

Chapter Six

HUMILITY AND AVOIDING ARROGANCE

What is humility?

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) defined arrogance as (Arrogance is denying the truth, and looking down at people and not giving them their due rights)
Narrated by Muslim

We will discuss the following concepts:

- 1- We are ordered in the Qur'an and Sunnah not to become arrogant and to be humble**
- 2- The pitfalls and dangers of arrogance**
 - Arrogance causes us not to hear the truth or accept it**
 - Arrogance causes us to be misguided**
 - Arrogance leads to Hell Fire**
- 3- Allah's righteous servants are humble**
- 4- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is our example of a good person who was humble and never elevated himself above his companions**
- 5- Humility is a sign of belief in God**
- 6- Examples of people who were arrogant and their fate**

Do not become arrogant

The Qur'an orders all believers to avoid arrogance :

﴿ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ

فَخُورٍ ﴾ [لقمان: ١٨]

"And swell not thy cheek (For pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth: for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster.

Luqman 31 : 18

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us not to behave arrogantly or elevate ourselves over others:

(Allah has inspired to me to teach you what you did not know of your religion, this day... and He inspired to me that you should be humble so that no person elevates himself above another person, and no one transgresses over another)

Narrated by Muslim

The pitfalls and dangers of arrogance

Arrogance causes us not to hear the truth or accept it

Those who are arrogant feel that they know everything and they are not willing to listen or accept a different point of view:

﴿ وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَلِيٰ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَانَ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَنَّ فِيْ أُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا فَبَشَّرَهُ

بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴾ [لقمان: ٧]

When Our Signs are rehearsed to such a one, he turns away in arrogance, as if he heard them not, as if there were deafness in both his ears: announce to him a grievous Penalty.

Luqman 31 : 7

They look down at other people and do not value their opinion. How can they know something that they do not know themselves!

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا

بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ [الأحقاف: ١١]

The Unbelievers say of those who believe: "If (this Message) were a good thing, (such men) would not have gone to it first, before us!" and seeing that they guide not themselves thereby, they will say, "This is an (old), old falsehood!"

Al-Ahqaf 46 : 11

The reason Satan refused to obey God and prostrate to Adam was his arrogance. He said: "How can I prostrate to Adam since I am better than him!"

﴿ قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ

مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ [الأعراف: ١٢]

(Allah) said: "What prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee?" He said: "I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay."

Al-Araf 7 : 12

Arrogance causes us to be misguided

Those who are arrogant are not willing to listen to the Qur'an or accept the signs of God. They turn away in defiance and refuse to accept their accountability. They follow their own ways and they deny themselves the benefit of divine guidance:

﴿ سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ ءَايَاتِي الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِن يَرَوْا كُلَّ ءَايَةٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الغَىِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ
سَبِيلًا ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِءَايَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ [الأعراف: ١٤٦]

Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right, they will I turn away from My Signs: even if they see all the Signs, they will not believe in them; and if they see the way of right conduct, they will not adopt it as the Way; but if they see the way of error, that is the Way they will

adopt. For they have rejected Our Signs, and failed to take warning from them.

Al-Araf 7 : 146

Arrogance leads to Hell Fire

Allah ordered us to call on Him promising that He will respond to our prayers. He also warned us of the danger of behaving arrogantly. If we feel self-sufficient and above calling on God, then we deny His blessings and we do not understand that we depend on Him, nor understand our accountability to Him. Therefore, our abode is in Hell:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي

سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ [غافر: ٦٠]

And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell, in humiliation!"

Ghafir 40 : 60

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِفَايْتِنَا وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

[الأعراف: ٣٦]

But those who reject Our Signs and treat them with arrogance, they are Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (forever).

Al-Araf 7 : 36

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained to us what types of people enter paradise, and what types enter Hell, in order to follow the example of those who are successful, and avoid the mistakes of those who lost. He said:

(Shall I tell you about the people in Heaven?). His companions said: Yes. He said: (Every weak, tolerant person, for if he made an oath, Allah will fulfill his oath). Then he said: (Shall I tell you about the people in Hell?). His companions said: Yes. He said: (Every person severe in enmity, who does not give in charity, and who is arrogant) Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said:

(Whoever has the slightest degree of arrogance will be thrown on his face in Hell Fire)

Narrated by Ahmad

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said:

(Hell and paradise argued. Hell said: "Only those who are tyrants and arrogant enter me". Paradise said: "Only those who are weak and needy enter me". Allah said: "You are My punishment, with you I punish whom I please. And you are My mercy, with you I bestow mercy on whom I please. Every one of you will get its fill)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim

Allah's righteous servants are humble

Those who believe and have faith appreciate God's blessings and are grateful to Allah. They understand that their success is not solely due to their effort but occurred because of God's grace. The Qur'an describes their attitude of walking softly on earth without arrogance and of turning to God in prayer at night and seeking His forgiveness and protection. They are moderate and not extravagant in the way they live and spend:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ

قَالُوا سَلَامًا ۗ﴾ [الفرقان: ٦٣]

And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"

Al-Furqan 25 : 63

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا ۗ﴾ [الفرقان: ٦٤]

Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing;

Al-Furqan 25 : 64

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ۗ﴾

[الفرقان: ٦٥]

Those who say: "Our Lord! avert from us the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous,

Al-Furqan 25 : 65

﴿ إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴾ [الفرقان: ٦٦]

"Evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in";

Al-Furqan 25 : 66

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴾ [٦٧]

[الفرقان: ٦٧]

Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes);

Al-Furqan 25 : 67

Allah's righteous servants are also humble with those who have faith and believe in God:

﴿ يَتَأْتِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ ۗ

أَذَلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَتَخَفُونَ لَوْمَةَ

لَا يَمِرُّ ۚ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ [المائدة: ٥٤]

O ye who believe! if any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him, lowly with the Believers, mighty against the Rejecters, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault. That is the Grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things.

Al-Maeda 5 : 54

Such persons who are humble with others, God will increase their dignity and will raise them up in honor. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Giving charity never decreases your wealth; and any person who forgives another human being Allah will increase him in dignity; and any person who humbles himself to Allah, Allah will raise him up in honor)

Narrated by Muslim.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is our example of humility and good manners

Allah ordered His messenger to be kind, humble and merciful with the believers:

﴿ فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٥٩]

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

Al-Imran 3 : 159

﴿ وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ [الشورى: ٢١٥]

And lower thy wing to the Believers who follow thee.

Ash-Shura'a 42 : 215

The Prophet (PBUH) exhibited humility and never elevated himself above his companions. One day they stood up to greet him and he said:

(Do not glorify me as the Christians glorified the son of Mary, for I am a servant of God; but say: "The servant of Allah and His messenger")

Narrated in Bokhari

Othman Bin Affan one of the prophet's companions and the third righteous caliph said: (We accompanied the messenger of Allah (PBUH) at home and during travel. He used to visit our sick and witness our funerals, and fight along side with us and share in whatever we had, whether it was plenty or little)

Narrated by Ahmad.

Aesha (the prophet's wife) related that the messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to mend his shoes, saw his clothes and work at home like any other Muslim. (Narrated by Baghawi).

Humility is a sign of belief in God

The Qur'an explains the attitude of those who have faith:

- When they are reminded with the signs of God they fall down prostrating to God and they celebrate God's praises and are grateful to Him
- They are not arrogant
- They stand up in prayer at night
- They call on God in hope and in fear
- They share with others what God provides for them

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا

يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿ [السجدة: ١٥]

Only those believe in Our Signs, who, when they are recited to them fall down in adoration, and celebrate the praises of their Lord, nor are they (ever) puffed up with pride.

As-Sajda 32 : 15

﴿ تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿

[السجدة: ١٦]

Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them.

As-Sajda 32 : 16

To be humble and kind with our parents is a sign of faith and belief in God. Being good and kind to our parents comes second only to worshipping God and serving Him:

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ ٱلْكَبِيرَ

أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا ٱفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿

[الإسراء: ٢٣]

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour.

Al-Isra'a 17 : 23

﴿ وَأَحْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ﴾ [٢٤]

[الإسراء: ٢٤]

And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."

Al-Isra'a 17 : 24

Examples of Arrogant people mentioned in the Qur'an

Satan (Iblees) the Devil is described as arrogant, refusing to prostrate to Adam, though this was a direct order from God:

﴿ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٤]

[البقرة: ٣٤]

And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam:" and they bowed down: not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: he was of those who reject Faith.

Al-Baqara 2 : 34

Pharaoh was also described as arrogant refusing to listen to the truth or accept the clear signs of God

﴿ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَتَأْتِيهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي فَأَوْقَدْ لِي يَهْمَنِ عَلَى الْطِينِ ﴾

﴿ فَاجْعَلْ لِي صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي أُطْعَمُ إِلَىٰ إِلَهٍ مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّي لِأَظُنُّهُ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴾ [٣٨]

[الفصص: ٣٨]

Pharaoh said: "O Chiefs! no god do I know for you but myself: therefore, O Haman! light me a (kiln to bake bricks) out of clay, and build me a lofty palace, that I may mount up to the god of Moses: but as far as I am concerned I think (Moses) is a liar!"

Al-Qasas 28 : 38

﴿ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ ﴾

[القصص: ٣٩]

And he was arrogant and insolent in the land, beyond reason, he and his hosts: they thought that they would not have to return to Us!"

Al-Qasas 28 : 39

Those who reject faith are also arrogant and refuse to submit to the truth from their Lord, especially those who are rich and in power:

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِء كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ﴾

[سبأ: ٣٤]

Never did We send a Warner to a population, but the wealthy ones among them said: "We believe not in the (Message) with which ye have been sent."

SA Ba 34 : 34

﴿ وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾ [سبأ: ٣٥]

They said: "We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be punished."

Sa Ba 34 : 35

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