

A Governance Model Based on Revelatory Teachings in Confronting the Phenomenon of Arrogance

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ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental challenges in the realm of governance and societal management is the phenomenon of arrogance (*istikbār*), which serves as a root cause of numerous ethical and social crises. Arrogance, defined as self-aggrandizement and perceiving oneself as superior to others, is strongly condemned in Islamic revelatory texts, particularly the Holy Quran and the hadiths of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a), where it is identified as a primary source of individual and societal deviations. This study aims to elucidate the principles and strategies for confronting arrogance within the framework of Islamic governance. Employing an analytical-descriptive methodology and drawing on library-based resources, the research examines Quranic verses and hadiths. The findings indicate that Islamic teachings advocate principles such as forbearance, guidance, dialogue, logical reasoning, adherence to human ethics, and, when necessary, firmness and rejection of compromise to counter the phenomenon of arrogance. The conduct of the Prophets (a) and the Imams (a) demonstrates that even when facing arrogant powers, upholding ethical and human principles and striving for their guidance and reform remain paramount. However, in the face of fundamental threats to religion and society, the principle of resoluteness and steadfastness is emphasized. Accordingly, the principles derived from the Quran and hadiths can serve as a model for Islamic governance to address arrogant and domineering currents at both domestic and international levels.

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Introduction

The phenomenon of arrogance has historically been a focal point for religious and social scholars, recognized as a root cause of numerous ethical, social, and political crises. In Islamic revelatory teachings, particularly the Holy Quran and the hadiths of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a), arrogance—defined as the pursuit of superiority and defiance against truth—is identified as the primary driver of individual and societal deviation, undermining the foundations of just governance. The central role of arrogance in fostering domination and creating structural barriers to achieving social and religious justice underscores the critical need for a systematic and scholarly approach to addressing this phenomenon. Confronting arrogance within the framework of Islamic governance is not merely a moral or spiritual imperative (see ‘Abdullāhī, 2023; ‘Abdullāhī, 2024) but a strategic and structural necessity for effectively organizing society and preserving human dignity and freedom. Revelatory teachings, emphasizing principles such as guidance, forbearance, dialogue, respect for human dignity, and firmness against domination and corruption, provide a comprehensive and strategic framework for effective governance in confronting domineering and arrogant forces.

This study, employing an analytical-descriptive methodology and utilizing library-based resources, seeks to analyze the concept of arrogance, examine its role in disrupting governance systems, and extract and elucidate principles and strategies for countering it based on revelatory texts. The objective is to propose a theoretical and strategic model for Islamic governance capable of ensuring the ethical and structural resilience of society against arrogant tendencies at both domestic and international levels.

Research Background

Arrogance is among the most deeply rooted negative traits in human spiritual and social history, as evidenced by the Quranic verse: “*And when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, but not Iblis: he refused and acted arrogantly, and he was one of the*

faithless”¹ (Quran 2:34), which highlights its initial manifestation through Iblis’s defiance of divine command. This trait is not confined to the narrative of the first rebellion but is evident throughout human history, across diverse cultures, and in individual and societal behaviors. Systematically confronting arrogance has been a core objective of divine prophetic missions and a fundamental challenge in guiding humanity. However, a review of domestic literature reveals a lack of comprehensive and systematic studies specifically analyzing the principles of engagement with arrogance based on the Quran and Islamic traditions. Notable works such as *Istiḍ’āf va Istikbār az dīdgāh-i Imam Khomeini* [Oppression and Arrogance from the Perspective of Imam Khomeini] (Khomeini, 2001), *Istikbārsitīzī dar Qur’ān* [Combatting Arrogance in the Quran] (Furqānī, 2004), and *Istikbār va Istiḍ’āf dar Qur’ān* [Arrogance and Oppression in the Quran] (Surūsh, 1981) primarily focus on describing the characteristics and forms of arrogance and its associated culture. However, a structured and methodical analysis of the jurisprudential and ethical principles for addressing this phenomenon based on revelatory sources remains limited. Similarly, theses such as *Istikbār az dīdgāh-i Qur’ān va Sunnat* [Arrogance from the perspective of the Quran and tradition] (Īmānī, 1998), *Istikbār az dīdgāh-i Qur’ān va ḥadīth* [Arrogance from the perspective of the Quran and hadith] (Shukrī Ṣādiqī, 2003), and *Barrasī-yi mafhūm-i istikbār dar Qur’ān* [Examination of the concept of arrogance in the Quran] (Malikshāhī, 2000) address various dimensions of the topic but highlight the need for a comprehensive and analytical study. Independent articles have also typically addressed specific aspects of combating arrogance in a limited manner.

