

The Dislike of Praising Someone in their Presence

By Shaykh Allaama Muhammed bin Salih al-Uthaymeen



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The Dislike of Praising Someone in their Presence

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Taken From
'The Explanation of Riyadh as-Saaliheen'

Translated by
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360 Chapter- The dislike of praising someone in their presence because you fear that he will be corrupted by conceit/arrogance etc and the permissibility of praising someone who is rightfully secure.

1797- From Abu Moosa al- Ashaari *–RadhiAllaahu anhu-* who said: The Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said ‘You have destroyed or broken this man’s back.’

Agreed upon by Bukhari and Muslim

1798 – From Abu Bakra *–RadhiAllaahu anhu-:* A person was mentioned in front of the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* and another man praised him with goodness the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said: ‘Woe be to you! You have cut off the neck of your companion’ The Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* kept repeating this statement, then he said:

‘If one of you has to praise a person and there is no other option then say, I regard him to be such and such if you regard him as that, and Allaah is the one who takes him to account, and no one can testify about a person, above Allaah.’

Agreed upon by Bukhari and Muslim.

1799 - From Hammam bin al-Haarith, from al-Miqdaad *–RadhiAllaahu anhu-* that a man began to praise Uthmaan *–RadhiAllaahu anhu,* al-Miqdaad sat up on his knees and began throwing small pebbles at his face.

Uthmaan said: ‘What bothers you?’

He said: ‘Indeed the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said: ‘If you see those who praise people in their presence, then throw dirt in their faces.’

Collected by Muslim.

Imam an-Nawawi said:

‘These are Ahadeeth which prohibit praising a person in his presence, however there are many authentic Ahadeeth regarding the permissibility of doing this. The scholars have said: The way we combine these (apparently opposing) Ahadeeth is:

If the one being praised has perfect Eeman, certainty, is secure in himself, trains his soul and possesses awareness to the extent that he will not be trialed or deceived by this praise nor will this praise play upon his conscience then in this circumstance it is not prohibited nor is it disliked to praise him in his presence.

If however, any of these above matters are feared and that person is not secure, then it is disliked to praise him in his presence, and it is disliked in the strongest terms. The differing Ahadeeth, are understood in this context and according to this explanation.

What is mentioned regarding the permissibility of praising a person in his presence; there is the statement the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* made to Abu Bakr *-RadhiAllaahu anhu:* ‘I hope you are from them.’ Meaning, he *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* hoped Abu Bakr would be from those who will be called to enter Paradise from all its Gates.

In another hadeeth (the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said to Abu Bakr *-RadhiAllaahu anhu:*) ‘You are not from them.’ Meaning you are not from those who trail their garments below their ankles to show off.’

Also, the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said to Umar *-RadhiAllaahu anhu:* ‘I do not see the Shaytan, except that he follows a pathway other than your path.’

[Taken from the text of ‘Riyadh as-Saliheen’]

Shaykh Muhammed bin Salih al-Uthaymeen said in his explanation:

The author brings forth an explanation concerning ‘praising another person’ and the question arises, is it necessary for a person to praise his brother with what he has or does not have? There are different situations to this scenario.

The first situation: That there is benefit in praising him and it is encouragement for him, motivating him to praiseworthy characteristics and noble manners. There is no harm in doing this because it is encouragement for your companion. Therefore if you witness generosity, being good to others, courage and sacrificing and you mention his qualities in front of him to others in order to encourage him and make him firm in order to continue with what he is doing, then this is good and is what is intended by the saying of Allaah Ta’ala:

<<Help one another in *Al-Birr* and *At-Taqwa* (virtue, righteousness and piety)>>
[5:2]

The second situation: That you praise him in order to make apparent his excellence amongst the people in order for this praise to spread amongst the people so they respect him, as the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* did with Abu Bakr and Umar.

Concerning Abu Bakr, the Prophet was speaking one day and asked: 'Who amongst you is fasting today?'

Abu Bakr replied: 'I am.'

Then the Prophet asked again: 'Who amongst you has followed a funeral procession today?'

Abu Bakr replied: 'I have.'

The Prophet said: 'Who has given charity today?'

Abu Bakr said: 'I have.'

The Prophet asked: 'Who amongst you has visited a sick person today?'

Abu Bakr replied: 'I have.'

The Prophet said: 'These matters are not gathered in a person except he enters Paradise.'

[Collected by Muslim]

In addition to this the Prophet once spoke of the one who trails his garment on the ground out of pride and that Allaah will not look at him, and Abu Bakr said: 'O Messenger of Allaah indeed one side of my garment loosens away from me though I attempt to keep it up.'

The Prophet replied: 'Indeed you are not of those who do it out of pride.'

The Prophet said to Umar: 'I do not see the Shaytan, except that he follows a pathway other than your path.' This means that when you O Umar follow a pathway then Shaytan runs away from it and takes another pathway.

These are examples of the Prophet explaining the excellence of Abu Bakr and Umar, and there is no harm in this.

The third situation: To praise someone and to take it to an extreme and to describe him in a way that he is not worthy of. This is prohibited and it is lying and deception. For example mentioning a leader or minister or someone of this rank

and extolling him and describing him with praiseworthy characteristics which he does not possess. This is not permissible and is harmful for the one being praised. The fourth situation: someone praises another person with that which he does possess however he fears that the person being praised will be deceived by this and become amazed of his own self and becomes conceited with himself, and raise himself above others. This is also prohibited and not permissible.

The author mentioned ahadeeth regarding praising someone in his presence: 'Woe be to you! You have cut off the neck of your companion.' This means that it is as if you have slaughtered him due to your praise of him, this means that your praise caused him to raise himself (become conceited) which is why the Prophet ordered for dirt to be thrown in the face of those who praise people in their presence. If it is well known that someone does not sit in a gathering of noble standing and status, except that he praises those present, and this person is one who praises those of high status but he is not like the one who praises anyone and everyone.

This person is the one whom you hear him praise anyone and everyone, [good or bad,] time and time again but the other type of person praises any senior person, judge or scholar etc, whenever he sits with them. In this case it is permissible to throw dust in their face because a man praised Uthmaan *-RadhiAllahu anhu-* so al-Miqdad stood and took some small pebbles and threw them in the face of the person who praised. Uthmaan asked him 'Why did you do that?' He said, indeed the Prophet *-sallAllahu alayhi wa sallam-* said: 'If you see those who praise people in their presence, then throw dirt in their faces.'

To conclude it is incumbent upon everyone to only speak good because the Prophet *-sallAllahu alayhi wa sallam-* said: 'Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day, then he should speak good or remain silent.'

And Allaah is the One who gives success.'

[Taken From: 'The Explanation of Riyadh as-Saaliheen' by Shaykh Allaama Muhammed bin Salih al-Uthaymeen, Vol.6 page 562-565]