

رسول الله (صلي الله عليه و اله):

"إِيَّاكَ وَاللَّجَاجَةَ فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَهَا جَهْلٌ وَآخِرُهَا نَدَامَةٌ"

The Holy Prophet (SAW):

"Avoid stubbornness; verily it begins with ignorance and ends in regret."

Some psychologists believe that children between two and three years of age show a high level of inflexibility and stubbornness. During this period, the child is trying to do what he/she likes to do without any concern for other opinions. The parents' efforts to restrain this type of behavior are almost predictably unproductive.

Studies show that the primary source of children's stubbornness at this age is their inability to recognize other realities besides themselves. Thus they evaluate everything on the basis of their own inclinations. It is further understood that until a child discovers and appreciates the existence of others he would remain obstinate.

امام على بن ابيطالب عليه السلام: "رَاكِبُ اللَّجَاجِ مُتَعَرِّضٌ بِالْبَلَاءِ."

Imam Ali (AS):

"One who rides (the horse of) obstinacy will be exposed to adversity."

امام على بن ابيطالب عليه السلام: "لَيْسَ لِلْجُوجِ تَدْيِيرٌ."

Imam Ali (AS)

"A stubborn person lacks preparedness."

In other words, it will cause the person to fall into hardship, and he will not be able to find relief. Since the stubborn person lacks planning and often insists in his own opinion, therefore, he seldom evaluates the adverse aftermath of his deeds.

Headstrong people, in addition to making their own lives miserable, often annoy others and provoke anger in some people. The Holy Prophet (SAW) exhorts people to avoid stubbornness by stating that it begins with ignorance and ends in regret.

This brings us to the question: why does stubbornness start with ignorance? The answer hinges on the obstinate person's egocentric disregard of others' opinions. Since he does not consider anyone's wisdom worthy of review or consideration, he remains unenlightened and ignorant.

But why does stubbornness end with regret? In essence, the one who adheres to only his own opinion will ultimately make numerous errors in his attempts to act, often resulting in an undesirable conclusion. The following hadith of the Holy Prophet (SAW) clearly illustrates the subject:

رسول الله (صلي الله عليه و اله): "مَنْ اسْتَبَدَّ بِرَأْيِهِ هَلَكَ."

The Holy Prophet (SAW):

"Whoever insists on his opinion would perish."

The Holy Qur'an, and other authentic Islamic sources, convincingly reveal that stubbornness is a moral deficiency and a direct result of improper family and social upbringing. Furthermore, there are explicit proofs through scientific and cognitive evidence that obstinacy is a mental inflammation and it is a serious threat to the real self, in addition to other human beings.

In most cases, obstinacy begins in the early years of a person's life, as a direct result of inadequate guidance, uninformed supervision, and an absence of good role models. There are a variety of plausible reasons for stubbornness, chief among them being: a child is the sole offspring, or in a family where primitive traditions hold sway, he is the only male among female children. In addition, some children who suffer from long term illnesses or a certain physical disorder are given preferential treatment without knowing the negative impact of excessive attention and unmerited favoritism. Thus the child tends to become more conceited and a hard-to-please individual.

To inhibit or at least minimize the possibility of contributing to this odious vice, parents must carefully adopt a balanced plan for rewarding or admonishing their children. There are simple yet effective steps that parents and teachers could take to explain to them that they are not the sole inhabitants of this earth. Furthermore, to make them gradually understand that the best opinions and most dynamic ideas are essentially derived from consultations with others.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) stated that "Jab'raeel (AS) (the angel Gabriel) never came to visit me except to provide me with Divine instructions and always his last word was: 'Alas, avoid stubbornness as it would unveil a person's hidden deficiencies and put an end to his honor.'" Then he (SAW) added:

رسول الله (صلي الله عليه و اله): "أَبْغَضُ الرَّجَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْأَلْدُ الْخَصِيمُ."

The Holy Prophet (SAW):

"The most detested person in the sight of Allah is the stubborn antagonist."

Stubbornness usually occurs when a specific want or desire of a person is denied. Even though stubbornness is more visible among adolescents, it is, however, the leading cause of family feuds which often end in divorce or a lifetime of hostility and, consequently, the erosion of the family composition and values.

The most undesirable form of obstinacy is unyielding to a manifest truth (*Haqq*), whether it is a Divine revelation or an established fact. A sound *fitra* (primordial nature) is not consistent with rigidity and stubbornness, but rather impels the person to submit to the truth despite its consequence, despite the fact that it is stated by a child, an unenlightened person, or a seasoned scholar.

Allah (SWT) in Surah 23 Al-Mu'minun Verse 75 describes the stubbornness of those who blindly reject the truth. First He (SWT) warns us that at times He includes them in His Benevolence so that perhaps they may reflect.

وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ مِنْ ضُرٍّ لَلَجُّوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

"Though We had mercy on them and relieved them of the harm afflicting them, they still would show obstinacy and wander blindly in their rebellion." (Surah 23, Verse 75)

Moreover, to demonstrate the fact that those who insist in their own opinion would seldom surrender before the truth, Allah (SWT) in the subsequent verse revealed that He would chastise them with afflictions and cataclysmic events. Provided they have not shown humility in the wake of Allah's Mercy, then the adversities may humble them. Of course nothing would avail them and they would persist in their own way of thinking.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

"We struck them with torment, but they did not submit themselves nor did they make themselves humble." (Surah 23, Verse 76)

Among many resulting symptoms of stubbornness is inequity or injustice, which in turn fosters scores of other vices such as prejudice, discrimination, and tyranny, to cite a few. (Surah 28, Verse 83)

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“As for that Abode of the Hereafter, We assign it unto those who seek not to impose their superiority over the others in the earth nor commit evil therein. The Happy end verily belongs to the pious ones.”

When the above verse was revealed, some of the distinguished companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) were confounded. They assumed by using the provisions of this world, such as food, shelter, and clothing, that they would be drawn to the perils of seeking supremacy. However, he (SAW) assured them that this verse alludes to inequity and not being receptive to the Truth. Following that explanation, the companions were constantly attentive not to resist any truth or its manifestations, and they continued to be humble before truth.

To confront the moral deficit of stubbornness and its evil effects, it is imperative to enhance our knowledge and intellectual competence by consulting with others and being receptive to the truth at all times.

The following impeccable statement from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), is a great admonition that obstinacy, even though it may temporarily boost one's ego, ultimately leads to destruction.

امام على بن ابيطالب عليه السلام: "الَّلَّجَاجُ عُنْوَانُ الْعَطْبِ."

Imam Ali (AS)

“Obstinacy is a prelude for (one's) downfall.”