Thus, the scarcity of organized and specialized resources on the jurisprudential and ethical principles for confronting arrogance in revelatory texts necessitates a novel and systematic study. This research, adopting an analytical-descriptive approach grounded in the Quran and hadiths, aims to provide a scholarly and practical framework for understanding and addressing arrogance. By systematically

¹. ﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ (البقرة/ ٣٤).

extracting principles and strategies from revelatory sources and integrating ethics, jurisprudence, and governance, it presents a comprehensive model. The primary innovation lies in combining soft approaches such as forbearance and dialogue with firmness in addressing fundamental threats, offering a theoretical-practical framework to strengthen Islamic governance and address the research gap in this domain.

Conceptual Analysis of Arrogance

To analyze the concept of arrogance, we first address its linguistic and technical meanings. Derived from the Arabic root “k-b-r” in the form of “*istif‘āl*”, “*istikbār*” is synonymous with “*kibr*” (pride) and “*takabbur*” (arrogance) (Jawharī 1987, 2:802). It denotes the pursuit of superiority (Muṣṭafavī 1981, 10:18), refusal to accept truth due to obstinacy (Ibn Manẓūr 1994, 5:126), and false self-aggrandizement (Ṭurayhī 1985, 4:9). Rāghib Iṣfahānī describes “*istikbār*” as a form of seeking grandeur akin to “*takabbur*”, where true arrogance involves rejecting truth and defying God, and reprehensible arrogance entails exceeding rightful limits (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1992, 697). Technically, “*istikbār*” refers to domination, colonialism, and exploitation (Pūyā 1992, 7). Imam Ali (a) defines it as the refusal to obey the one who has been commanded to be obeyed and the elevation above those whom they were urged to follow² (Majlisī 1983, 94:116); Imam Sadiq (a) describes the greatest form of arrogance as disregarding the truth and belittling people. In response to the question about the meaning of disregarding the truth, Imam Sadiq (a) says it is to be ignorant of the truth and to criticize its people³ (Kulaynī 19, 2:311). In the context of Islamic political culture, “*istikbār*” signifies the domination of a coercive minority over a deprived majority, manifesting internally or internationally, with the policies of major colonial powers serving as a

². قال على عليه السلام: «أَفْتَدُرُونَ الْإِسْتِكْبَارَ مَا هُوَ تَرْكُ الطَّاعَةِ لِمَنْ أُمِرُوا بِطَاعَتِهِ وَ التَّرَفُّعُ عَلَى مَنْ نَذِبُوا إِلَى مُتَابَعَتِهِ».

³. عِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنْ غَيْرِ وَاحِدٍ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَشْبَاطٍ عَنْ عَمِّهِ يَعْقُوبَ بْنِ سَالِمٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الْأَعْلَى عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عليه السلام قَالَ: «قُلْتُ لَهُ مَا الْكِبَرُ فَقَالَ أَكْبَرُ الْكِبَرِ أَنْ تَسْفَهَ الْحَقَّ وَ تَغْمِصَ النَّاسَ قُلْتُ وَ مَا سَفَهَ الْحَقَّ قَالَ بَجْهَلُ الْحَقِّ وَ يَطْعُنُ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ».

prime example (Muḥammadī 2001, 33). Najafī Khumaynī describes “*istikbār*” as seeking elevation and superiority without merit and refusing to acknowledge truth (Najafī Khumaynī 2019, 9:150).

