

## A PRACTICAL ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING MUSLIM YOUTH FROM THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT:

*The contemporary era is marked by intense spiritual challenges (Fitnah), with social media posing a major threat to the faith and spirituality of Muslim youth. This platform not only provides easy access to temptation but also simultaneously propagates various forms of Fitnah, leading youth away from the straight path. To combat this, this article proposes a practical, multi-faceted Islamic framework designed to protect the faith and well-being of the younger generation.*

*The framework is structured around several key pillars rooted in the Quran and Sunnah. It begins with the need to seek Allah's refuge and strengthen faith through foundational acts of worship like prayer (Salah), developing patience, and practicing fasting to build self-control (Taqwa). Essential spiritual disciplines are also highlighted, including protecting the gaze, engaging in remembrances (Adhkar) and seeking forgiveness (Istighfar), and deep pondering (Tadabbur) on the Quran and creation.*

*Complementary to spiritual fortification, the framework includes a section on "Social Media Detox," recommending practical steps such as unfollowing harmful accounts, turning off notifications, and taking social media fasts to break addiction. Furthermore, it stresses cultivating a healthy lifestyle to benefit physical, spiritual, and mental health, and the crucial need to develop self-control by striving for the 'self at peace' (Nafs al-Mutmainnah). Other essential components include getting rid of bad habits and company, nurturing an attitude of gratitude (Shukr), and making a spiritual migration from evil to goodness. Finally, the article emphasizes remembering the consequences and warnings of the Hereafter, maintaining consistency (Istiqamah) in good deeds, and utilizing supplication (Dua) as a powerful tool for divine protection from all Fitnah.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Muslim Youth, Fitnah (or Spiritual Challenges), Islamic Framework, Self-Control (or Taqwa)

### 1. Introduction

We are living in the age of extreme Fitnah, which is targeting our faith, our spirituality, leading to sin, and losing our connection with Allah. The biggest victim is our youth. The temptations destroy our youth, making them useless and away from the straight path. In modern times, the Fitnah of social media is the major Fitnah. Social media not only makes Fitnah easily accessible but also spreads many Fitnah's at once. Therefore, it is important to recognize these Fitnah's and take measures to be saved. We need a practical approach to protect Muslim youth from the fitnah of social media.

The following is the practical framework for the protection of Muslim youth from the Fitnah of social media.

### 2. Seek Allah's refuge and strengthen faith

Without Allah's help and protection, nobody is safe from temptations and harm. It is necessary to seek Allah's protection and refuge from all the evils. Believers should rely on their Creator and turn to Him for refuge. Islam emphasizes seeking Allah's refuge in various situations and problems. It is mentioned in the Quran.

﴿وَأِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

(If you are tempted by Satan, then seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.)

After seeking Allah's refuge, try to strengthen your faith; it will provide protection from evil, sins, temptations, harm, and nobody can manipulate you easily. Believers can strengthen their faith by following Allah's commands and performing the following steps.

- Prayer

Muslim youth should start with the foundation that is Salah (Namaz). It will protect against evil, source of guidance, and spiritual connection, as well as strengthen the faith. Start praying five times a day and track your salah. With obligatory prayer, add optional, night prayer (Tahajjud) and voluntary prayers as well. Allah says in the Quran.

(إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ) <sup>2</sup>

(Indeed, [genuine] prayer should deter [one] from indecency and wickedness.)

- Patience

Today's youth try to have patience during times of chaos, especially on social media. They should not act emotionally and harshly. They should develop patience within self, and it will help them in every matter.

- Fasting

Fasting is not only an act of worship but also benefits our body and soul. It acts as a shield against the desires and temptations, which is very helpful for the one who wants to protect themselves from the temptations and triggers of social media, as it provides self-control by increasing Taqwa (GOD's consciousness). Prophet Muhammad said.

"يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَحْصَىٰ لِلْبَصِيرِ، وَأَحْصَىٰ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ" <sup>3</sup>

("O, young people! Whoever you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty (i.e., his private parts from committing illegal sexual intercourse, etc.), and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power.")

