

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وَدِدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

A Bunch of Grapes changed his Life

If someone is told that he had acquired an important government position for a mere bunch of grapes, it would certainly seem very unusual. However, the truth is that the person in question in this incident actually acquired this important position of a Government Minister for a mere bunch of grapes.

The person in question is someone who is known in history as Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar Yahya bin Mohammed bin Haybarah Shaybani.

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar was born near Baghdad in a small village known as Ad Daur in 488 A.H. He was promoted during the rule of Muqtadah bi Amrillah and gained a Minister's position during the reign of Mustan jid Billah. However, prior to this, Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar was one of the poorest person in his community. Even

though he was tormented and oppressed when he was poor, when he became a Minister, instead of taking revenge, he pardoned all of these oppressors. In spite of the fact that he had the power to take revenge, he still forgave the people who had tormented and insulted him in the past.

It is reported that one day a person was brought into Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar's court. He was tied in chains by the local police. The person had been accused of murder and there was also a witness to this murder who was a family member of the deceased. Therefore, the murder itself was already proven.

When Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar saw the murderer he immediately recognized him as someone who came from his old village of Ad Daur but he did not reveal that he knew the person. Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then asked the family of the member of the deceased whether he would be happy with six hundred Dinaars as Diyat (or blood money) and the person replied that he would be happy with this. The chains were then removed from the accused and he was allowed to go free.

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then ordered that prior to the murderer leaving, he should be given fifty Dinaars for his travelling expenses. As the person was leaving, he thanked the Minister for his kindness. Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then turned to the people around him and asked, "Are you people aware that I am unable to see with my right eye?"

They replied that they were unaware of this.

He then explained, "The reason that I have lost vision in my right eye is because of this murderer who I had just helped by paying the blood money on his behalf. One day, I was sitting on the side of the road in my village and I was reading a certain book of Fiqh when this person went by. This person was carrying a bag of flowers and ordered me to carry his load and walk with him. I then said to him that I was not a labourer nor do I carry the goods of others. He then slapped me on my face and it was so severe that my right eye was damaged. However, when he appeared in my court in this state, I felt that instead of taking revenge, I should be kind to him."

One day, a Turkish soldier wanted to enter his court and Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar informed his body guard to give this person twenty Dinaars and send him away from the outside of the court. Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar also informed the guard that this person should never be allowed to enter his court.

He then turned to those around him and said, “One day, a person was murdered in my village. Turkish soldiers arrived and started to arrest everyone including myself. I was placed under the control of this soldier. He then tied everyone to his horse and made us run in front of him. However, some of the arrested people started to give him some Dinaars and as each person gave him something, he released that person. However, I had nothing to give him. He then started to beat me severely and during this time, it was the time for Asr. I then asked permission to read the Asr but he was not prepared to listen. Today, look at his state that he comes to my court for help. How times have changed. I now have power over him and if I wish, I can take revenge, however I have decided to pardon him.”

How Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar began a Minister is also interesting. It is said that he was born in a very poor family. His family members were ordinary farmers who lived a simple life and whatever they had they lived on this happily. No one had any interest in acquiring knowledge or such like.

However, from a young age, Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar was keenly interested in acquiring knowledge and was also very intelligent. He used to be in a habit of visiting the gatherings of the ‘Ulama and used to learn whatever he could from them. Whatever he heard he memorised and also recorded many points. He had a very good memory and had also memorised many poems. He learned so much from the ‘Ulama of the day that he was actually considered a master in Hambali Fiqh.

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then left his village and went to Baghdad Shareef to acquire further knowledge. Since his family was very poor and he had no income, he decided to look for some government post to earn a living. However, wherever he went, the people informed him that there was no work available.

