

RAMIFICATIONS OF BLACK MAGIC IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The paper traces out history and prevalence of black magic around the world and investigates its pervasiveness in Pakistan. The paper is geared toward examining the socio-cultural implications of the spells of black magic rampant in some localities of Pakistan and attempts to identify reasons why people resort to this practice with its apparent effects on people and societies. Findings suggest that this social machination is employed on account of revenge seeking attitude, weak belief in religion, lack of education and knowledge as well as the growing irresponsible attitude of media

BACKGROUND

Conventionally, black magic has been considered as the application of supernatural powers for purposes which tend to be wicked, selfish and sinful (Melton, 2001). Black Magic (*kalajadu*) is a type of occult art that has been known and practised for several centuries. It has been prevalent across different cultures and regions of the world. Magic has been professed and carried out by people ever since the beginning of history. It is believed that magic evolved due to a growing need to have power over the environment and surroundings, which in the beginning of mankind were quite unfriendly and threatening. There were several aspects of the world which used to bewilder human beings including sky, death, birth, illness, stars, life. Early human beings believed these features to be mysterious but potent forces. Endeavours to comprehend and explain the mysteries of the earth alongside attempts to control them led to the rise of several magical practices, habits and customs in order to control the forces of weather in addition to movement of death, illness, fertility and other apparently unmanageable forces.

As magic evolved over the centuries, it took on numerous forms comprising: shamanistic magic - which primarily entails departing the body and communicating with spirits of other worlds; voodoo - a combination of Christianity, West African religions and local beliefs prevalent in the islands of West Indies during the era of slave trade; witchcraft – sprung up as an amalgamation of numerous folk cultural and religious practices originating from the myths of middle ages; Satanism – involving worshipping the Satan (*Shaitan*).

There are basically three forms of magic – thaumaturgy, sympathetic magic and divination. Thaumaturgy is related to miracles and involves moving beyond the laws of nature and entails activities such as magical cure, curses and blessings. Sympathetic magic is associated with the idea of ‘like for like’; for example, a doll being representative of someone whom the practitioner can harm by harming the doll itself. Divination is another form of magical practice that is associated with looking into the future, by employing tools such as bones, cards, runes, animal intestines, etc. (Drury & Tillett, 1977).

DESCRIPTION

Black Magic primarily entails bringing harm to others. It has strong connections with the Satan. It is made use of, to invite the powers of wickedness and darkness with an endeavour to take control of natural forces by the means of invocations, chants, spells and other techniques. On the other hand, there exists white magic, which is regarded as the opposite of black magic and is considered to be not harmful to others. As far as black magic is concerned, there are believers as well as unbelievers. Black Magic is practised in several conventional cultural as well as religious groups. It prevails in Asian, Arabian, American as well as Mediterranean cultures (Whitcomb, 1999).

Over the years, black magic has been practised in South Asia as well including Pakistan. With reference to Pakistan, black magic is fundamentally practised through tying of knots in connection with the name of the victim and what the practitioner wishes to be done to that person, for instance, making that person fall ill,

manipulating thoughts, etc. However, everything cannot be regarded as black magic. Firstly, it has to be established whether the effect is due to black magic, 'sihr' or witchcraft or nazar 'ein' (evil eye) or 'mas-h' (control of a jinn). Though the cure of nazar 'ein' is a bit different but the cure with regard to 'sihr', spells, 'mas-h' and black magic is quite similar.

In order to find out whether the person has been affected by sihr or blackmagic, the affected person's behaviour is examined with respect to his or her emotions, feelings, moods, dreams as well as attitudes. If it is established that it is the case of black magic, then there are numerous means through which the person could have been victimized. The three fundamental ways through which a person gets affected by black magic are: Firstly, the person might have consumed any food or drink that has been affected by black magic. In this way, either the brain or the stomach gets affected by black magic. Secondly, the victim might have walked or crossed over any garbage or item that had been cursed with the spell of black magic. Thirdly, a black magic spell might have been shed on a piece of cloth or piece of hair belonging to the sufferer. In the case of black magic done on any object belonging to the victim or his or her hair, then that object or piece of hair must be found and subsequently, destroyed. While, black magic occurs through the consumption of food or drink, then a jinn penetrates into the person's body and remains there until it is got rid of. Black magic can have devastating effects on the victim. In Islam, Quran states that Satan (Iblees) imparted the knowledge of black magic to people in order to disrupt the bonds that exist between wife and husband. However, black magic is used for a variety of other purposes (witchcraft, demonic possessions, evil eye).

