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A SPECIAL STUDY OF GUIDANCE IN ISLAMIC TEACHINGS FOR MUSLIM YOUTH TO AVOID MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT:

The 21st century's digital landscape, dominated by platforms like TikTok and Instagram, presents significant challenges and spiritual temptations (Fitnah) to Muslim youth. While technology facilitates communication and offers benefits, the negative impacts of social media are seen to outweigh the positive, dangerously affecting the spiritual, psychological, and social well-being of the younger generation and specifically targeting their faith (Iman).

This article asserts that Islam, as a complete and comprehensive code of life provided over 1400 years ago, serves as the essential shield and source of guidance for navigating these modern digital challenges. It explores the ideal attitude of a Mu'min (true believer) in times of Fitnah, emphasizing steadfastness on the Quran and Sunnah, adherence to the methodology of the Companions, creating awareness, and acting with wisdom.

Furthermore, the paper provides core Islamic guidelines for Muslim youth to effectively and responsibly use social media. These guidelines include maintaining consciousness of Allah (Taqwa), ensuring pure intention in digital activities, upholding modesty (Haya), verifying information to combat fake news, utilizing social media for good purpose and Da'wah, and guarding against time wastage and cyberbullying. By adhering to these timeless principles and idealizing the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the righteous predecessors, Muslim youth can transform social media from a source of punishment and temptation into a tool for salvation and positive global engagement, thereby protecting their faith and benefiting the Muslim Ummah.

Keywords: Islam, Social Media, Fitnah, Muslim Youth, Haya

Introduction

The 21st century is the era of technology, advancements, and digital communication. Social media is one of them, we cannot live without it. It has made our lives easier and communication more efficient. These technologies and social media have both positive and negative aspects, but nowadays, the negative aspects are known to be the Fitnah of social media are overweight its positive aspects. The impact of these negative aspects of social media is far worse, it is destroying our youth, the nation's future, their spiritual, physical, psychological, mental, educational, and social life.

The fitnah on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram is directly impacting Muslim youth and targeting their faith. The faith is the foundation of Islam, very precious and important for every Muslim above anything else. However, in the era of digital dependency, it is not wise or nice to leave to social media and technology. We have to find out the ways to navigate social media positively and effectively.

1. Islam: The Shield Against Social Media Fitnah

Islam is a complete and comprehensive code of life. This religion, which came 1400 years ago, provides complete guidance, both traditional and modern. Without Islamic guidance, Muslim youth are very vulnerable to harm and can easily fall victim to any kind of evil, including digital Fitnah. Islam provides us with complete guidance and solutions to navigate life on social media. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram that have become an integral part of Muslim youth can become a source of salvation, and can become a source of punishment, Fitnah, and temptation. And it can affect our life in this world and the hereafter, so we have to navigate social media according to Islam to take every advantage of it while maintaining our religious life and preventing any harm or fitnah.

2. The attitude of Mu'min in Times of Fitnah

Mu'min, the true believer, who practically adores Islam and his/her life, is the true reflection of Islam. "Mu'min is a word of the Arabic language, which means a believer and a faithful Muslim".¹ The Mu'min's attitude towards any action or circumstance is very important as he/she will perceive everything in accordance with Islam.

Therefore, in times of Fitnah, the following is the attitude of a Mu'min.

i. Always steadfast upon His (Allah) book, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and on Deen (Islam).

A Mu'min, the true believer, will always remain steadfast on His book **Al Quran** in any matter, calamity, or fitnah (temptation). Whatever encounter in their life, firstly, they will turn to the holy book to cope with the situation according to the commandments of Allah Almighty.

¹ Bosworth, Clifford Edmund, (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill Publisher, Netherlands, 1993 A.D, vol. 7, p 554

And if they do not find any solution or command about the situation, then they will turn toward the **Messenger of Allah**. They will find the solution and will perform according to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Their priority will be the faith, and they will always be persistent in their Deen.

ii. Adhere to the methodology of the Companions and Righteous predecessors.

