

Hadīth Fifteen

When one is unable to fulfil their obligations and duties then taking the outer means to cure is obligatory

Indeed, those who fear Allāh - when an impulse touches them from the devil, they remember [Allāh] and at once they have insight (7:201).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾

'Aṭā ibn Abī Rabāḥ said that Ibn Abbās said to him: Shall I show you a woman of Paradise? I said: Yes. He said: Here is this dark-complexioned woman. She came to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and said: I am suffering from falling sickness [or fits/epileptic seizures] and I [find that I] am undressed; supplicate Allāh for me, whereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: If you wish, be patient and paradise is yours. Or, if you wish, I supplicate Allāh that He may cure you. She said: I am prepared to be patient (but the unbearable trouble is) that I become naked, so supplicate Allāh that He should not let me become naked, so he supplicated for her.

'Aṭā said that he had seen Umm Zafar, the tall black woman, at the curtain of the Kabah [clinging onto it].

Recorded in Al-Bukharī & Muslim.

It has also been reported that she would cling onto the stairs of the Kabah, and Allāh knows best.

Other reports state that she said: I fear that the khabīth (filthy jinn) would undress me. So the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for her, and whenever she would be apprehensive about the khabīth approaching her, she would retreat to the curtains of the Kabah and cling onto them.

It has also been transmitted that the *majānīn* would be brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he would strike the chests of one of them and they would be cured. And Umm Zafar was brought to the Prophet and he struck her chest, but she was not cured.

عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ أَبِي رَبَاحٍ قَالَ قَالَ لِي ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ أَلَا أُرِيكَ امْرَأَةً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ هَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةُ السُّودَاءُ أَتَتْ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أُصْرَعُ وَإِنِّي أَتَكَشَّفُ فَأَدْعُ اللَّهَ لِي قَالَ إِنْ شِئْتَ صَبْرْتِ وَلَكِ الْجَنَّةُ وَإِنْ شِئْتَ دَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُعَافِيكَ قَالَتْ أُصْبِرُ قَالَتْ فَإِنِّي أَتَكَشَّفُ فَأَدْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ لَا أَتَكَشَّفَ فَدَعَا لَهَا

عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ أَخْبَرَنِي عَطَاءٌ أَنَّهُ رَأَى أُمَّ زُفَرَ تِلْكَ امْرَأَةً طَوِيلَةً سَوْدَاءَ عَلَى سِتْرِ الْكَعْبَةِ

ثم وجدت الحديث في الأدب المفرد للبخاري وقد أخرجه بهذا السند المذكور هنا بعينه وقال على سلم الكعبة فאלله أعلم

وعند البزار من وجه آخر عن ابن عباس في نحو هذه القصة أئها قالت إني أخاف الخبيث أن يجرديني فدعا لها فكانت إذا خشيت أن يأتيها تأتي أستار الكعبة فتتعلق بها

وقد أخرج عبد الرزاق عن ابن جريج هذا الحديث مطولا وأخرجه ابن عبد البر في الاستيعاب من طريق حجاج بن محمد عن ابن جريج عن الحسن بن مسلم أنه سمع طاوسا يقول كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يؤتى بالمجانين فيضرب صدر أحدهم فبيرا فأتي بمجنونة يقال لها أم زفر فضرب صدرها فلم تبر

Ibn Hajar said: The reports demonstrate that Umm Zafar suffered from the fits that are caused by the jinn.

وقد يؤخذ من الطرق التي أوردتها أن الذي كان بأم زفر كان
من صرع الجن لا من صرع الخلط [فتح الباري]

This report —its words, context and various other full versions— affirm that her epilepsy was due to a filthy shaiṭān possessing her:

1. The word أُصْرِعُ (uncontrolled seizure) was not elaborated by her nor did the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ask her. That demonstrates that it was not a medical condition; rather devil-possession was known throughout human history, and it was more common than this medical condition, that is why she did not elaborate nor did he (ﷺ) ask her to elaborate. They both adopted the common meaning and understanding of أُصْرِعُ.
2. If it was a medical condition then at the very least the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would have alluded to something physical/material for her to take as a remedy and a means of cure, because "Allāh sends down no illness except He sends down with it a cure."
3. Even if the medical cure was not available in the Prophet's time, that does not negate his prophecy in prescribing the cure, if it was indeed a medical condition. For him to leave it to patience and duā shows that its cure is more related to belief in Allāh and spirituality (i.e. spiritual means) than physical research and treatment.
4. She explicitly says that she would become uncovered during these epileptic seizures. Tailored clothing does not come off easily, even more so during a seizure. It would only come off if she herself takes them off, and that would only happen when there is another being inside her who is taking off her clothes. She makes it very clear that she does not want to be uncovered, so it is unconceivable that she was uncovering herself whilst having a seizure!
5. Other complete narrations of this incident explicitly mention that her صَرْعٌ (seizure) was due to a shaiṭān possessing her.
6. If it was a medical condition then why would she come out in the open and be around the Kabah when she was about to have these seizures. Shouldn't she simply remain at home, and have patience as she and the Messenger (ﷺ) decided? Her needing to be screened by the Kabah or under the Kabah cloth (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī) or being at the footsteps of the Kabah (Al-Bukhārī; Adab al-Mufrad), shows that she was taking refuge with Allāh and His sanctified house from this devil and what it was doing to her.
7. This is a classic example of possession of lust by the devil.
8. The remedy and fruit which the Prophet (ﷺ) prescribed to her is exactly the remedy and fruit for anyone suffering from devil-possession, and that is; if all the spiritual treatments do not cure a devil-possession, then persist with YOUR duā and patience, for the one who is suffering this will have Jannah!
9. Is it not more appropriate to give a guarantee of Jannah or at least the hope of it to the one who is suffering from a devil-possession and everything that it comes with (doubts sowing

