

Ingratitude

Waiting is often a source of annoyance. The longer the wait, the greater the feeling of hopelessness becomes. Aminah was waiting for her friend, Huda, who had promised to visit her that day. It was nearly nine o'clock in the evening, and Huda still hadn't arrived. Aminah could not stop worrying. She knew that something important had kept her friend at home. She tried reading a book, but couldn't concentrate. At half past nine, the telephone rang.

Aminah rushed to answer it, and Huda was on the line, apologizing for not coming. She promised to come the following day. The next day, Aminah was so happy to see Huda that she hardly noticed her paleness. They sat together to talk, and Aminah noticed the lack of warmth and animation that was usually evident in Huda's voice. She was saddened by her friend's unspoken distress. Huda was not only a sister in faith for Aminah; she was also a torch that lit the darkness for her. Huda's strong belief and worthy ideals attracted the admiration of others. She was calm and wise when she advised her Muslim sisters.

Hoping to discover what was wrong, Aminah asked her friend, "Now, what prevented you from showing up yesterday?"

"Sometimes I am unable to keep my promises," Huda replied, sighing.

"That is not unusual," Aminah told her. "Various reasons can prevent a person from carrying out his plans sometimes."

Aminah saw that Huda was too upset to even speak. "Are you crying?", she asked. Tears should be shed for the sake of Allah. What is important enough to make you so upset?" Do you imagine that I would cry for any reason other than His cause? In fact, my sadness is for the sake of Allah."

Aminah tried to reassure her friend, "Then you have no reason to be upset, because you are on the right path. You should find comfort and solace in your faith. Shouldn't a Muslim feel happiness knowing that she is hastening towards Allah with a clear conscience? Such a person hearkens to the Prophet's (SAWS) words: "How I long to meet them—the true believers."

"That is exactly the source of my sorrow," Huda replied. "I am afraid that I may stop in the middle of the road and that I will fail to meet the Seal of the Prophets with an unblemished record." "Do you feel that you are performing your religious duties inadequately?", asked Aminah.

"Oh no, I always do my best. But, sometimes one is forced to ...", Huda broke off her sentence. "Forced to disobey religious' commandments?" "I would never do such a thing, even if the world pressured me to do so!", asserted Huda. "My discomfort arises from the thought that I cannot increase my Islamic activities so that I may reach a higher stage. I sometimes feel depressed when I think that I'll never reach perfection."

Aminah admonished her friend, "How can you feel depressed? Don't you know that it is unbelievers who despair of Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness?"

Huda replied, "Of course, I do not despair of Allah's Mercy, but when I encounter ingratitude or unfair treatment, I feel that it is due to my inadequateness or to a lack of faith on my part. Hence, I feel at a loss and do not know what to do. I fear that such self-doubt may endanger my spiritual strength."

"All aspects of a Muslim's life are based upon adhering to religious principles. One should recognize one's faults and weaknesses and work to correct them. Strive to increase

your Islamic activities and efforts," advised Aminah. "I have thought deeply about this matter", said Huda, "but I have come to no conclusion. This is why I have confided in you. A Muslim is like a mirror, which can reflect a fellow believer's faults and also show how they can be corrected."

"But I haven't seen any faults in you," Aminah answered. "So I can only advise you to continue on the right path; the one which you are on now. You have the ability to plant seeds in every sort of soil. If anyone doubts or mocks your good intentions, another person will benefit from the fruits of your knowledge. An important aspect of a believer's life is suffering which brings him or her closer to Allah. When one has a divine aim, the negative reactions of others are not of any value. For Allah, a good deed will be rewarded tenfold. Such efforts will inspire others. Please don't allow any pessimistic thoughts to dominate your thoughts. You are young and active, so don't lay down your weapon or leave the field. Have confidence in yourself and you will surely overcome all difficulties."

"Thank you so much!" Huda exclaimed, embracing her friend. "Your words have brought me tremendous relief. I feel sure now that I will continue on the correct path and that Allah will help me to do so."