn and the father of Alexander was a Jinn. Those who believed in a life after death would tie a camel at a tomb and starve it to death, thinking that the deceased would mount on its back on the Day of Resurrection.

8. They believed in sooth-sayers and fortune-tellers and had implicit faith in their utterances.
9. It was a superstitious belief of the Arabs that whenever they would be going out intending a work, they used to take omen by sending birds to fly. If it flew by the right side, it was a good omen; if by the left side, it was a bad omen.
10. The Arabs used to attribute particular supernatural powers to their respective idols, which were stationed within the Holy Ka'bah. They thought that the Almighty God entrusted the discharge of the various functions of the universe to different gods and goddesses and idols. Therefore, they invoked blessings of idols, especially of those that were stationed in the Holy Ka'bah. There were 360 idols within this ancient shrine belonging to different tribes. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) broke these idols to pieces and abolished idolatry attendant with superstitious beliefs from the soil of Arabia within the short period of 23 years and planted in its place the doctrine of pure monotheism.

Superstitious belief or omen is disallowed in Islam. If it had been lawful, a good omen would have been lawful too because it cheers up the mind and helps towards the onward progress of actions. Sayyiduna Abu Hurayra reported: *“I heard the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) say, ‘There is no bad omen, and the best of it is good omen.’ They enquired, ‘What is good omen?’ He replied, ‘The good talk which one of you hears’”*. (Agreed)

The Messenger of **Allah** (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“There is no contagious disease, no bad omen, no ‘Hamah’ and no ‘Safar’. And flee away from leprosy as you flee away from a lion”*. (Bukhari) No disease is caught by touch, but there are epidemics prevailing widely in a locality. None should go out the locality in which such diseases are prevalent and none from outside should come within it.

Sayyiduna Jaabir reported that the Glorious Prophet of **Allah** (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“There is no contagious disease, no ‘Safar’ and no ghost”*. (Muslim) Ghost is a kind of Jinn and Shaytaan called ghosts take sometimes the form of men and women and lead men astray to the wrong path and thus, destroy them. Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) abolished this superstitious belief of ghosts though, he told, there is existence of Jinn.

The Beloved Habeeb (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) abolished the superstitious beliefs in sounds of animals like lizards, crows, and brays of ass, etc. Evil omens still prevail mostly in India.

Sayyiduna Qutn Ibne-Qubaysa reported from his father that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“To take bad omen from sounds, and knocking of doors at night, and are acts of Shaytaan”*. (Abu Da’ood)

Sayyiduna Abdullah Bin Mas’ood reported from Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam): *“Taking bad omen is polytheism (He repeated it thrice). And there is nothing for us, but Allah removes it by virtue of resignation”*. (Tirmidi, Abu Da’ood)

Sayyiduna Jaabir reported that the Messenger of **Allah** (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) caught hold of the hand of a man having leprosy and placed it with his hand in a plate (to take food) and said: *“Take food with firm belief in Allah and resignation to Him.”* (Ibn-e-Majah)

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“Bad luck is in three things – house, woman and horse”*. The meaning of this Hadith is that there is no omen in anything. Had it been existent, these objects which people love dearly would have been subjects of bad omen.

Sayyiduna Buraydah reported that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) did not take bad omen from anything. When he sent a Governor, he used to ask his name. When his name pleased him, he

became glad about him and its good news was noticed in his face. When his name was not agreeable, his disliking was manifested in his face. When he entered any village, he asked its name. If its name pleased him, he became glad about it and its good news was seen in his face and if its name displeased him, the disliking was seen in his face. (Abu Da'ood) It appears from this Hadith that people should give better names to their sons and daughters, as bad names excite dislike in men.

Sayyiduna Anas reported that a man asked: *“O Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam)! We were in a house where we were many in number and our wealth increased. Afterwards we shifted to a house wherein our number became less (by death) and our wealth diminished.”* The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“Leave it as not agreeable.”* (Abu Da'ood) This is not on account of superstitious belief but owing to sanitary and hygienic point of view. This may be due to this fact that by change of residence the man would be free from his polytheistic belief.

Sayyiduna Qetadah reported that Almighty **Allah** created these stars for three reasons: He created them as adornment of the sky and as shots for the Shaytaan and as signs to be guided therewith. Whoever attributes things other than these is indeed wrong and destroys his fortune and takes trouble for what he does not know. (Bukhari)

Sayyiduna Ibn-e-Abbas reported that the Messenger of **Allah** (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“Whoever acquires a branch of the science of astrology for a purpose other than that for which Allah mentioned, has indeed acquired a branch of sorcery. An astrologer is a soothsayer and a soothsayer is a sorcerer and a sorcerer is an unbeliever”.* (Khaazin)

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayra reported that the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: *“Whoever comes to a foreteller and believes him in what he says, or comes to a menstruating woman (for intercourse), or comes to a woman from her back, he has indeed*

become displeased with what was revealed upon Muhammad
(Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam)”. (Abu Da’ood, Ahmad)