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Haroun Asks Bahlool a Question

One day Haroun was intoxicated and was sitting in a place on the corner of the river, busy watching the spectacle being made by the water waves. Meanwhile, Bahlool arrived. Haroun gave a drunken laugh, and then gave Bahlool a happy, warm welcome, and ordered him to sit down.

A little while later Haroun said, "Bahlool, today I am going to ask you a matter. If you give the right answer I will give you 1,000 Dinars; if you can't answer, I will give the order to throw you from this palace into the river.

Bahlool said, "I don't have any need for the Dinars, but I will accept your offer on one condition."

Haroun accepted so Bahlool said, "If I correctly answer your question then you must free 100 friends of mine that are in your prison; if I don't answer correctly, you have the right to throw me in the river."

So, Haroun asked, "If I have one goat, one wolf, and a bundle of grass, and I want to get them one by one from this side to the other side of the river; then in which order should they be taken so that the goat can't eat the grass and the wolf can't eat the goat?"

"First leave the wolf and take the goat across the river. Then come back and take the grass, leave it there, but bring the goat back. Now leave the goat here and take the wolf to the other side. Leave it there, come back alone, and then take the goat. This way one by one, they can all be safely taken across the river. Neither will the goat eat the grass, nor will the wolf eat the goat."

Haroun exclaimed, "Bravo! You gave the correct answer."

Then Bahlool told the names of his 100 friends who were all in all believers of the Holy Imam. The scribe wrote these names down; but when Haroun received the list, saw and recognized the names, he broke his promise. Later, after listening to Bahlool again, he only freed and forgave ten people.

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