In the Quran, “*istikbār*” and its derivatives appear 48 times, with four instances referring to Iblis’s arrogance and the remainder to human arrogance (Group of Researchers 2003, 3:165). The concept encompasses both individual and societal dimensions: individually, it denotes defiance against God and rejection of divine invitation, with the arrogant present across all social strata (Āqā Mahdavi et al., 2012, 175). The Quran states: “Certainly We gave Moses the Book, and followed him with the apostles, and We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, manifest proofs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit. Is it not that whenever an apostle brought you that which was not to your liking, you would act arrogantly; so you would impugn a part [of them], and slay [another] part?”⁴ (Quran 2:87), warning those who arrogantly reject worship of God that they will soon enter Hell in humiliation⁵ (Quran 40:60). It further describes the arrogant as those who unjustly exalt themselves on earth and turn away from divine signs⁶ (Quran 7:146), causing corruption and destruction⁷ (Quran 2:205). These verses indicate that arrogance is both an individual trait of defiance against truth and a societal phenomenon of domination and corruption. The arrogant pursue opposition to justice and truth, preserving their interests at any

⁴. «وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَفَقَيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ» (البقرة/٨٧)

⁵. «وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ» (غافر/٦٠)

“Your Lord has said, ‘Call Me, and I will hear you!’ Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility” (Quran 40:60)

⁶. «سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ» (الأعراف/١٤٦)

“Soon I shall turn away from My signs those who are unduly arrogant in the earth: [even] though they should see every sign, they will not believe in it, and if they see the way of rectitude they will not take it as [their] way, and if they see the way of error they will take it as [their] way. That is because they deny Our signs and are oblivious to them” (Quran 7:146)

⁷. «وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ» (البقرة/٢٠٥)

“And if he were to wield authority, he would try to cause corruption in the land, and to ruin the crop and the stock, and Allah does not like corruption” (Quran 2:205)

cost, as extensively detailed in the Quran and hadiths. Based on linguistic, technical, and Quranic meanings, “*istikbār*” can be defined as “practical self-aggrandizement,” combining subjective pride with domineering actions across individual and societal dimensions. The arrogant maintain their status and interests through humiliation, oppression, and exploitation, whether through boasting of wealth and status or imposing racial or political inequalities, themes thoroughly analyzed in the Quran and hadiths.

1. Principles of Engaging with Arrogance

Attention to the issue of arrogance in the future of human history can be discerned from the Book of Revelation. Since, in the Qur’anic discourse, the group opposed to the arrogant are the oppressed (*mustaḍ’afūn*), the Qur’an has promised this group leadership and inheritance of the earth (Asadi, Tajiki, & Shahbazi 2022, 75).

In everyday discourse, individuals refer to what they deem important as “principles.” The term “principle” (*‘aṣl* in Arabic) denotes the foundation, root, or basis of something (Ibn Manẓūr 1994, 11:16; Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1992, 79). Technically, a principle is that upon which other matters are built, inherently established and serving to substantiate other matters (Ṣalībā et al. 1987, 143). Broadly, principles are defined as the most significant rules, recommendations, and overarching imperatives (A’rāfī 2008, 34). In Islamic tradition, principles of engagement with others involve peaceful and rational methods, as exemplified by the Prophets and Imams. Below, we explore select principles aligned with the Quranic and hadith-based definition of appropriate engagement, though the principles for addressing the arrogant are not limited to those discussed here .

1.1. Principle of Monotheism-Centeredness

A paramount principle in confronting the arrogant is “monotheism-centeredness” (*tawḥīd-mihvarī*). Throughout history, political societies have witnessed a dichotomy between divine, monotheistic perspectives and arrogant, polytheistic ones. Prophets consistently championed the monotheistic perspective, calling people to worship the One God and

cautioning against polytheism, corruption, and arrogance. Monotheism is a cornerstone of prophetic teachings, with all Prophets inviting humanity to actions aligned with the worship of the One God. The Quran affirms this universal prophetic mission: “*We did not send any messenger before you but that We revealed to him that ‘There is no god except Me; so worship Me’*”⁸ (Quran 21:25). This verse underscores that all Prophets, from Adam (a) to Prophet Muhammad (s), were tasked with promoting the word of monotheism, fostering societies rooted in worship of the One God. Another verse states: “*Certainly We raised a messenger in every nation [to preach:] ‘Worship Allah, and keep away from the Rebels’*”⁹ (Quran 16:36). This highlights the dual prophetic mission of monotheism and rejection of false powers, emphasizing that realizing monotheism requires eliminating “*tāghūt*” (tyrannical powers). Thus, the Prophets’ mission involved eradicating “*tāghūt*” and establishing divine governance to foster a God-centered society (Group of Researchers, 2007, 222).