disbelief, feelings of mockery, arrogance, etc.) than to someone suffering from a medical condition?

10. Some spiritual illnesses [may decrease] but may not be fully cured, similar to some medical conditions, but which one of the two sufferers will be more suited to manifest the glad tidings of Jannah in this ḥadīth?
11. Glad tidings when dying from some medical illnesses are explicitly mentioned by Prophet (ﷺ). However, there is no explicit ḥadīth mentioning the glad tidings of the one who suffers or dies due to spiritual illnesses, including jinn-possession. So wouldn't this ḥadīth then be more suitable of the Prophet's comprehensive way of living and guidance if it was meant for spiritual illness?
12. The early and past scholars deemed that this was a devil possession. The narrators and collectors of the of the portion containing *يُوتَى بِالْمَجَانِينِ / إِيَّيْ أَحَافُ الْحَبِيبِ* (I fear that a khabīth/the majānin would be brought) obviously believed that it was a spiritual illness, otherwise why would they narrate it and why did they not negate it with other facts or evidences?
13. Later scholars also believed that this could refer to spiritual illness like Ibn Al-Qayyim in *Al-Ṭibb Al-Nabawī*, and Ibn Hajar in *Fatḥh Al-Bārī* gives precedence to this view.
14. Even Imām Al-Bukhārī inclines to this view as he titles the chapter as: *بَابُ فَضْلِ مَنْ يُضْرَعُ مِنَ الرِّيحِ* (Chapter: Virtue of one who is overcome by seizure from the wind). It is well-known that the early scholars used to mean by *الرِّيحُ* (*lit.* wind) a jinn/shaitān.
15. As far as I am aware, there was no early scholar who explained this ḥadīth with credible evidences to refer to a medical condition only and that it had nothing whatsoever to do with spiritual/jinn caused epilepsy.

Points of benefit:

1. Assistance and help can be sought from experts when one is unable to treat or cure himself.
2. Duā may be requested from those that you believe will have their duās most likely answered.
3. The essence of spiritual treatments and cure are found in tawḥīd of Allāh, tawakkul in Him, making duā, having patience with His decree (whilst taking all the spiritual and best outer means) and seeking His reward. The Prophets who went through spiritual illnesses and the door to their cure opened through duā! Consider Ayyūb (ﷺ) and Muḥammad (ﷺ) for example.
4. Those suffering from spiritual illnesses ought to fight them by adopting all legitimate means and not giving in to the evil, or giving up.
5. Requesting duā and taking legitimate treatments do not negate tawakkul in Allāh, nor the full reward. The reward lies in being content with the decree (qadar) of Allāh and its fruitful

wisdom (not with the illness in and of itself) whilst and after one has exhausted all efforts for the cure.

6. Continuously and relentlessly trying to remove the harm, through legislated means, is an essential part of believing that YOUR Allāh wants YOU to fight and overcome it through believing in Him and His legislated ways. Eventually when you do achieve the cure or the decreasing of the illness, you begin to witness Allāh rather than simply believing in Him! And ultimately that is the purpose of our creation and trials – to witness Him in our everyday matters by taking the utmost legitimate means in all our daily affairs!
7. One MUST seek assistance and help when one is unable to fulfil one's obligations, be it to oneself, or towards others, or towards Allāh. And those who can help MUST assist; it is an obligation both ways! So here she sought duā (help) because an obligation wasn't being fulfilled from her side (covering of her 'awrah especially in front of men). And the Prophet (ﷺ) made the duā because he knew with certainty that if he makes duā for that, it will be answered, and thereby he assisted her. So if one knows with certainty, or assumes it to be most likely, due to their expertise that they can assist, then it becomes obligatory on them to do so.