

Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn on Terrorism & Related Issues¹

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Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn² on Specific Incidents of Terrorism (the 1996 Khobar Bombing)

The Shaykh, may Allah have mercy on him, said regarding the bombing that took place in the city of Khobar:

As for a non-Muslim living under Muslim rule and a Mu'āhid,³ it's been authentically established that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

1 Some of the "Related Issues" may not seem directly related to terrorism at first. However, keep in mind that many of these issues are the very core of some Muslims' anger and frustration with governments, both Muslim and Non-Muslim. – T.N.

2 Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn: One of the late leading scholars of Saudi Arabia and the Muslim world and a former member of the Permanent Council of Senior Scholars. (1347-1421 Hijrah/1926-2001) - T.N.

3 Mu'āhid: a (Non-Muslim) ally with whom Muslims have a treaty, trust, peace, or agreement.

مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا تُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا

“Whoever kills a Mu’āhid will not even smell the fragrance of paradise and its fragrance can be smelled from the distance of forty years away.”⁴

And ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) said that Allah’s messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said:

لَنْ يَزَالَ الْمُؤْمِنُ فِي فُسْحَةٍ مِنْ دِينِهِ مَا لَمْ يُصِْبْ دَمًا حَرَامًا

“A Muslim will not cease to be comfortable with regards to his religion as long as he does not shed blood that is inviolable.”⁵

‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

“Certainly, one of the most difficult situations for which there is no turning back for whomever casts himself into it - shedding sacred blood without right.”⁶

‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Umar spoke the truth when he said this and no doubt the blood of a Mu’āhid is forbidden and spilling it is a major sin because the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informed that whoever kills such a person will not even smell the fragrance of paradise. And any sin that Allah associates with a specific threat in his book or his messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in his Sunnah, then it’s a major sin. As for the person who’s been promised safety and security (such as a person who legitimately entered the country with the permission of the government by the granting of a visa), Allah says in his book:

﴿ وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ﴾

4 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3166) from the ḥadīth of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه).

5 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6862).

6 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6863).

And if anyone of the polytheists (disbelievers, non-Muslims, etc.) seeks your protection, then grant him protection, so that he may hear the word of Allah (the Quran), and then escort him to his place of safety and security.

[Sūrah al-Tawbah, 9:6]

Meaning: make sure he's safe and secure among you until he reaches the place of safety in his own country. In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

ذِمَّةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَاحِدَةٌ يَسْعَى بِهَا أَدْنَاهُمْ، فَمَنْ أَخْفَرَ مُسْلِمًا فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ لَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهُ صَرْفٌ وَلَا عَدْلٌ

“The asylum (pledge of protection) granted by the Muslims is a joint responsibility that even the lowest in position is to undertake. Whoever disgraces a Muslim (in this respect), then the curse of Allah is upon him and that of the angels and mankind all together and none of his optional or compulsory deeds will be accepted.”⁷

The meaning of the ḥadīth is that whenever a Muslim guarantees safety to any other person, placing him under his care, then such a person's care becomes the responsibility of all Muslims. Whoever then comes and breaches this trust by acting hostile against the person who's been given a pledge of safety by the Muslim, then upon him (the violator) is the curse of Allah, the angels, and all of mankind.

So we curse whoever is cursed by Allah, His Messenger, and the angels. We don't accept anything from such a person. It's also reported in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī that Umm Hānī', the daughter of Abū Ṭālib, came to the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) on the day of the Meccan conquest and she greeted him. He asked:

مَنْ هَذِهِ؟

“Who is this?”

7 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6755) and Muslim (no. 1370) from the ḥadīth of 'Alī (عليه السلام).

She answered, "I'm Umm Hāni', the daughter of Abū Ṭālib." So the prophet (صلى الله عليه) replied:

مَرْحَبًا يَا أُمَّ هَانِيٍّ
"Welcome, Umm Hāni'."

She said:

"Oh Messenger of Allah, Ibn Umm 'Alī - meaning 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib - says he's going to kill a man (a Non-Muslim) whom I have promised would not be harmed."

So the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

قَدْ أَجَرْنَا مَنْ أَجَرْتَ يَا أُمَّ هَانِيٍّ

"We will guarantee safety to who you have guaranteed it, oh Umm Hāni'." ⁸

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) permitted the pledge of security made by a woman and he made her pledge a protection of the blood of a disbeliever. Based on this, whoever among us from the non-Muslims living in peace, then they are likewise protected and their blood sacred. Understanding this, you know how wrong it is to commit crimes such as the bombing that occurred in Khobar in a place occupied by people who are inviolable - their blood and their wealth. This took place Wednesday night, the tenth of this month, the month of Ṣafar, in the year 1417 Hijrah (CE: June 25, 1996). This crime resulted in more than eighteen people killed and three hundred eighty-six people wounded. From these people (other than the Non-Muslims) were Muslims, children, women, the elderly, middle-aged, and the youth. Such incident devastated wealth and many homes. No doubt, such an action is never condoned by: 1) Islamic legislation, 2) the intellect, or 3) even by basic human nature.

