



## *STRENGTHEN YOUR IMAAN*

Once, there were two fire-worshipping brothers who held the following conversation: “Our fathers and grandfathers always worshipped fire as we do also. Let us put our hands into this fire that we worship. If it burns our hands, let us give up worshipping it. A new religion has appeared, so let us find out about it and embrace it. Let us believe in the Prophet who has brought the new religion.”

They then stuck their hands in the fire, where they got burnt. They put their hands in once more and said, “O fire, if you are God do not burn our hands.” When their hands did get burnt again they said, “If this had been our God it would not have burnt us,” and they set off in search of Islam. On the way, the elder brother said to the younger, “I am not going ahead with this, I shall not desert the religion of my fathers.” He then turned back, but the younger brother said, “I shall seek the Truth,” and he went into the mosque in the city, where he found a place to sit.

Just then Hazrat Malik bin Dinar (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) came to deliver a sermon. The beautiful words of Hazrat Malik bin Dinar (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) were bringing him the good news that he stood at the threshold of good fortune. His heart was at peace and he was now content that he had found the truth. When the lecture had finished the young man stood up saying, “O ardent scholar, O guide to the way of the Truth, I am a fire-worshipper but I have come to accept the religion of Truth. Hazrat Malik bin Dinar (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) then made him recite the Kalima and explained to him the duties of a Muslim.

All he could think of on his way home, was his wife’s reaction to these developments. What would he do if she took the news badly? He had two children. What would he do with them if his marriage broke up? As he pondered these thoughts he prayed, “O Lord, grant faith to my wife’s heart, bring her to Islam and crown her with faith.” He reached home after performing Esha Salaah at the mosque, so the time was well advanced. After supper when the children had been put to bed, he told his wife, “Let us sit a bit longer, my dear. I have an important matter to discuss with you,” and he told her everything that had happened.

His prayer had been answered, for his wife heard his adventure with pleasant surprise and said, “If you wish me to embrace Islam then I have become a Muslim too. You are my benefactor, the source of my happiness. I shall never leave you.” He then taught her the things he had learnt that day. Together they pronounced the profession of faith and she too became a Muslim. They then slept till the time for morning prayer, when he woke his wife up for Salaah before he himself hurried off to the mosque. On reaching the mosque and feeling the tranquillity within, he gave thanks to Almighty Allah for having let him taste Islam.

After Salaah he left the mosque and went to the labourer’s market, the assembly point for all the workers who offered their services for daily wages. He had been going there every day and finding work so as to provide for his family. This time he went there as usual and waited for a job to come along. Everybody else was given a job and sent off to do it, but it seemed as if nobody

noticed this man who had newly embraced Islam. Even people he had worked for before and who had been satisfied with his work, came and chose other men. It was as if they had not seen him. Eventually the market was deserted. He waited there on his own until the call was given for the noon prayer. He then made his ablution and commenced to the mosque.

After the prayer, he returned to the same place. If only somebody else needed a porter, had a load for him to carry, he would be able to earn enough to feed his children, but in vain he waited. He eventually went to the mosque for Asr and Maghrib Salaah as well, returning each time to continue his search for work. However, after Maghrib Salaah everyone set off home and only he stayed on, waiting. He eventually performed Esha Salaah at the mosque and headed home. There was nothing to eat in the house.

When he reached home, the children were already asleep. He had nothing to offer his wife. "Where is the bread? The children have gone to sleep hungry," she said. "My dear wife," he said, "I did not collect my wages from the person I worked for today but God willing, I shall get the two days' wages tomorrow. If you have done your prayer, let us go to bed." He could not get off to sleep and rushed off to the mosque early in the morning. When he had performed the Fajr Salaah he went to the labourer's market. Again there was no work for him. He performed the Zohr, Asr, Maghrib and Esha Salaah in the mosque and spent the rest of the time looking for work without success. Before going home he picked up a few bits of bread that had been left in front of an eating-house. He found his children in tears, crying, "Bread, Bread!" He explained to his wife that he had worked again for the same person as yesterday, but had still not been able to collect his wages. They ate the scraps of bread, then he hugged his children and put them to bed.

