



Sahal bin ‘Abdillah Tustari (rahimahullah) was a renowned saint of his time. He was born in the city of Tustar (a city in South-Western Iran also known as Shushtar) during the year 200 or 201 A.H., and passed away in Basrah during the year 283 A.H.

Although Sahal bin ‘Abdillah Tustari (rahimahullah) acquired spiritual benefit from the saint, Zunnoon Misri (rahimahullah), the roots of his piety can be traced to the influence of his maternal uncle, Muhammad bin Sawwaar (rahimahullah). Sahal (rahimahullah) explains:

One day, my uncle said to me, “Why don’t you engage in the remembrance of Allah Ta’ala who created you?” I asked, “How should I engage in His remembrance?” My uncle responded, “When you go to bed at night, then say the following to yourself in your heart, three times, without moving your tongue, ‘Allah Ta’ala is with me! Allah Ta’ala is watching me! Allah Ta’ala is witness to all that I am doing!’”

I thus commenced this practice and continued with it for some time.

When I informed my uncle about it, he made me increase the number to seven times. After doing it for some time and reporting to him, he increased it to eleven times. In this manner, as I continued, sweetness (of Allah Ta’ala’s remembrance) settled into my heart.

After one year had passed, my uncle addressed me and said, “Safeguard this practice, which I have taught you, and remain punctual upon it until you enter the grave, as it will benefit you in this world and the next.”

I thus remained punctual on this practice, and perceived a sweetness in my heart due to it. Thereafter, my uncle once said to me, “O Sahal! When a person is aware at all times that Allah Ta’ala is with him, Allah Ta’ala is watching him and Allah Ta’ala is witness to all that he does,

will it be possible for him to disobey Allah Ta'ala? O Sahal, beware of the disobedience of Allah Ta'ala!"

(Wafayaatul Aa'yaan vol. 2, pg. 429-430)

Lessons:

1. When a person is still young, he is receptive, easy to influence and very impressionable. Hence, the uncle of Sahal (rahimahullah) wished to plant the seed of piety in his heart from a young age so that when he grew older, the roots of his piety would already be firm and deep. In this regard, if we wish our children to be pious, we will have to make a concerted, continuous effort. We will have to instil the correct Islamic values in their hearts and make them conscious and aware of Allah Ta'ala.

From reading the masnoon du'aas (before entering the toilet, before and after eating, etc.) to practicing on the sunnah acts (eating with the right hand, sleeping on the right side, etc.) and also to teaching them the obligations (salaah, fasting, etc.), parents must remain vigilant in raising their children correctly and can never become lax. Daily ta'leem of the Fazaail Kitaabs (Fazaail-e-Aa'maal and Sadaqaat) are absolutely essential, as is regular du'aa for their piety and constant monitoring of their behaviour and conduct so that they may be saved from harmful influences.

2. No matter what heights we may reach in life, we can never forget our roots – those people who played a part in our humble beginning. Be it our maktab teacher or even our hifz teacher, we must always remember their favour upon us and their contribution to our success.

3. The company of the pious servants of Allah Ta'ala is an irreplaceable bounty. Through spending time in their company, a person finds motivation towards righteousness and also gains direction and guidance in Deen. Hence, we should also make an effort to instil the love of the pious in our children's hearts so that they will naturally gravitate towards them and will yearn to remain in their company.

4. The greatest and best barrier between a person and sin, is the awareness and consciousness of Allah Ta'ala. The greater the awareness, the more difficult it becomes for him to disobey the commands of Allah Ta'ala. The blessed month of Ramadhaan is a training

period for the same and this has been declared as the objective of fasting.