

IBN ADHAM, THE PRINCESS AND IBRAAHEEM BIN ADHAM



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PROLOGUE

The decrees and operations of Allah Azza Wa Jal are to us mysterious and unfathomable. He operates in wonderful ways which are inexplicable to us and beyond our understanding. There is no clear exposition for the *Taqdeer* of Allah Ta'ala, hence Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) forbade the Sahaabah from probing into this domain in which numerous men of so-called intelligence have fallen and lost their Imaan.

The morbid reliance on intelligence for solving issues beyond the boundaries of our created mind with its limited scope of comprehension results in stunted and even destroyed wisdom.

The surrender to proscribed intellectual impulses produces *kufr*. Valid Belief is the product of Revelation, not of reason. It is therefore of imperative importance to subjugate reason to Revelation – the *Nusoos of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith*. In any conflict between Revelation and unbridled reason it is imperative to sacrifice the latter for the safety of *Imaan*.

Allah Ta'ala created Hadhrat Nabi Aadam (Alayhis salaam) to be *Ashraful Makhluqaat* (the noblest of creation). Then to impress his nobility and exalted status, all the Malaaiqah were commanded to prostrate to him. However, notwithstanding his extremely lofty status of honour, the *Taqdeer* of Allah Azza Wa Jal demanded the expulsion of Hadhrat Aadam (Alayhis salaam) in

disgrace from his wonderful primordial Home, Jannat. Furthermore, he was constrained to err and to act in conflict with the command of Allah Ta'ala thereby attracting the Wrath and Reprimand of Allah Azza Wa Jal. Then was he expelled in humiliation to languish in misery in this earthly realm of toil and suffering.

If Allah Ta'ala had willed to have despatched Aadam (Alayhis salaam) to earth as His Vicegerent with honour and respect, He had all the power of doing so. Aadam (Alayhis salaam) was the Representative of Allah Azza Wa Jal on earth:

*“Remember when Allah said to the Malaaikeh:
‘Verily, I shall be appointing on earth a Khalifah.’”
(Baqarah, Aayat 30)*

By the employment of our created reasoning ability we understand that the exalted Khalifah (Vicegerent) of Allah Ta'ala should have been despatched to his throne on earth in splendid style, not cast away, expelled and exiled from Jannat in humiliation.

After all, he was the Representative of *Khaaliq and Ma'bood*. He was not deposed from his honourable pedestal of vicegerency. On the contrary he ascended the Throne of Khilaafat as the first and sole Khalifah of Allah Azza Wa Jal. But Divine Wisdom demanded this exalted Vicegerent to be humiliated in the eyes of the entire then creation.

But our reasoning terminates at the juncture of Divine Wisdom and Command. The attempt to even probe the Divine Wisdom from which emanates *Taqdeer*, leave alone solving its inexplicable conundrums, and to strike a compatible chord between Revelation and reason is folly fraught with grave danger for the sustainment of Imaan. The obligation of the Mu'min is to set aside the dictates of his reason whenever it collides with *Wahi* and to submissively proclaim: "*I believe and I accept.*"

The episode of Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) who was among the Auliya Kaamileen is an enactment constrained by *Taqdeer*. His fall from the sublime pedestal of Divine Love to the mundane depths of an artificial love, then again to be restored to the sublimity of Divine Love is among the Divine Mysteries which reason cannot unravel.

Just as Hadhrat Aadam (Alayhis salaam) may not be criticized for his error, so too Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) is not rebukable. He was steered on by the Invisible Force of *Taqdeer* which defies our created minds with their finite and extremely limited scope of operation.

While the attainment of his *Maqsood* (Objective) of Divine Love was entirely possible via the strict and austere route of the Shariah and Sunnah, and which is the Pathway of the Auliya, Allah Ta'ala, in His Wisdom, bestowed the Treasure of His Love to Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) after thoroughly debasing him in the

tentacles of a mundane love which by its very nature is of ephemeral worth.

There are lessons to acquire from this wonderful story of Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh):

“And on earth are signs for those of firm faith, and also in yourselves. Do you not see (these signs and take lesson. Have you no intelligence?)!”
(Az-Zaariyaat, Aayat 20)



INTRODUCTION

Hadhrat Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) hailed from a noble lineage. He was of the progeny of Hadhrat Umar Ibn Khattaab (Radhiyallahu anhu), the second Khalifah of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

In his pursuit of Divine Love- the Love of Allah Ta'ala - his restless soul did not allow him to remain for long at a place. He took to wandering through deserts, wildernesses, forests and mountains where he derived solace, comfort and tranquillity. He was extremely averse to mingle with people.

This was the *Tareeqah* of numerous Auliya-e-Mutaqaddimeen – the Auliya/Sufis of the early era of Islam. For them the shortcut to reach Allah Ta'ala was austerity and abstemiousness (*Zuhd*) – total renunciation of the dunya.

By the *Taqdeer* of Allah Ta'ala this Wali whom Allah Ta'ala had blessed with extraordinary handsomeness, was trapped in an earthly love – the love of the princess who was the daughter of the king of Balkh. In the pursuit of attaining his objective he languished in intense suffering for some years. He became like a *Majzub*. He was perennially in a trance – the trance of love which overshadowed all his senses.

A *Majzub* is a Wali whose mental equilibrium is deranged by intense Divine Love. While to the people of

the world he is mad, his insanity is of a different kind. It is the madness of unattained Divine Love which he relentlessly pursues in his state of ‘insanity’.

Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) became a *majzub* in his pursuit of the love of the princess. Despite being in entirety consumed by the flames of this mundane love, Allah Ta’ala saved him from the profanity of bestiality and carnality of the *nafs* which are imperative corollaries of lowly, earthly love. Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) was of the kind of *Muhib (Lover)* about whom Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“He who has fallen in love (with a woman), but maintained his purity, then dies, dies as a Shaheed (Martyr).”

The condition for the attainment of this *Shahaadat* is purity of the body, purity of the eyes, purity of the mind and heart. It is a love bereft of carnality. Its ultimate effect is its substitution for the Love of Allah Ta’ala.

The story of Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) which is astonishing, is not fiction. It is not like the fiction of *Majnun and Leilah* which the Sufis allegorically cite to convey a glimpse of Divine Love. Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh), for the attainment of his objective of earthly love, Allah Ta’ala had commanded Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) to go to the aid of “*My beloved Servant Adham*”.

Thus, in all his steps and moves in the pursuit of his love for the princess, Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) was guided by Allah Ta'ala Whose Wisdom no one can question.



IBN ADHAM

The Princess

Balkh today is a province of Afghanistan. In bygone times it was an independent state. The stage of this story of Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh), the father of the renowned Wali, Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah alayh), is set in the Land of Balkh.

Ibn Adham was of the Taabieen era. He was of the progeny of Ameerul Mu'mineen Hadhrat Umar Bin Khattaab (Radhiyallahu anhu). He was extremely handsome. He was a wandering Durwaish (dervish / faqeer / buzrug). He was among the Auliya Kaamileen. His spiritual restlessness did not allow him to remain long in a place. He wandered in mountains, valleys and wildernesses in his search for Divine Proximity and the attainment of Divine Love which is the sole objective of all Auliya although this Objective is pursued in different ways.

The way adopted by some Auliya, is the short-route. That is, renouncing the world and taking to the mountains, wilderness and forests. This Way too has a variety of dimensions which cannot be explained in the written word and which are not pathways for us, the *awaamun naas* –the laity.

In his wanderings, one day he found himself in the luxurious forests of Balkh. The green forests held a great attraction for him, hence he decided to take up residence

in the forest. While this attraction is nugatory of the *Maqsood* (Objective) of the Auliya Kaamileen and Aarifeen, Allah Ta'ala had another Scheme for Ibn Adham, thus the attraction. He would occasionally go to the nearby city of Balkh. However, he was like a wild buck having fear and disdain for people. He would quickly return to the seclusion of his forest hut. He totally abstained from mingling with people. People were like serpents for him.

One day he coincidentally walked to where the fort of the king of Balkh was located. Soon he observed a huge crowd of people who had gathered to watch the royal procession of the king and his retinue. It was an occasion of tumultuous fanfare. He saw hundreds of soldiers and palace guards in the procession. All were in their respective ranks.

Durwaish Ibn Adham was amazed at the pomp and splendour of the royal procession. This emotion too was in conflict of the *Maqsood*. Nevertheless, he was being stirred on by an Invisible Force – the Taqdeer of Allah Ta'ala. While he stood at the side looking with interest and amazement, he saw the sudden formation of the infantrymen and the cavalry, all falling into their respective positions in long lines on either side of the road. Then came into view the procession of the princess for whom all this royal arrangement, hue and cry had been prepared. She was on her way to the royal gardens. There was now pindrop silence. All stood at attention and admired the procession of the princess who was a lady of

stunning beauty. No one could see her as she was in the Purdah of the howdah (*a cabin mounted or carried*) wherein she was concealed from observation.

She was seated in an exquisitely adorned howdah encrusted with precious stones. Ibn Adham's gaze focussed on the howdah. The curtains on the howdah glittered with the encrusted diamonds, pearls and precious stones. Ibn Adham standing aloof from the crowd was enraptured by the scene. It so happened by the decree of Taqdeer that the howdah of the princess came in close proximity of the spot where Ibn Adham was standing.

Just as the howdah was in line with Ibn Adham, a strong breeze lifted the curtain and the gaze of Ibn Adham fell on the princess. Absolutely captivated by her stunning beauty, he was beyond himself. He fell madly in love with the princess. He stood there rooted, bewildered and intoxicated with love for the princess. He stood riveted at that spot for hours. After he had regained some of his composure he headed in the direction of the royal gardens where the princess was. He walked around the enclosure. All gates were securely locked. There was no way of entering. Armed guards were on duty along the entire perimeter of the royal orchard.

With a heavy heart, the grief stricken durwaish went to the main gate where the guards were standing. He stood nearby. The guards stood at attention with drawn swords guarding the garden. The Durwaish unable to restrain his

burning passion approached the gate. He was suddenly encircled by the armed guards and apprehended. He cried and pleaded with the guards to allow him to just enter the garden for a few minutes. They believed that he was insane.

In fact, in all truth, he had become insane with love for the princess who had captured his heart. He bent, kissed the steps at the entrance and fell down unconscious. The guards believing him to be insane carried him and dumped him at a great distance from the royal garden.

It was after some time that he came to his senses. Suddenly he heard a huge commotion. With his mind and heart brimming with love for the princess, he set off in the direction of the commotion. The princess was returning to the palace. The guards and soldiers were ordering the people to make way for the princess and her retinue. Ibn Adham propelled by the insanity of his love followed the procession until finally the howdah of the princess disappeared within the palace grounds and the gates closed. The Durwaish stood rooted outside, forlorn and beyond himself with grief. For him it was nothing but darkness.

Finally, mustering up courage he went to the palace gate and asked one of the guards about the identity of the noble lady. The guard said: *“O mendicant! She is the daughter of the king. Forget about what I have said to you. If the king is informed that some mendicant had enquired about the princess, his wrath will descend on*

you and us all. Therefore, O pious man, beware, fear and disappear.”

The Durwaish was unfazed. Nothing affected him. The Durwaish was not diverted by the threat of the guard. His only concern was his burning love for the princess. He went to another guard and asked about the whereabouts of the king. He desired to interview the king. The guard said that the king appeared once a week in public. Coincidentally, this was the day when the king would appear to the public. This *coincidence* was also the effect of *Taqdeer* in which Ibn Adham was trapped.

The guards explained that today the king would listen to the public at large. People with their problems had direct access with the king on the days he would sit in open court to hear their complaints, problems and petitions. This information instilled some hope in the heart of Ibn Adham. He had understood that the king was just and the poor and weak had access to him.

He went to the venue where the king was in open court. A huge crowd of people had assembled to interview the king. One by one they stepped forward and conversed with the king. The king would not merely listen to the problems of his subjects. He would institute immediate measures to solve their problems and fulfil their needs. Meanwhile Ibn Adham was standing silently at the side and observing the scene. Suddenly the gaze of the king fell on the Durwaish. The king was awed at the pious countenance and the *noor* radiating from the face of Ibn

Adham. He instructed his wazier (chief minister) to speak to the Durwaish whose grief was engraved on his face, and the king had understood this.

The king instructed his wazier to immediately attend to whatever the needs of the Durwaish were. On the order of the king, the wazier approached Ibn Adham, and addressing him with much respect and honour requested him to state his needs.

“What is your concern? Why are you here?” Your needs will be immediately attended to”, said the wazier.

The response of the Durwaish hit the wazier like a bolt of lightning. In utter disbelief and shock he heard the Durwaish saying: “I am overwhelmed with love for the king’s daughter. Although I am a faqeer and a pauper, I am from a noble lineage. In her marrying me there will be the benefit of both worlds for us both.”

This was complete insanity stemming from a mad pauper. This impossible request made so blandishly and with such temerity by a pauper ignited the fury of the wazier. How could a faqeer ever be so audacious to request marrying the princess? Although the wazier was inflamed with rage, he was unable to vent his emotions for the fear of the king who was nearby. Ignoring the Durwaish, he returned silently to his position alongside the king.

The king was surprised and thrown into a quandary by the silence of the wazier and not reporting his discussion

with the Durwaish. The king summoned the wazier and said to him: "Explain to me precisely what had transpired in your discussion with the Durwaish. Explain in detail what the Durwaish had said regarding his needs."

The wazier was cast into greater perplexity. He was aware of the soft nature, piety, kindness and munificence of the king. He thought to himself: 'It is probable that the king may accept the Faqeer's proposal.' He therefore spun his own narrative. He said: "Your majesty! The faqeer is insane. It is highly unbecoming to present his request to you. It will only cast your majesty into perplexity and unwarranted concern."

Despite the king's insistence, the wazier remained silent. Finally, the king sent for the Durwaish and seated him in close proximity to himself. With profound respect and humility the king said to Ibn Adham: "What are your needs? Do inform me." Ibn Adham said:

"Your majesty! I am here in this Land since two months. I am forlorn, a pauper and without any worldly means. I have adopted this poverty and forlornness of my own free will because this transitory worldly abode will perish. Today, I came to the city for a short while with the intention to return to my seclusion and solitude in the wilderness. But Allah Ta'ala decreed something else.