8 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 357) and Muslim (82/Kitāb al-Ṣalāh) from the ḥadīth of Umm Hāni', the daughter of Abū Ṭālib – may Allaah be pleased with her.

As for 1) the Islamic legislation, you've already heard the Quranic and prophetic texts proving that a Muslim must respect the rights of other Muslims, their blood and wealth, as well as non-Muslims who have been given a trust, are under a peace treaty, or have been promised safety.⁹ Respecting such people - the Mu'āhid, anyone promised safety and security, or non-Muslims residing among the Muslims - respecting them is from the good character of the Islamic religion. And respecting them from the point of honoring the contracts made with them does not necessitate loving them or supporting everything they do. Rather, it's a way of honoring and fulfilling contracts and trusts as Allah says:

﴿ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ﴾

Surely, the covenant (treaty, contract, etc.) (about it you) **will be questioned.**

[Sūrah al-Isra', 17:34]

As for 2) the intellect, a person with any common sense would never do something as forbidden as this because he knows the evil outcomes and results of such a thing. An intelligent person would also not even do something considered permissible until he is sure of a favorable outcome and what all the consequences are. An example of this is the prophet's statement (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

“Whoever believes in Allah and the last day, he should speak only good or remain silent.”¹⁰

He made it part of the requirements and completion of one's belief and faith that a person should not say except good things. Otherwise, he should keep quiet. Similarly, it is said that also from the requirements and completion of one's faith is that he doesn't do any

9 A promise of safety is understood at a national level – if war has not been declared by a legitimate Muslim nation against another nation, then even Non-Muslims living in their own countries are not to be harmed. – T.N.

10 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6018) and Muslim (74) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

action except that it is good or he should otherwise refrain. No doubt, this horrible act (bombing) results in tremendous evil consequences of which we will try to mention the main ones, if Allah wills.

As for 3) one's own human nature opposing this horrible act, everyone with a sound, unadulterated natural disposition would hate that transgression is committed upon someone else; they would consider that as something evil. What was the crime of all those Muslims that were afflicted by this?

What was the crime of all those who felt safe and sound in their beds, in their houses, that they must be punished with such a painful incident?

What was the crime of all those afflicted from the non-Muslims, the Mu'āhids, and those promised security in the land?

What was the crime of the children? The elderly or handicapped?

It was definitely an awful, unjustifiable crime!

As for the evil consequences:

First, the foremost of these consequences is that it's a sin and disobedience to Allah and His Messenger, and it's a violation of those things Allah has made sacred, the perpetrator of which is threatened with the curse of Allah, the angels, and all of mankind. No excuses or actions will be accepted from such a person.

Second, from the evil consequences of bombings is that the image of Islam is disgraced. The enemies of Islam take advantage of such incidents to criticize Islam and drive people away from it, yet Islam is completely free of these crimes. The character of Islam is truthfulness, righteousness, honor and loyalty. The religion of Islam warns against these types of crimes and similar ones in the severest of ways.

Third, people both within the country as well as outside foreigners will all critically point out and claim that this is from the characteristics of those who strictly adhere to Islam. However, we know for certain that the ones who truly adhere to the legislation of Allah would never condone such things or be pleased with them. Rather, they're the first to declare themselves free of this and renounce it in the greatest possible way. This is because one who truly follows the religion of Allah acts in accordance with it in the manner in which Allah wants, not according to his own personal desires or opinions. He doesn't allow himself to become filled with his own emotions and reckless intentions, turning him to follow a devious methodology. Many of our youth truly adhere to the genuine Islamic legislation, thanks to Allah.

Fourth, many people throughout the world, ignorant of what it means to strictly adhere to Allah's religion, will look to the ones who do follow Islam strictly yet are completely free of such crimes, with the eye of enmity and hatred. They frighten people of them and warn against them as we've heard from some of the common, ignorant people, warning their children from connecting themselves with religion. This is especially the case after witnessing the images of those who were convicted of the earlier bombings in Riyadh (in 1995).

Fifth, from the consequences of this hideous act – the bombing of Khobar – is that it causes chaos and turmoil in this land which is known to be the safest and most secure country in the world. It houses the sacred mosque of Allah (in Mecca) which He's made a place of safety for mankind. Allah says:

﴿ وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا ﴾

And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah in Mecca) a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety.

[Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:125]

And:

﴿ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ ﴾

Allah has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, an asylum of security established for mankind.

[Sūrah al-Māi'dah, 5:97]

It's well-known that people will not be able to arrive at this sacred house except by means of traveling through this country.

Sixth, from the very worst consequences of this act is the devastation of lives and wealth, as people witnessed by the various means of media. People saw such things that caused hearts to burst, stomachs to turn, and eyes to cry. They saw children lying in hospital beds. Some were wounded in their eyes, ears, hands, legs and other parts of their bodies. You could see their eyes watching those who visited them yet they were unable to even move. Is there actually anyone who condones this or is pleased with it?

