

Warding off Fitnahs¹

Part One

Praise be to Allah the Sovereign, the Holy, and, the Source of Peace, (ﷻ), for His great boons and blessings, and I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah Who is alone without a partner, and I bear witness that our Master and Prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ), is His servant and Messenger; he is an example to believers and master of all creatures. Oh, Allah, send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honours, and Mercy) Peace and Blessings upon your servant and messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), and upon his family and Companions constant peace and blessings that last as long as day and night alternate.

Oh, Muslims!

Fear Allah, Oh servants of Allah, and remember that you stand between His hands (ﷻ): *﴿The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail (88), Except him who brings to Allâh a clean heart [clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifâq (hypocrisy).﴾* [Ash-Shu‘arâ : 88-89]

Oh, Muslims!

Perfect precaution to ward off *Fitnah* (sedition) and vigilance not to follow its path or be exposed to the causes that lead to encountering it are but the customary practice of sagacious people and the road taken by those who fear the Almighty even though unseen. It is also the approach pursued by those servants of Allah prompted by the power of their certitude and the perfect nature of their faith in those texts and Hadiths that came from Allah and His Messenger, (ﷺ), warning against the consequences of this *Fitnah*, indicating how to escape its evils, and guiding the way that should be followed when it occurs.

¹ *Fitnahs* (فتن), plural of *fitnah* (فتنة), is an Arabic word with connotations of sedition, affliction, trial, secession, upheaval, and chaos. It is widely used in Arabic daily language as an adjective which refers to "causing problems between people" or attempting to create a chaotic situation that tests one's faith. The exact translation of this word is often ambiguous for non-Arabic speakers. The word *fitnah* also has several similarities with the idea of *tribulation* in Christian belief.

At the forefront of this is what Allah (ﷻ) said in His warning against it and in His pointing out the general evils that result therein: **﴿And fear the Fitnah [affliction and trial] 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 Allâh is Severe in punishment.﴾** [Al-Anfâl: 25]; and the words of our Prophet (ﷺ): **“There will be Fitnahs (seditions) during which a sitting person will be better than the one standing, and the one standing will be better than the one walking, and the one walking will be better than the one running, and whoever exposes himself to these Fitnahs will be destroyed.”**

The gist of which is that whoever faces these *Fitnahs* in person, will be exposed to their harm.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: **“Whoever found a shelter or haven [to protect himself [in it] let him resort to it.”** [Narrated by the two Sheikhs in their *Saheehs*.]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: **“Rush to perform good deeds now before Fitnahs of pitch-black darkness (appears) wherein a man wakes up as a believer and becomes a disbeliever by nightfall, and another man goes to bed as a believer and wakes up as a disbeliever selling his religion for some worldly commodities.”** [Narrated by Muslim in his *Saheeh*, from the hadiths compiled by Abi Hurairah (رضي الله عنه)]

There is no doubt that knowing the truth about *Fitnah* signals the first stage in warding off its dangers and preserving oneself from getting burnt with its fire.

Fitnah as Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said, is of two kinds: **“The Fitnah of misconception, which is the greater of the two, and the Fitnah of lusts or desires. They may both be found in one person, or an individual may suffer from only one. The Fitnah of misconception results from weak perception or deficient learning especially if combined with a corrupt intention and the subservience to whim; then, we have the major Fitnah and the greatest catastrophe.”**

You can say as much as you want about a person who has deviated from the right path with bad intentions and whose deviation is actuated by whim and not by right guidance and is accompanied by weakness of perception and deficiency of knowledge of what Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) have said. Such a person is one of those about whom Allah has said: **﴿They are but names which you have named – you and your fathers – for which Allâh has sent down no authority. They follow but a guess and that which they themselves desire, whereas there has surely come to them the Guidance from their Lord!﴾** [An-Najm: 23]

Allah (ﷻ) has informed us that following one's whim leads to going astray. He said: *«O Dâwûd (David)! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on the earth; so judge you between men in truth (and justice) and follow not your desire – for it will mislead you from the Path of Allâh. Verily, those who wander astray from the Path of Allâh (shall) have a severe torment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.»* [Sâd: 26]

Fitnah, O servants of Allah, leads to infidelity and hypocrisy. It is the *Fitnah* of the hypocrites and innovators according to the degree of their innovations. There is no salvation from such a *Fitnah* except through following the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ) and deference to his judgment on the minutest points of religion and on religion as a whole, what is apparent in it and what is hidden or ambiguous, its beliefs and actions, and its confirmed tenets and laws.

