In prayer, nothing of people's ordinary speech is allowed. Only Tasbīh, Takbīr, and recitation of the Qur'an are allowed

Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Hakam As-Sulami (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) a man sneezed, so I said: "May Allah have mercy upon you." People looked at me disapprovingly, so I said: "May my mother lose me, why do you stare at me?" They began to strike their thighs with their hands, and when I saw them urging me to be silent I said nothing. When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) finished the prayer – and may my father and mother be sacrificed for him! I have never seen a mentor before him nor after him who gave better instruction than him. By Allah, he neither scolded me, nor beat me, nor insulted me, rather he said: ‘In prayer, nothing of people's ordinary speech is allowed. Only Tasbīh, Takbīr, and recitation of the Qur'an are allowed." Or he said something similar to that. Then I said: "O Messenger of Allah, I have recently abandoned the beliefs of the pre-Islamic era, and Allah has brought Islam to us, and there are men among us who go to diviners." He said: "Do not go to them." I said: "There are men who believe in omens." He said: "That is something which they find in their hearts, but let it not prevent them (from doing whatever they intend to do) (Ibn As-Sabbāh said: let it not prevent you)." I said: "Among us are men who draw lines." He said: "There was a prophet who used to draw lines, so if their lines are as his, then that will be good." He (Mu‘āwiyah) added: "I had a bondmaid who tended sheep for me by the side of Uhud and Al-Jawwāniyyah. One day, I happened to pass that way and found that a wolf had snatched a ewe from her flock. As a normal human being, I got angry and gave her a slap. Then I came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who considered my act of slapping her grievous, so I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, should I emancipate her?' He said: 'Bring her to me.' So I brought her to him, and he said to her: 'Where is Allah?' She said: 'He is in the heaven.' He said: 'Who am I?' She said: 'You are the Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Set her free, for she is a believing woman.'"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Hakam As-Sulami (may Allah be pleased with him) relates what happened when he was praying with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in one of the congregational prayers. He heard a man sneeze and say: "Praise is due to Allah," so he responded immediately by saying: "May Allah have mercy upon you," based on the statement of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): "When anyone of you sneezes, he should say 'Praise be to Allah,' and his brother or companion should say 'May Allah have mercy upon you.'" Mu‘āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) was unaware that responding to the one who sneezes by saying "May Allah have mercy upon you” is

recommended outside the prayer. "People looked at me disapprovingly," i.e. they gave him a critical look without speaking. He did not know the reason for their disapproval, so he said: "May my mother lose me," i.e. I am doomed. "Why do you stare at me?" i.e. what makes you look at me with such anger? "They began to strike their thighs with their hands," i.e. expressing more disapproval. He understood that they wanted him to be silent and stop talking, so he said nothing. He was wondering about the ugliness of what he had done, and their exaggerated disapproval of his action. He wanted to argue with them, but he said nothing out of compliance, because they were more knowledgeable than him. So, he did not act on his anger or ask them about the reason for their disapproval. When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) finished the prayer, he was not harsh with him, nor did he reproach him. Rather, he explained to him the Shariah ruling in a way that made it more likely to be accepted and obeyed. "By Allah, he neither scolded me, nor beat me, nor insulted me", rather he gently explained the Shariah ruling, saying: "In prayer, nothing of people's ordinary speech is allowed. Only Tasbīh, Takbīr, and recitation of the Qur'an are allowed", i.e. it is unlawful for people to converse with one another in prayer, it was permissible in the early days of Islam but was later on abrogated. What is permissible during the prayer is: glorifying Allah, declaring His greatness, and recitation of the Qur'an. He told the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) that he had recently abandoned the pre-Islamic beliefs and reverted to Islam, hence, he was not aware of all the rulings of religion. He then mentioned that some of his companions go to diviners, and ask them about matters of the unseen that will occur in the future. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) forbade him from going to diviners because they speak about matters of the unseen, and some of their predictions may coincide with reality, and this could be misleading. There are many corroborating authentic Hadīths that demonstrate the prohibition of going to diviners, and believing what they say, as well as paying their fees. Muʻāwiyah then mentioned the belief in omens, i.e. feeling pessimistic based on something seen or heard, or based on a certain time or place. The Arabs were known for their belief in evil omens, to the point that if one of them intended to do something good, and then he saw birds fly to the right or left – depending on what was known among them – he would delay what he wanted to do. Also, among them were those who would hear a sound or see a person and take it as an evil omen, or those who would be pessimistic about getting married in the month of Shawwāl, or those who would be pessimistic about Wednesday, or the month of Safar. All of this was invalidated by the divine legislation, due to its negative effect on one's mind, thinking, and attitude. Paying no attention to such things represents reliance on Allah. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) commented on that saying that pessimism is an involuntary feeling, and there is no blame on one in this regard. However, one should not let such pessimism prevent him from managing his affairs, which is something he can control, and one is thus held accountable for. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) forbade them from acting on omens, and letting such belief in evil omens prevent them from managing their affairs. There are authentic Hadīths that collectively demonstrate the prohibition of believing in omens, which here refers to acting upon them, not to what one feels about them without his actions being affected. "I said: 'Among us are men who draw lines'": According to the Arabs, drawing lines meant that a person would bring a diviner and in front of him would be a boy whom he would order to draw several lines on the sand. Then he would order him to erase them two at a time, then he would look at what finally remained of those lines. If an even number remained, then this

