



On one occasion, towards the end of the month of Sha'baan, the famous 'Abbaasi Khaleefah, Haaron Rasheed, summoned the great ascetic, Muhammad bin Sabeeh, who was famously known as Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah).

When Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) arrived, Haaron Rasheed's minister, Yahya bin Khaalid, asked him if he knew the reason behind the Ameerul Mu-mineen summoning him. Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) replied in the negative. Yahya then informed him, "He has called for you since he had learnt about the exceptional du'aa that you make for the prominent people and for the laymen."

Hearing these words, Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) responded, "The news that has reached the Ameerul Mu-mineen is only due to the veil that Allah Ta'ala has concealed me with.

Had He not concealed me (and covered my sins), no one would praise me, nor would anyone meet me with love and affection.

O Ameerul Mu-mineen! It is only this veil (of Allah Ta'ala) which has caused me to be seated before you (today)."

He then continued to say, "By Allah! I have not seen a face more beautiful than yours, so do not cause it to be burnt by the fire (by involving yourself in the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala)." Hearing this profound reminder, Haaron Rasheed burst out in tears.

Thereafter, Haaron Rasheed (felt thirsty and) asked for some water. When the utensil of water was presented to him and he was about to drink, Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) requested, "O Ameerul Mu-mineen, may I say something before you drink this water?" Haaron Rasheed gave him permission to say whatever he wished to say. Hence, he went on to say, "O Ameerul Mu-mineen! If (perchance) you were not allowed to take this sip of water unless you give the entire world and whatever it contains, would you give the world and whatever it contains in exchange of it (i.e. this sip of water)?"

Haaron Rasheed replied, "Yes (I would definitely do so)." Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) then said to him, "You may drink to your fill. May Allah Ta'ala bless you."

When Haaron Rasheed drank the water, Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) once again posed a question to him, “O Ameerul Mu-mineen! If supposedly you were denied the ability of passing (urine and expelling) this water (from your body) until and unless you hand over the world and whatever it contains, would you give the world and whatever it contains in exchange of it?” Haaron Rasheed again replied in the affirmative. Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) then concluded,

“O Ameerul Mu-mineen! (If this is the case) then why are you occupied with something which (is so worthless that) a sip of water is better than it.”

Hearing this, Haaron Rasheed began to weep bitterly.

Witnessing this, Yahya bin Khaalid, the minister, admonished Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) for inconveniencing the Ameerul Mu-mineen. Ibnus Sammaak (rahimahullah) responded saying, “O Yahya, you too should not let the comforts and ease of life beguile you.”

(Taareekhu Baghdaad vol. 3, pg. 352)

Lessons:

1. One of the great favours of Allah Ta‘ala upon us is that He conceals our sins from others, due to which we enjoy respect in the world. Together with begging Allah Ta‘ala to continue concealing our faults and weaknesses in this world and the Hereafter, we must also ensure that we do not expose and publicise the sins that we commit.

2. A person whose heart has been illuminated by Allah Ta‘ala understands the worthlessness of this world and the significance of the Hereafter. He thus makes minimal effort for this temporary life and instead focuses his attention and energies to his eternal abode.

3. The bounties of Allah Ta‘ala are priceless and invaluable. Even the favours which appear to be small and insignificant, like drinking and passing water, are worth more than the entire world and all the valuables that it contains.

Focusing on these invaluable bounties that a person enjoys, is a means of inculcating gratitude and positivity in one’s life.



Even the 'small' bounties of Allah Ta'ala are worth more than the entire world.

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