
Humility and Arrogance: Their Respective Legal and Ethical Positions in Islam.

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to examine various aspects of human behavior and its impact on personal and social life, with a focus on humility and arrogance. Attempt is also made to know the ways and means that can aid in the eradication of moral vices and the cultivation of moral virtues among individuals and societies. Pondering over the original texts, as well as their explanations provided by the scholars, the author has tried best to obtain a deeper understanding of the nature and essence of arrogance and humility, as well as their respective implications. The information gathered is organized systematically in accordance with academic norms. The texts as well as the human experience testify that arrogance is an abominable moral vice that breeds a slew of other moral vices, while humility is the most admirable moral virtue that fosters love and affection among individuals, resulting in mental peace and social solidarity. The paper would make a significant contribution in that it explains almost all the root causes of arrogance and then offers a list of seventeen remedies for removing it from one's own self (nafs). On the other hand, readers will find a summary of the virtues and advantages of humility in both personal and social life. Furthermore, the remedies discussed for the eradication of arrogance will help us to cleanse ourselves of this spiritual affliction. The tips and methods for acquiring humility that have been discussed will allow us to adorn ourselves with good moral qualities.

Keyword: Arrogance, Modesty, Morals, Virtues, Evils, Person, Society, Unity, Tolerance, Social Solidarity, Social Prosperity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring and adopting moral qualities is immensely beneficial to the individual self as it is to the entire humanity. Not only are the possessors of good moral qualities content mentally and spiritually but those around them too feel dignified and gratified to deal with such people. As every person in the human society is connected, by one way or the other, with other people and constantly exchange ideas with each other, therefore, possessing high moral qualities is most imperative to create civilized and peaceful society. Moral virtues have the inherent ability to pave way for the development of numerous other moral qualities; like mercy which gives birth to love, generosity, benevolence, and self-sacrifice. Forsaking moral vices, on the other hand, is also equally important because if they are not renounced, they will inevitably become a source of discomfort and harm to others, leading to numerous other evils that are harmful to individuals, societies, and nations. If they are not avoided at the individual as well as collective levels, they will definitely give birth to other evils; like envy which gives birth to hatred, hostility, enmity, rancor, etc. It is for this reason that scholars, thinkers, reformers, moralists, ethicists, savants, and mystics, right from the beginning of human society, have continued to ponder over various aspects of moral virtues and moral vices in order to identify benefits of the former and harms of the latter. The intensity of arrogance and the number of arrogant people can vary at different stages and under different conditions; sometimes arrogance becomes more extreme and the number of arrogant people increases in societies. Its reasons are many, some of which will be dealt with in this paper. When it so happens, the human life loses all its charm and becomes unpleasant. Gaps and distances increase among the people within the societies and nations. It becomes very difficult to get benefitted from one another's talents and excellences for an arrogant person is never inclined to render any favor to others. It is, therefore, definitely necessary to become aware of the root causes of arrogance. It is also crucial to understand what kinds of spiritual and temporal diseases evolve as a result of this heinous moral vice on individual and collective life. Similarly, knowledge of all the ways and means by which this terrible moral vice can be eradicated or at the very least reduced among individuals, communities, and societies is needed. It is also indispensable to understand which values should be promoted and given currency in order to uproot pride and arrogance from the human life. To make individual and collective life happier and more peaceful, it is necessary to understand the ways and means of developing good moral qualities in human selves (nufūs); for example, in place of hatred, envy, and injustice, love, generosity, and equity should be given currency; and, more importantly, in place of arrogance, humility should be given currency, and so on. The importance of learning about moral virtues and then practising them

individually and collectively is greater than ever before in the current world order. It is possible that the distances we see today are the result of our ignorance of this most valuable knowledge; perhaps, the hateful and violent atmosphere we are in is the consequence of our failure to obey universal moral standards. Two arrogant people can never come closer, whereas two humble people are always ready to arrive at common terms. In this backdrop, the present paper attempts at expounding the rewards and benefits of humility and modesty, and the harms and evils of pride and arrogance in the light of the teachings of Islam along with the explanations and elaborations of the scholars and savants.

2. ARROGANCE (TAKABBUR)

2.1 Meaning of Arrogance (Takabbur)

When an individual achieves (or secures) some qualities of perfection, a natural feeling arises in his self (nafs) due to the possession of these qualities but it is not any moral flaw as such unless it overtakes him in such a way that the possessor begins considering himself superior to others (i.e., to those who do not possess those qualities), and starts looking down upon them. If this is the case, then, this type of feeling is termed as pride (kibr) and its manifestation as arrogance (takabbur) (Al-Ghazzali, Vol. 3, p. 505), which is the deadliest moral disease and “a great sin”. (Tarrants, 2011).

The first in this universe who showed arrogance was the Satan (Iblīs / *Shayṭān*). He considered himself superior to Ādam, the first man. The Qur’ān relates Satan as saying: “(Iblīs said) I am better than he (Ādam); me Thou hast created of fire and him Thou hast created of clay.” (Al-Qur’ān 7:12, Daryābādī, A.M.).

God declared Iblīs as rejected and accursed one when he showed arrogance and boastfulness before Him. The Qur’ān says:

God said: then get thee down from hence, not for thee is to be stiff-necked herein (i.e., in the heavens where everyone has to be meek and lowly); so go thou forth; surely thou art of the abject ones. (Al-Qur’ān 7:13).