The royal cavalcade bearing the howdah of the princess passed by the spot where I was standing. By the will of Allah Ta'ala, a strong gust of wind opened the curtain

concealing the princess. As my gaze fell on the princess, my intelligence was extinguished. I now petition you in the Name of Allah Ta'ala Who has granted you all this splendour and pomp, to accept my marriage proposal and have my Nikah performed to the princess.”

Although surprised, but unlike the wazier, the king was not angered. He lapsed into a reflecting silence. He was deep in thought. The king thought: “If I refuse, he may make a *bad-dua* (curse). If I accept, it will be a blot besmirching my royalty.”

After being in deep reflection for some time, the king addressing Ibn Adham said: “I have heard your request. I require more time for reflection. Despite your proposal being unusual and in conflict with the demand of royalty, do not be concerned. I shall overlook the violation of royal etiquette of your request. I understand the pain which has struck your heart and I believe you are not blameworthy. What is your lineage? From whose progeny are you?”

The Durwaish said: “Your majesty! My Ancestor is Umar Farooq (Radhiyallahu anhu).” This information exercised a profound effect on the king. He said to the Durwaish: “Now there is no Shar’i objection to the marriage. You are from an illustrious and noble progeny. Nevertheless, there is a need for consultation with my family.”

The attitude of the king comforted Ibn Adham. He then returned to his hut in the forest. After three days, the Durwaish returned to the court of the king and stood silently behind all the people. This was the day of the king's public appearance. When the gaze of the king fell on the Durwaish, he (the king) was filled with awe and concern. He perceived nobility of an elevated status in the countenance of the young Durwaish and he thought to himself: 'If I acquit myself in any way which would distress the Durwaish, the grief of his heart will not spare me and my kingdom. I should accept his proposal.'

On this occasion the king did not speak to the Durwaish. After the public session ended, the king withdrew to the palace and consulted with his ministers regarding the proposal of the Durwaish. The king explained that they should advise him to have his daughter married to the Durwaish or alternatively present such a plan which will save him from any possible curse which will emanate from the grief-stricken heart of the Durwaish.

The wazier thought that this was the appropriate moment to convince the king of the ludicrousness of the pauper's proposal. In a lengthy discourse, goaded on by the rage and envy for the Durwaish, the wazier explained that due to the solid barrier of incompatibility between a pauper and the princess, the marriage would be bitter and miserable. Furthermore, the Durwaish was not of the social status of the princess. He was a total misfit.

The king, after reflection, said: “Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *‘Poverty is my pride.’* Wealth and worldly power and splendour are mere mirages and of a transitory nature. These possessions are not enduring. What is intrinsic and beautiful are the attributes within the Durwaish. Allah Ta’ala looks at the heart. If a Faqeer has a reformed and an adorned heart, he is better than the entire world, and if the heart of a king is dark, then in the Eyes of Allah Azza Wa Jal he is disgraceful and contemptible.”

Although the wazier understood what the king had said, his envy and rage constrained him to continue with his pernicious narrative. His intellect was blinded by his despicable emotions. After considerably praising the king and displaying his own obedience and humility, the wazier, in a bid to besmirch the character of the Durwaish said: “If he is a genuine Durwaish, a man of Allah, he would not have become so infatuated and annihilated merely on seeing the beauty of the princess. Such is not the mannerism of the Men of Allah. Those who enjoy divine proximity do not become annihilated by physical beauty. This pauper is lost in his own deviation. In fact, the pauper’s condition is the effect of wine. Your majesty! There are the sons of kings who are ever ready to marry the princess. Proposals have been regularly arriving.”

In response, the king said: ‘O Wazier! This pauper whom you consider to be a serpent, I believe him to be a beautiful flower from a wonderful orchard. Only Allah

Ta'ala is aware of the reality. Furthermore, it is incorrect to understand that the Men of Allah have no desire for women. Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had eleven wives and every Ummati has the right to take four wives. This Faqeer desires to perform Nikah in obedience to the Sunnah in a lawful manner as allowed by the Shariah. I had promised him and had given him much hope. It is improper for a gracious man to violate his promise. I am therefore plunged in great mental agitation. Is there a valid Shar'i manner and grounds to refuse?"

The wazier requested time to present a valid plan to satisfactorily bring this issue to a conclusion. The king then ended the session. The scheming wazier then approaching the Durwaish and feigning utmost respect and humility said: "The king is prepared to accept your proposal. However, there is an extremely difficult condition to be fulfilled. The princess has a pearl of invaluable worth. Its name is *Shab-e-Chiraagh* (*The Lantern of the Night*). But she has only one such pearl. If you can bring another pearl of its kind, the marriage will take place quickly. If you are unable then don't waste your time and don't bring grief to the king with your pestering. O Faqeer! My personal advice to you is to abandon the idea of marrying the princess. Prominent and noble princes have been attempting for years to marry the princess but to no avail. All are bewildered and silent because of her refusal. Therefore, O Durwaish! Why burden yourself unnecessarily. Take to your seclusion. However, if you are able to procure a pearl

exactly as the pearl the princess has, your wish will be fulfilled.

But listen carefully! If you are unable to procure such a pearl, do not have the temerity to return to this city. In fact do not even think that there is a city called Balkh.”

Ibn Adham with his faith in Allah Ta’ala, responded: “O Wazier! I shall bring a pearl more superior than the one the princess has. But, after I procure it and present it, there should be no deceit and plotting against me.”

The wazier said: “O Pauper! If you bring such a pearl, your marriage shall be performed with the princess.” The wazier was convinced that Ibn Adham being a pauper will not be able to procure such an invaluable pearl. Ibn Adham asked the wazier to show him the pearl. The wazier summoned the treasurer of the royal treasury and instructed him to bring the pearl called *Shab-e-Chiraagh*.

The casket containing the pearl was opened and the pearl placed in the hands of Ibn Adham who spontaneously exclaimed: “*Salli ala Muhammad (Salutations on Muhammad)*.” Ibn Adham said to the wazier: “While the duty of procuring such a pearl is indeed arduous, I shall now set out in the Name of Allah Ta’ala in search of such a pearl.”

The Durwaish travelled from place to place through forests and over mountains. He traversed wildernesses and deserts in search of such a pearl having full trust in

Allah Ta'ala to bestow such a pearl to him. He travelled to Room, Shaam, Sindh, Iran, Isfahan, Yemen and other lands in search of a pearl to match the pearl of the princess. However, he was unable to find such a pearl.

The obsession with the pearl overwhelmed his mental equilibrium. Whomever he met, he would ask where could he find *Shab-e-Chiraagh*? People would mock at him believing him to be a madman. He had become a *Majzub*. But while the objective of the *Majzub* is Allah Ta'ala Whose Love deranges his intellect, Ibn Adham's objective at this juncture was mundane love. This too was *Taqdeer* running its course. Ignoring everyone he would continue his search. He abandoned food and sleep. His one and only insane obsession was finding the pearl. Street urchins would mock, jeer and pelt him with stones. But, to Ibn Adham, everything was meaningless. His heart and very being were annihilated in the love for the princess. His search was now only for *Shab-e-Chiraagh* which would unite him with his beloved.

Totally absorbed in his mission he would be oblivious of the jeers and mockery. Wherever he saw a gathering of people he would ask about the availability of the pearl. He would plead with every trader in every marketplace he found himself in for *Shab-e-Chiraagh*. Finally when he lost all hope in obtaining it from people, the thought dawned on him that while *makhlooq* could not give him the pearl, there was *Khaaliq* (The Creator) Who can fulfil his heart's desire. It occurred to him that in his search for the pearl he had become oblivious of *Khaaliq*. With this

new hope consuming him, he went in the direction of the ocean. The pearl must be in the sea, thought Ibn Adham.

He wandered along the shores of the sea for months hoping and sobbing. When there was no sign of the pearl, he wished that a huge monster emerged from the ocean to devour him. Life had become meaningless for him. As such thoughts of self-immolation swirled in his mind, the picture of his beloved princess loomed up in front of him. This rekindled hope in him. With renewed hope he continued his aimless wanderings along the shores of the sea. The picture of the princess in his mind endowed him with so much love and courage that he resolved: "I shall continue my search lifelong and perish in the pursuit to gain the object of my love." He had no desire for food or sleep. When overwhelmed by hunger, he would eat some leaves.

The love for the princess had penetrated every capillary of his body. It had driven him to insanity. It occurred to him that he should drain the sea to find the pearl. Thus, he managed to find a container with which he commenced bailing out water from the sea casting it on the shore. For forty days he toiled insanely in his futile occupation to drain the sea. Then arrived the Unseen Help. The Mercy of Allah Ta'ala settled on the Durwaish. Allah Ta'ala commanded Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam): "Proceed immediately to the sea shores. There you will find one of My servants, weak and forlorn. Observe his plight, grief and misery, and immediately fulfil his desire."

With the Divine Command, Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) immediately departed from his abode and arrived at the sea shore where Ibn Adham was being consumed in the agony of his love and search for the pearl to realize the objective of his love. When Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) met Ibn Adham, he greeted with the Masnoon Salaam and he said: “O young man! Why are you engrossed in this ridiculous futility? Even if you devote and destroy your entire life, your efforts will be of absolutely no avail.”

The Durwaish, unaware of the identity of Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam), and entirely oblivious of reality, exclaimed: “Who says that I shall not reach my objective? Who says so?” When Hadhrat Khidhr observed this immense state of all-encompassing absorption (*Istighraaq*), he whispered into the ear of Ibn Adham: “*I am Khidhr. I have come to you by the command of Allah Ta’ala.*” The Durwaish was suddenly shocked into reality.

A new reality dawned on him. Suddenly everything – the Princess and his love for her – evaporated into non-existence. He fell at the feet of Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) sobbing uncontrollably. Hadhrat Khidhr took hold of him and embraced him firmly, consoling him and giving him hope. Hadhrat Khidhr asked Ibn Adham to narrate his story. The Durwaish said:

“O Master of the Tareeq (the Spiritual Path leading to Allah Ta’ala)! Besides Allah Ta’ala no one can extricate me from the deep ocean of bewilderment and insanity in which I am drowned.” He then narrated the full story from the beginning when he had caught a glimpse of the princess whose love had captivated him, casting him in the sea of insanity and bewilderment in which he was trapped. Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) smilingly said: “O immature one ! If you toil for a thousand years you will not succeed in reducing the sea by a drop. Nevertheless, there is good fortune for you. The favour and grace of Allah Ta’ala are upon you. I have been commanded to fulfil the desire and ambition of Ibn Adham with immediate effect.

“Close your eyes and for some time and with humility engross yourself in *muraaqabah* (meditation) of Allah Ta’ala.” The Durwaish, sobbing, fell to the ground in Sajdah. In his prostration he cried and supplicated to Allah Ta’ala, and lo! Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) disappeared mysteriously just as he had appeared. With the departure of Hadhrat Khidhr, there was a sudden increase in the waves of the sea. Unknown to the Durwaish, wave upon wave rose. With each wave came the Pearl, *Shab-e-Chiraagh* rolling from the waves towards the Durwaish who was still enraptured in Sajdah in meditation.

A Voice proclaimed: “Raise your head and look! Take as much as you desire!” When Ibn Adham lifted his head from Sajdah, he saw innumerable such pearls which

vastly surpassed the beauty and value of the pearl of the princess. His first reaction was to again fall into Sajdah profusely expressing shukr (thanks and gratitude) unto Allah Ta'ala. Then he took 40 pearls. Tying the pearls in the shawl he set off for Balkh. With the fadhl of Allah Ta'ala he traversed the distance miraculously and soon reached Balkh.

He reached Balkh at midnight. Seeing the City gates closed, he once again lapsed into his swoon of love and the misery of separation from his beloved. Two years had passed since he had first caught a glimpse of the princess. His mind dwelled on the royal procession of the princess, her entering the orchards and whatever had thereafter transpired. The hours ticked by with a slowness perceived dreadful by the Durwaish.

With the heralding of the Fajr Athaan in the Musaaajid, the city gates were opened. The Durwaish entered and proceeded towards the royal palace. This was the day of the king's public appearance. On seeing the Durwaish, the evil wazier was enraged and beyond himself with wrath. He said to the Durwaish: "O Faqeer! It was a condition that you should never set foot in this city without the pearl. O miserable one! Why did you come here without the pearl?"

It was beyond the wildest imagination of the wazier that this pauper would ever procure such a pearl as *Shab-e-Chiraagh*. Thus, he further said: "Now, your head shall

be smitten from your body. This is the punishment for violating the promise.”

Ibn Adham said: “O wazier! Allah Ta’ala has bestowed the desired pearl to me. Allah Ta’ala has bestowed such a large number of pearls from which I selected only 40.” Then he opened his shawl, and counted the pearls and presented it to the king. Expert jewellers were summoned. Unanimously all exclaimed the wonder of these dazzling pearls radiating such marvellous glitter. Never had they seen such wonderful pearls.

The king’s colour became pale and he lapsed into deep reflection. The condition has been fulfilled by the Durwaish. He thought: ‘If the Nikah is now not performed, the Wrath and Curse of Allah Ta’ala could overtake us.’ Again the king summoned his advisors to consult with them. The evil wazier emotionally advised against the Nikah. In sheer desperation, driven by wrath and envy, he presented a variety of arguments to discredit the Durwaish and the pearls. He attributed everything to satanism, magic and having jinn in his subjugation. He advised the king to have no concern and to leave the matter to him. He will correctly and adequately deal and dispose of the Durwaish and the matter.

The king, due to uncertainty and his aversion to have his daughter marry a wandering faqeer was relieved to repose his trust and confidence in the wazier. The king then retired to the palace leaving the wazier to resolve the issue. However, as he departed, the king cautioned:

“Although I have assigned the matter to you, you are responsible for any untoward consequences. Therefore, decide correctly. Violating a promise has dangerous consequences by Allah Ta’ala. Do devise such a plan which will not bring grief to the Faqeer.” At the back of his mind the king feared the repercussions which could develop in the wake of dishonouring his promise and the grief of the Faqeer.

