

## A word on bracelet-like amulets

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

From `Abdul-`Azeez ibn `Abdullah ibn Baaz to our respectable Muslim brother, may Allaah increase you in knowledge and faith. Ameen.

May Allaah's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be upon you. To proceed; I have received your letter, dated 14/1/1385 A.H., may Allaah grant you guidance. Actually, I am pleased with this letter and your comment on my legal opinion on bracelet-like amulets as well as your desire to have a comprehensive inquiry of the matter.

I would like to tell you that there are many different methods of treatment, regardless of beliefs. Some methods of treatment are permissible, while others are Makrooh (disliked), yet can become permissible when necessary. Also, some methods of treatment are prohibited, even if the person who uses them believes that they are merely methods of treatment and that the curer is Allaah Alone.

The first type of permissible treatment methods include, for example, medications, injections, bandages and creams prescribed by physicians to cure some diseases, as well as x-ray imaging. These are permissible methods of cure that have been tested by people and are known to produce beneficial effects without causing harm, provided the person having them has full belief that they are no more than methods of treatment and that cure is from Allaah Alone. The second type is Makrooh methods of treatment, such as cauterisation. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[Healing is in three things: A gulp of honey, bloodletting using a lancet, and branding with fire (cauterising), but I do not like to be branded with fire (cauterised).]**<sup>1</sup> In another wording: **[But I forbid my followers to use cauterisation.]** Thus, scholars have derived from this Hadeeth that cauterisation is Makrooh, but it can be used when necessary. Moreover, cauterisation should be the last resort for medical treatment when it is difficult to find other means of treatment. The third type of treatment methods are medications through forbidden means, such as wine, flesh of wild animals and other forbidden kinds of food and drinks. It is not permissible for a Muslim to have such forbidden things as medications, even if some people claim that such things contain benefit, and even if the one having them has full belief that Allaah is the Curer and they are no more than means of cure. This is because there are many pieces of evidence on

<sup>1</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

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the prohibition of treatment with Najis (ritually impure) substances and unlawful medication. Even if they are useful in some aspects, they are harmful in many others. Moreover, not all that is useful in some aspects is lawful. There are two prerequisites for anything to be lawful for use. First, there should be no legal evidence of it being prohibited by the lawgiver (peace be upon him). Second, harm resulting from it should not exceed its benefit. If its harm is more, it is not permissible for a person to use it, even if there is no evidence of prohibition. This is because Sharee'ah (Islaamic Law) prohibits anything whose harm is more than its benefit, such as Khamr (intoxicants). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[O servants of Allaah, seek treatment, but use nothing unlawful.]**<sup>2</sup> In another narration: **[Verily, Allaah does not make your cure in what He has prohibited to you.]**<sup>3</sup> Also, it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[A man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about wine being used as medicine. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'It is not a cure; it is a disease.']**<sup>4</sup> It can be derived from what has been mentioned that the criterion of lawfulness or prohibition has nothing to do with a person's belief, but rather the Shar'eh (Islaamic legal) evidence. A person may believe that Allaah is the Only Curer, but still takes prohibited medications, just like Mushriks (those who associate others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship) who worship gods other than Allaah (Exalted be He) and claim that such gods bring them nearer to Allaah and intercede with Him on their behalf, even though they believe that such gods have no independent power to cure them, bring their absent people back, or defend them. Allaah (Exalted be He) says: **[And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allaah."]**<sup>5</sup> Allaah (Glorified be He) also says: **[So worship Allaah (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allaah's sake only. Surely the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allaah only. And those who take Auleeyaa' (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allaah." Verily Allaah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allaah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever.]**<sup>6</sup> There are many pieces of evidence on this point. Someone may use lawful medications, such as Ruqyah (reciting Qur'aan and saying supplications over the sick seeking healing), drugs, injections, and so on. But such medications become prohibited if the person who uses them believes that such medications are the cause of recovery, not Allaah in Whose Hands is recovery from all diseases.