In Islam, **companions (Sahaabah)** are "individuals who met the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) or saw him, believed in him and his message, and then died adhering to that belief." They are the ones who stood with the **Prophet Muhammad** in every situation, and they found the companionship of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). So, they will follow the companions and righteous predecessors' advice and methodology in the times of Fitnah.

iii. Create Awareness

Mu'min will create **awareness** among people about the Fitnahs. They will take every necessary step and use all available means to **warn people about Fitnah**, its consequences, and in the end, provide solutions.

iv. Take Actions with Wisdom and Knowledge.

Mu'min is not someone who **shoots an arrow** into the **air blindly**. He is the one who will take action with **wisdom and knowledge**. A believer does not lose his sense in a difficult situation or lose hope, but instead acts with **patience** and **Hikmat** (wisdom).

v. Believer will Emphasize Self-Improvement over Self-Interest. A believer is the one who prefers to reform other people or society over his self-interests. Mu'min will ensure that personal interests or worldly gain do not come in the path of their Deen. They will always prioritize the well-being of the Muslim Ummah.

vi. Caution and Discernment

A Mu'min does not engage in Fitnah, arguments, situations, or activities that lead to Fitnah itself. Believer will work cautiously and make sure not to engage himself in the world of Fitnah. A Mu'min is someone **firm** at the core, demonstrates **gentleness and kindness** in expression, and adheres to the guidance provided by the **Ouran and Sunnah**.

² Muhammad ibn Saleh Aal `Uthaman, "Who Is a Companion?" Islam online, August 11, 2022 A.D, https://islamonline.net/en/who-is-a-companion/

3. Islamic Guidance for Youth About Social Media

Technology will continue to evolve, and in the future, innovations and inventions will emerge in all fields, including social media. With all the new inventions, new challenges will surely come, but no matter what happens in the future or what kind of harmful challenges will come, our religion, Islam, and its guidance will be timeless and till the end, because it is a complete religion and encompasses every aspect of human existence. It is mentioned in the Quran;

﴿ ٱلْيُوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِى وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَـٰكَمَ دِينَ إِا
$$ho^{3}$$

(Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your way.)

The following are the core guidelines for youth while using social media and its platforms.

Be Conscious of Allah Almighty

Remember this rule in your life, no matter what you do, all aware that your Creator, Allah Almighty, is watching you. Whether you are in public or in private, Allah Al Baseer (The All Seeing) is watching you and keeping records of what you do. People know or not, Allah knows all. HE stationed two Angels on either side of every Muslim, known as Raqib and Atid (Kiraman and Katibin), who are keeping record of the good and the bad deeds of every Muslim. It is mentioned in the Quran;

(As the two recording angels [one] sitting to the right, and [the other to] the left note [everything])

(Not a word does a person utter without having a [vigilant] observer ready [to write it down].)

When a person knows that Allah is watching, he/she will ensure not to perform any action that will count as a bad deed or in the sight of Allah their place ruined. So, this consciousness of Allah keeps every Muslim aware that whatever actions they **perform on social media or watch any haram content** in private, Allah is watching and observing all the time.

• Pure Intention

Every action has intention. In Islam, every action of Muslims is valued by their intention. A hadith narrated by Umar bin Al Khattab;

1427A.H AL Saudia.

Al-Maidah 5:3

³ Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara,

⁴ Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H Quaff 50:17

("The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So, whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for.")

Therefore, whatever a person does on social media has some purpose behind it. If the intention is pure, they will receive a good reward, and if the intention is bad, then punishment will be accordingly. So, every Muslim youth should define their purpose before using social media, and clarify their intentions as pure, beneficial, and appropriate, not fame, attention, showing off, or inappropriate purposes.

• Maintain Modesty (Haya)

Modesty is a very important and valuable aspect in Islam. Modesty "Haya carries the meanings of conscientiousness, shame, modesty, bashfulness, and all related feelings that deter a person from behaving indecently." Modesty and faith are interlinked and directly proportional to each other. If one is gone, the other automatically vanishes.