With the departure of the king, his comments were completely ignored. The evil wazier turned wrathfully to the Durwaish and said: “Your mind is totally corrupt. How could you express yourself so insolently to the king requesting marriage to the princess? Have you no shame? You have resolved to be insolent and shameless. What status do you, a pauper, have to propose marriage to the noble princess? Understand well that if ever again you mention the princess, every joint in your body will be separated. Your tongue will be cut out and you will be sawn apart. If you value your life, then repent and seek the pardon of the king.”

But, the Durwaish was unfazed. The *Tajalli* of Allah Ta’ala was permeating him. The Plan of Allah Ta’ala cannot be thwarted. He was not affected in the least by the barking of this evil worldly dog. Thus he exclaimed: “O miserable and treacherous one! You have forgotten about Allah, The One Who has no partner. It is He who had granted you your present status. But you have no understanding of the meaning of honouring pledges and promises. It is a branch of Imaan. I have fulfilled my

obligation, now you have reneged. Fear Allah Ta'ala. You will be overtaken by a great calamity from the Ghaib.”

The wazier was more infuriated. He resolved to have the Faqeer executed. He ordered the guards to take the Faqeer and to beat him to death. They rushed on the Faqeer like a pack of hungry wolves, savagely assaulting him with whips and batons. His entire body was drenched with blood. The brutal assault rendered the Durwaish unconscious. Believing him to be dead, the guards dragged him and dumped him in the far away city dump. Depicting this tragedy, it is mentioned in a narrative:

“The grass and the stones also sobbed. The birds shrieked and shed tears. The roots of the zaalim will soon be deracinated while the mazloom's (the oppressed one) misery is a temporary phase, soon to be relegated into oblivion.”

While the horribly wounded and bloodied Durwaish was lying like a dead person on the filthy dunes of the city dump, it was time for Divine Revenge to be activated. Allah Ta'ala had a wonderful plan for Ibn Adham. Allah Ta'ala operates in ways which are unfathomable to us. Suddenly a severe pain developed in the breast of the princess. Her colour turned pale and she rolled like a slaughtered fowl in agony. She fell from the couch on which she was sitting and groaned in agony lying on the floor. She lost her voice and became speechless.

The king and all those in the palace were struck with grief and shock. While the love of the princess was driving Ibn Adham to insanity, the love for her was driving her parents and others into the abyss of grief. Everyone was helpless. Within a short while her soul took flight and she was pronounced dead. It was qiyaamah in the palace. The palace became like a haunted place. She was the only child of the king. He had no sons. Now he lost even this one beloved daughter. The king's love for his daughter was extraordinarily profound. He would not even eat food without her. The queen became a walking corpse. The anguish of the grief she and others suffered was beyond description. It appeared that the world was enveloped in darkness.

Holding his daughter's head on his lap, the king sobbed and shed tears uncontrollably. People present feared that the king too may die of grief. The pious and wisemen who were the close associates of the king, consoled him and urged him to have Sabr since this was the decree of Allah Ta'ala. The decree of Allah Ta'ala cannot be thwarted. It has to be accepted. They said: *"Your Majesty! Even the Ambiya and Auliya are helpless in the sway of the Taqdeer of Allah Ta'ala. Do not denude yourself of the garment of Sabr. Maut is the inevitable and inescapable reality."*

Responding to the advice of his wisemen, the king regaining his composure said: "I submit to the Qadr of Allah with all my heart. Grief had momentarily deranged my intellect."

The king stood up. With tears welling up in his eyes he issued instructions for the ghusl, kafan and janaazah of the princess. The scene of grief, the wails and anguish of all present in the palace cannot be adequately described at the time of the funeral arrangements. After ghusl was given, the face of the princess glittered with so much *noor* which rendered her more beautiful than the beauty of her lifetime. It appeared to everyone who saw her face that she was alive and smiling pleasantly. There was no rigidity in her body. The tenderness of her body was that of a living person. There was no coldness in her body. There were no signs of a corpse in her. But she was dead and had to be buried. Again it was the *Taqdeer* of Allah Ta'ala that despite signs of life, it did not occur to anyone nor to the hukama that the janaazah should be delayed until certitude of her death has been established.

The Janaazah proceeded to the Qabrستان with a mass of wailing humanity following. When it reached the Qabrستان, the king issued the order for a large tent to be erected around the Janaazah at the graveside. Only women were allowed inside, and only they undertook the burial. Armed guards were posted on the perimeter of the large tent to prevent any male from entering. No one was allowed to even peep inside.

Meanwhile, the king smitten by the profoundest grief and remorse was rebuking himself and supplicating to Allah Ta'ala:

“This punishment is the consequence of having violated the pledge given to Ibn Adham. In addition to having dishonoured the pledge, grave injustice (zulm) was done to him. O Allah! It was my crime to have handed the matter to the wazier who has invited this punishment with his zulm. He has involved me in this calamity. I had gravely erred for having trusted this unfit wazier. I was prepared to honour the pledge but this miserable wazier turned out to be a dacoit. In addition to casting me in this calamity, he has disgraced me for even the Aakhirat.”

The king sobbed uncontrollably. The princess was interred in a coffin of sandalwood. The king on this occasion distributed so much wealth in Sadqah that even all the beggars had become wealthy.

The Janaazah service was completed at 2 a.m. The king and the queen stood by the graveside. Numerous armed guards were placed outside the tent to protect the grave of the princess. Hundreds of Ulama and Huffaaz recited the Qur’aan Majeed for the princess.

At the very hour when the king and queen were departing from the grave to return to the palace, Ibn Adham regained conscience. He was astonished to find himself laying in the city dump. With all his wounds he stood up and like a wounded lion, driven by his insane love, he stumbled forward. The love for the princess compelled him to move towards the city unconcerned with the calamity which had befallen him and oblivious of any danger which may be awaiting him. As he entered the

city, someone recognizing him said: “O Faqeer! The one for whom you have suffered so much is dead. What kind of curse did you invoke on her whose love had brought you to the verge of death?”

The Durwaish was not convinced that the princess had died. He thought that he was being mocked. On reaching the palace, he saw a huge concourse of people sobbing and wailing. Now he was convinced that the princess had died. This thought made him shudder and he fell down unconscious. After regaining consciousness, the Durwaish smitten with indescribable grief set off in search of the grave of the princess. In the darkness of the night, the Durwaish despite his injuries, searched like an insane man for the grave of his beloved princess. He was absorbed and annihilated in this love which seemed unattainable. But, he continued his search in desperation.

It is necessary to understand at this juncture that the Durwaish, despite having been wounded brutally and despite the sufferings and miseries of two years, he relentlessly pursued his objective. He was able to endure what no one else could, purely by the decree of Allah Ta’ala. Taqdeer was running its prescribed course, hence Ibn Adham could not be deterred from the pursuit of his objective by anyone and anything. Allah Ta’ala had a Plan for him. He was driven on by an Unseen Hand.

Henceforth *Sakeenah* (*Tranquillity*) settled on his heart. This *Sakeenah* from Allah Ta’ala eliminates all fears and uncertainty. He was imbued with perfect conviction of

attaining his objective regardless of what had happened and what has been said. Whilst continuing his search, he suddenly caught a wondrous fragrance which he had never before perceived. He said to himself: "*This is the fragrance of the Princess.*" He was being drawn in the direction of the fragrance, drawn by the magnet of love. He pushed on relentlessly until he observed a light in the distance. Ultimately, he reached the enclosure wherein was the grave of the princess.

To his dismay he saw the enclosure surrounded by armed guards. Not even a bird would be able to gain entry into the enclosure. He took refuge behind a rock concealing himself to prevent him from being detected by the guards. His heart beat restlessly and fiercely. The guidance of Allah Ta'ala was at hand. It was the time of *Sehri*. Allah Ta'ala cast slumber on all the guards. They fell into deep sleep and snoring.

Taking maximum advantage of this sudden opportunity provided by Allah Ta'ala, the Durwaish silently crept into the enclosure. Soon he was by the grave of the princess. Insane and intoxicated with love, he fell on to the grave kissing it. At this juncture he was unable to think of any plan. What should he now do? He was by his beloved one. It dawned upon him to open the grave just for glance at the princess. He had no plan. With this in mind, he set about to remove the sand covering the coffin. After removing the soil, he was dismayed to see that there was a coffin of sandalwood. Unfazed, he began

opening the coffin. Again he succeeded miraculously to open the coffin.

He was astonished and pleasantly shocked to see the beautiful princess as if she was still alive. Her face radiated with celestial lustre (*noor*), and her body was fresh and tender. Was she really dead? Beyond himself with a mixture of joy, fear and the love which had consumed him, and without thinking of any consequences, he removed the body. He loaded the princess on his back and began his exit. He was steered on by an Invisible Force. This was an enactment of *Taqdeer*. He resolved to take the body to his hut in the forest. Thus he commenced his departure from the enclosure with the princess on his back. He yearned for death and for his body to be buried with the princess.

It occurred to the Durwaish that soon the guards will discover the open grave and a search will begin. He calmly lowered the body from his back and hastily closed the coffin and poured the soil over it. After completing this task, he immediately loaded the body and began his exit. By the *Qudrat* of Allah Ta'ala, not a single guard was disturbed from his deep slumber. It was only after the Durwaish had reached his hut in the forest, did the guards wake up. But nothing was amiss for them.

After so much of suffering, toil and misery he had finally reached his hut which was a hidden hideout deep in the forest where no one passed. He placed the princess in sitting position against the wall of the hut. Her body was

like a living person. There was no sign of death on her. Was she alive?

His total absorption with love for the princess made him oblivious of his wounds, pains and food. In the darkness of the night, when he would let out a sigh of grief, it would ignite the firewood he had piled for light. This should not be surprising. This Durwaish was among the Kaamileen Auliya, and Allah Ta'ala fulfilled his needs miraculously just as he had derived aid from Hadhrat Khidhr (Alayhis salaam). His entry into the cemetery enclosure and the removal of the body were also the effects of *karaamat*.

The Durwaish was so lost and engrossed in his love that he sat in front of the body of the princess and conversed with her as if she was alive. It was still dark while the Durwaish was absorbed in his conversation with the princess. At this time he observed a caravan approaching. The caravan had lost the road and was seeking its way out of the forest. It was by the *qudrat* of Allah Ta'ala that the people of the caravan decided to encamp. The spot where they halted was in close proximity to the hut of the Durwaish.

The travellers required fire. In the distance they saw the glow of the fire of the Durwaish. They concluded that there is a Durwaish living in the forest, hence one of them went in the direction of the fire with the intention of acquiring a flame.

As he heard footsteps nearing the hut, the Durwaish went pale with fear, thinking that the guards must have discovered his secret. Therefore, he hastily exited and went to the safety of a nearby cave.

When the traveller entered the hut, he found only a beautiful lady dressed in *kafan*. Overcome with fear, he forgot about the flame, and hastily returned to the caravan. He narrated his discovery to the chief of the caravan. He specifically emphasized the dead lady sitting against the wall without any sign of death on her, but she was draped in *kafan*. In the caravan was an expert hakeem. The chief along with the hakeem quickly went to the hut.

They were shocked and bewildered at the scene. It dawned on them that this lady appeared to be from the royalty. But what was the mystery for her body being here in the forest in a hut in this condition? The hakeem who was a top expert in his field, viewed the body and exclaimed: *“She is not dead! She is alive! This glitter radiating from her and the overall condition are not the attributes of a corpse. There is no death in any of her organs and limbs. She is in a coma.”*

He felt her pulse and announced that she was alive. After thoroughly examining her body, the hakeem said: “I am aware of her sickness. For some reason the blood is not reaching her brain. In our terms it is described as *Saktah*.”

The hakeem took from his pocket a lancet (a small surgical instrument with which blood is extracted), and affixed it to some part of the body. By the fadhl of Allah Ta'ala, blood immediately surged forth and was extracted. Within a few moments, the princess opened her eyes. With shock and bewilderment she observed strange men in front of her. Modesty constrained her to lower her head and cover her eyes with her hands. She also was bewildered and fearful of the forest surroundings and the hut.

Mustering up considerable courage, she asked: "Who are you people? Where am I? Whose hut is this? Who has brought me here? Why am I draped in *kafan*? What has happened to my garments? What is this mystery?"

The chief of the caravan spoke: "*Wallaahi Azeem!* We have no awareness and no knowledge of this mystery. We were passing through this forest, lost the way and alighted on this hut, and we discovered you. The hakeem diagnosed your sickness and treated you and you are now cured. Besides this, we know nothing. We do not have the haziest idea of this mystery. Now you should explain something about yourself. Who are you? What is the name of your father? Where is your home?"

Meanwhile, the Durwaish had kept watch from a distance. When he was convinced that the men were not the royal guards, he stepped forward, entered the hut and made Salaam. The men of the caravan were convinced

that this Durwaish was the owner of the hut. They exclaimed: “O Man of Allah! What is this mystery?”

Ibn Adham narrated his entire story from beginning to end. Meanwhile the princess was listening with great attention and bewilderment. She was profoundly impressed. The narrative of Ibn Adham struck a responsive chord in her heart.

The men listened in astonishment to this incredible wonderful narrative. They loudly exclaimed the Takbeer: “*Allaahu Akbar!*”. Then there was silence. Everyone lapsed into the fortress of silence. What was the next step in this wonderful saga of love? *Taqdeer* was running its divine course.

The caravan having lost the path and the discovery of the princess were not accidental episodes. Everything was in the Plan of *Taqdeer*. Hadhrat Nabi Musa (Alayhis salaam) with his family had lost the road in the darkness of the night on his journey to Egypt from Madyan. His deviation from the main road and being separated from the caravan were not accidental. It was part of the Divine Scheme. It was on this occasion that the sight of a fire burning in the distance drew Nabi Musa (Alayhis salaam) towards it to acquire a flame for warming his family in the intense cold of that night. It was during this Night by the Fire that Allah Ta’ala conversed with Nabi Musa (Alayhis salaam) and awarded Nubuwwat to him. Whatever happens is by the decree of Allah Ta’ala. Not an atom moves without the Divine Decree.

