



There was once a group of people who were suffering from a certain calamity. One of these people came to Wahb bin Munabbih (rahimahullah) and asked, "O Abu 'Abdillah! Have you ever heard of a calamity or punishment that is worse and more severe than the calamity which we are suffering at present?" Wahb (rahimahullah) replied, "If you have to look at the difficulty that you are suffering and the difficulties that were faced by the people of the past, you would realize that your difficulty compared to theirs is like smoke compared to fire!"

To illustrate the point, Wahb (rahimahullah) narrated the following incident:

There lived a woman in the Banu Israaeel who had seven sons. One day, the king of the time, who would force people to consume pork, summoned her together with her sons. When they were brought before him, he called the eldest son forward, presented some pork to him, and said, "Eat this pork." The eldest son resolutely replied, "I will never eat something which Allah Ta'ala has declared haraam (forbidden)!" The king thus gave the command and the boy was dismembered (his limbs were cut off, one by one), causing him to pass away.

The king then summoned the next son and said to him, "Eat the pork." However, he too refused and replied, "I will never eat something which Allah Ta'ala has declared haraam!" The king thus commanded for a copper cauldron to be brought. When it was brought, he had it filled with oil and had a fire lit beneath it. Once the oil was boiling, he had the boy cast into the cauldron where he died.

The king then summoned the third son and instructed him to eat the pork. However, the third son fearlessly responded, "You are disgraced, weak and insignificant before Allah Ta'ala, so how can I obey you and disobey Allah Ta'ala by consuming that which He has made haraam?" The king laughed and remarked to those present, "Do you know why he is insulting me in this manner? The reason is that he wishes to anger me so that I will kill him swiftly, but that will definitely prove to be his mistake (as I will do the opposite)!" Having said this, he instructed for the boy to be skinned alive.

First, the skin was peeled from his neck, then from his head and face, until the skin was peeled from his entire body, causing him to die.

The king then proceeded to kill the remaining brothers, using a different form of torture to end the life of each one, until only the youngest brother remained. Seeing the boy and his mother, the king addressed her and said, "It pains me to have seen you undergo this suffering. Take your son, and when you are alone with him, convince him to eat just one morsel of pork. If he does so, he will be allowed to live."

The mother agreed, and when she was in solitude with her son, she addressed him thus, "O my beloved son! Do you know that while I had a right over each of your brothers, I have a double right over you? The reason is that I had suckled each of your brothers for two years. However, your father passed away while I was still expecting you. This caused me to feel even more attachment to you. Thereafter, due to my feelings of sympathy for you, and due to your weakness, I suckled you for four years (as was perhaps permissible in their sharee'ah). I thus ask you in the name of Allah Ta'ala, and by the right that I have over you, that you do not ever allow the point to come where you consume that which Allah Ta'ala has declared haraam. Do not meet your brothers in the Hereafter in the condition that you are not with them."

Hearing this, the son exclaimed, "All praise is due to Allah Ta'ala who enabled you to say these words to me! It was my fear that you would try to convince me to consume that which Allah Ta'ala has declared haraam!"

The mother then returned to the king with her son and said, "Here he is, I have spoken to him and convinced him." The king thus instructed him to eat, but the son refused and staunchly declared, "I will not consume that which Allah Ta'ala has made unlawful!" The king then gave the command for him to be killed, causing him to join his brothers by sharing their fate.

Finally, the king said to the mother, "I find myself pitying you, after the suffering that I have seen you undergo today! What is wrong with you? Eat one morsel! Then I will do with you as you please and give you whatever you wish so that you may live comfortably." The mother retorted, "You want me to mourn my sons and disobey Allah Ta'ala at the same time? I do not wish to live after them if it entails me doing this (as I will then suffer a double tragedy – the death of my sons and disobeying Allah Ta'ala). I will never consume that which Allah Ta'ala has declared haraam." The king thus had her killed as well, uniting her with her sons in

the Hereafter.

(‘Uyoonul Hikaayaat pg. 27)

Lessons:

1. It was only one thing that prompted the mother and her seven sons to behave in the manner they did – imaan. When a person’s imaan is strong, his conviction in Allah Ta’ala and Jannah is so strong that he will not hesitate to sacrifice his life to please Allah Ta’ala. On the contrary, when imaan is weak, we will not be able to make even small sacrifices such as giving up sin and refraining from haraam.

2. The youngest son was raised without a father, yet his imaan was so strong that he stared death in the face and did not flinch. This could have only been the result of his mother’s upbringing and attention. Similarly, every mother (and father as well) should make an effort to strengthen the imaan of their children and connect them to Allah Ta’ala. Conducting daily ta’leem in the home is an easy method to achieve this.

3. Just as a person with an allergy cannot consume food which contains his allergen, similarly a believer cannot consume haraam. If he consumes haraam, in any form (haraam food as well as anything acquired through haraam wealth), it will cause his imaan to have an allergic reaction, weakening it and causing it damage.