

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وَلَدِ آدَمَ 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*

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## The Prince became a Sufi

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Once, the son of Mamun Abbasi, namely Ali bin Mamun, was sitting on the roof of one of the palace platforms looking at what was happening in the market place below him. He realised that he was living a rich and pomp life and everything around him was one of luxury. He was dressed in the finest clothing of the day and was eating the finest food of the day. However, on this specific day, Ali bin Mamun was not feeling hungry or thirsty because he was so intent on looking at the scene below him. He was looking at the people in bazaar that were coming and going and also the traders and the people buying these good in the market place.

Ali bin Mamun was also looking at a certain labourer in the bazaar that was doing his normal duty which he did every day. He was carrying goods from one trader to the next but at the same time, the appearance of this labourer was a little different from those around him. This person had an appearance of piety and spiritual brightness around him. He was also carrying some bags of goods on his shoulders from one shop to the

next. He was unaware that a young prince was watching his every move. When the time of Chaast appeared, the labourer stopped his work and left the market place.

Ali bin Mamun then reached the banks of the Dajlah and made Wudu. He performed two rak'ah of Salaah and picked his hands and made Du'a, "Glory be to that Allah Almighty who always pardons my inefficiencies. When a person commits a sin and then makes Taubah, again the Allah Almighty pardons him. He even rewards the sinners and the sinners are not stopped from receiving his Divine Mercy because of their sins and transgressions. Indeed, very Great is that Divine Being towards whom the poor and destitute turn. Great indeed is that Divine Being towards whom the oppressed call for help. He is indeed very Great that ordinary people can recognize Him but the rich and powerful are oblivious of His Greatness. Great indeed are those people who eat dry bread and live in ordinary dwellings, yet they recognize their Creator. But, those who live in high palaces and expensive mansions are unable to know who He is."

All the while the young prince was carefully studying the poor labourer. After the person had completed the Chaast Salaah, he continued his work in the bazaar. This continued until the time of Zohar. He then bought a single piece of bread for one Dirham and returned to the river bank. He soaked the dry bread in the water and then consumed this with a some water from the river. After giving thanks to Allah Almighty, he performed his Zohar Salaah. After the Salaah, he also wept and gave thanks to Allah Almighty for whatever he had received.

He then slept a little while and after getting up, he returned to the bazaar as an ordinary labourer. He continued in this fashion the entire day and finally before he left for home, he again bought another piece of bread to take home.

The prince took notice of him for another four days and every day, this was his daily routine. The prince by now was very fascinated by this ordinary labourer and his daily dedication to work, Ibadah and taking home something to eat.

One day, he asked one of his solider to go and call the labourer to the palace. The solider then went to the labourer and informed him that the prince wanted to meet him. However, the poor person replied, "What connection or relationship do I have with the Kings of the Banu Abbas? There is not even any family relationship between us. I also

have not submitted any court case in their court. I have no problem and there is nothing important which I wish to discuss with them. If there was any problem, I would certainly turn to that Divine Being Who is Alive and the entire earth and heavens have been established by Him. When I am hungry, Allah Almighty feeds me and when I am thirsty, He also gives me an opportunity to satisfy my thirst. I have no house except a small room and I have no piece of land as well.”

However, the soldier insisted that he come with him because he had been given specific instruction to bring him to the palace. At the same time, the labourer also thought that perhaps there was something which was going to be placed against him or instituted against him. He immediately recited “Hasbunallah”. This is mentioned in Surah Ale Imran (173).

This is that powerful weapon which is a great source of safety for the down-trodden and someone who is facing immense test and trial. This is the same blessed words which were recited by Nabi Ebrahim - *peace be upon him* - when he was about to be thrown into the fire prepared by Nimrud.

This is the same blessed words which were recited by Sayyiduna Rasoolullah - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - during all the battles when they saw the mighty numbers of people that were standing against the Muslims.

This is the same words which were recited by Salaahudeen Ayubi when he faced the might of the West.

This is the same Wazifah which was recited by all oppressed Muslims when they face immense forces against them.

Finally, the labourer presented himself in front of the prince and greeted him. They then spoke:

Prince: “Do you know who I am?”

Labourer: “When I have never ever been in front of you before, how can I be able to recognize who you are?”

Prince: "I am the son of the Khalifah".

Labourer: "This is what people have told me also."

Prince: "What work do you do?"

Labourer: "I am working in the Kingdom of Allah Almighty with the servants of Allah Almighty."