Are there living souls actually not moved by these catastrophic tragedies? I do not know what those people (the bombers) wanted from such act. Do they want rectification and the improvement of current affairs?!

Rectification will never come by such means. Just as evil does not result from good, likewise rectification will never be the result of evil means. How could something filthy become pure by that which is even filthier?

For sure, we and other unbiased people with reason and experience know that our country, thanks to Allah, is the best of the Muslim lands with regards to ruling and judging by what Allah has revealed and avoiding idle and useless matters. Destructive behavior has never been known to be from the characteristics of our country nor do we have grave-worship (that is so prevalent in many Muslim lands), and even alcohol is not sold and consumed publicly. We have no apparent churches in which other than Allah is worshipped and we do not have, as far as I know, those other things that many other Muslim lands have. So is it befitting for one sincerely concerned about Allah, His Messenger, and the believers to bring these trials and tribulations to our country? So let

the people fear Allah and not say anything but true and correct statements. Let them work only praiseworthy actions.

Oh Allah, we ask You from this place of ours now, waiting to perform one of the obligations You have placed on us (the prayer) that You eliminate this corruption and the corruptors. Allah, eliminate this corruption and those who commit it. Oh Allah, turn their plots back against themselves, turn their actions into the destruction of their own selves, oh Lord of all creations. Allah, we ask You to protect our land from the evil of such tribulations, hidden and apparent. Allah, save us from the evil of ourselves and the evil of Your servants, continue the safety in our land and increase it in well-being, You are certainly able to do anything.

This is what I have to say and I ask Allah's forgiveness for myself and you all and I ask His protection for all the Muslims from every sin. All of you should ask His forgiveness for surely He is the Forgiving, the Most Merciful.¹¹

The Bombings of Riyadh & Khobar

Question: You are aware of the bombing incident (in 1995) that took place in 'Ulayyā (a district of Riyadh) that killed innocent people from non-Muslims living in peace in our Muslim lands and other evils perpetrated by people young in age, having reckless and deficient intellects. And certainly you know the severity of this action and what it contains of opposition to the commands of Allah and his messenger, of not being in accordance with the legislative proofs, neglecting the opinions of those scholars firmly-grounded in knowledge, and disobedience and opposition to the leader. And now a new bombing has taken place in Khobar (in 1996). So could you give a few words explaining the religion of Allah (ﷻ) regarding this, warning of this dangerous way that a group of the youth – and they are the minority thanks to Allah – seem to be traversing and that this is an act derived from the actions of the Khawārij although they may not know it? So is there something of support for Allah's religion and a clarification (that you could give)?

11 Taken from al-Taḥdhīr min al-Taṣarru' fī al-Takfīr by Muḥammad al-'Uraynī (53-65).

Answer: First, no doubt this is an act that no intelligent person would ever approve of, especially no believer. No one should approve of this because it's in complete opposition to the Book (the Quran) and the Sunnah and because it harms Islam both domestically and internationally. This is because everyone who hears of this news will not associate it with anyone other than those who strictly follow Islam, saying, "So these are the Muslims? This is the character of Islam?" Yet Islam is free of this. So these people (the bombers) in actuality before anything else have harmed Islam. We ask Allah to pay them back by His justice for this great evil they have committed.

Second, these people have also harmed, by this action of theirs, fellow Muslims who adhere to the teachings of Islam because when people imagine, including even some Muslims, when they imagine that this occurs from someone claiming to be a Muslim and claiming to respect Islam, they will hate this and assume this is the behavior of every Muslim who follows Islam. It's well-known that this is not the behavior of one who truly adheres to Islam's teachings because such a person would follow the book of Allah and the Sunnah of his messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (both contradict such acts). And we all know that Allah has ordered the treaties (of peace with other nations) and contracts to be fulfilled, He said:

﴿ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ﴾

Surely, the covenant (treaty, contract, etc.) (about it you) **will be questioned.**

[Sūrah al-Isra', 17:34]

And likewise, we all know that Allah's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ

"Whoever kills a Mu'āhid ¹² won't even smell the fragrance of paradise."¹³

12 Mu'āhid: a (Non-Muslim) ally with whom Muslims have a treaty, trust, peace, or agreement.

13 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3166) from the ḥadīth of 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه).

