How to Escape from Fitnah: Fifteen Pointers

1 - Fear Allah and Keep Your Duty to Him

{"...and whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out of every difficulty."} [at-Talaq; 2]

{"...and whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him."} [at-Talaq; 4]

2 - Place Your Trust in Allah

{"...and whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him."} [at-Talaq; 3]

{"Those to whom the people said: "Verily, the people have gathered against you, so, fear them." But it only increased them in faith, and they said: "Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs!" So, they returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they followed the good Pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty."} [Al 'Imran; 173-4]

3 - Repent and Turn to Allah with Humility

{"And Yunus, when he went off in anger, and imagined that We would not punish him! But he cried through the darkness: "None has the right to be worshipped but You, Glorified are You. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers." So, We answered his call, and delivered him from distress, and thus We do deliver the believers."} [al-Ambiya'; 87-8]

{"Verily, We sent Messengers to many nations before you, and We seized them with extreme poverty and loss in health with calamities so that they might believe with humility. When Our Torment reached them, why then did they not believe with humility? But their hearts became hardened, and Satan beautified for them that which they used to do."} [al-An'am; 42-3]

{"And indeed We seized them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves to their Lord, nor did they invoke with submission to Him."} [al-Mu'minun; 76]

4 - Seek Strength Through Patience and Prayer

{"O you who believe! Seek help in patience and prayer. Truly! Allah is with the patient ones."} [al-Baqarah; 153]

{"Indeed, We know that your heart is strained at what they say. So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves to Him."} [al-Hijr; 97-8]
{"And Verily, they were about to frighten you so much as to drive you out from the land. But in that case they would not have stayed after you, except for a little while. This was Our rule with the Messengers We sent before you, and you will not find any alteration in Our rule. Perform the prayer from mid-day till the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever witnessed. And in some parts of the night, also offer the prayer with it as an optional prayer. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a station of praise and glory!"} [al-Isra'; 76-9]

{"So bear patiently what they say, and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun, and before its setting, and during some of the hours of the night, and at the ends of the day that you may become pleased with the reward that Allah will give you."} [Ta Ha; 130]

{"Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their ownselves, even after the truth has become clear to them. But forgive and overlook until Allah brings His Command. Verily, Allah is Able to do all things. And perform the prayer and give charity, and whatever of good you send forth for yourselves before you, you shall find it with Allah. Certainly, Allah is All-Seer of what you do."} [al-Baqarah; 110-1]

5 - The Prophet Would Wake His Family to Pray to Prepare for the Fitnah

Umm Salamah - the wife of the Prophet - reported that one night, the Messenger of Allah got up and said: "Glory be to Allah! How many trials have descended tonight, and how many treasures have been disclosed! Go and wake the sleeping women of these houses up to pray. A well-dressed person in this world may be naked in the Hereafter."

[Reported by al-Bukhari (7069) and at-Tirmidhi (2196)]

6 - Congregational Prayer During the Times of Fitnah

'Abdullah bin 'Udayy reported that he went to visit 'Uthman bin 'Affan when he was under siege in his home, and said to him: "You are our leader, and we see what has happened to you, and we are led in prayer by the originator of this tribulation, and we feel uneasy about praying behind him." So, 'Uthman said to him: "The prayer is the best of the people's actions, so, if the people do something good, then participate in that action with them. If they do something bad, then avoid participating in that action with them."

['Sahih al-Bukhari'; # 695]

Ibn Hajar said:

"And in this narration, there is an encouragement to pray with the congregation - especially during the times of tribulation - so that the Muslims would not be divided. Also, it proves that the prayer behind one that is disliked takes precedence over abandoning the congregational prayer." ['Fath al-Bari'; 2/190]
7 - Happiness Is for the One Who Avoids Fitnah

al-Miqdad bin al-Aswad reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah say: "**Verily, the happy one is the one who avoids tribulations! Verily, the happy one is the one who avoids tribulations! Verily, the happy one is the one who avoids tribulations, and how excellent is the one who is subject to tribulation, yet he is patient!**"

[Reported by Abu Dawud (4263), and it is authentic]

8 - Escape from Fitnah

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reports that he heard the Messenger of Allah say: "**One day, the best wealth that a Muslim has will be some livestock that he herds to the peaks of the mountains and the bottoms of the valleys, seeking to escape with his religion from the trials and tribulations.**"

