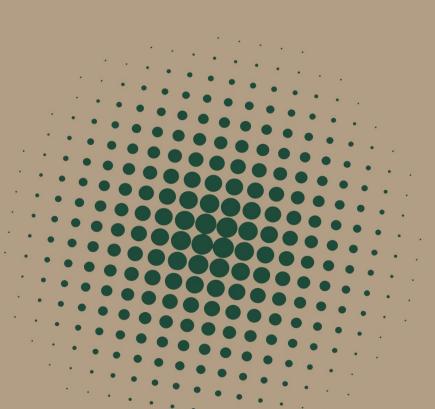
A BRIEF RESPONSE TO THE UNISA SEMINAR "MUSLIM" SANGOMAS CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS



Prepared by Shaykh Lut Hud Mputhi

بسم الله والحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين أما بعد:

All praise is due to Allah, the One who completed for us the religion of Islam. Whatever is found in His book, the Quran, and the authentic Sunnah of His Prophet is accepted in the deen of Allah, and whatever opposes the Quran and authentic Sunnah is rejected and disapproved.

Knowledge of the Unseen

Among the things that oppose the deen of Allah (Islam) and its core foundation, which is the At-Tawheed (Oneness) of Allah in His worship, lordship, and His names and attributes, are fortune-telling, divining, and sangoma practices. These practices completely oppose Islam, as they are mainly connected to claiming knowledge of the unseen while Muslims must believe that none knows the unseen except Allah, the Creator of all existence. Allah says in the Quran:

Say: "None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (unseen) except Allah, nor can they perceive when they shall be resurrected." {Surah An-Naml v: 65}

The main ways of claiming the unseen include fortune-telling, bone-reading, palm-reading, and other forms of soothsaying and fortune-telling (sangomas).

Therefore, practicing fortune-telling is major shirk (associating partners with Allah in worship). This renders a person a disbeliever from the deen of Allah. Likewise, believing that there is someone who knows the knowledge of the unseen other than Allah is disbelief and expels one from the religion of Islam. This includes consulting a diviner, a soothsayer, or a fortune-teller, or any claimant of such knowledge and believing what they claim to know from the matters of the unseen.

The Messenger of Allah said:

"He is not one of us who practices omens or has omens practiced for him, or who practices fortune-telling or has fortune-telling practiced for him, or who practices magic or has magic practiced for him, or who ties a knot, or who goes to a soothsayer and believes what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad, may Allah send blessings and salutations to him." [Narrated by Bazaar with a good chain]

All the above-mentioned practices, which include claiming the knowledge of the unseen, believing in omens, and practicing sorcery/magic, are evil actions and from the affairs of the devils. As Allah said:

"Shall I inform you (O people!) upon whom the Shayaateen (devils) descend? They descend on every lying (one who tells lies), sinful person. Who gives ear (to the devils, and they pour what they may have heard of the unseen from the angels), and most of them are liars." {Surah Ash-Shu'araa v: 221-223}

The above-mentioned verses and hadith are clear indications that these practices are un-Islamic and disobedience to Allah, the Creator of all existence.

Can A Muslim Be a Sangoma (Fortune-Teller)?

Taking the verses and narrations into consideration, it becomes very clear that a person can never be a Muslim while being a sangoma at the same time, and there is no being caught between the two worlds. It's just two opposite ways: a way of Allah, which is Islam, and a way of Shaytaan (devil), which is fortune-telling and soothsaying. Allah says:

"And verily, this is My Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become Al-Muttaqun (the pious)." {Surah Al-An'aam v: 153}

Also, Allah the Almighty says:

"And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment." {Surah Al-Hashr v: 7}

Allah warned the believers from following the path of Shaytaan (devil), and He said:

"O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of Shaytaan (devil). And whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaytaan (devil), then, verily he commands Al-Fahsha' [i.e., to commit indecency (illegal sexual intercourse, etc.)], and Al-Munkar [disbelief and polytheism (i.e., to do evil and wicked deeds; to speak

or to do what is forbidden in Islam, etc.)]. And had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins. But Allah purifies (guides to Islam) whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower." {Surah An-Nur v: 21}

What Can a Muslim do When There is a Calling to be a Sangoma?

The so-called "calling" of being a sangoma is from the whisperings of Shaytaan (devil), and it is a calling for a person to commit shirk (polytheism) and disbelief in Allah, as Allah says:

"Like the example of Satan when he says to man, 'Disbelieve.' And when he disbelieved, he says, 'Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds.'" {Surah Al-Hashr V: 16}

Responding to such a calling and starting the practice as a sangoma is great disobedience to Allah and obedience to the devil. The fact that Allah and His Messenger Muhammad **have rebuked this act severely and prohibited attending and consulting sangomas is clear proof that, like any other action, a person is able to respond to such a calling either positively or negatively since human beings are created with the ability to choose right from wrong.

What is the Solution?

One of the main things one can do when experiencing such whisperings is to seek Allah's protection using legislated means from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah , saking Allah for protection and being set free from the traps of Shaytaan (devil). Allah says:

"And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaytaan (Satan), then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearer, All-Knower." {Al-A'raaf v: 200}

Allah also says:

"And say: 'My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the Shayatin (devils).' 'And I seek refuge with You, My Lord, lest they may attend (or come near) me.'" {Surah Al-Mu'minun v: 97-98}

Islamic Ruqya (Exorcism) as a Solution

Should the matter reach a point where one ends up getting possessed by the jinn (demons), then one must seek help and consult reliable learned Muslims who are upon the correct creed and correct methodology to render an Islamic ruqya (exorcism). One should also strive to be a practicing, God-fearing Muslim and avoid acts of disobedience that attract such evil, like listening to music, taking photos, and engaging in other forbidden things that may attract shayateen (devils) to a person. Frequent remembrance of Allah is crucial because it chases away shayateen (devils), while neglecting the remembrance of Allah attracts shayateen (devils) to befriend a person. As Allah says:

"And whosoever turns away (blinds himself) from the remembrance of the Most Beneficent (Allah) (i.e., this Quran and worship of Allah), We appoint for him Shaytaan (Satan – devil) to be a Qareen (an intimate friend) to him." {Surah Az-Zukhruf v: 36}

Also, it is important to learn At-Tawheed (monotheism) and apply it in one's life. A life of a Muslim without At-Tawheed is a life of danger and leads to destruction. Sheikh Abdur-Razzaq Al-Badr, a scholar from Medina, said regarding At-Tawheed:

"Through At-Tawheed, the devils are expelled, and they cannot remain in a place where At-Tawheed settles." [Maqaalaat Mutanawi'ah]

Additionally, every Muslim needs to have Tawakkul, which is putting all trust in Allah and entrusting all affairs to Him, as Allah says:

"...and put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed." {Surah Al-Ma'idah v: 23}

May Allah the Almighty ease all our affairs and guide us to do that which is in conformity with His book and the Sunnah of His Messenger .

Allah knows best.

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