

Truth is a force in itself

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Mamun Rashid (789-833), caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, was very kind and considerate towards the common people. Once an old woman of Baghdad entered his court and approached him. "I am a poor woman," she complained to the caliph. "I once owned a plot of land, but it has been taken away from me by a tyrant. He would not listen to my cries, so I have come to you to ask for justice."

"Who is it who has maltreated you in this way?" asked the caliph. The old woman pointed to the person sitting next to the caliph. Mamun Rashid saw that it was his own son, Abbas who she was pointing at. He ordered his vizier, i.e. his chief advisor, to take Abbas and stand him up next to the old woman. This order was carried out. Now the caliph asked them both to state their cases.

The prince spoke falteringly and in an undertone. But the old woman spoke firmly and in a loud voice. The vizier admonished her to talk softly and with respect as she was in the presence of the caliph. But the caliph intervened, and said that she should be free to express herself as she wished.

It was the truth that had made the old woman speak loudly, and falsehood which had made the prince dumb. She was found justified in her claim. The case was decided in her favour and the land returned to her.

Truth is a force in itself. The conviction of being in the right makes one bold. One who utters the truth does so without fear. His speech is free from contradiction and artificiality.

There is no inconsistency in what he says. There is no trace of guilt on his face when he speaks, and no hesitancy in his voice. As a result, there is a power in the voice of one who is in the right, which convinces the listener.