The inmates of the hut fell into deep reflection regarding this wonderful Scheme of Allah Ta'ala. Looking at Ibn Adham, the princess was overwhelmed with grief and sorrow. He had suffered so much for her. There was no parallel in history for the true Love of Ibn Adham. Her beautiful eyes welled up with tears which flowed profusely from her cheeks like pearls. Each tear drop was of greater value than the *Chiraagh-e-Shab* in pursuit of which Ibn Adham had toiled for more than two years, suffered, was savagely assaulted and thrown in the city dumps as dead carrion.

Now the gaze of the princess was fixed on the extremely handsome face of Ibn Adham from which radiated the glitter of celestial light (*noor*). Her heart became overwhelmed with love for this unknown *Muhib* (*Lover*) who had languished in pain and misery and had suffered so much for her. She reflected on the wonderful feat of having retrieved her from the grave where she would have perished with misery and agony had she revived from her coma in the securely closed coffin. This and all the sufferings of Ibn Adham were the effects of nothing but true love. The princess said to herself: “*Then Allah Ta'ala saved me and restored me to life by means of this Durwaish.*”

Allah Ta'ala says in His Glorious Qur'aan: “*Allah draws unto Him whomever He wills.*” Thus, did Allah Ta'ala draw this princess unto Himself. Reared in the exquisite pomp, splendour and luxury of palace life, she never

experienced a moment of hardship. Here today she was draped in kafan in a hut deep in a forest with a pauper. Allah Ta'ala imbued her with a sudden realization of the futility of this ephermal worldly life. She stood up and exclaimed: *“The life of this world is but a mere dream and a mirage. It has no reality.”* Allah Ta'ala had ignited in her heart the Flame of true love, the futility of this dunya and the reality of the Akhirat. A feeling of intense aversion for this dunya developed in her. She now understood the meaning of the Hadith: *“This world is carrion.”*

Her parents and the palace which were close by no longer had any attraction for her. Her heart had become cold towards everything of the dunya. It did not occur to her to return to the palace. On the contrary, she was averse to the very idea of returning to her parents and taking up her position as the royal princess. She resolved to spend the rest of her life in the remembrance of her Rabb. She will follow the Road of Truth and Divine Love of this Durwaish.

The atmosphere in the hut was still of pin drop silence. Whilst the mind of the princess was swirling in the whirlpool of thought and reflection, the chief of the caravan breaking the silence said:

“Allah Ta'ala has again granted you life and He has favoured you both with His mercy. O Durwaish! If this damsel from heaven was not alive, you would not have been able to live. We are from the Land of Shaam and

shall soon be departing. If you so desire, you may accompany us. We shall always be at your service. If you choose to remain her, then what are your plans?”

The Durwaish spoke: “It is my heart’s desire that this Rose of my Heart accepts my Nikah proposal. If this damsel of paradise consents, then perform my Nikah to her.”

Turning to the princess, the chief said: “O Daughter of the King! Allah Ta’ala has granted you again life after ‘death’. Do you consent? If yes, do you have any conditions?” The princess, with modesty lowered her head and said: “I accept this man. My Mehr is that he remains in my service lifelong. I have no need for pearls and gold.”

The Nikah was concluded. The chief and the hakeem still lost in wonder and bewilderment returned to the caravan as the Athaan for Fajr was being pronounced.

Today Allah Ta’ala fulfilled the desire of Ibn Adham after years of suffering. Allah Ta’ala granted him the object of his love. Ibn Adham was a Durwaish and accustomed to the austerity of his lifestyle of wandering and living in forests, mountains and wildernesses. But his wife was from a royal palace. Never did she experience any difficulty. She was reared in comfort, luxury, pomp and splendour.

When she would visit the royal gardens which were reserved for her, a cavalcade of soldiers and guards would escort her howdah. Today she was in a forest without any basic amenities of life and without proper dress. She only had on her the kafan shrouds. The palace and her parents were nearby. She could easily have gone to the palace. But she sacrificed everything and everyone for leading a life of extreme austerity (Zuhd) in pursuit of divine proximity. Allah Ta'ala had drawn her to Himself.

This change was sudden. Not even 24 hours had passed since her 'death' and assignment to the grave, and she had become a 'durwaish'. It never crossed her mind that the city of Balkh is close by. She could have asked her husband to procure some clothes for her. But, no! She chose to be dressed in the *kafan* shrouds.

It was in the Divine Plan that Ibn Adham and the Princess were to become the parents of the renowned Wali, Hadhrat Ibraaheem Bin Adham whose *Silsilah* of Tasawwuf would endure for all times. Many would become great Mashaaiikh under him.

The Princess passed her days with faithful obedience to her husband whose love did not dissipate for a moment. His passion of love for her remained aflame just as it had been prior to the Nikah. She devoted herself to Ibaadat like her husband. Both became oblivious of sleep and food. Night and day were spent in Ibaadat and the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala.

Allah Ta'ala had made a miraculous arrangement for their sustenance. From the *Ghaib* would appear trays of sumptuous food of a variety of kinds.

Ibn Adham was already among the Kaamileen Auliya. Soon his wife also attained the lofty status of *Wilaayat*. Nine months later, Allah Ta'ala blessed them with the wonderful gift of a son whose beauty was beyond description. He bore a striking resemblance to his mother. In fact, his appearance was a replica of the Princess. Thinking of Nabi Ibraaheem (Alayhis salaam), they named their son Ibraaheem. This noble child was a source of immense happiness for his parents.



IBRAAHEEM BIN ADHAM

After two years had passed and the baby had been weaned off his mother's breast, the *karamat* commenced. Such food came in beautiful rays from the *Ghaib*, which the Princess had not seen even in the palace. The miraculous arrival of such delicious food had become a norm. The nearby trees began to bear delicious fruit of a variety of kinds. The child was thus reared in much love and comfort. When Ibraaheem was seven years of age, his parents discerned remarkable intelligence and piety in him. They became concerned with his education. It was decided to have him admitted in a Madrasah in Balkh.

Thus, Ibn Adham for the first time after his marriage, took Ibraaheem to the city of Balkh. He searched for a Muallim who would, in addition to providing Deeni *Ta'leem*, also attend to the *Tarbiyat* (moral training) of his child. After much searching he found an Aalim of a lofty status of Taqwa. He was an Aalim, Zaahid and imparted knowledge of the Deen *fisabeelillah*.

The Ustaadh was immediately attracted to this boy who displayed remarkable intelligence. The Ustaadh was astonished at the grasp of the boy. Whatever lesson he would teach, Ibraaheem would immediately understand and memorize it. Thus, the Ustaadh paid greater attention and affection to him. The programme was for Ibn Adham to bring his son in the morning, and to fetch him in the

evening. This was his daily routine. This continued for quite some time.

One day, by the decree of Allah Ta'ala, the king with a large retinue of ministers, officers and soldiers happened to pass in close proximity of the Madrasah where Ibraaheem, the king's grandson, was learning. Precisely at that moment, Ibraaheem Ibn Adham was audibly reciting the Qur'aan Majeed. As the sound of the Tilaawat fell on the king's ears, he was attracted as if a magnet was drawing him. He was enthralled by the boy's qiraa't. It had exercised a profound and an inexplicable effect on his heart. The king with his cavalcade halted and he remained seated on his mount listening to the recitation. The young lad's beautiful recitation had cast all unto wonder.

It was the practice of the king to promote the Makaatib. Whenever he would pass by a Maktab, he would halt, go onto the Maktab and listen to the recitation of the pupils. Then he would award them gifts. After making the gifts to the pupils and the Ustaadh, it would be holiday for that day.

The king dismounted from his horse. First he stood outside the Maktab listening to Ibraaheem's beautiful recitation which had captivated the king. The Magnet drew him into the Maktab. Firstly, he listened to the other children rewarding each one with a gift. Then came Ibraaheem's turn. When the king looked at his grandson, he was dumbstruck with astonishment. He was beyond

himself with bewilderment. Here in this child he saw the replica of his ‘dead’ daughter. The resemblance was incredibly precise. He was a carbon copy of his mother’s appearance.

The flames of love for this boy suddenly were ignited in his heart and he fell silent. He had no words to convey his feelings. In every limb of the boy, the king saw his daughter. The memory of his daughter gushed into his mind and his eyes welled up with tears. Unable to contain his grief and sorrow, and to the absolute surprise of the Ustaadh, the students and his retinue, the king uncontrollably sobbed and lifted the boy with great affection to his heart.

Although there was surprise and astonishment, no one dared question the king nor enquire the reason for his grief. The king himself was oblivious of the fact that this was his grandson in his arms. After sometime, regaining his composure, the king asked the Ustaadh for the name of the child and the name of his father, and the whereabouts of his home? The king demanded a full explanation of all details pertaining to the child. The Ustaadh explained:

“His father is a faqeer and a pauper living deep in the forest. He has a strong aversion for mingling with people. His name is Adham and the boy’s name is Ibaaheem. He has been here learning since a year. His father brings him every morning and fetches him every evening. Indeed he is a pure, uprighteous, genuine Man of Allah.”

The mention of very name Adham struck the king like a bolt of lightning. He was beyond his senses. There was total silence. The king perceived just darkness in front of himself. The mystery had deepened. He said to himself: “Indeed there is some divine mystery underlying this episode. I have to take this boy home so that my wife’s eyes could be cooled seeing him. The resemblance with our daughter will bring joy to her. ”

The king stood up, took the boy affectionately by the hand to take him to the palace. He instructed the Ustaadh to inform the father to come to the palace. The king presented 100 dinars (gold coins) to the Ustaadh. Then he left with Ibraaheem.

When the queen saw the boy, she momentarily gazed at him in shocked bewilderment. A mixture of grief and joy consumed her heart, and she spontaneously lifted him on to her lap. She saw her beloved daughter in the boy. The memory of her daughter gushed into her mind and the sorrow caused her to lapse into unconsciousness. All the women of the palace came running to the unconscious queen applying whatever remedy they knew for reviving an unconscious person. It was reminiscent of the occasion when the princess had ‘died’. After some time when the queen regained consciousness, she again took the child on her lap and shed tears of grief in profusion.

Clinging to the child affectionately, the queen said: “O my child! What are the names of your father and

mother?” The child said: “My father’s name is Adham and my mother’s name is Faatimah.” This was the name of the princess. The queen was spellbound to hear these names. Adding to these names the striking resemblance of the child to the princess, the mystery was deep and inexplicable for the queen, the king and whoever was present at that moment. Everyone was well aware of Adham and his love for the princess. It had become common knowledge that the death of the princess was the consequence of the curse of Adham because of the violation of the pledge given to him. Thus, the people understood that he was a Wali.

When the names of the parents were mentioned by the child, there was only astonishment and bewilderment. No one understood the mystery. While Adham was alive, the princess was ‘dead’. But here is the child of Adham who was the replica in appearance of the princess. What was the meaning of this mystery? It was only confusion and intrigue for which no one had answer.

The king and the queen who was a pious lady had faith that Allah Ta’ala was All-Powerful. He could kill and resurrect as He wills. An inexplicable delight came to the king and queen when they heard the name of their daughter being mentioned by the child. Regardless of the seeming impossibility of the daughter being alive, everything was in the power of Allah Ta’ala. Their hearts testified that this child is their grandson.

The queen herself bathed Ibraaheem. She did not allow any of the numerous ladies who were at her service to bathe the child. Then she dressed the child in beautiful garments, and with her own hands fed him while speaking to him lovingly.

The king, leaving the child with the queen withdrew into his chamber where he sat alone absorbed in meditation. He was absorbed and lost in an ocean of deep reflection. What is the mystery? What has happened? He had no answer. The more he reflected the deeper became the mystery. He finally concluded that only Adham can unravel the mystery. He is a man of Truth. He will speak only the truth.

Coming out from his chamber, the king issued strict instructions to all in the palace, to the workers, the officers, the ministers, the gurads, etc. that when the child's father arrives, he must be met with honour and respect. He should be brought to the king with utmost respect and honour. After issuing these instructions, the king awaited anxiously for Ibn Adham.

In the evening when Adham arrived at the Maktab to take his child, he found it vacant. There was no one. Fear overtook him. He found the Ustaadh who narrated to him what had transpired. The king has invited him to the palace where Ibraaheem will be. The Ustaadh added: *"The king had emphasized that you should come without the slightest hesitation. You should entertain no fear at*

all. You may take the child as you please. You will not be prevented.”

Full of apprehension and restlessness, Ibn Adham set off in haste to the palace. At the palace gates he said to the guard: “Inform the king that Adham has come for his child. Please send him without any delay.” The king was waiting in anticipation. He immediately invited Ibn Adham into the palace. With profound honour and respect he seated Ibn Adham in front of him. With utmost humility the king said:

“O Servant of Allah! Truthfully tell me the name of the mother of your child.” Ibn Adham responded: “*O King! She is your own daughter. And her name is Faatimah.*” The king said: “But she died some time ago and we had buried her. Does a dead person become alive?” Ibn Adham said: “She did not die.” Then he narrated the entire episode. He did not change one iota of the anecdote in his narrative.

Hearing this marvellous narration, the king shed tears of joy and pleasure. He immediately went to convey the glad tidings to the queen. Not even on the Day of Eid was such happiness seen in the palace. There was tumultuous joy and celebration in the palace. The queen distributed pearls, gold and diamonds to the poor to express her happiness and gratitude to Allah Ta’ala. No amount of charity can compensate for this wonderful bounty of Allah Ta’ala – of having brought their daughter out from the grave and restoring her to life.

Meanwhile the king summoned all the friends of his daughter as well as the midwife. He instructed them all to set off immediately to the forest to ascertain if indeed the lady was his daughter. For total assurance the king ordered her friends to respectfully question her about her childhood days, then report to him her answers without any delay. He wanted absolute certitude that it was indeed his daughter, hence he had devised this plan. After the ladies had departed, the king went into his chamber and fell into Sajdah supplicating with extreme humility.

Whilst the king was deep in reflection a horse rider came at speed and loudly proclaimed: “O king! The Ladies you had despatched sent me to convey to you that indeed the she is your daughter.”