The Quran emphasizes that the arrogant, due to their disposition, reject monotheism and worship of the One God, viewing it as contrary to their desires: “*Your Lord has said, ‘Call Me, and I will hear you!’ Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility*”¹⁰ (Quran 40:60). This theme is reiterated in verses such as 35–36 of *Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt*, and verse 172 of *Sūrat al-Nisā’*. Prophets initiated their missions by calling people to servitude to God and avoidance of obedience to *tāghūt*. However, they faced resistance from the arrogant and powerful, whose social and political dominance conflicted with the Prophets’ monotheistic call. Imam Ali (a) states: “Praise be to Allah who wears the apparel of Honour and Dignity and has chosen them for Himself instead of for His creation. He has made them inaccessible and unlawful for others. He has selected them for His own great self, and has hurled a curse on him who contests with Him concerning them. Then He put His angels on trial concerning these attributes in order to distinguish those who are modest from those who

⁸. ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوْحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾ (الأنبياء/ ٢٥)

⁹. ﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رُسُلًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ...﴾ (النحل/ ٣٦)

¹⁰. ﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ ذَاخِرِينَ﴾ (غافر/ ٦٠)

are vain”¹¹ (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 192). Thus, the Prophets’ primary effort was to combat polytheistic ideologies and promote monotheism, as divine religion rejects the imposed domination of one group over others’ lives, wealth, or destiny. This rejection, grounded in the Islamic monotheistic belief in human equality before God, opposes any form of superiority or lordship by some over others (Ḥakīmī 2006, 3:362). The Quran calls for a shared commitment to monotheism: “Say, ‘O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allah.’ But if they turn away, say, ‘Be witnesses that we are Muslims’”¹² (Quran 3:64).

Thus, the principle of monotheism-centeredness must be prioritized, as neglecting it undermines all other foundations. The monotheistic perspective, aligned with human nature, serves as a robust fortress against satanic and arrogant enslavement, guiding humanity to a secure refuge. The Creator has identified monotheism and worship of God as humanity’s greatest need and the essence of human dignity.

1.2. Principle of Forbearance and Gentleness

A fundamental and common principle in engaging with the arrogant is the observance of forbearance and gentleness, avoiding harshness and severity, except in cases where hope for their guidance is entirely lost, they deserve divine punishment, or they exhibit obstinate defiance against divine truth. “*Mudārā*” (forbearance) linguistically denotes kindness, gentleness, and caution (Ṭurayḥī 1985, 1:138). ‘Allāmah Majlisī defines it as “gentleness and softness with people, avoiding conflict and dispute” (Majlisī 1983, 67:374). The Quran places significant emphasis on this principle, commending forbearance even when dealing with rebellious and arrogant figures such as Pharaoh

¹¹. امام علی عليه السلام: «الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَيْسَ الْعَزَّ وَالْكِبْرِيَاءُ وَ اخْتَارَهُمَا لِنَفْسِهِ دُونَ خَلْقِهِ وَ جَعَلَهُمَا جَمِی وَ حَزَمًا عَلَى غَيْرِهِ وَ اصْطَفَاهُمَا لِجَلَالِهِ وَ جَعَلَ اللَّعْنَةَ عَلَى مَنْ نَازَعَهُ فِيهِمَا مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ثُمَّ اخْتَبَرَ بِذَلِكَ مَلَائِكَتَهُ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ لِيَمِيزَ الْمُتَوَاضِعِينَ مِنْهُمْ مِنَ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ». (نهج البلاغه، خطبه قاصعه)

¹². «قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَ بَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَ لَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَ لَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ» (آل عمران/ 64)

(Hāshimī Rafsanjānī 1999, 20:86). Forbearance with others yields numerous benefits, including: 1. Creating a conducive environment for the exchange of ideas and intellectual discourse; 2. Preserving societal unity by fostering goodwill, increasing the number of allies, and reducing adversaries. This is reflected in the Quranic verse addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him): "... *had you been harsh and hardhearted, they would have surely scattered from around you ...*"¹³ (Quran 3:159).

