



Fadh al bin Rabee' narrates the following incident:

I once set out for hajj in the company of the khaleefah, Haroon Rasheed. En route, we passed by the city of Kufah where we encountered Bahlool, (who was known as) the madman (due to him being madly in love with Allah Ta'ala), who was muttering and babbling away. I said to him, "Keep silent! Ameerul Mu-mineen has arrived!" Thus, he ceased his muttering and remained silent.

When the carriage of Haroon Rasheed drew near to him, he suddenly called out, "O Ameerul Mu-mineen! Ayman bin Naabil narrated to me that Qudaamah bin 'Abdillah Al-'Aamiri (radhiyallahu 'anhu) mentioned, 'I saw Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) mounted on a camel in Mina. He (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) was seated on a worn, old saddle. There (in the presence of Rasulallah [sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam]), the people were not struck, pushed or shouted at, "Move! Move!" (i.e. the Sahaabah [radhiyallahu 'anhum] were neither hitting the people nor pushing them to clear the path for Rasulallah [sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam], as your entourage are doing here for you today).'"

Fadh al bin Rabee' swiftly remarked, "O Ameerul Mu-mineen! He is (merely) Bahlool, the madman!" Haroon Rasheed replied, "I know, I recognize him." Haroon then turned to Bahlool and said, "If you wish to say something, you may do so." Bahlool addressed Haroon Rasheed and recited the following couplets:

□ *"Suppose that you rule over the entire earth, and all the people are subservient to you, what will be so great about that?"*

Is not your journey tomorrow towards the pit of the grave, where this person and that person

will throw sand upon you?"

When Haroon Rasheed heard these couplets, he praised Bahlool saying, "You have spoken excellently, O Bahlool!" He then asked, "Is there anything else that you wish to say?" Bahlool answered, "Yes, O Ameerul Mu-mineen!" He then said, "The person who is blessed with beauty and wealth by Allah Ta'ala, but he exercises chastity in his beauty, and generosity in his wealth, his name will be recorded in the register of the pious."

Haroon Rasheed thought that he was indirectly asking for some wealth. Hence, Haroon Rasheed said to him, "We have instructed for all your debts to be settled." However, Bahlool replied, "Do not do that, O Ameerul Mu-mineen! Do not settle one debt by incurring another (i.e. do not use the wealth of the public, meant for public benefit, for my personal benefit)! Return the rights of those whose rights are outstanding or usurped, and use your own wealth to settle your debts, as you only have one life and chance. I take an oath in the name of Allah Ta'ala, if your life comes to an end, it will never again be restored."

Haroon Rasheed then said to Bahlool, "We have given the instruction that you should be given an allowance." Once again, Bahlool replied, "Do not do this, O Ameerul Mu-mineen! Allah Ta'ala will not give you and forget about me. That Being who has given you all that you have, is responsible for giving me what I need, hence I have no need for your allowance." Bahlool then turned and departed while reciting the following couplets:

□ *"I place my reliance and trust solely in Allah Ta'ala, and I do not have expectations or hopes in anyone besides Allah Ta'ala.*

Sustenance does not come from people, rather sustenance is from Allah Ta'ala."

(Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah vol. 10, pg. 270 and 'Uyoonul Hikaayaat pg. 48)

Lessons:

1. No matter what position or rank a person may hold in life, he should always remain humble and should never use his power and position to abuse the rights of others. One effective method to gain this humility is for a person to ponder over the reality of the grave. Whether rich or poor, black or white, male or female, every person will eventually be placed in the grave. Once in the grave, it may even be those very people whom he threatened and abused who will scatter sand over him. At that point, all the money and influence in the world will be of no avail. Hence, one should remain prepared for the grave at all times.

2. Even though Haroon Rasheed was the king of the time, his position did not prevent him from allowing others to advise him, nor did he regard it below his dignity to accept correction from others. In fact, he was eager for correction, as he had even asked Bahlool for further advice. Hence even if the person advising us is our junior, we should be grateful and accept the correction if we are deserving of it.

3. We should never entertain hopes and expectations in people. If we do so, we will inevitably be disappointed when our hopes are not fulfilled. Even if our hopes are fulfilled, we will lose our dignity and respect, as people will view us as 'users' and opportunists. Allah Ta'ala alone is the giver. If we place our hopes in Allah Ta'ala, we will never be disappointed. Furthermore, it is only Allah Ta'ala whose pleasure increases the more our requests and du'aas to Him increase.

4. Public wealth is a trust (amaanah). Thus, we must exercise extreme caution in dealing with public wealth. Public funds and facilities funded with wealth of the public should never be misused, as we will be answerable for it.