

Beware of the *Fitnah* of Women

From the Noble Scholar of Islām,
Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn

Prepared for English translation
by Abū al-Ḥasan Mālik Ādam al-Akhḍar

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Verily, all Praises are for Allāh, we praise Him, beseech His Help and seek His Forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of ourselves and the wrongdoing of our actions. Whomsoever Allāh guides, there is no one to misguide him; and whomsoever He has misguided, there is no one to guide him. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped besides Allāh, and I testify that Muḥammad ﷺ is His servant, Messenger, truthful conveyer of His Revelation and His friend. May the Peace and Blessings be upon him, his family and companions.

To proceed:

Allāh says in His Book:

“And fear the *Fitnah* (affliction and trial, etc.) which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but it may afflict all the good and the bad people), and know that Allāh is Severe in punishment.” [*al-Anfāl* 8:25]

The *Fitnah* that Allāh has warned against is the spread of sin and wrongdoing, until neither good is commanded nor evil prohibited, and this, praise be to Allāh, is all but absent from our nation for the most part; however, in certain instances, this can be found. O Muslims! Verily, from the *Fitnah* that some of the people have fallen into, which is not feared for them alone,

¹ This is taken from a transcription of a sermon found on the Shaykh’s official website. Refer to the following link: http://www.ibnothaimeen.com/all/khotab/article_597.shtml

rather, for them as well as others, is the *Fitnah* of the women of which Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "I have not left a *Fitnah* more harmful on the men of my *Ummah* than the women."²

Indeed this is a trial that some of the lowly people have fallen into until becoming totally consumed with [satisfying] their base desires, and being blinded in both their sight and discernment; so their sight has been blotted out leaving them chasing after women in the streets and markets, flirting and whispering, and perhaps even touching; they bump and grope blindly, as if they cannot even see those around them, or as if those around them are animals instead of humans; this is because they are submersed in lusts, heedless of morals, unfearful of Allāh, having no shyness and having little, if any, religion; having no concern for others or the sanctity of the Muslims. O Muslims! O countrymen! O you who believe in Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ! Indeed it is incumbent upon us, as we are a Muslim nation, to reject these actions from these individuals. It is upon us to reject these actions, because they contradict the characteristics of those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day. It is upon us to

² This hadīth is collected by al-Bukharī in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 4808) and Muslim in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 4901) both on the authority of Usāmah ibn Zayd.

In his explication of the "Book of Repentance" from al-Nawawī's *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* (p. 69), al-'Allāmah al-'Uthaymīn says regarding this narration: "And due to this, our adversaries, the adversaries of Islām, rather, the adversaries of Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ from the Jews, Christians, polytheists, Communists and their followers are bent upon trialling the Muslims with women, calling to their beautification and the free mixing of the sexes; inviting to the corruption of morals, calling to this with their pens, tongues and works—and refuge is sought with Allāh—because they are aware that this great trial of the women causes a man to forget his Lord and Religion. Those women who are a trial upon the people of intellect as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ stated, "I have not seen anyone as deficient in intellect and religion as you [women], more able to lead a wise, prudent man astray." Are you in need of anything clearer than this? [They are] able to lead a wise, prudent man astray! So imagine the ignominious one who has no prudence, resolve, religion or manhood. It is much more severe, and refuge is sought with Allāh.

This profound statement of al-'Allāmah al-'Uthaymīn can be seen manifest in what al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in his work *Siyar 'Alām al-Nubalā* (4/214) in the biography of the narrator 'Imrān ibn Ḥiṭṭān: "On the authority of Muḥammad ibn Sirīn: 'He (i.e. 'Imrān) married a woman from the Khārijites. He said, 'I will bring her [to the *Sunnah*]:' Instead, she diverted him to her methodology. And al-Madā'inī said, 'She was a woman of beauty, while he was an unattractive person. So, one day she marveled him saying, 'You and I are in paradise. You were given, and you were thankful. You were tested, and you were patient.'"

