

CONDITION OF THE UMMAH

PART 3

TRIBULATIONS ARE BREWING

ARE YOU PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THEM?

October 10th 2001

Islam is the last of the Abrahamic religions which was revealed for all mankind. Everything that we need to know in this life until the Day of Judgment has already been told to us by Allah SWT and His Prophet SAW; nothing has been left out.

We as humans are limited and insignificant beings in this vast universe. Our intellects are a gift from Allah SWT and we can only comprehend what Allah SWT allows us to comprehend. Our knowledge compared to His (SWT) is just a drop in the ocean.

So what is the wiser approach: try to figure things out on our own or go back to the All-Wise and All-Knowing Lord whose knowledge encompasses all things?

Islam stands for peace which one attains through surrendering himself to the will of Allah SWT. Muslim is a title given to the one who has attained peace by surrendering himself to the will of Allah SWT, and spreads this peace at all times. Anytime a situation arises a Muslim is required to investigate what Allah SWT said and what RasulAllah SAW has asked him to do.

Today, we are surrounded by confusion, uncertainty, trials and tribulations in all aspects of our lives. And unfortunately, instead of returning to the owner of knowledge, we occupy ourselves in speculations and meaningless discussions while nothing actually gets done. Companions of the Prophet SAW used to say that we talked less and accomplished a lot and a time will come when people will talk a lot and accomplish little. The companions considered this act as a sign of hypocrisy.

What will we be classified as?

Those who are busy achieving goals do not have time for meaningless talks. For generations Muslims have been wasting their time doing just that while none of their actions have borne any fruits. If they did, this wouldn't be our condition. Neither are we doing anything on our own, nor seeking consultation of learned people who can lead us back to Allah SWT.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

We are living at a time when everything is tainted by doubt, uncertainty and confusion. The Muslim *Ummah* is going through trials and tribulations all over the world. In Arabic this state is referred to as *fitna*.

Fitna originates from the root word *fa ta na* which means refining of gold to remove impurities. It is a process through which Allah SWT brings out the inner realities of people and through which He separates believers from disbelievers and hypocrites.

Allah SWT will test every soul before they leave this world by some sort of *fitna*. Allah SWT tells us in *Surah Anbiya*:

Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned. (Anbiya 21:35)

And We have made some of you [people] as trial for others - will you have patience? And ever is your Lord, Seeing. (Furqan 25:20)

Alif, Lam, Meem. Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars. (Ankabut 29:1—3)

During the time of *fitan* (tribulations), truth and falsehood will be blurred and it will be immensely difficult to distinguish between the two. Only those who are guided by Allah SWT and meant to be saved will be able to differentiate between them and will choose the right path.

In order to get a deeper understanding of this topic we must closely look at the words of Allah SWT and His Prophet SAW. It is imperative that you must read each verse and *hadeeth* carefully and take notes of matters to avoid and things to do during such times. The most troublesome *fitna* is the one that takes people away from guidance of Allah SWT. May Allah SWT have mercy on us and allow us to overcome the tribulations instead of them overcoming us.

FITNA IN THE WORDS OF ALLAH SWT

Warning To The Unbelievers And Hypocrites

In the following verses Allah SWT warns the disbelievers and hypocrites against the *fitna* that they inflict on the believers, saying that they will not be given any mercy and will one day taste fire for their wrongdoings.

[And will be told], "Taste your torment. This is that for which you were impatient." (Adh-Dharyyat 51:14)

Indeed, those who have tortured the believing men and believing women and then have not repented will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire. (Buruaj 85:10)

And they thought there would be no [resulting] punishment, so they became blind and deaf. Then Allah turned to them in forgiveness; then [again] many of them became blind and deaf. And Allah is Seeing of what they do. (Maida 5:71)

And among them is he who says, "Permit me [to remain at home] and do not put me to trial." Unquestionably, into trial they have fallen. And indeed, Hell will encompass the disbelievers. (Tawba 9:49)

These verses carry severe warning against those who generate *fitna*. As Muslims, you and I must be extremely cautious about generating and spreading *fitna* with both our words and our actions. Without guidance, proper knowledge and understanding it is quite easy to fall into the *fitna* when it arrives.