And we also know he said:

ذِمَّةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَاحِدَةٌ يَسْعَى بِهَا أَدْنَاهُمْ، فَمَنْ أَخْفَرَ مُسْلِمًا فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ لَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهُ صَرْفٌ وَلَا عَدْلٌ

“The asylum (pledge of protection) granted by the Muslims is a joint responsibility that even the lowest in position is to undertake. Whoever disgraces a Muslim (in this respect) then the curse of Allah is upon him and that of the angels and mankind all together.”¹⁴

So fulfilling this (trust) and assuring that it's honored, could even be done by a single Muslim, though he may not be the leader. It could also be a single woman as the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) once said:

قَدْ أَجَرْنَا مَنْ أَجَرْتَ يَا أُمَّ هَانِيٍّ

“We will guarantee safety to who you've guaranteed it, oh Umm Hāni'.”¹⁵

So how much more of a duty and trust is it upon us when such a treaty is made by the ruler? This (breaking such a treaty) is the very essence of aggressive opposition to Allah and His Messenger.

Third, even if we were to assume the worst – that the country from which those killed were nationals, was a country that is against Islam – still, what was the actual crime of those people actually killed? Those people came here for legitimate reasons authorized by their governments. Some of them may not have even wanted to come nor had anything of enmity (towards Islam and Muslims). Furthermore, what was the crime of the Muslims who lived there (near the explosions)? Many children, helpless and elderly people were afflicted while they lay safe and secure in their homes, sleeping at the night in their beds!

14 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6755) and Muslim (no. 1370) from the ḥadīth of 'Alī (رضي الله عنه).

15 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 357) and Muslim (82/Kitāb al-Ṣalāh).

For these reasons, this crime is considered one of the most abominable crimes ever. Yet, by the grace of Allah, the transgressors will never be successful. Allah willing, they will be stopped and receive their justified punishment. Nevertheless, it's required for the students of knowledge to expose and clarify that this methodology is a filthy and devious one – the methodology of the Khawārij, those who make even the blood of Muslims lawful to shed while often saving the blood of the polytheists instead. Those people have no knowledge, are stupid, and extremely envious. They're ignorant for not knowing the religious legislation because it commands that the trusts and treaties be fulfilled and honored, and Islam is the religion most honoring of such treaties. They are also stupid because such an incident will only result in evil and corruption, the effects of which only Allah (ﷻ) knows. This is by no means a way of rectifying anything even though they say they only intend to better our situation. Rather, they are nothing but corruptors in reality and those full of envy towards this country and its people. We don't know of any other country that implements Islam as this one does, and all thanks are to Allah. What are they trying to accomplish with this action of theirs? They want rectification? I swear by Allah, they do not work for rectification of any sort. They're only deviant corruptors. So it is incumbent upon us to know the risk of how such false honor for Islam can lead to this extreme.

Fourth, undoubtedly, crimes like these harm this country, its people, and the safety of everyone in it. Everyone wondered how such a thing could happen in a land of safety such as this one.

We ask Allah (ﷻ) to repay these people for what they did, and that He gives the ruler and government control over them and over whoever follows in their footsteps by committing such crimes so that the ruling of Allah can be applied against them.¹⁶

Suicide-Bombings

16 From the cassette: Fatāwá al-'Ulamā fil-Jihād wal-'Amaliyyāt al-Intihāriyyah wal-Irhāb.

Question: Some people say it is permissible to carry out suicidal acts of Jihād such as they do by rigging a car with explosives and then storming into the middle of an enemy, all the while the perpetrator knows that he too is certain to die.

Answer: My opinion of this is that it is nothing but suicide and that such a person will be punished in Hell just as has been authentically reported from the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).¹⁷

...I believe that there is no excuse for one who commits this during our time because it is an ill-famed, modern-day form of suicide that's become widespread among people. So as such, it is incumbent upon every person to ask the people of knowledge regarding such acts so that correct guidance may be distinguished from sin. It is amazing that these people even kill themselves (along with others) when Allah has clearly forbidden that, saying:

﴿ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴾

And do not kill yourselves. Indeed, Allah is merciful to you all.

[Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:29]

And most of these people want nothing more than revenge on their enemies no matter how they achieve it – whether by permissible or forbidden means. They want nothing but to relieve their thirst for revenge. We ask Allah to give us the correct insight in applying His religion and in doing acts that please Him. He is capable of anything.¹⁸

17 The ḥadīth is narrated by Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) in which he said that Allāh's messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whoever kills himself with a piece of iron, that same iron will be in his hand and he will continue stabbing himself with it in the fire of Hell, living therein forever. And whoever drinks poison to kill himself, he will continue sipping it in the fire of Hell, living therein forever. And whoever jumps from a mountain to kill himself, he will continue jumping in the fire of Hell, living therein forever." It's recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 5442) and Muslim (no. 109) and has also been narrated by Thābit Ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk and others.

18 Taken from a conversation with Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn published by Al-Da'wah Magazine (issue no. 1598, 2/28/1418 Hijrah which corresponds to 7/3/1997).

Political Demonstrations & Protests

Question: What is the Islamic position of political strikes, demonstrations, and protests in mosques because some people claim to base these actions of theirs upon a religious verdict that has supposedly come from you, as they claim. They allege that during some past circumstances in Algeria, you allowed these actions with the conditions that no rioting would result and no armed resistance or similar evils. So what is the ruling of this in your opinion and what is your advice for us?

