

The Detrimental Effects of

Lustful Glances

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The Detrimental Effects of Lustful Glances Translated & Published by: At-Tazkiyah

1st Edition: Jumādal-Ūlā 1446 / November 2024

This booklet is a translation of an Urdu lecture 'Bad Nazarī Ke Muhlik Atharāt' delivered by Shaykhul-Hadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat ṣāḥib dāmat barakātuhum in June 2009 at Islāmic Da'wah Academy.

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Available from:

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بُلِينُّا إِخْ الْمُنْ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِللهِ وَكَفَى وَالصَّلُوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الرُّسُلِ وَخَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ الْأَصْفِيَاءِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْأَتْقِيَاءِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ النَّظْرَةَ سَهْمٌ مِنْ سِهَام إِبْلِيْسَ مَسْمُوْمٌ، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. أَ

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِيْ صَدْرِيْ وَيَسِّرْ لِيْ أَمْرِيْ وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِيْ يَفْقَهُوْا قَوْلِيْ، سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ. اَللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَنَكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ. اَللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَمَلْقُوا صَلُّوا وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا، إِنَّ اللَّهُ وَمَلَآثِكَتُهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ، يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ أَمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيْمًا، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى اللهِ وَأَنْبَاعِهِ وَأَرْواجِهِ وَذُرِيَّاتِهِ.

Allāh has granted us innumerable blessings. From amongst these blessings, one great blessing is our body. Similarly, the various parts of the body such as the eyes, ears, hands and feet are also priceless blessings of Allah . Furthermore, the different types of nourishment for the body and its limbs are also blessings. The nourishment of the body is what we eat and drink, the nourishment of the ears is what we listen to and the nourishment of the eyes is what we look at. The body will only remain healthy as long as it receives its food and drink; otherwise, it will be negatively affected and become weak.

¹ Al-Muʻjamul-Kabīr liṭ-Ṭabarānī, Ḥadīth (10362)

In the same way, if the ears, eyes and other limbs do not receive their nourishment, they too will be negatively affected. For example, if a person was to be blindfolded for a lengthy period of time, his eyes would be affected due to being deprived of their nourishment of looking. When the blindfold is eventually untied, his eyes will not be able to function properly and would require treatment. Similarly, if the hands were to be tied up and prevented from their job of holding and grasping, they too would be affected due to not receiving their nourishment of movement.

The Priceless Blessings of Allah

My brothers! These eyes, ears, hands, feet, nose and all the other limbs and organs of our bodies are extremely valuable blessings of Allāh 🛣. Since we do not ponder over the blessings that Allāh & has granted us, we start feeling deprived. We begin to think that Allāh 🍇 has given others abundantly, but has not given us anything. My brothers! Try to put a price on just one eye, or just the tongue or the brain that Allāh # has given us. The heart, liver, kidneys and all such blessings which Allāh 😹 has bestowed upon us solely out of His Kindness and Generosity are all so precious and valuable that no intelligent person would be willing to accept the wealth of the entire world in exchange for even one of them. Instead, he would say, 'Let alone the wealth of the world, I would not even accept the kingdom of the world in exchange for one eye.' Just a single eye is such a great blessing of Allāh # that even if a poor person was offered the kingdom of all seven continents in exchange for it, he would not be ready to give it away. Instead, he would say, 'No, I'm fine with my lentils and chapati, and I am okay with eating one meal a day, but I am not ready to give away my eye.'

Ḥalāl and Ḥarām Sources of Nourishment

As mentioned, all of our limbs have their own nourishment. The nourishment of the eyes is to look. The eyes constantly desire to look at different things. It is just like the body which is nourished with food, and hence it always remains desirous of trying different things to eat. Now, from amongst all of these various sources of nourishment, some are ḥalāl and others are ḥarām. The nourishment of the body is food and drink; some types of food and drink are ḥalāl and some are ḥarām. Similarly, the nourishment of the tongue is to speak. Speech is also of two kinds, ḥalāl and ḥarām. The nourishment of the ears is to listen. Things that can be listened to are also of two types; ḥalāl and ḥarām. The nourishment of the eyes is to look, and this is also of two types; some things are ḥalāl to look at whilst others are ḥarām. It is a great Favour of Allāh that if we were to compare the number of ḥalāl and ḥarām things, we would come to realise that the ḥalāl far outnumber the ḥarām.

