



Corrupt Modern Practices – Demonstrations, Sit-ins, & Strikes

Saleh As-Saleh

All Praise is due to Allah, and may the *salaah* and *salaam* be on Prophet Muhammad, his household, and the noble companions and those who follow them until the Day of Resurrection.

Previously, we discussed the legal and illegal pledges, known as *al-bay'ah*, as well as partisanship (*hizbiyyah*). In continuity with that, it is appropriate to discuss certain practices that are taking place in the Muslim world in the form of so-called protests, namely demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes. In our time, some people embrace everything that comes to us from the east or west. These practices are not an exception. This has reached the extent that some consider these practices as a means for *da'wah* (calling others to Allah). Given this, it is appropriate to determine whether this is the reality.

Types of Protests and Their Intentions

There are three specific types of protests that are used. They are demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes.

A **demonstration** is when a group of people will meet along a street or a main road carrying banners, shouting, yelling, and demanding certain things be done or to show strength. This is known in Arabic as *mudhahaharah*.

A **sit-in** is known as *'itisam* in Arabic. In our times, it involves sitting in one place (e.g., headquarters of a party, parliament, a factory, a campus, etc.) for a certain time, without leaving, in objection to some grievance, demanding that grievance be addressed.

The third type of protest is a **strike**. This is known as *idrabat*, with the origin of this word meaning refraining. As such, you refuse or hold back from doing a certain practice in order to request something. Examples of this include workers in a factory refusing to go to work, demanding higher wages or students not going to school, protesting a certain matter.

Given the definition of the different matters, the question arises how these things crept into the Islamic society. Mostly, they came from the West where they appeared originally; it was transferred to the Muslim world by primarily political and secular parties. These practices were later embraced by some Islamic groups who imitated such a methodology while trying to find some evidence in *shariah* to support these practices.

Evidences Cited to Justify Protests

It is important to note that those who cite evidences justifying these practices are not scholars. They are primarily thinkers and writers.

First, they cite the narration that when Umar ibn al-Khattab (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) accepted Islam, the Prophet (ﷺ: *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came out resting on the shoulders of two companions, namely Umar and Hamza. This was done to show the strength of the Muslims to the pagan Arabs of *Quraysh*. This hadith was reported by Abu Nu'aim in his book, *al-Hillayyah*. *al-Haafidh* ibn Hajar also reported it in his book *al-Issaba* relating it to Muhammad ibn Uthman's book of history and as well as in *al-Fath* where he related it to al-Bazaar. The narrations of this incident revolve around a person named Ishaq ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abi Farwa. However, his hadith is rejected. Therefore, this incident can not be cited as a proof.

Second, these thinkers also take as proof the gathering of the Muslims on *'Eid* and Fridays.

They twist the nature of these events to make them evidence for the permissibility of demonstrating, sit-ins, and showing strength. In response, it is necessary to note that there is no evidence in this. The gatherings on *Eid* and Fridays are acts of worship and can not be linked to these protests. These gatherings are to make manifest the symbols of Allah in worship, in accordance with the way Allah chose and commanded. We can not stretch these acts of worship the way we want as this would entail abuse.

Therefore, there is no legally justifiable stance for these protests.

Effects of Protests

The effects of these protests, demonstrations and strikes are numerous and very serious.

Firstly, they bring forth chaotic behavior to the streets due to crowding and the like, negatively influencing the affairs of people. They can easily endanger the lives of many, while also providing an environment for theft and robbery. Many businesses could also be affected; for example, if a business does not close on the day of a demonstration, the protesters may vandalize or damage the building or even label the owners as traitors. And all of this occurred in many Islamic and Non-Islamic Capitals in the World.

Secondly, even when people try to go along with these protests to protect their benefits, they are forced to close their shops, negatively impacting their affairs as well as the economy in general. If they do not close their shops they are called "traitors", "un-patriotic," and so forth.

Thirdly, these protests provide a golden opportunity for those with hidden agendas or the people of *fitnah* to infiltrate the ranks of these demonstrations, to the degree where some of them may use firearms to create a *fitnah* or escalate the confrontation between the demonstrators and the

security forces. This will lead the security forces to return fire on the crowd, potentially wounding many people.

Fourthly, these acts instigate animosity and hatred between the members of society, specifically the citizens and the security forces. Since the security forces usually try to prevent these demonstrations, there will be bloodshed and injury, which may lead to revenge attacks.

Fifthly, these practices lead to the halting of economic production in many sectors of the economy, especially during strikes. Most of the time when these groups intend to demonstrate, they ask the factory workers to join them, causing work to cease at times when the country is in dear need of collaboration between its ranks.

Sixthly, these protests disturb the overall security in the land due to the confrontations associated with them.

Seventhly, those who took these practices as a means of worship are worshipping Allah through a methodology that is not legislated and baseless. Therefore, they end up worshipping Allah through a way that is not acceptable to Him (ﷻ: *subhannahu wa ta'ala*). For any act to be accepted, it must be done with the correct intentions and condoned by *shariah*. The actions of these people remind us of the statement of ibn Masoud (*radi Allahu 'anhu*) when he said,

“Many are those who intended good but could not achieve it.”

In order to attain the good, you must work according to the *sunnah* and the legal methods.

Eighthly, these demonstrations hasten confrontations between the groups that utilize them and the government, since these practices appear as threats to the survival and security of the government itself. Therefore, the plotting begins against these groups, often resulting in

unpleasant consequences and continuous animosity and mistrust.

The claim that these protests are permissible has led to their acceptance by the rejectionist Shia' (*Raafidah*), who made such demonstrations against what they classified as imperialism during Hajj. Many innocent people were killed because of this, as is well known.

Misconceptions

There are numerous misconceptions regarding the value and permissibility of these practices.

For example, some note that other countries regulate demonstrations and permit them according to their laws. As such, they fail to recognize the harm in doing the same. The response to this is that even if the government was to allow such practices, then we should not resort to them because there is no legal evidence justifying them, and we have to follow *shariah* above all other matters. We do not follow the general motto that says, "Objectives justify the means." In Islam, the objectives must be legal, and the means that attain these objectives must be legal.

Similarly, others engage in these practices saying, "So-and-so considered these practices to be permissible." However, it is necessary to note that these acts were not practiced by the *salaf*, and had these demonstrations been something beneficial, they would have resorted to it, and we have no reports to indicate such. Moreover, when someone gives a fatwa, what really matters is the *daleel* (evidences) as any opinion without a proof can not be considered, even if it is made by the most knowledgeable of people as we are obligated to follow the Prophet (ﷺ: *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his companions who informed us all that is good.

If someone asserts that these practices had some benefits during certain times or in some countries, bringing useful results, then the response is that such results is not a proof for their permissibility since the criteria is the affirmation of the *daleel* and the acting of the *salaf*. Furthermore, we assert that if these demonstrations were successful during certain times, then most often, they failed and only lead to casualties, hastening confrontations with these groups, leading to their disintegration.

Conclusion

These are some points concerning these contemporary matters, which are counterproductive and have depleted the energy of Muslim groups and youths in many parts of the Muslim world. We ask Allah to save us and to save our societies from all forms of corrupt and deviant practices, and to show us the truth and make us follow it while showing us the falsehood and safeguarding us from that.

All Praise is due to Allah, and may the *salaah* and *salaam* be on Prophet Muhammad, his household, and the noble companions and those who follow them until the Day of Resurrection.

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