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Haroun Rashid and a Hunter

The Khalifa was playing chess with his wife Zubaydah one Eid day. Bahlool came near them, sat down, and watched the game. A hunter saluted them by kissing the floor. He had brought the Khalifa a very good and fat fish.

Haroun happened to be drunk at that time. He gave the order to give the hunter 4,000 dirhams as reward. Zubaydah criticized Haroun, "This amount is a lot for the hunter because everyday you have to give rewards in the forts and cities; and when you give them less than this amount they will say that they are not equal to a hunter; and if you give them more, the government treasury will be empty in a few days."

Haroun liked Zubaydah's thought, so he asked "Now what do I do?"

"Call the hunter and ask him if the fish is a male or female. If he says it is female, say you don't like it; if he says it is male, again say you don't like it. Helpless, he will go; take his fish and reward away."

Bahlool said to Haroun, "Don't be deceived by a woman. Don't depress the hunter."

But Haroun didn't listen. He called the hunter and asked, "Is the fish male or female?" The hunter kissed the floor and said, "This fish is neither male nor female, actually, it is an eunuch."

Haroun was happy with his answer. He gave the order to give him 4,000 dirhams more as reward. The hunter took them and put them in his purse. But when he was descending the palace stairs, one of the dirhams fell out on the floor; the hunter bent and picked it up. Zubaydah said to Haroun, "How lownatured is this person that he can't even part with one dirham."

Haroun thought this behavior was bad, so he called him. Again Bahlool said, "Don't stop him."

But Haroun didn't agree. He called the hunter and said, "How low and base is your heart that you are not ready to let the slaves have one dirham from such an amount."

The hunter saluted again and said, "I am not base, but know how to value grace. That is why I picked up

the dirham. On one side is a Quranic verse and on the other side the Khalifa's honorable and illustrious name is engraved. If it is left on the ground, then it is certain that it will come underfoot, and this is disrespectful."

The Khalifa again became very happy and gave the order to give the hunter another 4,000 dirhams as reward.

Bahlool said, "Didn't I say don't stop him?"

Haroun said, "I am crazier than you because you stopped me three times, but I did not listen to you. By following this woman, I suffered this loss."

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