By considering oneself superior to the others, one feels gratified and is prone to be arrogant. Even the learned men, worshippers and devotees are seldom free from it. There are two evil consequences of arrogance, the refusal to accept the truth and contempt for others. (Al-Tirmidhī, hadith no. 1999). The worst form of arrogance is that which does not allow one to acquire knowledge – considering it below his dignity to sit before others –, and to accept the truth. (Al-Ghazzali, 2001, Vol. 3, p. 509). There have been arrogant men like Pharaoh (Fir’awn) and Nimrod who challenged God and refused to recognize His Prophets. Their arrogance was due to ignorance and insurgence.

The real essence of arrogance and pride is to exalt oneself and applaud one’s own qualities while at the same disdain and devalue others and their qualities. If one has no intention of disdaining and degrading others then this is not a contemptible pride (takabbur). (Thānavī, pp. 188-89). Muḥammad, the Messenger of God said: “He who has in his heart the weight of a grain of mustard-seed of arrogance shall not enter Paradise.” A person (amongst those who were present) said: “Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine.” The Messenger remarked: “Verily, God is Graceful and He loves Grace. Arrogance is that you disdain the truth (out of self-conceit) and look down on people.” (Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, hadith no. 265, & Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4291 & 4295).

In response to a question from a handsome man who wished to preserve his attractiveness and the elegance of his clothing but was unsure if this was a form of arrogance, the Prophet said: “Arrogance is when someone disdains the truth and is contemptuous of people.” (Ibn Al-Ash‘ath, hadith no. 4092).

2.2 Various Forms of the Manifestation of Arrogance

Arrogance is the source of all evil desires and intentions. It is the source and root of numerous other evils and sins. It is the fountainhead of religious, moral and temporal degradation. “Truly it is our greatest enemy” (Tarrants, 2011). The evil consequences that come out of it are beyond count e.g., when an arrogant person hears a truth from another person, he does not accept it because of his arrogance and begins to challenge it. In arguments, he does not want to know the truth, but only to vindicate his own self-importance and re-affirm his own opinions. Usually, an arrogant person thinks of himself as superior to others and looks down upon them. This kind of arrogance, in any case, is extremely abominable. Real pride, greatness and honor belong only to God, the Lord of the Universe. By appropriating these attributes to oneself, one tries to compete with God with regards to them; and this is the greatest offence. [1] The arrogant person thinks it below his dignity to sit, walk, converse or eat with the common people. Such a person likes that other people should stand before him / her and wait in service. Some arrogant people do not like to go to meet others, though they could teach some good things to them. In this way, they deprive others of the knowledge they possess themselves. Some do not like others to sit near them. Some do not like to do even the most trifling things with their own hands. When an arrogant person meets somebody on the road he / she wants them to salute first. While walking in a group, such a person wants to walk ahead of the others. In the meetings such people want to have a special seat.

Consequently, the forms and ways of the manifestation of arrogance are numerous. The Messenger of God has said: “He who has in his heart the weight of a grain of mustard-seed of arrogance shall not enter Paradise.” (Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, hadith no. 265).

Scholars have explained the philosophy of this tradition (ḥadīth) by saying that human beings are endowed with some special morals (akhlāq), and these morals are the gates of Paradise (Jannah), but arrogance does not let men exercise any of these morals and with the result the gates of Paradise are closed for them. The arrogant will be kept in solitary (and aloof state) as he used to be in solitary, out of arrogance, from the other fellow beings in the world and always wished to have a distinct position and state. (Al-Ghazzali, 2001, Vol. 3, p. 509).

Harun Yahya, in his book *Arrogance of Satan*, explains the effects of arrogance on human soul and body, the summary of which is given in the following lines: The arrogant people always remain in a diseased and disturbed state of mind. Their inner-world is a somber place of distress and anxiety; consumed with devious thoughts and schemes. Lacking in character, they are cold and ill-tempered. There isn't any pleasant expression or sign of affection or appreciation found on their face. One cannot feel relaxed among them or enjoy their company. They are in a constant struggle to escape accusation of any faults as they try to appear superior to all and gain appreciation all the time. The arrogant humiliate others when they discover their mistakes. They exaggerate the errors other people make, taking every opportunity to bring these to light. They erroneously assume that if they reveal others' mistakes they establish their faultlessness. They can never tolerate any kind of criticism against them. They believe that being subject to criticism or admonition is degradation. These people always enjoy praising themselves and devaluing praiseworthy qualities of others. They find it demeaning to show their love to others; they always desire to be the one to whom love and attention is shown. Because of harboring arrogance, they become devoid of many praiseworthy qualities, like, tenderness, warmth, sincerity, generosity and modesty. They are unable to enjoy anything because they are incapable to mix with other people as they try to appear superior to all. They cannot taste the blessings of having joy as they are constantly submerged in their gloomy world. Concerns such as over making a mistake, being subject to criticism or humiliation, losing prestige, earning the approval of others, or losing things for which one is proud, puts man under extreme pressure and demand constant attention of him. This causes tension, stress and depression. This also results in the dullness and falling of the hair, skin gets thickened and hardened and loses its pliability. Their mouth dries, eyes lose the vitality and become dull. An arrogant person is impaired in speech, failing to speak fluently or sincerely. His reasoning is flawed. Instead of speaking candidly or purposefully, he speaks boastfully, so as to cover his flaws, or earn the acclaim of others. Internal organs are also vulnerable to the negative effects of arrogance. The most observable consequences of stress are stomach aches, gastritis, and other disorders of digestive system. The arrogant do not allow any to exercise authority over them. According to them, they are the ones who are the most capable and the best to take decisions. Because they are so sure of themselves, they do not even consider the possibility of the existence of someone else who may know better. They are incapable of showing respect to others. (Yahya, 2002). [2].