The king made immediate arrangements to go to his daughter. With a large entourage of noblemen and ministers the king with the queen set off to the forest. It was a huge splendid procession. The news spread like wild fire. Thousands of people followed to witness the unfolding drama and the unravelling of the mystery of the ‘dead’ princess having come to life. When they were in close proximity to the hut of Ibn Adham, the king alighted from his horse. Taking the queen with, they entered the hut made of grass and devoid of any amenities of life. As they entered they saw their daughter deep in concentration in Namaaz. The dress she was wearing was tattered and torn. They could not even count

the numerous patches on her shawl. She had become the special servant of Allah Ta'ala. *“And Allah draws unto Himself whomever He wills.” (Qur’aan)*

The eyes of the king and queen welled up with sadness at the sight of their daughter. From the palace life she had chosen this forlorn hut and life devoid of pleasure and comfort. Her royal raiments were replaced with tattered and old pieces of cloth. Meanwhile the other ladies had arrived and waited until the Princess completed her Namaaz. After she made Salaam, they stepped forward and most affectingly informed her that her parents have arrived to meet her.

The princess turned and when she saw her parents, she ran to them and fell at their feet. They lifted her and lovingly embraced her. It was indeed a wonderful and joyous occasion of meeting their daughter. It was a reunion which cannot be described. They dressed their daughters with the royal garments they had brought with. The princess was seated in a howdah with her mother, and Ibn Adham accompanied the king. It was a procession of great splendour and happiness.

After spending three days in the palace, Ibn Adham said to the king: “O your majesty! The Remembrance of Allah is best in solitude and seclusion. I am not accustomed to the palace pomp and splendour. It is claustrophobic for me. I am disturbed by crowds. Mingling with people is like mingling with serpents for us. O king! The breezes of the forest are best for me. I

therefore desire to return to my hut and be engrossed in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. If my wife selects to live here, then she and the child are at liberty to do so. I shall occasionally come to visit them.”

This is the attitude of a true devotee of Allah Ta'ala. The fire of love he had for his wife and son would not induce him to remain in the palace. His choice was the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala in the forest. Allah Ta'ala had restored his intelligence. Now, the burning love for the wife and child would not deter him from the Objective of his wanderings in mountains and wildernesses. The Love which overwhelmed the mundane and inferior love for which he had suffered so much, was the Love of Allah Ta'ala, the True Objective.

Regardless of the pleading and assurances of the king, Ibn Adham was determined to return to his forest hut. He could not be deterred from the pursuit of His Objective. His attitude was like that of a wild buck which derives comfort and solace in the forest. It flees at the sight of people. This is the attitude of the Auliya Kaamileen, and Ibn Adham was of this mettle. The perishable earthly love which had driven him to insanity was a temporary phase. It was the effect of *Taqdeer* over which he had no control.

Allah Ta'ala had now dawned a new reality on him. His mundane love was substituted for the Burning Divine Love. He sacrificed the comfort of the palace and the love of the princess – the love which had brought

mountains of suffering on him. He thus departed from the palace to return to the forest where he would find the Object of True Love.

He passed the remaining years of his life in solitude in his hut. Occasionally he would visit his wife and child at the palace, stay two days and depart once again for the wilderness where he passed his time wrapped in Divine Love – in the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. His visiting his family at the palace was in keeping with the Shariah. He was by way of fulfilling an obligation- the obligation of family ties. This was his life style until his soul took flight from this transitory earthly abode. This ends the wonderful story of Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh).

Ibn Adham had exercised a profound spiritual influence on the king. While he spent the days attending to the duties and obligations of governance, he devoted the nights to Ibaadat. Since the king had no son and no other daughters, his love for his daughter was intense. He loved his grandson more than even the love a father has for a son.

Elaborate arrangements were made for the ta'leem and tarbiyat of Ibraaheem. Under direct supervision of the king was he educated by many accomplished Asaatizah in the palace. From childhood he had displayed profound intelligence and piety. He was educated in every branch of knowledge. His intelligence and accomplishments in all fields of knowledge convinced the king that he was

fully qualified to assume the reigns of the Sultanate to rule the country.

The king assembled all his ministers, officials, and noblemen at a session to witness the handover of power to Ibraahim Bin Adham. The governance of the entire country was officially assigned to him and the king retired to spend his remaining days in ibaadat.

Ibraaheem Bin Adham ruled the country with great justice and in strict accord with the Shariah. His every act and statement were in compliance with the Qur'aan and Hadith. Four years passed with Ibraaheem Bin Adham governing the country superbly. The king was extremely pleased with his system and manner of governance. In fact, the king derived much lesson from the practical lifestyle of his grandson who was devoted to Ibaadat. The king took to seclusion and devoted himself to the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. He became cognizant of the imminence of Maut, hence he was preparing for the departure from this world.

Finally the moment of Maut arrived and the king's soul took flight whilst he was engrossed in Ibaadat.

Of all people, Ibraaheem Bin Adham was the most grieved. The demise of his grandfather had a profound effect on him. He increasingly devoted himself to solitude and Ibaadat. He was silent and withdrawn. He passed considerable time at the grave of the king. After forty days at the graveside, the ministers of the state

pleaded with him to return to the affairs of the country. They advised him to adopt Sabr and to attend diligently to the affairs of government.

Although he returned to the throne, his heart was elsewhere. His heart had turned away from the world. Despite attending to the affairs of the state, his focus was on Allah Ta'ala. If he became aware of any Durwaish, he would immediately divest himself of all affairs and hasten to meet him. He would stay for some days in the company of the durwaish. His advisers and the officials of the state would be surprised. Despite Ibraahim Bin Adham being a king, an Aalim of lofty academic and spiritual excellences and accomplishments they could not understand him acting like a servant in the company of mendicants (durwaishes). Further, it was inexplicable and from their perspective, that he would suddenly leave the palace all alone, without bodyguards, soldiers, etc., as was the practice of kings. The people of the dunya had no understanding of the Flame of Divine Love kindling in his heart.

Despite being consumed by the Love of Allah Ta'ala, Ibraaheem Bin Adham was endowed with the stupendous ability of keeping the country under the subjection of the Shariah. His reign was of justice and benevolence. There was peace and prosperity in the land. But the incompatibility between his spiritual impulses and worldly obligations was intensely manifest in his attitude of forlornness and disdain for palace life regardless of such obligations and duties being the maintenance and

promulgation of the Shariah. After all, he was the son of a Wali-e-Kaamil of lofty status. That same spirit of wandering in the deserts and mountains in search of Allah Ta'ala experienced by his father, was overwhelming Ibraaheem Bin Adham.

This incompatibility ultimately compelled him to surrender to the spiritual impulses which were the effects of Divine Love. And, this had finally led to the permanent abandonment of the throne and taking up the life of a Durwaish in the footsteps of his father, Adham. Ibraaheem Bin Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) was a paragon of Divine Love which consumes the hearts of dervishes, and at the same time a paragon of the Zaahiri Shariah. This is not a feat which every Durwaish can accomplish. He was absolutely averse to the primrose path of the dunya, hence was always restless in the palace. In the midst of all his mundane duties and obligations, the Love of Allah Ta'ala maintained a perennial vitality.

SUPPRESSING DESIRES FOR ALLAH'S SAKE

Hadhrat Sufyaan Bin Ibraaheem (rahmatullah alayh) narrates:

"I saw Hadhrat Ibraaheem Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) sobbing in Makkah Muazzamah at the place where Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was born. This place is called Suqal Lail. I greeted him and recited

Durood in that blessed place. I said to him: 'O Abu Ishaq! Why are you crying in this place?' He responded: 'It is good to cry here.'

I visited this place again - twice or thrice - and found him in the same condition, sobbing. After I repeatedly asked him to explain, he said: 'O Abu Sufyaan! I desired for the past thirty years to eat Hareesah, but I applied pressure on my nafs and denied its desire. Last night I was overwhelmed by sleep. In a dream I saw a handsome young man with a green steaming mug in his hand. The fragrance of Hareesah was being emitted from the mug. I exercised control on my heart. The young man said: 'O Ibraheem! Eat this.' I said: 'I shall not eat something which I had renounced for Allah's Sake.'

The young man said: 'Will you not eat it even if Allah Ta`ala feeds you with it?'

By Allah! I had no reply other than to cry. The young man said: 'Eat - Allah will have mercy on you.'

I said: 'We have been instructed not to have any food with us.'

The young man said: 'Eat! Allah Ta`ala will overlook it. Ridhwaan, the over-looker of Jannat has given this (Hareesah) by the Command of Allah Ta`ala. He had ordered me: 'O Khidr! Feed this to Ibraheem. Allah Ta`ala has taken pity on his soul. He has exercised remarkable restraint. He has prevented himself from forbidden desires.'

The young man added: 'Allah Ta`ala feeds you, but you refrain! O Ibraheem, I heard the Malaa-ikah say: 'A man who refuses to accept what he had not asked for, will be denied when he asks.'

I said: 'If it is truly as you are saying, then I am in your presence. To this day I have not violated Allah's Pledge.' Another lad appeared. He gave Khidr something and said: 'Put this in Ibraheem's mouth.'

Hadhrat Khidr then fed me until I woke up. When my eyes opened I had the taste of the food in my mouth and the colour of saffron on my lips. I went to the well and rinsed my mouth, but the taste and colour remained in my mouth.'"

Hadhrat Sufyaan said: *"When I looked, I saw the impressions of the food and colour still in his mouth."*

A LION HONOURS THE GUEST

Hadhrat Ibraaheem Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) was walking in the wilderness and desert on his way to Makkah. One night, the severity of the cold drove him to seek shelter in a cave. Then suddenly a huge lion entered. When the lion saw him, it spoke: "Why did you enter into my abode without permission?" Ibraheem Bin Adham said: "I am forlorn and distraught. I have come to you as a guest for this night."

The lion went aside and slept away while Hadhrat Ibraaheem engaged in Tilaawat of the Qur'aan Shareef the entire night. In the morning when he intended to

leave, the lion said: “O Ibraheem! Beware of *ujub* (self-esteem). Beware of saying: ‘I slept by a lion and remained safe.’ By Allah! I have not eaten for three days. If you were not my guest, I would have devoured you.”

Hadhrat Ibraaheem Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) recited the praise of Allah Ta’ala and departed.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEEN

Once Imaam Abu Hanifah advised Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham (Rahmatullah alayh): “O Ibraahim! You are the recipient of a great and virtuous share of ibaadat. You should also focus on Knowledge of the Deen, for it is the basis of Deen. All worldly and Deeni affairs are rectified by means of Ilm of the Deen.”

LOVE ALLAH’S BELOVED

Even if you are not a Sufi (i.e. one who loves Allah with every fibre of his heart, body and soul), do not despise Allah’s devotees. Love Allah’s Beloved one, for then He will love you. Once in a dream, an Angel informed Hadhrat Ibraaheem Bin Adham that Allah loves those who love His devotees. Those who criticise and mock the mendicants of Allah Ta’ala invite His Wrath and Curse. Love for His devotees is a medium for the attainment of Divine Love.

A SHEPHARD'S MIRACLE

Once Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham passed by a shepherd who was tending to his flock. He asked the shepherd if he had any water or milk. The shepherd asked: "What do you prefer – milk or water? Ibn Adham said: 'Water'.

The shepherd struck his staff on a rock and water gushed from it. The water was colder than ice and sweeter than honey. Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham drank of the water, and stood bewildered. The shepherd commented: "Don't be surprised. When the servant obeys His Rabb, then everything obeys him (the servant)."

IBRAAHIM BIN ADHAM'S CONVERSION

Hadhrat Ahmad Bin Abdullah Al-Muqaddasi once asked Hadhrat Ibn Adham to narrate to him the circumstances which had led to his abandoning the throne of the kingdom of Balkh and taking the road into the wilderness to seek Allah Ta'ala. Hadhrat Ibn Adham narrated:

“One day I was sitting on the balcony of my palace when I observed a faqeer outside. The faqeer took from his bag a piece of dry bread, moistened it and ate it with some salt and drank some water. After offering *shukr* and *hamd* (praise) to Allah Ta'ala, he laid down and fell asleep. I instructed a servant to keep the faqeer under observation, and when he wakes up to bring him to me.

When the faqeer woke up, the servant informed him of the my instruction. The faqeer was ushered into my presence. I said to him: ‘O Faqeer! You were hungry,

then you ate bread. Are you satisfied?" He said: 'Yes.' I said: 'You were thirsty and you eagerly drank water. Was your thirst quenched?' He said: "Yes." Then you slept. Did you sleep peacefully?" The faqeer said: "Yes."

Then I focused on my nafs reprimanding myself for all my indulgences in this world I wondered: 'What need do I have with this abundance of the world?' I resolved to repent and to be contented with the lifestyle of the faqeer whom I had questioned. When night approached, I donned simple woollen garments and departed from my palace to set out into the wilderness in search of the capital I shall require for the Hereafter.

Soon I met a well-dressed handsome man from whom a wonderful fragrance exuded. I made Salaam and shook hands with him. He asked: 'O Ibraaheem, where are you off to?' I said: 'I am fleeing unto Allah.' He asked: 'Are you hungry?' I said: 'Yes.' The Shaikh performed two raka'ts Salaat and instructed me to also perform two raka'ts. After the Salaat, I observed a tray of sumptuous food and water by him. He said: 'O Ibraaheem, eat and express shukr for Allah's kindness.' Despite eating and drinking of the water, the quantity remained the same.

The Shaikh said to me: 'O Ibn Adham! Make use of your intelligence and understanding, and do not make haste in anything because haste is from shaitaan. When Allah Ta'ala desires to do good to a person, He selects that person for His proximity. He ignites the lamp of His Holiness in the heart. By virtue of this lamp, the person is

able to distinguish between Haqq and baatil (Truth and falsehood).

O Ibraaheem! When you are in the company of the pious, make yourself a carpet for them (i.e. be humble). Do not displease them because when they are displeased, Allah Ta'ala becomes displeased. When they are pleased, Allah Ta'ala becomes pleased.' Then he taught me the *Ism-e-A'zam*, and vanished from my sight.

