

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

In the Name of Allah the Most Compassionate Very Merciful

All Praise Due to Allah Almighty the Lord of Hazrat Muhammad – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him

The Destructive Cause of Muslims' Downfall in the Light of Quran

By

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فَأَمَّا عَادُ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ۖ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۖ وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

And as to those who were Aad, they waxed proud in the earth without right and said, 'who is mightier in strength than us'. Did they not know that Allah who created them, is mightier than they in strength? But they continued to deny Our signs.

(Haa Meen Al-Sajdah 41, Verse 15)

TAFSEER:

Allah Almighty has mentioned the cause for the destruction of the nation called “Aad” in the Holy Quran, so that the Muslims may abstain from observing such behaviors which paved the way for the destruction of the nation of “Aad”. Three causes of the destruction of “Aad” are mentioned in the verse:

1. Arrogance
2. Boastfulness
3. Rejecting the Prophet – peace be upon him

May Allah grant Muslims the divine guidance to be protected from these three evils. Let us firstly begin with the introduction of the nation of “Aad”.

Note: The nation of “Aad” was from the offspring of Iram s/o Saam s/o Nooh – peace be upon them. They were the inhabitants of the place called “Ahqaaf” which is near Yemen. Those people were very huge, muscular and the people of physical strength, as a result of which, the shortest amongst them used to measure 60 ft. tall and the ones of average stature measured 100 ft.

The Holy Quran states in regards to their description:

كَانَ لَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ

As though they were trunks of palm-trees lying down.
(Al-Haaqqah 69, Verse 7)

The extent of their physical strength was such that an ordinary person of their race could lift big mountain rocks. They were a very skillful and wealthy nation.

(Roohul Bayaan)

The stories of their craftiness and strength are mentioned in the Quran at several occasions. Hazrat Hood – peace be upon him – was appointed to propagate Allah’s religion among them but they, in return, went against him, and were ultimately destroyed though the heavy wind. Hence, these people were arrogant, therefore Allah Almighty destroyed them by light wind, so that the lesson must be well-learnt. Allah Almighty destroyed “The People of Elephant” by Abaabeel birds and destroyed Namrood by a mosquito bite.

However, this nation had three evil qualities which are mentioned within the Quranic verse, so let us analyze them:

1. Arrogance

It means “To think of oneself as a superior being”. This evil is the root of all evils. It is due to arrogance that one commits sins, Kufr, and causes fights and battles. If one clings to humbleness then there would be no fight nor a battle but everyone is carried away by the misguidance of Shaitan (devil), but imagine what misled him (satan)?

Arrogance! He was arrogant of being created by a higher force which is fire and of his great amount of worship, and he was thus disgraced.

Note: Arrogance or pride can be in two ways:

- a) Right
- b) Wrong

If someone is really superior than the other and on that basis, considers himself to be superior then it's right but if one is not actually superior and still considers himself as superior then it's wrong. Sometimes, the right kind of pride is Compulsory (Fard), sometimes valid and the wrong kind of arrogance is sometimes forbidden and even kufr at some specific occasions.

When a soldier of Muslim Army stands against the infidels then he must consider them as a disgrace and consider himself to be the righteous; this is Compulsory, or else he will not be capable of fighting the war.

When Hazrat Ali – may Allah be pleased with him – used to go for Jihaad, he would proclaim:

أَنَا الَّذِي سَمَّيْتُ أُمِّي حَيْدَرُ

I am the one whose name my mother kept "Lion"

When he used to enter the premises of Masjid, he would plead:

إِلٰهِي عَبْدُكَ الْعَاصِيُ أَتَاكَ

مُقِرًّا بِالدُّنُوبِ وَقَدْ دَعَاكَ

O my Allah! Your sinful servant has come to You

Acknowledging the sins and praying to You

A poet very beautifully explains:

هُوَ الْبُكَاءُ فِي الْبَحْرِ ابْ لَيْلًا

هُوَ الضَّحَاكُ فِي يَوْمِ الظَّرَابِ

At times, shedding tears in Masjid at night

At times, laughter in the battlefield

Similarly, the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – himself proclaimed in the battle of Hunain:

أَنَا النَّبِيُّ لَا كَذِبُ

أَنَا ابْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ

I am the Prophet without a shadow of doubt

I am the son (grandson) of (Hazrat) Abdul Muttalib

Conclusion: The pride of a Muslim against a kafir is a form of worship, for it is the core of bravery and a means for the upliftment of Islam.

