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but they will name it with other than its real name.
Instruments will be played over their heads accompanied by
female singers..."

MUSIC & SINGING

In Light Of The Qur'an & Sunnah

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The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There will
appear people at the end of time who
will make permissible fornication,
silk [for men], drinking wine and
musical instruments. Allāh will
cause the earth to swallow them up."

Music & Singing In Light Of The Qur'ān & Sunnah, & The Early Muslim Scholars

By Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid Alam.

In the name of Allāh, Most Merciful, Bestower of Mercy.

Allāh has honoured the Muslims and given them sufficiency and happiness in the Religion of Islām, so it is sad to see Muslims trying to find joy and entertainment in that which displeases Allāh, the Most High—and from the frivolous amusements that they have turned to are musical songs, and playing instruments. The Islamic texts make clear that music and singing¹ turn people away from the remembrance of Allāh, and away from His worship and obedience. People who download music, and listen to musicians and singers are distant from Allāh and weak in *īmān* (faith) which is usually apparent from their manners, behaviour, dress-code and

¹ There are some exceptions to singing that are allowed for women and girls that will be mentioned later in this article.

general lack of steadfastness upon the true Religion.² Muslims should be taught the Law of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) so that they may refrain from falling into major sins that lead to Allāh’s punishment.

Listening to music is prohibited (*ḥarām*) in Islām according to the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*, the Companions of the Prophet and the verdicts of the well-known jurists.³

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) stated, “**And from mankind is he who purchases *vain speech* to mislead men from the Path of Allāh without knowledge, and he takes the**

² The same can be said about Muslims who watch movies and television shows, many of whom have become addicted—may Allāh guide them to the Straight Path.

³ Muslims should pay no attention to ‘*fatwās*’ that contradict the Revealed Texts and oppose the understanding the Companions, regardless of who issues them.

Path of Allāh as a mockery. For such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hell-fire).”⁴

Vain speech is singing and playing musical instruments as has been explained by a group of the Companions of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and their successors. For example, ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) said: **“It (vain speech) refers to singing.”⁵**

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (died 110H) said, **“The verse was revealed concerning flutes and singing.”⁶**

Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said, **“By Allāh, besides whom there is none worthy of worship! It refers to singing.”** He repeated it three times. And the same was reported from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا).⁷

The Companions understood the meanings of the Qur’ān verses better than those who came after them. It is not permissible for anyone to contradict

⁴ Qur’ān, Luqmān: 6.

⁵ *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī*.

⁶ *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*.

⁷ See *Ighāthat al-Luhfān* of Imām Ibn al-Qayyim.

the Path and understanding of the Ṣaḥābah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) with their own opinions and desires.

Furthermore, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) explicitly warned against music and musical instruments when he said, **“There will appear people at the end of time who will make permissible fornication, silk [for men], drinking wine and musical instruments. Allāh will cause the earth to swallow them up.”**⁸ In this narration, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) placed musical instruments alongside fornication, wearing of silk for men and the consumption of alcoholic drinks. All of these things are *ḥarām* (prohibited) in Islām so this proves that music is also *ḥarām*—this includes musical instruments alongside singing.⁹

He (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said, “Among my *ummah* there will be some people who will consider fornication, the wearing of silk, consuming intoxicants and playing musical instruments to be lawful. From them

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 5590.

⁹ See *al-Jāmi‘ fī Fiqhil-‘Allāmah Ibn Bāz*, p. 1203.

will be some who will stay near the side of a mountain, and in the evening their shepherd will come to them with their sheep and ask them for something, but they will say to him, ‘Return to us tomorrow.’ Allāh will destroy them during the night and will cause the mountain to fall on them—and He will transform the others into monkeys and pigs—and they will remain in that state till the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁰

Ibn al-Qayyim said, “Those who criticised the authenticity of this *ḥadīth* have achieved nothing in aiding their false stance of permitting music, such as Ibn Ḥazm, claiming that this narration has a disconnected chain of narration because Imām Al-Bukhārī did not connect it.” Ibn Ṣalāḥ said, “No attention is to be paid to him in his rejecting this narration. He erred from numerous angles—the narration of Al-Bukhārī is well-known to be authentic

¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 5590.

with a connected chain of narration upon the conditions of the *ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī.”¹¹

Nāfi‘ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said, “Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) heard a flute instrument being played so he put his fingers in his ears and walked away from the path he was on. Then he said to me, ‘Can you still hear anything?’ I said, ‘No.’ So he took his fingers out of his ears, and said, ‘I was with the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) on an occasion and he heard similar to what we have just heard, and he did what I did.’”¹²

Imām Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671H) commented on this *ḥadīth* saying, “Our scholars have said, **‘If this was their response concerning just the sound of this modest instrument, then how much worse is the singing of people in this time and their instruments!’**”¹³

¹¹ See *Ghadhā’ al-Albāb fī Sharḥ Manẓūmah al-Ādāb* of Imām al-Safārīnī.

¹² Abu Dāwūd, no, 4924, graded *ṣaḥīḥ* by Al-Albānī.

¹³ *Al-Jāmi‘ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* of al-Qurṭubī.