Soon thereafter, I met a young man also well-dressed with a wonderful fragrance exuding from him. He said: 'O Ibraaheem, who was the person you have met?' When I described him, the young man cried so much that I too broke down and cried with him. I said: 'Hadhrat! Who was that man, and who are you?' He replied: 'That Shaikh is my brother Ilyaas (alayhis salaam), and I am Abul Abbaas Khidhr.

I was delighted. I embraced him and kissed him on the forehead and asked him to make dua for me. He made a dua and vanished from my sight. This was the initial period of my renunciation of the world."

IBRAAHIM BIN ADHAM OBSERVES THE QUDRAT OF ALLAH

Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) narrated the following episode to Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Thu'baan (rahmatullah alayh):

“Once I was stranded in the wilderness for twelve days and twelve nights. I found not a morsel of food nor a drop of water during this period. I was not unduly perturbed. However, it surprised me to discover that despite being without food and water for 12 days, my health and strength were not affected in the least. This was amazing. After all, this worldly life is dependent on material ways and means.

While these thoughts crossed my mind, I heard someone calling from nearby. When I went near to the spot from whence the voice came, I was astonished to see a buzrug. Both his legs were amputated. Seeing me, he exclaimed: ‘O Ibraahim! Do you doubt the perfect Qudrat (Power) of Allah, Rabbul Izzat? I have neither ate nor drunk anything for 16 days. By His grace and kindness Allah has sustained my health and strength. Look! If I instruct this tree to become gold, then I have confidence that Allah Ta’ala will transform it into gold.’ When I looked at the tree, it had become pure gold”, said Ibraahim (rahmatullah alayh).

THE EVIL OF GHEEBAT

Once a pious man who exercised much caution regarding halaal food invited some people for meals. Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham had also been invited. When he reached the house of the host, there was a delay in serving the food. The host was waiting for one more guest to arrive. Someone commented adversely about the absent person. Ibraahim Bin Adham silently left the

gathering. He said to himself: ‘Gheebat is taking place here.’ He severely criticized and reprimanded himself for having attended. He profoundly regretted that he had to listen to gheebat being made of a Muslim. He repented and resolved never to accept such invitations again.

ALLAH IS SUFFICIENT

In the city of Khurasaan, a relative of Hadhrat Ibn Adham (rahmatullah alayh) had died. Besides Ibraahim, this relative who had left behind a substantial estate, had no other heir. It occurred to Hadhrat Ibraahim to go to Khurasaan to distribute the wealth to the poor. He feared that the wealth would be misappropriated and squandered. With this intention he set off with a group of his companions in the direction of Khurasaan. Along the journey, they saw on the banks of a river a blind animal sitting calmly. A frog emerged from the stream with a worm in its mouth. It fed the worm to the blind animal.

Hadhrat Ibraahim remained standing there for a long while, deep in reflection. He said to his companions: “Have you observed the wonder of my Rabb? Just see how he delivers the rizq of this blind animal.” He cancelled his intention of going to Khurasaan. Allah Ta’ala will arrange for the distribution of the wealth.

As a penance for his error of having planned to go to Khurasaan, Hadhrat Ibraahim remained alone in the wilderness, not eating or drinking for three days.

THE LOFTIEST STATION – BAABUSH SHAMS – THE DIVINE VISION

After Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham’s demise, a Buzrug saw him in a dream, and enquired about his condition. In the dream, Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) explained: “Allah, Rahmaan, Raheem, Ghafoor, Rabbul Izzat, purely by His boundless grace and mercy bestowed to me indescribable bounties. Allah Ta’ala admitted this contemptible slave into the proximity of the Abode known as Baabush Shams.” The Buzrug asked: “Which place is Baabush Shams?” Hadhrat Ibraahim said: “It is a wonderful Abode under the Lofty Arsh of Allah Ta’ala. The greatest treasure which the inmates of this Abode have acquired is the daily Vision of Allah Azza Wa Jal. There is no greater bounty than this treasure.”

THE NIYYAT OF THE MU’MIN

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: “The niyyat (intention) of the Mu’min is better than his deed (i.e. good deed).”

When a buzrug saw Hadhrat Ibraahim Ibn Adham (rahmatullah alayh) in a dream, he asked: ‘Hadhrat, how did you fare by Allah?’ Hadhrat Ibn Adham replied: “Allah Ta’ala has forgiven me. I am in great comfort and happiness. However, my neighbour has surpassed me although he had never engaged in the moral and spiritual struggles in which I was engaged.

He (the neighbour) was a man with a family. Due to his family commitments he performed only the essential requisites of the Deen. His time was occupied in earning the livelihood of his family. But, he always yearned: ‘I wish I was as free as Ibraahim Bin Adham. I too will then become engrossed in the Thikr of Allah Ta’ala as he is.’”

His entire life passed in caring for his family and in yearning for free time to devote to Thikrullaah. After he died, Allah Ta’ala bestowed to him such ranks which I envy. Despite the paucity of his virtuous deeds, Allah Ta’ala elevated him to these lofty stages on the basis of his sincere intention.”

THE OBEDIENT SNAKE

A Buzrug who went to visit Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) narrated the following episode:

“I did not find Hadhrat Ibraahim Bin Adham in the Musjid. I was told that he had just left the Musjid. I went out in search of him. It was extremely hot. I located him sleeping in a valley. I was astonished to see a snake with a branch of the Jasmine tree in its mouth. The snake was near to the face of Hadhrat Ibraahim and was fanning away the flies. While I looked on bewildered, the snake spoke and said: “O young man! Why are you astonished and bewildered?” I said: ‘Your activity astonishes me,

and to a greater degree your speaking with a human tongue surprises me despite you being the enemy of human beings.' The snake said: 'By Allah, The Glorious! Allah has made us the enemies of the transgressors. We are obedient to the pious ones.'

YOUR PREFERENCE

Ibraaheem Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh) said to a person: "What do you prefer: A dirham (a silver coin) in your dream or a dinar (a gold coin) while you are awake?' The man said: 'A dinar while I am awake.' Ibrahim said: 'You are a liar! Whatever you love in this world is like a dirham you love in a dream.'

The world with its pleasures and comforts are like a dirham in a dream. Man hankers after this unattainable dirham while he abandons the dinar which is presented to him when he will be awake, that is, in the Hereafter. His love for this world signifies his abhorrence for the treasures of the Aakhirah.

Hadhrat Junaid Baghdaadi (rahmatullah alayh) said: "Ibraahim Bin Adham is the Key of the Knowledge of the Auliya."

Once when he visited Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), many in the gathering viewed Ibraahim Bin Adham with contempt. Imaam Abu Hanifah said: "Sayyiduna Ibraahim!", and profoundly honoured him. In surprise someone asked: "How has he become our leader?" Imaam Abu Hanifah said: "He is always in the

remembrance of Allah, while we are engrossed in remembrance of the world."

When he was the king of Balkh, he led a life of great pomp and splendour. One night while he was sleeping in the palace, he heard a sound on the palace roof. He called out: "Who's there?" A voice said: "I am searching for my camel."

Ibraahim: "How can you search for your camel on the palace roof?"

The Voice: "How can you search for Allah in this palace?"

Suddenly, he was overwhelmed with fear of Allah.

Then next day, while he was seated on his throne in his royal court, a stranger who inspired awe in onlookers suddenly entered. No one had the courage to question the stranger. His entry into the palace was a mystery. He passed by all the guards at the palace entrances without any guard attempting to prevent him. He boldly came forward, stood in front of the throne and said: "Who is the owner of this inn?"

Ibraahim: "This is not an inn. It is my palace." Stranger: "Before you to whom did it belong?" Ibraahim: "To my grandfather."

Stranger: "And before your grandfather to whom did it belong?"

Ibraahim: "To his father." Stranger: "Where are they now?" Ibraahim: "They are no longer living."

Stranger: "Is this then not an inn where people tarry for a while and depart?"

Then the stranger suddenly disappeared just as mysteriously as he had appeared. He was Khidhr (Alayhis salaam) who had come to guide the king.

Ibraahim Bin Adham terminated the session and went out in search of the stranger. When he located him after great difficulty, Ibraahim asked his identity. The stranger said: "I am Khidhr.", and he promptly disappeared. Ibraahim Ibn Adham was overcome with fear.

Once Ibraahim Bin Adham set out with a group of his soldiers on a hunting excursion to divert his mind from the perplexing events of the past few days. While hunting, he was separated from the rest of the party. Suddenly, he heard a voice repeatedly exclaiming: "Wake up before death awakens you." Suddenly, a buck appeared. Ibraahim went in pursuit. The buck suddenly stood and exclaimed: "I have come to hunt you. You cannot catch me. Has Allah Ta'ala created you for this?" He turned away with these words ringing in his ears. Now fear had completely overwhelmed Ibraahim Bin Adham. Then he began hearing these words coming from his own breast. The spiritual realm now opened up for him. He repented and resolved to renounce his throne and the world .

While walking he met a shepherd with a flock of sheep. He exchanged his royal garments for the shepherd's simple dress and presented all the sheep to the shepherd. The sheep incidentally belonged to Ibraahim. Thus he

cast off the garments of the world and donned the raiments of the spiritual realm. Dressed like a shepherd he wandered off into the wilderness to search for the capital he required for his journey into the Hereafter. He wandered alone in the wilderness, repenting and passing his time in Allah's remembrance.

On his journey in the wilderness he saw a blind man walking on a narrow bridge cross a river. Ibraahim shouted: "Be careful! Be careful! Suddenly the blind man was high in the air. He lifted Ibraahim and took him across the river. Ibraahim was left wondering in amazement.

He took up residence for nine years in a cave near to Nishaapur. He would spend the whole week inside the cave, emerging only on Thursdays to collect firewood which he sold in Nishaapur. On Friday morning he would sell the wood in Nishaapur. After Jumuah Salaat, he would give half of his earning to some faqeer and with the other half he would buy bread which would suffice until the next Friday. This was the former king of Balkh who had renounced his throne and the pomp, splendour and luxury of the palace and of his royal status.

In winter the region, including the cave, was covered with ice. One night he was in need of ghusl. He broke the ice and managed extract from it some water for ghusl. With the iced water he bathed and passed the remainder of the night in Salaat. By Fajr he was shivering uncontrollably as a result of the intense cold. He thought

that he would die of the cold. Suddenly he felt something, like a warm blanket, being thrown around him. Feeling the warmth, he fell asleep. When he woke up, he saw that it was a huge snake which had kept him warm by having wrapped itself around him. Overcome with fear, Ibraahim prayed: "I am unable to bear the form in which You, O Allaah, have sent Your aid." As he supplicated, the serpent disappeared into the ground.

When the people discovered his identity and his lofty spiritual rank, Ibraahim Bin Adham fled from the cave and set off for Makkah. After his departure, Shaikh Abu Saeed (rahmatullah alayh) visited the cave and commented: "Subhaanallah! Even if this cave was filled with musk it would not have been as fragrant as it has been left by the short stay of that noble soul. It is indeed soothing to the soul."

While journeying through the wilderness, Ibraahim Bin Adham met a buzrug who imparted to him the Ism-e-A'zam (The greatest Name of Allah Ta'ala known to only a few selected Auliya). Shortly thereafter he met Khidhr (alayhis salaam) who said: "O Ibraahim! The one who taught you the Ism-e-A'zam is my brother, Ilyas." Ibraahim Bin Adham became the Mureed of Hadhrat Khidhr. It was through the agency of Hadhrat Khidhr that Ibraahim Bin Adham attained such lofty spiritual heights of divine proximity.

Along his travels when he reached Zaatul Irq, he came across a group of 70 durwaishes who were lying dead.

Blood was still flowing from their bodies. When he went near, he found one of them was still alive.

Ibraahim: "O young man! What has happened?"

Young man: "We are a group of Sufis. We set out in the wilderness with trust in Allah. We had pledged neither to speak to anyone nor fear anyone besides Allah Ta'ala. Our motion and rest would be only for Him. When we met Khidhr, we were overjoyed. We said that we had attained our goal. We were delighted that such an illustrious person came to welcome us. Then came the divine rebuke: "Violators of your pledge! What was your pledge? You have forgotten Me and have been attracted by others. I shall take your lives for this crime."

The dying Sufi continued: "O Ibraahim! All these extinguished bodies you are observing are the consequence of the violation of that Vow. O Ibraahim! "If you too are prepared for this then proceed, otherwise retrace your steps."

In amazement, Ibraahim said: "Brother, tell me, how did you escape?" Young Sufi: "They were accomplished while I am a novice in this field. Therefore, I was spared to live a while." As he said so, his soul took flight and he died.

After wandering for many years in the wilderness, Ibraahim Bin Adham finally reached Makkah Muazzamah. Numerous people in Makkah became his disciples. While in Makkah he would earn his living by selling firewood which he would gather himself.

Sometimes he would work as a farmhand.

When Ibraahim Bin Adham was asked for the reason for having abandoned his throne, he said: "One day while sitting on my throne I was looking in the mirror. I reflected and realised that my destination was the grave; the journey ahead was long and arduous; there was no companion and no food for the journey. The Judge is just and I lack evidence. My kingdom then appeared detestable to me."

Someone asked: "Why don't you marry?"

Ibraahim said: "Does a person take a wife to make her walk bare feet and to remain hungry? If I can, I would give talaq to even myself. How can I then tie others to myself? How can I deceive a woman?"

When Ibraahim Bin Adham heard a durwaish complaining about another durwaish, he said: "You have adopted sainthood without any benefit. You have purchased durwaishi (sainthood) without any payment." The durwaish said: "Does one purchase sainthood?" Ibraahim replied: "Yes. I have purchased it with the kingdom of Balkh. This too, is a cheap price for such a priceless treasure." The durwaish was not aware that Ibraahim was the king of Balkh.

A man presented a thousand dirhams to Ibraahim Bin Adham. He said: "I have never accepted anything from the poor."

The man said: "I am wealthy."

Ibraahim: "Do you need more wealth?"

Wealthy man: "Yes, I need more."

Ibraahim said: "When you are in need of more, then you are the chief of the poor. Take what you have brought."

Ibraahim Bin Adham said:

"The sign of an Aarif is that he is always in contemplation. He derives lesson from everything and praises Allah. He is always active in the obedience of Allah."