Having known this, are bracelet-like amulets regarded as one of the permissible medications, such as injections and pills, or one of the Makrooh medications, such as

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<sup>2</sup> Abou Darda reported: The Messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, Allaah sent down the disease and the cure, and for every disease He made a cure. Seek treatment, but do not seek treatment by the unlawful." [Sunan Abee Dawood]

<sup>3</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

<sup>4</sup> Saheeh Muslim

<sup>5</sup> Soorah Yoonus [10:18]

<sup>6</sup> Soorah al-Zumar [39:3]

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cauterisation and other medicines, or one of the forbidden means, such as hanging amulets, bracelets, strings and sea shells around children's necks to protect them from envy, devils and some diseases? Are they considered like hanging cords around animals' necks, as was done by the people of Jahileeyyah (pre-Islaamic time of ignorance), and the Prophet (peace be upon him) rebuked them and told them that such practices were acts of Shirk (associating others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship), even though they believed that Allaah is the One Who brings benefit and causes harm; the One Who disposes of people's affairs, the One Who removes harm, and the One Who gives benefit? The evidence of this point is Allaah's Saying: **[Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?" They will say: "Allaah." Say: "Will you not then be afraid of Allaah's punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allaah)?"]**<sup>7</sup> In this Ayah (Qur'aanic verse), Allaah (Exalted be He) commanded His Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask the Mushriks about these things. Allaah (Glorified be He) told His Prophet (peace be upon him) that they would say that they were done by Allaah Alone; hence the conclusion of the Ayah: **[Say: "Will you not then be afraid of Allaah's punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allaah)?"]**<sup>8</sup> The meaning is: ought they not fear Allaah and abandon Shirk, since they know that Allaah is the Disposer of all affairs? Allaah (Glorified be He) says: **[And verily, if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth?" Surely they will say: "Allaah (has created them)." Say: "Tell me then, the things that you invoke besides Allaah - if Allaah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He (Allaah) intended some mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?" Say: "Sufficient for me is Allaah; in Him those who trust (i.e. believers) must put their trust."]**<sup>9</sup> There are many Ayahs to this effect. They prove that the Mushriks fully believe that Allaah (Exalted be He) is the One Who brings benefit or causes harm, and the One Who can remove harm. He is the One Who causes people to live or to die, and the One Who disposes of all affairs, but they worship other gods, such as idols, trees, prophets, righteous people and angels just to intercede with Him for them. The same applies to the practice of hanging amulets, cords, bracelets and threads around the necks of children and animals as a means of medication, not because they themselves can bring any healing. However, since such methods of medication are prohibited, but people cling to such means and become heedless that Allaah is the Only Curer, the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade people to use such means, which may lead to major Shirk (associating others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship that takes the Muslim out of Islaam). Also, the use of such means may result in grave corruption. That is why there have been different opinions by scholars on the issue of bracelet-like amulet; is it regarded as a prohibited means of medication? I showed in the reply - of which I sent you a copy - that bracelet-like amulet is better to be enlisted among the prohibited means of

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<sup>7</sup> Soorah Yoonus [10:31]

<sup>8</sup> Soorah Yoonus [10:31]

<sup>9</sup> Soorah al-Zumar [39:38]

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medication as it is like rings, amulets and cords that Islaam forbids. This is because those who used such things, in the pre-Islaamic period of ignorance and those who followed them, thought there was some benefit which Allaah (Exalted be He) has put in such things, even though He is the One Who brings benefit and cause harms. Allaah (Glorified be He) has created different sorts of benefit and harm in His creation and has made each have a particular portion of benefit and harm. That is why people may resort to both permissible and forbidden methods of cure. It is through the purified Sharee'ah a person can distinguish between what is lawful and what is unlawful. Consequently, what is known to have the characteristics of a prohibited means of cure, is regarded as prohibited even if it has some aspects of benefit. Similarly, what is known to have the characteristics of permissible means of cure, is considered permissible even if it has some aspects of harm, as long as its overall benefit exceeds its harms. If something is known to be forbidden by Sharee'ah, such as alcohol and the flesh of wild animals, it is obligatory for a Muslim to completely abstain from it. It is well known that wearing arm bracelets remains for days and years like wearing amulets, unlike pills and injections that are used for some time. An arm bracelet is not like pills and injections, but rather like wearing an arm ring or armlet about which there is a Prophetic Hadeeth reported by `Imraan ibn al-Hussayn, which I mentioned in the reply you reviewed. Wearing an arm bracelet is like wearing amulets, seashells and cords. Therefore, you can guess my opinion and other Shaykhs' opinions who say that wearing such bracelets is forbidden. And Allaah (Exalted be He) knows best.

Also, wearing arm bracelets may lead people to wear all that is imported from the West and thought to have some benefits, a matter that may lead to a catastrophe and cause people to neglect the purified Sharee'ah, which warns people against all that Allaah has forbidden. I ask Allaah (Exalted be He) to guide you, us and all Muslims to what pleases Him. I ask Him to grant us insight into His Religion and to make us steadfast adherents to the faith of Islaam. I ask Allaah to protect all Muslims and us from the evil of trials. Indeed, He is the Patron, Capable of all things. May Allaah's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be upon you.