Answer: How often lies are made against me! I ask Allah to guide anyone who lies against me that he never repeats such statements.

It is amazing that people do these sorts of things while being completely unaware of what has taken place as a result in other countries in which the youth took to such methods. What did they achieve? Did they gain anything?

Yesterday, a radio station in London announced that the number of Algerian casualties has reached forty thousand in just three years! Forty thousand people (dead)! Such an enormous number of people the Muslims have lost due to chaotic incidents like these.

A fire, as you know, always begins with a single spark then becomes a burning blaze. How do you prevent people when they begin to hate one another and despise their leaders, eventually leading themselves to take up arms? Only evil and anarchy result. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded that when a person sees something he dislikes from his leader that he should persevere with patience.¹⁹ He also said:

مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى غَيْرِ إِمَامٍ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

“Whoever dies without (allegiance) to any leader, he dies the death of Jāhiliyyah (a pre-Islamic state of ignorance).”²⁰

19 This is based upon a ḥadīth narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) and recorded by Al-Bukhārī (no. 7054) and Muslim (no. 1849).

²⁰ Recorded by Aḥmad (no. 16876), Abu Ya‘lá (no. 7357), and Ibn Ḥibbān (no. 4573) from the ḥadīth of Mu‘āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) which is an authentic ḥadīth.

We must instead sincerely advise as much as we are able. As for staging public confrontations and protests, this is against the guidance of the Salaf. You now know that these affairs have nothing at all to do with Islamic legislation nor do they bring about any rectification.

They do nothing but cause more harm... During the time of the ruler, al-Ma'mūn, many scholars were killed because they refused to accept his order and say the Quran was created. He killed so many scholars and forced the people to say this statement of falsehood. Despite this, we have never heard that Imam Aḥmad, or any other of the leading Imams, ever carried out strikes and protests in the mosques. We have also never heard that they used to publicly spread his (the ruler, al-Ma'mūn) faults just to instill within the people hatred and enmity against him...

So, we don't support political demonstrations, protests, strikes, or similar actions. Correction and reconciliation can be obtained without these means. There must be some hidden hand, foreign or native (to the country), which tries to propagate these kinds of things.²¹

Praying for the Absolute Destruction of All Non-Muslims

He (Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn), may Allah have mercy on him, said:

As for unconditionally praying for destruction against all non-Muslims, this is a controversial issue. However, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) never prayed for his (disbelieving) tribe of Quraysh to be destroyed. Rather, he supplicated:

اللَّهُمَّ عَلَيكَ بِهِم، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سِنِينَ كَسَنِي يُوسُفَ

²¹ Taken from the original book: "Fatāwā Al-'Ulamā Al-Akābir fīmā Aḥdara min Dimā fil-Jazāir" by 'Abd al-Mālik Ramaḍānī (pgs. 139-144).

“Oh Allah, deal with them. Oh Allah, put them through years (of hardship) like the years of (the people of prophet) Joseph.”²²

This is a supplication against them, yet for hardship. And hardships could perhaps be for the benefit of an oppressor, for he may return back to Allah and leave his oppression.

At any rate, the important issue is that overall supplicating against all disbelievers is an issue of hesitation in my opinion. Some people use the following narrated supplication of Khubayb (رضي الله عنه) as proof for allowing this:

“Oh Allaah, count each one of them and don’t leave a single one remaining.”²³

This situation happened during the time of the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and it happened exactly as he supplicated – not one of those particular people remained until the next year. Allah (ﷻ) did not condemn that nor did the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). In addition, the fact that Allah answered his supplication indicates His acceptance of it. So some people use this as a proof to allow praying against disbelievers for destruction. However, we must look into the details of this story. There may have been some specific reasons for it which may not be present under all circumstances. Also, Khubayb prayed for the destruction of only a certain group of disbelievers, not for the overall destruction of every single person who disbelieves in Islam.²⁴

The Saudi Arabian Government

Question: What is your reply to one who says that most of the evils present in the land of Tawḥīd (referring to Saudi Arabia) come from the government itself, and that the leaders are not Salafī (following the righteous Muslim predecessors)?

²² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 804) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

²³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3989) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

²⁴ Taken from Shaykh Ibn al-‘Uthaymīn’s explanation of Kitāb al-Tawḥīd titled: al-Qawl al-Mufīd ‘alā Kitāb al-Tawḥīd (vol. 1, pg. 302).

Answer: Our reply is that this is just like those people who used to say the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was insane or a poet. We reply with the famous Arabic phrase:

لا يَضُرُّ السَّحَابَ نَبْحُ الكِلَابِ

“No harm will come to the clouds from the barking of the hounds.”

