

26. Pride

Allah, the Wise, has said:

فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

“As to those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts refuse to know, and they are arrogant.” 1

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ.

“One, whose heart contains pride, (even if it is) in the measure of a mustard-seed, shall not enter Paradise.” 2

Short Explanantion

A proud and arrogant person regards himself better and superior to others and by assuming vain and wishful thoughts in his mind, adopts the conduct of Shaitan (Satan) who said: “I have been created of fire while Adam has been created of earth, and fire possesses superiority over earth.” The first sin to have been committed in the world of creation was arrogance on the part of Shaitan.

Thus, as for it being a vice, there can be no doubt or scepticism. Proud and arrogant individuals look down upon others and anticipate others to greet them and exhibit respect and deference towards them, always nurturing aspects of their superiority and greatness within their minds. The difference between ‘Ujb and Takabbur is that someone who suffers from ‘Ujb is egocentric, whereas one who suffers from takabbur possesses an air of self-superiority with respect to others and it is for this reason that his (spiritual) sickness is greater than one possessing ‘Ujb.

1) Abu Jahl

‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud, a companion of the Noble Prophet (S), was the first person to openly recite the Qur’an in front of a gathering. He participated in all the battles of the Noble Prophet (S) but was so short that even when he stood up among people who were sitting, he would not rise above them! It was for this reason that in the battle of Badr, he requested the Noble Prophet (S): “I do not possess the strength to fight in the battle; can you assign me some task by means of which I too can attain the same reward as those who fight?”

“Look amongst the dying infidels and if you happen to find anyone of them still alive, kill him,” the Prophet (S) replied.

‘Abdullah narrates: “As I moved in the midst of people who seemed to be dead, I came to Abu Jahl, the most unyielding enemy of the Noble Prophet (S). He still had some life left in him.

“I thank Allah that He has humiliated you,” I said as I sat on his chest.

Abu Jahl opened his eyes and grunted, “Woe unto you! Who has been victorious?”

“Victory is for Allah and His Prophet, and it is for this reason that I shall kill you,” I replied, placing my foot on his neck.

With great arrogance, he cried, “O’ tiny shepherd! You have placed your foot on a very exalted place. Do know that nothing is more painful for me than to be killed by a dwarf like you. Oh! Why did not one of the sons of ‘Abdul Muttalib kill me?”

I severed his head from his body and appeared before the Noble Prophet (S).

“Glad tidings to you, O’ Prophet of Allah! This is the head of Abu Jahl.”³

“Abu Jahl was more sinful and worse than Fir’awn of the time of Musa (as). When Fir’awn was convinced that he would perish, he believed in Allah, whereas when Abu Jahl became certain of his impending doom, he called upon Lat and ‘Uzza to save him,” the Prophet remarked later.⁴

2) Walid Ibn Mughairah

Three years after having been appointed as a prophet and with only a handful of people having accepted Islam, it was revealed to the Noble Prophet (S): “Openly proclaim your Prophethood and disregard the ridicule and troubles from the polytheists, for We shall protect you from their evils.”

One of the opponents was Walid Ibn Mughairah. Once, Jibra’il the divine Archangel, was with the Noble Prophet (S) when Walid happened to pass by. Seeing him, Jibra’il asked the Noble Prophet (S): “This Walid Ibn Mughairah, is he of those who ridicule you?”

When the Noble Prophet replied in the affirmative, Jibra`il pointed towards Walid's foot.

Walid continued walking until he reached the place where a person from the tribe of Khuza'ah was engaged in sharpening arrows. Walid stepped on the sharp splinters and chippings lying on the ground, some of which penetrated into the heel of his foot. His heel was badly bruised as blood began to flow. Walid's pride prevented him from bending down and plucking the splinters out of his heel. On reaching his home, he heaved himself into a chair and dropped off to sleep while his daughter slept on the floor beside the chair.

Meanwhile, the blood gushed out so profusely from Walid's wound that it reached the mattress of his daughter who woke up from her sleep. She asked her slave-girl why she had not shut the lid of the water-skin.

Walid explained, "This is not the water from the water-skin. It is the blood of your father."

He then dictated his will and left this world – departing for Hell.⁵

3) The Rich near the Poor

A rich person dressed in clean and elegant clothes arrived in the presence of the Noble Prophet (S) and sat down before him. A short while later, a poor person wearing old and tattered clothes, came and sat down near the rich person, who immediately gathered his neat garments from near the poor person and drew it towards himself.