PREVALENCE IN PAKISTAN

In spite of the fact that majority of the population of Pakistan is Muslim and black magic is sternly forbidden in Islam, several people particularly women tend to engage in this prohibited activity. Due to feelings of jealousy, hatred, greediness and vengeance, many women opt to visit the clinics of *aamils* and pirs

who are considered to possess complete control over this sinful activity.

Rural as well as urban areas of Pakistan are heavily populated with *aamils* who declare themselves as masters in casting as well as removing black magic. Many such *aamils* tend to be fake ones who use this profession just to fool people and make money. On several occasions, fake *aamils* in Pakistan have been involved in sexually abusing women and minors who visit them. The ever-present wall chalking in Karachi and other regions of Pakistan about *aamils* and black magicians signifies the growth of this business (Aslam, 2012).

In Pakistan, it is a general tendency of the females to relate the any bad occurrence or event with black magic, which they believe to be spelled out by any covetous relative or foe. Women in Pakistan are also known for going to the clinics of *aamils* to transmit black magic at their relatives such as sister in laws, mother in laws, wives of brothers and sons, etc. Further, when a girl does not get married for a long period of time, mothers often tend to attribute the delay to black magic, believing that the daughter's marriage is being setback through black magic by an evil relative, neighbour or friend. Such thoughts and traditions not only prevail in rural and uneducated families, but they also have strong existence in urban and educated families. Even though the Holy Quran and the Ahadith strictly forbid people from resorting to such evil malpractices, yet people are increasingly engaging in these wicked practices (Bajwa, 2009).

Despite the claims of magicians that black magic is used to offer services to the people, it is mostly used to inflict damage to others in one way or the other. According to Pakistan Today, almost 70% of the people visiting the clinics of black magicians arrive with an objective to injure their foes and majority of the visitors comprise women. Numerous incidents are reported in Pakistan about killing of new born children, abuses, digging and humiliation of graves, attempts of sexual intercourse with dead women, fierce physical torture inflicted upon men and women who are spell bound, rapes, removing covers from graves and despoliation of sacred holy shrines and scriptures. These

malevolent incidents tend to go unchecked, as there does not exist any particular law with regard to black magic and wicked practices in Pakistan. It is believed that these practices prevail in Pakistan as they have been inherited from the traditional beliefs of the Indian culture.

In addition to revenge spells, black magicians are also involved in casting a variety of spells with rates contingent on the financial standing of the clients. The type of spells that black magicians of Pakistan offer include money spells, protection spell, hex spells, success, gambling and lottery spells, love spells, divorce spells, job spells, etc. As per Pakistan Today, highest price is that of a revenge spell and it varies between Rs.3,000 and Rs.50,000. In fact, the characteristics of the enemy with reference to power and financial status determine the price of the spell. Explicit details of the revenge spells are not available as the black magicians make a pledge with their blood which is quite revered to them. According to a black magician, they make use of the body parts of a dead person or the blood of a living being, besides despoiled holy shrines and scriptures. The black magician also went on to add that black magicians from across the globe especially from the countries of Bangladesh and India assemble in a sacred gathering each year, which takes place in the interior region of the Sindh province. Meeting's location is not disclosed by any of the attendees as disclosure would enrage the demons (Ali, 2012).

Spells of Black Magic

BA Kigar Bangali says that on most occasions, women are their clients. He said that they just obtain money from them and make arrangement of the ingredients and elements themselves since they cannot be obtained by ordinary people. He said that there are five most practised spells of black magic which include Masan, Flying pot, Mirgi fits, SeharKabos and Sehar Al Mahfloj.

