

Hunger strikes and holding a vigil...

Article taken and slightly adapted from: thealbaani.site

[Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 465]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Questioner: May Allaah bless you! Is it allowed for people or some people to go on a hunger strike in front of the rulers' palaces so that they will respond to some of their requests?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ): Refrain from eating?

Questioner: Fast and condemn them, ya'nee, stand in front of the palaces and in front of ... so that they can ask for ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee: No this is a foreign, kaafir practice which the Muslims are not allowed to employ as a means to express their dissatisfaction with something that the state stipulates.

We must call to mind the Prophet's ﷺ well-known hadeeth related to this, "**And whoever imitates a people is from them**," numerous, untold hadeeths have been reported as more detailed clarification of this general, "**and whoever imitates a people is from them**," one. One of those hadeeths which can be regarded as a more detailed clarification of it is his saying ﷺ, "**Pray in your sandals and your shoes and act differently from the Jews.**"

Even more surprising is that once the Prophet ﷺ was coming back from a battle and they passed by a sidr tree which the polytheists used to hang their weapons on. So some of the Companions said, "**O Messenger of Allaah! Make a Dhaat Anwaat** [the name of that tree which the polytheists used to hang their weapons on and seek blessings from] **for us just like they have a Dhaat Anwaat**," a statement they made, "**Make a Dhaat Anwaat for us just like they have a Dhaat Anwaat.**"

So the Prophet ﷺ disapprovingly said, "**Allaahu Akbar! These are the ways** [of those who came before you]! **You have said the same thing that Moosaa's people said to him, "Make a god for us like their gods."**¹

Look at the difference between the two statements! They said, "**Make another god for us instead of Allaah that we can worship**," as for the Prophet's Companions [they said],

¹ [Soorah al-A'raaf 7:138]

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"**Make a tree for us, a Dhaat Anwaat, just like they have a Dhaat Anwaat,**"—how different they both are, that one being connected to 'Aqeedah, indeed to worship, to Tawheed and to major shirk which negates Tawheed, "**Make a god for us like their gods,**"—and the statement of some of the Companions, "**Make a tree for us, a Dhaat Anwaat just like they have a Dhaat Anwaat,**" which was not [apparently] connected to 'Aqeedah or fiqh but which we could possibly say was related to some social norms. But the Prophet ﷺ was not happy with this imitation—the two situations are completely separate, and so he ﷺ disapproved that they said, "**... just like they have a Dhaat Anwaat.**"

This hadeeth confirms that the Muslims must have a personality totally independent of the disbelievers, not only inwardly but outwardly too, [they must have] their own specific personalities that are distinct from the disbelieving nations and peoples.

So a Muslim going on hunger strike is totally like [that] shaving of the head [that I will now refer to] ... in some Soofee paths when a Muslim affiliates himself to a Shaykh who has his own [Soofee] path he has to show his total submission to him as is represented in their, i.e., the Soofees saying, "The mureed [the Soofee Shaykh's follower] should be like a corpse before an undertaker." So as part of this blind surrender which opposes the Most High's Saying, "**Say, (O Prophet), 'This is my way. I invite to Allaah with insight—I and those who follow me,'**"² they make a proclamation of this principle which goes against [true] insight by ordering those who affiliate themselves to this [Soofee] path to shave their heads.

We know that shaving one's head is a form of worship and obedience to Allaah تعالى in certain places and is something permitted at other times too as he ﷺ said, "**Shave it all or leave it all,**" and in Hajj, "... (some with) **heads shaved and** (others with) **hair shortened,**"³. And in the two Saheehs the Prophet ﷺ said, "**O Allaah! Forgive those who get their heads shaved.**" **The people asked, 'Also those who get their hair cut short?'**" The Prophet ﷺ said, "**O Allaah! Forgive those who have their heads shaved.**" **The people said, 'Also those who get their hair cut short?'**" The Prophet ﷺ (invoked Allaah for those who have their heads shaved and) at the third time said, "**... also (forgive) those who get their hair cut short.**" So since shaving one's head is a form of worship and one of the rites of Hajj it is not then allowed according to the Sharee'ah to transfer it to another occasion as the Soofees or some of the Soofee Shaykhs have done, taking it as a path and manhaj for themselves as I have explained just now.

The same goes with fasting, fasting is an act of obedience to Allaah تعالى which has its [own] regulations, conditions and pillars. If a Muslim wanted to fast al-Wisaal (i.e., fasting continuously without breaking one's fast in the evening or eating before the following

² [Soorah Yoosuf 12:108]

³ [Soorah al-Fath 48:27]

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dawn) he would have disobeyed Allaah, because the Prophet ﷺ said, "**Do not practice al-Wisaal. And if you must, then continue from suhoor to suhoor.**"⁴

So fasting perpetually—and [remember fasting] is an act of obedience to Allaah—is not allowed, then how can it be permitted in Allaah's Sharee'ah for one to withhold eating day and night in accordance with the way of the disbelievers?

There are two violations in doing so: the first is what we were speaking about earlier which is the imitation of the disbelievers. The second is that we would have made perpetual fasting a Sunnah for ourselves whereas it is not allowed [as a normal act of worship] in Islaam let alone not being allowed in acts that are not worship.

Questioner: Shaykh, this question reminds me of something I read yesterday or the day before in a newspaper where some Islamic jamaa'ahs were asking people living in some city in this country to fast on a certain day and for them to carry torches and climb up on to the rooftops with the intention of this inspiring them to victory or something of the sort, yes ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee: Strange!

Questioner: Yes, carrying torches to the ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee: I have heard of this so called fasting [that we just spoke about] but torches what?

Questioner: A newspaper yesterday, Shaykh, said take some torches and stand on the rooftops and ask Allaah for help, that kind of thing ...

Interjection: Sorry was it an Islaamic group asking them to do that?

Questioner: Yes an Islaamic group.

Interjection: That's an imitation of the Christians.

Shaykh al-Albaanee: Yes it is.

Questioner: Holding torches ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee: Wallaahee strange. I had heard about the fasting and had seen it [being done] in some mosques but [now] in this form too, Allaahu Akbar!

My brothers, this is a proof of what I said and what I always say: that the Muslims today do things based on ignorance not on the religion's rulings, because they are ignorant of the rulings of the religion—and someone who doesn't have something can't give it.

⁴ Saheeh Bukhaaree

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That is why I say there has to be purification and nurturing on this correct knowledge otherwise the Muslims will have nothing to stand on.