would be a proof of happiness and prosperity. If an odd number remained, then this would be a proof of disappointment and hopelessness. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said that there was a Prophet who used to draw lines, like the lines drawn in the sand, and would know about matters through perspicacity by the position of those lines. This prophet was either Idrīs (Enoch) or Danyāl (Daniel) (peace be upon them). So if their lines were as the lines of that Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) that would be permissible. However, there is no way for us to know for certain that it is done in the same manner of that prophet, so it is not permissible. This statement denotes the prohibition of such a practice, because it is not permissible except with certainty that it is the same as that done by that prophet, and we are not certain. One possibility is that this practice was abrogated in our divine legislation. Another possibility is that the permissibility of drawing lines was a sign on the prophet-hood of that prophet, and it has ceased; so we have been prohibited from practicing it. In sum, the Hadīth indicates the unlawfulness of practicing geomancy, not its permissibility. Furthermore, it indicates the invalidity of the manner in which people practice it, because practicing it in the same way as that prophet requires knowledge of it, and knowledge comes through one of the following ways: 1. A clear, authentic text that clarifies the manner of this science. 2. An uninterrupted transmission concerning this matter from the time of that prophet to the time of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Both ways do not exist. It is worth mentioning in this context that prophets do not claim knowledge of the unseen, and they never inform people that they know the unseen. Whatever they informed people of unseen matters was only learnt through revelation from Allah, and they never attributed it to themselves. Allah, the Almighty, says (what means): {The All-Knower of the unseen, and He reveals to none His unseen. Except to a messenger whom He has chosen, and then He makes a band of watching guards to march before him and behind him} [Sūrat al-Jinn: 26-27]. That is because the unseen is part of that knowledge which is exclusive to Allah, and no one claims it for himself except a person who claims to share with Allah some of the characteristics of Lordship. That is exactly what the masters of this craft do. Hence, the fraud of these people appears in their claim that this prophet is their teacher. Mu‘āwiyah then mentioned that he had a bondmaid who tended his sheep in a place close to Mount Uhud. One day he happened to pass that way and found out that a wolf had killed one of the sheep that belonged to him. He became angry and wanted to beat her severely for that, but he only gave her a slap. Then he went to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who considered what he had done grievous. Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Hakam As-Sulami (may Allah be pleased with him) asked if he should emancipate her, and the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered him to bring her to him. When he brought her, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to her: "Where is Allah?" i.e. where is the deity worthy of worship and characterized by traits of perfection? By this question, he wanted to make sure that she believed in the oneness of Allah, so he spoke to her by what would make his purpose understood, as the sign of those who believe in monotheism is their belief that Allah is in the heaven. She replied that Allah is in Heaven, meaning that He is above everything and above His Throne which is the canopy of the creation. He asked her about himself, and she replied that he was the Messenger of Allah. Thereupon, he ordered Mu‘āwiyah to set her free, for being a believing woman. Her replies were a clear proof of her faith and the soundness of her beliefs.