There are numerous narrations from the *Salaf* which demonstrate the great fear they held for this *Fitnah*. al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī also mentions in *Siyar 'Alām al-Nubalā* (5/88) in the biography of 'Atā ibn Rabāḥ where 'Atā says, "If you were to place me in charge *Bayt al-Māl*, I would be trustworthy; however, I do not trust myself with a dark-skinned woman.' I say (i.e. al-Dhahabī): He has spoken truthfully. May Allāh bestow his mercy upon him."

al-Dhahabī also mentions in the biography of the leader of the *Tabi'īn*, Sa'īd ibn Musayyib (4/241), who at 84 years of age, blind in one eye and losing sight in the other said: 'I do not fear for myself anything more than my fear of women. The people replied, 'O Abū Muḥammad! Indeed a man like you has no need for women.' He replied, 'The matter is as I have said to you.'"

reject them, for indeed they lead to unlawful sexual intercourse of which Allāh said in a warning:

“And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse.” [*al-Isrā* 17:32]

Verily, we must reject these actions because they are a transgression against our safety and spread fear, terror and disorder. It is upon us to reject them because they are a cause of sin and an awaiting punishment in the Next Life.

Allāh says:

“And when We decide to destroy a town (population), We (first) send a definite order (to obey Allāh and be righteous) to those among them [or We (first) increase in number those of its population] who are given the good things of this life. Then, they transgress therein, and thus the word (of torment) is justified against it (them). Then We destroy it with complete destruction.” [*al-Isrā* 17:16]

Allāh ordered them concerning a decreed matter of which Shaytān has made fair-seeming in their hearts from sinfulness; they fell into wickedness until it justified Allāh completely destroying them, not leaving a structure standing afterward. O Muslims! Listen to the Statement of Allāh concerning the worshippers of *al-Raḥmān* who abstain from that which angers Allāh, and from them, illegal sexual intercourse.

Allāh says:

“And those who invoke not any other ilāh (god) along with Allāh, nor kill such life as Allāh has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment.

The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace;

Except those who repent and believe (in Islāmic Monotheism), and do righteous deeds, for those, Allāh will change their sins into good deeds, and Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [*al-Furqān* 25:70]

O Muslims! Indeed these contemptible behaviors and sinful acts, which have dragged some of the people down, were not present in our society except after [adherence to] the religion weakened, a sense of honor diminished and the causes of *Fitnah* spread. As for weakness in [adherence to] the religion, had those who pursue women, those who are infatuated with them, had any strength in the religion of Allāh, they would not have dared to commit this act and fallen into disobedience of Allah and diverted their hearts from the remembrance of the Creator to the remembrance of the creation. Do you think that these individuals only pursue them (women) when they pass? Nay, they covet them in the hearts, in their homes and in the market. So they have diverted their focus from the Creator to the creation.

Allāh says:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.). That is purer for them. Verily, Allāh is All-Aware of what they do.” [*al-Nūr* 24:30]

Indeed those who are trialled by women, those who pursue them, lack in sense of honor. For if these individuals had a strong sense of honor, they would not have dared to behave in this manner and would not have been a trial upon the women of their brothers [in faith] and countrymen; for indeed, true brotherhood necessitates that they have the same sense of honor with their brothers and fellow citizens' women as they do with their own. So I am asking them, would any of them be pleased with his wife, his daughter, his sister or any of his womenfolk being chased after and flirted with? The answer to this, without doubt, would be in the negative. Thus, if he is not pleased that this takes place with his relatives, then how can he be allow himself to do similar to another person's family? Indeed I warn these infatuated ones that what they are doing to others' families will be visited upon them, or they will be tested with one of their children having this chronic disease.

O Muslims! As for the reasons of the increase in the *Fitnah* with some of the people, its causes are numerous, from them: the audio, television and print media, which have fallen into the hands of the youth from the males and females; magazines and newspapers containing pictures in them that incite the desires, stir the emotions and kindle the fire of passion, as they also contain titillating speech.