"Tomorrow on the Day of Qiyaamah, the act which seems so difficult here on earth for you, will be the heaviest in the Meezaan (Scale of Deeds)."

"When three veils are lifted, the door of spiritual treasures opens for the Salik. Even if he acquires the kingdom of both worlds, he is not delighted. If this kingdom is snatched away, he does not grieve. If he grieves, it indicates greed and anger. This is assign of his contemptibility which deserves punishment. He desires no praises. A man who loves to be praised lacks courage in entirety. One who lacks courage is put to shame.

Ibraahim Bin Adham asked a man: "Do you wish to enter the assembly of the Auliya of Allah? Have no care for either this world nor the next. Become absorbed in Allah. Consume halaal food even if you do not spend the nights in ibaadat and the days in fasting."

"No one has attained sainthood (wilaayat) by only Salaat,

Saum, Hajj and Jihaad. But, he who knows what he is eating, attains sainthood." As long as a man is not scrupulous regarding his food, he will never gain nearness to Allah Ta'ala by virtue of abundance of worship.

People were highly praising a young man. It was said that his spiritual state was extremely lofty. He was a man of elevated states and ecstasy. Ibraahim Bin Adham asked to be taken to the young saint. When he was taken there, the young man asked Ibraahim to be his guest for three days. He observed the young man for three days and was impressed by his worship and rigorous acts of austerity. In fact, Ibraahim felt ashamed of himself, for he found that in comparison to the young man he was lacking and deficient. Ibraahim then thought: "Let me examine him more intensely. Perhaps a shaitaan has influenced him and is keeping him in a state of delusion." On closer examination, Ibraahim discovered that the young man's food was not halaal. He commented: "Allahu Akbar! This is the influence of shaitaan." He asked the young man to be his guest for three days.

Ibraahim brought the young man home and he joined in meals. Immediately, there was a transformation in the young man's condition. The former state of spiritual fervour, enthusiasm and vigour dissipated. Highly agitated, he said: "What have you done to me?" Ibraahim said: "Your food was not halaal. Shaitaan would enter into you along with the food. He freely came into your body and emerged. Now that halaal food has entered into

your body, shaitaan has been unable to demonstrate his influence. Now your true state has been exposed. The basis of spiritual progress is halaal rizq."

Ibraahim Bin Adham said to Sufyaan Thauri (rahmatullah alayh):"Although you have considerable knowledge, you are in need of some yaqeen."

Hadhrat Shafeeq (rahmatullah alayh) asked Ibraahim Bin Adham (rahmatullah alayh):"Why do you flee from people?" Ibraahim responded: "My Deen is in my lap. With it I flee from city to city and mountain to mountain to protect it from shaitaan and to make my exit with safety from the doorway of Maut."

After completing Salaat, he would cover his face with both hands. When asked about this, Ibraahim Bin Adham said: "I fear that Allah Ta'ala may fling my Salaat into my face."

One day, he did not obtain a single morsel to eat. In gratitude he performed 400 raka'ts Salaat. The next day again he had nothing to eat. Again he performed 400 raka'ts. This continued for seven days.

After seven days Ibraahim Bin Adham was overcome by extreme hunger and weakness. He prayed: "O Allah, send some food now." Suddenly a young man appeared and said: "Do you wish to eat?" When Ibraahim said, 'Yes', the young man took him to a palatial mansion. Now recognising Ibraahim Bin Adham, the young man said: "I

am your slave and this mansion belongs to you." (The slave and the mansion were part of Ibraahim's estate which he had renounced when he had abandoned the throne).

Ibraahim said: "I am setting you free. This mansion and its contents are now your property." He departed without eating and supplicated: "O Allah! I asked for a piece of bread. You put the world in front of me. Henceforth I shall ask for nothing besides You."

Once he spent the night with three mureeds in a dilapidated Musjid. There was no door and an extremely cold wind was blowing. To shield his mureeds from the cold gust, he stood the entire night in the doorway.

When anyone wished to stay with him (as his mureed), Ibraahim Bin Adham stipulated three conditions:

- (1) I shall serve everyone.
- (2) I shall give the Athaan.
- (3) Whatever I acquire, I shall distribute it equally among the mureeds.

A man who had wandered around the whole day in search of employment was returning empty-handed. He thought of his hungry wife and children at home. What will he tell them today? On his way home, he saw Ibraahim Bin Adham sitting peacefully. With a heavy sigh, the man said: "You are sitting so peacefully without a care in the world. I envy you."

Ibraahim said: "Give me your sigh in exchange for all the

Ibaadat I have so far made."

A grief-stricken heart has great value by Allah Ta'ala. In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah Ta'ala says: "I am by the broken hearts of people."

Once when someone asked him for his profession (i.e. worldly occupation by means of which one earns a living), Ibraahim Bin Adham said: "The office-bearers of Allah are not in need of a profession."

When Mu'tasim Billah (the Khlaifah) asked him the same question, he replied: "I have left the world and the Aakhirah for their searchers. For myself I have chosen Allah's Remembrance in this world and Allah's Vision in the Aakhirah."

Ibraahim Bin Adham was asked: "Have you ever experienced happiness in your state of poverty?" He replied: "I experienced happiness several times. On the first occasion I was in a boat. My garments were tattered and torn and my hair dishevelled. People were mocking me. A man was repeatedly tugging at my hair and punching me. All expressed their mirth in laughter. Seeing the disgrace of my nafs, I became delighted.

On the second occasion, also in the boat, suddenly a storm threatened to wreck the boat. The pilot accusing me of ill-luck instructed that I be thrown overboard. I was harshly grabbed and hauled to the edge of the boat. Just as they were about to cast me overboard, the storm

subsided. I was then left. Again I experienced happiness on account of the disgrace suffered by my nafs.

The third time I was overcome with extreme weakness. I fell asleep in a Masjid. The people grabbed me and pushed me down the steps. As I rolled down hitting my head, blood gushed out. Each step I went down, Allah Ta'ala revealed a spiritual realm to me. The happiness of this revelation ended when I landed at the bottom. I wished that the steps were endless so that I could perpetually roll down experiencing the exhilaration of the revelation of spiritual realms."

Once he journeyed several days in the wilderness. He could not find anything to eat. He thought: "I have a friend living nearby. If I go there, I shall have something to eat." Immediately he abandoned the idea since he concluded that his tawakkul was deficient. He entered a Masjid and said: 'I repose my trust in The Being Who is alive and Who will not die.' A Voice said: "Allah has removed from earth those who had trust in Him." Ibrahim said: "Why is this so?" The Voice responded: "A man who thinks of going to friends for food is not a mutawakkil (one who has trust in Allah)?"

(While it is not nugatory of the ordinary person's tawakkul to seek assistance from others, it is not expected of the Auliya of elevated status to contaminate their Tawakkul by diverting the gaze on others, hence the Divine Reprimand.)

Once Ibraahim Bin Adham asked a man: "From whence do you eat?" The man said: "I do not know. Ask Allah Ta'ala. I have no time for such nonsense."

Someone asked: "How do you spend your time?" Ibraahim Bin Adham replied: "I have three vehicles. When I acquire a ni'mat (bounty), I ride the vehicle of shukr and go to Him. When I worship, I ride the vehicle of ikhlaas to Him. When I commit a sin, I ride the vehicle of istighfaar and go to Him."

A number of Mashaa-ikh were sitting at a place. Ibraahim Bin Adham attempted to join them but they prevented him. It was said to him: "We perceive the odour of kingdom in you."

When this was the reaction of the Mashaa-ikh notwithstanding the exceptionally lofty spiritual rank of Ibraahim Bin Adham, what can now be said in regard to others?

Someone asked: "Why is there a veil screening the heart from Allah Ta'ala?" Ibraahim Bin Adham said: "Because the enemy of Allah is taken as a friend and the bounties of the Aakhirah are forgotten."

Advising a man, Ibraahim Bin Adham said: "Take Khaaliq (The Creator) as your friend and abandon makhlooq (the creation)."

"Open the purse. Eliminate love for wealth. Spend in Allah's path and prevent your tongue from profane and evil conversation – lies, abuse, flattery, back-biting,

gossip, and nonsensical talk are all evil.”

When a man asked for naseehat, Ibraahim Bin Adham said:

"Do six things. When you commit a sin against Allah Ta'ala, refrain from eating the food He provides. When you wish to sin, get out of His territory. Sin in a place where He cannot observe you. At the time of death, ask Malakul Maut to grant you respite for taubah. Do not allow Munkar and Nakeer to approach you in the grave. When you are sentenced to Jahannum, refuse to enter it."

The man said: "No one can achieve this. How then can I do these?"

Ibraahim said: "If you are unable, then refrain from sin." The man repented and died in Ibraahim's presence.

People asked: "Why are our duas not accepted?"

Ibraahim Bin Adham replied: "You know Allah, but you do not worship Him. You recognize His Rasool and the Qur'aan, but you do not obey. You eat His bounties, but you are not grateful. You do not prepare for Jannat nor arrange for safety from Jahannum. You acknowledge shaitaan as the enemy, but you do not abhor him. You know Maut will arrive, but you do not prepare for it. You bury your parents in the grave, but you derive no lesson. You know that you have defects in you, but you search for the faults of others. How can your duas be accepted?"

Once when the people complained of the high price of meat, Ibraahim Bin Adham advised: "Do not buy meat.

The price will then fall."

Once Ibraahim Bin Adham and others were picking up dates. Each time he filled his garment, someone would snatch it from him. He would renew the effort only for the dates to be snatched away. This occurred 40 times. Thereafter no one took his dates. He heard a Voice saying: "The forty times are in expiation of the forty golden shields with which soldiers paraded in front of you when you were a king." (*The shields of gold were haraam. In this imposition of a difficulty which Ibraaheem Ibn Adham tolerated without complaint, was he being absolved of that sin.*)

Once he was employed to guard an orchard. One day the owner asked him to bring some pomegranates. Ibraahim Bin Adham brought a few but all were sour. Annoyed, the owner said: "After all this time you are unable to differentiate between sweet and sour pomegranates." Ibraahim said: "You employed me to guard the orchard, not to eat the fruit." The owner said: "It appears from your piety that you are Ibraahim Bin Adham." His identity was exposed, Ibraahim immediately departed.

Ibraahim Bin Adham said: "In a dream I saw Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) holding a book in his hand. I asked him: "What are you doing with this book?"

Jibraeel (alayhis salaam): "I am recording the names of Allah's devotees."

Ibraahim: "Will you record my name too?"

Jibraeel: "You are not a devotee of Allah."

Ibraahim: "At least I am a friend of Allah's devotees."

After a short pause, Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) said: "Allah Ta'ala commands that your name be written at the top of the list." In this path hope is acquired from hopelessness."

One night Ibraahim Bin Adham was in Musjidul Aqsa. Since the caretaker did not permit anyone to sleep inside the Musjid, Ibraahim concealed himself by wrapping himself in a carpet. Late in the night he saw the door automatically open. A Shaikh with a group of forty durwaishes entered. All of them were dressed in sackcloth. After performing two raka'ts, the Shaikh turned to face the group. One in the group said: "Is there anyone who does not belong to us?" The Shaikh said: "Yes –Ibraahim Bin Adham. He has not tasted the pleasure of 40days of Ibaadat." Ibraahim came out of concealment and said: "True, but why?"

The Shaikh: "You had purchased some dates in Basrah. You saw a date which belonged to the seller and thought that it was yours. You picked it up." Ibraahim Bin Adham distressed by this information, returned to Basrah and requested the seller to forgive him. Ibraahim's attitude had such an impact on the seller that he gave up his business and set out in the path of Allah. Ultimately he was accepted into the assembly of the Abdaal.

One day outside the city precincts, Ibraahim Bin Adham met a soldier who asked: "What is your name?" Ibraahim: "A servant of Allah, i.e. Abdullah." When the soldier asked for the direction to the city, Ibraahim

pointed towards the qabrustaan. Thinking that Ibraahim was mocking him, the soldier beat him fiercely drawing much blood. He put a rope around his neck and brought him to the city. The people reprimanded the soldier and said: "This is Ibraahim Bin Adham." The soldier regretting his misdeed apologized profusely. Ibraahim said: "You have made me deserving of Jannat. I made dua that you too attain Jannat."

A buzrug saw in a dream the inmates of Jannat gathering pearls. He asked: "Why are you gathering pearls?" They replied: "A foolish man wounded Ibraahim Bin Adham's head. We have been commanded to scatter these pearls on him when he enters Jannat."

Ibraahim Bin Adham saw an intoxicated man lying in the street. He was frothing from his mouth. Ibraahim washed the man's mouth and with a heavy heart sighed: "The mouth which should be involved in the thikr of Allah should not be in this condition."

At night, Ibraahim dreamt that an Angel was saying: "You cleansed his mouth for the sake of Allah, hence Allah has cleansed your heart." When the man sobered up, people informed him of what had transpired. He was so much affected by what he heard that he repented and devoted himself to the remembrance of Allah.

Once Ibraahim Bin Adham was discussing with a buzrug on a mountain. The buzrug asked: "What is the perfection of a man of truth?" Ibraahim said: "If he says to a mountain: 'Move!', it will move." As he spoke, the

mountain began to move. Ibraahim said to the mountain: "I did not order you to move. I only cited an example." The mountain became motionless.

One day Ibraahim Bin Adham was sitting on the banks of the river Dajlah sewing his tattered shawl. A passer-by who recognised him said: "What did you gain by abandoning the kingdom of Balkh?" Ibraahim threw his needle into the river and made a sign with his hand. Instantaneously, thousands of fishes emerged. From the mouth of every fish a golden needle protruded. Scanning the river, Ibraahim said: "I do not want these needles. I want my needle." All the fish disappeared underwater and a tiny fish emerged with Ibraahim's needle in its mouth. Taking his needle, he commented: "The least acquisition for abandoning the throne of Balkh is this."

Once when he drew the bucket from the well, it was filled with silver. He dumped it and lowered the bucket. When he brought it out, the bucket was full of gold. He dumped it and lowered it again. This time it was full of precious stones. He said: "O Allah! I need water for wudhu. I am not in need of the wealth of this world." The fourth time when he retrieved the bucket, it was filled with water."