The Test of Life

Allāh has granted us these blessings and commanded us to adopt the ḥalāl sources of nourishment and abstain from the ḥarām sources of nourishment. This is the test of life. From the things that can be listened to, some are ḥalāl and others are ḥarām. Allāh has wishes to see, 'Does My servant refrain from listening to backbiting, indecent speech, music, and other impermissible things or not?' The nourishment of the tongue is speech. Allāh has wishes to see, 'When speaking, does My servant refrain from backbiting, lying, slandering, swearing, and other sins of the tongue?' Just as the nourishment for the body is divided into permissible and impermissible; such as water and mutton being permissible whilst alcohol and pork being impermissible; in the same

way, the means of nourishment for the various limbs of the body are also divided into halāl and harām.

Lack of Cautiousness Regarding the Nourishment of the Limbs

Those amongst us who are considered to be religious, tend to be very cautious when it comes to the nourishment of the body. They totally refrain from all food and drink that is impermissible and are also very careful regarding doubtful things. They will not drink a particular drink due to doubting its ingredients, and they will not eat from a particular restaurant as they are not completely certain of its food being halāl. Alḥamdulillāh, as far as the nourishment of the body is concerned, they are very cautious. However, when it comes to the nourishment of the ears, this same category of people becomes totally relaxed. When it comes to the nourishment of the tongue, they become totally careless. When it comes to the nourishment of the eyes, they simply become reckless, and when it comes to the nourishment of the heart and mind, they have no regard for ḥalāl and ḥarām. In these instances, they let go of taqwā.

Stand Up and Resolve

Let us resolve that, inshā'allāh, at every stage of our lives, in every aspect, every move and every action of ours, we will give utmost importance to abstaining from all types of impermissible nourishment for all of our limbs. My brothers! Make this firm intention, and thereafter exert effort and seek the Help of Allāh ...

The Help of Allah & Comes with Effort

Whoever makes a firm intention to refrain from harām and thereafter exerts effort, most definitely receives the Help of Allāh . Whoever thinks to himself, 'this particular thing is harām and using it displeases

Allāh ﷺ, hence I will refrain from it in all circumstances', will most certainly receive the Help of Allah ∰.

One who strives in quest of something, acquires it.

Disobeying Allāh With the Blessings He Gave us?

My brothers! Let us contemplate for a moment: if Allāh had not blessed us with the eyes we have, which power is there in the world that could have granted them to us? The ear is such a blessing that even if all the leading scientists and doctors of the entire world came together to grant us one ear, they would not be able to do so. The tongue is such a blessing that none besides Allāh has granted us these priceless blessings solely through His Mercy and Grace. How can we then use these very blessings given to us by Allāh to disobey Him?

The ears, tongue, eyes and brain are things that no one besides Allāh are can give to us. Our most Generous Master has granted us all of these blessings solely through His Grace and Generosity, without us deserving them; but we become so ungrateful that we use these very same blessings to disobey Him! May Allah forgive us; what a great form of ingratitude! Each and every one of us should sit down in solitude and take account of his life. If one spots any shortcomings in this regard, he should lament himself: 'how wretched and ungrateful must I be that I show such disloyalty towards my Greatest Benefactor!'

Ingratitude to Our Khāliq (Creator) and Mālik (Owner)

In this world, we do not forget the most insignificant of benefactors, who may have only fed us one meal, lent us some money, or conferred any other small or big favour upon us. Even when such a person

requests us to do something difficult, we are ever-ready to fulfil his request, as we think to ourselves that this person has a favour upon us hence we ought do the task. Even if he was to say something to us in an inappropriate manner in front of others, we will calmly bear the humiliation due to his favour upon us. My brothers! We are very careful not to be ungrateful to anyone, but when it comes to our Creator and Owner Who has granted us thousands of priceless blessings, and Who has blessed us with a blessing like Imān, we remain engrossed in ingratitude to Him day and night. Is He not our Master? Is He not our Greatest Benefactor? Is He not our Creator and Owner? My brothers! Resolve at this very moment that you will never again use any blessing of Allāh in a manner contrary to that which pleases Him.

