

Riots, Strikes, Demonstrations And Revolutions

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From the ruinous actions that we find in many of the contemporary Islaamic groups (Jama'at al-Islaamiyah) is that they at times will set up (sit-in) occupation of (and demonstration in) mosques, streets, public squares and/or government buildings.

They may also go on strike and wage hunger strikes for days on end. They seek with these (disastrous) actions leverage against the ruler of the land, seeking to weaken him and possibly have him give into their demands regarding a particular issue.

Other times they will turn to anarchist civil uprising and rioting. They set out on a rampage fighting those who contest them, breaking into stores, overturning cars and wreaking havoc thinking that with this action they are furthering the cause of Islaam.

They are completely oblivious to the fact that this ruinous action is in fact detrimental to Muslims and only infuriates those who they are protesting against causing them to retaliate against the (general body of the) Muslims.

They fail to understand that their actions hinder the Da'wah to Allaah and cause greater Fasaad (corruption) and harm.

The Shaykh, the -'Alaamah 'Abdul-'Azeez bin Baaz (rahimahullaah) was asked:

"Are the (street) demonstrations, attended by both men and women, which are held in protest of the ruling authority and the leaders a (correct) avenue of Da'wah? And if one of the demonstrators is killed in these protests is he considered a martyr in the path of Allaah?"

The Shaykh (rahimahullaah) answered: "I do not see the permissibility of (street) demonstrations involving men and women as a cure (for anything). On the contrary, it is one of the reasons for Fitnaah and evil, and it is oppression and transgression of one people against another without due right. The legislated means (of addressing the Muslim authority) is through written statements, Naseeha, Da'wah (calling them) to goodness using the proper avenues. That is the way of the people of knowledge. That is the way of the Companions of Muhammad (sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and those who followed them in righteousness. (The proper way is) the written statement, dialogue between those who find fault and the leader, communicating directly with him and advising him and writing to him without openly broadcasting his shortcomings on the pulpits or other public avenues. Wa Allaahul Musta'aan, aid and reliance are sought from Allaah alone." [Transcribed from a tape titled "Muqtatafaat min Aqwaal-il-'Ulamaa"]

The Faqeeh of our era, Shaykh Uthaymeen (rahimahullaah) was asked: "What is the ruling regarding (protesting by) holding a general strike from all work activity in a Muslim country in hopes of bringing an end to the secularist governing system of that particular country?"

He (rahimahullaah) responded by saying:

"Without a doubt this question entails a great deal of peril (if its answer is not understood correctly) in the scope of guiding the Muslim youth. The issue of striking from work, whether private or public sector, has no basis to substantiate its validity in the Sharee'ah. Undoubtedly, it will involve a lot of harm that will be relative to the length, need of the services and scale of the strike and this, certainly, is (used) as a pressure tactic against the government. In the question it is implied that this tactic is to be used to bring an end to secular rule (in a Muslim country). We must first establish that the governing is a secular form of government. If it is established that it is a secularist government then we make it known that going out against the governing authority is unlawful unless certain prerequisite conditions are met." [As-Sahwah al-Islaamiyah - Dawaabit wa Tawjeehaat (pg. 286-287)]

The Shaykh (rahimahullaah) was also asked: "When the strike has neared its end, the organizers put forth their demands. When the demands are not met is it permitted (for them and their followers) to face the authority with a civil revolution?"

He (rahimahullaah) responded:

"I do not see the permissibility of a civil revolution in this instance. The material strength is possessed by the authority as is commonly known, while the protestors have little in their hands beside kitchen knives and sticks which are insignificant when compared to the tanks and weapons (of the authority). Yet, it is conceivable that such a situation may take place if the proper Shuroot (prerequisite conditions) are met. We are not to hurry the matter. Any country that has lived long years under occupation cannot be transformed between day and night into a (truly) Islaamic country. We must take in a deep breath to attain our objectives.

If a person builds a home, he has laid a foundational root for himself, regardless of whether he will eventually reside in the home or depart the worldly life having never lived in it (he has accomplished something). What is important is that we set the stage for Islaam (and ensure its strength) even if we do not harvest the reward of that action for many years. I do not see the permissibility of impulsiveness in these types of issues or in civil revolutionary tactics that are mostly without substance. If a division of the army destroys a block the next one recants their previous stance."

He was then asked (rahimahullaah): "Along with the general work strike these groups of youth would also take over a place and perform a "sit-in" whereby they would take over a government position and remain fortified in it day and night. What is the ruling on this? Does it have any foundation in the legislated law?"

He (rahimahullaah) responded: "Undoubtedly this is (used) as a pressure tactic against the government and it is an action that is imported (into the Muslim lands) as far as I know. It is known that the means (actions) are relative to the intention and are judged by the intention if the action is not prohibited. The takeover that you have discussed carries the same ruling that we have just previously discussed with you regarding the general strike from work." [As-Sahwah al-Islaamiyah - Dawaabit wa Tawjeehaat (pg. 286-287)]