It is especially appropriate to share some excerpts from Tarrant's article *Pride and Humility*, which first appeared in the winter 2011 issue of *Knowing & Doing*. Quoting C.S. Lewis, he writes: “... it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. ... Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense” (Tarrant, 2011). Using the words of other saints and savants Tarrant (2011) observes that pride is the origin of sin and the devil's most powerful and destructive weapon. Jonathan Edwards said: “Spiritual pride is the main spring or at least the main support of all other errors. Until this disease is cured, medicines are applied in vain to heal all other diseases” (Tarrant, 2011). Indicating to the dangers of prides he further writes: “Clearly pride is very dangerous and can produce widespread suffering in society when people in leadership and power are corrupted by it” (Tarrant, 2011).

2.3 Causes of Arrogance (Takabbur)

The causes of arrogance are many but generally the objects upon which people show arrogance are the following five things: (a) pedigree, (b) beauty, (c) wealth, (d) health and strength, and (e) the abundance of supporters and friends. (Al-Ghazzali, 2001, p. 515). Islam has given its verdict regarding these things and has declared that none of these things are worth enough to be proud of, nor are they lasting and all-abiding. For example, about pedigree it gives the conception that it is of no use for a person to be proud of the qualities possessed by his forefathers when he himself is devoid of them. In the same way, about beauty, Islam teaches us that beauty is transient, a minor sickness or an accident can change a beautiful face into an ugly one. What is it to be proud of the apparent beauty when one's inside is full of filth, stool, urine, etc.? Wealth, also, is not something stable; it can be lost or stolen. The friendship of powerful men cannot also be relied upon permanently as it is unstable; the friendship may exterminate only on trivial matters.

The main cause of arrogance in the Arabs was the feeling of superiority of their pedigree and ancestry. God abolished this arrogance in them through the following Qur'ānic verse (āyah):

Mankind! Verily We! We have created you (i.e., all of you; entire mankind) of a male and a female, and We have made you nations and tribes that you might know (and not despise or dominate) one another. Verily the noblest of you with God (i.e., the most honorable among you in the sight of God) is the most pious of you (in the conduct of his daily affair, and not the high-born of you). Verily God is Knowing, Wise. (Al-Qur'ān 49: 13). The purpose of this verse is to clarify that honor and dignity does not lie in pedigree but in piety – moral and spiritual excellence. Muḥammad, the Messenger of God explained this concept further in these words:

“People should stop boasting about their fathers who have died Indeed God has removed the arrogance of jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic period) from you and its boasting about lineage. (Indeed a person is either) a pious believer, or a miserable sinner. And people are all the children of Ādam and Ādam was created from dust.” (Al-Tirmidhī, hadith no. 3955) [3].

Islam does not prevent people from physical and external elegance and adornment. It does not prohibit from cleanliness and hygiene, adorning of the body and clothes, wearing of expensive dresses unless they become a cause of arrogance and a feeling of superiority over others. Islam approves of the use of these things but under the condition that they don't become the cause of arrogance. It is reported in a tradition (ḥadīth) that once a man who was very handsome came to Prophet Muḥammad, and said: “I love beauty and I have been given what you see so I do not want anyone to be superior to me (he either said ‘by the strap of a sandal’ or ‘by a red sandal-thong’). Is that arrogance?” The Prophet replied. “No, verily, God is Graceful and He loves Grace.” (Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, hadith no. 265).

It means that using beautiful and costly items is not vanity as long as they are not used for the purpose of ostentation or denigration of others. When beauty, decoration, elegance, and adornment, on the other hand, become a source of vanity, pride, superiority, and disdain for others, in such situation Islam forbids their display. The Prophet said: “Whoever drags his clothes (on the ground) out of pride and arrogance, God will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection.” (Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4301).

Islam acknowledges the importance of wealth. At many places, the Qur'ān uses the word *khayr* [4] and *qiyām* [5] for wealth and money which indicates that Islam highly acknowledges the importance and significance of lawful (ḥalāl) earnings, wealth and riches. Islam strictly prohibits destroying the wealth and money by spending it extravagantly. It encourages in terms of spending it for the needs of family members and also giving some portions of it in charity to the needy and indigent people. But when this wealth is used with evil motives and for evil purposes, e.g., for mere ostentation and pride, then God says that its reality is nothing except delusion, vain bauble, sport and play [6]. Then, what is there in it to be proud of!