For instance, these days we so easily share what we consider to be 'news' without verifying the information or its source. By doing this, we might unknowingly be part of spreading the *fitna*. This applies to every aspect of our daily life such as family issues, workplace or the society at large. In addition, backbiting, spreading rumors, conspiracy etc. are all ways of spreading *fitna* under the pretext of news.

And if it had not been for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy in this world and the Hereafter, you would have been touched for that [lie] in which you were involved by a great punishment.

When you received it with your tongues and said with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge and thought it was insignificant while it was, in the sight of Allah, tremendous.

And why, when you heard it, did you not say, "It is not for us to speak of this. Exalted are You, [O Allah]; this is a great slander"?

Allah warns you against returning to the likes of this [conduct], ever, if you should be believers.

And Allah makes clear to you the verses, and Allah is Knowing and Wise.

Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you do not know. (An Noor 24: 14—19)

One of the beautiful qualities of a believer is that when he hears something he reflects on it and verifies it before sharing it with others. In verses 15 and 16 of Surah An Noor mentioned above, Allah SWT is giving us the example of a person who hears something and it is as if he has a ball at the tip of his tongue which he then passes on. It indicates towards speedy sharing of the news a person hears without verifying the information first. It is because he forgets or neglects that what he says is an *amanah* (trust) for which he will be questioned about. This is among the quality of the hypocrites and *fasiqoon* (those who deliberately continue to sin).

O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful. (Al Hujurat 49:6)

It is a command from Allah SWT to the believers to investigate any information before they share it or pass judgment on anyone.

Allah Is The One Who Trials Us

Allah SWT confirms that He is the One who trials people...

[We] tried you with a [severe] trial. (Taha 20:40)

Indeed, We have made it a torment for the wrongdoers. (Saffat 37:63)

Everyone Will Be Tested

Allah SWT will test everyone in this world—believers and unbelievers. The dissimilarity between the believers and unbelievers will be transparent. Believers will return all affairs to Allah SWT and will emerge from the *fitna* with a higher spiritual status, whereas the unbelievers will fall into it and will lose both this world and the hereafter.

And fear a trial which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty. (Anfal 8:25)

Most of the Humanity Will Fail

Allah SWT with His ultimate knowledge knows that most of the humanity will be heedless of the real purpose of *fitna* which is examination and will fall into it.

And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to the other direction]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.

He invokes instead of Allah that which neither harms him nor benefits him. That is what is the extreme error. (Hajj 22:11-12)

And when adversity touches man, he calls upon Us; then when We bestow on him a favor from Us, he says, "I have only been given it because of [my] knowledge." Rather, it is a trial, but most of them do not know. (Zumar 39:49)

And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allah," but when one [of them] is harmed for [the cause of] Allah, they consider the trial of the people as [if it were] the punishment of Allah. But if victory comes from your Lord, they say, "Indeed, We were with you." Is not Allah most knowing of what is within the breasts of all creatures? (Ankabut 29:11)

It is from the *sunnah* of Allah SWT to trial people especially the believers. Some trials are in the form of calamities while others are in the form of ease and luxury. The trial in the form of ease, luxury and materialistic life is by far the most challenging *fitna*. Various verses in the Qur'an warn us of the *fitna* of worldly life and of the fact that majority of the people will fall into it. This emphasizes that most people become comfortable with the material life they possess, they enjoy it, and instead of serving humanity with the bounty Allah SWT has given them, they abuse it.

They become so pre-occupied with their materialistic life to the point that they forget the message of Allah SWT. Instead of generously spending the bounty they have been blessed with in His path, they become stingy and selfishly amass it for their personal pleasures. They act like Pharaohs indulging in, and abusing their wealth, and behaving as if they will live forever.

