

## Islam Forbids Astrology

### Introduction:

It is indeed saddening to see people of various communities on daily basis, as soon as they take hold of newspapers, they flip over the pages, and then look up their astrological predictions for the day. This happens before they have read any other part of the newspaper! For such people, the astrologers' predictions take the most important place in their life and Almighty God gets relocated to backstage. Of course, modern technology has also facilitated easy access to astrology in almost every means of communications. Whilst other communities may have variations of involvements in astrology, for Muslims however, they must remember at all times: that Islam forbids astrology. There is subtle difference between astronomy and astrology. The topic is complex and it is expanded below.

### Discussion on Astrology:

- 1) Islam, as the final revealed religion directly from Almighty God, condemns and forbids practising of any form of astrology. Likewise, Islam also condemns and forbids all the practices of prediction of the future. According to the Holy Qur'an, only Almighty God has the knowledge of the future, which He may sometimes circumstantially, share with His Messengers. This fact is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ72:26-28** *"The Knower of the unseen, so He makes His secrets known to none, except a messenger whom He chooses. For surely He makes a guard to go before him and behind him, that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord; and He encompasses whatever is with them, and He keeps account of all things."*
- 2) Astrology, fortune-telling, soothsaying, prediction of the future, witchcraft, superstition and similar practices are all subsystems of idolatry and polytheism. They are all forbidden in Islam as sinful and they are all commonly classified as *Shirk*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In Islam, shirk is the serious sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism, i.e. the deification or worship of anyone or anything besides the Oneness of Almighty God. In Arabic, shirk means ascribing or the establishment of "partners" alongside the absolute Oneness of Almighty God. Shirk is not forgivable. **HQ4:48** *"Surely Allah does not forgive that a partner should be set up with Him, and forgives all besides that to whom He pleases. And whoever sets up a partner with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin."* Other widely practised examples of shirk are: Bowing down to anybody other than Almighty God; Bowing to *Pir* or any religious leader; Bowing down to graves of anybody; Speaking to dead in their graves; Believing that anybody other than Almighty God can save them from sin; Believing that anybody other than Almighty God can reward them to Heaven; Believing that anybody or anything

- 3) Almighty God is the only Knower of the Unseen. Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) in like principles to Messengers previous to his time, also denounced fortune-telling as a demoniac practice<sup>2</sup>. There is however, need to stress the difference<sup>3</sup> between the science of astronomy and the occult of astrology. During his short but most informative life of 63 years<sup>4</sup>, Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) wanted the Arabs to eradicate all sorts of pagan beliefs, which included: Astrology, fortune-telling, soothsaying, and prediction of the future, witchcraft, superstition and similar practices, as they are all subsystems of idolatry and polytheism. At this juncture it is important to differentiate astronomy from astrology.
- 4) **Astronomy**<sup>5</sup>: Astronomy is a science that studies the physics of the universe and everything outside of the earth's atmosphere, such as planets, stars, asteroids, galaxies; and the scientific properties and relationships of those celestial bodies. Astronomers base their studies on scientific research and scientific observation of physical facts. Astronomy is also a useful and important tool in navigation and assists people in finding their way over the oceans or over vast spread of landmass, provided of course, the people know and correctly interpret the directional movements of stars and planets. Early ocean navigators used both the movements and positioning of stars to plot their coordinates when sailing. Early Arabs also used them for the same purpose when crossing thousands of square miles of rolling deserts. Of course, in modern technology, the GPS serves the same purpose, even within small technological devices such as cell phones.
- 5) **Astrology**<sup>6</sup>: Astrology is not a science but an occult: Astrologers' involvements attempt to study how the positions, motions, and properties of stars, planets and other celestial bodies affect peoples' lives and events on Earth. On the basis of these paired variables, astrologers attempt to predict the future.

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(idols, statues, and pictures) can listen to prayers other than Almighty God; Believing that anybody has same Power as Almighty God; Believing anybody other than Almighty God can save people on the Great Day of Judgement; Believing in superstition.

<sup>2</sup> Some key quotations from Hadith are given below.

<sup>3</sup> Both astronomy and astrology use planets, stars and celestial bodies outside of Earth's atmosphere.