The Treachery of the Eyes Is Not Visible to Anyone

My dear friends! Our eyes are also a precious blessing given to us by Allāh , hence they too should be protected from ḥarām nourishment in all circumstances. If we wish to progress spiritually, we must safeguard our eyes, and this requires great himmah (willpower). The sins of the tongue, ears and other limbs become known to others, hence shame and embarrassment stops a person from committing them. A person thinks to himself that if he listens to music, the neighbours will find out; and if he backbites, people will come to know of this bad habit of his. However, no one is able to see the deeds of the eyes. Nobody comes to know when the eyes act dishonestly. It is for this reason that besides taqwā, ḥayā' (modesty) and the fear of Allāh , there is no other barrier to stop the eyes from disobeying Allāh . Shaytān and nafs benefit hugely from this weakness of human beings. An individual who seems very devout, performs hajj and 'umrah, keeps a beard and is elderly with his hair turning white, is considered to be pious. People may even request him to make du'ā for them. For Shayṭān and nafs to involve

such a person in the sins of the tongue and ears is very difficult because he will feel ashamed of sinning in front of other people. However, his nafs will succeed in making him sin with the eyes, as its sins are not visible to anyone.

The Poisonous Arrow of Shaytan

Shayṭān uses the sins of the eyes as a weapon for himself too. Allāh mentions in a Ḥadīth Qudsī:

Indeed, the (lustful) glance is a poisonous arrow from the arrows of Shayṭān.²

When Shayṭān wishes to entrap someone who is spiritually progressing, who is acquiring the ma'rifah (recognition) and love of Allāh ; who is becoming desirous of the Ākhirah and has begun to find tranquillity in the Masjid, in reciting the Qur'ān, doing dhikr and sitting in the company of the pious; who has lost interest in the beauty and adornment of this world, in extravagant holidays and in amassing wealth; when Shayṭān desires to deviate such a person from the straight path and prevent him from progressing further, he engages him in lustful glances. This is an extremely poisonous arrow of Shayṭān.

The Zinā of the Limbs

In a Ḥadīth, this very sin of the eyes has been termed as zinā (fornication):

The zinā of the eyes is the (lustful) glance.3

² Al-Muʻjamul-Kabīr liṭ-Ṭabarānī, Ḥadīth (10362)

³ Şaḥīḥ Muslim, Book القدر, Ḥadīth (2749)

It is the first step towards zinā. May Allāh protect us all. The first step towards engaging in zinā is to cast a lustful glance. Firstly, a woman attracts the eyes and the eyes take a liking to her appearance. Thereafter, one develops an eagerness to meet her and then makes plans to this end; this is the zinā of the feet. Thereafter, they speak to each other which is the zinā of the ears and tongue. Then the hand is placed on her, and this is the zinā of the hands. All of these actions are the prelude to zinā. Whilst carrying them out:

The heart remains desirous and hopeful.4

Internally, one's heart restlessly anticipates the enjoyment of actual zinā: 'When will the opportunity come about so that I can fulfil my craving'. Whilst looking at her, walking towards her, speaking to her and placing his hand on her, this same thought remains in his mind; 'When can I fulfil my desire?' The poor woman simply feels that he is only speaking to her casually, but the man has something completely different in his heart. This is the zinā of the heart. After this comes the stage of actual zinā. May Allāh protect us. (Āmīn)

The Attack of Shayṭān when a Man and Woman Meet in Seclusion

When a non-maḥram man and woman meet in seclusion, Shayṭān immediately comes into action. Rasūlullāh ## mentions:

Listen attentively! Never does a man meet with a (non-maḥram) woman in seclusion except that Shayṭān is the third amongst them.⁵

⁴ Şaḥīḥ Muslim, Book القدر, Ḥadīth (2749)

⁵ Sunan at-Tirmidhī, من صلّى الصبح فهو في ذمة الله Chapter أبواب الفتن, Ḥadīth (2305)

Through their baṣīrah (Dīnī insight), the pious predecessors have gone so far as to mention that even if a pure-hearted saint like Ḥasan Baṣrī were to meet with a pure-hearted and chaste woman like Rābi'ah Baṣrīyyah in seclusion, Shayṭān would be successful in causing them to slip too. Why? Because the statement uttered by Rasūlullāh from his blessed tongue can never be wrong. When a man and woman meet in seclusion, the third with them is Shayṭān, who incites their desire and leads them towards immoral actions.