In comparison to the trials of materialistic wealth the trials of diseases, hardships, injustice, and poverty are far easier to bear. It is precisely because over these, one has only to be patient, hopeful, and thankful and wait for Allah SWT to open a way out of their difficulty. Whereas, material wealth makes the person responsible and puts him/her in a position to

make decisions instead of accepting Allah SWT's decisions. Meaning when people have ability to manage their affairs, they become arrogant and think that they are in control.

It is easy to talk about this but when the time comes the only one who will succeed are the believers—those who return all their affairs to Allah SWT and ask Him to give them the quality to persevere and pass the trials.

Note: The sign of overcoming the *fitna* is to view your wealth as a trust and spend it in the cause of Allah SWT; and the sign of failing is to become selfish and waste your wealth on worldly goods while ignoring the cause.

Believers Are Protected By Allah SWT

Allah SWT sends special mercy and blessings on the sincere believers, which allows them to remain firm on the path of guidance even when surrounded by *fitna*. However hypocrites fall into it because of the diseases in their hearts.

[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart. And indeed, the wrongdoers are in extreme dissension. (Hajj 22:53)

The *ayah* makes it clear that those who have diseases in their hearts or their hearts have hardened by being distant from Allah for too long, Allah will make what Shaytaan puts in their hearts a *fitna*. After this instead of turning to Allah, they become diverted from the correct understanding.

Everything is Fitna!

Anything that Allah SWT gives or takes from people is a *fitna* for them. Everything including family, business, health, and wealth has been given to us as a form of trial. Allah SWT wants to see what we will do when He gives and how we will behave when He takes it away.

And know that your properties and your children are but a trial and that Allah has with Him a great reward. (Anfal 8:28)

And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned. (Anbiya 21:35)

And I know not; perhaps it is a trial for you and enjoyment for a time." (Anbiya 21:111)

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." (Al Baqara 2:155-156)

The Worst Kind of Fitna

As mentioned earlier, the worst form of *fitna* is that which leads people away from the revelations and guidance of Allah SWT.

And indeed, they were about to tempt you away from that which We revealed to you in order to [make] you invent about Us something else; and then they would have taken you as a friend. (Isra 17:73)

Allah SWT warns us against trials and tribulations by declaring they are far more severe and dangerous than murder.

and fitna is worse than killing. (Baqara 2:191)

A scholar explained this statement to mean that if a person kills someone, he can still repent and might receive the forgiveness of Allah SWT and enter jannah *InshaAllah*. But if someone is involved in spreading *fitna* or he himself falls into it then his punishment is severe and can cause him to be cursed by Allah SWT.

FITNA AS EXPLAINED BY THE PROPHET (SAW)

RasulAllah SAW came as a guide and leader for humanity. He informed us of everything that we need to know until the Day of Judgment. RasulAllah SAW has given his *ummah* an in-depth understanding of the *fitan* that they will face, along with the means to protect themselves.

Below we will list some of the sayings of the Prophet SAW that point to the *fitan* which will increase as we get closer to the Day of Judgment.

Abu Wa'il narrated from Hudhaifah that 'Umar said: "Which of you remembers what the Messenger of Allah SAW said about the *fitna*?" So Hudhaifah said: "I do." Hudhaifah said: "A man's *fitna* is in his family, his wealth, his children, and his neighbors. It is atoned for by the salah, fasting, charity, and by commanding good and forbidding evil." 'Umar said: "I am not asking you about this. Rather, about the *fitna* that spreads like the waves of the sea." He said: "O Commander of the Believers! Between you and it is a closed door." 'Umar said: "Will it be opened or broken?" He said: "It will be broken." He said: "Then it will never be closed until the Day of Judgment." (At-Tirmidhi *Sahih*)

When we study this hadeeth we find that the door was Umar (RA) himself and his death started the trials which will continue until the Day of Judgment.

Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah SAW stood on the *minbar* and said: "The land of *fitan* is there" and he pointed to the east, meaning: "Where the sun rises from the horn of Shaytaan" or he said: "The horn of the sun." (At-Tirmidhi *Sahih*)

Narrated Asma': The Prophet SAW said, "I will be at my Lake-Fount (Kauthar) waiting for whoever will come to me. Then some people will be taken away from me whereupon I will say, 'My followers!' It will be said, 'You do not know they turned Apostates as renegades (deserted their religion)." or (You do not know how much they deviated from your teachings.) (Bukhari)

Narrated Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: "O Allah bless us in our Sham! O Allah bless us in our Yemen." They said: "And in our Najd" He said: "O Allah bless us in our Sham! O Allah bless us in our Yemen." They said: "And in our Najd" He said: "Earthquakes are there, and tribulations are there." Or he said: "The horn of Shaytaan comes from there." (At-Tirmidhi *Sahih*)

Abdullah Ibn 'Amr narrated: We gathered around the Messenger of Allah and he SAW addressed us, saying, "Every Prophet before me was under obligation to guide his followers to what he knew was good for them and to warn the evil thing which he knew. As for this

Ummah, it will have sound state in its early stage of existence; but the last phase of its existence, will be faced with trials and with things you do not recognize.

There will be tremendous trials, one after the other, and to each the believer will say, 'That is it'. Whenever a trial arrives the believer will say: 'This is going to bring about my destruction.' When this passes, another calamity will approach and he will say: 'This surely is going to be my end.' Whosoever wishes to be removed from the Fire (Hell) and admitted to Jannah should die with faith in Allah and the Last Day; and he should treat others as he wishes to be treated. He who swears allegiance to an Imam, he should give him the pledge in ratification and the sincerity of his heart. He should obey him to the best of his capacity. If another man comes forward as a claimant (when one has already been installed), behead the second." (Muslim)

When we look at this *hadeeth* we discover there is only one message: when *fitna* arises, we need Allah SWT!

We need solid *iman* in Allah because He SWT is the only One who can help us navigate through the confusion when *fitna* occurs.

A scholar said, if you want to identify whether you have passed or failed a trial then look at your inner condition.

- If the situation made you closer to Allah,
- your *iman* increased, and
- your reliance in Allah increased

it means that you have passed the trial and Allah SWT will guide you through the rest.

- If the situation distracted you,
- you became hostile to it, or
- became caught up with it and tried to navigate by yourself

then you have failed.

The word navigate is used here because when the *fitna* actually strikes, it will be like sailing in the sea on a dark night with no means of finding the direction—no light, map, or compass— nothing! The only One who has all the means, light, and guidance is Allah SWT. All in all, it will be impossible to find your way without His support and guidance.

Fitna Of This Ummah

Messenger of Allah SAW said, "Verily, there is a *Fitna* (trial) for every nation and the trial for my nation (or *Ummah*) is wealth."(At- Tirmidhi *Hasan Sahih*).

The Prophet SAW said: This people of mine is one to which mercy is shown. It will have no punishment in the next world, but its punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed. (Abu Dawud *Sahih*)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: "Rush to do good deeds. A *Fitna* will occur that is like a portion of the dark night, morning will come upon a man as a believer, who will be a disbeliever in the evening, and evening will come upon a believer,

who will be a disbeliever in the morning. One of them will sell his religion for goods of the world." (At Tirmidhi *Sahih*)

'Awf bin Malik Al-Ashja'i said: "I came to the Messenger of Allah SAW during the campaign of Tabuk, when he was in a tent made of leather, so I sat in front of the tent. The Messenger of Allah SAW said: 'Enter, O 'Awf.' I said, 'All of me, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'All of you.' Then he said: 'O 'Awf, remember six things (that will occur) before the Hour comes, one of which is my death.' I was very shocked and saddened at that. He said: 'Count that as the first. Then (will come) the conquest of Baitul-Maqdis (Jerusalem); then a disease which will appear among you and cause you and your offspring to die as martyrs and will purify your deeds; then there will be (much) wealth among you, so that if a man were to be given one hundred Dinar he would still be dissatisfied; and there will be tribulation among you that will not leave any Muslim house untouched; then there will be a treaty between you and the Romans, then they will betray you and march against you with eighty banners, under each of which will be twelve thousand (troops).'" (Ibn Majah *Sahih*)

Trials are Mercy for Believers

Allah's Apostle said, "If Allah wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials." (Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: "Trials will not cease afflicting the believing man and the believing woman in their self, children, and wealth, until they meet Allah without having any sin." (At-Tirmidhi *Hasan*)

Warning Against Being Involved In The Fitna

Messenger of Allah SAW said: "Beware of tribulations, for at that time the tongue will be like the blow of a sword." (Ibn Majah)

Meaning your tongue and how you use it can be the cause of massive killing and destruction which is evident today. For example, one decision or one word can cause bloodshed or start a war between people or nations.

The Prophet SAW said, about the *fitna*: "Break your bows during it, cut their strings and stick to the depths of your homes, and be like Adam's son." (At-Tirmidhi *Hasan*)

Jabir reported: I heard Allah's Messenger SAW as saying: The throne of Iblis is upon the ocean and he sends detachments (to different parts) in order to put people to trial and the most important figure in his eyes is one who is most notorious in sowing the seed of dissension. (Muslim)

The message of this *hadeeth* is that during trials and tribulations it is very important to remain united as believers and not take sides with any conflicting parties. We are not allowed to be involved in *fitan* with either our tongues, ears, hands or wealth. Today, a lot of so-called Muslims carry rumors that they share as if it is accurate knowledge and thus ignite *fitna* without knowing it. We should not be involved in any such activities, otherwise we will be sucked in it and not be able to get out. In front of Allah SWT, we will be held responsible for the consequences of our words.

Trials That RasulAllah SAW Prophesied

Some of these trials have already passed while others will continue to occur until the Last Day.

Mu'awiyah (RA) said: "I heard the Prophet SAW say: "There is nothing left of this world except *trials* and *tribulations*."" (Ibn Majah)

The Messenger of Allah SAW said: The time will become short, knowledge will be decreased, civil strife (*fitan*) will appear, niggardliness will be cast into people's heart, and *harj* will be prevalent. He was asked: Messenger of Allah! What is it: He replied: Slaughter, slaughter.) (Abu Dawud *Sahih*)

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (RA) that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: "The Hour will not begin until wealth becomes abundant and tribulations appear, and *Harj* increases." They said: "What is Harj, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Killing, killing, killing," three times. (Ibn Majah *Sahih*)

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (RA) in a Marfu' report (meaning, attributed to the Prophet SAW: "Time will pass quickly, knowledge will decrease, miserliness will be cast into people's hearts, tribulations will appear and there will be much Harj." They said: "O Messenger of Allah, what is Harj?" He said: "Killing." (Ibn Majah *Sahih*)

Note: We can see this hadeeth alive today and the killing it mentions will keep increasing.

Hudhaifa (RA) reported: Allah's Messenger SAW came to us all of a sudden as we were (busy in a discussion). He said: What do you discuss about? They (the Companions) said, "We are discussing about the Last Hour." Thereupon he said: "It will not come until you see ten signs before and (in this connection) he made a mention of the smoke, Dajjal, the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him), the Gog and Magog, and land-slidings in three places, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from the Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly." (Muslim)

Narrated Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman (RA): The people used to ask Allah's Apostle about the good but I used to ask him about the evil lest I should be overtaken by them. So I said, "O Allah's Apostle! We were living in ignorance and in an (extremely) worst atmosphere, then Allah brought to us this good (i.e., Islam); will there be any evil after this good?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Will there be any good after that evil?"

He replied, "Yes, but it will be tainted (not pure.)" I asked, "What will be its taint?" He replied, "(There will be) some people who will guide others not according to my tradition. You will approve of some of their deeds and disapprove of some others."

I asked, "Will there be any evil after that good?"

He replied, "Yes, (there will be) some people calling at the gates of the (Hell) Fire, and whoever will respond to their call, will be thrown by them into the (Hell) Fire."

I said, "O Allah's Apostle! Will you describe them to us?"

He said, "They will be from our own people and will speak our language."

I said, "What do you order me to do if such a state should take place in my life?"

He said, "Stick to the group of Muslims and their Imam (ruler)."

I said, "If there is neither a group of Muslims nor an Imam (ruler)?"

He said, "Then turn away from all those sects even if you were to bite (eat) the roots of a tree till death overtakes you while you are in that state." ... (Bukhari)

Note: It means that the deception from our own people who are on the wrong track will increase and it will be very difficult to perceive the truth. This is the state of Muslims today. It cannot be reiterated enough that we need Allah SWT and the proper guidance. Furthermore, we have to be extremely careful and refrain ourselves from joining or associating with any group that generates any mischief.

Abu Hurayrah (RA) said: The Messenger of Allah SAW said: 'There will be in the end of time charlatan liars coming to you with narrations that you nor your fathers heard, so beware of them lest they misguide you and cause you tribulations'. (Muslim)

WHAT DO ALLAH (SWT) AND HIS PROPHET (SAW) ADVISE US TO DO?

*Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, **so watch them and be patient**. (Qamar 54:27)*

Beseech Allah SWT in the following words:

So they said, "Upon Allah do we rely. Our Lord, make us not [objects of] trial for the wrongdoing people. (Yunus 10:85)

Our Lord, make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (Mumtahina 60:5)

Messenger of Allah SAW said: "Seek refuge with Allah from the punishment of Hell, and seek refuge in Allah from the punishment of the grave. Seek refuge in Allah from the trial of Al-Masihid-Dajjal, and seek refuge in Allah from the trials of life and death." (At Tirmidhi *Sahih*)

The Messenger of Allah SAW said, "The reward of worship performed at a time of trials is equal in reward to an emigration to me." (Muslim)

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri (RA) said: "The Messenger of Allah SAW said: 'Soon the best wealth of a Muslim will be the sheep which follows in the mountain peaks and places where rainfall is to be found, fleeing with his religion from the tribulations.'" (An-Nasai *Sahih*)

Note: In here our beloved Prophet SAW emphasizes that to guard our faith is better for us than anything else; even if we were to lose all material life.

It was narrated from Hudhaifah bin Yaman (RA) that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: "There will be tribulations at the gates of which will be callers (calling people) to Hell. Dying when you are biting onto the stump of a tree will be better for you than following anyone of them." (Ibn Majah *Sahih*)

'Abdullah bin Khabbab (RA) narrated, 'I heard my father say: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah SAW say, "There will be times of *Fitna*, so O slave of Allah be in it the one who is killed and do not be the killer." (Bulugh Al Maram *Sahih*)

Busr bin Sa'eed said: During the *Fitna* (in the time) of 'Uthman bin 'Affan, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas said: "I testify that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: 'There will be a *Fitna* during which the sitting person is better than the standing (person) is better than the walking, and the walking (person) is better than the running.'" He said: "What do you say (I should do) if he entered upon me in my home and extended his hand to kill me? He said: 'Be as Adam's son.'" (At-Tirmidhi *Sahih*)

Note: Meaning do not extend your hand to be the cause of any killing, even if you will be killed.

Abu Darda (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah SAW said: "Whoever commits to memory the first ten Ayat of the Surat Al-Kahf, will be protected from (the trial of) Ad-Dajjal (Antichrist)." (Muslim)

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah SAW said: "(Whoever commits to memory) the last ten Ayat of Surat Al-Kahf, he will be protected from (the trial of) Ad-Dajjal (Antichrist)." (Muslim)

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As: When we were around the Messenger of Allah SAW, he mentioned the period of commotion (*fitna*) saying: When you see the people that their covenants have been impaired, (the fulfilling of) the guarantees becomes rare, and they become thus (intertwining his fingers). I then got up and said: What should I do at that time, may Allah make me ransom for you? He replied: Keep to your house, control your tongue, accept what you approve, abandon what you disapprove, attend to your own affairs, and leave alone the affairs of the generality. (Abu Dawud *Hasan Sahih*)

From all these *ahadeeth*, we can come to the following conclusions:

1. Journey of *iman* and living the life of a *mo'min* will allow us to be guarded, saved and protected by Allah SWT from all these *fitan*.
2. We have to remember Allah in abundance; do good deeds; have short hope; and not live for too long (not to be occupied with the future.) We need to learn to live day by day and try to seize any or all good deeds that can bring us closer to Allah SWT.
3. Leave the majority; hold tight to the honest, truthful people; hold tight to the rope of Allah; do good; and be silent.
4. Never get involved in any of the majority's affairs (meaning materialistic life or prevalent situations in the society.) If we can correct the environment and people around us, we can get involved but if we feel that the environment is affecting us, we have to run away and save our *deen*.

At this moment, metaphorically speaking, we migrate to the mountains. This implies towards leaving everything behind, sacrificing all our wealth, and living alone until the end of our lives; all in order to save our *iman*.

5. Beg Allah SWT wholeheartedly day and night to save us, guard us, rescue us, guide us and protect our *iman*.
6. Be vigilant about our *iman* moment by moment, hour by hour, and day by day.

KINDS OF TRIALS

There are two kinds of trials:

- Trials from Allah SWT;
- Trials caused by our own actions.

1. Trials From Allah SWT

Allah SWT trials people by placing them in situations which can cause their *iman* to fluctuate. These trials could be in the form of good deeds or sins, loss of health or wealth, torture, disgrace, killing or other calamities. As long as we have not caused the situation we are in, we have to believe that it is the will of Allah SWT and there is a wisdom and purpose behind it. At times like this we have to be grateful to Allah SWT and humbly wait for Him to alleviate the situation from us. Allah SWT says:

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided. (Baqara 2:155—157)

Therefore, it is given that we will be trialed in ourselves, what we love and cherish, what we want and desire, our health, wealth, and belongings; sickness, calamities, hardships, fear, and uncertainties of the future are all Allah SWT's ways of testing us.

No matter what the situation is, as long as it is not initiated by us and we have no power or ability to either stop the situation or change it, then it is a trial from Allah to which we must surrender. And the only way to pass it is to seek advice of Allah SWT, His Prophet and the righteous people. We cannot use our *nafs*, intellect, and means as a way to get out of the situation...it will not work. Only two things will save us at this time—*iman* and patience with Allah SWT.

2. Trials Caused By Our Actions

It is highly recommended to stay away from actions that cause *fitna* as being involved in it is a major sin and incurs severe repercussions.

RasulAllah SAW said:

Fitna is asleep; may God curse the one who awakens it." (At-Tirmidhi)

How can people generate trial against themselves?

Aisha RA informed us that RasulAllah SAW advised her never to make *du'a* or seek material benefit without consulting Allah SWT first by performing *istikhara*. Anything dealing with everyday life or future such as marriage, job, new house, new business etc. should be consulted with Allah SWT first since He knows what is best for us.

Istikhara is to beseech Allah SWT to choose what is best for us and guide us to what pleases Him. After the sincere supplications if we find the doors to what we want closed and we see that it is not happening or it is too difficult, then we should stop pursuing it further. We must acknowledge it as a sign from Allah SWT that it is not meant to be and we should be content with the decree of Allah SWT and trust that He knows best.

Take for example a married couple who can't conceive; they go to extreme measures to be able to have a child who in the end might be misguided, ill, disabled, or a source of calamity for his parents. Just look around and see how many people are miserable because of their own children!

Therefore, it is imperative that when we want something materialistic we should always consult Allah SWT. After this consultation if the matter does not become easier then it is a sign that Allah SWT has not intended it for us. If we keep pursuing the matter anyway and achieve what we want, it might generate a problem for us in the future. Thus, we bring *fitna* upon ourselves with our actions. This usually results in a downward spiral where the person becomes discontented after getting what he wants and because of it incurs the wrath of Allah SWT.

Note: These are just a few examples which reinstate the significance of performing *istikhara* for all issues in our lives.

This can be applied in matters of good deeds or actions done for the sake of Allah SWT. If the person performs them his own way or according to his own understanding instead of the way of Allah SWT and His Prophet SAW, they can become *fitna*. It is commonly seen among Islamic groups and scholars who introduce their own ideology and generate new understanding about Islam. This causes division in the *ummah* and gives birth to new groups which fracture the unity of Muslims even further. Even if they all mean well and claim that they are following Allah SWT and His Prophet SAW, they are too far apart—hating, calling names and even killing each other.

Our actions can either cause *fitna* or be a source of goodness and guidance for others. If we want to know whether we are generating *fitna* or not, all we have to do is look at our actions and their outcomes.

We all carry qualities that either generate *fitna* or dispel it.

Qualities That Generate Fitna:

- Stinginess
- Harshness
- Oppression
- Abusive language and attitude

Qualities That Dispel Fitna:

- Mercy
- Generosity
- Kindness

Allah SWT told RasulAllah SAW:

So by mercy from Allah , [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. (Al Imran 3:159)

This message is intended to encourage us to seek Allah SWT's consultation and seek proper knowledge from respectable scholars to always make sure we are on the right track. May Allah SWT allow us to be among those who dispel *fitna* and not generate it. May Allah SWT allow us to be keys of goodness and locks of evil wherever we may be. *Ameen.*

FINAL NOTE

Are we prepared to deal with what is coming our way?

I bear witness to Allah, according to all the knowledge and understanding I have gained in my life; if you read [Book of the End](#) by Ibn Kathir and read my article called "Heedlessness From Meeting Our Lord", you will come to the conclusion that we are in the middle of these trials. One of the signs of these trials is our inability to know that we are surrounded by them.

What does Allah SWT want from us now?

1. Believe in Allah.
2. Not to be occupied with the conditions; don't let them bother us even if they look terrible.
3. Trust in Allah.
4. Have *Tawakkul* (reliance in Allah)
5. Hold tight to the rope of Allah.
6. Beg Allah and surrender wholeheartedly as much as we can.
7. Spend the maximum we can in charity on the poor, needy, orphans, and towards spreading the message of Islam.
8. Be in good righteous company and get closer to the learned people. Make sure we have someone in our life whose *deen* and knowledge we trust. We should take all the affairs of our lives easy—not be too overwhelmed with the matters of this world, make a lot of *du'a* and consult the learned people we trust.
9. Always be in the state of seeking the right knowledge—the knowledge of Allah and His Prophet SAW.
10. Make sure to always check the sources of knowledge, where it is coming from and who the writers are because as we get closer to the Day of Judgment the knowledge will increasingly become corrupted and misleading.

If we are occupied with Allah SWT, He will be there for us in times of need! He will take care of us! Guard us! Guide us! And will allow us to pass the trials!

At this point we will have tranquility, peace, security, and assurance—even if the situation is dark, ugly and becomes a matter of life and death. Our faith will allow us to maneuver in the middle of a storm to safety and peace, both in this *duniya* and *akhirah*.

May Allah SWT rescue us from the *fitna* of *duniya* and *akhirah*, *fitna* of *Al-Masihid-Dajjal* and *fitna* of the grave. *Ameen Ya Rabbal 'Alameen*.