And from the causes of this *Fitnah* is what Allāh has blessed our nation with of good health and leisure time as a result of an abundance of wealth, good nutrition, stability and prosperity; therefore, the heart has become empty, the body inactive, and thus, rarely will you

find one of those tempted with this *Fitnah*, i.e. the *Fitnah* of women, except that he is one of two types: either he is an unsuccessful person who has no job to occupy him and connect him to honorable men; therefore, he does not study or work, neither at a private company nor with the government or anywhere else. He has been overtaken by his desires and therefore deemed salt to taste sweet; or he is a person who has a job but fails in his duty, unconcerned with that which will cause his ruin from misfortunes and an evil consequences. As for the honorable, prudent believer, then he would not lower himself to such indignities.

Also, from the causes of this *Fitnah* is what some of the women practice of deviant behavior in their dress and appearance, and other conduct which pulls them into *Fitnah* and distances them from the methodology of *al-Salaf al-Salih* (the pious predecessors). You find some of them going out to the market beautified in the most attractive clothing she has, then covers it with a thin or short or raised over garment to show the beautiful dress she is wearing underneath it; thus, she is clothed yet naked, her dress is the dress of the women of the Hell-fire as our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has stated: “There are two groups of the people of the Hell-fire I did not see: a group of people with whips resembling the tails of cows, beating the people with them and women who are naked despite wearing clothing, drawn to immorality and enticing others to it, their heads like swaying camels’ humps. They will neither enter Paradise nor smell its fragrance, though its fragrance can be found at a great distance.”³

And also from this this *Fitnah* is what some of the women do from going to the market adorning themselves gold and beautiful watches, walking around with their hands uncovered to entice those who see them.

Allāh has said:

“And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment.” [*al-Nūr*: 24:31]

And from the women is one who goes out shopping perfumed, and perhaps even chooses the strongest, sweetest smelling fragrance she has; thus, there in no one she passes except that she entices them. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Any woman who perfumes herself with *Bakhūr* (incense), then do not attend the night prayer with us.”⁴ This with the fact she was

³ This narration is collected by Muslim in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 3950 and 5076) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

⁴ Collected by Muslim in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 667), Abū Dawūd in his *al-Sunan* (no. 3626), al-Nisāi in his *al-Sunan* (no. 5037 and 5167) and Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (no. 8089) all on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

going out to the masjid and merely perfumed herself with *Bakhūr*, still, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ forbade her from attending the prayer. In another hadīth, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said that if a woman perfumes herself and passes by a gathering, then she is like such and such, meaning, a fornicator.⁵

Also from the tribulation is a woman who goes out to the market partly dressed, covering her face with a thin veil, and perhaps it even makes her more appealing and hides faults, or she covers her face with a thick veil; however, she tightens it until the point that her facial features become apparent.

And from the women is one who walks through the market with a swaying strut, joking with her girlfriend, if she is accompanied by a girlfriend, or perhaps, she will stop by a store clerk for a need, or without a need, and engage him in intimate conversation; and perhaps she will request something, 'May I have such and such,' but she does not really desire it; instead, she wants to continue conversing with him. Allāh says to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, the Mothers of the believers, the most honorable of women and the furthest from *Fitnah*:

“O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty (to Allāh), then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery, etc.) should be moved with desire, but speak in an honorable manner.” [*al-Ahzāb* 33:32]

⁵ This narration is collected by al-Tirmidhī in his *al-Jāmi'* (no. 42), Abū Dawūd in his *al-Sunan* (no. 3624), al-Nisāi in his *al-Sunan* (no. 5035) and Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (no. 20632) all on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-'Ash'arī. This narration has been authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī in a number of his works. See his *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḡhīr* (no. 323).

Regarding the statement that she is a fornicator, the scholars have explained that what is intended here is the *minor* fornication which leads to illegal sexual intercourse. The scholar of hadīth al-Mubārakfurī said in the explication of this hadīth: “[This is] because she stirred up the desires of men and caused them to look at her, and whoever looks at her has fornicated with his eye; and due to the fact that she is the cause of the eye's fornication, she is therefore sinful.” [*Tuḥfah al-Aḥwadhī* 8/71]