There does not exist today a country like ours with regards to Tawhīd and ruling by the Islamic legislation. Of course, it is not free of problems just like every other country in the world. Even in Medina during the time of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), there were some people who used to commit crimes such as stealing and adultery.²⁵

And he (Ibn al-'Uthaymīn) also said:

Some people today have been tested with backbiting and speaking bad about certain groups from the Islamic nation like the leaders of its affairs: the scholars and those working within the governments. They let their tongues loose when they sit, talking about the scholars, the callers, those in authority, and the governments in general which are higher in position than the general authorities. Backbiting these people is an even greater sin and its effects are worse, causing dissension and division within the Muslim nation...

Oh brothers, certainly backbiting those in authority like the leaders and scholars is not only backbiting those individuals, but it's also backbiting and destroying what they stand for regarding their responsibilities. So when people talk badly about the scholars, the overall status and importance of scholars diminishes in the eyes of the people. Furthermore, what the scholars may say and advise with from the legislation of Allah then loses its weight. This in turn results in people not acting in accordance with the legislation – all caused by that initial backbiting.

In that, there is a weakening of the religion of Allah (ﷻ) among the common people. So people who speak badly of those in authority like the nation's leaders and governments, they harm the entire society. They don't harm only the government, but the whole society. This leads to infringement upon the safety and security of the society, its stability, and

²⁵ From the cassette, al-Radd 'alá Aḥmad Salām.

public order. When people dishonor their leaders (kings, presidents, etc.) and governments, their status and reputations are lowered among all the common masses. They begin to renounce allegiance to them, stop acting in compliance with what they command, and disregard whatever they may prohibit. At such a time, anarchy becomes acceptable to the society, each individual becoming his own leader. Then the affairs of corruption set in and the people live in chaos and disorder having no direction and leadership. So backbiting is a major sin and not something to be taken lightly.²⁶

Obeying the Governments & Authorities

Question: There are some people who are confused with regards to obeying the authorities. Some say that (1) giving the pledge of allegiance is only to be done to the main leader of all the Muslims in the world. Others say that (2) nothing is binding of obedience upon them because they did not personally go and pledge allegiance before the ruler, while others claim that (3) such obedience is only to the king and not to others of (lesser) authority. What do you say about this?

Answer: No doubt, this is incorrect. If such a person were to die, he would die in a state of Jāhiliyyah because he would die while not having allegiance to anyone.²⁷ The general rule in Islamic legislation is that Allah says:

﴿ ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴾

That is the Book. There is no doubt in it, and it is guidance for the Muttaqīn

(those who are constantly fearful of Allaah).

[Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:2]

If no supreme leader over all Muslims in the world exists, then whoever happens to be the leader in one's region – he is the leader. Otherwise, if we were to accept this erroneous opinion, then that would mean there is no legitimate Muslim leader of anyone

²⁶ From the book: Wujūb Ṭā'ah al-Ṣultān fī Ghayri Ma'ṣiyah al-Raḥmān by Shaykh Muḥammad al-'Uraynī (pgs. 51-52).

²⁷ He's referring to the ḥadīth, "Whoever meets Allāh (dies) with no allegiance of obedience upon him, he dies in a state of Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic state of ignorance)." It is recorded by Muslim (no. 4770). - T.N.

today, and everyone that dies do so in a state of Jāhiliyyah (according to the ḥadīth) Who says this?

The Islamic nation during the time of the companions was widely spread out. You know that ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Zubayr was in Mecca, (the leaders of) Banū ‘Umayyah were in al-Shām (Syria), some people were in Yemen, and others in Egypt. The Muslims have always held the belief that the pledge of obedience is binding upon them to whoever is in authority over the land in which they reside. They pledge to obey him, calling him the “Leader of the Believers”. No one denies that. Rejecting this is a form of inciting dissension and mutiny among the Muslims from the point of one assuming that there’s no obedience to anyone binding upon him and because it is contradictory to the unanimous opinions of the Muslims since the earliest times.

The messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

اسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَإِنْ اسْتَعْمِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدٌ حَبَشِيٌّ

“Listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave is put in authority over you.”²⁸

That’s the reply to the first issue.

The second one says he hasn’t personally given this oath of obedience to anyone. This is actually the call of the ignorant, from the most ignorant servants of Allaah. When the Companions gave the pledge to Abū Bakr, did every single crippled person, elderly, and child physically come and give the pledge or was it mainly those of position and authority?

Those people having status among the people and authority were the ones who came and physically gave the pledge of obedience. Did all of the people from the children, the elderly, male and female, all come and give the oath personally? If the people of position and authority give the oath of obedience to the leader of any land, then the pledge of allegiance is complete, such a leader is then a legitimate leader, and obedience to him is binding upon the people.

²⁸ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 661) and Muslim (4732).

The third says all the people did not give the pledge to the king. How do they know the people did not give this pledge to the king? Of course the people gave the oath of obedience to the king. I was present during the pledge of allegiance to King Khalid (the former king of Saudi Arabia) and King Fahd (the king of Saudi Arabia at the time Ibn al-'Uthaymīn gave this ruling). Yes, it's correct that every single child and elderly person did not physically come and make this pledge before him, but it was the people of position and authority that made it.

