

**THE RULING CONCERNING MUSIC  
ACCORDING TO THE FOUR IMAAMS**  
(rahimahumullaah)

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“And from amongst mankind there are those who purchase idle talk in order to misguide people from the path of Allaah without knowledge, and they take it as mockery. For these ones there shall be a humiliating punishment. And when Our aayaat are recited to such a one, he turns away in pride, as if he has not heard them, as if there were deafness in his ear. So give them news of a painful punishment.” [Soorah Luqmaan 31:6-7]<sup>1</sup>

**INTRODUCTION:**

All praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship besides Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

“O you who believe! Fear Allaah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of **Islaam** (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allaah.” [Soorah Aali-Imraan 3:103]

“O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Hawwaa, Eve), and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allaah though Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allaah is Ever an **All-Watcher over you.**” [Sooratur-Nisaa' 4:1]

<sup>1</sup> The following is a translation of the booklet *Hukmul-Ghinaa' 'indal-A'immatil-Arba'ah* by Shaykh Fawzee al-Atharee.

**“O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allaah and His Messenger, he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and made to enter Paradise).”** [Sooratul-Ahzaab 33:70-71]

To proceed, verily the best speech is the Book of Allaah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). And the worst of affairs are the newly-invented matters, every newly invented matter is an innovation, every innovation is misguidance and all misguidance is in the Fire.

Know that from amongst the affairs that are obligatory upon you to know and to be clear as regards its ruling within Islaam is the issue of musical and stringed instruments and singing. Indeed, the Legislator has clarified its unlawfulness. And it is known from the *Sharee'ah* according to the people of knowledge, such as the four Imaams: Abee Haneefah (d.150H), Maalik (d.179H), ash-Shaafi'ee (d.204H) and Ahmad (d.241H) – *rahimahullaah* – that music is unlawful. It has been clarified from the decisive evidence from the Book and the *Sunnah* that music is unlawful...These are the people of guidance, Religion and truth, the companions of beneficial knowledge and righteous action. Their light is shining, their virtues are generally known, their signs are brilliant, their *madhaahib* are apparent and their evidence is overpowering...

So the Book is their tool and the *Sunnah* is their evidence, they do not incline towards desires, nor are they swayed by opinion. They accept what is related by the Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and they believe in it and are trustworthy. They are preservers and treasure houses of Religion and they are vessels and carriers of knowledge. When there is a difference concerning a *hadeeth*, one must refer back to them. So whatever they have ruled concerning it, then it must be accepted and listened to. They are the trustworthy ones (*udool*) and their path is the Straight Path. And every innovator, feigner of knowledge and blind follower will become exposed through their *madhhab*. And Allaah is the One from Whom aid is sought, the All-Powerful.

They are those who Allaah the Exalted testified to in His Book and the Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) testified to them in his *Sunnah*, and they did not oppose them due to doubts and they obeyed them in their commands. By Allaah, Ibnul-Qaasim – *rahimahullaah* – brought forth a pearl when he clarified the excellence of the four Imaams. So he said, “The four Imaams have virtue, and the same goes for the Imaams other than them. And it is obligatory to love and respect them and to warn against those who possess hatred for them and who wish to harm them. Indeed, they gave victory to the *ayaat* and the authentic reports and narrations, and they presented the concurrent evidence from the intellect and the texts and then they brought these evidences together. So they are the people of excellence over us and they preserved the Religion for us. And the majority of the Muslims depend upon their *madhaahib* for their actions from the early days of Islaam until this day of ours. Rather, knowledge is not realized, except through their books and

the Religion has not been preserved, except through their path. So it is obligatory to love and respect them and to know their status and to have a good view of them. So they are the best of the *Ummah* and the successors of the Messenger (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). And knowing their statements is a cause for being upon the correct path and knowing the truth.”<sup>2</sup>

So this treatise explains the correct *fatwaa* (legal verdict) of the four Imaams – *ridwaanullaahi 'alayhim* – with regards to the ruling concerning musical instruments and singing, as it will serve as a cure to a great problem affecting the modern day Muslim. This is the problem of ignorance concerning the ruling upon music in this confused and changing world.

And I ask Allaah to benefit us with what He has taught us and to continue to teach us that which will benefit us and to make knowledge an evidence in our favour in this world and in the Hereafter. And I ask Allaah not to make knowledge an evidence against us. And may the peace and greetings of Allaah be upon our Prophet, Muhammad and upon his family and all of his Companions.

Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan Fawzee al-Atharee

## **MENTIONING THE EVIDENCE FROM THE NARRATIONS OF THE FOUR IMAAMS CONCERNING THE UNLAWFULNESS OF LISTENING TO MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND SINGING:**

**[1]: The Madhhab of Imaam Aboo Haneefah:** From Abut-Tayyib at-Tabaree who said, “Aboo Haneefah used to hate music and he used to place the one who listened to music along with the sinners.”<sup>3</sup> And he said, “Likewise, this was the *madhhab* of the rest of the people of al-Koofah.”<sup>4</sup>

From Abee Haneefah – *rahimahullaah* – who said, “Music is unlawful (*haraam*) according to all the religions.”<sup>5</sup>

And Ibnul-Qayyim (d.751H) – *rahimahullaah* – said in *Ighaathatul-Lahfaan* (p. 348), “The *madhhab* of Abee Haneefah concerning that was from the harshest of the *madhaahib*, and his statement concerning it is from the harshest of statements. Indeed, his companions clarified that it is unlawful to listen to any musical instruments such as the wood-wind oboe, the hand drum, or striking bars. And they clarified that it is disobedience obligating *fisq* (disobedient sinning) and they would reject him as a witness. The most profound

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<sup>2</sup> Refer *Haashiyatur-Rawdil-Marbi'* (1/19-20).

<sup>3</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 282) of Ibnul-Jawzee and *Ighaathatul-Lahfaan* (p. 347) of Ibnul-Qayyim.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 282) of Ibnul-Jawzee.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to *Roohul-Ma'aanee* (21/67) of al-Aaloosee.

evidence of that is their statement that listening to music is *fisq* (disobedient sinning) and taking pleasure in it is disbelief. These are their words.”

**[2]: The Madhhab of Imaam Maalik Ibn Anas:** From Ishaq Ibn 'Eesaa at-Tabbaa' who said, 'I asked Maalik Ibn Anas about what the people of al-Madeenah from music. So he said, 'Indeed, those who do that are considered *fussaaq* (disobedient sinners) according to us!!!’<sup>6</sup>

I say: this clarifies that permitting music is not from the *madhhab* of Imaam Maalik – *rahimahullaah*. And he strengthened the statement of the Scholars of al-Madeenah.

Said Abut-Tayyib at-Tabaree, “As for Maalik Ibn Anas, then he prohibited music and listening to it...and that is the *madhhab* of the rest of the people of al-Madeenah.”<sup>7</sup>

Said Ibnul-Qaasim, 'I asked Maalik about singing, so he said, 'Allaah the Exalted said,

**“So what is there after the truth except falsehood?”**

So is this the truth?”<sup>8</sup>

From Ibraaheem Ibnul-Mundhir al-Madaneer was asked, 'Do you permit music?' So he said, "Refuge is sought with Allaah! No one does that except that he is a disobedient sinner according to us.”<sup>9</sup>

Said Abut-Tayyib at-Tabaree, “This is also the *madhhab* of the rest of the people of al-Madeenah.”

**[3]: The Madhhab of Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee:** From ash-Shaafi'ee – *rahimahullaah* – who said, "I left something in al-'Iraq called *at-taghbeer*<sup>10</sup> which was invented by the heretics (*zanaadiqah*) to lure the people away from the *Qur'aan*.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> **Saheeh:** Related by al-Khallaal in *al-Amr bil-Ma'roof wan-Nahee 'anil-Munkar* (p. 142) and Ibnul-Jawzee in *Talbees Iblees* (p. 282) by way of 'Abdullaah Ibn Ahmad from his father, from Ishaq. I say: this *isnaad* is *saheeh*, it was authenticated by al-Albaanee in *Tahreemul-Aalaatit-Tarab* (p. 98).

<sup>7</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 272) of Ibnul-Jawzee.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to *Jaami' Ahkaamul-Qur'aan* (14/52) of at-Tabaree.

<sup>9</sup> **Saheeh:** Related by al-Khallaal in *al-Amr bil-Ma'roof wan-Nahee 'anil-Munkar* (p. 142) by way of al-'Abbaas Ibn Muhammad ad-Dawree who said, 'I heard Ibraaheem...' I say: its *isnaad* is *saheeh*.

<sup>10</sup> **at-Taghbeer:** It is poetry denouncing the worldly life that is sung by a singer. Then some of the attendees strike bars once the singing stops. Refer to *Ighaathatul-Lahfaan* (1/351). And according to the language of the *Salaf*, *at-taghbeer* is singing and asking to be listened to. Refer to *Ighaathatul-Lahfaan* (p. 123).

<sup>11</sup> **Saheeh:** Related by Aboo Nu'aym in *al-Hilyah* (9/146), al-Khallaal in *al-Amr bil-Ma'roof wan-Nahee 'anil-Munkar* (p. 151) and Ibnul-Jawzee in *Talbees Iblees* (p. 283) by way of al-Hasan Ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez who said, 'I heard ash-Shaafi'ee saying...' I say: this *isnaad* is *saheeh*.

Said Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) – *rahimahullaah* – in *al-Fatwaa* (11/507), “And what ash-Shaafi’ee mentioned from it being an innovation of the heretics, then this is the speech of an Imaam of who is well acquainted with the foundations of al-Islaam. So no one delights in it, nor calls to it in essence, except one who is to be suspected of heresy.”

