



Imaam Asma'ee (rahimahullah), a great scholar of this Ummah who passed away in the year 215 A.H. or 216 A.H., narrates the following incident:

On one occasion, I set off into the wilderness, accompanied by one of my friends. While traveling, we lost the road. After some time, when we halted, we suddenly came across a tent and thus headed towards it.

When we came to the tent, we called out with salaam and heard a woman reply to our greeting. She asked, "Who are you?" We replied, "We were passing by when we lost our way. We then saw your tent and thus came towards you to seek company." The woman said, "Turn your faces away so that I can (come out of the tent and) fulfil some of the rights of which you are deserving." We did as she instructed, and she lay down a carpet for us saying, "Sit until my son arrives. He will attend to you and see to that which you require."

We thus sat, and (as we waited the arrival of her son,) she continued to raise the corner of the tent, peeping out. Eventually, she peeped out and said, "I ask Allah Ta'ala to send us barakah with the one who is arriving, for the camel belongs to my son, but the one riding the camel is not my son."

When the rider arrived, he said, "O Ummu 'Aqeel! May you be blessed with immense reward for (observing patience on the loss of your son,) 'Aqeel." Ummu 'Aqeel responded, "Woe to you! Has my son passed away?" The man confirmed that he had indeed passed away, to which she asked, "What caused his death?" The man answered, "The camels crowded around him (in a stampede), pushing him into a well."

Ummu 'Aqeel then said to the man, "Please attend to the needs of these people." He thus dismounted from the camel, slaughtered a sheep, prepared it with salt and served it to us. We

thus ate, while marvelling at the sabr (patience and composure) of Ummu ‘Aqeel.

After we completed the meal, she asked us, “Tell me, are any of you well-versed with the book of Allah Ta’ala (i.e. the Quraan Majeed)?” When I replied that I was, she said, “Please recite to me some verses from the book of Allah Ta’ala through which I may take solace.”

I thus recited the following verses:

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And give glad tidings to the patients ones – those who when a calamity befalls them, they say, “Indeed to Allah Ta’ala alone do we belong, and indeed to Him alone will we return.” Those – upon them are special blessings from their Rabb and Divine mercy, and those – they are the rightly-guided. (Surah Baqarah v155 – 157)

When Ummu ‘Aqeel heard these verses, she asked in wonder, “Is this really what is mentioned in the book of Allah Ta’ala?” I replied, “By Allah! This is exactly what is mentioned in the book of Allah Ta’ala!”

Ummu ‘Aqeel then said, “Assalaamu ‘alaikum,” and thereafter stood, performed two rakaats of salaah, raised her hands and made du’aa in the following words, “It is to Allah Ta’ala alone that we belong, and to Him alone that we will return, and it is from Allah Ta’ala alone that I hope to receive reward for (exercising patience over the loss of) ‘Aqeel!” She repeated this du’aa thrice, and then said, “O Allah! I have done what You have commanded me to do, so bless me with the abundant rewards that You have promised me!”

(Mir-aatul Jinaan vol. 2, pg. 50)

Lessons:

1. A Muslim, in every condition, turns his gaze towards Allah Ta'ala and hopes for reward from Him. If he undergoes hardship, he exercises sabr (patience) and hopes for reward, and if he enjoys ease and comfort, then he expresses shukr (gratitude) and hopes for reward.

2. To feel sad and grieved over a tragedy is natural. However, such was the composure of Ummu 'Aqeel that she did not lose herself in her sorrow, and still made arrangements for the meal of the guests. In the same way, if we are afflicted by a difficulty, we must ensure that it does not prevent us from fulfilling the rights of Allah Ta'ala (e.g. salaah, etc.) and the rights we owe to people.

3. In Islam, purdah between strange men and women is extremely important. It is for this reason Ummu 'Aqeel ensured that she maintained purdah with the two visitors, by making them turn away when she emerged from the tent to lay down the carpet.

When the son of Ummu 'Aqeel passed away, she performed salaah, made du'aa, and then said,

“O Allah! I have done what You have commanded me to do, so bless me with the abundant rewards that You have promised me!”

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