If an authoritative person commands his subjects considering himself as superior, this too, is valid; such as, the authority of king over his people, the authority of teacher over his students, the authority of the spiritual guide over his disciples, with the condition that he is not being boastful in doing so, but it should be done to gain Allah's pleasure. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – stated:

أَنَا سَيِّدُ وَلَدِ آدَمَ وَلَا فَخْرُ

I am the Master of mankind but I am not boastful about it

As far as the evil form of arrogance is concerned, it can be in two ways:

- a) If one thinks of oneself superior than the people his level and considers them as inferior.
- b) If one thinks of oneself superior than the people of higher level than him and considers them as inferior.

Both of them are evil and should be regarded as such, and the latter is worse than the former.

The evil kind of arrogance can be further analyzed in two ways:

- a) If one is arrogant about some worldly (non-religious) matters then it's a sin.
- b) If one is arrogant in religious matters; such as, if a non-Aalim considers the 'Ulama, Mashaa'ikh or Prophets as inferior then he becomes a disbeliever.

This very arrogance is the objective of the verse, that the nation of "Aad" considered their Prophet as inferior, and earned Allah's wrath.

So far, we managed to discover that not every type of arrogance is evil; sometimes it's good and at times, it's bad. One of Allah's Attribute is Mutakabbir, for this is His Mighty Status while if we were to have that attitude, it's a sin.

Note: The noblest and superior people of the world are the Prophets and the Master of all of them is our Beloved Prophet Muhammad Mustafa – may Allah send blessings and peace upon him. The authority a Prophet has over his nation is that not even a king has over his subjects nor an owner over his belongings. The Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is the absolute owner of our lives, body, wealth, property, children and wives, for if he were to forbid our wives upon us then they will definitely become forbidden for us. If he were to disown us from the ownership of our properties and belongings we will literally become beggars.

Hazrat Ka'b's wife was made forbidden upon him at the time of punishment while she was still married to him. He married Hazrat Zainab Bint Jahsh to Hazrat Zaid Ibn Haaritha without seeking her permission. He forbade Hazrat Ali from making a second Nikah in the life of Hazrat Fatimah Zahra – may Allah be pleased with them.

However, the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – is the absolute owner of everything of ours. Our personal will cannot affect it in any way.

If a beggar cannot be arrogant with the king who has a little status in comparison to the Prophets then how can the nation of a Prophet – peace be upon him – show arrogance to their Prophet? The nation of "Aad" was destroyed due to this reason.

Note: All the rich and poor are similar in the world of souls, at the time of birth and in their upbringings etc. with just a little difference which occurs further in their lives that one owns the throne of kingdom while the other goes bankrupt, and

then, they both are same at the time of death while there is a possibility that on the Day of Judgment, the bankrupt may take precedence over the king.

With so many things having in common, a beggar still can't claim similarity to a king then what would be the status of the greatness of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – who owns both the worlds, who ranks highest in the world of souls, blessed birth, in life, death, grave, Barzakh and on the Day of Judgment? Claiming similarity to him is absolute infidelity and unfaithfulness. The people of Ummah seek His blessings at every juncture. The souls of the Prophets were luminous in the world of souls while others' souls were not as such. The first one to say "Yes!" (in response to Allah's question, "Am I not your Lord?") was the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon them – and then the rest followed after hearing him say.