In an atmosphere of forbearance and tolerance, critical thinking and intellectual inquiry flourish, fostering a spirit of cooperation, national unity, and social responsibility. Individuals are exposed to both opposing and supporting viewpoints, enhancing dialogue (Naw'ī 2000, 82). The importance of forbearance is underscored by the Prophet's statement: "My Lord (Allah) has commanded me to be gentle to people just as He has commanded me to fulfill my obligations"¹⁴ (Kulaynī 1986, 2:117). In other hadiths, the Prophet (s) states: "Dealing kindly with people is half of belief and leniency to them is half of livelihood"¹⁵ (Kulaynī 1986, 2:117). The Prophet's exemplary forbearance earned him divine praise: "*and indeed you possess a great character*"¹⁶ (Quran 68:4). Throughout his migration period, the Prophet (s) consistently practiced dealing kindly with people as a principle, maintaining control over circumstances without harshly confronting hypocrites despite their provocations (Ja'fariyān 2006, 1:451). Thus, one of the most critical principles for engaging with the arrogant is the application of forbearance and gentleness. In the contemporary world, military confrontation has largely lost its relevance, applicable only in specific and limited circumstances. However, through "heroic flexibility" (*narmish-i qahramānānih*), constructive engagement with the global community is possible, leveraging such interactions to advance the cause of pure Islamic teachings worldwide.

¹³. ﴿... وَ لَوْ كُنْتَ قَطًّا غَلِيظًا لَأَنْفَضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ...﴾ (آل عمران/ ١٥٩)

¹⁴. أَبُو عَلِيٍّ الْأَشْعَرِيُّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْجَبَّارِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ زَبِيعٍ عَنْ حَمْرَةَ بْنِ زَبِيعٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «أَمَرَنِي رَبِّي بِمُدَارَاةِ النَّاسِ كَمَا أَمَرَنِي بِإِدَاءِ الْقَرَائِضِ».

¹⁵. عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ هَارُونَ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ مَسْعَدَةَ بْنِ صَدَقَةَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «مُدَارَاةُ النَّاسِ نِصْفُ الْإِيمَانِ وَ الرِّفْقُ بِهِمْ نِصْفُ الْعَيْشِ ...».

¹⁶. ﴿وَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾ (القلم/ ٤)

1.3. Principle of Guidance

The principle of “guidance” (*hidāyah*) is a cornerstone in confronting arrogance, clearly articulated in the Quran, hadiths, and the practical conduct of the infallible Imams (a). The primary mission of the Prophets was to guide the misguided from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge and justice, actualizing the belief in monotheism across all facets of life. Arrogance and tyrannical powers (*tāghūt*) represent significant obstacles to this guidance. Guidance is defined as gentle direction and orientation toward the appropriate path (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1992, 835). The Quran emphasizes the principles of order and guidance, as seen in: *‘‘Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it]’’¹⁷ (Taha, 20:50) (Muṭahharī 2009, 26:471). Imam Ali (a) exemplified this principle during the Battle of *Ṣiffīn* by engaging opponents with courtesy and praying for their guidance (see Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 206).

The Quran labels those who obstruct guidance as “leaders of disbelief” (*a’immat al-kufr*) (At-Tawbah, 9:12) and commands the Prophet and his followers to oppose them: *‘‘And if they break their oaths... then fight the leaders of disbelief’’* (At-Tawbah, 9:12). The conduct of the Prophets was rooted in guidance; they initially approached the arrogant with kindness and rational arguments, as exemplified by Prophet Noah (peace be upon him): *‘‘He said, ‘O my people... I know from Allah what you do not know’’’’* (Al-A‘raf, 7:61–62), with the ultimate aim of achieving divine satisfaction through guidance. Prophets prioritized guidance, employing reason and logic to persuade the arrogant, as guiding transgressors was a central objective of their mission.

