

The Summary of Muftī Taqī ‘Uthmanī’s Discussion Regarding *Ruqyah* & *Ta‘wīdh*

[Whilst reading a Ḥadīth about Ta‘wīdh in our lessons of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, I directed the students to refer to Takmilah Fath al-Mulhim for the discussion of Muftī Muḥammad Taqī ‘Uthmanī ḥafizahullah on this issue. Here we present the summary of that which was prepared by the students of Mishkāt class at Madani Madrasah in London. Mahfuz]

Many people have shown interest with regards to the *shar‘ī* position on *ruqyah* and whether or not it produces tangible results. Muftī Taqī Muḥammad ‘Uthmanī presents a detailed discussion of this topic in his commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *Takmilah Fath al-Mulhim*, the main points of which have been summarised below.

Conditions of *ruqyah*

1. The words of the *rāqī* (the one who is doing *ruqyah*) must be understood.
2. Through *ruqyah*, one should not seek help from anyone other than Allah ﷻ.
3. The person who is receiving *ruqyah* should not believe that the *ruqyah* in and of itself will help a person, instead they should have *tawakkul* (trust) in Allah ﷻ.

Method of doing *ruqyah*

Originally, *ruqyah* is carried out by reciting the Qur’ān, or mentioning some of the names or attributes of Allah ﷻ. After this, the *rāqī* will blow onto the affected individual in the hopes that Allah ﷻ will remove whatever has afflicted them. This is an established practice which can be traced back to the Prophet ﷺ via a number of *aḥādīth*.

As for writing the *mu‘awwidhāt* (Sūrah al-Falaq and Sūrah an-Nās) and placing it on the neck of a child or a sick person, or writing them and making the sick person drink its ink, that can be proven through the practices of the *Ṣaḥābah* RA and the *Tābi‘īn* RH.

It is mentioned in the *Muṣannaf* (a genre of *aḥādīth* books) of Ibn Abī Shaybah RH (d. 235 AH) that Ibn ‘Amr RA used to write the *mu‘awwidhāt* and put it around the necks of his young sons and teach them to his older children.¹

¹ Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah: 23547.

Mujāhid RAH used to write the *ta'wīdh* for people and hang it around their necks.² It has also been quoted from Sa'īd ibn Musayyib RH, Ḥassan al-Baṣrī RH and Muḥammad ibn Sirīn RH that it is fine to write the *ta'wīdh* and place it on the neck or shoulder. Because of this, many contemporary scholars have also permitted the use of *ta'wīdh* and placing it around the neck, or tying it on the shoulders.³

Is it permissible to wear a *ta'wīdh*?

Yes, it is permissible for one to wear a *ta'wīdh*. It was narrated by Abī 'Iṣmah RH who said that he asked Sa'īd ibn Musayyib RH about the *ta'wīdh* to which he replied, “there is no harm if it is wrapped up well.”⁴

Can a *ḥā'idah* wear a *ta'wīdh* if it has a Quranic *āyah* in it?

According to the tābi'ī, 'Aṭā' RH, a *ḥā'idah* (menstruating woman) who is wearing a *ta'wīdh* wrapped in a covering made of skin should remove it. However, if it is inside a silver pendant, it is permissible for her to wear it.⁵

Ta'wīdh for a person who is unwell

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taymiyyah RH mentions in his *fatwā* that it is permissible to write *ta'wīdh* for those affected by ailments and those who are sick with ink that is lawful. The writing is then placed into water which the patient then drinks from and washes with. Imām Aḥmad RH and others have affirmed this. Ibn 'Abbas RA said “If childbirth becomes difficult upon a woman, then write:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 { كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرُونَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا }
 { كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرُونَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ بَلَاغٌ فَهَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ }

In the name of Allah ﷻ, there is none worthy of worship except Allah ﷻ, the Most Forbearing, the Most Wise. Glory be to Allah ﷻ, the Lord of the Great Throne. All praise belongs to Allah ﷻ, the Lord of the Worlds.

The Day they will see it, it will seem to them as if they did not live (in the world)
 but only for one afternoon or for the morning thereof.

The Day they will see what they are promised, (it will be) as if they did not stay (in the world) more than an hour in a single day. This is a message. So, none will be destroyed except the sinners.

² Ibid: 23545.

³ This is the view of Abū Ja'far RAH Muḥammad ibn Sirīn RAH, 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar RAH and aḍ-Ḍaḥāk RAH. Mentioned in Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah. See *Takmilah Faṭḥ al-Mulhim*.

⁴ Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah: 23543.

⁵ Ibid: 23544.

Ibn ‘Abbas RA said: “One should write this in a clean pot and give it to her to drink.” Imām Aḥmad RH said “She should drink it and the water should be sprinkled below her navel.” ‘Abdullāh said, “I saw my father (Imām Aḥmad RH) write it in a vessel or something clean.”⁶

Ibn Taymiyyah RH also mentions that these words would be written on a piece of paper and hung across the woman’s shoulders. ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥassan ibn Shaqīq (the narrator) said, “We tested it out and it was unlike anything we had ever seen. The delivery was quick, and afterwards she either tore or burnt the paper.”⁷

All of these *aḥādīth* and sayings of the *tābi‘īn* are evidence against those in our time who claim that writing *ta‘wīdh*, drinking from its ink or placing it on one’s neck is prohibited. Some even go to the extent of saying that such actions are a form of *shirk*, their evidence being the *ḥadīth* narrated from Zaynab RA, the wife of ‘Abdullāh RA, that ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd RA said that he heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: “Indeed *ruqyah*, using an amulet and love spells are *shirk*.” However, at the end of the very same *ḥadīth*, there is evidence which rebuttals this opinion. Zaynab RA replied, “Why do you say this? I swear by Allah ﷻ, when my eye became extremely swollen, I would frequently visit such and such Jew so he could do *ruqyah* on me. When he did *ruqyah* on me, it became calm.” ‘Abdullāh RA said, “Indeed that is only the action of *shayṭān*. He used to prick [the eyes] with his hands and when the *ruqyah* was done, *shayṭān* would refrain from pricking. Indeed it would suffice for you to say just as Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

أَذْهِبِ الْبَاسَ، رَبَّ النَّاسِ

Remove the calamity, O Lord of the people.”⁸

This *ḥadīth* clearly suggests that this particular *ruqyah* was not permitted as it was the *ruqyah* of the polytheists, who would seek help from the *shayāṭīn* (devils). As for *ruqyah* which is not associated with *shirk*, it is permissible and this has been established through many of the *aḥādīth* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The rulings of using amulets are the same as doing *ruqyah*.

The Arabs would place strung beads around the necks of their children under the impression that these beads themselves could protect their children from the evil eye as they believed it was a complete cure and medicine. However, this is considered a form of *shirk* as they sought protection from harm from other than Allah ﷻ.

⁶ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, V. 19 P. 64.

⁷ *Ibid*, V. 19 P. 65.

⁸ Sunan Abī Dawūd, Kitāb at-ṭibb: 3883.

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