Prince: "I have noticed you for a number of days working extremely hard in the market place. Therefore, I have come to conclusion that I should lessen the burden on your shoulders."

Labourer: "How?"

Prince: "I request you to bring your entire family to the palace and live in the palace. You may eat, drink and rest without any concern or worry. There is also no need for you to work anyone."

Labourer: "Dear prince! That person has no concern who is not surrounded by sin and transgression. He is protected from sadness who protects himself from disobeying the Divine Commands of Allah Almighty and the commands of Sayyiduna Rasoolullah - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Therefore, when a person refrains from sin, why should he have any worry? However, that person who spends all his time in disobedience to Allah Almighty, he is certainly someone who is visited by sadness, pain and problem".

Prince: "Where is your family?"

Labourer: "I only have a mother who is extremely old and frail. I have a wife who is blind. Both of them fast every day and every day before Maghrib, I always buy something and we all sit together to make Iftaar. After, 'Isha, we retire to bed."

Prince: "When do you awake?"

Labourer: "In the third part of the night when Allah Almighty blesses the earth with his special Divine Blessings."

Prince: "Do you have any debts."

Labourer: "Yes, I do have the burden of sin which is between me and my Creator."

Prince: "Do you not wish to live with me in the palace?"

Labourer: "I swear by Allah Almighty that I do not want to do so".

Prince: "What is the reason?"

Labourer: "I fear that my heart will become hard and my religion would be wasted."

Prince: "Is this your wish that you remain an ordinary labourer who is always hungry? You have no proper clothing and yet, you do not wish to live in a palace."

Labourer: "This is certainly the truth that I do not wish to live with you in the palace."

The labourer then left the palace.

However, the words of the ordinary labourer had a great impact on the young prince. One night, this same young prince awoke from his sleep and it was like his entire world had changed. He realised that during all of this time, he was the one who was sleeping. He then made sincere Taubah from his lifestyle and decided to become an ordinary Muslim.

One night, he changed all his clothing to ordinary clothing and called one of the guards. He mentioned to them, "I am going to a far off land. Only when three days have passed, you should inform my father that I have run away and we will only meet on the Day of Judgement."

This prince, Ali bin Mamun, coming from one of the most powerful families in Islamic history, then divorced himself from all regal items and hid in such a place where no one

recognized who he was. According to the historians, the prince travelled to a city called Waasit.

(This is a city which was established by Hujjaj bin Yusuf and which was situated between Kufah and Basrah on the bank of the Euphrates. In fact, this was also the seat of government of Hujjaj bin Yusuf. In fact, this was also the city in which Mohammed bin Qasim, the conqueror of Multan, was imprisoned and it later lost its significance).

Ali bin Mamun completely disguised himself and lived as a true Faqueer. He also worked as an ordinary labourer for a person that used to make bricks.

True to say that the one time prince became a true Dervish. Not a dervish in name, but a dervish in the true sense of the word. He used to keep fast in excess and spend the night in Ibadah. During the evening and morning, Ali bin Mamun used to spend pleading to Allah Almighty. He also memorized the Qur'an and used to fast even when it was very hot. Ali bin Mamun only had food for one part of the day. In fact, in a few years, there was no sign that he was ever a prince who grew up in a palace.

In Surah Al An'am, verse 122, the Qur'an declares:

أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَشِيءُ بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلَهُ فِي  
الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

“And will the one who was dead and so We raised him to life and set for him a light with which he walks among the people, ever be like the one who is in realms of darkness never to emerge from them? Similarly, the deeds of disbelievers are made to appear good to them.”

It is reported that when the time came near for Ali bin Mamun to pass away, he called the person he was working for and revealed his true identity. Ali bin Mamun asked the person to carry out his last rites and to give the Sultan a ring which belonged to him. After the prince passed away, his last rites were carried out by this person. He then

arrived at the palace of Khaifah Mamun and handed him the ring. When the Khalifah saw the ring, he burst into tears and inquired about his son. The person then explained the true character of the Khalifah's son and explained to him the pious life which he had led and that he had passed away a few days ago.

When the Khalifah heard these words, he cried even more and even the people in the court also began to weep when they heard the complete story. Only then did they realise that indeed the prince was someone whom they had not understood.

All of them also understood the 125<sup>th</sup> verse of Surah Al An'am which is:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ  
صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرُّجُسَ عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

“And whomever Allah wills to guide, He opens his bosom for Islam; and whomever He wills to send astray, He makes his bosom narrow and firmly bound as if he were being forced by someone to climb the skies; this is how Allah places the punishment on those who do not believe”.