

Requiring wages for exorcism

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee

Article taken and slightly adapted from: ferkous.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Question: Some scholars said that it is permissible for the exorciser to require wages for his exorcism. We would like you to explain in detail whether the exorciser can require some money or other things? And may Allaah reward you.

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

It is permissible to take wages for exorcism by way of Ju`aala (recompense, or a promise of recompense) if its meaning and expressions are clear. In fact, it is not allowed to use prohibited, incomprehensible and illogical words in exorcism, lest it resemble the words that the people of falsehood use. This implies that the exorciser should not have the attributes that stain his faith and integrity. Rather, he should have a correct credo and his appearance should be in conformity with that of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ while providing the conditions of supplication, in a context that is full of Allaah's fear, reliance upon Him and a sincere worship to Him.

This being said, even if it is permissible for the exorciser to receive wages for exorcism, what he requires will not be deserved unless the patient recovers and the effect of the illness disappears. The proof of that is what Al-Bukhaaree reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما **"That some of the Companions of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed by a place where there was water, one of whom had been stung by a scorpion. A man from those staying near the water came and said to the Companions: "Is there anyone among you who can practice exorcism¹, for near the water there is a person who had been stung by a scorpion." So one of the Companions went to him and recited the opening Soorah of the Qur'aan in return for a sheep as his charge. The patient recovered and the man brought the sheep to his companions who disliked that and said: "You took fees for reciting Allaah's Book!" When they arrived in Madeenah, they said: "O Allaah's Apostle! He took fees for (reciting) Allaah's Book." The Messenger of Allaah said: "You are most entitled to take fees for (reciting) Allaah's Book."²**

Al-Bukhaaree-also-reported a hadeeth on the authority of Aboo Sa'eed Al-Khudree رضي الله عنه **"Some of the Companions of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed (on their way by) by one of Arab**

¹ It is worth mentioning here that the word Ruqya in Arabic, translated by "exorcism" in English, includes more than seeking to expel evil spirits and demons. It involves also, as in this hadeeth, the treatment of the scorpion sting, the snakebite, the treatment of the evil eye...etc. by reciting some verses of the Qur'aan or special prophetic evocations. Translator's note.

² Reported by Al-Bukhaaree in As-Saheeh, chapter of "Medicine", concerning stipulating a flock of sheep for exorcism (hadeeth 5405) and Ibn Hibbaan in As-Saheeh (hadeeth 5146) on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما.

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tribes, which did not entertain them. While they were in that state, the chief of that tribe was stung by a scorpion. They said to the Companions: "Do you have any medicine with you or an exorcizer (i.e. healer)³." The Companions said: "Since you rejected to entertain us, we will not treat your chief unless you pay us for it." So they agreed to pay them a flock of sheep. One of the Companions started reciting the opening Soorah of the Qur'aan gathering and spitting his saliva at the place of the scorpion bite. The patient got cured and his people presented the sheep to them, but they said: "We will not take it unless we ask the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ about its legality." When they asked him, he smiled and said: "How do you come to know that the opening Soorah of the Qur'aan could be used as an exorcism (i.e. treatment)? Take it and assign a share for me."⁴

This hadeeth indicates that wages are permissible for exorcism, because the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ approved of the stipulation made by the Companion. Also, the fact that he asked them to assign for him a part is another proof that wages are permissible. This is known by recompense or promise of recompense, which is different from the salary, because the effect of the action in case of the promise of recompense is not known, i.e. the cure is not sure. In addition, the promise of recompense is valid without determining the author, while in case of the salary both the action and the author should be determined.

This being said, and in order to avoid confusion between the promise of recompense and the salary, it is worth saying that exorcism is a kind of treatment; what one takes in return for it is called a promise of recompense; and it is permissible to take wages for it. Therefore, the meaning of the promise of recompense is wider than the meaning of the salary, this is the reason why it is permissible without knowing the action and the duration.

Though it is permissible for the exorciser to take wages for exorcism, after the patient recovers, he should not be exigent; his demand should be according to need and without even overtaxing the patient. However, it is preferable to not state conditions or pecuniary compensation for exorcism. Its aim is to help the Muslims and remove harm from them without inflicting harm to them while aspiring only to Allaah's reward, Who provides indeed sustenance and reward.

It is worth mentioning that the exorciser should help his brothers in faith in need and when it is possible, and to do it with fairness. He should not devote himself completely to the treatment of the patients, because the fact of devoting oneself to exorcism was not a thing the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) and the Imaams of the nations used to do, even if some of them used to see their supplications answered, and that there were many reasons to devote themselves to it [and did not do it].

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers, Rabee` Ath-Thaane 14th, 1429 H. Corresponding to: April 20th, 2008.

³ See footnote 1. Translator's note.

⁴ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree in As-Saheeh, chapter of "Medicine", concerning exorcism with the opening Soorah of the Qur'aan (hadeeth 5404) and Muslim in As-Saheeh, chapter of "Salutation", concerning the permission of taking wages for exorcism with the Qur'aan and some forms of remembrance (hadeeth 5733) on the authority of Aboo Sa'eed Al-Khudree رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.