



Abul Hasan Makki (rahimahullah) had a daughter, living in Makkah Mukarramah, who was even more pious than he was. Such was her simplicity and austerity that she would live on a mere thirty dirhams (silver coins) for the year. Her father would send her this money from the profit he made by selling mats which he would weave from palm leaves.

The neighbour of Abul Hasan Makki (rahimahullah), Ibnur Rawwaas, relates the following:

I intended leaving for hajj, and so I came to Abul Hasan (rahimahullah) to bid him farewell, ask him if he needed anything, and to request his du'aa. He thus handed me a paper bag and said, "Ask the people of Makkah Mukarramah to direct you to so-and-so woman in such-and-such location and hand this to her." I understood that the parcel was for his daughter.

I accepted the paper bag and on arriving in Makkah Mukarramah, I made enquiries regarding the woman, and discovered that her 'ibaadah and disinterest in the world had become so famous among the people that she was known by one and all. I thus decided to add some of my own money to the money that her father had sent so that I would also have a share in the reward. However, since I anticipated that she would not accept money from me, I opened the paper bag and secretly increased the amount from thirty coins to fifty, thereafter resealing the bag.

When I handed her the bag, she asked me, "How is my father?" I replied, "He is well." She thereafter remarked, "It seems as though he has begun to spend time in the company of the people of the world, and he has abandoned dedicating himself to Allah Ta'ala." She then said to me, "I wish to ask you something, so I beseech you, in the name of Allah Ta'ala, that Being for whom you are performing hajj, to answer me truthfully." I responded, "Certainly!"

She asked, “Did you mix some of your own wealth into this money?” I answered, “Yes, but how did you know?” She said, “My father would not give me more than thirty dirhams, as he cannot afford to give me more than that. The only way that he could have given me more would have been if he had given up his dedication to ‘ibaadah (and spent more time in earning wealth). If you had informed me that this was indeed the case with my father then I would not have taken anything from his wealth either.”

Having said this, she addressed me saying, “Take the entire amount of money away, for you have not fulfilled your duty towards me (of discharging the trust of the money to me), despite being able to do so.” In response, I asked her, “How is this?” She answered, “I will not consume any wealth unless it was earned by myself or by my father. Likewise, I will not accept any wealth unless I am able to verify its condition (i.e. whether it was earned through halaal sources or otherwise).”

I responded saying, “In that case, take the thirty dirhams which your father sent for you and return the rest.” She retorted, “If I was able to identify those exact coins, from all the other coins, then I would certainly do so. However, my father’s coins have now been mixed with the other coins (and I cannot separate them). Hence, I will not accept any of the coins. Now, I will have to live off the dumps in order to survive until the next hajj season (when my father will send money again), as this money was my allowance for the entire year. You have put me into hunger (and difficulty). Had your intention not been to assist me, I would have cursed you.”

After completing my hajj, I returned to Basrah, grieved and remorseful over what had transpired. I went to Abul Hasan (rahimahullah), informed him of what had happened and apologized to him. (After hearing me out,) he said, “I will not take this money from you, as it has now mixed with the other money (and cannot be separated). You have been undutiful to me and to her.” (Completely at a loss,) I asked him, “What should I do with the coins?” He replied, “I don’t know.”

I persevered for some time, continuously apologizing to him and asking him what I should do with the money, until he eventually said, “Give it in sadaqah.” I thus gave it in charity.

(Sifatul Safwah vol. 1, pg. 448)

Lessons:

1. What a person consumes has a direct impact and effect on his actions, the condition of his heart and his motivation towards righteousness. Furthermore, 'what we consume' is not restricted to the food we eat, but includes the wealth that we earn, etc. It is for this reason that the pious people of the past would exercise such caution regarding their wealth.

2. The pious do not only abstain from that which is clearly impermissible, but also refrain from that which is doubtful. Likewise, if they are unable to verify that something is completely halaal (e.g. due to lack of information, the inability to inquire, etc.) then they exercise caution and refrain.

3. The purpose of doing a person a favour is to bring comfort to the person. Hence, before doing the favour, we must ensure that the person will be comfortable with what we are doing. Otherwise, we may think that we are doing him a favour, whereas we are actually doing him a disservice and causing him inconvenience. If we know a person very well, then we will be acquainted with their temperament and will be able to bring them comfort. If we are not well acquainted with their temperament then we should rather enquire before doing anything, as although we may mean well, we may unintentionally put the person through difficulty.