Having observed this, the Noble Prophet (S) remarked to the rich man: "Did you fear that the poor person next to you might make your clothes dirty?"

"No," replied the man.

"Then why did you behave so?" asked the Noble Prophet (S).

"I have a companion (soul) that makes good deeds appear evil to me and vice-versa. O' Prophet of Allah! As a punishment for this reprehensible act of mine, I gift half of my wealth to the poor man".

Turning to the poor person, the Noble Prophet (S) inquired, "Do you accept the offer?"

"No, O' Prophet of Allah," said the man.

When the rich person wanted to know the reason, the poor man explained: "I fear I too might come to acquire the pride and self-conceit which has overwhelmed you."⁶

4) Sulaiman Ibn ‘Abdul Malik

One Friday, Sulaiman Ibn ‘Abdul Malik, (one of the Caliphs of Bani Marwan) put on new clothes, applied perfume and ordered that the chest containing the royal turbans be brought before him.

With a mirror in one hand, he kept trying on one turban after another till he was eventually satisfied with one.

With pomp and glory, he set off for the mosque. As he entered the mosque, he ascended the pulpit, looking particularly pleased with his appearance, and kept adjusting his outfit. The sermon he delivered made him feel elated with himself and several times during the sermon, he appeared to be obsessed with his dress and thought to himself, “I am a Sultan, young, awe-inspiring and immensely generous.”

At the end of his sermon, he descended from the pulpit and headed towards his palace. Once inside, he asked a female who seemed to be one of his slave-girls: “What is your opinion about me?”

“I find you to be honourable and joyous; alas! If only it were not for the poem of a poet!” replied the slave-girl.

Sulaiman was taken aback by this comment. He insisted on hearing the poem, so she recited:

‘You are a good commodity and investment, if only you remain forever,

But alas! For man, there is no eternity.’

As soon as Sulaiman heard it, he burst into tears and continued to weep for the entire day. In the evening he summoned the slave-girl in order to find out what had prompted her to recite that poem, but she swore that till that day she had neither come before him nor had she recited any poem. All the other slave-girls vouched for her testimony. It then struck Sulaiman that the incident had a supernatural dimension attached to it and the thought filled him with great fear and apprehension.

Not long afterwards, he departed from the world with the self-conceit that had come to seize him.⁷

5) Khusrow Parvez

Of the kings to whom the Noble Prophet (S) had sent letters inviting them to Islam, one was Khusrow Parvez, the emperor of Iran. The letter was sent to him through ‘Abdullah Ibn Hadhakah.

On receiving the letter, Khusrow ordered it to be translated. When it was translated, he noticed that the Noble Prophet (S) had written his own name before the emperor’s and this proved too hard for him to digest. He tore the letter in fury, totally ignored ‘Abdullah and refrained from responding to the letter.

When the Noble Prophet (S) was informed of this act, he prayed: “O’ Lord! You too tear apart his kingdom.”

Khusrow wrote to Badhan, the king of Yemen: “It has reached my ears that a person has claimed Prophethood in Hijaz. Arrange to send two brave and courageous persons to him so that they may bring him to me as a captive.”

Badhan sent two persons, Babwaih and Kharkh’Asrah to Hijaz and they presented Badhan’s letter to the Noble Prophet (S).

He said to them: “You may rest now for I shall hand over my reply to you tomorrow.”

The next morning when they arrived before him, the Noble Prophet (S) told them: “Inform Badhan that last night (10th of Jumada al-Ula, year 7 ah), when seven hours of the night had passed, my Lord killed Khusrow Parvez at the hands of his son Sheerwaih, and shortly we shall prevail over his empire. If you accept Islam, you can continue to rule over your region.”⁸

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1. Noble Qur’an, Suratul Nahl (16) Verse 22
 2. Jame’ al-Sa’adat, Volume 1, Page 346
 3. Paighambar Wa Yaran, Volume 4, Page 206; Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d, Volume 3, Page 106
 4. Safinatul Bihar, Volume 1, Page 200
 5. Muntahal A’mal, Volume 1, Page 36
 6. Rahnama-e-Sa’adat, Volume 1, Page 161; Al-Kafi, Volume 2, Chapter The Excellence Of the Poor Muslims
 7. Pand-e-Tarikh, Volume 3, Page 37
 8. Dastan-ha Wa Pand-ha, Volume 2, Page 126; Rauzatul Safa

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