Our Deceitful Claims

My brothers! Are we being truthful to ourselves when claiming that 'when we speak to non-maḥram women, we do not have any wrong feeling in our heart', 'we do not experience any wrong sentiments' or 'we do not feel any inclination towards them'? My dear friends! We can deceive our friends, rather we can deceive the entire world, but we can never deceive Allāh . If we do not find any pleasure in looking at women, then why do our gazes become fixed on them? If we do not experience any pleasure in looking at a non-maḥram, then why do we disobey our Rabb by staring at them? Why would we incur such a great loss where we do not experience any pleasure, rather we lose the Pleasure of Allāh ? Can any intelligent person do something in which he ends up losing out instead of gaining anything? Absolutely not! Only someone who finds enjoyment in these actions will engage in them.

Various Forms of Lustful Glances

Let us also keep in mind that 'lustful glances' includes everything from eyeing women whilst walking on the streets, glaring at indecent images

⁶ Shar'ī Purdah par Qur'ānī Aḥkām kī Tafṣīl, Pg. 28

on newspapers and looking at women on television programmes. Anyone who watches films ends up spending several hours in lustful glances. Even those who do not watch films, but watch documentaries where the presenter is a woman; their eyes too find pleasure in looking at the presenter. Similarly, looking at inappropriate things on the internet and social media is also a common method of casting lustful glances.

The Harms of the Internet and Social Media

There is no denying that there are many benefits of the internet and social media. However, we should not turn a blind eye towards their countless negative aspects. The Dīn of those who do not practise great caution in this regard remains in danger. Which evil out there cannot be found on the internet and social media? Immorality, nudity, immodesty and indecent imagery are all commonplace. One can watch whatever he desires, whenever he desires. We can only dread to think as to what so many people must be watching in their homes behind closed doors. My brothers! If someone looks at naked or semi-naked images on the internet, YouTube, social media or television, it would be an extremely despicable form of misusing the eyes. May Allāh protect us all. (Āmīn)

Allah sis Aware of Our Each and Every Movement

My brother! You are secretly looking at things that you should not be looking at. Yes, no one in this world is watching you, but your Rabb who is 'Alīm (All-Knowing), Khabīr (All-Aware), Samī' (All-Hearing) and Baṣīr (All-Seeing), is watching everything. He is aware of your each and every movement, and on the Day of Qiyāmah, you will be questioned:

The day secrets will become known, man will have no power nor will he have any helper. (86:9-10)

On that day, every human being will be informed of the actions which he had sent forth (to the Hereafter) and left behind (in the world).

(75:13)

Let it not be that on the Day of Qiyāmah, when our book of deeds is opened, our mantle of taqwā, sanctity, nobility, and religiousness is left shredded to pieces. May Allāh protect us. (Āmīn)

When The Illness of Lustful Glances Worsens...

My brothers! This illness of lustful glances then worsens until the condition of a person becomes such that he creates imaginary images of women in his heart and mind and thus engages in the sin of casting lustful glances at all times. He may be sitting in the masjid, in the front row with his head lowered, yet he remains engaged in the sin of lustful glances in his own world of imagination.

This illness is so detrimental that it comes to haunt a person even at the time of death. When we cast evil glances, our eyes capture images. We look at this person and a picture is taken. We look at that person and an image is captured. Gradually, the collection of images continues to grow in our hearts. If one does not make true tawbah from this sin, then at the very point of death when the Angel of Death is extracting his soul, all of these stored images will come before his eyes and entice him, as a result of which he will become negligent of Allāh . May Allāh protect us. (Āmīn)

Visualising Someone Else When With the Wife

The person addicted to this sin stoops so low and becomes so disgraceful that even when he is fulfilling his desire with his wife, he visualises someone else. We seek refuge in Allāh ...

These are all consequences of casting lustful glances. If he had protected himself from lustful glances, his condition would not have become as such. My brothers! There is still a chance. Repent and begin to safeguard your eyes. Placing my trust in Allāh , I guarantee you that through the barakah of the effort of just a few months, all of those images that are stored in the heart will be erased inshā'allāh, and thereafter you will face no disturbing thoughts whilst living in this world, nor at the time of death. Our life will become one of tranquillity and so will our death. Furthermore, Allāh will bless us with the permissible pleasures of this world and the Hereafter.

