

Şāliḥ al-Fawzān¹ on Terrorism & Related Issues²

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¹ Şāliḥ al-Fawzān: One of the leading scholars of Saudi Arabia today and a member of the Permanent Council of Senior Scholars. (born 1354 Hijrah / 1933). – Translator's Note (T.N.)

² 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.

Plane Hijackings & Bombings

Question: What is the Islamic perspective of hijacking planes, blowing up structures, carrying out acts of rebellion and seeking to overthrow (the rulers, governments), and acts of insurgence and revolution? Are these legitimate means according to Islam?

Answer: All these are despicable actions that Islam has forbidden. They harm Muslims and Non-Muslims may use them as support and justification for attacking and conquering the Muslims. This is exactly what non-Muslims use to criticize and blame Islam for, describing it as a religion of terrorism and they do this only as a result of these incidents. Allah (ﷻ) has instructed that when at war with people like non-Muslims, they are only to be fought for a purpose, under the support of all Muslims and their leaders. As for the issue of bombings, destruction, and plane hijackings, this is all forbidden in Islam because these crimes cause harm to the Muslims first and foremost before anyone else and because they produce no benefit whatsoever.³

Suicide Bombings

Question: Are bombings and acts of suicide considered legitimate means of propagating Islam?

Answer: Those people who carry out these kinds of acts assuming they are calling to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), they themselves are

³ From the cassette: Mu'āmalah al-Kuffār.

in need of being called to (Islam and having it propagated to them)! How could someone be promoting Islam among people while at the same time carrying out explosions and acts of destruction? This is not calling and propagation. Instead, it is deterrence and repelling (people from Islam).

Did the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) propagate the religion this way? When he was in Mecca, was there even a single day that he or his companions destroyed anything or carried out any act of devastation? Of course not, he did the very opposite; he used to call to his Lord with wisdom and good preaching, requesting the people to join and assist him in this. He never carried out any destructive acts among people because this harms the Muslims the most and even causes some of the non-Muslims to rejoice. So, it is never permissible or condoned (by Islam). It is rather a way of calling to Satan and calling to the fire (Hell). Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ ﴾

And we have made them leaders calling to the Fire.

[Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:41]

And He says:

﴿ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ ﴾

Those invite to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise.

[Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:221]

So, it is possible for someone's way of calling and propagation to actually be a call to the Fire if that call is to misguidance as the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لَا يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ
آثَامِهِمْ شَيْئًا

“Whoever calls to misguidance, there is upon him a sin similar to the sin of anyone who follows him in that without taking anything away from their own sins.”⁴

So, it is certainly possible that such a call could really be to the Fire and not to the truth.⁵

Political Demonstrations

Question: Is staging political demonstrations a legitimate way to correct and resolve the problems of the Islamic nation?

Answer: Our religion is not one of chaos and anarchy. Our religion is one of discipline and order, calmness and serenity. Staging political demonstrations was never originally from the actions of Muslims as they never knew of such things before. Islam is a religion of calmness and mercy and discipline. Chaos, disorganization, and the inciting of tribulations are not from Islam. This is Islam, and the rights of all people are fulfilled and earned by seeking them in the manner Islam has legislated. Demonstrations mostly result

⁴ Recorded by Muslim (no. 2674) from the Ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

⁵ Taken from the cassette: Fatāwá al-'Ulamā' fī al-Aḥdāth al-Rāhinah allatī Ḥadathat bisharq Madīnah ar-Riyādh.(1424 Hijrah / 2004).

in bloodshed and the destruction of property and wealth. Such things are not permissible.⁶

The Khawaarij Ideology

Question: Are there present today those who have the same ideologies of the Khawārij?

Answer: All of this that is prevalent today – is it not from the actions of the Khawārij?! Making Takfīr⁷ of Muslims and even worse – killing fellow Muslims and hating them? This is the exact methodology of the Khawārij. It includes three things:

1. Making Takfīr of other Muslims.
2. Renouncing obedience to the leader or government.
3. Declaring the blood of other Muslims lawful to spill.

This is precisely the methodology of the Khawārij. Even if a person were only to believe any of these things with his heart, yet he may not actually speak or do anything of them, he is still one of the Khawārij in his baseless belief and opinions.⁸

Harming Muslim Security Officers & Investigators

⁶ Taken from the cassette: Fatāwá al-'Ulamā' fī Ḥukm al-Tajjīrāt wa al-Muzāharāt wa al-Ightiyālāt.