[Reported by al-Bukhari (19), Abu Dawud (4267), an-Nasa'i (8/123), and Ibn Majah (3980)]

It was asked of the Messenger of Allah: "O Messenger of Allah! Who is the best of people?" He replied: "**A believer who strives in the Path of Allah with his soul and his wealth.**" He was then asked: "Then who?" He replied: "**A believer in a secluded area who fears Allah and protects the people from his evil.**"

[Reported by al-Bukhari (2786), Muslim (1888), Abu Dawud (2485), at-Tirmidhi (1660), an-Nasa'i (6/11), and Ibn Majah (3978)]

Salamah bin al-Akwa' reported that one time, he entered upon al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf, so he said to him: "O Ibn al-Akwa'! Have you returned to being a bedouin?" Salamah replied: "**No; rather, the Messenger of Allah allowed me to remain with the bedouins (during the times of tribulation).**"

['Sahih al-Bukhari'; # 7087]

*Issue: Is It Better to Seclude Oneself from the People or Mix With Them?*

Ibn Hajar mentions - quoting al-Khattabi:

"**The ruling on seclusion and mixing depends on the situation. The clear proofs encourage mixing with the people when this involves acts of obedience and fulfilling the affairs of their religion, and the opposite is true when the situation is reversed (i.e., when this involves disobedience). As for physically mixing and secluding oneself, then, for the one who fears for himself in terms of his livelihood and his religion, then it is upon him to seclude himself from the people as long as he maintains the congregational prayer, spreading and answering the greetings of peace, and the rights of the Muslims that include attending funerals and visiting the sick. Rather, what is intended here is to avoid unnecessary socialization, because of what that leads to of wasting of energy and time that could be used for better things, and to make one's mixing with the people similar to his need for food: he limits himself to that which he needs, as this is more relaxing for the body and the soul, and Allah Knows best.**" ['Fath al-Bari'; 11/333]
al-Qushayri said, in 'ar-Risalah':

"The path of the one who chooses seclusion is that he should believe that he is protecting the people from his harm, not the opposite. The first case indicates one's belittling of himself, and this is a trait of the humble. The second case indicates his assumption of his superiority to others, and this is a trait of the arrogant."

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"A person must have time for himself to engage in supplication, remembrance, prayer, reflection, taking himself to account, and recitifying his heart. These are issues that nobody else can participate with him in. These are affairs that need to be seen to on an individual basis, whether that be in his home or otherwise, as Tawus said: "How excellent of a refuge is the home; in it, one can restrain his gaze and his tongue."" [Majmu' al-Fatawa; 10/425]

Ibn 'Umar said: "The Muslim that mixes with the people and is patient upon their harm is better than the Muslim who does not mix with the people and is not patient upon their harm."

[Reported by at-Tirmidhi (2507), Ahmad (5/365), and Ibn Majah (4032). and it is authentic]

9 - Deal With the Oppressors

{"And fear a trial which will not only affect those of you who do wrong."} [al-Anfal; 25]

ash-Shawkani says, in regards to this verse:

"(meaning), fear a trial that will not be limited to the wrongdoer. Rather, it will strike the righteous and the wicked, and its affects will not be limited to those of you who engage in oppression." [Fath al-Qadir; 2/299]

an-Nu'man bin Bashir reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "The example of the one who is steadfast on preserving the limits of Allah and the one who has fallen over it is that of a people that are on a boat. Some of them go to the top and the others go to the bottom. Those on the bottom - in order for them to drink - had to disturb those on top. So they said to themselves: "Let us make a hole in the bottom of the boat in this portion of ours, so as not to disturb those above." If the people on top leave them to what they want to do, they will all die. If they deal with them and stop them, they will save everyone."

[Reported by al-Bukhari (2493) and at-Tirmidhi (2173)]

Abu Bakr reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah say: "Verily, if the people see an oppressor and do not deal with him, then eventually, they might be struck with a punishment from Allah."

