



Ahmad bin Mahdi (rahimahullah) (d. 272 A.H.) was an illustrious scholar of hadeeth and a great worshipper of Allah Ta'ala. Such was his generosity and love for the 'Ulama that he had spent three hundred thousand dirhams (silver coins) on the 'Ulama of his time.

One night, a woman came to him in Baghdad complaining of a great misfortune that had afflicted her, and pleaded to him, "I beg you by Allah to conceal me (and not reveal this to anyone)." So he asked her, "What is this affliction (that you are referring to)?"

She explained, "I was raped and have fallen pregnant. (To avoid embarrassment and humiliation,) I told the people that you are my husband and the child that I am expecting is yours, so please do not disgrace me (by denying this). Please conceal me, Allah Ta'ala will conceal you (in the Hereafter)."

Ahmad (rahimahullah) remained silent and did not say anything. Time passed and he had even forgotten about it. When she had finally given birth, the Imaam of the area, accompanied by some of his neighbours came to him congratulating him on the birth of a son. Instead of denying this and exposing the woman, Ahmad (rahimahullah) expressed happiness and joy (as though it was his own child). The next day, he gave two gold coins to the Imaam and said to him, "Give it to that woman so that she can spend it on the child because we are no longer together (implying that talaq had taken place)."

Moreover, every month, he would send two gold coins to her via the Imaam saying, "This is for the expenses of the child."

This continued for two years until the child unexpectedly passed away. When people came to console him, he expressed submission and acceptance to the will of Allah Ta'ala, as though he had lost his own child.

A month after the child had passed away, one night the woman came to Ahmad (rahimahullah) with the gold coins that he used to send for her in order to return them. She also said to him, “May Allah Ta‘ala conceal you just as you have concealed me.” Ahmad (rahimahullah) said to her in reply, “These gold coins were a gift from my side to the child and it is now yours as you are his heir. So you may spend it as you please.”

(Al-Muntazam vol. 13, pg. 284, Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah vol. 11, pg. 236 and Siyaru Aa'laamin Nubalaa vol. 12, pg. 597)

Lessons:

1. Concealing the faults of others is a quality greatly emphasized in Islam. Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) has said, “Whomsoever conceals a Muslim, Allah Ta‘ala will conceal him in this world and in the Hereafter.” (*Sunan Ibni Maajah #2544*) One should therefore try his level best to conceal the faults of others with the hope that Allah Ta‘ala will conceal his faults. The trend of ‘naming and shaming’ that has become a norm on social media platforms – where the private lives of individuals are spied on and then broadcasted with the motive of running them down, is thus in total contrast with the values of Islam.

2. Although it may have been no fault of the woman, she still disliked that her name be tainted and her respect be tarnished. All the more, one should make a concerted effort to save himself from situations that will compromise his integrity and respect, such as freely mixing and communicating with non-mahrams, visiting inappropriate places, etc.

3. Such was the concern and generosity of Ahmad bin Mahdi (rahimahullah), that not only did he conceal the woman, but even provided two gold coins every month for the expenses of the child, understanding that the woman will perhaps be unable to manage the expenses. On the side of the woman, her level of honesty was such that she did not touch the money without needing to do so. Even on the demise of her child, she offered to return the wealth back to him. However, since it was a gift to the child, Ahmad (rahimahullah) refused to take the wealth back and left it by the woman who was the rightful heir.

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