



5. Blackmail

Delivered by His Eminence
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All praise is due to Allaah. He forgives sins and accepts repentance, He is severe in punishing those who deserve it, He is the Most Generous, none deserves worship besides Him, and the final return of all will be to Him alone. All praise is due to Allaah and all goodness lies in His hand. He deserves all praise in the beginning and the end, and all of us will return to Him. 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 Messenger. He is the role model for all people of taqwaa (i.e. those who fulfil Allaah's commands and avoid His prohibitions), and he is the leader of all former and latter generations. Allaah sent him with guidance and clear evidences. Allaah made him a mercy to all of creation, and an exemplar for them to emulate until the Day of Reckoning. May Allaah grant an abundance of commendation and protection to His Messenger, the Messenger's immaculate family, his wives who were the mothers of the people of eemaan, his esteemed Companions, and all who continue to follow their path until the Day of Recompense.

Servants of Allaah, we must all observe taqwaa of Allaah and maintain reverential fear of Him in all circumstances, whether in public or private, whether pleased or upset, and throughout all our words and deeds. "People of eemaan, observe taqwaa of Allaah, seek nearness to Him by complying with His directives, and sincerely struggle in His path. By doing those things, Allaah would grant you success."¹

Servants of Allaah, people remain in comfort which they attain by mutual affection and mercy, so long as they are not affected by sharp tongues of obscenity or hostile hands that strike painfully. The tongue and hand are two tools which – if put to certain uses – are enough to split or even demolish the blocks that build any collective. The minds and deeds of any collective remain stable in proportion to how little effect those tools have on its structure. This is why our Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) explained the effect that the tongue and hand can have at the individual and collective levels, as well as the relationship which those have with Islaam (submission to Allaah) and eemaan (sound beliefs and righteous deeds). He said, "A person who submits to Allaah in Islaam is one from whose tongue and hand others remain protected, and a person who has eemaan is one whom others trust regarding their lives and property." This was collected by Ahmad² and similar can be found in the Two Saheeh collections.

Servants of Allaah, with that being said, it should be understood that there is something that certain people do to others by way of their tongues and hands, and it is one of the worst things for which those organs can be used. It is something that emanates from hearts that are permeated with darkness. It is something that results in exploiting others and using their weakness as leverage to achieve contemptible objectives. Servants of Allaah, the thing we are referring to is blackmailing others. Blackmail is a weapon that is only wielded by those who cowardly and weak. They use it to attack the possessions and morals of their victims. It is a weapon of deception, not defense, and it has never been considered to be a weapon of the brave, strong, or dignified.

¹ Soorah al-Maa'idah (5):35.

² Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad (8931). This wording was also collected by an-Nasaa'ee (4995). Graded hasan saheeh by al-Albaanee.



Servants of Allaah blackmail is an act of aggression that is driven by excessive selfishness, and is carried out to achieve unlawful personal objectives. It is used against the type of person who lacks the determination to stand up to threats, and it is carried out by exposing things that coerce the person to hand over whatever is sought from him. Thus, he is forced to surrender in order to avoid the public exposure of matters that are confidential and which he does not want to be known. That is what is done by vile and corrupt perpetrators who know how to attack their prey. Without any doubt, it is a form of being overpowered which our Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) sought Allaah's protection from when he would say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ،
وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ، وَصَلْعِ الدِّينِ، وَعَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

“O Allaah, I seek refuge with You from anxiety, grief, helplessness, laziness, cowardice, stinginess, being overcome by debt, and being overpowered by men.” This was collected by al-Bukhaaree.³

Blackmail is a foul action carried out by corrupt individuals. It is an indicator of depraved souls and corrupt predatory hearts that unleash criminal talons upon those who are weak. It is prompted by malice, vengefulness, and the desire to exploit; and it undoubtedly gives a false sense of power to the perpetrators. Blackmail does not have a certain thought or religion that promotes it, and it does not honour any sort of agreements or give consideration to the weak.

Servants of Allaah, the arena of blackmail is one entered by a wide array of people, all of whom share the traits of depravity, cruelty, aggression, selfishness, and willingness to use others for attaining personal gains. It is not only used by enemies or disputants. Rather, it may even be used by an individual against his own spouse, brother, or friend. When a soul becomes corrupt, there are no reins that can hold it back, and it looks at both friend and foe the same way. The only ones exempted from that reality are those whom Allaah is merciful to by making them among the people who listen with comprehension to the following statement of the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) and then follow suit. Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with both of them) narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) once ascended the minbar and said in a raised voice, “I say to those who profess Islaam with their mouths while eemaan has not reached their hearts: You must not harm the people of Islaam, disparage them for sins that have passed, or go after their errors. If a person goes after the errors of his respectable Muslim brother, Allaah will go after that person’s errors. If Allaah does that to anyone, He will expose that person even if he remains in the innermost confines of his own home.” This was collected by at-Tirmitheeh and others.⁴

Servants of Allaah, in our time, most blackmail is aimed at compromising people’s character and integrity. That is what is hunted and where people are claimed as victims, especially in this age of many new communication methods which are utilized to hunt, provoke, and deceive, and throughout which vicious wolves and cunning thieves prowl looking for their prey. Servants of Allaah, a person’s integrity is certainly one of five indispensable necessities which all people strive to safeguard. Thus, those who blackmail others violate its safety and seek to undermine the security of a collective at which they take aim. Anyone who blackmails is a rogue thief and assailant.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) described such people by saying that disobedient inclinations comprise the lead they follow, ignorance drives them forward, and heedlessness is their vehicle. They are constantly engrossed with thinking about how to achieve their worldly

³ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (2893).