Furthermore, if a person is placed in authority over any land and were he to have an heir, then his heir could be the leader after him. If the leadership of the first ends, the second would become the leader even if the people did not actually come to him personally to renew the allegiance. This is for the ease and well-being of the people.

If we were to say there's no contract of leadership for the second unless and until he is given the pledge of obedience by the people again, then turmoil and disorder would result. Such opinions are thrown into the hearts of ignorant people by Satan in order to divide the body of Muslims and to sow discord among the people as the messenger (صلى)

(الله عليه وسلم) explained in his statement:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ أَيْسَ أَنْ يُعْبَدَ فِي جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ وَلَكِنْ فِي التَّحْرِيشِ

“Indeed, Satan has lost all hope of ever being worshipped in the Arabian Peninsula. However, he will sow discord among them.”²⁹

So convey my advice to such people to fear Allah (ﷻ) and to know that they are now under the leadership and obedience of the one in authority over him so that they don't die in a state of Jāhiliyyah.³⁰

Categories of Obedience to the Leaders

²⁹ Recorded by Muslim (no. 2812).

³⁰ Taken from Naẓarāt Taṣṭīyyah by Doctor Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd Allāh Abū al-Khayl, the vice president of Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (pg. 473).

Question: Is it compulsory to comply with everything that the leaders command or is it the case that some commands are obligation upon us and some merely recommended? How do we distinguish between them, may Allah reward you?

Answer: The commands from the leaders are of various categories:

The First Category is those commands that it's not permissible to obey them in – that is, if a leader commands something of disobedience to Allah such as ordering one to shave his beard or commands other sinful acts. Regarding such things, there's no obedience to him because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ﴾

Oh you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.

[Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:59]

He connected the obedience to those in authority to the obedience of Allah and his Messenger without repeating the action (the verb: “obey”) again, indicating that the obedience to those in authority is conditional based upon the obedience to Allah and his messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said:

إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

“Obedience is in that which is good.”³¹

Meaning whatever does not contain anything of sins. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) once sent a man on an expedition and instructed the people with him to obey him. One day, they angered the man so he ordered them to gather wood and they did. He then ordered them to start a large fire and they did. He then commanded them to throw themselves in

31 The full text and details of the ḥadīth are given in the following footnote, no. 32.

it. They refused saying, “We only followed the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) out of fear of the fire!” When they returned to the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), they informed him of the incident to which he said:

إِنَّهُمْ لَوْ دَخَلُوهَا مَا خَرَجُوا مِنْهَا، إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

“Indeed, had they entered it, they would never have come out from it. Obedience is only in that which is good.”³²

That’s the first category.

The Second Category is when the leader commands whatever Allah commands or His Messenger of acts of worship. So if they are religious obligations such as instructing the people to observe congregational prayer, then obedience here is mandatory from two perspectives:

1. Such acts are obligations in the Islamic legislation even if the leader had not ordered it.
2. The obligation is reinforced even more when the leader also commands it.

The Third Category is when he orders the performance of acts of worship that are not obligations yet are still legislated. An example would be if he were to order the people to fast saying, “Oh people, fast tomorrow because we are going to all collectively pray to Allah for rain tomorrow and the supplication of the fasting person is accepted, so fast tomorrow.” In this case, obedience to him is not explicitly compulsory because this is an act of worship between the individual servant and his Lord, so obedience is not a direct obligation.

The Fourth Category is when the leader commands that which helps to preserve public safety and security and the general well-being of the society. In this case, obedience to

32 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 4085) and Muslim (no. 1840).

him is an obligation even if Allah and His Messenger did not explicitly order it, and as long as it contains nothing of sin. An example is the laws prevalent now which have been accepted; they do not contradict Islam at all. It's required to obey the leader regarding such laws, and whoever breaks these laws and opposes them, he's a sinner. This is what comes to mind right now of the categories of obedience to the leaders.

There is an issue now: some people, out of their pride and honor for the religion of Allah (ﷻ), if they see crimes and evil deeds among the people which may be circulated in the newspapers, radio stations, or seen on some satellite channels, they begin attacking and accusing the government of falling short and being responsible for these things. They go and publicize the faults of the government among the people, inciting the hearts against the leadership. In turn, this causes the people to begin hating the authorities over them. This is actually a very serious mistake contradictory to Islamic legislation, dangerous to the society, and a cause for future trials and tribulations. If such people would only rush to advise and correct the society starting with themselves, it would have been better for them. For example, those things circulated by the various means of communication, whether written, heard, or seen – these people should rather warn others from those specific issues (instead of warning against the government). For example, they could warn against certain magazines, against watching certain shows which are harmful to one's religion and life. They could warn people from dealing with usury, for example. If the whole society begins to rectify and improve itself, the leader, as part of this society, would likewise improve whether he's aware of it or not.