Thus we can receive from him (ﷺ) the true facts about belief and the laws of Islam, and the attributes, actions and names which he affirms about Allah and those he negates about Him. We also receive from him the obligation to perform prayers, their times and number, the amounts of *Zakat*² (charity) we should pay and their recipients, the obligation to perform ablution, fast Ramadan, and go on pilgrimage to Allah's House in Makkah for those who can, and other canonical laws that pertain to Islam.

Allah did not charge him to be His Messenger about certain matters and not others: he is His Messenger for everything that the nation needs to observe concerning its actions and what it needs to know. Such knowledge and information can be received only from him (ﷺ).

As for the second kind of *Fitnah*, it is the *Fitnah* of lusts or desires. Allah (ﷻ) mentioned the two kinds together when He said: *«Like those before you: they were mightier than you in power, and more abundant in wealth and children. They had enjoyed their portion (awhile), so enjoy your portion (awhile) as those before you enjoyed their portion (awhile)...»* [At-Taubah: 69]. That is, they enjoyed their share of the world and its pleasures [desires]. The word "*Khalaq*" in the verse means the predetermined share

² The Arabic word *Zakat* (زكاة) means both 'purification' and 'growth'. Our possessions are purified by setting aside a proportion for those in need, and, like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth. *Zakat* is the amount of money that every adult, mentally stable, free, and financially able Muslim, male and female, has to pay –after a time span of one lunar year– to support specific categories of people.

[allotted to each one]. Then He said: *«... and you indulged in play and pastime (and in telling lies against Allâh and His Messenger Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as they indulged in play and pastime ...»* [At-Taubah: 69]. This “*Khawdh*” is “wrongful *Khawdh* [discussion, negotiation]” in other words, misconceptions.

In this *Ayah*, Allah (ﷻ) referred to the corruption that may overtake the hearts and religions as a result of enjoying one’s share of pleasures and engaging in falsehood because the corruption of religion occurs either when a person believes in falsehood and endorses it in his conversation or when, in his actions, he departs from true learning.

The origin of every *Fitnah* can be found when personal opinion is given precedence over *Shar’* (canonical Islamic law) and whim over reason. Giving precedence to personal opinion over *Shar’* is the origin of the *Fitnah* of misconception; whereas giving precedence to whim over reason is the origin of the *Fitnah* of lusts or desires. The *Fitnah* of misconception can be repelled by means of certitude, and the *Fitnah* of lusts or desires can be averted through patience.

Therefore, Allah (ﷻ) has made the *imamate* (the leading position) of the Religion contingent upon these two matters. Allah (ﷻ) says: *«And We made from among them (Children of Israel), leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our Ayât (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.)»* [As-Sajdah: 24]. It is a proof that with patience and firm conviction, the *imamate* (the leading position) of the religion is reached, a proof that the *Fitnah* of lusts is repelled with the perfection of mind and patience and a proof that the *Fitnah* of suspicious matters is repelled with perfect insight and firm conviction; that is with the clear proofs and guidance that came from Allah.

Fear Allah, O servants of Allah! And verily beware of following the *Fitnahs* of suspicious matters and lusts. Beware of them!

O Allah! We ask You to guide us to follow Your Religion and hold tight to Your *sharia*! And we ask You to protect us from the misleading *Fitnahs*, O You, Who hears and answers our prayers!

May Allah benefit you and I of His Book's guidance and His Prophet's (ﷺ) *Sunnah*. This is said, I ask Allah, the Almighty, the Exalted to forgive my sins, yours and those of all Muslims; He is truly Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!

Part Two

All praise be to Allah Who has created (everything), and then proportioned it and Who has measured (preordainments for everything even to be blessed or wretched); and then guided (i.e. showed mankind the right as well as the wrong paths, and guided the animals to pasture). I praise Him (ﷻ) and I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens, all that is on the earth, all that is between them and all that is under the soil. I also bear witness that our Master and Prophet, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, is His chosen and beloved Messenger. O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honors, Mercy) and Peace on Your servant and Messenger Muhammad, on his family, his Companions, the *tab'in* (the contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death), and those who were guided by his guidance!

O Servants of Allah!