The Pleasure and Sweetness of Iman

My brothers! Why do we look at impermissible images? Is it not to acquire pleasure? If we could find something of greater pleasure then would we still continue? Take the example of a child who is habituated to eating chocolate. If he were to fall ill and there was a fear of his illness increasing if he ate more chocolate, he will have to be encouraged to give up eating chocolate. It is obvious that this will be very daunting and difficult for the child. However, if the child's attention is diverted towards an alternative that is even more delicious than chocolate, it will become very easy for him to leave it. If it is said to him, 'Son! Try and taste this other thing, it is more delicious than chocolate', and the child places it in his mouth and discovers that it really is more delicious than chocolate; now it will become very easy for him to shift his heart away from chocolate. Allāh is also very Compassionate and Merciful

to His servants. Whenever a servant of Allāh & exerts mujāhadah to abstain from looking towards a non-maḥram, solely for the Pleasure of Allāh or out of fear of Allāh ; then within a short period of time, Allāh are grants him the incredible enjoyment and sweetness of Īmān. Allāh mentions in a Ḥadīth Qudsī,

Indeed, the (lustful) glance is a poisonous arrow from the arrows of Shayṭān. Whoever abstains from it and safeguards his eyes due to My fear, I will grant him in exchange such Īmān, the sweetness of which he will experience in his heart.⁷

My brothers! Upon tasting this pure pleasure, the condition of both male and female servants becomes such that they safeguard their gazes at all times, so that they may enjoy the pleasure and sweetness of Īmān.

Lustful Glances in Old Age

My young friends! Repent from this sin and make your youth pure. Through the barakah of repentance, the eyes, the heart and the mind will all be purified from this filth. If we do not repent, our heart will continue to be contaminated by the impurities of lustful glances, and this habit of casting lustful glances, the zinā of the eyes, will continue into our old age. May Allāh protect us. (Āmīn)

A Great Shortcoming of Ours

A great problem in our society is that we are not careful in keeping our young girls away from elderly men. Let alone homes in which

⁷ Al-Muʻjamul-Kabīr liṭ-Ṭabarānī, Ḥadīth (10362)

segregation is not given importance; even in homes where segregation is implemented, young girls of twelve, thirteen, or fourteen are not segregated from elderly men. The family says, 'he is like her grandfather, hence there is no need for segregation from him.' This is a very wrong notion, and the results of such carelessness are very detrimental. Mark my words! When a non-maḥram old man touches young girls and places his hand over their heads, it is not a gesture of shafqah (affection), but a gesture of shahwah (lust). Therefore, segregation should be practised with everyone, the young and the old. Segregation is necessary from everyone who is not our maḥram.

Segregation is a Mercy and Protection for Women

At this point, it is worth highlighting that the command to observe segregation is not a form of oppression upon women; rather it is a mercy and protection for them. The command for segregation exists so that no one is able to look towards a woman with an impure intention, place a hand on a woman's head with an impure intention, embrace a woman with an impure intention, kiss a woman with an impure intention or touch a woman's body with an impure intention. In Islām it is impermissible to shake hands with a woman; embrace her or gaze at her; not because the woman is worthless, but because she is invaluable. She is so precious that in Islām it is unbearable for anyone's impure hands, impure lips, or impure sight to fall on her under any circumstance.

Spiritual Diseases of the Eyes

My brothers! Safeguard your eyes from lustful glances at all times and keep in mind that there are other spiritual diseases of the eyes too. To look towards something with greed is also a type of evil glance. Upon looking at a belonging of a close friend with greed, one asks, 'From

which store can this be purchased?' He asks this question with the thought in mind that 'this is a good and very generous friend of mine, hence he will give it to me for free'. This is also an evil glance. Another type of evil glance is to look at something whilst thinking, 'Why does he have this blessing? Why didn't I receive it instead?' This is the glance of hasad (jealousy) which too is an evil glance and a misuse of the eyes. It is also impermissible.

However, the type of evil glance I am emphasising at this time is looking at non-maḥrams. Men should safeguard their gazes from non-maḥram women at all times. Similarly, women should also safeguard their gazes from non-maḥram men at all times. Bring this beautiful teaching of Islam into your life and then see whether or not you find pleasure in 'ibādah, whether or not the quality of your ṣalāh and dhikr improves, and whether or not you experience enjoyment in tilāwah.