On the third morning he again hastened to the mosque for Fajr Salaah and then went to the usual place to look for work. But nobody noticed him again. His day was no different to the last two days. He stood there getting hungry and exhausted. When the Azaan for Asr Salaah was given, he went to the mosque and stood in the presence of the Almighty Allah. After the Salaah he fell into prostration, weeping profusely as he cried, "O Allah, You never made me hungry all the time I attributed partners to You. Surely You will not make me die of hunger now that I have become Your servant. Though You leave me hungry, though You inflict a hundred thousand pains on every organ of my body, I shall never turn my face away from You. I shall never desert my faith in you. You know my heart. This is a test to teach this servant of Yours a lesson. It is Your way of showing how dependent I am upon You. But it is my wife I am afraid for, lest her faith be weakened." He wept and wept. He repented to Allah and asked for forgiveness for the days when he had attributed partners to Him. (How many of us believers could endure such a test and remain so steadfast in faith?)

As he made his entreaty through his tears, an angel was instructed to assume human form, take a bag of gold and deliver it to the man's house. He knocked at the door and when the woman answered, he said to her, "My lady, tell your husband that his Master is very pleased with work and wishes him to continue with it. For two days he has not received his wages. You will find them inside this bag." As soon as he said this he disappeared. The woman opened the bag. The

gold it contained was not only sufficient for the rest of their lives, but to bring up their children as well. "What a generous master this is," she thought in amazement. Not even a king would give such a treasure to a man he had employed for two days. Her eyes filled with tears of joy as she took one piece of gold to the money-changer. The infidel money-changer who assayed the quality of the gold had never seen anything like it. It was very pure, unlike any gold in the world, and inscribed upon it in letters of light was the affirmation of Divine Unity. He turned it over and over and asked where she had got the gold from. She explained that her husband was working for someone and it was given as his wages. The man was quite learned in heavenly scriptures and told the woman that the husband must come see him immediately. He cashed the gold for a very large sum and going back, the woman bought meat and fruit, fed the children and prepared a delicious meal for her husband.

The husband on the other hand, still waiting patiently for work, eventually went to the mosque for Maghrib Salaah and remained there till Esha listening to the Holy Qur'an. After Esha he went out into the street, where he gathered a handful of sand and put it in his handkerchief. He filled another handkerchief with stones and then set off for home. His neighbours were fire-worshippers and he could not let them see him coming home empty-handed three days in a row.

With the handkerchiefs in his hand, he approached the house. The lamp was lit and the children were playing together. The smell of fresh food floated from the house. Unable to make head or tail of this, he stood wondering whether his wife had gone begging. Could she have begged from their relatives, who were hostile to their faith? He entered in a rage, prepared to cause trouble. When his wife greeted him joyfully and the children clung to his legs he cried with a frown, "Where did you get all these things? Tell me, where did you get them?!" and flung the handkerchiefs he was holding behind the door. "What a sin," said his wife, "Why do you throw the bread and flour on the floor?" as she picked up the bread and tried to sweep up the floor. The man was amazed. He wondered if he was dreaming. That had been sand and stone. But no, the stone was now bread, and fresh and warm too, and the sand had turned to the best quality flour.

His wife then started talking and said, "What good fortune! What a kind master he must be. That person you worked for sent his man today to give us your wages and to let you know that he is very pleased with the way you are working for him." Only then did the man realize what had happened and why the stones had turned to bread and the sand to flour. Praising and extolling Allah Ta'ala he told his wife that his employer was no one, but Allah Ta'ala. It was from Him they had received this recompense for their faith. The woman told him to go and see the money-changer, who after learning of this mysterious affair, also embraced Islam and found salvation in both the worlds.

From this incident there are three lessons to be learnt:

1. One might be a great sinner or even out of the fold of Islam, but when one comes into contact with the Awliya Allah, then they can change our destiny within an instant if they wish. This is also evident from the incident in which Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) turned a person who came to steal from him, from a thief to an Abdaal in an instant.

2. We further learn that Allah Ta'ala sometimes puts us through tests to strengthen our Imaan, and we will be successful only if we endure such hardships with patience and contentment with the Will of Allah.
3. Lastly, we should take heed from the punctuality and love for Salaah this young man had even though he embraced Islam only three days earlier. Even though he could not get work, and money for food, he never missed his Salaah. Yet our condition is such that Allah Ta'ala gives us so much but still we refuse to perform our Salaah. Are we not being ungrateful to our Rabb?

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to sit in the company of the Awliya Allah, to have love and punctuality in our Salaah and to be patient at the time of calamities, Ameen.

*[Compiled from Irshad: Wisdom of a Sufi Master by Shaikh Muzaffer Al Jerrahi]*