In the same stream, Islam regards power and strength among the commendable qualities when it is used, for example, for earning livelihood by doing manual labor, or when it is used for socio-religious upliftment of the society, or helping the oppressed and destitute. But this strength and power should not be used in tyrannical ways, suppressing the weak and destitute. In such cases, it becomes nuisance and cause of God's displeasure for the possessors. It is narrated that Prophet Muḥammad said: “The Garden (Paradise) and the Fire (Hell) debated. The Fire said, ‘The tyrants will enter me and the arrogant will enter me.’ The Garden retorted, ‘The weak will enter me and the poor will enter me.’ God Almighty said to the Garden, ‘You are My Mercy and I show you to whomever I will.’ Then He said to the Fire, ‘You are My punishment with which I will punish whomever I will.’ Each of you will have your fill.” (Al-Tirmidhī, hadith no. 2561, & Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4285). In another tradition the Prophet said: “If anyone behaves insolently or walks with arrogance, he will meet God Almighty covered with His anger.” (Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4302).

The abundance of helpers and supporters can also contribute towards developing a sense of arrogance in the minds of some people, especially, the people of uncivilized nations. God has condemned taking pride in these things. The Qur'ān says:

The emulous desire of abundance (in wealth, number, strength and position) engrosses you (and keeps you heedless of the Hereafter, having no time for things spiritual) until you visit the graves (i.e., until you die). Lo! You shall soon (on your death) know (your folly). (Al-Qur'ān 102: 1-3).

2.4 Evils and Harms of Arrogance

Not only common men but many learned ones, worshippers and devotees can also be afflicted with this moral disease, because some forms of pride (*kibr*) are so subtle that only an expert diagnostician (spiritual guide) can detect them. Arrogance is such a dangerous moral disease that it prevents the arrogant from accepting the invitation of the Prophets. God sent Mūsā and Hārūn with a number of manifest signs and proofs to Pharaoh (Fir'awn) and his chiefs but they denied accepting the guidance that was sent to them from God because they considered themselves superior to others, even to the Prophets. God says:

Thereafter We sent Mūsā and his brother Hārūn with Our signs and a manifest authority to Fir'awn (Pharaoh) and his chiefs, but they waxed proud and they were people self-exalting. So they said (in pride and arrogance): shall we believe in two human beings like us, while their community is a subject to us? (Al-Qur'ān 23: 45-47).

In short, those who consider themselves superior to others or even to the Prophets do not desist from rejecting the call of the Prophets. The Qur'ān expresses strong condemnation towards the arrogant (*mutakabbirūn*) at a

number of places with variety of expressions. For example, it says: “Nay, those who disbelieve are in vainglory (and obstinacy) and schism (i.e., opposition to truth).” (Al-Qur’ān 38: 2).

God declares through the Qur’ān that He does not love the people who are arrogant and boastful. [7] He warns them of being thrown into the Hell – an evil abode – where they will have to abide forever. [8]

In a number of his sayings Prophet Muḥammad condemned the attitude of arrogant and boastful people in very strong terms. [9] He persuaded his followers in simple yet powerful terms that there is nothing in this universe that can be relied on or proud of in the long run. It is only the Almighty God, the Lord of the Universe who deserves Pride and Majesty as He alone is Al-Ṣamad (Eternal, Absolute). The Prophet washed away the pride and arrogance from the hearts of all his companions; the arrogance they were harboring in their hearts during the pre-Islamic period (jāhiliyyah), and forbade them from bragging about their ancestors.

The Prophet said: “While a man (from among the people before you) was walking, dragging his dress with arrogance, he was caused to be swallowed by the earth and will go on sinking in it till the Day of Resurrection. (Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4296). He further said: “God will not look, on the Day of Resurrection, at a person who drags his robe (behind him) out of pride and arrogance.” (Al-Bukhārī, hadith no. 3665). Yet in another tradition, he is reported to have said: “If anyone behaves insolently or walks with arrogance, he will meet God Almighty covered with His anger.” (Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4302).

Arrogance; be it in matters of knowledge possessed, wealth and riches accumulated, or related to any department of human life, is most abominable in itself, always detrimental to the peace and solidarity of the society, and above all, most detestable to the Creator of man and the whole Universe.

According to Thānavī, it is feared that one’s blessings could be snatched away due to his / her arrogance conduct. (p. 189).

Al-Ghazzali (2001) narrates the saying of Muhammad bin Husain bin Ali as: The more a person develops arrogance in his self, the more his intellect and wisdom are harmed. (Al-Ghazzali, Vol. 3, p. 502).

2.5 Methods and Remedies to Eliminate Arrogance

The evils, harms and dangers of arrogance have extensively been discussed above. We came to know that it is this arrogance that caused *Shayṭān* (the devil) to disobey the Lord, after which he was thrown out of the heaven, estranged and accursed. In the beginning of this paper, a tradition of Prophet Muḥammad is cited where he is reported to have said: “He who has in his heart the weight of a grain of mustard-seed of arrogance shall not enter the Paradise.” Thus it becomes necessary for everyone to seek some measures and adopt some methods to remove the arrogance out of their selves (nufūs), and consequently from the whole society. The following are some steps that can be extremely beneficial in saving individual selves (nufūs) from the menace of pride and arrogance, and when individual inner and outward actions and conduct are corrected, the entire society is immediately corrected.