1.4. Principle of Patience and Forbearance

A significant ethical principle in engaging with the arrogant is “patience” (*ṣabr*) and “openness of breast” (*sharḥ-i ṣadr*), repeatedly emphasized in the Quran and teachings of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a). “Openness of breast” (*sharḥ-i ṣadr*) refers to the expansion of the heart

¹⁷. ﴿رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى﴾ (طه/٥٠)

through divine light and tranquility (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1992, 449). The Prophet (s) is described as the epitome of patience: “The Messenger of Allah was the most patient of people...” (Ibn Saʿd 1985, 1:378). The Quran instructs the Prophet: “*So be patient just as the resolute among the messengers were patient*”¹⁸ (Quran 46:35). Openness of breast, coupled with patience, empowered the prophets to endure hardships. Prophet Moses (a), tasked with confronting Pharaoh, first sought openness of breast: “*He said, ‘My Lord! Open my breast for me’*”¹⁹ (Quran 20:25), recognizing its necessity for facing challenges (Sharīʿatī 1967, 32). God assured Moses and Aaron that their supplication was answered and commanded steadfastness: “*Said He, ‘Your supplication has already been granted. So be steadfast ...’*”²⁰ (Quran 10:89). The perseverance of the Israelites against Pharaoh led to their triumph: “*We made the people who were abased the heirs to the east and west of the land which We had blessed, and your Lord’s best word [of promise] was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their patience, and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had built and what they used to erect*”²¹ (Quran 7:137). Similarly, the Prophet of Islam (s) demonstrated openness of breast and patience in the face of mockery and persecution in Mecca, steadfastly inviting people to Islam (Ibn Hishām 1936, 1:410). An individual endowed with openness of breast and patience fearlessly engages with opposing views, critically evaluates them, and accepts what is rational.

1.5. Principle of Strategic Planning

A critical principle in confronting the arrogant is the development of strategic plans to eradicate oppression and arrogance, as Quranic teachings prioritize defending the oppressed over reticence: “*Allah does not like the disclosure of [anyone’s] evil [conduct] in speech except by someone who has been wronged, and Allah is all-hearing, all-*

¹⁸. ﴿فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعِزِّ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ﴾ (الأحقاف/ ٣٥)

¹⁹. ﴿قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي...﴾ (طه/ ٢٥)

²⁰. ﴿قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَتْ دَعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا...﴾ (يونس/ ٨٩)

²¹. ﴿وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضَعُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ﴾ (الأعراف/ ١٣٧)

knowing”²² (Quran 4:148). Formulating practical strategies to combat arrogance—a manifestation of oppression—is essential at both societal and politico-social levels. Quranic teachings mandate avoiding oppression in all domains and resisting it as a collective duty. The Quran addresses believers: “*Why should you not fight in the way of Allah and the oppressed men, women, and children, who say, ‘Our Lord, bring us out of this town whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us a guardian from Yourself, and appoint for us a helper from Yourself’*”²³ (Quran 4:75). The spiritual aim of fighting in God’s cause is attaining divine reward, while its temporal aim is liberating the oppressed from tyrannical forces (Mudarrisī 1998, 2:112). In this verse, God proposes to those living under the oppressive rule of tyrants, constantly subjected to subjugation and oppression, as well as to those who witness their plight, a practical and life-affirming program of jihad and struggle against injustice, accompanied by revolutionary and competent leadership. He declares that to achieve liberation from the oppression and dominance of tyrants, a strategic plan must be devised to safeguard against vulnerability, exploitation, and the yoke of oppressors. Accordingly, it can be stated that in confronting the phenomenon of arrogance, by understanding its characteristics, actions, and orientations, one must wisely regulate their conduct. In all domains, planning, and collective or individual orientations, actions must be guided by prudence and wisdom. If we recognize the nature of the system of domination and arrogance today, how can we move forward with wisdom and foresight to devise sound plans.