TOWARDS THE END OF HIS LIFE

When he had abandoned his throne, he had left behind an infant son. After the son attained manhood, he made enquiries about this father. His mother narrated the

episode of his father's renunciation of the world and told him that this father was presently in Makkah Muazzamah. Four thousand inhabitants of Balkh accompanied the young prince to Makkah. When they finally reached Musjidul Haraam, the prince saw many durwaishes.

When he questioned them about Ibraahim Bin Adham, they said: "He is our Shaikh. He has gone to gather firewood." The prince went to the outskirts where he saw an aged man with a pile of wood on his shoulder. This was his father, the kink of Balkh. This sight reduced the prince to tears. Controlling himself, he followed his father at a distance. When they reached the market-place, he heard his father exclaiming: "Is there anyone with wholesome money to purchase a wholesome product?" A man gave some bread in exchange for the firewood. Ibraahim Bin Adham gave the bread to his mureeds. Then he became engrossed in Salaat.

Ibraahim's teaching to his mureeds was to guard their gaze from young lads and females. Ibraahim and his mureeds were making tawaaf of the Ka'bah. During the tawaaf, his gaze fell on his son. Inexplicably, paternal love kindled and his gaze was momentarily fixed on his son. His mureeds were astonished. After tawaaf, they asked Ibraahim to explain the mystery of his conduct. He said: "When I left Balkh, I left behind a milk-suckling boy. That lad appears to be my son."

The next day a mureed of Ibraahim went to the caravan

of Balkh. He found the young prince seated on a chair reciting the Qur'aan. The prince was weeping. The following conversation transpired:

Durwaish: "From where do you hail?"

Prince: "From Balkh."

Durwaish: "Whose son are you?"

The prince wept and said: "I never saw my father. Yesterday I saw a man, but I am not sure if he is my father. I fear that he may flee if I asked him. My father's name is Ibraahim Bin Adham."

Durwaish: "Come, I shall take you to him."

Ibraahim was sitting with his mureeds at Rukn-e-Yamaani when he saw the mureed approaching with his son and his wife (i.e. the queen, Ibraahim's wife). When the mother saw Ibraahim, she lost control, wept and said: "Son, that is your father." All the mureeds as well as others began to weep. They cried loudly. The prince fainted. When he regained consciousness, he greeted his father. Ibraahim, returning the Salaam, embraced with profound love and affection his son and asked: "What Deen are you following?"

Prince: "The Deen of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)." Ibraahim: "Do you know the Qur'aan?"

Prince: "Yes, I know it."

Ibraahim: "Al-hamdulillah! Have you acquired any knowledge?" Prince: "Yes, I have."

Ibraahim: "Al-hamdulillah!"

With love kindling in his heart, he understood the

naseehat which the dying young Sufi had given him on the occasion when the 70 Sufis were slain by Divine Love. In was in the midst of a great trial. The conflict between Divine Love and the love of his son and wife. He must break loose from the attraction of mundane love. He stood up and began walking away. But his son held on to him while his wife was pleading. Ibraahim raised his face to the heaven and said: "O Allah! Set me free!" Instantly, his son dropped down dead. With determination he departed, leaving his wife pleading and crying profusely. The Love of Allah Ta'ala compelled him to expel from his heart the love for his wife and son.

Later when his disciples asked him to explain the death of his son, Ibraahim said: "When I embraced my son, his love kindled in my heart. Immediately, The Divine Voice reprimanded: "O Ibraahim! You are claiming to love Me but you associate with another being. You admonish your disciples to guard their gaze from looking at boys while you look with love at your son and wife." I then supplicated: "O Allah! If his love will divert me from You, either take my life or take his life." The dua was accepted and his life taken."

Some Auliya have an extremely close relationship of Divine Love. They are on a different spiritual plane. Having abandoned the world and its pleasures in entirety, great trials are imposed on them in the journey of Divine Love. Just as Hadhrat Ibraahim(alayhis salaam) was called on to sacrifice his son, Ismaail (alayhis salaam), so too are certain Auliya required to make great sacrifices

for the treasure of Divine Love.

Towards the end of his life, he disappeared. It is not known where he had died. Some say that he died in Baghdad while others claim in Shaam. It is said that this grave is near to the grave of Nabi Loot (alayhis salaam). Allah knows best.

It is narrated that on the occasion of his death, a Voice was heard proclaiming: "Today the Safety of the world has died!"

IN RETROSPECT

While it is understood that everything that occurs in creation, even the movement of an ant, is by the decree of Allah Ta'ala, these are the effects of the *Taqdeer* of Allah Ta'ala which is unfathomable to our created minds with their extremely, limited scope of reach and operation. The reach of the mind is demarcated by finitude just as is the reach of all the other physical senses.

The Qur'aan Majeed repeatedly emphasizes the need for retrospect and for deriving lessons from episodes and occurrences. Thus, the Qur'aan Majeed states:

“Narrate for them the stories so that they ponder (reflect and gain lesson).”

In the story of Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) there are lessons for us just as there are lessons for us in the fall

from grace of Hadhrat Nabi Aadam (Alayhis salaam). Diverting the gaze from *Taqdeer* for the sake of deriving lesson (*Ibrat*), Hadhrat Aadam (Alayhis salaam) had erred by acting in conflict with the express command of Allah Ta'ala. He was warned from coming in proximity of the forbidden tree. The lesson is that we should not come near to anything which Allah Ta'ala has prohibited. It is imperative to stay far from the approaches of sin. Thus the Qur'aan Majeed says: "*Do not come near to zina.*" While proximity may initially be permissible, it ultimately leads to the commission of sin.

Hadhrot Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) was among the Auliya Kaamileen. He was an accomplished Wali of lofty status. It was only expected of him to observe all the rules of the *Tareeq/Tasawwuf*. He had fatally erred by allowing his focus to drift from the Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala to the boisterous fanfare of the crowd on the occasion of the emergence of the princess from the palace for proceeding to the royal gardens. This divergence of focus is a major sin in the Math-hab of the Sufiya/Auliya. It was this initial indulgence in futility which proved so calamitous for him.

His second error was to be intrigued by the royal procession of the princess. He gazed at the exquisitely adorned *howdah* of the princess. The curtains behind which the process was concealed were decorated with gold, silver and studded with precious stones of a variety of kinds. All of this worldly decoration is part of the *jeefah (carrion)* stated by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi

wasallam). It does not behove the Man of Allah to spare even a momentary glance at such *jeefah*.

A gust of wind opened the curtain and Ibn Adham's gazes fell on to the princess. Thus, was he trapped in the snare of physical beauty which drove him into insanity.

The primary lesson to learn from this episode is to abstain from *laghw* (futility). *Laghw* is an act which has neither worldly benefit nor benefit in the Aakhirah. Even if indulgence in futility may not be a punishable offence if the limits of the Shariah are not transgressed, in the Aakhirah *deprivation* will be understood as being a major punishment over which there will be much remorse and regret. When the wonderful rewards for constructive worldly indulgence will be seen in the Aakhirah one will then regret for having deprived oneself from such rewards for having squandered the time in futility.

The Qur'aan Majeed says: "*The life of this world is but play and amusement while the Abode of the Aakhirah is best for those who fear. Have you no intelligence (to understand this reality?)*" Such play and amusement is for the kuffaar who have no share in the Aakhirah. Therefore Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "*Every sport of the Mu'min is haraam.*"

The futility of sport is the precursor to Haraam. It inevitably brings into existence a host of haraam which no honest person will deny. The Mu'min should be a stranger in this dunya. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi

wasallam) said: “*Verily, the world has been created for you, but you have been created for the Akhirah.*” Thus, the Mu’min is permitted to take from this worldly *jeefah* the amount necessary for his earthly sojourn. If he burdens himself with this carrion, he will find himself bereft of the necessary capital, means and luggage for his journey into the Akhirah.

If Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) had adhered to the demands of the *Tareeq* he would not have been afflicted with all the suffering which had reduced him to insanity.

DESTRUCTION OF IMAAN A CONSEQUENCE OF FUTILITY

*“Verily, the Mu’minoos have attained success.
(They are those) who are fearful / humble in
their Salaat, and they are those who
turn away from futility....”
(Al-Mu’minoos, 1 & 2)*

*“When they pass by futility, they pass gracefully
(ignoring it).”
(Al-Furqaan, Aayat 72)*

Indulgence in futility and frivolity can have dangerous consequences for Imaan. It can even deracinate Imaan bringing eternal perdition in the Fire of Jahannam.

A Buzrug was sitting in the company of Hadhrat Hasan Basri (Rahmatullah alayh). Suddenly they saw a group

of people dragging a headless human body. The sight of this disaster overwhelmed Hadhrat Basri (Rahmatullah alayh). He fell down unconscious. After sometime when he regained consciousness, the Buzrug asked him for an explanation.

Hadhrat Hasan Basri (Rahmatullah alayh) explained: “The executed man who was being dragged was among the high-ranking Auliya. He was an Aabid and Zaahid of lofty status. One day this Shaikh left his home with the intention of going to the Musjid. Along the way his eyes fell on a very beautiful Christian female. Her beauty captivated him. He fell madly in love with her.

His insanity constrained him to approach the girl with his proposal of marriage. The girl said that she will marry him only if he embraces Christianity. This most unfortunate Aabid ultimately succumbing to the evil dictates of carnality (*nafsaaniyat*) renounced Islam and embraced Christianity. However, she did not immediately accept his proposal. Nevertheless he persisted and pestered her considerably.

Ultimately, the Nasaara girl said to him: “There is no goodness in you. You have abandoned your priceless religion at the behest of carnal lust. You had devoted your entire life to this religion, and now you have renounced it. I am now abandoning Christianity to obtain from Allah, The One, The Eternal the never ending bounties of the Hereafter.”

Then she recited Surah Ikhlaas. The people were struck with wonder and were bewildered. They enquired from her about her ability to recite Surah Ikhlaas. Explaining the mystery, she said:

“I take oath by Allah that I was not aware of it. I never knew it. When this man persisted in pursuing me, I dreamt that I was about to enter into Jahannam. Then suddenly I saw this man being cast into Jahannan instead of me. I was overwhelmed with fear and I panicked. I heard someone saying: ‘Fear not! Do not grieve! Allah Ta’ala has substituted this man for you.’

Then the person who had consoled me, took me by the hand and led me into Jannat. In Jannat I saw the following Aayat inscribed:

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ^ط وَعِنْدَهُ رُؤْمُ الْكِتَابِ

“Allah obliterates whatever He wills, and He establishes (whatever He wills). By Him is the Mother of the Kitaab.”
(Ar-Ra’d, Aayat 39)

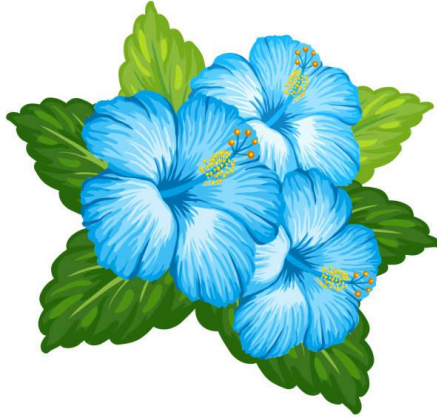
“Then this person taught me Surah Ikhlaas. When my eyes opened, I was able to recite this Surah.”

While the woman became a Muslim, the unfortunate aabid renounced Islam and was executed. His body was thus dragged to be dumped. We seek the protection of

Allah Ta'ala. Imaan is suspended between fear and hope.”

(End of the anecdote)

While Ibn Adham (Rahmatullah alayh) who had fallen in love with the princess was guided by Allah Ta'ala, the Imaan of this *aabid* was obliterated by Allah Ta'ala. He had not guarded his gaze. His futile glances led to his downfall and destruction.



FUTILITY AND PRIDE – A SHAIKH IS PUNISHED

Once a prominent Shaikh who was famed for his knowledge, worship and Taqwa was walking in a street in Baghdad. A Christian brushed against him. In anger the Shaikh blurted out: “May the curse of Allah be on you. Get away from me!”

Christian: “Why should the curse of Allah be on me?”

Shaikh: “Because I am better than you (i.e. by virtue of my Imaan and your kufr).”

Christian: “Who informed you that you are better than me? Do you have knowledge of the decrees of Allah?”

The Christian walked on.

Sometime after this incident, Allah Ta’ala punished the Shaikh for his pride. The punishment befell him in the form of worldly love and kufr. He fell in love with a Christian girl, renounced Islam for her sake, accepted Christianity and for one year acted as her pig herd looking after her pigs.

Meanwhile Allah Ta’ala ennobled that Christian with the treasure of Imaan. He accepted Islam. The lamentable state which befell the Shaikh was a punishment for having despised the Christian. No one has any guarantee that his Imaan will remain intact until the last breath of life. Hence, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *“Imaan is suspended between fear and hope.”*

Since the Shaikh was a true Wali of lofty status, Allah Ta'ala did not tolerate his pride. He was severely punished in this manner. However, Allah's Rahmat (Mercy) did not forsake the Shaikh. Just as Allah Ta'ala had overwhelmed him with the punishment, so had Allah Ta'ala broken the spell and again ennobled him with Imaan. The Shaikh had repented and Allah Ta'ala restored him to his former glory. The Shaikh's spiritual status and divine proximity were enhanced. The Christian girl had embraced Islam and had married the Shaikh.



DUA FOR PROTECTION OF IMAAN

Imaam Tirmizi (rahmatullah alayh), the renowned Muhaddith, says that once he saw Allah Rabbul Izzat in his dream. He supplicated: "O Allah! I am fearful of losing Imaan." Allah Ta'ala instructed him to recite the following dua between the Sunnat and Fardh Salaat of Fajr:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
أَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُحَيِّيَ قَلْبِي بِنُورِ مَعْرِفَتِكَ
يَا اللَّهُ يَا اللَّهُ يَا اللَّهُ يَا مُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى

Translation of the Dua

O You Who are alive and established! O You Who are the One of grandeur and munificence! I ask of You to enliven my heart with the noor of Your recognition (ma'rifat). O Allah! O Allah! O Allah! O You Who gives life to the dead.