Imām Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) explained that the narrations of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) forbidding musical instruments are clear-cut and without ambiguity—except for the simple drum that can be played by women at weddings or on ʿEid accompanied with their singing.

Al-Albānī and Ibn Al-Qayyim (d. 752H) have shown [with clear citations] that the four *Imāms*: Abu Ḥanīfah (d. 150H), Mālik Ibn Anas (d. 179H), Ash-Shāfiʿī (d. 204H) and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241H) were agreed upon the prohibition of music, musical instruments and singing.¹⁴

A group of scholars have cited consensus (*ijmāʿ*) that listening to music and musical instruments is *ḥarām* such as Al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Aṣ-Ṣalāḥ and Ibn Rajab.

Imām Aṭ-Ṭabarī, the great historian and scholar of the Qurʾān said, **“The scholars of the various lands have agreed (*ijmāʿ*) regarding the dislike of singing [and music] and its prohibition.”**

¹⁴ See *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, 1/145 and *Ighāthat al-Luhfān*.

Imām Al-Awzā'ī (d. 157H) said, **“Do not go to a wedding (*walīmah*) where there is singing and music.”**

Imām Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H) said, **“If a wedding (*walīmah*) has singing and music, then the invite is not to be accepted.”**¹⁵

Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728H) stated, “The position of the Imāms of the Four Schools of Jurisprudence is that all musical instruments are *ḥarām*... and it is not narrated from any of the followers of the *Imāms* that they disputed concerning this.”¹⁶

It has been reported from Imām Abu Ḥanīfah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) that he said, “Music and singing are from the major sins that must be abandoned immediately.” Imām al-Safārīnī said, “Abu Ḥanīfah hated music and he counted it among the sins—and that was the view of the scholars of Kūfah: Sufyān, Ḥammād, Ibrāhīm,

¹⁵ *Al-Jāmi'* of al-Qayrawānī.

¹⁶ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*.

Ash-Sha‘bī and others. There was no differing between them in this matter, and we know of no differing between the scholars of Baṣrah either regarding its prohibition.”¹⁷

Al-Awzā‘ī said that ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azīz (d. 101H) wrote to ‘Umar Ibn Al-Walīd, stating at the end of his letter, **“Your openly allowing musical instruments and flutes is an innovation in Islām. I was considering sending someone to cut off your evil forelock of hair!”**¹⁸

It is not hidden from any right-minded person that music distracts a person from innumerable benefits—and when you add to that the associated sins, and punishment from the Lord of creation, then no righteous person would engage in this corrupt activity that earns him the anger of Allāh. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **“People of my ummah will drink wine but they will name it with other than its**

¹⁷ *Ghadhā’ al-Albāb fī Sharḥ Manẓūmah al-Ādāb* of al-Safārīnī.

¹⁸ Al-Nasā’ī, no. 4135, *ṣaḥīḥ*.

real name. Instruments will be played over their heads accompanied by female singers. Allāh will cause the earth to swallow some of them, and others, He will transform into monkeys and pigs.”¹⁹

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said to Shayṭān, “**And deceive them gradually—those whom you can among them—with your voice (i.e., songs and music).**”²⁰

Mujāhid said, “It means: Distract them with idle speech and singing, so that they are made lowly.” Al-Qurṭubī said, “It proves the prohibition of flutes, singing and idle speech—and whatever is from the sounds of the devil, his actions, and whatever he beautifies, it is obligatory to avoid it.”²¹

Ibn al-Qayyim explained in some lines of poetry, “Love of Allāh’s Book and love of music and singing in the heart of a believer, cannot be gathered together.”

¹⁹ Ibn Mājah, no. 1420, see *al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, 1/138.

²⁰ *Al-Isrā*: 64.

²¹ *Tafsīr* of al-Qurṭubī.

Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, “Two sounds are cursed in this world and in the Hereafter: instruments played on the occasion of joy, and bells that are rung during a calamity.”²² The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **“Do not buy or sell singing women, and do not teach them to be singers. There is no good in this business, and the earnings from it are *ḥarām*.”**²³

This prohibition applies to buying, selling and distribution of music-videos, songs, and so on.

Sharing songs that glorify sin, and fornication is from the major sins. Both the film and music industry are built upon immoral behaviour that has led to huge corruption in societies around the world. Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said, **“Verily, those who love that lewdness and immoral sexual behaviour should be propagated among those who believe will have a**

²² *Majma‘ al-Zawā'id* 3/16, graded *ḥasan* by al-Albānī, see *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb* no. 3527.

²³ Al-Tirmidhī no. 3195, graded *ḥasan* by al-Albānī.

painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter.”²⁴

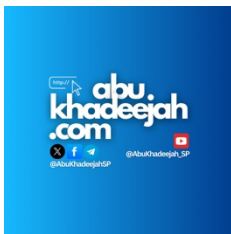
It is upon each person to begin rectification with themselves, their family and those close to them. People are in dire need of beneficial knowledge, rectification and guidance from Allāh.

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To finish I say: All praise is for Allāh, Lord of creation—may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions and his true followers.

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²⁴ *Al-Nūr*: 19.