We were all born illiterate, with no intellect, crying, while they all were great Gnostics, full of intellect, and in Sajdah at the time of their birth. Hazrat 'Isa – may Allah send peace upon him – proclaimed his Prophethood, Allah's Oneness and the Salah etc. right after he was born. The Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – made Sajdah and prayed for the intercession of his nation at the time of his birth, went for Ascension in his blessed lifetime. His kingdom is over every drop and atom. from east to west, and all have faith in him. If one utters his blessed name at the time of death it becomes a means for one's salvation. In short, there is a huge difference in every aspect, so it's utter foolishness to brag about one's superiority:

اَدب گاہیست جنت زیر آسمان از عرش نازک تر

نفس گم کرده می آید جنید و بلیزید ای جا

There is such a great Jannah of reverence below the heavens which is even more significant than the 'Arsh

Where even the likes of Junaid (Baghdadi) and Baayazeed (Bustaami) find themselves breathless (due to Adab)

What Causes One to Become Arrogant?

Arrogance is of two nature:

- a) Temporary
- b) Permanent

Temporary arrogance is developed and rubs off by being in the company of indecent people while the permanent arrogance is inherited through the genetic transmittance from the parents.

If the upper order of the family is insolent and disrespectful then the off-shoots will not come out to be decent. If the parents are shameless then it's not expected from the child to be modest. Dr. Iqbal has very beautifully described this concept:

بے ادب ماں با ادب اولاد جن سکتی نہیں

معدن زر معدن فولاد بن سکتی نہیں

A disrespectful mother cannot bear a decent child

Just as a gold-mine cannot transform into an iron-mine

چوزہ را باش از مخلوق روپوش

کہ در آغوش شبیر می آید

When Hazrat (Fatimah) Zahra concealed herself from the creation

Then Imam Husain appeared in her lap

A Muslim woman is not to just perform her Salah but also to bear a brave soldier of Islam like Imam Husain – may Allah be pleased with them. Her place is not to turn herself into a flashing light for the parties but she is the candle that enlightens a home. If the mothers of our society are indecent and disrespectful then the children, of course, are likely to turn out to be one.

Hazrat Nooh – peace be upon him – complained to Allah Almighty about his nation:

وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا ﴿٢٧﴾

And they will beget none but an evil doer, an ungrateful.

(Nooh 71, Verse 27)

Its Cure:

There is, in fact, only one permanent cure; and that is the blessed attention of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – which can cleanse the heart as the sun cleanses the contaminated land. The sun brings the presence of day only on the earth's surface but His blessed attention causes dawn to rise within the hearts. Excessive recitation of Durood and the company of the righteous creates and nourishes the love for the beloved Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – in the heart. One whose birth took place in an evil environment it's pointless to expect any good from such individual.

The Harmful Effects of Arrogance and Benefits of Humbleness and Respect:

Years of worship can be destroyed by arrogance and disrespectfulness while on the other hand, years of sins can be forgiven by observing Adab. Shaitan worshipped tirelessly for millions of years but it was all ruined due to one instance of disrespect towards Hazrat Adam – peace be upon him.

گیا شیطان راندہ ایک سجدہ کے نہ کرنے سے
اگر لاکھوں برس سجدے میں سر مارا تو کیا مارا

Shaitaan was disgraced due to not making one Sajdah

Does it even matter if he worshipped for a million years?

When Pharaoh hired the magicians to combat Hazrat Moosa – peace be upon him – the one form of respect they showed towards him was that they sought his permission before commencing:

قَالُوا يَمُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

They said, 'O Musa, either you throw first or we be the throwers'.

(Al-A'raaf 7, Verse 115)

Allah Almighty liked this Adab of theirs, so he granted them the status of being a believer, companion, Saabir and martyrdom in seconds. Allah Almighty states:

وَالْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

And the magicians were made to prostrate.
(Al-A'raaf 7, Verse 120)

Point to be noted: They did not go into Sajdah by themselves (passive case) but Allah Almighty took the lead of their action.

Story of a Humble Disciple:

There was a man who visited a Wali of Allah with the intention of becoming his disciple. The Shaykh told him to strive for forty days in a place which he considers as more inferior than himself. He thought that he was the worst of all, so where could he find such a spot but then ultimately he came to the conclusion that he will stay where the dirt of the whole city is dumped and accumulated. When he went and sat there, a voice came from within that place, "Look Mr, I was a very significant fruit prior to this but after staying in the belly of some people like you I became so contaminated that I ended up here. Are you still not going to leave me in peace? Do you now want to drag me to hell along with you?"

