9229 - How to Get Rid of Arrogance in Islam

the question

How should a person overcome arrogance?

Summary of answer

One of the remedies for arrogance is to think of yourself as being just like other people and realise that they are like you, they were born from a mother and a father just as you were, and that Taqwa is the true criterion of superiority.
The arrogant Muslim should realise that no matter what he achieves, he is still too weak to attain a stature like the mountains in height or rend nor penetrate the earth.
Another remedy for arrogance is for a person to realise that on the Day of Resurrection he will be gathered in a small form like an ant which will be trampled underfoot.
Another remedy is to remember that he and urine came out of the same place; that he began as a despised drop of sperm and he will end up as a rotten corpse, and that in between he is a vessel for faeces.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Arrogance in Islam

Arrogance is a blameworthy characteristic which is the feature of Iblis (the devil) and his cohorts in this world, those on whose hearts Allah has placed a seal.

The first one who showed arrogance towards Allah and His creation was the accursed Iblis, when Allah commanded him to prostrate to Adam and he refused and was arrogant, and said

(interpretation of the meaning), {I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay.}

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And surely, We created you (your father Adam) and then gave you shape (the noble shape of a human being); then We told the angels, `Prostrate yourselves to Adam`, and they prostrated themselves, except the devil, he refused to be of those who prostrated themselves.

(Allah) said: `What prevented you (O Iblis) that you did not prostrate yourself, when I commanded you?` Iblis said: `I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay`.} [Al-A`raf 7:11-12]

Arrogance is one of the characteristics of Iblis, so whoever wants to be arrogant should realise that he is acquiring a characteristic of the devils, and that he is not acquiring a characteristic of the noble angels who obeyed their Lord and fell down prostrate.

Arrogance may deprive you of Paradise

Moreover, arrogance may be the cause of a person being deprived of Paradise and may mean that the Lord of Glory will not even look at him, as it says in the following two Hadiths:

- It was narrated from `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No one who has an atom’s-weight of arrogance in his heart will enter Paradise.” A man said, “O Messenger of Allah, what if a man likes his clothes and his shoes to look good?” He said, “Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance means rejecting the truth and looking down on people.” (Narrated by Muslim, 91)
- It was narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever lets his garment drag along the ground out of pride, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection.” Abu Bakr said: “Sometimes my garment slips down on one side, unless I pay attention to it.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “You

are not doing that out of pride." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 3465)

Arrogance is an attribute that is not befitting for anyone except Allah

Pride is an attribute that is not befitting for anyone except Allah. Whoever seeks to compete with Allah in that, Allah will destroy him, wreak vengeance on him and make things difficult for him.

It was narrated that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Allah, the Exalted, said: 'Might is His garment and pride is His cloak; whoever seeks to compete with Me concerning them, I will punish him.'" (Narrated by Muslim, 2620)

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This is how it is narrated in all texts. The pronoun in the words `His garment` and `His cloak` refers to Allah, and there is something omitted; what is meant is `Allah says, `whoever seeks to compete with Me concerning them, I will punish him`.

What is meant by 'seeks to compete with Me' is seeking to acquire that characteristic in the sense of sharing in it.

This is a stern warning against arrogance which clearly demonstrates that it is prohibited." (End quote from *Sharh Muslim*, 16/173)

Everyone who tries to be arrogant and put himself above others, Allah will bring him down among the lowest of the low, and will humiliate him, because he is going against reality, so Allah will punish him by thwarting his aims; the punishment is to fit the crime.

The one who is arrogant towards the people will be trampled beneath the feet of the people on the Day of Resurrection, as a punishment for his arrogance.

It was narrated from `Amr ibn Shu`ayb via his father and grandfather that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, the arrogant will be gathered like ants in the form of men. Humiliation will overwhelm them from all sides. They will be driven to

a prison in Hell called Bawlas, with the hottest fire rising over them, and they will be given to drink of the juice of the inhabitants of Hell, which is Teenat Al-khabal." (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi, 2492; classed as sound by Al-Albani in *Sahih At-Tirmidhi*, 2025)

Types of arrogance in Islam

Arrogance is of several types, including the following:

1. When a person does not accept the truth and produces false arguments against it, as we have mentioned in the Hadith of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him), "Arrogance means rejecting the truth and looking down on people."
2. When a person admires himself for his beauty or handsomeness, or the fineness of his food or clothing, so he feels proud and arrogant and feels superior to people.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said (or Abu Al Qasim (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said): "Whilst a man was walking, dragging his garment with pride, with his hair nicely combed, Allah caused the earth to swallow him and he will go on sinking in it until the Day of Resurrection." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 3297 and Muslim, 2088)

A similar case is the story of the friend of the man whose companion spoke to him arrogantly. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And he had property (or fruit) and he said to his companion, in the course of mutual talk: 'I am more than you in wealth and stronger in respect of men'.} [Al-Kahf 18:34]

It may be that he was boasting about his tribe and lineage.

How to get rid of arrogance

- One of the remedies for arrogance is to think of yourself as being just like other people and realise that they are like you, they were born from a mother and a father just as you were, and that taqwa (piety, fear of Allah) is the true criterion of superiority.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [i.e. he is one of the Muttaqoon (the pious).} [Al-Hujurat 49:13]

- The arrogant Muslim should realise that no matter what he achieves, he is still too weak to attain a stature like the mountains in height or rend nor penetrate the earth (cf. Al-Isra` 17:37), as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not any arrogant boaster.

And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the braying of the asses.} [Luqman 31:18-19]

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The phrase “nor walk in insolence through the earth” is a prohibition of arrogance and is enjoining humility. Marah (translated here as insolence) is excessive joy, or it was said that it means being arrogant in walking, or thinking too highly of oneself.

Qutadah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: it means showing off in walking; or it was said that it means vanity.

All of these suggestions are close in meaning, but they may be divided into two categories: those which are blameworthy and those which are praiseworthy.

Arrogance, vanity, showing off and thinking too highly of oneself are blameworthy; joy and energy are praiseworthy.” (End quote from *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, 10/260)

- Another remedy for arrogance is for a person to realise that on the Day of Resurrection he will be gathered in a small form like an ant which will be trampled underfoot. Arrogant people are hated by other people just as they are hated by Allah; people love humble, tolerant and gentle people, and they hate those who are harsh and cruel to people.

- Another remedy is to remember that he and urine came out of the same place; that he began as a despised drop of sperm and he will end up as a rotten corpse, and that in between he is a vessel for faeces. So what does he have to feel so proud and arrogant about?!

We ask Allah to rid us all of arrogance and make us humble.

For more details, please see the following answers: 150839, 240812, and 170526.

And Allah knows best.