1.6. Principle of Competent Leadership

The Quran underscores the importance of competent leadership in combating oppression and arrogance, as highlighted in 75 of *Sūrat al-Nisā’*. Exegetical sources note that Muslims under oppressive rule first sought a “guardian” (*walī*) and then a “helper” (*naṣīr*) for liberation. Prior

²² «لَا يَحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا» (النساء/ ١٤٨)

²³ «وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا» (النساء/ ٧٥)

to all else, the presence of a competent and compassionate leader is essential, followed by sufficient supporters and helpers. Therefore, even an abundance of supporters, without the guidance of proper leadership, will yield no results (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 4:11). Transforming materialistic and polytheistic societal values into spiritual and humanistic ones, particularly in contexts dominated by tyrannical powers, requires spiritual and physical readiness, intellectual capacity, sufficient supporters, and righteous leadership (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 13:192). The prophetic tradition, such as Prophet Moses's leadership in overthrowing Pharaoh's dictatorship and establishing divine governance through the Israelites' obedience, exemplifies this principle. Imam Ali (a) describes the Israelites' perseverance: "Till when Allah, the Glorified, noticed that they were enduring troubles in His love and bearing distresses out of fear for Him, He provided escape from the distress of trials. So, He changed their disgrace into honour and fear into safety. Consequently, they became ruling kings and conspicuous leaders and Allah's favours over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached"²⁴ (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 192). Thus, revolutionary leadership is a fundamental principle in confronting the arrogant.

1.7. Principle of Respect-Centeredness

Social behaviors are typically categorized into two types: those based on respect and recognition of others' rights, and those rooted in insult and disrespect (Rashād 2006, 10:30). Pharaoh and his followers exemplify the latter: "*Thus did he mislead his people and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were a transgressing lot*"²⁵ (Quran 43:54). The Quran portrays Pharaoh as a symbol of human degradation, and those who belittle others follow a Pharaonic system built on dehumanization and domination through humiliation. In contrast, Prophets and divine leaders prioritized respect for human dignity, as reflected in their

²⁴. امام علی عليه السلام: «حَتَّى إِذَا رَأَى اللَّهُ سُيُحَانَهُ جَدَّ الصَّبْرِ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى الْأَذَى فِي مَحَبَّتِهِ وَ الْإِحْتِمَالِ لِلْمَكْرُوهِ مِنْ خَوْفِهِ جَعَلَ لَهُمْ مِنْ مَضَائِقِ الْبَلَاءِ قَرَجاً فَأَبْدَلَهُمُ الْعِزَّ مَكَانَ الذُّلِّ وَ الْأَمْنَ مَكَانَ الْخَوْفِ فَصَارُوا مُلُوكاً حُكَّاماً وَ أَيْمَةً أَعْلَاماً، وَ بَلَغَتْ الْكَرَامَةُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ مَا لَمْ تَذْهَبِ الْأُمَالُ إِلَيْهِ بِهِمْ». (نهج البلاغه، خطبه قاصعه)

²⁵. «فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ» (الزخرف/ ٥٤)

conduct (Rashād 2006, 10:31). “Respect” (*takrīm*) and dignity are foundational Quranic principles, with *takrīm* denoting reverence and honoring humanity (Mu‘īn 1981, 1:1126). This principle underpins all human interactions and serves as a benchmark for social rulings (Dilshād Tihirānī 2006, 69). The Quran affirms humanity’s exalted status as God’s vicegerent: “*When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth’...’*”²⁶ (Quran 2:30) and “*Certainly We have honoured the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and given them an advantage over many of those We have created with a complete preference*”²⁷ (Quran 17:70). Human dignity is inherent, and social relations must be rooted in respect; neglecting this leads to inhumane and unjust interactions.

Divinely bestowed dignity stands in opposition to Pharaonic disdain, as oppressive regimes rely on dehumanization to sustain their dominance. Prophets (a), characterized by nobility, adopted respect-centered conduct, believing that honoring a Muslim equates to honoring God²⁸ (Ḥurr ‘Āmulī 1989, 12:266). Respect fosters resilience against challenges and prevents hypocrisy and arrogance. Social relations grounded in dignity and compassion, rather than humiliation and violence, align with divine mercy. Imam Sajjad’s (a) compassionate response to an abusive enemy, leading to their reform, exemplifies this principle (Irbilī 2003, 2:101). Thus, a society rooted in divine mercy must prioritize respect, as emphasized in the Prophet’s conduct.

