

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَنِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وُلُودِ آدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيُرِضِّي بَأْنُ يُصْلِّي عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

The Kindness of Ma'mun

It is reported that once, Ebrahim bin Mehdi forcefully claimed to be the leader of the region called Rayy. He ruled this place for one year and eleven months without sharing power with anyone. During this period, Ebrahim bin Mehdi witnessed some strange and amazing incidents and the following is one of those incidents. Bear in mind that this person has staked a claim without the permission of the Khalifah Ma'mun and hence, in the sight of the government, he was considered a traitor. At the same time, he was also part of the Quraish tribe.

He narrates: "Once Ma'mun made an announcement that whoever captures me, that person would be given a reward of one hundred thousand Dirhams. Obviously, I was extremely afraid and had no idea what I should do. One day, after the Zohar Salaah, I left my house and travelled aimlessly not knowing where I was going. I then entered a

cul de sac and I realised that if I turned back, the people would become suspicious and I would certainly be captured.

I then saw a black slave who was standing near one of the doors and I approached this person. I asked him whether he had a small place to stay so that I could rest for a while. He said that he had a small place and opened the door for me. It was not a house which was highly decorated and it simply had a few pieces of carpets thrown around the room. He made me sit and went outside.

I began to think that perhaps he had heard about the reward and he was going to inform the government of my whereabouts. It was if I was swimming in hot burning coal.

I have no idea how long I spent in this state and eventually, he returned. He had another servant with him who was carrying some hot bread and food. The servant was carrying all of these items on his head. He then looked at me and said that he was a barber and perhaps I was hesitant in taking any of these things, but he promised that all the utensils were new and that I was free to also take them with me.

There was no doubt that I was extremely hungry and was in great need of food. I also had no idea when I had eaten such delicious food before. He then asked me whether he could serve me some cold drink and he mentioned that through this, the sadness of someone also disappears. I did not hesitate to accept this cold drink. He then placed some fresh fruits in front of me after I had eaten.

He mentioned that he would like to retire to one corner of the house so that he could rest. After a while, he mentioned to me that he did not have the courage to ask me to sing a song since I was his esteemed guest. I then asked him how he knew that I was someone who could sing. He replied, "My master (meaning me) is indeed a very famous person. You are indeed Ebrahim bin Mehdi who was our leader just yesterday. Ma'mun has also announced a reward of a hundred thousand Dirhams for anyone who points out where you are staying."

When I heard this statement and knowing that this person had remained loyal to me in spite of the reward which he could get if he only revealed that I was living in his house, I felt immense respect and awe for this person. I suddenly felt sleepy and tired and dozed off and only awoke during the time of Maghrib. I could not help thinking about how kind and merciful this mere barber was and the immense respect he had shown me. I then woke up and after freshening up, I also awoke this person.

I had a pouch of Dinaars with me which were very valuable and I handed it over to him. I then informed him that I was now leaving and that he should keep this money for his own personal needs. I mentioned that if perhaps, I escaped from the authorities, I would also give him a further reward.

However, he displayed displeasure at this action of mine and returned the Dirhams. He then mentioned, "You are indeed great people and people like us have no status in front of people like you. Time has blessed me by being in your company for a short while. How can I accept this gift of yours? Please do not present such a thing again."

I then took back the Dirhams but felt extremely saddened that such a noble person had not accepted my humble gift. As I began to leave, he said to me, "O master! This house is safer for you than any other place and I have no problem spending for your upkeep. It is my advice that you stay awhile until Allah Almighty creates a solution for you."

I then changed my mind about leaving and again tried to hand him the Dirhams to spend as he wished but again he refused to accept it. I then spent a few days in his house but soon felt that I did not want to become a burden on him.

One day, when he left the house to fetch some items, I decided to quietly leave. I also wore a dress so that no one would recognize me. When I appeared on the streets, I again felt extreme terror. I then decided to cross over a bridge and near this area, a canal was been built.

However, suddenly a soldier recognized me and began to shout that this was the person who was been sought by Ma'mun. This was also a soldier who had perhaps one day been in my service. He then grabbed me and pushed me along with his horse. Obviously, the entire incident became a public spectacle and many people began to gather around.

