

Bahlool Instructs a Friend

It is said that a person brought a beautiful donkey for the commander of Kufa. The courtiers praised the donkey. Among those present, someone jokingly said, "I am ready to teach that donkey how to read."

Hearing this, the commander said, "You who are saying this right now should fulfill it. When you have taught it how to read, I will give you a heavy reward, and if you can't fulfill this, I will give the order to have you killed."

The man regretted his joke. Helplessly, he asked for some time. The commander gave him ten days.

The man took the donkey home. He was very perturbed and worried. He didn't know what to do. Helpless, he left the donkey at home and went to the market. On the way he met Bahlool. Since they were already acquainted, he asked for help and told Bahlool about the commander's gathering and the donkey.

Bahlool said, "The work is under my control, whatever I tell you, do it."

So, Bahlool ordered not to give the donkey hay or grain all day; and to place a day's livelihood between the pages of a book. "Put the book in front of it and flip the pages. Since it will be hungry, the donkey will pick up whatever is between the pages. Keep repeating this action. Then keep him hungry on the tenth day, and when arriving at the commander's gathering, take the same book along with the donkey to the commander. That day don't put barley between the pages, and place the book in front of the donkey in the commander's presence."

The man did exactly what Bahlool had instructed him to do.

When the appointed day came, he took the donkey and the book to the commander; and in the presence of others, he placed the book before the donkey. It was very hungry and like everyday, as usual, flipped all the pages of the book looking for the barley which was always there, between the pages. It brayed to tell that it was hungry. The commander and those present did not know what kind of intelligence was behind this action. They believed that the donkey truly wanted to read the book. Everyone was astonished at this. Finally, the commander fulfilled his promise by giving the man a very

good reward. This is how he was saved from punishment.

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