

Shakh Salih al-Fawzan's Visit to A'id al-Qarni

About a week ago, I (Dawud Adib) received an image in a Whatsapp forum indicating that the noble scholar Shaykh Salih bin Fawzan al-Fawzan was standing at the bedside of one of the most notorious people of misguidance of our time, A'id al-Qarni. Within hours of that picture's release, there was an abundance of comments—many unfavorable—about the Shaykh's visit. One brother who was dismayed about this visit cited to me the statement of al-Imam al-Barbahari concerning not visiting the innovator or deviant who has fallen sick, from his *Explanation of the Creed*. Although the brother was sincere, he had become confused by the actions of the Shaykh, since, in his mind, they were at least in contradiction to this basic Salafi principle on how we deal with the People of Desires, Deviation, and Misguidance, or maybe even in opposition to it.

I responded to the brother with two narrations: one from the best caller to Allah, Abul-Qasim Muhammad bin 'Abdillah bin 'Abdil-Muttalib (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace), and the other from the Imam of the People of the Sunnah and Jama'ah of his time, al-Imam Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal.

I explained to the brother that this affair (visiting the innovator or deviant who has fallen sick) is not as black and white as one may think.

جاء في صحيح البخاري من طريق حماد بن زيد عن ثابت عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال. كان غلام يهودي يخدم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فمرض فأتاه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يعوده فقعده عند رأسه فقال له. أسلم. فنظر إلى أبيه وهو عنده فقال له أطمع أبا القاسم صلى الله عليه وسلم. فأسلم فخرج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو يقول. الحمد لله الذي أنقذه من النار.

It was reported in *Sahih al-Bukhari* from Hammad bin Zayd from Thabit that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “There was a Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace). He fell sick, and the Prophet (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace) went to visit him. He sat at his head and said to him, ‘Accept Islam.’ (The boy) looked towards his father, who was with him. (His father) said, ‘Obey Abul-Qasim (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace).’ So he accepted Islam, and the Prophet (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace) went out (from his house) saying, ‘Praise be to Allah Who has saved him from the Hell-Fire.’ ”

I told the brother that there are many benefits from this narration, and one of them that clearly stands out was the Prophet's (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace) zealously to have people guided and saved from the Fire by the permission of Allah.

The other authentic narration is from al-Imam Ahmad, found in the book *Ahl al-Milal war-Riddah waz-Zanadiqab wa-Tarik as-Salah wal-Fara'id min Kitab al-Jami* by Ahmad bin Muhammad Khallal, in The Book of Funerals, Chapter of Visiting the Sick, #602:

قال الفضل بن زياد سمعت أحمد بن حنبل سئل عن الرجل المسلم يعود أحداً من المشركين، قال: إن كان يرى أنه إذا عاده يعرض عليه الإسلام يقبل منه فليعده كما عاد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الغلام اليهودي فعرض عليه الإسلام.

Al-Fadl bin Ziyad said, “I heard Ahmad bin Hanbal being asked about a Muslim individual visiting one of the pagans who had fallen ill. He [al-Imam Ahmad] said, ‘If he thinks that if he visits him while he is sick and tells him about Islam, he may accept it, then let him visit him, as the Prophet (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace) visited the Jewish boy who was sick and told him about Islam.’ ”

Some days later, I came across an article posted on www.sahab.net from someone responding to the same issue the brother and I were discussing, which provided an elaborate explanation to this timely affair. May Allah bless the brother and Sahab for their efforts in assisting Islam.

The following is my translation of his response:

All praise is for Allah, Lord of all the worlds. In addition, may prayers and peace be upon Muhammad, the most honored of the Messengers. As to what follows:

As salamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh,

There has been an increase in lectures and clamor from the People of Deviation and Desires, from amongst the Qutubis and Takfiris and their apprentices, concerning the [recent] visit of the erudite scholar Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan (may Allah protect and preserve him) to a [well-known] caller of fitnah. This individual who has deviated from the methodology of the Prophet (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace) and his Companions [is none other than] A’id al-Qarni.

Some students of knowledge have become puzzled about this matter, while others have become despondent. Likewise, some of the general masses of the People of the Sunnah have begun to doubt and their hearts have differed.

Consequently, I would like to point out some matters that clearly indicate the harmony of this methodology, its deep-rooted firmness, and its constancy.

First: The [true, erudite] scholar of the People of the Sunnah and Jama’ah is like the ruler who has [the responsibility of] the affairs of the citizens [in his hands]. He is the most knowledgeable of what benefits them and of what assists the call to Allah the Most High.

As a result, Allah has referred matters of a calamitous, problematic nature to their formal legal opinions and judgments. This is not [the case] for those other than them. Thus, [the meaning of what] Allah the Most High has stated:

"And when there comes to them information about [public] security or fear, they spread it around. However, if they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them, then the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have followed the Shaytan, except for a few." [Surah an-Nisa 4:83]

Hence, there is [a clear] distinction between the common people and the scholars.

Second: This visit to this obstinate contravener [to the Book of Allah, the pure Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad and the methodology of the righteous Salaf] did not occur without [thorough] familiarity (with the issue) and [deep] research. If people have these types of thoughts about them [the scholars], then they [in reality] have judged them as those who waste time and indulge in frivolous entertainment, which is not commensurate with their [deep] knowledge and [vast] experience. Indeed, the major, senior scholars have spent their youth being actively engaged in seeking knowledge and shunning enjoyment and pleasures during the prime of their lives.

So how could this ever be assumed about them in their advanced age when worldly desires have been suppressed in their hearts, and while they are [consistently] upon what they have been upon?