(i) One should contemplate about his origin, that his beginning was a mere drop of semen, a clot of blood; and his end will be a lifeless corpse; and in between these two stages (i.e., during his life) he is just a container of filth – carrying stool, urine and blood, etc. God says in the Qur’ān:

Perish man! How ingrate he is! Of what has He created him? From a drop of seed (nuṭfah: male and female semen drops), He created him and set him in a proper form (i.e., He formed him with the proportion). Then He made easy the way (out of the womb). Then He caused him to die and be buried. (Al-Qur’ān 80:17-21).

When one becomes fully aware of the origin and nature of his self (nafs), he is inclined towards humility and selflessness. He tries to perform those acts which are helpful to weaken the signs of arrogance, and develop qualities of humility and selflessness in him.

(ii) If one becomes arrogant as a result of his pedigree and the virtues possessed by his forefathers, he should consider that it is futile to be proud of the qualities that others possess when he himself is devoid of them. He should also think about the origin and shortcomings of his forefathers as well that they too were created of obnoxious matter (i.e., semen) and the earliest ancestor of the human beings was created of dust. The Qur’ān says: “And God created you of dust (as species, O mankind!), then of seed / nuṭfah (as individuals); then He made you pairs (male and female).” (Al-Qur’ān 35: 11).

(iii) If one is proud of one’s beauty, let him think how full of filth one’s inside is. His belly is full of stool and urine; his mouth is full of spittle; mucus arises out of his nostrils; his veins are full of blood. He has to use different kinds of deodorants and perfumes to eliminate the bad smell that emanates from underneath his armpits and genital organs. Such type of contemplation will cool down his intoxication of beauty. He should also know that the beauty is transient, a minor illness or an accident will transform a beautiful and handsome into an ugly and graceless being. Even if none of these dreadful events occur, a person must remember that he is also vulnerable to a ruthless and irrepressible foe: ageing. Even the most beautiful person on the planet cannot escape the effects of ageing, and his/ her beauty fades with time, and then “every soul (irrespective of merits and demerits) shall taste death” (Al-Qur’ān 3: 185). These examples demonstrate how pointless it is to be arrogant on account of one’s youth and appearance. He should also think that it may well be that the inner beauty, charm

and light be bestowed upon others from the Lord may, which may make them more loved by people than those who always boast of their beauty and physical appearance.

(iv) If one is proud of one's health and strength, he should think that even animals like a donkey, an ox, a tiger or an elephant are stronger than him. He should also think that a minor sickness robs man of strength, sometimes partially, sometimes wholly. Power and strength, therefore, are not things to be proud of. He should look into history. During his study, he will definitely come to know that there were people with far more power and possession than his own, but eventually they all passed away and nothing was left of them on the earth. In fact, nothing on the earth has eternity. Indicating to this fact, the Qur'an says: "Everyone (of the living creatures) who is thereon (i.e., on the earth) is mortal, and there will remain the Face of thy Lord, Owner of Majesty and Beneficence (i.e., He alone is Immortal, Ever-living)" (Al-Qur'an 55:26-7). What remains behind of an individual, according to the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, is: "Acts of obedience / or good works (of which the fruit remains forever) (Al-Qur'an 18:46.), continuing charity, knowledge that others get benefitted from, a righteous child who supplicates for the parents" (Al-Tirmidhī, hadith no. 1376, & Ibn Yūsuf, p.59) [10]

(v) If an individual is proud of his wealth and riches, he should understand that they are the product of God's grace and bounty. He bestows His blessings on whom and when He pleases, and only what He desires. The Qur'an says: "Whoso intends the quick-passing world We hasten to him (certainly not as a mark of Our approval, but only in accordance with Our universal Plan) therein whatever We please to whom We intend." (Al-Qur'an, 17:18).

Such a person should also be aware that wealth never stays in one person's possession. It continuously moves from one side to the other, and when a person dies, it passes to his or her heirs, leaving the dying person with nothing. Furthermore, we are continuously hearing about the bankruptcy of one or the other company, corporation, or millionaire in today's world. Nowadays, medical care has assumed completely different shape. It has been commercialized everywhere. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on disease treatment, depleting even the most valuable assets.

If one believes that his wealth and riches are due to his "knowledge" and "abilities", he is mistaken. He should remember the incident of Qārūn (Korah), whose mention one can find both in the Qur'an and the Bible. He boasted that he had amassed all of his riches as a result of his intellect and knowledge. He went forth before the people intoxicated by his riches, proud of his worldly pomp and glitter. Many people were misled by his arrogant and haughty acts. God despised this mentality, so He made the earth sink with him, swallowing him and everything he owned. (Al-Qur'an, 28: 76-81).

Daryābādī writes: "Wealth, in Islam, is not to be regarded as an excuse for vanity and luxury, but is to be held as an opportunity for giving freely to the service of God and humanity. (Vol. 3, p. 369). [11]

(vi) If one is proud of his backers and followers, friends and helpers, he should keep in mind that no one is obligated to stay here indefinitely. Consider the fact that most of his associates are attached to him for ulterior motives; as long as he is able to meet their needs, they will remain attached to him; otherwise they will stop supporting him or abandon him. However, if there are any sincere associates, how long will they stay with him! Furthermore, how can one be certain that he will always win because of the assistance and love of his supporters? It is likely that his adversary is much more powerful than he and his party, and that he will be able to eliminate them all. These associates are often likely to join hands with others for one purpose or another, rendering him limbless. These days we see ministers and members of parliament, around the world, increasingly leaving their parties to join others or form their own.

The Qur'an says: "Did he not know that God had destroyed before him, of the generations, who were stronger than he in might and larger in respect of following." (Al- Qur'an, 28:78).

The Prophet is reported to have said: "Three things follow the deceased person, then two things return and one remains with him. He is followed by his family, wealth, and deeds. So, his family and wealth return [from his gravesite] and his deeds remain." (Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2379).

Upon contemplating on these things one can understand that wealth and the friendship of powerful men cannot be depended upon, thus there is no use of being proud of these things.

(vii) If any person shows arrogance for knowledge he possesses, then he should know that he alone is not the possessor of some knowledge but there are thousands and millions of men around the world possessing knowledge, even more than what he possesses. The Qur'an says: "And above every knowing one is a Knower [12] (knowing more than other or all)" (Al-Qur'an 12:76).

He should also know that the responsibilities of a learned man are more than a common man. A man who knows, and then commits a sin has to face greater punishment than an ignorant one. A man who has been endowed with some knowledge has moral as well as religious duty to pass it on to others, and if he fails to do so, then he will be questioned about it (Thānavī, p. 190). In the Qur'an, God likened those who do not act according to their learning with a load-bearing donkey. God says:

The case of those who were laden with Taurāt (Torah) but who bore it not is (in point of futility and fatuity) as the case of an ass bearing tomes (on its back, but profiting very little from the knowledge and learning contained in them). (Al-Qur'ān 62:5) [13]

Therefore, a learned man ought to fear God more than others. He ought not to be proud of his learning, instead he should be thankful to God for blessing him with some knowledge. He should always pray to the Creator for giving him more and more knowledge, and thus should always consider himself a student, never an accomplished teacher.

(viii) Those who take pride in their piety, worship, and devoutness, and consider it sufficient for their accomplishments and salvation, and refuse to admit or respect common or learned men – who do not have that level of piety and devoutness – should know that others may have some superior qualities that are hidden from them but visible to the Lord. They should also know that, while others may not be as religious and devout as they are now, it is possible that they will become more religious and devout in the future. (Thānavī, pp. 190-191).

In addition to the above mentioned remedies the following measures should also be employed to purify the self from any sort of arrogance.

(ix) One should know that whatever quality one possesses is only by the grace of God. He should know that he himself is not the creator of any quality but God has created qualities in him. This contemplation will urge people to praise God more and more, and will save them from taking any pride or showing arrogance.

(x) One should think that one did not deserve to be given these things because there are others in the world who really deserve more than he does, but even if he receives something, it is only by the mercy and blessing of God that He bestowed some gifts on him.

(xi) He should know that he has no power to maintain and keep for long the qualities he possesses but it is only in the hands of God, He can snatch them away if and when He wishes so.

(xii) One should know that while others do not currently possess these qualities, it is quite possible that in the future they may receive more than they currently possess, and that they themselves may become dependent on them in many other matters and cases.

(xiii) One should think that others may be more superior (and acceptable) in the sight of God than him or both may be equal in rank in the sight of God, then how is he thinking of himself as superior to the other when both are equal in the sight of God.

(xiv) And suppose the other is really imperfect and inferior to you. Then as per the general rule (especially Islamic teachings) the superior or perfect has some rights of inferior and imperfect upon him which he has to fulfill in any case. For example, healthy person has some rights towards a sick, strong towards a weak, wealthy towards a destitute. In the same way, an accomplished or a superior one has rights of imperfect and inferior which demands compassion and mercy to him, striving to help him to acquire some qualities of perfection or at least praying for him so that he may also become possessor of some good qualities. This method will create a sense of love and compassion towards others and one will finally cease disdain others.

(xv) One should try to humble oneself in front of those whom he considers inferior and should extol their good qualities.

(xvi) One should always remain cautious of this moral vice (i.e., takabbur). If one feels that the disease of arrogance has touched him, he should immediately try to perform activities which are contrary to those that develop sense of arrogance in the self (nafs) so that the sense of humility gets developed in him.

(xvii) One should think about one's own defects and faults. It is obvious that the knowledge of one's own defects and faults is certain to him, while the knowledge of faults of others is uncertain. Now, it is clear that the knowledge of whose defects is certain is always inferior to the one the knowledge of whose shortcomings is uncertain. In this way, one can successfully train one's self to look only at one's own defects and faults and not to others. (Thānavī, pp. 190-191).

3. HUMILITY

3.1 Meaning and Essence of Humility

The nature and essence of humility (tawāḍu') for the sake of God is that one should consider oneself nothing and extremely insignificant, and then be humble to the fellow beings. One should not consider oneself worthy of any greatness on account of his talents and qualities. Instead, he should intend sincerely to wash out all signs of haughtiness and self-conceit present in his self. [14] It should be done practically, and this quality can be acquired mainly through mystic exercises to purify the soul. It should not be mere lip service, simply calling oneself by the names like worthless, insignificant, petty, or incapable or poor. Instead, the condition should be that if anyone scolds and despises you because they consider you worthless, you should not take it seriously and should not consider retaliating in any way. One should please one's self (nafs) by saying to it: Yes, you are as petty and insignificant as the other claims, then why should you seek vengeance? If you are what he calls you, why should you feel offended? What will happen to you if he reproaches and maligns you? Don't be concerned and don't be influenced. When someone's scolding or reproaching you doesn't arouse you to seek vengeance,

and when both praise (madaḥ) and revile (dhamm) become identical to you – neither the praise nor the disparagement causes you to become overly excited or irritated, and you remain cool and calm in both cases – this is the highest degree of humility, which is an extremely commendable attribute. Though, on account of human nature, you may feel happy hearing the praises and sad hearing the criticisms, you are never upset by faith (intellectually), and you remain constant in both cases, demonstrating your solemnity and serenity through your conduct. (Thānavī, pp. 112-113).

Luqmān's admonition to his son is related in the Qur'ān thus:

And turn not thy cheek from men (in pride and arrogance), nor walk on the earth haughtily (i.e., in a pompous and conceited manner); verily God does not approve any vainglorious boaster. And be thou modest in thy gait (neither going too slowly nor too quickly), and lower thy voice (as indicative of humility) (Al-Qur'ān 31:18-19, & 17:37).

Praising the humble and faithful men, God says in the Qur'ān:

And the (true, faithful, and loyal) servants of the Compassionate (God) are those who (immersed in deep spirituality) walk upon the earth meekly (symbolic of their humility in every department of life), and when the ignorant address them (in infidelity and arrogance), they (instead of retaliating) say: Peace! (i.e., let us go our own way, we have no wish to quarrel with you). (Al-Qur'ān 25:63).

3.2 Rewards and Benefits of Humility

It is the promise of God that He will bestow greatness upon those who show humility, and will create love in the hearts of people for them. Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have said: "One who adopts humility for the sake of God, God elevates him to higher status. Thus such a person is smaller in his own eyes but is bigger in the eyes of the people" (Al-Tirmidhī, hadith no. 2029, & Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4271).

Humility is a basic necessity for unity and solidarity among various sections of human societies, which is a fact that is also testified by human experience. Any two humble people would not be indifferent or disagreeable to each other.

The essence of humility is such that it elicits strong feelings of affinity and attraction. That is why we have a higher level of love and attraction towards people who are humble in nature than we do for others. People's hearts naturally grow love, affection, and admiration for such an individual because of this quality of man. On the other hand, anyone who is humble and modest will always honor the elders and treat the children with kindness and affection.

Those who are humble have a faculty that recognizes the importance of character, wisdom and morality as true values. They do not boast of their qualities. And they gain the love, respect and appreciation of others on account of this character. (Yahya, 2002).

Here are some Bible verses that mention great rewards for those who possess the quality of humility and meekness. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). "A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor" (Proverbs 29:23). "When pride comes, then comes shame, but with the humble is wisdom." (Proverbs 11:2). "And be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5). "For whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

Discussing the constructive role of humility in contrast to destructive effects of arrogance, Tarrants (2011) writes: "For just as pride is the root of all sin, so 'humility is the root, mother, nurse, foundation, and bond of all virtue.'" The closing line of his article is: "And it is a grace that is precious in the sight of God, Who in due course will exalt all who embrace it." (Tarrants, 2011).

3.3 Methods of Acquiring the Quality of Humility

The ways and means of acquiring the quality of humility are those which are the remedies for arrogance and haughtiness; the things which eliminate arrogance from the self (nafs), develop humility in it. [15]

One should contemplate on one's existence, addressing to the self: "Your existence is not your own, you have been created by the Creator, the Lord of the universe. If anyone deserves praise and greatness it is God. You doesn't deserve any excellence or greatness."

This type of contemplation will surely make you aware of your essence, and your worth, and will make you ever content and satisfied. In this way, humility will become your nature and conceit and haughtiness will not come nigh to you. (Al-Ghazzali, 2001, Vol. 3, p. 544).

However, if being overly humble hurts or inconveniences others, don't display too much humility / meekness to them in such situations; instead, strive to be a little more casual and intimate with them, since many people, if not the majority, are hurt or inconvenienced when you act too humbly with them. (Thānavī, p. 113).

4. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it is clear that in the moral philosophy of Islam there is great importance of adopting the quality of humility and shunning the arrogance. Moreover, it is clear that certain people are born with the

quality of humility, and it is extremely important for them to maintain and practise it because external circumstances can in many cases impair and weaken it. On the other hand, there are people whose temperament don't allow them to have humility, but they can acquire it by self-disciplining and self-purification, and by being in the company of those whose selves are morally elevated. If they sometimes fail to uphold or exercise moral values, such as in times of stress or frustration, they will correct their wrongs, repent, and continue down the right path as before. Moral qualities will become deeply ingrained in their selves in this manner, and they will not need to expend any significant effort to obey the proper behavior.

Regarding arrogance, the abominable moral vice, it is evident from the above discussion that certain people are arrogant by birth and continue to act in a haughty manner. Others grow this evil after gaining worldly advantages such as money, rank and status, power and strength, and so on. Both are at a loss, and they will be tormented in this world and in the hereafter as a result. However, if they mend their ways and repent for their previous behavior, they will be rewarded greatly both in this life and the life to come, and their sins will be forgiven.

We also learned how brilliantly Islamic thinkers described the root causes of moral evils and their branches, as well as proposed remedies to correct them. They also studied and reflected on every aspect of morality and ethics, as well as the methods and means that can be used to preserve and embrace moral virtues while avoiding moral evils. They discuss morality and ethics in such a way that they don't seem to be purely theoretical, and they focus on practising moral values and avoiding moral evils in everyday life as a religious obligation, as well as for living a healthy and happy life on both an individual and collective level.

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Notes

1. Muhammad, the Messenger of God relates from God that He said: "Might is His Izār (lower garment) and majesty is His Ridā (upper garment), and whoever contends with Me I shall punish him." (Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, hadith no. 6680). In another narration the words of the Prophet are: "Allah, Exalted is He, says: 'Pride is My Ridā and majesty is My Izār, and whoever contends with Me concerning either of them, I shall throw him into the Fire. (Ibn Al-Ash'ath, hadith no. 4090).

2. Izār: A thing well known; [a waist-wrapper] a wrapper for covering, or which covers, the lower part of the body, [from the waist downwards, concealing the thighs, and generally the upper half, or more, of the shanks, not sewed: or such as is beneath the shoulders, or on the lower half of the body. (Lane, p. 153).
3. Ridā: is that which covers the upper half of the body; or that which is upon the shoulders and back; and this also is not sewed: each of these explanations is correct. (Lane, p. 153).
4. These things (Izār and Ridā) are being used in a metaphorical context here. The purpose of this tradition (hadith) is to emphasize that all pride and majesty belong solely to Him. All the attributes of the Creator are His own, while the attributes of the creature are granted by God.
5. A famous Harvard psychologist says: “The very nature of the neurotic disorder is tied to pride. ... Thus, most neuroses, are, from the point of view of religion, mixed with the sin of pride.” (Tarrants, 2011).
6. Honor, respect and nobility in Islam depend on personal character and behavior. The pious and righteous is successful and the sinner and disobedient is unsuccessful.
7. Literally means: excellent, superior, blessing, good, welfare, etc.
8. Literally means: existence, support, sustenance, etc.
9. God says in the Qur’ān: “Know that the life of this world (in comparison with the life hereafter) is but a sport and a play, and an adornment and self-glorification among you and a rivalry in riches and children. It is as (i.e., comparable in the ephemeral nature of these worldly aims) the vegetation after rains the growth of which pleases the husbandmen, then it withers and thou seest it becoming yellow, then it becomes chaff. And in the Hereafter there is both a grievous torment (this is for those who covet the life of this world) and forgiveness from God and His pleasure (this is for those who aim at the life of the Hereafter); and the life of this world (with all its snares and delusions) is but a vain bauble. (Al-Qur’ān, 57: 20).
10. See, for example, Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Nisā: Chapter 4; verse 36, Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Naḥl: Chapter 16; verse 23, Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah Luqmān; Chapter 31; verse 18.
11. See, for example, Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah al-A’rāf: Chapter 7; verse 36, Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Zumar: Chapter 39; verse 60, Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Naḥl: Chapter 16; verse 29.
12. In chapter 16 the Qur’ān says: “It would be said to them: So enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein forever. Woeful indeed will be the lodging of the arrogant.” (16:29).
13. The Prophet said: “One who has arrogance (takabbur), God disgraces him. Thus he becomes smaller in the eyes of the people and bigger in his own eyes till he becomes as disgraceful as a dog or a pig in the eyes of the people” (Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 4271).
14. The same message is found in the Bible as well. “When pride comes, then comes shame” (Proverbs 11: 2). “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16: 18). “For whoever exalts himself will be abased” (Luke 14:11).
15. See also hadith no. 104, p. 59 in Provisions for the Seekers where other things are also mention besides these three. (Ibn Yūsuf, 2014).
16. There is yet another important fact that should be kept in mind; everything a man possesses in this world exists by the Will of God. By God’s Will, some people are born into wealth while others are tested in poverty for the length of their lives. However, it is entirely irrational for a person to be arrogant because of the blessings God grants him. God does all this according to His divine plan. He improves the situation of those whom He pleases, and He also restricts the means of others. In both cases, however, it is a test for man; he is tested in his attitude to these favors as well as deprivations. God says in the Qur’ān: God increases the provision for whom He will (in consonance with His universal Plan) and also (for whomsoever He will) He stints. (Al-Qur’ān, 13:26).
17. Thus, being wealthy in this world does not always imply that you are in God’s favor, and being in adversity does not always imply that you are in God’s disfavor. Both situations are, in fact, a test for humanity. Describing the unstable attitude of man, God says:
18. As for man (i.e., the ungrateful man) – when his Lord tries him (by prosperity) and honors him, and is bountiful to him, he says (in pride and exultation): my Lord has honored me (and this prosperity is my due). And when his Lord tries him (by adversity) and stints unto him his provision, he says (by way of complaint): my Lord has despised me (while I ought to have been honored). No indeed (it is a true test of merit). (Al-Qur’ān, 89:15-17).
19. i.e., human knowledge, howsoever profound, is after all relative; in God alone Perfection dwells. The passage is introduced as a corrective to human conceit.
20. Explaining the same subject, Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have said: “The example of a person who teaches good things to other people but forgets his own self (i.e., not working according to his knowledge) is like that of a lamp / candle that provides light to the people but burns itself.” (Al-Mundhirī, hadith no. 218 & 220).
21. “For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (Galatians 6:3).
22. These are discussed above under “Methods and Remedies to Eliminate Arrogance”.