According to Bangali, Masan is the most complicated spell to cast. It is a spell that is usually casted on children by making use of ash dust that is left from a burnt Hindu deceased body. The ash dust is put in the food which kids eat. Blood of an owl sitting in dark night on an oak tree is blended in Masan to increase its effectiveness further. He said that availability of Masan in Pakistan

is very limited; hence it is imported and smuggled from India. After consuming Masan, health of children begins to worsen and sooner or later they die. The black magician added that its mostly women who visit them in the quest of revenge against the children of their foes or their husband's children from second wife. With regard to flying pot, he said that it is also a conventional magic tool that is used to take away the lives of the enemies. Apart from several other ingredients, a tiny part of flesh sliced from the vengeance seeking person's body is mixed in the pot. Bangali claimed that he had the ability to fly the pot and he could make the pot fly in a way that it smashed over the victim's head or on the victim's house top. When the flying pot breaks, blood sprays around alongside with flesh. Intolerable disgusting odour promulgates around the house of the victim with the result being victim falling prey to a disease or despair encircles him. He asserted that blood rituals based on sacrifice were necessary to force the spirits of jinns, fairies, demons and other evil entities. He said that the clients do not tend to possess the valour needed to execute such hardcore blood rituals, consequently the magicians act upon them on behalf of clients. Apart from Masan and Flying Pot, the other three commonly used spells by black magicians are: Mirgi, which results in the victim suffering from the lethal disease of epilepsy; Sehar Al Mahfloy, which paralyzes the victim and makes him or her incapable of doing any work; and SeharKabos, which results in the victim feeling drowsy most of the time. In the words of Bangali, these three spells are relatively easier to perform (Ali, 2012).

ANALYSIS

As it has been discussed in earlier parts of the paper, black magic is a very old tradition that cannot be regarded to any specific region, culture, religion, or era. This social evil and wicked form of magic has been practised over the years.

Black Magic, a deplorable evil practice, is adopted by people for a variety of reasons. Some of the factors that contribute towards people practicing this evil have been discussed below:

Revenge Seeking Attitude: A major factor that contributes to people taking up the practice of black magic is revenge seeking

attitude. According to a report by *Daily Times* in which several black magic practitioners were interviewed, many of these people do not perform this dreadful act to pursue money, riches or other forms of wealth. In fact, they are sufferers to similar types of quandaries themselves. Most of them reported that they had fallen prey to analogous tactics in their past. Consequently, not only these individuals divert their path from religion, but out of desperation and determination to seek revenge, they turn towards the grotesque world of black magic. They enter this ugly arena with determination to take vengeance from the people who had inflicted trouble to them. As a result, with revenge seeking attitude and behaviour, these people become black magic practitioners and resort to gratify the forces of dark world

In actual fact, true black magic practitioners do not worry about seeking clients since their practices mostly revolve around their own globe of dilemmas. They engage in inflicting harm to those who had caused problems to them in the past. They make use of very unique type of items such as animal bodies and their remains, stones, blood, scriptures, etc to accomplish their activities. These magicians possess the ability to transfer things from one location to another, whether it is jewellery or money. It is not difficult to comprehend that riches and wealth are quite insignificant for true practitioners of black magic (Aayan, 2011).

Weak Belief: Another major reason that leads people towards Black Magic is their weak belief in religion and the Almighty Allah. When people do not believe in faith and the presence of Allah, then the fear of accountability diminishes in them and consequently, many atheists turn towards black magic and the appeasement of dark forces. Baba Professor Anait Messih, another black magician (popularly known in his circles as the king of evil powers and jinns) interviewed by *Pakistan Today* stated quite clearly that black magicians do not have any association with religion and those who assert being 'Shah' or 'Syed' and claim that they tend to possess unusual powers as a result of their ancestry are counterfeit people. He said these people only befool others by making such type of statements and claims. He was quite candid in saying that he himself had gone through a lot of dirty activities

before being blessed with the powers of black magic including bathing in the urine of cow and even drinking it to attain even higher powers. According to him, a person who indulges in such kinds of filthy acts cannot claim association with any religion. In fact, he stated that magic itself is a completely comprehensive religion. Hence, weak belief in one's religion contributes quite significantly in influencing people to enter the horrible world of black magic.

Lack of Education and Knowledge: Another important reason for people turning towards the evil of black magic is the prevalence of illiteracy in the country both with regard to worldly as well as religious education. Literacy rate of Pakistan has been low over the years and even currently, its a modest 55% with Pakistan ranking 113 among 120 countries around the globe with respect to literacy rate (Imaduddin, 2012). Consequently, lack of education and knowledge of Islam, not only leads people to practise black magic but also results in the widening of the client base for the black magicians. Moreover, illiteracy also results in the growth of fake black magicians, also known as fake *aamils*. Imam Bari, who is a retired Associate Professor of Mass Communication Department, Karachi University stated that the root the cause of the growing number of fake black magicians and fake *aamils* in the country is illiteracy. Lack of worldly and religious knowledge has led to people being influenced by the charm of black magic.

