

The Story of the Skin Tanner and the Bewitched prince

Once, a skin tanner was passing by the perfume shops in the market place. He had spent most of his life tanning animal skins and had become used to the foul smell of decay. So much so that when he smelled the fragrant smell of the scent, he could not bear it and fell unconscious. A big crowd gathered around him. Some were reciting Wazeefas and blowing over him in an effort to revive him. Others were sprinkling rose water on him. While some were massaging the palms of his hands and feet.

In spite of all these efforts, he did not recover and seemed to be sinking deeper into unconsciousness. His brother heard what had happened and came running along. He smelt the fragrant scents and immediately understood that the scents were the cause of his unconsciousness. He announced, "Let no rose water be sprinkled over him. And let no fragrant scents be brought near him". The brother went away and brought some faeces, hidden in the sleeve of his shirt. Moving through the crowd, he came to his brother and held the faeces to his nose. The bad smell of the faeces immediately revived him. The people were surprised, wondering what strong perfume the brother had brought, which was not even found in the perfume selling shops.

Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) says: "His brother came along with dog's faeces hidden in his sleeve and forcing his way through the crowd came to his brother. He brought his head near to the brother as if to tell him a secret and then brought the dog's faeces to his nose and he was revived."

Lesson

Those who become perplexed and agitated at the sweet smell of Allah Ta'ālā's and His Rasūl's obedience and those who are not inclined to a life of following the Sunnah, should be considered as having the same sickness as the tanner. In their dirty way of living and the dirty environment of sin, they spend a whole lifetime, so their hearts and minds become familiar with those things and are inclined towards them.

The way of getting them to change is to gradually get them out of that environment of sin and to make them wander around in the fragrant gardens. They should be brought to the gatherings of the saintly ones. After frequenting these places for a couple of days, they will

say, "Indeed we were in a very dirty environment!" Then thinking about the life of the past, they will cry, sigh, and will be very grateful for the company of the righteous ones. Thus, gradually their noses will become used to the fragrant scents (i.e. in the love and service of Allah Ta'ala) and they will be able to say: "It is as if I am living in paradise; all these flowers are embroidered on the garden of my heart."

The Story of the Bewitched Prince

There was a king who had only one son. The prince was quite handsome and bore good character. It was the king's desire and intention to have his son married to a beautiful princess and in this regard, he started talking to a religiously minded and righteous family. However, the queen started having second thoughts. She said to the king: "You are looking at righteousness and fear of Allah, but you do not see that these people are inferior to you as far as honour, respect and wealth are concerned". The king replied: "He who chooses Deen, Allāh Ta'ālā will remove all other worldly sorrows from Him".

At last, the king managed to persuade his wife, so the prince was married to the beautiful princess. After the marriage, they waited a long time but there was no sign of the princess bringing forth any offspring. This caused the king great worry. He thought: "What could be wrong? The princess is pretty and young. Why is she not conceiving?" The king secretly gathered his advisors and consulted with the Ulama and saintly ones.

At last, it was discovered that the prince was under a spell from an old woman who had bewitched him. As a result, he felt great dislike and aversion towards his wife and used to go to the ugly old woman. Because of the spell, he was in love with the ugly old woman. When the king heard this, he became extremely sad and displeased. He immediately started giving out charity and fell into prostration, crying bitterly before his Rabb. Before he could stop crying, a man from the unseen appeared before him and said: "Come with me to the graveyard".

The king followed him to the graveyard. He went to a very old grave and dug it up. He showed the king a hair with a hundred knots on it – an article of witchcraft - on which sorcery had been practiced. The man blew upon every knot and opened it. As he did this, the young prince began healing. As soon as the last knot was opened, the prince was freed from the love for the old woman. His eyes gained proper sight and he no longer detested his wife. He stopped

looking at the old woman with eyes filled with love, in fact, he felt great dislike and aversion for her. When he now looked at his young and beautiful wife, he was so struck by her beauty that he fell down unconscious. Slowly, he regained his senses and gradually he was able to bear her beauty.

Lesson

Maulana now gives us lessons from this story: He says: "O people, you are like that prince and this world is like that ugly old woman who has bewitched the lovers of this world. Because of this spell they fall in love with the outside appearance of this temporary life, while turning their backs towards Allah Ta'ala, Rasūlullah + and towards the life of the Hereafter.

We learn from this story that the treatment for the person whose eyes have been bewitched by this world is:

1. To have sincere and deep love for the friends of Allah Ta'ala.
2. To remember death at all times.
3. To stay in the company of the saintly ones as much as possible.
4. To discard one's own opinions and to listen attentively to their instructions and to act accordingly.
5. To perform two-Rakāt of Salaah, beg forgiveness and beseech Allah Ta'ala for His guidance.