1.8. Principle of Employing Diverse Methods

A fundamental Quranic principle is the adoption of diverse methods in confronting the arrogant. At times, one must listen patiently to their arguments, respond gently with truth, and, if necessary, disengage to avoid reinforcing their arrogance. Prophet Moses (a) initially used

²⁶ ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً...﴾ (البقرة/٣٠)

²⁷ ﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا﴾ (الأنعام/٧٠)

²⁸ «... وَمَنْ أَكْرَمَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمِ فَإِنَّمَا يُكْرِمُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ».

gentle language with Pharaoh to prevent obstinacy, as God instructed: “when his Lord called out to him in the holy valley of Tuwa? [And said,] ‘Go to Pharaoh, for indeed he has rebelled, and say, ‘Would you purify yourself? I will guide you to your Lord, that you may fear [Him]?’”²⁹ (Quran 79:16-19) and “Speak to him in a soft manner; maybe he will take admonition or fear”³⁰ (Quran 20:44). However, when Pharaoh persisted in denial and rebellion, gentle speech proved insufficient, and divine punishment was enacted: “Then he showed him the greatest sign. But he denied, and disobeyed. Then he turned back, walking swiftly, and mustered [the people] and proclaimed, saying, ‘I am your exalted lord!’ So Allah seized him with the punishment of this life and the Hereafter”³¹ (Quran 79:20-25). Similarly, when the people of Moses transgressed on the Sabbath, God transformed them into apes: “And certainly you know those of you who violated the Sabbath, whereupon We said to them, ‘Be you spurned apes’”³² (Quran 2:65). Thus, respect and diverse methods, grounded in Quranic teachings and prophetic conduct, are critical for preserving human dignity and achieving social and political reform.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of arrogance (*istikbār*), a critical challenge in governance and societal management, is a primary source of ethical, social, and structural crises. Islamic revelatory teachings, particularly the Quran and narrations of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a), meticulously analyze arrogance as self-aggrandizement and unjust superiority, identifying it as a root cause of individual deviation and societal inequalities and domination. This study, employing an analytical-descriptive methodology and systematically examining Quranic and hadith sources, elucidates the principles and strategies for countering this destructive phenomenon. The findings demonstrate that Islamic

²⁹. ﴿إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى * أَذْهَبَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ * فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ * وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ﴾ (النازعات/١٦-١٩)

³⁰. ﴿فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لِّنَبِّئَهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ﴾ (طه/٤٤)

³¹. ﴿فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ * فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَىٰ * ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ يَسْعَىٰ * فَخَشَرَ فَنَادَىٰ * فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ * فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَ الْأُولَىٰ﴾ (النازعات/٢٠-٢٥)

³². ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدُوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ﴾ (البقرة/٦٥)

teachings, as intellectual and practical foundations for governance, advocate a multifaceted and balanced approach to confronting arrogant tendencies, rooted in forbearance, guidance, dialogue, logical reasoning, and adherence to human ethics. This approach, centered on preserving human dignity and commitment to justice, fosters an environment for reforming the arrogant and prevents recourse to violent or extreme measures.

This study also highlights that in the face of fundamental threats to religion, society, and Islamic governance, firmness and rejection of compromise are essential, safeguarding religious identity and public rights. The conduct of the Prophets (a) and the Imams (a) serve as practical models of spiritual leadership. They emphasize the importance of upholding human ethics while also taking decisive actions when necessary. This approach reflects the balanced nature of Islamic governance, which addresses arrogance through both reformatory and deterrent measures. The principles derived from revelatory sources provide a coherent, scholarly, and practical framework for designing an Islamic governance model applicable at domestic and international levels, serving as a strategic and ethical paradigm to counter arrogant and domineering forces. This model ensures societal stability, justice, and security while minimizing the disruptions caused by arrogance. Adopting this model represents a significant step toward advancing Islamic governance and realizing the ideals of social justice and spirituality-based governance.

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