However, I also noticed that because the crowd was getting larger, I found an opportunity to escape by crossing the bridge as quickly as possible. I then entered a small street and noticed a female who standing in her front porch. I then mentioned to her that I was in deep trouble and wanted to know whether she could give me shelter for the day. She happily agreed to this and allowed me to enter a room which was carpeted. She then brought me some food and mentioned that I should take my time eating and that no one would come to know of my whereabouts. Suddenly, someone banged the door and I noticed from one corner that this was the same solider who had tried to capture me on the bridge. His head was also bleeding and his clothes were also soaked with blood. His horse seemed to have also disappeared. When the lady asked him what had happened, he mentioned that he had nearly captured me and then narrated whatever had happened to him on the bridge. The lady then cleaned the wound and after wrapping it with a small cloth, she prepared a place for him to rest.

After he had dozed off, the lady approached me and said that perhaps I was the person who was mentioned in this incident. I could not lie and mentioned that I was indeed the person in question. After hearing this, she mentioned, "Please do not be concerned as nothing will happen to you." She also increased in her concern for me.

I actually spent three days in the same house as her guest and she was a wonderful hostess. After three days she approached me and said, "I am beginning to feel afraid that my husband will come to know of your presence. Therefore, it is time that you started to think about your safety."

I then asked for time until sunset and after this, I again used another set of female clothing and left the house. I also had close female servant and decided to go to her

house. When she saw me, she was extremely disturbed and also began to cry. She thanked Allah Almighty for my safety.

She then decided to go to the bazaar to purchase some items. I had a good impression of this person. However, suddenly Ma'muns soldiers surrounded the house and this same female who I had a high regard for had actually informed Ma'mun of my whereabouts.

I was then brought into the presence of Ma'mun wearing the same female clothing. When I had was standing in front of him and everyone had gathered around, I greeted him with the Islamic greeting.

However, he replied that I should not be in peace.

I then said that a ruler is giving the complete option to choose whatever action he wished, however, to pardon and forgive is something which is closer to Taqwa. I also mentioned that indeed the Allah Almighty has given him a special status and that my sin was the greatest of sins. I told him that if he pardoned me, this would his special kindness and if he took revenge, this was also his right as well.

I then mentioned the following words:

“In your eyes, my sins are major, but you are certainly greater than this.

Whether you take revenge or not, you will pardon it with your kindness.

If I am not from among the pious and decent people, you are certainly from among the pious.”

When he lifted his head and looked at me, I mentioned, “I have indeed committed a great mistake and you are certainly someone who has the quality to pardon. If you pardon me, this is your kindness and if you punish me, this would be your justice.”

I could see that he was greatly affected by this words. He then turned to his son Abbas and his brother Abu Ishaq and towards the rest of the people and asked them what should be done with me. All of them collectively mentioned that I should be killed. However, there was disagreement on how I should be killed.

Ma'mun then turned to someone called Ahmed bin Abi Khalid and asked him for his opinion. This person replied, "O Ameerul Mo'mineen! If you kill him then we will become aware of an example of where a person like you had killed a traitor like this. If however, you decide to pardon him then certainly, we will never be able to present an example wherein a leader like you with such powers had pardoned such a criminal."

When Ma'mun heard these words, he moved his walking stick on the ground and read the following words, "These are people who had killed my own brother and if I do not make him a target, certainly, the arrow will be pointed at me."

I then removed my head scarf and screamed out aloud that indeed the Khalifah had pardoned me. Ma'mun then told me that I should have nothing to worry about. I then mentioned that my crime was so major that I could not even describe it and in the same manner, I could even describe his kindness and grace.

It is mentioned that at the end of his story, Ma'mun also called the wife of the soldier and gave her a high position in government and also gave the barber a huge reward for his immense kindness and hospitality.

As we have mentioned, these were people of the Quraish and amazing incidents of this nature were something to be expected. After all, they were the direct descendants of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - and therefore, kindness and grace was something which was instilled in them.