Prophet Muhammad said.

("Al-Haya is from faith, and faith is in Paradise. Obscenity is from rudeness, and rudeness is in the Fire.")

However, enemies of Muslims, including Satan (Devil) and evil people, are targeting our faith by attacking modesty. In this modern era, social media is used as a tool to promote immodesty and vulgarity. Women are at the forefront of this propaganda against Islam on social media. Muslim youth should not engage in immodest behaviors on social media and maintain modesty. It acts as a barrier against evil and sin. Modesty encompasses all aspects of human life, such as in their behavior, dressing, speech, interactions, and actions etc. So, be mindful of modesty in all these aspects while using social media.

• Be Responsible on Social Media

Muslim young individuals should behave responsibly in every matter, as they will be accountable for every action, including on social media as well.

⁵ Al Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail, Imam, Al Jamay Al-Sahih, Dar-us-Salam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1997 A.D (Hadith 01)

⁶ Mohammad, Elshinawy, Sheikh, "Ḥayā': More Than Just Modesty in Islam," Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, August 5, 2021 A.D, p 2, https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/haya-more-than-just-modesty

⁷ AL Tirmidhi, Muhammad Ibn Eisa, Imam, Hafiz, Sunan At-Tirmidhi, Dar-us-Salam Publication, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2007A.D (Hadith 2009)

Every single person on social media should not become the source of someone's sin and evil, especially social media **Influencers**, **TikTokers**, **YouTubers**, and everyone who has a following on social media, ensure that they will not become a cause of someone's misguidance and astray. Use their **fame positively and responsibly**, advising people to engage in good and avoid evil, according to the principles of Islam. **Allah Almighty** mentions in the Quran;

(Let there be a group among you who call [others] to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil; it is they who will be successful.)

Verification

Fake news, hoaxes, and misinformation about religion or other matters are very common on social media, Therefore, the guidance of Islam in these matters is to verify information from valid sources, and not to share anything about which you have no knowledge.

It is mentioned in the **Holy Book**;

(O believers, if an evildoer brings you any news, verify [it] so you do not harm people unknowingly, becoming regretful for what you have done.)

• Keep in Mind: This Duniyah (World) Won't Last.

One of the important realizations this youth needs is that this world is temporary and life will come that will be permanent, which they should work for. All the possessions, wealth, fame, allurements, and benefits of the world, which social media provides with immoral means, are not permanent. Whoever spends their whole life chasing, gaining, and fulfilling worldly desires while overlooking Islamic teaching and values will lose in the Hereafter. The permanent life of the Hereafter is far better than this duniyah and its temporary incentives for the one who did not lose himself in the pleasure of the world and maintained his life according to Islam. Allah says in the **Ouran**;

Ali'Imran 3:104

AL Saudia, 1427A.H

Al-Hujurat 49:6

⁸ Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

⁹ Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara,

(But you [deniers only] prefer the life of this world,) (Even though the Hereafter is far better and more lasting.)

• Use Social Media for a Good Purpose.

We are in the age of **convenience of sin**, because of social media. As it can bring harm with just one click. At the same time, we are in the age of **convenience of virtue**, as social media can bring a lot of good and productivity with just one click. So, it is up to us how we utilize it. Muslim youth should use social media to spread beneficial education, to promote Islamic ethics, values, and good character. Furthermore, use for **Dawah** and the **welfare** of human beings.

It is mentioned in the Quran;

(Invite [all] to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice,)

• Do Not Use Social Media to Hurt Others.