⁷ Takfīr: The indiscriminate declaring of people to be disbelievers regardless if they declare belief or not. [T.N.]

⁸ Taken from the cassette: Fatāwá al-'Ulamā' fī al-Aḥdāth al-Rāhinah allatī Ḥadathat bisharq Madīnah ar-Riyādh.(1424 Hijrah / 2004).

Question: It seems to have spread among many of the youth the notion that it is permissible to kill security officers and especially the investigators (in the Muslim lands). This baseless claim is based on a religious verdict allegedly attributed to some students of knowledge, claiming that such rulers and governments are considered disbelieving apostates. We hope you will clarify the Islamic legislative ruling regarding this.

Answer: This is the methodology of the Khawārij. The Khawārij were the same ones who killed ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه), the best companion after Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān. So, those who have the audacity to kill ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, would they not then kill security officers? This is exactly from the Khawārij methodology. As for the one who issues to them a religious verdict allowing this, then he’s just like them and one of them. We seek safety from Allah.⁹

Harming Americans

Question: Some people give religious verdicts allowing the killing of Americans in all lands throughout the world, saying they are all at war (with Islam and the Muslims). What do you say about this?

Answer: Such a person giving this verdict is ignorant because this is a detailed matter. As for someone that has a peace agreement with us and he enters our country legally in safety or if we (our government) have requested them to come to perform some work we need from them, then such people are under a covenant of safety from us and a peace treaty. It is not permissible for anyone to act treacherously towards such people nor is it permissible to harm or kill them. Any country that there exists between them and us a

⁹ Taken from the cassette: Fatāwā al-‘Ulamā’ fī al-Aḥdāth al-Rāhinah allatī Ḥadathat bisharq Madīnah ar-Riyādh.(1424 Hijrah / 2004).

treaty or diplomatic relations, it is forbidden to act hostile against them. Those Non-Muslims who have entered our country legitimately with permission (by obtaining a visa), it is forbidden to harm them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ 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 Allah (the Quran), and then escort him to his place of safety and security.

[Sūrah al-Tawbah, 9:6]

So, it is not allowed to harm or act treacherously against anyone who enters any land of the Muslims legally with their permission or if the Muslims request their presence. Such talk is forbidden.¹⁰

Praying for Absolute Destruction of Non-Muslims

Question: Regarding going to extremes in supplication by praying for the absolute destruction of every non-Muslim and for them to be removed from existence, what has been legislated about this?

Answer: What is legislated in supplication is to pray against only the transgressors among the non-Muslims. This is because the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), whenever he used to supplicate in prayer, he would specify only the transgressors among them. He would not pray against all of them inclusively. Instead, he would say, for example, “Oh

¹⁰ Taken from the cassette: Fatāwá al-‘Ulamá’ fī al-Aḥdāth al-Rāhinah allatī Ḥadathat bisharq Madīnah ar-Riyādh.

Allah, condemn this person and that tribe.” He would not absolutely include every single person who disbelieves.¹¹

Boycotting American Products

Question: These days, we find written in some newspapers people calling others to boycott American products, not to buy or sell them. It was even written today in a newspaper that Muslim scholars themselves call for such boycotts and that doing this is an obligation upon every single Muslim. It is said that to purchase even one item from these products is forbidden and that anyone who does so commits a major sin and is assisting them and the Jews in killing Muslims. We hope you will clarify this matter since there’s a dire need for such clarification. Also, would a person ever be rewarded for doing this (boycotting)?

Answer: First, I would request a copy or the clipping from this newspaper that contains this kind of talk the questioner mentioned.

Second, this is incorrect. The scholars have never issued religious verdicts saying that buying American products is forbidden. These American goods are still imported and sold in Muslim markets. And even so, it wouldn’t harm America in the least if you yourself did not buy their products. No products are to be boycotted unless the government, the legitimate ruler, issues a sanction or boycott against another country. In this case, the boycott would be legitimate and binding. As for just some individuals wanting to do this and passing their own religious verdicts in support of it, then this is forbidding something that Allah has made permissible and that is not allowed.¹²

¹¹ Taken from the magazine: al-Da’wah (no. 1869, the month of Ramadan 1423 Hijrah).