Refrain from Misusing the Eyes in All Circumstances

My friends! Repent today at this very moment, and purify yourself from this sin of casting lustful glances. In the initial stages, it will seem somewhat difficult. However, the servant of Allāh who utilises his willpower and abstains from this impermissible pleasure a few times will begin to experience the real pleasure of Imān. He will begin to find ease and sweetness in what was once difficult and bitter. Ḥaḍrat Muftī Taqī Usmani ṣāḥib dāmat barakātuhum has given a brilliant example about saving oneself from lustful sins. He mentions, 'The very first time I sipped qahwah, it tasted very bitter; so much so that I was barely able to swallow it. Thereafter, as my meetings with Arabs became more frequent, there were more instances where qahwah was served to me, thus I eventually developed a liking for it. Now all the bitterness has disappeared and I find enjoyment in drinking qahwah.'8

⁸ Işlāḥī Majālis: 1/103

In Saudi Arabia, qahwah is served in small cups. Those who have spent Ramaḍān in Makkah Al-Mukarramah or in Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah will be aware of this. When someone drinks qahwah for the very first time, it tastes bitter and is not so appealing. The second time, the experience is the same. It is only after drinking it ten to fifteen times that one develops a liking for it. After that, one will have such an inclination towards it that just hearing the word 'qahwah' will bring joy to a person. Saving yourself from misusing the eyes is exactly like drinking qahwah. The first time you lower your gaze, you will experience much bitterness. The second time will also be bitter. However, as you continue to lower your gaze and abstain from lustful glances ten, fifteen, twenty or twenty-five times; then in place of bitterness you will find sweetness.

My brothers! The only way of curing ourselves from this illness is to repent and thereafter utilise our willpower to remain steadfast on this repentance. No matter how bitter it may be, we have to continue safeguarding ourselves. We make a resolution that whatever happens, we will not misuse our eyes. We will give our life, but we will not commit this sin.

Safeguarding the Gaze in Difficult Circumstances

Now, many brothers here study or work in such environments where it seems impossible to save oneself from casting lustful glances. There are many professionals seated here. After listening to what has been mentioned thus far, a thought must be crossing their minds: 'We accept that this is a very dangerous sin, and we want to repent from it and safeguard ourselves from it too, but our environment is very different from your environment. You remain within the confines of the madrasah and masjid, whereas we spend our time in such environments where women are constantly in front of us.'

For such brothers, I would like to emphasise that there is no Command of Allāh # that is impossible to fulfil. If there was a command that is impossible to carry out, it would mean that when Allāh & had revealed this Dīn fourteen hundred years ago, He was unaware that in the twenty-first century, many of his servants from India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and other countries would move to England, and study and work in places where women will also be present - due to which this command will be impossible to fulfil. Was this missing from the Knowledge of Allah 🞉? Can this ever be the belief of a Muslim? Every Muslim believes that Allāh 🎉 is 'Alīm (All-Knowing) and Khabīr (All-Aware). His knowledge of today and tomorrow are one and the same. Allāh 🎉 is aware of everything that is going to occur until the Day of Qiyāmah and what is going to occur after that for all of eternity. It is this very 'Alīm and Khabīr who has revealed the command to lower the gaze, and therefore it will most definitely be possible to abide by it in every place and every era.

How to Save Yourself from Lustful Glances

Firstly, we must instil the severity of this sin in our hearts. Thereafter, accept that it is possible to fulfil this Command of Allāh even today and make a resolution to fulfil it. Make this resolution at this very moment, then at the earliest opportunity, perform two raka'āt ṣalāh, repent to Allāh and beseech Him saying, 'O Allāh! I work in a shop, I work in a hospital, I work in an office, etc. where it seems very difficult to fulfil this command of Yours; O Allāh! You are the All-Powerful. If You wish, You are able to save me from the sin of casting lustful glances even in such an environment. Create the means for me through which I can become free from this sin!'

My brothers! Consider lustful glances to be a sin, make a firm intention to protect yourself from it and thereafter make du'ā and also exert effort. Inshā'allāh, you will most definitely succeed.

Thus, the first thing we need to do is instil the severity of this sin in our hearts - that it is a very grave sin, and an evil and filthy action. Thereafter, resolve to abstain from it in all circumstances. After doing this, turn to Allāh and seek His Help. Cry and beseech Allāh with much humility and helplessness. Along with this, find a Shaykh from amongst the pious servants of Allāh and connect yourself to him. Inform him of your circumstances, explain to him the difficulties and problems you face, and request him to guide you and show you a solution. Thereafter, act according to whatever he instructs you to do. Inshā'allāh, you will acquire freedom from this sin.

