Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)



# Poverty and Pomp

From *Unto Thee We Grant...*

Bahlool liked to visit the graveyards. “People here are good friends”, he used to say, “They do not backbite.” Once, he sat in a corner of a graveyard and with a long heavy stick started probing some of the old skulls which lay scattered about. Harun Rashid, the king passed by, and saw him. The he said: O Bahlool, what are you doing?

Oh nothing very important, said Bahlool. I am just trying to find out whether the skulls belong to kings or paupers. They are all the same.

And what is the stick for, Harun asked.

Well, I am measuring the earth, Bahlool replied.

Measuring the earth? What are your findings? Harun joked!

It is equal and the same, O King! Bahlool retorted. Three armlengths for me, inspite of my poverty and three armlengths for you, in spite your pomp and wealth.

**Source URL:**
https://www.al-islam.org/pearls-wisdom-stories-and-sayings-infallibles-and-their-noble-companions/poverty-and-pomp#comment-0