He submitted his name on a register and waited for some response. He then continued to go every day to see whether there was an opening and the same answer was given that

there is nothing at this time. Finally, the little money he had with him had finished and since there were no jobs available, he decided to return to his village. He decided to walk back to his village. As he walked further, the time of Asr came and he decided to look for a small Masjid where he could perform his Salaah. He found a small and poor looking Masjid away from the road and decided to go to this Masjid. He then performed the Wudu and recited his Asr Salaah.

After the Salaah, he could hear someone crying on one corner of the Masjid. When he went to that part of the Masjid, he found an old person laying down and when he touched this person, he realised that the person had a very high fever. He asked the person how he was feeling and the person replied, “My entire body is sore and I have no friend or family in this world at the moment. Since the people are very far, I have decided to spend my last few moments in this Masjid.”

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then asked him whether he needed anything or had any wish and the person replied, “Yes, my wish is to eat a bunch of grapes. It was always my intention to eat a bunch of grapes before I die.”

When Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar heard this, he was worried about where he could acquire a bunch of grapes from and at the same time, he had no money to purchase the grapes. He thought to himself that this person is in his final moments in this world and the least he can do is fulfil his wishes. Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then decided to walk to the nearby village thinking that although this person was a stranger, yet there is immense reward in helping this person and perchance Almighty Allah will reward him for this action. He then mentioned to the stranger to wait and he will go and look for some grapes.

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar started to walk as speedily as possible so that he could return before sunset. When he arrived in the local village, he noticed a flower seller and there was also a bunch of grapes hanging on one corner. He asked the person the prices and was told that it was half a Dinaar. He said that he did not have any money but asked him whether he could leave his cloak with him as a guarantee of payment and when he has the half a Dinaar, he would return to pay him. The shop owner agreed to this. He then took the bunch of grapes and returned to the Masjid.

When Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar reached there, the sun had already set and it was dark. He then made Wudu and performed the Maghrib Salaah. After the Salaah he washed the bunch of grapes and handed it to the poor person. Obviously, the sick person was very happy to see this and very quickly, the grapes had been eaten. He then said to Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar, “I make Shukr to Allah then He had given me the opportunity of eating grapes before I die. I had this intention for a long time. However, since I had no money, I could not afford to do this.”

He then continued, “It seems like you are certainly a blessing from Allah. I wish that you can sit with me so that I can reveal to you the story of my life. I am also the impression that this is my last night in this world.”

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then sat next to him and he started to reveal his story. He related, “I am someone who came from Khurasaan and my name is Ahmed. I was also considered as among the famous traders of Merv. My younger brother, Mahmud, also used to be with me in business. About a year ago, we decided to travel to Baghdad Shareef with the intention of purchasing some goods there and then re-selling it in Merv. A large caravan was then prepared and I had also taken a lot of goods to sell in Baghdad Shareef with the intention of then purchasing goods to sell in Merv. My younger did not take any goods but he had one thousand Dinaars with him and he had this kept in a leather purse. Since he was still young and did not have much experience, he gave me the purse to keep which I tied in my inner clothing.

“To protect this caravan, there were also young people who travelled around the caravan fully armed. Although the journey was quite long we had nearly reached Baghdad Shareef and decided to camp for a while. Since, we were quite close to the city, the guards had also become lazy and in this state, we were attacked by robbers just after Asr. Some of the people in the caravan were killed, some injured and some people managed to escape. I was also seriously injured.

“The next morning I managed to drag myself to Baghdad Shareef and then spent a number of days treating my wounds. We were also helped by a few people who came on the scene. Before leaving, I searched for my brother but could not find him either among the dead or among the injured. I searched everywhere for him without success.

I also remembered that I had with me his Amaanah of one thousand Dinaars which I needed to give to him.

“During this one year, when my personal money had been depleted, I began to find work here and there and managed to support myself. All the while, I kept looking for my younger brother with not much success. Today, I still have the one thousand Dinaars with me and I am afraid that I will die before I give it to him. When I die, you must bury me and take the purse and see whether you are able to find him and give him this Amaanah. If however, you do not find him, then you are free to keep this money with you and spend it as you deem fit.”