People also have a tendency to resort to quick fix solutions. They tend to follow superstitious beliefs and take the help of black magicians and *aamils* in getting rid of their problems. In Pakistan, there also exists a phenomenon of "herd behaviour" as people, in a blindfolded manner, tend to follow the behaviour of others, instead of solving problems through rational means. Poor literacy rates only add fuel to the fire in case of developing an attitude of ignorance. In that way, instead of thinking and pondering, uneducated and uninformed people tend to place staunch trust on the *aamils*, pursue their instructions with paramount seriousness and consequently fall into the trap of black magic.

Bari also talked about the role that Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) needs to play, stating that PEMRA

is responsible to take instant and stern action against the morning shows on television channels that tend to endorse bogus black magicians and *aamils* (Azhar, 2012).

Evil Intentions: Black Magic is resorted by people to fulfill their evil, wicked and immoral intentions. People who experience strong emotions and feelings often tend to develop evil intentions, which often lead to them to seeking the help of black magicians to get their odious desires fulfilled. Some of the evil intentions include:

Breaking a Marriage: This is believed to be one of the primary reasons for which black magic is employed. People who cannot see a couple happily married tend to take help of black magic in separating them. It is also discussed in the Holy Quran “And from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife...” (*Al-Quran* 2:102).

Jealousy: This is a very compelling emotion that overrides the rationale and thought process of people and results in influencing them to inflict harm to others. People can feel jealous at the success of their relatives, friends, neighbours and their arch rivals. Jealousy can also emerge in those parents who do not have children, against those who have.

Getting Married/Making Someone Fall in Love: This is also an evil intention that forces people to resort to black magicians to get someone to marry them or fall in love with them (Aslam, 2012).

Irresponsible Media: In recent times, a major factor that has contributed to the rise of black magic activities in Pakistan has been the irresponsible attitude of media especially television channels. A number of morning shows on various Pakistani television channels have been promoting black magic by airing morning shows based on the subject of black magic with black magicians and often dubious *aamils* as guests who tend to influence the audiences through their talks and activities on the show. Television channels have been conducting these shows largely to compete with each other and attain higher ratings, but eventually they are promoting *aamils* and black magic in the already fragile and struggling society of Pakistan. Moreover, by linking these activities with Islam every

now and then, these television channels are also portraying a negative image of Islam (Azhar 2012).

SYMPTOMS OF BLACK MAGIC

When individuals are affected by black magic, they experience certain symptoms which are representative of black magic. Symptoms have been listed below but they may also be present due to physical illness.

- Loss of consciousness
- Nightmares and horrible dreams
- Detraction from Religion
- Avoidance of Spouse
- Miscarriage
- Increasing Likeness towards a specific person
- Radical changes in personality and behaviour

There can be various other symptoms as well, however, these tend to be the most common in those who are affected by black magic (Aslam, 2012).

EFFECTS OF BLACK MAGIC

Black Magic can have disastrous effects on the victims. Black magicians possess the ability to break marriages and create permanent separations between husband and wife. According to Baba Professor Anait Messih, evil acts (known as Silfyamal) are very complex to carry out and through them, a sufferer can be made to undergo throat virus, never ending headaches, breathing difficulties, severe pain, eyesight damage, hearing diseases, heart diseases, destruction of foetus in the womb, etc. Baba went on to claim that he possessed expertise with regard to voodoo dolls. He stated that he could make voodoo dolls and then insert pins into them, which resulted in the victims suffering pain in those specific parts. He was quite honest in declaring that it is neither folklore nor myth, but he could fetch needed consequences and results without any intricacy. However, he also said that on occasions, black magicians also have to bear the brunt of their own activities as the

evil spirits demand much bigger sacrifices. In this way, not only do the demons inflict harm to these magicians but also to their family members (Ali, 2012).

