



The Wisdom of Bahlul

Pathan Shabana Mansoor



As dusk settles over the bustling city of Baghdad, the golden hues of the setting sun illuminate the grand courtyard of an ancient mosque. A visibly troubled young man named Zayd approaches the wise and gentle sage Bahlul, who sits quietly upon a woven mat. Zayd's heart races with anxiety as he prepares to confess a heavy temptation that has been weighing heavily on his mind.



Bahlul listens with a calm and understanding expression, his eyes filled with profound kindness rather than judgment. Zayd speaks in a trembling, hushed voice, admitting his overwhelming desire to commit a wrong act and pleading for guidance. Instead of offering an immediate scolding, Bahlul gently smiles and proposes three simple conditions that must be met first.



Bahlul raises a single finger, gently challenging Zayd to ponder the source of his daily sustenance. He explains that if Zayd insists on disobeying the one who provides his food and blessings, he must first find another provider. Zayd pauses in deep confusion, realizing the profound truth hidden within the simple question.



Lifting two fingers, Bahlul presents his second condition regarding the very ground they walk upon. He asks how one can live and disobey upon a sovereign's land without first seeking a territory that belongs to someone else. Zayd's face pales with realization as he gazes at the earth below, muttering in utter helplessness that the skies and the land belong entirely to the Creator.



Gazing directly into the youth's eyes with a powerful yet compassionate look, Bahlul raises three fingers to deliver the final condition. He tells Zayd that if he is determined to commit a transgression, he must seek out a hidden place where the All-Seeing cannot observe him. Hot tears stream down Zayd's face as his voice chokes with emotion, whispering that no such secret place exists.



Overwhelmed by deep remorse and sudden clarity, Zayd closes his eyes, takes a slow, steadying breath, and bows his head in profound humility. He slowly raises both hands in heartfelt prayer, seeking forgiveness and turning away from his dark intentions forever. Bahlul places a comforting hand upon the young man's shoulder, sealing a powerful moment of spiritual awakening under the quiet evening sky.