As for those who pour out their so-called pride and honor for Islam upon the leaders in order to incite the people's hearts against them, this results only in evil and corruption and is without doubt a wrong approach. You all know the great afflictions that occurred during the time of 'Alī (ﷺ). Rather, it even began earlier during the time of 'Uthmān (ﷺ) which resulted in major calamities and people began declaring lawful the taking of other people's blood and wealth. For these reasons, we hold this approach for reform (opposing and criticizing the leadership) to be incorrect and forbidden by Islam. If a person really had true pride and honor (for this religion), then he would direct others to that which is good. But amazingly, you find some people complaining and accusing the

leaders, while there're people in his society making Shirk, worshipping others besides Allah (ﷻ). Yet about this he doesn't say a word. Shirk is much greater than whatever sins committed by the leaders. Or he may come and try to twist the meanings of some verses of the Quran to be in accordance with his desires. So for example, he quotes the verse:

﴿ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

And whoever does not rule by that which Allah has revealed – those, they are the disbelievers.

[Sūrah al-Māi'dah, 5:44]

He then says that based upon this, every law and statute that opposes Islamic legislation is disbelief! This is also very wrong. Even if we were to assume the extreme – that a leader is a disbeliever, does this then mean we can incite the people to oppose him, even if it causes revolt, chaos, and killing? This is definitely wrong. The kind of rectification and improvement desired will never come by this approach. Rather, the only thing it will bring is great corruption because if, for example, a group of people rise up in opposition to the leaders of some country and those leaders have strength and authority that the opposing insurgents do not have, what will happen? Will this insignificant minority prevail? It will not. On the contrary, the opposite will happen. Evil and anarchy will result and the public affairs will be in complete disorder. It is essential that an individual looks first from the Islamic legislative point of view and not just blindly look at the texts (of the Quran or sunnah) from a single perspective. We should consider all the texts together.

A person should also look at the situation with the eye of intellect and wisdom. What will come about from this thing? So, we believe these ways of rectification (criticizing the leaders, rebellion, etc.) to be wrong and very dangerous. It is not permissible for anyone to support or assist someone in such things. One must instead clearly reject these methods. We don't speak directly against the government, but we speak in general terms.

With regards to this government (of Saudi Arabia), thanks to Allah, this is a country ruled according to the Islamic legislation. The judges do not pass rulings except based upon

Islamic legislation. Nation-wide fasting is established, the pilgrimage is established, religious lessons are given in the mosques. As for whatever crimes or problems occur, then we must prevent the further evil and its causes. And if we look at our country, thanks to Allah, we don't see things like tombs and monuments being built over graves, religious rites being performed at gravesites, or other heretical Sufi innovations. Sure, some individuals may practice some aspects of Sufism and similar things, but they aren't public and apparent. Every society has problems, but if we compare this kingdom to other countries close to it, we see a big difference. In other countries, alcohol is publicly served and sold in the grocery stores, restaurants remain open during the days of Ramadan, people eating and drinking as they like. You even find prostitutes out in the open. Some people told me that when tourists visit certain countries, as soon as they leave the airport, they are confronted with young girls and even boys – we seek refuge with Allah from this. They are asked, “What would you prefer, a young boy or girl?” This is open in public! How far Allah is above deficiencies.

So the individual must look at the reality of his government and country and not go around publicizing and spreading the faults of his rulers, whether they are excused due to some reasons or not. These people are often blind to the overall well-being and benefit of the nation. Such a government may have something of good within it. Overlooking this and focusing on its faults is not justice and Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ﴾

Oh you who believe, stand up firmly for Allah and be just witnesses and don't let the enmity and hatred for others cause you not to do justice. Be just, that is closer to righteousness.

[Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:8] ³³

33 Taken from the cassette, Aḥdāf al-Ḥamalāt al-'Ilāmiyyah ʿĪd Wulāh wa 'Ulamā' Bilād al-Ḥaramayn. See also the book: Naẓarāt Taṣīliyyah by Doctor Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd Allāh Abū al-Khayl, the vice president of Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (pg. 473).

Boycotting Products Manufactured by Non-Muslims

Question: There is a drink called “Cola” that is supposedly produced by a Jewish company. So what is the ruling of consuming this drink, or of selling it? Is this considered cooperating in something that is sin and transgression?

Answer: You have never heard that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to buy food from a Jewish man to feed his family?! He died while his shield was pawned to this Jewish man.³⁴ You have never heard that the messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to accept gifts from the Jews?!³⁵ If we are going to go so far as to say this, then let us not overlook something even more obvious: we use automobiles that are manufactured by Jewish companies. There are other beneficial products made only by them...³⁶

34 This is mentioned in the had ĩth recorded by Al-Bukhārĭ (no. 2068) and Muslim (no. 4090).

35 This is mentioned in the had ĩth recorded by Al-Bukhārĭ (no. 5777).

36 Taken from: al-Bāb al-Maftūh (no. 61-70, pg. 95).