Opposing the commandment of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ); that is his way, his path, his *Sunnah* and his *Sharia*, is among the most serious reasons for *Fitnah* in religion, as Allah (ﷻ) said: **﴿And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah – legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.﴾** [An-Nur: 63]

What is meant is that those who have opposed the *Sharia* of the Messenger (ﷺ) visibly and invisibly have to guard against and fear that some *Fitnah* may befall them; that is disbelief, hypocrisy or innovation in their hearts or a painful torment be inflicted on them; that is killing, punishment or imprisonment in this worldly life. As the *Hadith* included in the two *Sahihs*, i.e. *Sahih Muslim* and *Sahih Bukhari* (Muslim's Books of authentic hadiths): Abu Huraira (رضي الله عنه) said that: **'I heard Allah's Messenger saying', "My example and the example of the people is that of a man who made a fire, and when it lighted what was around it, moths and other insects started falling into the fire. The man tried (his best) to prevent them, (from falling in the fire) but they overpowered him and rushed into the fire."** *The Prophet added': "Now, similarly, I*

take hold of the knots at your waist (belts) to prevent you from falling into the Fire, but you insist on falling into it."

Fear Allah, O Servants of Allah, and verily beware of opposing the commandment of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ); for the consequence of this is *Fitnah* in this Worldly life, and severe punishment in the Hereafter.

And always remember that Allah has ordered you to ask Him to send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours and Mercy) and Peace upon the last of the prophets and the *Imam* [leader] of those fearing God and Allah's Mercy to the '*al-'alamin* (the worlds). He (ﷺ) says in His Qur'an: **﴿Allâh sends His Salât (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and also His angels (ask Allâh to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your salat on (ask Allâh to bless) him (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islâmîc way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salâmu 'Alaikum).﴾** [Al-Ahzâb: 92]

O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honors, and Mercy) and Peace upon Your servant and Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ)! Be pleased with the four Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali, with the Prophet's family, Companions, the *tab'in*, and those who follow them righteously until the Day of Resurrection! O Allah! Be also pleased with us all, along with them, by Your Pardon, Generosity and Bounty, O You, the Most Generous and Bounteous of all!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! Protect the unity of Your Religion! Destroy the enemies of religion and all tyrants and corrupters! Unite the hearts of Muslims, unify them, guide their leaders and unite their word on the Truth, O You, Lord of *al-'âlamîn* (the Worlds)!

O Allah! Grant victory to Your religion, Your Book, the *Sunnah* of Your Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and Your truly-believing servants!

O Allah! Grant us security in our homelands, make good our leaders and those responsible for our affairs, support with truth our *Imam* and leader, provide him with righteous retinue and guide him to do whatever you love and accept! O You, All-Hearing of our prayers! O Allah! Guide him, his Crown Prince and his brothers to do what is good for Islam and Muslims, for the country and for the people! O You, to whom people shall return on the Day of Resurrection!

O Allah! Make better our belief which is the bond of our lives! Make better our *Dunya* (life in this world) where we live! Make better our Hereafter to which we are returning! Make life an increase of every good and death a relief from every evil!

O Allah! We seek refuge in You against the vanishing of Your blessing, the change in the good health you granted us, the suddenness of Your vengeance, and all kinds of Your wrath! O Allah! We ask You to guide us to do good deeds, forsake reprehensible actions and love the needy! O Allah! We ask You to forgive us and have mercy upon us! O Allah! If You want to send an affliction on a nation, please make us die before your affliction was sent!

O Allah! Make good all our last deeds (just before we die)! Save us from the disgrace of this Worldly life and the punishment of the Hereafter!

O Allah! Cure those of us who are sick. O Allah! Bless the souls of those of us who are dead! O Allah! Fulfill our hopes in accordance with Your pleasure and make our last deeds good ones!

O Allah! Save us from the evil of *Fitnahs*! O Allah! Save us from the evil of *Fitnahs*, those of them which are apparent and those which are concealed, in this country in particular and in all the Muslim countries, O Lord of *al-'ālamîn* (the Worlds)!

O Allah! We leave Your enemies and ours to You (to deal with them) and seek refuge in You from their evils! O Allah! Protect us against Your enemies and ours in any way that pleases You, O Lord of *al-'ālamîn* (the Worlds)! O Allah! Protect us against Your enemies and ours in any way that pleases You, O Lord of *al-'ālamîn* (the Worlds)!

﴿(They say): "Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower."﴾ [Âl 'Imrân: 8]

﴿They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers."﴾ [Al-A'raf: 23]

O Allah! Protect the Muslims in all of their countries! O Allah! Protect them in Syria, in Palestine and in Myanmar! O Allah! Protect them against Your enemies and theirs, O You, Lord of *al-'ālamîn* (the Worlds)! O Allah! Be with them! O Allah, reunite them, have mercy upon their weakness, cure the wounded among them and accept their dead as martyrs, O You, Lord of *al-'ālamîn* (the Worlds)!

﴿... Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 201]

Finally, I pray that Allah's *Salat* (Graces, Honours, and Mercy) and Peace be sent on His Servant and Messenger, our Prophet, Muhammad, on his family and all of his Companions! All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!