

Vice 14: Vanity (*ujb*), which is to deem a blessing as tremendous and rely on it, while forgetting to attribute it to its true giver, namely, Allāh Most High, for indeed being preoccupied by a blessing from the Giver is blameworthy vanity.

Its opposite is to mention a favor, that is, for one to state that it [the blessing] exists only due to enablement by Allāh Most High, and that He alone is the One who honored him and enhanced his reward and merit; this mentioning is obligatory (*farḍ*) when one feels tempted by vanity.

The cause of vanity, in reality, is pure ignorance, or heedlessness and unawareness. Its general treatment, then, is to realize that everything that exists does so by the creative act and will of Allāh Most High, and that every blessing—of intelligence, knowledge, righteous works, fame, wealth, etc.—is from Allāh Most High alone; and to be cognizant and aware of this by mentioning it and bringing it to mind, namely, that He Most High alone is the Creator of the servant and all of his actions, outward and inward. So it is incumbent upon him to show gratitude for whatever blessings he finds, like knowledge, actions, etc., that he possesses only due to enablement and succor by Allāh Most High. Of its most potent treatments is to know its spiritual calamities, which are numerous. It suffices one to realize it is the cause of arrogance; forgetting one's sins; forgetting the blessings of Allāh Most High; feeling secure from Allāh's devising and punishment; and thinking one has standing with Allāh and deserves his righteous works, which in fact are blessings and gifts from among His blessings and gifts. It leads to one deeming himself pure and prevents one from benefiting and taking advice from others. It is narrated by Anas رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said, "There are three things that destroy [a person's soul and society at large]: stinginess that is obeyed, caprice that is followed, and a person's being impressed with himself" (*Bayhaqī, Bazzār*).

The most despicable type of vanity is to be impressed with one's own incorrect opinion, whereby one becomes elated, persists upon it, and does not heed sincere advice; rather, he looks at others with the eye of deeming them ignorant. He Most High states, "Or then the one for whom his wretched act is adorned, such that he deems it good and beautiful?" (35:8). All sects of reprehensible innovation and misguidance persist upon their deviation only due to being impressed with their own opinions.

The treatment of this type of vanity is most difficult and challenging, since its possessor deems it as knowledge, not ignorance; as a blessing, not a calamity; and as sound health, not sickness. So he does not seek out treatment nor pay attention to the spiritual doctors that diagnose and treat diseases of the heart, namely, scholars [of both the inward and outward disciplines], of Sunnī orthodoxy and consensus (may Allāh grant victory to their speech until the appointed Hour).