¹² Taken from the cassette: “Fatāwā al-‘Ulamā’ fī al-Jihād wa al-‘Amaliyyāt al-Intihāriyyah”.

Is it Betrayal to Turn the Terrorists in to the Authorities?

Question: Honorable Shaykh, some of the youth come sometimes and ask about this issue: if I find someone who defends these people (the Khawārij, terrorists, etc.) and their plots, should I turn them in and inform (the authorities) of them? Some people consider this to be a form of betrayal on the part of the authorities, and that it is impermissible to do this. We hope your eminence will explain this.

Answer: The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ

“The religion is sincerity (giving sincere advice).”

He repeated this three times. We (the companions) asked, “To whom, messenger of Allah?” He answered:

لِلَّهِ ، وَلِكِتَابِهِ ، وَلِرَسُولِهِ ، وَلِلْأئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ

“To Allah, His book, His messenger, to the leaders of the Muslims and their common people.”¹³

So, anyone who falls into these issues, he should be sincerely advised and explained the reality of these matters. If he desists, then thanks are due to Allah. If he does not desist

¹³ Recorded by Muslim (no. 55).

yet he keeps quiet and does not actually do anything, then leave him – his sin is upon himself. But if he actually and outwardly does something to deceive other Muslims or always talks about it, spreading this filthy ideology, then it is an obligation to turn him in. This is a part of being sincere to Allah, His book, His messenger, to the Muslim leaders and the common people.¹⁴

Are Today's Terrorists the Khawārij?

Question: The questioner asks about this group that has today left the Muslims and opposed them. They carry out bombings and terrorize people who once felt safe. Are these people truly part of the Khawārij or are they disbelievers?

Answer: This group that has left the Muslims, rebelling against them – this is the result of disassociating oneself from the scholars. I mentioned the consequences of this during the last part of the (previous) lecture. They broke away from the scholars, broke away from the Muslim leaders, and the disbelievers and hypocrites put these ideologies into their heads. So, they have become outcasts in Muslim societies.

They are Khawārij, no doubt. This act of theirs is the act of the Khawārij. Rather, they are even more violent and extreme than the (original) Khawārij. The (past) Khawārij did not use to destroy buildings and residents. The Khawārij used to show up face-to-face on the battlefield. They used to fight on the battlefield despite what they were upon of ignorance. But they did not used to collapse buildings on everyone inside them – women, children, the innocent, those at peace with Muslims, people with whom Muslims have a treaty, and other people guaranteed safety. The Khawārij used not to do this. This is worse and more

¹⁴ This question was answered by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān verbally and the audio clip can be found at: <http://www.fatwa1.com/anti-erhab/lrhabion/lrhabion.html>. This particular audio clip is no. 20 in the list and contains three questions answered by the Shaykh; this is the third one.

violent than the actions of the (original) Khawārij. This is more like the actions of the Qarāmiṭah (a severely violent, misguided sect). They are more like the Qarāmiṭah because the actions of the Qarāmiṭah are secret, based on secrecy and underhandedness and what these people today do is also based on secrecy. The (former) Khawārij – their actions were not kept hidden and secret; they would make themselves and their objectives known, publicly announcing them. So, these people are even worse than Khawārij.¹⁵

How Do We Deal with Those Who Try to Validate Terrorist Acts?

Question: You find among some of the youth people who do not consider what has occurred of bombings and similar actions (to be evil). They approve of, or try to validate some actions of this group...¹⁶

Answer: Such a person is either one of two things: He is either 1) ignorant, giving them (the terrorists) the benefit of the doubt. And to him, you clarify their faults to him, and explain them until his misconception about them is gone. Or 2) he is behind them, supporting their ideas. He has the same belief as they do and shares their ideas. To him too, you clarify the truth, so perhaps he may return back. If he does not return back (to truth), then his sin is upon himself. Unless of course it appears he himself may disrupt peace and safety or attempt to deceive other Muslims; in that case it is an obligation to

¹⁵ This question was answered by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān verbally and the audio clip can be found at: <http://www.fatwa1.com/anti-erhab/Irhabion/Irhabion.html>. This particular audio clip is no. 20 in the list and contains three questions answered by the Shaykh; this is the first one.

