



Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge: Having Pride and Being Deceived with Oneself

An explanation of some points from “Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge” (of Shaikh Abdus-Salaam Burjis) by Abu Hakeem Bilaal Davies. Transcribed by Abu and Umm Mariam for SalafiPublications.Com, edited and amended by Abu Iyaad Amjad Rafiq, checked by Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank.

Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Shaykh Burjis mentions in this chapter that: “Having pride is a sin from the sins against Allah, so much so that Some of the great imaams (like Adh-Dhahabi, Ibn Abdul Wahhaab - rahimahullah) mentioned it to be from the major sins (in the books they wrote concerning the major sins).”

Imam Ash-Shafi’ee (rahimahullah) mentioned: “Verily, I complained to Wakee’ [*] (his shaykh) concerning a problem that I had with my memory and guided me and told me to leave sins. And he informed me that Ilm is Nur (light), (in some versions ‘light from allah’ and the light of Allah is not given to the sinful person...”

The Shaikh also mentions:

Allah, the Most High says: “That home of the Hereafter (i.e. paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes. And the good end is for the Muttaqun (the pious and righteous persons). Al-Qasas 28:83

“Be cursed (the disbelieving) man! How ungrateful he is! From what thing did He create him? From Nutfah (male and female semen drops) He created him and set him in due proportion. ‘Abasa 80:17-19

Ayoob al-Sakhtiyaanee (rahimahullah) mentioned: “Verily it is befitting for the alim (the one who has knowledge) to put dirt upon his own head in order to have humility.”

The Salaf in general mentioned: “The person who is humble from the students of knowledge will be from those students of knowledge who have the most Ilm, just as the plot of land that is the lowest holds the most water.”

So let the student beware of this despicable characteristic the like of which is hated by Allah and hated by the believers. For indeed he who humbles himself for Allah (Allah will raise him, and in opposition to this whoever doesn't humble himself for Allah, Allah will lower him). Ibn al Jawzee mentions in Tahdheebul Ihyaa: 'An 'aalim will not be able to repel kibr (pride) except by knowing two affairs.

Firstly: that Allah's proof is more firmly established against the people of knowledge and that a tenth of the probabilities and excuses that are given to the ignorant one are not given to the aalim. For indeed the crime of the one who disobeys Allah upon recognition and knowledge is more despicable (due to the fact that) he didn't fulfill the right of the blessing of Allah upon him with knowledge.

Secondly: that the aalim knows that kibr is not befitting except for Allah azza wa jal alone and that if he has kibr then he will become despised and hated in the sight of Allah' (Tahdheeb al Ihyaa' 2/136).

[*] Wakee' ibn al-Jarraah ar-Rawaasee. Aboo Sufyaan. The Muhaddith of Iraaq. Yahyaa ibn Ma'een said: "I have not seen anyone narrating for Allah's sake except for Wakee' and I have never seen any one having better memory than Wakee'. Wakee' in his time was like al-Awzaa'ee in his time." Imaam Ahmad said "Wakee' was the Imaam of the Muslims in his time." Wakee' said "Whoever seeks hadith as it is, then he is a person of the sunnah, and whoever seeks it to support his own opinion then he is a person of innovation."

Benefits from this Lesson

1. Pride and being amazed with oneself are amongst the major sins and they do not befit the one who seeks knowledge or the scholar.
2. Humility is a sign of benefiting from knowledge and humility too is a sign of abundance of knowledge.
3. The one with knowledge has less excuses and the hujjah is more firmly established against him than those who are ignorant.
4. Kibr (pride) is the sole right of Allaah. Abu Sa'eed and Abu Hurairah narrate (in Sahih Muslim), "The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: Honour, al-'Izz, is His lower garment and Pride, al-kibriyaa is his cloak. I will punish whoever contends with Me [concerning them]."