

Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn on the 1996 Khobar Bombing¹

The Shaykh, may Allāh 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,² it's been authentically established that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

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.”³

And 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) said that Allāh'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.”⁴

'Abd Allāh 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.”⁵

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

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

4 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6862).

5 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6863).

'Abd Allāh 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 Allāh 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), Allāh says in his book:

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

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 Allāh (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 Allāh is upon him and that of the angels and mankind all together and none of his optional or compulsory deeds will be accepted."⁶

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

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 Allāh, the angels, and all of mankind.

So we curse whoever is cursed by Allāh, His Messenger, and the angels. We don't accept anything from such a person. It's also reported in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī that Umm Hāni', 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?”

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

مَرْحَبًا يَا هَانِي

“Welcome, Umm Hāni'.”

She said:

“Oh Messenger of Allāh, 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 هَانِي

“We will guarantee safety to who you have guaranteed it, oh Umm Hāni'.”⁷

7 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.

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 Şafar, 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.

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.⁸ 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 Allāh says:

﴿ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ﴾

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

[Sūrah al-Isra', 17:34]

⁸ 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.

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 Allāh and the last day, he should speak only good or remain silent.”⁹

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 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 Allāh 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?

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

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 Allāh and His Messenger, and it's a violation of those things Allāh has made sacred, the perpetrator of which is threatened with the curse of Allāh, 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 Allāh 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 Allāh acts in accordance with it in the manner in which Allāh 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 Allāh.

Fourth, many people throughout the world, ignorant of what it means to strictly adhere to Allāh'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 Allāh (in Mecca) which He's made a place of safety for mankind. Allāh 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 لِّلنَّاسِ ﴾

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

[Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 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 Allāh, is the best of the Muslim lands with regards to ruling and judging by what Allāh 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 Allāh 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 Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers to bring these trials and tribulations to our country? So let the people fear Allāh and not say anything but true and correct statements. Let them work only praiseworthy actions.

Oh Allāh, 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. Allāh, eliminate this corruption and those who commit it. Oh Allāh, turn their plots back against themselves, turn their actions into the destruction of their own selves, oh Lord of all creations. Allāh, we ask You to protect our land from the evil of such tribulations, hidden and apparent. Allāh, 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 Allāh'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.¹⁰

¹⁰ Taken from al-Taḥdhīr min al-Taṣarru' fī al-Takfīr by Muḥammad al-'Uraynī (53-65).