Cyberbullying, trolling, scamming, and harassing are prevalent things on social media. People hurt others easily through **filthy and hateful** comments, posts, and edits. It leads to harmful results such as suicides, depression, and anxiety. A Muslim should not hurt others and maintain their privacy, as that is what they have been taught in Islam. Prophet Muhammad said;

("The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe,")

Allah also warned in the Quran;

﴿يَــاآَأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ۚ لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ ۚ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ ٓ أَنَ يَكُونُوا ۚ خَيْرًاٖ مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءَ عَسَىٰ ٓ أَن يَكُونُوا ۚ خَيْرًاٖ مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءَ عَسَىٰ ٓ أَن يَكُونُوا ۚ بِٱلْأَلْقَــٰبِ ۚ أَ بِيْسَ ٱلۡقُسُوقُ بَعْدً عَسَىٰ ٓ أَن يَكُن خَيْرًٖ مِا مِّنْهُنَ ۚ وَلَا تَلْمَزُونَ ۖ أَنْفُسُوقُ بَعْدً لَعُسُوقُ بَعْدً اللَّهِ عَلَى اللَّهُ مَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى الللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ عَلَمْ عَلَا عَلَ

(O believers! Do not let some [men] ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let [some] women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by

¹⁰Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H Al-A'la 86:16-17

¹¹Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H An-Nahl 16:125

¹² Nasai, Ahmad ibn Shoaib, Abu Rahman, *Al Sunan*, The Book of Faith and its Signs, Chapter: Description of The Believer, (Hadith 4995)

Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H Al-Hujurat 49:11

offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the [true] wrongdoers.)

• Ideal for Youth: Prophet Muhammad and Righteous Predecessors

Today's youth is very inspired by social media **influencers**, **celebrities**, **and idols**. They look up to them in various aspects and try to follow them. They are extremely attached to them and admire these social media influencers. This is the situation of Muslim youth as well. That's why they are extremely astray. However, in Islam, we have a perfect person to be idealized, and that is our beloved **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him). He is the best example, an influencer for Muslim youth; every aspect of his life is a role model for us. Allah mentions in the Quran;

(We have sent you [O Prophet] only as a mercy for the whole world.) Muslim youth should follow the amazing and brilliant characters of the prophets, such as Yusuf, Musa, Yaqub, Ibrahim, Ismael, and Yunus, as well as they should follow the unwavering companions of the Prophet like Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali, Abu Huraira, Saad and Seed etc. The Muslim women should follow and idealize the pure lives of the Royal Women known as Ummahat al-Mu'mineen, such as Hazrat Khadijah, Hazrat Aisha bint Abu Bakr, Hazrat Hafsa, Hazrat Umm Salamah, and the Lady of Heaven Hazrat Fatima. Should learn how these women live their lives with strength, wisdom, and courage, as well as set the perfect example of modesty. They are all true to be called influencers and ideals.

• Guard Yourself and Your Loved Ones from the Fitnah of Social Media.

Muslims not only protect themselves but also protect their loved ones. They should learn about what kinds of Fitnahs are on social media and how they can prevent them. They should teach their families about precautions. Parents and older siblings can play an important role in it and can encourage good and positive use. **Allah stated** in the Quran;

(O believers! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.)

• Do Not Waste Time on Social Media

Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H
Al-Anbya 21:107

Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H At-Tahrim 66:6

Most young Muslim individuals waste their time on social media and useless scrolling. Youth is an important phase of life, and one should spend it for a beneficial purpose. They should engage in productivity instead of scrolling. Islam values the youth and their rectification. The Prophet Muhammad says that;

("Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death.")

Surround Yourself with Good Peers

Muslims should surround themselves with good friends, whether **offline or online**. Because friends and peers influence one's life, so should choose wisely. These days, it is ubiquitous to have peer pressure, especially on social media. It encouraged individuals to adopt certain behaviors or attitudes. **For instance**, sometimes they encourage their friends to have social media accounts, or make them public their accounts, pressure them to perform social trends and challenges with them. So, the people under peer pressure participate in trends and follow them to avoid feeling left out, or you can say **FOMO** (Fear of missing out) makes them do such things. About this, **Prophet Muhammad** said;

("A man is upon the religion of his friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends.")

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