- Protecting gaze (Gadd al Basar)

Protecting gaze is like protecting faith. It is very important, especially on social media, where haram (forbidden) and immodest content is widespread. The constant exposure to harmful content builds up more desires. Therefore, it is important to lower the gaze from the negative content of social media.

- Akhdar (Remembrances) and Istighfar (Seeking forgiveness)

Azkar, meaning remembering Allah and seeking His forgiveness, are powerful tools that protect faith, cleanse the evil, and give strength to face Fitnah's. Every Muslim youth should make a habit of reciting the morning and evening Adhkar and use a social media platform or any app that reminds them to recite, such as Islam360, Islam One, Dua & Askar app, etc. Allah says in the Quran.

<sup>2</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

Al-Anka but 29:45

<sup>3</sup> Al Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail, Imam, Al Jamay Al-Sahih, Dar-us-Salam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1997 A.D  
(Hadith 5066)

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾<sup>4</sup>

(Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort.)

- Ponder

Pondering (Tadabbur) is a spiritual act, and Islam emphasizes it. Muslim youth should reflect on the verses of the Quran, Allah's creation, on their actions and thoughts. This revives their hearts and awakens them. Which will help obey and follow Allah's commands.

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾<sup>5</sup>

([This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you [O Prophet] so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful.)

- Quran and Sunnah

Following the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah is a crucial need of the time, particularly for the youth, because they are away from it; that's why they are in astray and engaged in the fitnah of social media. Therefore, it is necessary for them to read the Quran, its Tafsir (interpretation), so that they can understand it and learn the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and apply them in real life.

### 3. Detox Social Media

- Unfollow

The first step to take while detoxing social media is to unfollow all the accounts of social media platforms that are engaged in Fitnah. Unfollow the vulgar, immoral, and immodest content creators, influencers, and TikTokers.

- Turn off notifications

Turn off the notifications of unnecessary apps as well as while sleeping, praying, or in a family gathering, and doing something important. It will help reduce time spent on social media and cut down the repetitive checking of social media platforms. And it will also boost the ability to concentrate and better your attention span.

- Uninstall

Uninstall the application that makes you addicted, as well as engages you in Fitnah. Uninstall them immediately and work on your faith, reflect, revive your heart, and try to gain control of the time you spend on idle scrolling.

- Social media fast

The excessive use of social media is not good, whether you are using it for good. Breaks and rest are important on social media; they help you not be addicted to something. Therefore, make a schedule and select a day on which you will not use your phone or social media platform except for emergencies, and make sure that your contacts know that you are on digital break and do not contact you unnecessarily.

- Downtimes

<sup>4</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

Al-Rad 13:28

<sup>5</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

Sad 38:29

Downtimes mean specific times when your social media or mobile device is out of reach. Set limits when you are not using your phone, such as a maximum of 2 hours before bedtime and 2 hours after sleep. Do not use while eating, studying, in the mosque, during family time, or at social events.

#### 4. Engage in a healthy lifestyle

Muslim youth should cultivate a healthy lifestyle. They should spend their days with purpose. Start the day with Salah (prayer), engage in a workout, maintain a clean diet, prepare a schedule for the day, and sleep on time. Try to do tasks promptly, pray all five prayers, enhance self-discipline, and spend your spare time on healthy activities like reading, learning Islamic knowledge, sports, and hobbies instead of spending it on social media. A healthy lifestyle will benefit physical, spiritual, and mental health, which is disturbed by the negative use of social media. Prophet **Muhammad** told us.

"يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ أَلَمْ أُخْبِرْ أَنَّكَ تَصُومُ النَّهَارَ وَتَقُومُ اللَّيْلَ" قُلْتُ بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ " لَا تَفْعَلْ، صُمْ وَأَفْطِرْ، وَقُمْ وَنَمْ، فَإِنَّ لَجَسَدِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا،"<sup>6</sup>

("O `Abdullah! Have I not been formed that you fast all the day and stand in prayer all night?" I said, "Yes, O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)!" He said, "Do not do that! Observe the fast sometimes and also leave them (the fast) at other times; stand up for the prayer at night and also sleep at night. Your body has a right over you.")

