

## When Scholars Visit Rulers

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Ibn Abbaas narrated that Rasulullah (SAAWS) said: Whoever lives the life of a Bedouin becomes coarse. And whoever occupies himself with hunting becomes heedless and whoever visits the rulers falls into fitnah. (Narrated by Abu Dawud, al Tirmithis, al Nasai, and al Bayhaqi and is agreeable.)

Man is affected by his environment and actions. Therefore Islam guides us to which actions we should perform and which actions should be avoided and it also teaches us what environment we should live in and which people we should surround ourselves with.

The line of work one chooses affects his personality. The personal traits one gains from being in the medical field are different than those one gains from being in IT for example. Some professions make people coarse when others make them gentle. In some professions being polite is necessary for success in the field while in others profanity and rudeness is the rule. Even within the same profession one may find differences. Rasulullah(SAAWS) says that shepherds of goats and sheep are merciful while shepherds of camels are proud.

In the above quoted hadith Rasulullah (SAAWS) mentions three actions and their effects on the person who performs them:

The first is living as a Bedouin. Rasulullah (SAAWS)says that life as a Bedouin makes a person coarse and rough in their character. The difficulty of life in the desert and the rough environment demand that man develops the traits that are suitable for his survival in such conditions.

The second action is hunting. The ability to find the game and the desire to win against its abilities to deceive, hide and run from the hunter is exiting and can become an addiction. This may lead to a person foregoing the responsibilities that they have and lead to shortcomings in their religion and thus Rasulullah (SAAWS) says they become heedless.

The third action is visiting the rulers. Rasulullah (SAAWS) says that the person who visits the rulers falls into fitnah. In the commentary on Sunan Abi Dawud, Awn al Mabood, it says that the meaning of falling into fitnah here is losing one's religion.

In Tuhfat al Ahuthi, the commentary on Sunan al Tirmithi it says: "that the one who visits the ruler and adulates him has fell into fitnah but the one who visits him and does not adulate him but advises him and enjoins him to do good and forbids him from doing evil then his visiting to the ruler becomes the greatest Jihad."

The hadith here refers to the rulers of the Muslims who were Muslim but fell into wrongdoing and oppression.

So what should we say about the scholars who visit the rulers of today who have left the folds of Islam altogether? If the hadith states that a person loses his religion by visiting an oppressive ruler what would happen to the religion of those scholars who visit the promoters of apostasy and the protectors of the enemies of ummah?

Entering into the world of the rulers is a fitnah. Their world is an artificial and deceptive one when the scholars come from a pure and clean environment. The environment of the scholars is an honest and straightforward one and does not prepare them for what they face in the world of deception and lies of the kings. These rulers trick the scholars with their words and promises and they win over their loyalty by kind treatment and "gifts". Doesn't Rasulullah (SAAWS) say: "Give each other gifts and you would love each other"?

Indeed some of these scholars have absorbed in their hearts the love of the rules like Banu Israel absorbed the love of the Calf.

These rulers have entrapped many scholars in their webs and recruited them to the role of protecting them, their interests and the interests of their masters, the Jews and Christians, rather than protecting the religion of Allah and the Muslims.

But there will always be a group of this ummah on truth protecting the religion of Allah and there are scholars who stand for the truth and sacrifice for it. There are scholars today who follow the footsteps of Ahmad ibn Hanbal who stood up alone for the truth only to become the Imam of Ahl al Sunnah wal Jama'ah.