



11. Bigotry

Delivered by His Eminence
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18 Rabee' al-Awwal 1441h (15 November 2019)

All praise is due to Allaah, the Most High, the Most Exalted. He created all things, gave them the features He willed to give them, and guided them to the functions best suited for them. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allaah's worshipping servant, and beloved chosen Messenger. He will be the leader of all people on the Day of Resurrection. He conveyed Allaah's message completely, fulfilled all that was entrusted to him, and left us upon a path so clear that its night is just as bright as its day and none strays from it except someone who leads himself to his own demise. May Allaah grant an abundance of commendation and protection to His Messenger, as well as to the Messenger's immaculate family, to his wives who were the mothers of the people of eemaan, to his esteemed Companions, and to all who continue to follow their path until the Day of Recompense.

My dear audience, I counsel all of you, as well as myself, to observe taqwaa of Allaah by fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. That is the counsel that was given to all former and latter generations. By way of taqwaa, the scattered can be gathered, the small can become large, the ruined can be repaired, and the fallen can be raised. By way of taqwaa, hearts find peace, adversities are removed, fears are calmed, and a person becomes one of Allaah's awliyaa' (i.e. obedient worshipping servants). "Indeed, the awliyaa' of Allaah will not have reason to feel any fear or sorrow. They are people who had eemaan and continually observed taqwaa."¹

Servants of Allaah, in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, our Lord granted the Ummah of Islaam blessings which strengthen the ties between its individuals and place them on equal standing in terms of their responsibility to comply with His directives. All of us trace our lineage back to our father, Aadam, and our mother, Hawwaa'. Thus, no person has the right to boast that he is better than anyone else. Just because a person is light-skinned, that does not make him better than someone dark-skinned; and just because a person is of Arab descent, that does not make him better than someone of non-Arab descent. The only thing that gives a person virtue over others is the extent to which he observes taqwaa. That is the standard that Allaah gave us for true virtue. As for people's lineages, languages, and skin tones, those exist as part of what allows them to know and identify each other. Allaah, the Most Majestic, said,

﴿يَتَأْتِيَ النَّاسَ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا﴾

﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَقَكُمْ﴾

"Mankind, We certainly created you from one male and one female. Thereafter, We made you descend as various peoples and tribes so that you could know and identify each other. Indeed, the most honourable of you to Allaah are those who observe taqwaa most."² This knowing each other is to exist between people in such a way that it brings them together and removes differences or animosity that could exist between them. Allaah did not make humans into various peoples and tribes for some to transgress against others, fight them, or insult them. Furthermore, He did not make their languages, skin tones, or homelands the basis for their unity. Rather, he designated a religion for them

¹ Soorah Yoonus (10):62-63.

² Soorah al-Hujuraat (49):13.



which gathers them and does not divide them, and sets things right for them and does not spoil them. It eliminates sectarianism and arrogance from among them just as fire eliminates the impurities of iron. However, there are individuals who explain certain matters in ways that suit their own purposes, not according to the actual realities and meanings that their Creator wants from them based on His infinite wisdom and justice. Such people are led by disobedient inclinations rather than intellect, and recklessness rather than wisdom. They put their own motives ahead of dealing with things correctly, and blindness ahead of sound direction. Their actions have produced a lopsided and incomplete course that leads to terrible degrees of bias, bigotry, and partisanship.

I implore Allaah to grant all of you His protection. Bigotry breeds scorn within a person's soul towards those who are outside of his own circle, from a different ethnicity, or have a different line of descent. Having that outlook towards others is a serious sin and major ill. How could it be otherwise when the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, "It is enough of an evil trait for a person to scorn his Muslim brother." This was collected by Aboo Daawood.³

Dear Muslims, bigotry can infiltrate a person's system such that it makes his heart constricted towards others, and that leads him to give importance to none beyond himself and those within his own circle. This is contrary to being tolerant towards others. Tolerance is a quality which expands one's heart and makes it accommodate all of his brothers in Islaam regardless of whatever differences or social disparities may exist between them, such that the bond of Islaam between them always remains intact.

May Allaah grant all of you His protection. You must also realize that anyone who harbours bigotry is led onwards by disobedient inclinations which render him blind and deaf to what is correct. No person of bigotry has ever been known for being fair, impartial, reasonable, or moderate. A person of bigotry is, in fact, a yes-man who blindly follows others. His sights are set on nothing besides his own disobedient inclinations, as well as those who find his outlook appealing. Furthermore, this bigotry is undoubtedly a contagious disease and it leads anyone affected by it to no longer see matters in the correct light. Such a person sees relatively minor blemishes in his brother without seeing his own massive defects, and he finds fault with others but does not recognize the things he himself does which are far worse than what he faults others for. No one is free from some sort of flaw, regardless of whatever knowledge, status, lineage, or ideas one possesses. Many people who ignore their own flaws hide them with a barrier of bigotry so as to present an image of alleged perfection.