[Reported by at-Tirmidhi (2168), and it is authentic]

Sa'id bin Zayd reported that a group of people were with the Messenger of Allah while he was describing to them some trials that would afflict them, and they were great and mighty events that were being mentioned. So, some of the people said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah! If we were to present during these times, we would be destroyed!" So, the Prophet said: "It is enough
of a mercy for you that you would be killed during these times."
[Reported by Aby Dawud (4277), Ahmad (1/189), and it is authentic]

10 - *Fitnah* is Worse than Death

{"And tribulation is worse than killing."} [al-Baqarah; 191]

at-Tabari said, in his 'Tafsir':

"This means that for a believer to be put to trial in regards to his religion - and for him to become a disbeliever in Allah after he was a believer - is worse for him than that he is killed while he is strong and upright upon his religion, holding firm to it."

11 - Do Not Add to the Populations of the People of *Fitnah*

Ibn 'Umar reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah say: "If Allah brings down a torment upon a people, then this torment will affect everyone who lives among them, then they will be resurrected upon their actions."

[Reported by al-Bukhari (7108) and Muslim (2879)]

Ibn Hajar said:
"What is meant by "everyone who lives among them" is everyone who does not even necessarily agree with those people's opinions." ['Fath al-Bari'; 13/60]

12 - Leave the Land of *Fitnah*

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Among those before you there was a man who killed ninety-nine people. He asked who was the most knowledgeable man in the world and was directed to a monk. He went to him and said that he had killed ninety-nine people and was repentance possible for him? The monk said: "No," so he killed him and made it a hundred. Then he again asked who was the most knowledgeable man on earth and was directed to a man of knowledge. He said that he had killed a hundred people, so was repentance possible for him? The man said: "Yes, who can come between you and repentance? Go to such-and-such a land, where there are some people worshipping Allah. Worship Allah with them and do not return to your own country. It is an evil place." So he went and then, when he was half way there, he died. The Angels of Mercy and Angels of Punishment started to argue about him. The Angels of Mercy said: "He came in repentance, turning with his heart to Allah." The Angels of Punishment said: "But, he has not done a single good action." An angel came in a human form and they appointed him as an arbitrator between them. He said: "Measure the distance between the two countries and whichever one he is nearer to, that is the one he belongs to." They measured and found he was nearer to the land to which he was going, so the Angels of Mercy took him."

[Reported by al-Bukhari (3470), Muslim (2766), Ibn Majah (2622), and Ahmad (3/72)]
13 - Hold Firm to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah

al-'Arbad bin Sawiyah reported that the Messenger of Allah led the people in prayer one day, then proceeded to give them an emotional speech that caused the people to weep. One of them said: "O Messenger of Allah! It is as if this is a farewell speech, so what do you advise us with?" So, he said: "I advise you to fear Allah, to listen and to obey even if an Ethiopian slave was placed in authority over you, for whoever lives after you will see great division and differences. So, it is upon you to stick to my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided khalifahs after me. Bite onto it with your molar teeth, and beware of newly invented matters, for every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is a form of misguidance."

[Reported by Abu Dawud (4607), at-Tirmidhi (2676), Ahmad (4/126), Ibn Majah (43), ad-Darimi (1/44), al-Hakim (1/95), and it is authentic]

14 - The Virtue of Worship in the Times of Fitnah

Mu'aqqal bin Yasar reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Worship during the times of tribulation is equivalent to a migration to me."

['Sahih Muslim'; # 2848]

an-Nawawi said:

"The reason that worship during such times is so virtuous is that the majority of the people will be heedless of it and will be preoccupied from it, and none will devote themselves to it except for a few individuals." ['Sharh Sahih Muslim'; 5/809]

15 - Remain Silent During Times of Fitnah

'Abdullah bin 'Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever remains silent, then he is saved."

[Reported by at-Tirmidhi (2501), Ahmad (2/159), ad-Darimi (2/229), and Ibn al-Mubarak in 'az-Zuhd' (385), and it is authentic]

Ibn 'Umar said: "Excessive speech did not emerge during the time of the Messenger of Allah, or Abu Bakr, or 'Umar, or 'Uthman. Rather, it emerged during the time of tribulations."

[Reported by Ibn Hibban in 'Mawarid ath-Thaman'; # 111]

[Adapted from a chapter by Mustafa al-'Adawi in his book 'as-Sahih al-Musnad min al-Fitan wal-Malahim wa Ashrat as-Sa'ah'; p. 229-270]

And Allah Knows best