

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Friday Khutbah – 02/01/2015

A few days ago I received a letter from a Muslim brother (I don't know this brother and I don't know if he is among us today or not. I received the letter by email, and he could be anywhere.) He said: "I have a very serious question. When I go out I look upon men and women and catch glimpses of women which I lower my gaze but I do find them attractive. I am not asking about if it is halal or haram to look at women but I am asking if it is fine to find other women attractive other than your wife."

Before I answer this question I would like to mention a few points about the subject of sighting and what is *Haram* of it and what is not *Haram*, for it is an important subject.

Slaves of Allah! The blessing of sight is one of the greatest blessings of Allah upon us. Allah obliged us with this blessing along with the blessings of hearing and hearts, regarded them as favours upon us and ordered us to thank Him for these great blessings. He says: "And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks." (An-Nahl 78)

However this great blessing could turn into a serious misfortune if one sets it free to look at what Allah has prohibited. As a result one would earn numerous sins and would come heavy burdened with them on the Day of *Qiyamah* because one of the things one will be asked about on that Day is the blessing of sight. He will also be asked about the blessings of hearing and intellect as Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says: "Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those - one will be questioned."

Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) ordered us to lower our gazes and not to look at what He has prohibited us to look at. Among what He has prohibited us to look at is a foreign woman (*non-Muhram*.) He says (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts....." (An-Noor 30-31)

As it is permissible for a man to look at a woman who is not *Halal* to look at, the same applies to women.

Prohibited glances whether directly or indirectly – in moving or still images – is a form of *Zina* (fornication) in which a person falls. Rasulullah (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "Allah has written for the son of Adam his share of *Zina* which he will inevitably get. The *Zina* of the two eyes is sighting, the *Zina* of the tongue is utterance. The *Nafs* wishes and desires and the private part realizes that or denies."

If we understand and accept the danger of setting the sight free to look without control, then we would appreciate that the problem is even greater for us - we who are living in this age because one of the main features of this age is the multitudes of women who are improperly dressed; who display their beauties.

The prohibitions (of the sight) surround us from every direction. The streets, market places, airports and so on are all full with women who display their charms. Even worse is that prohibited images have invaded people's homes through the TV channels, internet and so on.

The difference between the *Haram* glance and the non-*Haram* is that a sudden and accidental first glance is not *Haram*. The continuous or second glance is the *Haram* one. This is what the Prophet (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) had stipulated. Jareer Ibn Abdullah (*radhiya Allahu 'anhu*) said: "I asked Rasulullah (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) about the sudden glance and he ordered me to turn my sight away." (Reported by Imam Muslim.) He (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said to Ali (*radhiya Allahu 'anhu*): "O Ali! Do not follow a glance with another glance for you are excused for the first but not for the second."

Imam Ibn Aj-Jawzi explained the difference between the two and why one is excuse for the first and not the second. He said: "This is because the heart would not be conscious at the first glance and one would usually not contemplate the beauty at this stage. However, once one continues the glance until the heart becomes aware, it (i.e. the first glance) becomes like the second in sinfulness."

Because of the strong emphasis laid upon turning the sight away from the prohibitions of Allah, *as-Salaf as-Salih* were very careful not to give a free rein to their sights. Al-Hassan Al-Basri said: "Whoever sets his sight free will regret too much." His brother said to him: "Non-Muslim women display their chests and heads." He said to him: "Turn your sight away."

Coming back to the question of the brother that when he catches glimpses of women he lowers his gaze but he does find them attractive.

This of course is wrong and there is a problem here. The feeling he gets is the opposite of what a Muslim should find in his heart of energy of Iman for obeying Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) by lowering his gaze. The Muslim gets this feeling because he is hopeful that Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) will reward him for his act of obeying Him.

These thoughts are perhaps a result of a prolonged first glance. As Imam Ibn aj-Jawzi explained once one continues the first glance until the heart becomes aware, it becomes like the second glance in sinfulness."

So what matters here is not that you should lower your gaze after the first glance but that the lowering of the gaze should be done instantly before the heart becomes aware.

These thoughts are from Shaytan and when one finds them, he should seek refuge with Allah and saying: "*Aa'udhu' Billahi mina-shaytanir-rajeem.*"

One of the things which would help drive these thoughts away is what Ibn Masoud (*radhiya Allahu 'anhu*) taught us. He said: "If one is attracted to a woman let him remember her defects." This should be useful especially if she is an indecent woman.

Passion for images (of women) is fruitless and will come to nothing. One should be contented with one's wife and should not look or think beyond. Rasulullah (*Salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said in a *Hadith*: "If one of you looks at a woman and (feels something), let him approach his wife. That will drive away what he finds."