What he intends here by the “eye's fornication” is what can be found in the authentic hadith of the Prophet ﷺ collected by al-Bukhārī in his *al-Ṣaḡhīḥ* (no. 5895 and 6243) and Muslim in *al-Ṣaḡhīḥ* (no.1474 and 4779) both on the authority of Abū Hurayrah from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: “Allāh has written a portion of fornication on the son of Ādam which he must commit. The fornication of the eyes is the looking. The fornication of the hand is the touching. The fornication of the foot is the walking. The fornication of the lips is the kissing. The fornication of the tongue is the speaking. The heart desires and covets, and the private parts either confirm all of this or deny it.” Ibn 'Abbās said concerning this narration, “I did not see anything more like minor sins than what Abū Hurayrah said that the Prophet ﷺ, said.” [See hadīth number 5895 in the *Ṣaḡhīḥ* of al- Bukhārī].

And from the women is one who enters the shops alone with the clerks, and this is impermissible if *Fitnah* is feared, and there is no doubt that this is a means to *Fitnah*. So the women must fear Allāh, and the guardians of women must fear Allāh, for indeed they are responsible for them.

O Muslims! Indeed we have described the sickness, but is there a cure? Yes, there is a cure. Indeed Allāh has not sent down a sickness except that He sent down the cure; and it is possible that the answer is in knowing ourselves and judging ourselves accordingly, for we, O Muslims, and praise is for Allāh, are a Muslim nation. We worship Allāh in accordance to Islam, with the correct creed, with lofty mannerisms and noble character. Are you not like this? Verily, you worship Allāh in accordance to the religion of Islam, which is the most complete of the religions in creed, worship, morals and mutual relations; therefore, it is upon you to thank Allāh for this blessing before it is taken away from you. It is upon us to beware of the *Fitnah* and move to eradicate it and its causes. It is upon every one from among us to elevate himself above lowly matters and contemptible behavior. It is upon each and everyone us to possess the level of *Imān* that prevents him from violating Allāh's prohibitions. It is upon everyone from among us to have the sense of honor to guard himself and his family from the *Fitnah*.

It is incumbent upon all of us to honor our personal and public duty and to take account of whether or not he has fulfilled his duty in a manner which pleases Allāh and exonerates himself. It is upon each and every one of us to always be mindful Allāh's Statement:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allāh, but do that which they are commanded.” [*al-Tahrīm* 66:6]

It is upon each and every one of us to keep in mind the statement of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ: “All of you are shepherds, and all of you are responsible for your flock. So the Imām is a shepherd, and he responsible for his flock. A man is a shepherd, and he is responsible for his flock. A woman is a shepherd, and she is responsible for her flock. The servant is a shepherd, responsible for his master's wealth.”⁶ So all of you are a shepherd, and all of you are

⁶ This hadīth is collected by al-Bukharī in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 843, 2367, 2370, 2545) and Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 3400) both on the authority of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar.

responsible for your flock. This is what the Prophet ﷺ has said. He has given us a great responsibility, just as our Lord has in His Statement:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire (Hell).” [*al-Tahrīm* 66:6]

O Muslims! Be mindful of this and prepare a correct answer for this responsibility that will save you when standing before Allāh. Verily, this *Ummah* is one, as Allāh has said:

“And verily! This your religion (of Islāmic Monotheism) is one religion, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me.” [*al-Mu'minūn* 23:52]

It is upon each and every one of us that if he sees a woman going outside of the Islāmic character to advise her to the best of his ability, far removed from *Fitnah*, because the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever sees an evil, then let him change it with his hand, and if he is not able, then with his tongue, and if he is not able, then with his heart.”⁷ I ask Allāh in this place to make me and you from the callers of Truth and its helpers, and to make us from those who command good and prohibit evil, and from those who preserve the boundaries set by Allāh.

O Allāh! Establish for this *Ummah* an affair in which the people of obedience are honored and people of sin are abased, in which good is enjoined and evil forbidden. O Allāh! Make us thankful for Your blessing. O Allāh! make us Your sincere worshippers and followers of Your Prophet ﷺ, O Lord of the worlds! All Praises are for Allāh, and the Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his family and all his companions.

⁷ This hadīth is collected by Muslim in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 62) on the authority of Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī