

On Pride

“He (Satan) refused (to obey God) and was proud.....” (Qur’an, Chapter 2, verse 34):

Pride, greed and envy are the three basic evils which are the foundation of all sins and crimes in this world. All three were clearly demonstrated in the very beginning of mankind when Satan refused to bow down before Adam and arrogantly declared that he was better than Adam. It was ‘pride’ which led to disobedience of God. Eve, owing to her greed, was persuaded by Satan that eating from the ‘forbidden tree’ would be in her benefit. That also led to the disobedience of God. Cain became envious of his brother Abel and killed him. Envy led to the capital sin and crime. It is for the sake of these moral lessons that this story has been repeated several times in the Qur’an.

Pride is one of the most condemned sins in Islam. Four verses of the Qur’an clearly state that Hell is the abode of proud persons. The Holy Prophet has said: “Allah says, greatness is My prerogative, and whoever tries to share it with me (becomes proud) I will put him in Hell”.

Islam has framed its code of life in such a way that pride is crushed continuously. Take for example the rules of salutation. It has been stressed that you should be the first in saying ‘Asalamu alaikum’. Do not wait for others to salute you. And it makes no difference whether the other party is older or younger than you or equal to you in age. Not only this code, but the reason given for it also is a sure remedy of pride. It has been explained in this way. If the other party is older than you, you must salute him, because owing to his longer stay in this world, he has got more chances of good deed than you have; if he is younger than you, you must salute him, because owing to his shorter stay in this world, he has got less chances of evil – deed and sins than you have; if he is your contemporary, remember that you know your own, but not his, vices and sins: therefore you must be the first to begin Salaam to everyone without any distinction of age or rank.

Prayers in the mosques are another example of crushing the pride. There are no reserved seats. Whoever comes first, sits nearer to the priest. A pauper stands in the first line, a millionaire stands behind him: and in prostration the feet of the pauper touch the head of the millionaire, reminding him that in the presence of God it is piety which counts, not the coins.

Pilgrimage to Mecca is another reminder of this lesson. Poor and rich, great and small, ruler and ruled, all are dressed alike, with shaven heads and nearly bare feet, and perform all the functions of Hajj side by side.

Thus minds are dense constantly of 'pride', one of the fundamental evils.

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