Servants of Allaah, harbouring bigotry wastes one's energy and harnesses it for blameworthy purposes. It amounts to foolishness which makes a person incorrectly imagine that he has some sort of special distinction and unparalleled greatness. In reality, it is like what a little cat might do if it puffs itself up pretending to be a fierce lion. I swear by Allaah that the notions such a person has about himself are as flimsy as the threads out of which a spider weaves its home. "But the frailest of homes is indeed the spider's home, if only those people realized this."⁴

Servants of Allaah, if all the preceding is kept in mind, we should recognize that when reference is made to bigotry in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, it is only mentioned in a blameworthy way, and as a feature of the era of ignorance prior to Islaam. It is a trait that stands at odds with the dignified traits and aims of Islaam. Allaah, the Most Majestic, said,

﴿ إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ ﴾

"Messenger of Allaah, remember and inform the people about when the residents of Makkah who rejected the truth ingrained arrogance and bigotry within their hearts, that being the

³ Sunan Abee Daawood (4882). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.

⁴ Soorah al-'Ankaboot (29):41.



arrogance and bigotry which existed in the era of ignorance prior to Islam.⁵

In addition, the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “Indeed, Allaah – the Almighty and Most Majestic – has ridden you of the bigotry from the era of ignorance prior to Islaam, as well as the arrogance that existed among people during that time regarding their ancestry. A person is either an obedient worshipping servant of Allaah or a disobedient individual who will end up in misery. All of you are descendants of Aadam, and Aadam was created from soil. It is absolutely necessary for people to desist from boasting about individuals who will end up as mere coals for the hellfire. If they do not desist, they will be even less significant to Allaah than a beetle that rolls dung with its nose.” This was collected by Aboo Daawood.⁶

The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) also said, “If someone rebelliously disobeys the authorities and breaks away from the people who are doing what is correct, and then dies in that state, he dies a death of jaahiliyyah (i.e. the era of ignorance prior to Islaam). If someone fights blindly with no legitimate reason, out of bigoted alliance to his own faction, calling others to them and furthering their cause, and is then killed in that state, he is killed in a state of jaahiliyyah. If someone takes up arms against my Ummah, indiscriminately killing the righteous and the criminals, not sparing the people of eemaan, and not fulfilling promises of safety given to others, then such a person is not from me and I am not from him.” This was collected by Muslim.⁷

Additionally, there was an instance when Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) heard one of the Ansaar cry out regarding one of the Muhaajireen who had hit him, saying, “My fellow Ansaar, assist me against this man,” and the individual from the Muhaajireen cried out in response, “My fellow Muhaajireen, assist me against him.” However, the Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “Why these calls of jaahiliyyah?” The Companions replied, “Messenger of Allaah, a man among the Muhaajireen struck the back of a man among the Ansaar.” He responded, “Forsake those calls because they are indeed repugnant.” This was collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim.⁸

After the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection), the Companions and their successors followed the same course. There are also many words from each one of the four Imaams – Aboo Haneefah, Maalik, ash-Shaafi’ee, and Ahmad – showing that none of them was partisan towards his own opinion, and each of them disowned any opinion he may have had that opposed the Qur’aan and Sunnah. A basic principle each of them stated for their contemporaries and successors to comprehend was: if a hadeeth is authentic, that is my math-hab (i.e. the path I follow).

Shaykh al-Islaam ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) commented that if someone is partisan towards his own family, acquaintances, people from his own locale, or those who follow his school of Islaamic law or legal theory – such that he only listens to those and no one else – that person has traits from the era of ignorance prior to Islaam. The people of eemaan are to be as Allaah instructed them: firmly adhering to the Qur’aan and Sunnah. Their book is one, their religion is one, their Prophet is one, and their Lord – Allaah – is One. None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, all praise belongs to Him in the beginning and the end, all decision ultimately belongs to Him, and all people will eventually return to Him. Anyone who forsakes ascribing to Islaam and the Qur’aan – and instead, he makes his primary ascription to a certain lineage, place, ideology, or any other path – has certainly followed the course of jaahiliyyah in choosing an ascription for himself.⁹

⁵ Soorah al-Fath (48):26.

⁶ Sunan Abee Daawood (5116). Graded hasan by al-Albaanee.

⁷ Saheeh Muslim (1848).

⁸ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (4905), Saheeh Muslim (2584).

⁹ See Majmoo’ al-Fataawaa (28/422, 328).



Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) commented that there was bigotry from the era of ignorance prior to Islaam, such as partisanship towards one's own people or tribe. Similar to it is partisanship towards certain schools of Islaamic law, or to certain factions or scholars, and declaring some to be better than others. When allegiance and disavowal happen based on those things, all of that is part of the same bigotry from the era of ignorance prior to Islaam.¹⁰

With all of that being said, it can be readily understood that bigotry is very much blameworthy and it claims numerous victims. Many have been lost to partisanship and arrogance, many families have been split due to them, many have broken away from the jamaa'ah (i.e. collective of Muslims who adheres to what is correct) due to them and then ended up facing grave consequences. When two enemies face off during battle, one generally ends up dead while the other lives on. However, if two bigots face off, both of them are as good as dead because bigotry itself destroys each one of them.

Servants of Allaah, an enlightened mind would not subject itself to the narrow ideas of bigotry. It is therefore no wonder that the enlightened mind does not allow itself to be blown over by winds of bigotry, or to draw from the influences of bigotry. Allaah indeed spoke the truth when He said,

﴿وَأَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا﴾

“Remember the blessings Allaah granted you since you were once enemies but Allaah united your hearts and you became brothers by His favour.”¹¹

May Allaah bless us all by the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and allow us to glean benefit from the aayaat, admonition, and wisdom they contain. I say this much and I implore Allaah to forgive me, you, and all Muslim men and women for every sin and misdeed. Thus, seek forgiveness from Allaah and repent to Him, as my Lord is certainly the Most Forgiving, the Bestower of mercy.



Never-ending praise is due to Allaah. He deserves the finest of glorification, and we implore Him to grant commendation and protection to Muhammad, the most virtuous of His chosen Messengers.

Indeed, the best speech is the Book of Allaah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). The worst things are those which are innovated and then claimed to be part of Islaam. All such innovations are classified as bid'ah, and all bid'ah is misguidance. You must also remain with the jamaa'ah (collective of Muslims which adheres to what is correct) because the hand of Allaah is over the jamaa'ah.

Servants of Allaah, bigotry is something blameworthy according to Islaam's pristine teachings. It follows that the same applies to all channels which foster and encourage it, whether at the level of individuals, groups, organizations, or clubs; and whether in the form of prose, poetry, or mottos. When an end is impermissible, so are the means leading to it. In contrast, when a person uses means correctly, they do not lead to blameworthy ends. A discerning individual must recognize that bigotry is a manifestation of pride, arrogance, and claiming perfection. In reality, any bigot has flaws, and people will see that and speak about them. We must always remember that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) stated, “All of Adam's descendants repeatedly make mistakes, but the best individuals who make those mistakes are the ones who constantly repent.” This was collected by Ahmad and others.¹²

¹⁰ See Zaad al-Ma'aad (2/431).

¹¹ Soorah Aali 'Imraan (3):103.

¹² See Jaami' at-Tirmitheeh (2499), Sunan ibn Maajah (4251). Graded hasan by al-Albaanee.



Among the most effective means to averting and treating bigotry is adhering to Islaam's teachings since they lead a person to remain fair, and to avoid injustice and dishonesty. A further means is ensuring that our young ones are raised with a sound understanding of unity and remaining with the jamaa'ah, as well as a sound understanding of the fact that the two sources of Islaam – the Qur'aan and Sunnah – provide solid defence against bigotry whether it be in relation to people's colour, language, gender, homeland, tribe, or school of Islaamic law or legal theory.

There is unanimous consensus among the scholars of Islaam that Allaah's Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) was the best of mankind in his lineage, religion, and message; holds the highest status with Allaah out of all created beings; and will be granted the greatest of intercession on the Day of Resurrection. However, despite that all, we do not find that he harboured any bigotry or became partisan towards or against anyone, and we do not find that he transgressed against anyone. On the contrary, we find that he said, "I will be the leader of Aadam's descendants, and I am not saying that to boast; I will be the first to emerge from the earth on the Day of Resurrection, and I am not saying that to boast; I will be the first allowed to intercede and the first to have his intercession accepted, and I am not saying that to boast; and the banner of praise will be in my hand on the Day of Resurrection, and I am not saying that to boast." This was collected by ibn Maajah¹³ and similar can be found in the Two Saheeh collections. The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) emphasized that concept by setting an example for his followers. He also said, "Do not be excessive in praising me as the Christians did with the son of Maryam. I am indeed only a worshipping servant; therefore, describe me as the worshipping servant of Allaah and His Messenger." This was collected by al-Bukhaaree.¹⁴

Servants of Allaah, in short, bigotry brings about many ills for people. It is a door that is quite difficult to close once opened. It is blameworthy, and not praiseworthy at all. Allaah is the One whose assistance we seek, and the One who guides to the straight path.

¹³ Sunan ibn Maajah (4308). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.

¹⁴ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (3445).