Said Ibnul-Jawzee (d.597H) – *rahimahullaah*, “Indeed, the heads of the companions of ash-Shaafi’ee (*radiyallaahu ’anhum*) prohibited listening to music.”<sup>12</sup>

And Abut-Tayyib at-Tabaree – *rahimahullaah* – said, “Music is not permissible, nor is listening to it, nor is it permissible to strike bars. And whosoever attributes this to ash-Shaafi’ee, then he has lied upon him.”<sup>13</sup>

And Ibnul-Jawzee – *rahimahullaah* – said, “So this is the statement of the Scholars of the *Shaafi’iyyah* and the people of Religion from amongst them. It was only the late comers from amongst them who permitted it due to their lack of knowledge and due to them being overcome by their desires.”<sup>14</sup>

Said ash-Shaafi’ee (d.241H) – *rahimahullaah* – in *al-Umm* (6/209), “Indeed, music is *makrooh*<sup>15</sup> amusement resembling falsehood. And whosoever listens to it much, then he is an idiot (*safeeh*) whose testimony is to be rejected.”

Said Abut-Tayyib at-Tabaree, “He declared the one who listens to music an idiot because he calls the people to falsehood and whosoever calls the people to falsehood is an idiotic disobedient sinner.”<sup>16</sup>

Said Ibnul-Qayyim in *Ighaathatul-Lahfaan* (p. 350), “And ash-Shaafi’ee and his elder companions and those who were knowledgeable of his *madhhab* were from the harshest of the people in speaking against music.”

**[4]: The Madhhab of Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal:** From ‘Abdullaah Ibn Ahmad Ibn Hanbal who said, ‘I asked my father about music, so he said, ‘It does not surprise me that music cultivates hypocrisy in the heart.’<sup>17</sup>

From Abul-Haarith who said, ‘I asked Abaa ‘Abdullaah what he thought about *at-taghbeer*<sup>18</sup> and whether or not it melts the hearts, so he said, ‘It is an innovation.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 283).

<sup>13</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 283).

<sup>14</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 283).

<sup>15</sup> His statement ‘*makrooh*’ means that it is unlawful, since this is what it meant amongst the early people.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to *Mas’alatus-Samaa’* (p. 119) of Ibnul-Qayyim.

<sup>17</sup> **Saheeh:** Related by al-Khallaal in *al-Amr bil-Ma’roof wan-Nahee ‘anil-Munkar* (p. 142). I say: this *isnaad* is *saheeh*. And Ibnul-Jawzee mentioned it as well in *Talbees Iblees* (p. 280).

<sup>18</sup> *at-Taghbeer* is a type of singing as has preceded.

Said Ibnul-Jawzee, “So as for the music that is known today, then he (Ahmad Ibn Hanbal) warns against it. How would it be if he had known what the people had invented of additions.”<sup>20</sup>

I say: May Allaah bestow mercy upon Ibnul-Jawzee, how would it be if he had known what the people have innovated into music from additions in this present age!!!

Said Ibnul-Jawzee, “And the *fuqahaa’* (jurists) from our companions – meaning the *Hanaabilah* – do not accept the testimony of the singer and the dancer. And Allaah is the One who grants success.”<sup>21</sup>

Said Ibn Taymiyyah – *rahimahullaah* – in *al-Fatwaa* (11/576), “So the *madhhab* of the four Imaams was that all instruments of musical amusement are unlawful.”

Said Ibnul-Qayyim in *Ighaathatul-Lahfaan* (1/250), “So let it be known that if the hand drum (*daff*), reed flute and singing are combined, then this is unlawful (*haraam*) according to the Imaams of the *madhaahib* and according to the other Scholars of the Muslims.”

Said Ibn Taymiyyah in *Minhaajus-Sunnah* (3/439), “The four Imaams are all agreed upon the unlawfulness (*tahreem*) of music such as the flute and its likes.”

Imaam Naasirud-Deen al-Albaanee (d.1420H) - *rahimahullaah* - said in *Tahreem Aalaatut-Tarab* (p. 105), “Indeed, the Scholars and the jurists – and amongst them are the four Imaams – have all agreed upon the prohibition of musical instruments in following the Prophetic *ahaadeeth* and the *Salafee* narrations.”

So these four Imaams who are from the most outstanding Scholars of the Muslims have ruled that it is unlawful (*haraam*) to listen to musical instruments, stringed instruments and signing. So who can come with more knowledge than these ones, whether he brings an agreement or disagreement. And is there anything after the truth except falsehood? And the last of our calls is that the praise is for Allaah, Lord of the worlds, and may the peace, greetings and blessings of Allaah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and all of his Companions.

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<sup>19</sup> **Saheeh:** Related by al-Khallaal in *al-Amr bil-Ma’roof wan-Nahee ‘anil-Munkar* (p. 151) by way of Muhammad Ibn Abee Haaron Ibn Ja’far that Abal-Haarith related it to him. I say: its *isnaad* is *saheeh*.

<sup>20</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 284).

<sup>21</sup> Refer to *Talbees Iblees* (p. 284).