

Placing Black Pots Upside Down and Hanging Shoes on Cars to Avoid Evil Eye

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Question

What do respected scholars of Islam say regarding the following: After constructing a new house, some people place upside-down black cooking pots on the roof. Similarly, after buying a rickshaw, van, or car, they hang an old shoe on the back, assuming that this will be protected from the evil eye. What is the reality of this according to Sharia?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

Being affected by the evil eye is a reality that is inferred from the Quran and Hadith. Many incidents related to the effects of the evil eye are mentioned in Tafsir, Hadith, and history. Therefore, using any method to avoid its effects, or if it has already been affected, any method of curing it is allowed as long as the method doesn't contradict Shari'ah.

In the Indo-Pak community, there are many methods commonly used to avoid the effects of the evil eye, one of which is to attach an object that is unpleasant to look at, causing feelings of disgust. This prevents the object from being looked at with admiration or awe, as such feelings increase the likelihood of being affected by the evil eye. As for the method of placing black pots and hanging shoes, as asked in the question, these are methods that don't contradict Shari'ah or any of its guidelines. Rather, if the collection of Hadith is studied, an origin for these methods can be found.

It is stated that once a woman came to the blessed court of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and pleaded, "We are villagers and farmers. We remain in fear that the evil eye will afflict our fields." Mentioning a solution, The Merciful Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stated, "Place a skull on a stick in the middle of your field so the evil eye may not have an effect."

Note - Some people deny the concept of the evil eye and consider it a trite and outdated concept. But keep in mind that when one thing is proven from the Quran and Sunnah, not being able to logically grasp it is a shortcoming of our intellect and understanding. Therefore, that which is proven from the Quran and Sunnah cannot be denied due to not understanding something.

In his book *Kitab al-Marasil*, Imam Abu Dawood Sijistani رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى (D. 275 A.H/889 GC) mentions this narration from the grandson of Imam Husain رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ:

أخبرني أبي، أنه سمع عمر بن علي بن حسين، وعبد الله بن عنبسة، يذكران الجماجم التي تجعل في الزرع، فقال: عمر بن علي بن حسين: إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إنما أمر بذلك من أجل العين

Translation: My father told me that he heard Umar B. Ali b. Husain and Abdullah B. Anbasa were discussing about 'al-Jamajim' which are placed in the fields. During the discussion, Umar B. Ali B. Husain said, "The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed us to do this to avoid the evil eye." (Kitab al-Maraseel Li Abi-Dawood, p. 363, Publ. Muasis al-Risalat, Beirut)

In this exact book, with a different chain of narration, he mentions a detailed narration:

عن علي بن عمر بن علي، عن أبيه، عن جده، قال: قدم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم المدينة فقال: «يا معشر قريش، إنكم تحبون الماشية، فأقلوا منها؛ فإنكم أقل الأرض مطرا، واحترثوا فإن الحرت مبارك، وأكثر وافيها من الجماجم»

Translation: When the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ arrived in Madinah, he said: "O people of Quraish! You love the cattle very much but reduce them because you reside in an arid land. Cultivate your lands for indeed cultivation is blessed, and add many al-Jamajim in them." (Kitab-Ul-Maraseel Li Abi-Dawood, Pg 363, Publ. Muasis Ur Risalat, Beirut)

In the translation of both narrations, we kept the word 'al-Jamajim' as is because in the vocabulary of Hadith, two meanings have been mentioned and both fit the context. (1) Skull. This meaning has been mentioned in *al-Munjid*, *Misbah al-Lughat*, and *al-Nihayah Fi Ghareeb al-Hadith Wa al-Asar*. (2) Ploughshare, which is

used for tillage (preparation of the land for planting crops). The masters in the vocabulary of Hadith, Allama b. Asir Jazri Shafi'i (D. 606 AH/1210 GC) and Allama Tahir Patni Gujrati Hanafi (D. 986 AH/ 1578 GC) رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهَا both have mentioned this meaning.