Some of the other effects of black magic that victims experience involve animals becoming sick, cattle stop yielding milk, children weaken and die, girls stop getting proposals, making people financially troubled, causing insanity, disgracing a woman in the eyes of her husband (Types of Black Magic).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Black magic, certainly is a social evil and an ugly practice that needs to be curbed down in order to maintain harmony in the society. In Pakistan, black magic is practiced on a large scale. There are various types of practitioners, some who do not perform it for money while others who have made it a profession and earn money out of it. On the other hand, there also exist fake black magicians as well who befool people through black magic. In the case of fake *aamils* or black magicians, they have affected a large chunk of the society, from the literate as well as the illiterate segment (Unholy practice: 'Fake peer' arrested for looting women , 2012). Some of the ways through which black magic can be curbed are discussed below:

Strengthening Belief: As discussed earlier, black magic in Pakistan is usually practised by those people who have lost their faith in religion. The primary thing that is required is renewal of firm faith religion. Once belief in religion can be strengthened by performing the obligations of prayers, and religious rituals (Aslam, 2012).

Improving Media's Role: Media's role is very critical in Pakistan since it is widely followed by the society. Consequently, media today holds significant importance as a vital pillar of the society. In this way, media's role should be to guide the society towards the right path. As mentioned earlier in the paper, irresponsible attitude of the media lately with regard to airing morning shows with strong content of black magic has proved to be quite detrimental for the society as it has directly and indirectly promoted black magic in the country. PEMRA, which is the media

regulatory authority in Pakistan, needs to take this issue seriously and take strong action against the television channels that violate the code of conduct in this regard by airing shows related to black magicians and *aamils*. Censorship needs to be strengthened and penalties should be increased by PEMRA for television channels that organize these shows. Moreover media channels themselves should comprehend the increasing importance of their role in the society. Pakistan, as a nation, is already going through a lot of trouble from various quarters. Terrorism, economic and social injustice has already wounded the country's population quite badly. In such a scenario, increase in the menace of black magic can only worsen the existing problems. Hence, media houses should rather think seriously about these issues and attempt to play a more constructive and positive role, by educating the nation and imparting knowledge to them about how to deal with challenges of life in a more realistic and religious manner (Azhar, 2012).

Improving Literacy: Lack of worldly and Islamic education has been one of the primary factors for the spread of black magic in Pakistan. Fake black magicians and *aamils* have also found increasing number of clients in the society due to the same reason. Government needs to increase spending on the education sector. At the same time, parents should also make efforts to impart education to their children. Improving literacy rate is necessary so that people can differentiate between right and wrong (Education endowment: 'Pakistan's literacy rate needs to improve', 2012).

Change of Attitude: People in Pakistan also need to change their attitude. Revenge seeking attitude and evil intentions need to be curbed down and a more harmonious approach is needed from each and every member of the society if black magic is to be eliminated. Also, the tendency to seek quick fix solutions contributes to the growth of black magic. Again, such a radical change can only come through proper education (Shaffer, 2012).

Legal Action: Currently, there is no law or regulation with respect to black magic in Pakistan, hence magicians cannot be tried in the court and they tend to operate with freedom in different parts of the country. There is an immediate need to take some strict action in this regard and develop some kind of framework to legally

prosecute the deplorable activities of the black magicians (Ali, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

Black Magic has been practiced for numerous centuries in different parts of the world. It is a very old practice that has its roots in South Asia and Pakistan too. There are a variety of spells of black magic with Masan, Flying pot, Mirgi fits, Sehar Kabos and Sehar Al Mahfloj being the most practiced ones. Interviews with black magicians reveal that majority of their clients in Pakistan are women and people visit the clinics of black magicians for a variety of reasons, including inflicting harm to others, getting someone to fall in love, breaking marriages, etc. The primary causes of black magic involve: weak belief in Allah and religion, which leads to people falling prey to Satan and his evil spirits; lack of education about Islamic and worldly knowledge; irresponsible attitude of media which has been promoting black magicians through its morning shows; and finally the evil intentions and revenge seeking attitudes of people. The effects of black magic can be wide ranging from causing pain, inflicting death to breaking relationships. There is a growing need to overcome the grave problem of black magic in Pakistan. The measures that can be adopted in this regard include: strengthening belief in religion; improving literacy rates; improving the role of media; and changing attitudes.

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