<sup>4</sup> Whilst Prophet Muhammad lived only 63 years (b.570AD-d.632AD), he became the Prophet at age of 40 and served as the Final Prophet of Almighty God for just 23 years.

<sup>5</sup> Astronomy is a science and includes the study of the universe and its contents of celestial bodies outside of Earth's atmosphere. Almost all communities in all geographies of the world have some versions of astronomy for study and to assist them in navigation.

<sup>6</sup> Astrology most often consists of a system of horoscopes purporting to explain aspects of a person's personality and predict future events in their life based on the positions of the sun, moon, and other celestial objects at the time of their birth. It also involves certain occult principles.

- 6) Please note: Occult of any description is forbidden in Islam. On the contrary, when Muslims are in some situations of distress, they are encouraged to recourse to intense prayers to Almighty God, pleading with Him to assist them in warding off the distress.
- 7) Amongst the widespread European communities, astrology most often consists of a system of horoscopes, purporting to explain aspects of a person's personality and predict future events in their life. This is based on the positions of the sun, moon, and other celestial objects at the time of their birth. The zodiac<sup>7</sup> is believed to have been developed in Egypt about 3,300BC and later adopted by the Babylonians. Even as early as then, the astrologers knew it took 12 lunar cycles.
- 8) As discussed earlier in this paper, there are various practices by some people, which are not permitted in Islam. Shirk is an unforgivable sin in Islam Shirk means the deification of any person, object, idol, statue, picture, Trinity or other deification fractions of God. Furthermore, belief, practise and acceptance of superstition are also examples of Shirk.
- 9) Polytheism is also unforgivable sin and prohibited practice to Muslims: The Holy Qur'an states an Ordinance at **HQ4:48** *"Surely Allah does not forgive that a partner should be set up with Him, and forgives all besides that to whom He pleases. And whoever sets up a partner with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin."*
- 10) The foundation of Islam all over the world is the centrality of Oneness of Almighty God and this principle applies throughout both the known parts of the universe to mankind and the unexplored parts of the universes in all galaxies. Almighty God is everywhere, on earth and throughout the universes in all galaxies. The centrality of Oneness of Almighty God also means that Almighty God is the single Supreme Power, Whose greatness is beyond all material descriptions known to humanity and only He is the Best Knower of the future.
- 11) Inclusion of any partner to God, such as a consort or any off-spring (i.e. a son of God) are all practises of Shirk and there is no forgiveness for Shirk. Some people also worship few of the great scholars of religion (known as *Pir* worship), including the graves of those who have died; and this aspect is strictly prohibited in Islam as yet a dimension of Shirk. Further, the wearing of *taweez* as amulets for self-protection is another example of Shirk.

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<sup>7</sup> They are the 12 zodiac signs, also known as "the circle of creatures" which becomes the basic search index based on date of birth, and time of birth of people, as integral part of astrology. The divisions between each of the 12 creatures in the zodiac are 30-deg apart, according to the ecliptic routing.

- 12) Belief in astrology and belief and practising citations in horoscopes are also examples of Shirk, practised by many religious and cultural communities.

### **Hadith on Astrology:**

- 13) It is important to note what Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) directly stated about Shirk. There are several Hadith on this topic and here is an example: *"Whoever dies claiming that Allah has a rival, will enter Hell."* This is in Hadith Sahih Bukhari 4497 and Hadith Sahih Muslim 92.
- 14) There is concise warning in one of several Hadith stated as *"The salah (daily prayer) of whoever approaches a fortune-teller and asks him about anything will not be accepted for forty days and nights."* Hadith Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1211, no. 5440.
- 15) *"Whoever approaches an oracle or fortune-teller and believes in what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad."* [Reported by Abu Hurairah and collected by Ahmad and Abu Dawood (Sunan Abu Dawood (English Trans.), vol. 3, p. 1095, no. 3895).]

### **Conclusions on Astrology:**

- a) Astrology was known to be practised by the widespread older civilizations of Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, and Persia. As each of these Empires moved and conquered, they brought over their astrological practices and imposed it upon their conquered communities. India also has complex system of astrological practises.
- b) The Mongoloids and Chinese communities have their own system of astrology, also using creatures as symbols in their zodiac
- c) There is no scientific link between movement of planets within the universe and the behaviours of people.

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