#### 5. Develop self-control

Today's youth need to develop self-control. There are three selves mentioned in the Quran; the first one is Nafis al Ammara (lower self) 12:53, the second is Nafis al Lawwama (self-incriminating) 75:2, and the third is Nafis al Mutmainnah (self at peace). The first one, Nafis al Ammara, is the self that commands towards evil; it is a self that follows desires, pleasures, and gratification, completely inclined towards sins. It is mentioned in the Holy Book.

(إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ)<sup>7</sup>

(For indeed the soul is ever inclined to evil,)

By analyzing the situation of social media, most of the youth are inclined towards evil, fulfilling their desires, which means they are following the Nafis al Ammara (lower self) and engulfed in the fitnah of social media. They are following their desires instead of following the ways and commands of Allah. The self that follows the command of Allah Almighty and His path is called Naf al Mutmainnah (self at peace). It is mentioned in the Book of Allah.

(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ، ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً)<sup>8</sup>

([ Allah will say to the righteous, "[O tranquil soul! ]

( Return to your Lord, well pleased] with Him]and well pleasing [to Him])

<sup>6</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk Fahad, Al Tabaha al Musaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

(Hadith 5199)

<sup>7</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

Yusuf 12:53

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

Al-Fajar 89:27-28

This self is disciplined, trained, and controlled in such a way that it feels happy with what Allah pleases. This self-controls desires, temptations, and resists evil just for the sake of their Creator, Allah Almighty. Therefore, every Muslim youth should build the Nefs al Mutmainnah by controlling desires and following Allah's commandments.

## 6. Get rid of bad habits and bad company

Good peers and good habits matter in the life of a person, which is necessary for a reserved life. There are many bad habits of Muslim youth related to social media, such as wasting hours on useless scrolling, watching haram content, neglecting their Deen, showing off, hating, and hurting, which affect them and also their relationship with Allah. Likewise, there is bad company which encourages you to be part of social media and its Fitnah, as well as helps you to make sin convenient. Therefore, Muslims should leave those bad habits and friends and replace them with good habits and righteous company.

## 7. Gratitude

Every Muslim youth should build an attitude of gratitude (Sukr). Be thankful to Allah with whatever you have. Muslim youth should not feel inferior by seeing other people's wealth, possessions, perfect lifestyle, and relationships on social media.

Life on social media is mostly fake and shows only the perfect side of it, which is the opposite of reality. So, the mindset of the youth should not be so weak that they are easily seduced by the glamour of social media and its fictional lifestyle. They must have an attitude of humility and gratitude to live their life peacefully. A mercy to the universe, beloved Prophet Muhammad gave us the best solution for this. He said.

"إِذَا نَظَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى مَنْ فَضَّلَ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالْخَلْقِ، فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْهُ"<sup>9</sup>

("If anyone of you looked at a person who was made superior to him in property and (in good) appearance, then he should also look at the one who is inferior to him.")

## 8. Migration from evil to goodness

In today's digital world, committing sin is easier, but distancing and protecting oneself from it is very difficult. Nowadays, the Ummah needs the youth and their contribution to the prosperity of the Islamic world. The Ummah needs modest and pious young individuals. Social media is everywhere, in every city, every country, wherever you go, you can have the facility of the internet, which means the facility of singing. Therefore, youth need a permanent solution to keep their faith safe wherever they are; for this, they need spiritual migration. They need to change the environment that triggers Fitnah. They should migrate from evil to goodness, migration towards Allah and His Prophet, the migration of abandoning sin and embracing righteousness. Prophet Muhammad said.

"الْعِبَادَةُ فِي الْهَرْجِ كَهَجْرَةِ إِلَيَّ"<sup>10</sup>

("Worshipping during the period of widespread turmoil is like emigration towards me.")