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar continues his story, “The same night the person passed away. I had also managed to read the Talkeen before he died. I then performed his Ghusal and buried him. I took the purse which he had given and instead of travelling towards my village, I decided to travel to Baghdad Shareef. The first thing I did was pay the half Dinaar to the person from whom I had purchased the bunch of grapes from. He also gave my Jubbah back to me.

“When I arrived in Baghdad Shareef, I came to the river Dajlah and saw a few boats ready to take people across. I jumped on one of the boats which was manned by a young man and since the journey was about half an hour, I decided to start a conversation with the young man. During the conversation, I realised that his manner of speaking was not something which was normal for someone in Baghdad Shareef. In other words, his dialect was a bit different. I then asked where he had come from and he mentioned that he was originally from Khurasaan from the city of Merv.

“I asked him his name and he replied that his name was Mahmud. I asked him how he had arrived in Baghdad Shareef and at first he was hesitant in revealing anything but finally decided to reveal his actual story. He then related that he was one of the many business people from Merv and that he had a brother whose name was Ahmed who was the elder. He mentioned that nearly a year ago, they had travelled to Baghdad Shareef to do business when they had been attacked by robbers. He then mentioned exactly his elder brother had revealed to me.

“He revealed that he had managed to escape from that place alive. He continued, ‘The next day, I went back to this place to search for my elder brother but could not find him. Looks like he had changed his mind and who knows, perhaps he had decided to keep the one thousand Dinaars with him. Obviously this was also something which I found it hard to accept. I was also extremely worried that I had nothing and I arrived in Baghdad Shareef extremely poor and destitute. I also searched everywhere for my elder brother Ahmed but could not find him. One day, I was sitting in this desperate state near this river when the owner of this boat saw me. He felt extremely sorry for and came to speak to me. He listened to my story and decided to take me to his house. He asked me to take over the boat and earn a living as he had no sons and he had also become old. I decided to work for him and he was much impressed by my honesty and after a short while, he also agreed to allow his daughter to marry me. After a short while, he also passed away.’”

Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar then asked the young man to describe the purse and when he described it, I realised that this was the same purse which I had with me and which was given to me by this person’s elder brother. There is no doubt that Almighty Allah certainly creates His own means. I then placed the purse in front of him and he was beyond control. He was so happy and thrilled that he nearly fell unconscious. I placed some water on his head and he came back to his senses. He asked me how I had managed to acquire this purse and I revealed everything to him. I also made it clear that his brother had certainly not stolen his money but had looked everywhere for him in Baghdad Shareef. He continued to look at the purse remembering his brother and then looked inside. When he counted it, it was obviously only ninety nine Dinaars. He then asked me about what had happened to the one Dinaar and I explained the story of purchasing the one bunch of grapes. He was even more joyous when I revealed this story and he took a hand full of Dinaars and placed it in my hand as a gift. As long as I stayed in Baghdad Shareef looking for employment, I managed to survive on these Dinaars.

The next day when I arrived at the government heard quarters, the person in charge ran towards me and explained to me that he had been looking for me and that there was now an opening for me. In other words, I had acquired all of these things for a mere bunch of grapes. I then began to move from position to position and was promoted regularly till I became Minister of Finance. In 544 A.H. the Khalifah died and when his son took control, he also nominated me as one of the Ministers.

It is reported that Aunnudeen Abul Muzaffar passed away in 560 A.H. (Shuz raatuz Zeb, Tabqaat-e-Hanaabilah, Waafi aatul Ayaan by ibn Khalakaan, etc).

There is no doubt when a person is helpful to others, he can go from position to position. Here is someone who achieved one of the most powerful positions in government and all of this was achieved by his sense of Islamic kindness to a person who was close to death. Sadly, in today's time, people will not even help a Muslim who is living alone and someone who is close to death. Times have certainly changed and hence, the Barakah is no more there.