⁴ Jaami‘ at-Tirmitheeh (2032). Graded hasan saheeh by al-Albaanee.



interests, intoxicated by desires and love for the immediate, and directed by the lead of every outcast shaytaan.⁵

Servants of Allaah, blackmailers are people focused on their own selfish motives regardless of the harms that may cause their victims. A blackmailer knows that he lacks the dignity to achieve his aims in lawful ways and this is why he turns into a vicious wolf on the prowl, baring his selfish fangs and claws. He is a person who lacks basic human values. He is, in fact, a shaytaan in human form.

Servants of Allaah, blackmail is a form of aggression that leads to further crimes. It may begin with extortion of money and end with physical harm. It is like saltwater in the sense that the more one drinks, the thirstier he becomes. A blackmailer does not suffice with just one act. A victim may surrender thinking that giving in once will end the blackmail. However, he will subsequently find himself targeted from more than one direction. Thus, the blackmailer grows in his craving and he does not put a cap on the extent which his craving can reach. He immerses himself in his crime and does as much damage as he can to his victim. The most frequent recorded cases are those in which young men blackmail young women. The young men do things led by their youthful vigour and the young women do things led by their emotions. However, the emotions are no match for the vigour, and the victim ends up unable to break free from the fetters of the blackmailer after having been involved in emotional promises and sinful deception. Although a young man may be doing something very wrong and hold a greater share of blame, that does not absolve a young woman of fault for placing her trust and feelings with someone whose character, religious practice, and trustworthiness she knows nothing about. She gives in despite his shadiness and ends up increasing his disease. Thus, it is no wonder that she ends up with her hands tied and her mouth stifled. When a person does not secure his home's door, he leaves it exposed to burglars. Blackmailers are motivated by their belittlement of their victims. If that was not the case, they would not find what they seek with the victims. When a person has bad rooted within him, he belittles and scorns others, giving no mind to their dignity. "It is enough of an evil for someone to scorn his Muslim brother. All of a Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim: his life, property, and dignity." This was collected by Muslim.⁶ All forms of blackmail are blameworthy, and all of them cause harm to others. Allaah has warned us against harming the people of eemaan, and threatened us with punishment for doing so.

May Allaah bless us all by the Qur'aan and Sunnah, and allow us to glean benefit from the evidences, 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.



All praise and gratitude are due to Allaah for His favours and guidance, and may Allaah grant commendation and protection to His Prophet who called people to do what pleases Allaah. 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 of things are those which are invented and then claimed to be part of Islaam. Every such invention is considered bid'ah, and every bid'ah is misguidance. You must also remain with the jamaa'ah (collective of Muslims who adheres to what is correct) because the hand of Allaah is over the jamaa'ah.⁷ If anyone breaks away from it, doing so will take him to the hellfire.

⁵ Ighaathah al-Lahfaan (1/9).

⁶ Saheeh Muslim (2564).

⁷ See Jaami' at-Tirmitheeh (2166), Sunan an-Nasaa'ee (4020). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.



May Allaah grant all of you His mercy. You should realize that there are many who have addressed the issue of blackmail. Some have been brief and others prolonged. Some have called it a problem and others a phenomenon. Whatever the case, it undoubtedly remains a moral crime, and a shortcoming which those in positions of responsibility in Muslim communities must give careful consideration. In addition, it is necessary for them to realize that treatment will not be effective unless the disease is pinpointed and its causes are diagnosed precisely. Not only that, we must all recognize that confronting blackmail is a responsibility shared by the entire community, each according to his ability. It is not limited to any specific individual or group. Families have a role to play. There are also roles to be played by the educated and even by security personnel. The treatment for blackmail has elements related to security, morality, and education. Each element complements the others and none of them is sufficient on its own. The security element treats the disease after its occurrence, while the moral and educational elements are preventative and they treat the disease before its occurrence. If the opportunity to prevent is missed, nothing less than removal is required. Nonetheless, in all cases, prevention of a disease is better than having to treat it after its occurrence.

May Allaah have mercy upon all of you. In conclusion, invoke Allaah to grant His commendation and protection to His Messenger. Allaah instructed us to do so. He mentioned Himself first, then mentioned His angels who proclaim His perfection, and then addressed you – the people of eemaan – where He said,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾

“People of eemaan, invoke Allaah to grant the Prophet commendation and to grant him protection as well.”⁸

⁸ Soorah al-Ahzaab (33):56.