This journey towards goodness must be difficult, and one has to bear the pain of suffering, desires, and Satan will make this path difficult, but Allah Almighty is with His servants.

<sup>9</sup> Al Qur'an, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

(Hadith 6490)

<sup>10</sup> AL Qushairi, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, An Naisaburi, *AL Jami Al Sahih*, Dar-us-Salam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1998 A.D

(Hadith 2948)

It is a hadith Qudsi (sacred hadith)

"وَإِنْ أَنَا يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً"<sup>11</sup>

(“And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him.”)

## 9. Remember the consequences and warnings

As we are here in this duniyah (world) for a test, and the real life will start after death. Every Muslim knows that a time will come when they will be accountable for their actions. The result of good deeds will be in the form of Jannah, and bad deeds will lead to Hellfire. Muslim youth should be conscious of the life in the hereafter, which will be permanent. They must remember the consequences and warnings that are given to them; this will make them think before any action they perform, either on social media or in daily life. For practical write down the sins and their consequences, read the warnings of the Quran and hadiths. Keep in mind the death before any action. Prophet Muhammad told us;

"يُبْعَثُ كُلُّ عَبْدٍ عَلَى مَا مَاتَ عَلَيْهِ"<sup>12</sup>

(“Every servant would be raised (in the same very state) in which he dies.”)

## 10. Consistency

Consistency (Istiqamah) is the key to success. Muslim youth should be consistent on the points mentioned above, then this consistency will protect them from all the Fitnah's, including the Fitnah of social media. Consistence in good deeds will increase their faith. Begin with small righteous steps, and being consistent with them will be very helpful to build self-discipline. Knowledge will be beneficial with action and perseverance. Islam also teaches believers to be consistent in good deeds. Allah's Apostle said that.

"سَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا، وَاعْلَمُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُدْخِلَ أَحَدَكُمْ عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ، وَأَنْ أَحَبَّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَدْوَمُهَا إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَإِنْ قَلَّ"<sup>13</sup>

(“Do good deeds properly, sincerely, and moderately, and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant, even if it were little.”)

## 11. Dua (Supplication)

The last but not the least practical step is to seek help from Allah Almighty with dua for protection from Fitnah's. Dua is a powerful tool in any problem, need, or difficulty, and sometimes solutions do not work, but dua does. It is a way to connect with your Lord (Allah), so every Muslim should ack Allah for everything. Allah Almighty mentions in the Quran;

{وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ} <sup>13</sup>

(Your Lord has proclaimed, “Call upon Me, I will respond to you.)

<sup>11</sup> AL Qushairi, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, An Naisaburi, *AL Jami Al Sahih*, Dar-us-Salam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1998 A.D

(Hadith 2675)

<sup>12</sup> AL Qushairi, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, An Naisaburi, *AL Jami Al Sahih*, Dar-us-Salam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1998 A.D

(Hadith 2878)

<sup>13</sup> **Al Qur'an**, Majma al mulk fahad, Al Taba'a al Mushaf al sharif, Al Madina al Munawara, AL Saudia, 1427A.H

Ghaffir 40:60

We have taught many duas in the Quran and hadiths for different situations and problems. There are many supplications for protection from the Fitnah's, and one of the comprehensive du'a' is mentioned in a hadith. **Prophet** (SAW) taught us this dua;

"تَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الْفِتْنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ" <sup>14</sup>

("Seek refuge with Allah from turmoil, its visible and invisible [aspects]")

Beloved Prophet Muhammad taught us this as well,

"إِذَا تَشَهَّدَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ أَرْبَعٍ يَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ وَمِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ" <sup>15</sup>

("When any one of you utters tashahhud (in prayer), he must seek refuge with Allah from four (trials) and should thus say:" O Allah! I seek refuge with Thee from the torment of Hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trial of life and death, and

from the evil of the trial of Masih al-Dajjal" [Antichrist].")

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<sup>14</sup> AL Qushairi, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, An Naisaburi, *AL Jami Al Sahih*, Dar-us-Salam Publications, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1998 A.D  
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