My brothers! At least instil in your hearts that it is possible to abstain from this sin and make an intention that you will, inshā'allāh. Never become despondent. If we make this resolution today, then inshā'allāh, we will acquire freedom from this sin; and if not total freedom, then at the very least, there will surely be a decrease in the number of times we commit it. If previously we were casting lustful glances a hundred times a day, then inshā'allāh tomorrow it will be fewer than a hundred. It may be 60 times, 90 times or even 99 times. If through exerting effort we were able to save ourselves just once, then the barakah of this will manifest the next day when we will gain the tawfīq (ability) to protect ourselves twice. The day after we will be able to abstain three times; and if we continue in this manner, a day will come when we will become completely pure from this illness/malady, inshā'allāh.

Thus, make a resolution to save yourself from this sin, and on a daily basis, before leaving for the office, factory, hospital, college, or university in the morning, make du'ā to Allāh and say, 'O Allāh! I

have remained in disobedience to You for such a lengthy period of time. I never tried to control myself even once. Today I am leaving with this resolve that from now on I will not commit this sin. O Allāh! Protect me. O Allāh! Assist me'. Make du'ā before leaving and thereafter remain mindful throughout the day and try your utmost to abstain from casting a lustful glance .

Upon returning home in the evening and having completed any necessary routine tasks, perform wuḍū, sit on a muṣallā or sofa with your eyes closed, and carry out muḥāsabah of your entire day for a few minutes. If you see that you were successful in abstaining from this disobedience, express gratitude to Allāh and seek further tawfīq; and if you see that you were unsuccessful, carry out tawbah and istighfār, renew your intention and say to Allah and istighfār, renew your intention and say to Allāh! Please help me and save me from this disobedience to You! O Allāh! Please help me and save me from this disobedience to You! O Allāh! Create another avenue of sustenance for me, and if my sustenance is decreed to come to me from this avenue, then grant me the strength and willpower to abstain from this sin. I know that this is Your Command and therefore necessary and possible to fulfil in every place. It is only due to my own weakness that I am not managing to practise. O my Allāh! Please help me!'

My brothers! Make a du'ā everyday in the morning and thereafter remain alert and be mindful of your actions throughout the day. In the evening, carry out muḥāsabah, do tawbah and istighfār and thereafter beseech Allāh for His Help with utmost humility. The Help of Allāh will most definitely come, inshā'allāh. The main problem is that we do not even try.

Guidance Relating to Social Media and the Internet

Friends! Do not use the internet and social media without necessity. Whether the website is an Islamic one or not, do not visit them without

necessity. The word 'web' refers to the web of a spider. When a fly becomes entangled in the web of a spider, there is no escape. The more it tries to break away, the further it becomes entangled. The internet is no different; once a person becomes entangled in it, he continues to get entangled further and further.

It is my own experience that whenever the need arises to visit a particular website in order to read a certain article, I see another article displayed on the side. The thought crosses my mind to read that too, hence I click on that article after which another article is displayed on the side. Again, the thought crosses the mind, 'this looks interesting, I should read this too'. We have all experienced this. We visit a website with the intention of spending only ten to fifteen minutes, but when we eventually finish, we realise that an hour and a half to two hours have passed by.

Things That Steal Time

My friends! If we wish to save the precious moments of our life from being wasted and spend our time in beneficial activities, we will have to be cautious with the internet, social media and the smartphone. Just like listening to football and cricket commentaries and sitting in gatherings of gossip, these things are also robbers of our time. Let us stay away from all of these robbers of time, so that our time is spent in worthy and beneficial tasks. Using the internet is understandable for individuals who can save themselves from disobedience to Allāh and lā yaʻnī (futile activities), but those who are unable to control their nafs should avoid it in all circumstances. Some people have even had the bad experience of going onto the internet to listen to an Islamic lecture, but ended up watching a film or something impermissible; rather they ended up watching pornography.

If Using the Internet is Unavoidable

Individuals for whom using the internet is unavoidable should use it only as much as needed. Only visit those websites that are essential and stipulate a time within which one must finish. May Allāh grant us the tawfīq to practise. Another beneficial point is that we should keep our computer in such a place where people pass by frequently. This will protect us from looking at inappropriate things.

