



A person once came to Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) and said, “O Abu Ishaq! I am a great transgressor and sinner. Please give me some advice that will serve as a deterrent from sin and will save my heart.”

Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) replied, “If you accept five things from me and you are able to hold fast to them, you will neither be harmed by falling into sin nor will you be destroyed through falling prey to your carnal desires.” The man replied, “Mention them, O Abu Ishaq.”

Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) commenced enumerating the five things as follows:

The first thing is that when you wish to disobey Allah Ta‘ala, then do not eat from His sustenance.” The man replied, “Where will I get food from when all the food on earth is the sustenance granted by Allah Ta‘ala?” Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) responded, “Does it behove you to eat from Allah Ta‘ala’s sustenance whilst disobeying Him?” The man submitted, “No, it does not behove one to do so.” The man then said, “What is the second thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) said, “When you wish to disobey Allah Ta‘ala, then do not stay on His land.” The man replied, “This is even more difficult than the first! When the East and the West and all the lands in-between belong to Allah Ta‘ala, then where will I live?” Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) responded, “Does it behove you to eat from Allah Ta‘ala’s sustenance, and reside on His land, whilst disobeying Him?” The man admitted, “No, it does not behove one to do so.” The man then asked, “What is the third thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) said, “When you wish to disobey Allah Ta‘ala, and you are eating from His sustenance and residing on His land, then at least find a place where He will not

see you defying Him openly.” The man exclaimed, “O Ebrahim (rahimahullah)! How is this possible when Allah Ta’ala even sees those things which are hidden?” Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) responded, “Does it behove you to eat from Allah Ta’ala’s sustenance, and reside on His land, and disobey Him while He is watching you and can see how you are defying Him?” The man acknowledged, “No, it does not behove one to do so.” The man then asked, “What is the fourth thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) said, “When the angel of death approaches you to extract your soul then say to him, ‘Give me some time so that I may engage in sincere repentance from my sins and carry out righteous actions to please Allah Ta’ala.’” The man responded, “The angel of death will never accept this request from me!” Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) remarked, “When you do not have the ability to repel death when it comes to you, so that you will have the opportunity to repent, and you are well aware that when death comes, there will be no delay or procrastination, then how do you hope to gain salvation?” The man then asked, “What is the fifth thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) said, “On the Day of Qiyaamah, when the angels of punishment come to seize you and drag you to the fire of Jahannum, then do not go with them.” The man replied, “Neither will the angels leave me, nor will they listen to my plea!” Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) asked, “In that case, how can you hope for salvation?”

The man exclaimed, “O Ebrahim (rahimahullah)! That is enough for me! I beg Allah Ta’ala to forgive my sins and I turn to Him in repentance!”

The man then chose to remain in the company of Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) where he remained engaged in ‘ibaadah until his death.

*(Kitaabut Tawwaabeen - Ibnu Qudaamah pg. 211)*

### **Lessons:**

1. The nature of this world is that with its wealth, pleasures and entertainment, it distracts us from our goal – the Aakhirah. We become so immersed in making the most of life that we become unmindful of Jannah and Jahannum. The remedy for this is for us to ponder over the reality of life, to ponder over how every person, as powerful and wealthy as he may have been, eventually left this world. Hence, our turn will also come one day.

Then, we should think about the invaluable favours of Allah Ta'ala that we enjoy.

*Does it behove us to repay Him by flagrantly flouting His laws and commands?*

Through utilizing our intelligence and pondering in this manner, we will, insha-Allah, create some feeling of remorse in our hearts and the inclination to repent and make amends.

2. When a person has a serious illness, he cannot treat it on his own. He will have to refer to an expert doctor for attention and treatment.

Similarly, the person in this incident had the illness of repeatedly falling into sin. He thus referred to the illustrious saint and 'Aalim of the time – Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah) – for guidance and advice. Through the blessing of referring to this 'Aalim, Allah Ta'ala guided him and inspired him to change his life.

3. After repenting, the man did not continue on his way. Rather, he realised that if he wished to continue benefiting and progressing, and if he wanted to prevent a relapse, he would need to remain attached to Ebrahim bin Adham (rahimahullah). Hence, he remained with him until death. If we wish to progress and benefit, and want to put our lives in order, we will have to attach ourselves to some pious person, who is committed to the sunnah. In this way, Allah Ta'ala will bless us via this pious person and we will remain committed to Deen.