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Bahlool Meets Shaykh Junayd

Shaykh Junayd Baghdadi went for a walk out of Baghdad. His students followed him. The Shaykh asked how Bahlool was. They answered, “He is a crazy person, what do you need from him?”

“Bring him to me because I have a need for him.”

The students searched for Bahlool and found him in the desert. They took Shaykh Junayd to him.

When Shaykh Junayd went near Bahlool, he saw Bahlool in a state of perturbation with a brick under his head. The Shaykh greeted him. Bahlool answered and asked, “Who are you?”

“I am Junayd Baghdadi.”

“Are you Abul Qasim?”

“Yes!”

“Are you Shaykh Baghdadi who gives people spiritual instructions?”

“Yes!”

“Do you even know how to eat?”

“I say Bismillah (In the Name of Allah). I eat from in front of me, I take small bites, put them in the right side of my mouth, and slowly chew. I don't stare at others' bites. I remember Allah while eating. For whatever morsel I eat, I say Alhamdolillah (Praise be to Allah). I wash my hands before and after eating.”

Bahlool stood up, shook his garment on the Shaykh, and said, “You want to be the spiritual teacher of the world but you don't even know how to eat.” Saying this, he walked away.

The Shaykh's students said, “O Shaykh! He is a crazy person.”

“He is such a lunatic who is intelligent in his work. Listen to the correct statements from him.”

Saying this he went after Bahlool, saying, “I have a need for Bahlool.”

When Bahlool reached a deserted building he sat down. Junayd came near him. Bahlool asked, “Who are you?”

“Shaykh Baghdadi who doesn't even know how to eat.”

“You don't know how to eat, but do you know how to talk?”

“Yes.”

“How do you talk?”

“I talk in moderation and to the point. I don't speak unoccasionally or too much. I speak so the listeners can understand. I call the world's people towards Allah and the Prophet. I don't talk so much that the people would get bored. I care about the deepness of inner and outer knowledge.” Then he described whatever was connected with manners and etiquette.

“Forget about eating, you don't know how to talk either.” He stood up, shook his garment on the Shaykh and walked away.

The students said, “O Shaykh! You saw, he is a crazy person. What do you expect from a lunatic!”

“I have a need for him. You do not know.”

Again he went after Bahlool until he reached him. Bahlool asked, “What do you want from me? You who don't know the manners of eating and speaking, do you know how to sleep?”

“Yes, I know.”

“How do you sleep?”

“When I am finished with Salat (prayer)-e-Isha and reciting supplications, I don my sleepwear.” Then he described the manners of sleeping which were transmitted to him by the learned people of religion.

“I understand that you do not know how to sleep either.” He wanted to get up, but Junayd caught hold of his garment and said, “O Bahlool! I don't know; so for the sake of Allah teach me.”

“You claimed knowledge and said you knew so I was avoiding you. Now that you confessed your lack of knowledge I will teach you. Know that whatever you described is secondary. The truth behind eating meals is that you eat lawful morsels. If you eat forbidden food likewise, with one hundred manners, it won't benefit you, but will be the reason for blackening the heart.”

“May Allah grant you great reward.”

Bahlool continued, “The heart must be pure, and have good intentions before you begin to talk. And your conversation must be to please Allah. If it is for any worldly or useless work, then however you express yourself, it will become a calamity for you. That is why silence and quietude would be best. Whatever you said about sleeping is also of secondary importance.

“The truth of it is that your heart should be free of enmity, jealousy, and hate. Your heart should not be greedy for this world or its wealth, and remember Allah when going to sleep.”

Junayd kissed Bahlool's hand and prayed for him. The students who saw this incident, and had thought that Bahlool was crazy, forgot their actions and started a new life.

The lesson is that if someone doesn't know something, then he shouldn't be ashamed of learning it; like Shaykh Junayd learned the ways and manners of eating, talking, and sleeping.

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