Third: If we really understand these two principles from the two aforementioned points, [then we will also come to know and understand that] the scholar has already realized the predominant public benefit in visiting the adamant infringer for the purpose of advising and establishing proofs [against the infringer's deviations and misguidance]. This is known from the [actions of the] Companions and their followers from amongst the Salaf of this ummah. Amongst the utmost proofs for this is 'Ali bin Abi Talib sending Ibn 'Abbas to the Khawarij for a discussion, causing a number of them to return to the truth right on the spot.

[That discussion] brings to mind two narrations from al-Imam Ahmad, [the first] from al-Imam Abu Dawud on p.276 of *Masa'il of al-Imam Ahmad*:

(a) I [al-Imam Abu Dawud] said to Ahmad, "We have relatives residing in Khorasan who have adopted the views of al-Irja'. So when we write to Khorasan, should we also extend to them the greetings of peace?"

Imam Ahmad retorted, "Subhanallah! You do not extend to them the greetings of peace?" So I said to Ahmad, "We should speak to them?" He said, "Yes, unless they are callers to [these deviated beliefs] and quarrel with [you] concerning them."

Ibn al-Muflih said in "Al-Adab ash-Shar'iyah," vol. 1, p.229:

(b) In the narration of al-Fadl: "It was said to [al-Imam Ahmad], 'And should one speak to any of them?' He said, 'Yes, unless you know of any nifaq from them, because the Prophet (may Allah raise him in rank and grant him peace) feared for the three [Companions] who stayed behind (from the campaign to Tabuk), thus he ordered the people not to speak to them. I said, 'O Aba 'Abdillah! Then how should the People of Desires be dealt with?'

"He replied, 'As for the Jahmiyyah and Rafidah, then no [do not speak to them].'

"Then it was said to him, 'So [what about] the Murji'ah?' He replied, 'They are less complicated, unless they are those who quarrel [with you]—then do not speak with them.' "

This indicates that the judgment to meet with the People of Innovation to advise them in a particular matter goes back to the scholars, who possess the discretionary ability to deal with critical situations.

Fourth: Shaykh Salih (may Allah preserve and protect him) has never been known for trying to win applause, having affection for or displaying flattery to the People of Innovations, or including them in [the fold of those who adhere to] the methodology of the Salaf like those who oppose it do.

On the contrary, he continues to unleash upon them a firm, unchangeable, cast-iron tongue. He upbraids them; even more than that, he orders to withdraw from them and not come close to them. This is known from his writings and legal decisions to those near and far.

Fifth: As we have already clarified, Shaykh Salih (may Allah preserve and protect him) has not opposed the methodology of the Salaf, just as the erudite scholar Shaykh Rabi' has not opposed it regarding this matter, the matter of giving advice and being patient with the obstinate violator [of the methodology of the Salaf]. Shaykh Rabi' has displayed mammoth restraint toward the pig-headed opponent [of the Salafi methodology]. Everyone knows that he was patient with 'Abdur-Rahman 'Abdul-Khaliq for ten years before speaking out against him. At the same time, [Shaykh Nasir ad-Din al-Albani] (may Allah's mercy be upon him) has distinguished [Shaykh Rabi'] with the title "the carrier of the flag of [knowledge] of Jarh wa Ta'dil," which is why the enemies have unsheathed their swords against him. Assuredly, this is a distinct characteristic that Allah gives to whomever He wants, just as He distinguished al-Imam Ahmad in standing against the innovators, although during his time there existed many [renowned] scholars who were persecuted and killed.

Sixth: Those People of Desires, from amongst them the Haddadis and Qutubis, deem Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan as being from the remnants of the Salaf. They have said this about him; the innovator [Abu Ishaq] al-Huwayni recently called him "the remnant of the Salaf." This is a proof that they deem him to be an extraordinary erudite scholar from among the scholars who call to the Sunnah. Despite this, they do not desire to follow the methodology of Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan in the issue of not revolting against the ruler, the issue of mawazanat, or the issue of bombings and calling a Muslim a disbeliever. This is because they oppose the Shaykh, heart and soul. But they are persistent about those issues in which Shaykh al-Fawzan and Shaykh Rabi' have differed, focusing on those affairs to create conflict between the Salafi scholars and students of knowledge. Likewise, they intend to confuse and deceive the masses.

In summary, Shaykh Salih did not go out in opposition to the ruler (King Salman), may Allah protect and preserve them both, as the Takfiri Qutubis have done in revolting against the rulers and declaring them disbelievers. Rather, he went out on the authorization and order of the king (may Allah protect and preserve them both). Likewise, his visit has not opposed his previous comments regarding the callers of fitnah, and his visit is not a green light allowing the common Muslims to listen to the lessons and lectures of those individuals or to sit with them. How could it be so, when he himself has explained the narration regarding the strike of the tongue at the end of time being like the blows of the sword?

[Translator's note: It should be noted that the aforementioned narration of "the strike of the tongue will be like the blows of the sword," collected by Imams at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, and Ibn Majah, is weak. This is due to the uncertainty of one of the narrators named Ziyad bin Saymin or Simin Kush, and the weakness of Layth bin Abi Sulaym. More than likely the Shaykh was using it to cite a point and Allah knows best!]

So it is upon the people to avoid the callers of fitnah and hold on to the well-known scholars. And [Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan] has not opposed the methodology of the Salaf in his evaluation of the benefits and wisdoms of calling to Allah the Most High, as I have previously mentioned.

From Allah comes every source of goodness.

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Dated Jumu'ah 16 Jumada al-Akhirah 1437

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Dated Jumu'ah 23 Jumada al-Akhirah 1437