Hearing this, the man began to weep, and came at the feet of Shaykh and said, "I am the worst of all, where would I find a suitable place for Chilla (40 days)?" "Come and become Mureed now. I just wanted you to understand that" responded the Shaykh.

نہ تھی اپنے جو عیبوں کی ہم کو خبر

رہے دیکھتے اوروں کے عیب و ہنر

When I was not aware of my own faults

I kept on finding faults in others

پڑی اپنی برائیوں پر جو نظر

تو جہاں میں کوئی برانہ رہا

When I happened to examine my faults

I found no one worse in the world

To consider yourself inferior and becoming humble is one of the fundamentals of spirituality (Tasawwuf) and a means of attracting the mercy of Allah Almighty.

The second evil quality of the nation of “Aad” was boastfulness and bragging:

قَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ط

And said, 'who is mightier in strength than us'.

It's one thing to think of oneself as superior, for it's the inner condition of one's heart but it's something else to reveal that arrogance and brag about one's superiority and thus, being boastful. Arrogance is the root and its off-shoot is one's expression of it which is also just as bad as arrogance. Its victim neither acknowledges Allah's bounties nor does he appreciate the Holy Prophet – peace be upon him – nor can he benefit from anyone, for it becomes a veil between Allah and the creation. One must recognize Allah's Power through one's weakness, His All-Forgiving Attribute through acknowledging one's sins, His Attribute of Al-Sattaar (One who conceals our faults) through acknowledging one's dark side, His Ever-Existing Attribute through the acknowledgement of one's temporary existence, His Attribute of Independency through one's dependency and helplessness, His Attribute of being the Provider through acknowledging one's needs. If the world were to get rid of the poor there would be no value of riches. In short, Allah's recognition is dependent on one's acknowledgement of one's inferiority. One who thinks powerful, independent and ever-lasting of himself can never attain the Ma'rifat (Allah's recognition) of Allah Almighty. The nation of “Aad” was subjected to this grave crime and thus destroyed.

Note: Just as one cannot recognize Allah Almighty without acknowledging one's weakness and inferiority likewise one comes to acknowledge the superiority of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – by acknowledging one's inferiority. Shaitaan became arrogant and could not recognize the status of Hazrat Adam – peace be upon him – and the hypocrites and infidels became arrogant and were thus deprived from the recognition of the greatness of the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him. Just like due to optical ailments, one has an obstructed vision and cannot see clearly, likewise is the case of the arrogance which causes an obstruction in the path of Ma'rifat. Allamah Jalaaluddeen Rumi therefore states:

اشقيار اديده بينانه بود

نیک و بد در چشم شاں یکساں نمود

The deceitful are deprived of real vision

Both the good and evil are equal in their view

It is for this reason that even the great saints used to keep fearing in His Mighty Court by acknowledging their shortfalls. Khwaja-e-Khwaajgaan, Hazrat Bahaa'uddeen Naqshbandi – may Allah be pleased with him – left a will that the following verse (of poetry) should be recite ahead of his dead-body and also at the time of burial:

مفلسانم آمدہ در کوئے تو

شیئاً للہ از جمال روئے تو

I came empty-handed to Your court

Requesting Mercy from Your Luminous Being

Allah Almighty states:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۖ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

Have you not observed those who declare themselves to be pure? Nay, It is Allah Who purifies whomsoever He pleases.

(Al-Nisa 4, Verse 49)

The simple treatment for it is that one must seek the company of the righteous, so he recognizes his weakness and tries to rectify, and in religious matters, one should acquire direction from pious predecessors, so he comes to realize that he is nobody. One should visit the graveyard and observe the end of all the people that were proud but what a motionless situation they are in now? This is what's coming my way too.

(Mu'allime Taqreer p. 18-28)