

# MUSIC AND SINGING

IN LIGHT OF THE QUR'ĀN AND SUNNAH

“And from mankind is one who purchases vain speech to mislead men from the Path of Allāh”

(Qur'ān, Luqmān: 6)



# MUSIC AND SINGING IN LIGHT OF THE QUR'ĀN AND SUNNAH

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 listening to music and songs, and playing musical instruments. The Islamic texts state that music and singing<sup>1</sup> turn people away from the remembrance of Allāh, and away from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. People who download tunes 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 their general lack of steadfastness upon the true religion.<sup>2</sup> Muslims should be taught the commandments of Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) so that they may refrain from falling into major sins.

Listening to music is prohibited (ḥarām) in Islām according to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the verdicts of the well-known jurists.<sup>3</sup>

Allāh (ﷻ) stated, **“And from mankind is one who purchases vain speech to mislead men from the Path of Allāh without knowledge, and he takes the Path of Allāh as a joke. For such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hell-fire).”**<sup>4</sup> ‘Vain speech’ is singing and playing musical instruments as has been explained by a group of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their successors. For example, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: **“It refers to singing.”**<sup>5</sup> Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (died 110H) said, “The verse was revealed concerning flutes and singing.”<sup>6</sup> Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) said, **“By Allāh, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship, it refers to singing.”** He repeated it three times. And the same was

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

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 ‘fatwas’ that contradict the Revealed Texts and oppose the understanding of the Companions, regardless of who issues them.

4] Luqmān: 6.

5] Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī.

6] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.

reported from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا).<sup>7</sup> The Companions understood the meanings of the verses of the Qur’ān better than those who came after them. It is not permissible for anyone to contradict the path and understanding of the Ṣaḥābah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) using 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 a 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.”<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> He (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said, “Among my ummah there will be people who will consider fornication, the wearing of silk, drinking intoxicating drinks, and playing musical instruments to be lawful. There 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 some reward. 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.”<sup>10</sup> 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 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 with a connected chain of narration upon the conditions of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī.”<sup>11</sup>

Nāfi‘ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, “Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) heard a flute instrument being played so he put his fingers in his ears and walked away from the path he was upon. Then he said to

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

8] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 5590.

9] See Al-Jāmi‘ fi Fiqh al-‘Allāmah Ibn Bāz, p. 1203.

10] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 5590.

11] Ghadhā‘ al-Albāb fi Sharḥ Manzūmah al-Ādāb of Imām al-Safārīnī.



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.’”<sup>12</sup> 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!’”<sup>13</sup>

Al-Imām Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) 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 ‘Īd accompanied with their singing.

Al-Albānī and Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751H) have shown (with clear citations) that the Four Imams: Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150H), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179H), al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204H) and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241H) were agreed upon the prohibition of music, musical instruments and singing.<sup>14</sup>

A group of scholars have cited consensus (ijmā‘) that listening to music and musical instruments is ḥarām such as al-Qurṭubī, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ and Ibn Rajab. Imām al-Ṭabarī, the great historian and scholar of the Qur’ān said, “**The scholars of the various lands have agreed (ijmā‘) regarding the dislike of singing (and music) and its prohibition.**” 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.”<sup>15</sup> Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728H) stated, “The position of the Imams 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 Imams that they disputed concerning this.”<sup>16</sup> It has been reported from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) that he said, “Music and singing are from the major sins that must be abandoned immediately.” Imām al-Safārīnī said, “Abū Ḥanīfah hated music and he counted

12] Abū Dāwūd, no. 4924, graded ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī.

13] Al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān of al-Qurṭubī.

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

15] Al-Jāmi‘ of al-Qayrawānī.

16] Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā.



## **“Love of Allāh’s Book and love of music and singing in the heart of a believer cannot be gathered together.”**

- Imām Ibn al-Qayyim

it among the sins—and that was the view of the scholars of Kūfah: Sufyān, Ḥammād, Ibrāhīm, al-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.”<sup>17</sup> Al-Awzā‘ī said that ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘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!”**<sup>18</sup>

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 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.”**<sup>19</sup>

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said to Shayṭān, **“And deceive them gradually—those whom you can among them—with your voice (i.e. songs and music).”**<sup>20</sup> 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.”<sup>21</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim explained in some lines of poetry, “Love of Allāh’s Book

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17] Ghadhā‘ al-Albāb fī Sharḥ Manzūmah al-Ādāb of al-Safārīnī.

18] Al-Nasā‘ī, no. 4135, ṣaḥīḥ.

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

20] Al-Isrā: 64.

21] Tafsīr of al-Qurṭubī.

and love of music and singing in the heart of a believer cannot be gathered together.”

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.”<sup>22</sup> 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.”<sup>23</sup> This prohibition applies to buying, selling and distribution of music–videos, songs, and so on.

Sharing these 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said, “Verily, those who love that lewdness and immoral sexual behaviour should be propagated among those who believe will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter.”<sup>24</sup>

It is upon each person to begin rectification within themselves, their families and those close to them. People are in dire need of beneficial knowledge, rectification and guidance from Allāh. Begin today by visiting one of our websites, SalafiSounds.com, and listen to the uploaded sermons, lectures and classes—all from authentic sources.

To finish we 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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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.

24] Al-Nūr: 19.

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