¹⁶ [Translator's Note] When transcribing this question from the original audio, the last part of the question was not very clear because the questioner's microphone produced audio much less discernable than that of Shaykh al-Fawzān. However, I believe the last few words were simply asking the Shaykh to clarify, in a few words, our obligation when dealing with these kinds of people. And Allah knows best.

inform (the authorities) about him. If there appears anything from him that may infringe upon peace and security or he may deceive more Muslims or if he calls the youth to this (misguidance), he must be turned in and informed of so they stop him.¹⁷

Tracking Down the Terrorists is One of the Greatest Forms of Jihad

Question: Noble Shaykh, may Allah grant you success. We are a group of police officers and we would like to direct a question to you since we have been entrusted in this country with investigating those who wish to disturb the peace or oppose and reject obedience to the leader of affairs.

And we have heard of a religious verdict stating that it is impermissible to track these people down to pursue them and fight them because they are “Mujāhidūn” (people making religious Jihad), and because they want to expel the nonbelievers who fight Muslims in other countries such as Iraq. So, what is the correct opinion regarding this, may Allah grant you success.

Answer: May Allah assist you; you are the ones making Jihad. You all, by this work of yours, are in Jihad. This is because by doing this, you intend to prevent the people of falsehood, secure the peace, and safeguard people’s lives, honor, and wealth. So, you are the ones making Jihad; may Allah assist you. And the reward of the Mujāhidīn will (instead) be written for you and for your compliance and obedience to the leader of the

¹⁷ This question was answered by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān verbally and the audio clip can be found at: <http://www.fatwa1.com/anti-erhab/Irhabion/Irhabion.html>. This particular audio clip is no. 20 in the list and contains three questions answered by the Shaykh; this is the second one.

Muslims. This job of yours is a respectable, dignified job, very honorable. So, have no doubt about this.

As for someone who issues a religious verdict that this (what the terrorists do) is Jihad – who says this is Jihad? Are the people who issue such rulings dependable, respectable or are they simply supporters and defenders – ignorant people? They are definitely not scholars, these people. Has a single, dependable and respectable scholar ever said that this is Jihad? Never. It is a lie. This (the actions of the terrorists) is not Jihad. Rather, it is sinning against Allah and His messenger, a violation and transgression against what Muslims hold sacred, and opposition and rebellion against the obedience to the leader of Muslim’s affairs. All of these things are sins – major sins, may Allah protect us. So, it is not a form of Jihad. This is – yes, this is for the sake of Satan, not for the sake of Allah because it harms Muslims.

As for expelling nonbelievers – this is not your business. The issue of expelling nonbelievers is a decision for the leader of affairs (ruler, king, president, etc.). He is the one who establishes a trust between them, allowing them to enter (a country) for some service or benefit the people need, and afterwards he may relieve them when their fixed period of stay ends. As for the messenger saying:

أَخْرِجُوا الْيَهُودَ مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ

“Expel the Jews from the Arabian Peninsula.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Ḥadīth with similar wordings are recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3053) and Muslim (no. 1767).

This is a decision directed towards the leaders (and not every individual). For this reason, none of them ever expelled them except 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). It is not for the people to decide and expel them. So, the one with the decision to expelling nonbelievers is the leader of a country's affairs just as he is the same one who may allow them to enter the country; this is the responsibility of a leader. And they (non-Muslims) have not come here except for our advantage and with valid visas. They have come, invited, to fulfill some kind of work whether it be jobs in embassies, companies, or whatever. They have come to the Muslims to benefit them. They have been given a trust (of safety) – a covenant – and the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

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

“Whoever kills someone (a non-Muslim) given a trust or covenant will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise even though its fragrance can be smelled from the distance of forty years away.”¹⁹

This is a severe threat. So, whoever passes some religious verdict that this (work of the terrorists) is Jihad – he is no scholar; he is either a misguided scholar who used to have knowledge or he is a complete fool who does not know what Jihad for the sake of Allah even means.²⁰

¹⁹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3166) from the Ḥadīth of 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه).

²⁰ This question was answered by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān verbally and the audio clip can be found at: <http://www.fatwa1.com/anti-erhab/Irhabion/Irhabion.html>. This particular audio clip is no. 22 in the list.