Returning to the Main Point

Let us safeguard our gaze to the best of our ability and frequently contemplate over the following āyah:

Allāh sk knows the treachery of the eyes and what the chests conceal. (40:19)

Explain to yourself that my Khāliq and Mālik is fully aware of the treachery of my eyes. Not only that, but He is aware of the thoughts that pass through my heart too. My brothers! Safeguard yourself as much as you can, and adopt the habit of lowering your gaze when walking on the streets. Whilst walking, we tend to look here and there. We look right, left and up-ahead, and when our sight falls on a non-maḥram, that is when we try to lower our gaze. Obviously, lowering the gaze once it has fallen on somebody is not easy. Therefore, the more effective method would be to keep our gaze lowered from the very beginning. Allāh mentions,

Instruct the believing men to keep their gazes lowered... (24:30)

وَقُلُ لِّلْمُؤْمِنْتِ يَغُضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَامِهِنَّ

And instruct the believing women to keep their gazes lowered. (24:31)

This means that when a man or woman leaves the home, they should keep their gazes lowered. If they were to walk with their gazes kept low, they will not come to know of what is on the right, left or in front of them. Therefore, look downwards whilst walking and keep yourself engaged in dhikrullāh. Only look right, left or ahead when the need arises.

The Mission of Shaytan

When Shayṭān was removed from Jannah, he said,

Grant me respite until the day people will be resurrected. (7:14)

Allāh is responded by saying,

You are from amongst those who have been granted respite. (7:15)

When Allāh commanded Shayṭān to leave Jannah, Shayṭān made a request: 'O Allāh! Grant me respite by prolonging my life until the Day of Qiyāmah'. Allāh replied, 'You are from those who have been granted respite', meaning that it had already been predestined that you would live until the Day of Qiyāmah. When Allāh made this promise, Shayṭān responded by saying,

Because You have caused me to be misguided, I will most definitely sit in wait for them on Your straight path; then I will come to them from in front of them, from behind them, from their right and from their left. And You will not find most of them to be grateful. (7:16-17)

How to Save Yourself from Shaytan

During this conversation, Shayṭān stated that he would come from the front, from behind, from the right and from the left. However, he did not mention anything about coming from above and below. One group of Mufassirīn state that Shayṭān's intent from this statement is that he will come from all directions; from the right, left, front and back as well as above and below; hence he will attack from all directions.⁹

Another group of Mufassirīn state that Shayṭān can only attack from these four directions; from the right, left, front, and behind. He is unable to attack from beneath because he is arrogant, and his arrogance prevents him from coming from below. Similarly, he is unable to attack from above because the Mercy of Allāh descends from above, and Shayṭān does not have the power to cause an obstruction between the Mercy of Allāh and His servants. Thus, Shayṭān is unable to attack from these two directions. ¹⁰

From this, we understand that we have two options available to abstain from casting lustful glances: either we look upwards whilst walking or we look downwards. If we look right then we are at risk. If we look left then we are at risk too. If we look ahead then too we are at risk. Looking behind also puts us at risk. If we keep our gazes lowered or raised upwards, we will be safe. However, if we look upwards whilst walking there is a possibility of tripping or bumping into something,

⁹ Tafsīruth-Tha'labī: 3/13

¹⁰ Hāshiyatuş-Ṣāwī 'Alā Tafṣīrul-Jalālayn: 2/660

hence we only have one option remaining, and that is to look down whilst we walk. If we keep our gazes lowered, we will be protected from lustful glances, inshā'allāh.

My brothers! Casting lustful glances is a very dangerous sin. Until we do not purify ourselves from this sin, we will not progress spiritually. We carry out the dhikr of Allāh , we recite the Qur'ān, we remain engaged in good deeds, we adopt good company and we strive to follow the Commands of Allāh . Through all of these, the heat of the love of Allāh is created within our hearts, yet the condition of our hearts does not change. The only reason for this is that the windows of our eyes are left open, through which this heat of the love of Allāh secapes. From today onwards, these windows of our eyes should remain closed at all times. Then we too will experience the heat of the love of Allāh in our hearts, inshā'allāh.

May Allāh sgrant us the tawfīq to act accordingly. (Āmīn)