Their text can be found through the reference mentioned below. (Al-Nihayah Fi Ghareebil-Hadith Wal-Asar, 01/289, Publ. Darul-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah Beirut) (Majmau-Bihar-il Anwaar, 01/393, Publ. Majlis Dairatul Ma'arif Al-Usmaniyah)

The great jurist, Imam Qazi Khan Awzjandi (D. 593 AH/ 1196 GC) رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ writes:

لابأس بوضع الجماجم في الزرع والمبطقة لدفع ضرر العين لأن العين حق تصيب المال والادمي والحيوان ويظهر أثره في ذلك عرف ذلك بالآثار وإذا خاف العين كان له أن يضع فيه الجماجم حتى إذا نظر الناظر إلى الزرع يقع بصره أو لا على الجماجم لارتفاعها فنظره بعد ذلك إلى الحرث لا يضر لما روي أن امرأة جاءت إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وقالت نحن من أهل الحرث وإننا نخاف عليه العين فأمرها النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن تجعل فيه الجماجم

Translation: There is no issue in placing skulls in crop fields and watermelon fields to prevent the effects of the evil eye because the effects of an evil eye are a reality. It affects wealth, humans, and animals and it can be detected by various signs. When any farmer fears (for his crops) getting afflicted with the evil eye, he is allowed to place a skull (on a stick) in the field so that when one looks towards the field, he first sees the skull because it is raised, then he will see the crops. (By the will of Allah) In this way, they will not be harmed. It is stated that once a woman came into the court of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and said, "We are farmers and we fear getting afflicted with the evil eye." The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded the woman to put a skull in the fields. (Fatawa Qazi Khan, Vol. 03, Pg. 330, Publ. Darul-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, Beirut)

Allama Ibn Abideen al-Shami al-Dimishqi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ (D. 1252 AH/1836 GC) has referenced this text. (Radd-al-Mukhtar Fi Durr Mukhtar, Vol. 21, Kitab Ul Hazr Wal Ibahat, Pg. 418, Publ. Damascus)

Another method to protect children from the evil eye is to mark a

dot on the chin i.e. mark the chin with kohl. This is from the Usmani tradition. Nur al-Din, Allama Ali Qari Hanafi (D. 1014 A.H/1605 GC)

رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ has mentioned:

روي أن عثمان رضي الله عنه رأى صبياً مليحاً فقال: دسموا نونته كيلاً تصيبه العين، ومعنى دسموا: سودوا،
والنونة النقرة التي تكون في ذقن الصبي الصغير

Translation: It has been narrated that once Usman رضي الله عنه saw a beautiful child, so he said to his family, “Mark his chin with a black dot so the evil eye doesn’t inflict him.” The word دسموا means “turn black” and the word النونة is used for “a small dot on the chin of the child.” (Mirqat al Mafatih, Vol. Chapt. Of Tib and Riq, Pg. 360, Publ. Darul Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, Lebanon)

Sadr al-Shari’ah, Mufti Muhammad Amjad Ali A’zami (D. 1367 AH/1947 GC) رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ has written:

بعض کاشت کار اپنے کھیتوں میں کپڑا لپیٹ کر کسی لکڑی پر لگا دیتے ہیں، اس سے مقصود نظر بد سے کھیتوں کو بچانا ہوتا ہے، کیونکہ دیکھنے والے کی نظر پہلے اُس پر پڑے گی، اس کے بعد زراعت پر پڑے گی اور اُس صورت میں زراعت کو نظر نہیں لگے گی، ایسا کرنا، ناجائز نہیں، کیونکہ نظر کا لگنا صحیح ہے، احادیث سے ثابت ہے، اس کا انکار نہیں کیا جاسکتا۔

Translation: Many farmers wrap a cloth on a stick and place it in their fields. The purpose of this is to protect the fields from the evil eye. The one looking towards the field will first see this cloth then the crops. In this way, the evil eye won’t affect the crops. Doing such isn’t impermissible because the infliction of the evil eye is true and proven from Hadith and therefore, cannot be denied. (Bahar-e-Shariat, Vol. 3, Pg.420, Publ. Maktaba Tul Madinah)

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ knows best.)

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