

I would give up my kingdom to be like Sālim

Ibn Kathir may Allah have mercy upon him said:

The Umayyad Caliph Hishām bin Abdul Malik performed Hajj. While he was performing Tawaf around the house he saw Sālim ibn Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Sālim was carrying his broken shoes in his hand and he was wearing a garment that was not worth two Dirham (the currency of that time).

The Caliph Hishām went close to him and said, ‘O Sālim do you need anything?’

Sālim looked at him surprised and angry. Then he said to him, ‘Are you not embarrassed, while we are in the house of Allah, you want me to ask other than Allah for my needs?’

Severe embarrassment and shame appeared on the face of Hishām, so he left Sālim alone and completed his Tawaf, but he continued to watch him.

When he saw Sālim outside of Masjid Harām he caught up to him and said, ‘O Sālim you refused to tell me what you needed inside of Masjid Harām, so ask me now since you are outside of the Masjid.’

Sālim said to him, ‘Should I ask you for my worldly need or my needs in the hereafter?’

The Caliph said to him, ‘O Sālim, ask me for your worldly needs, as for needs in the hereafter, you only ask Allah for this.’

Sālim said, ‘O Hishām, I swear by Allah, I have not asked for any worldly needs from the One who owns the world, so how could I ask of someone who does not own it?!’

The Caliph Hishām’s eyes filled with tears and he said this famous statement, ‘I would give my entire kingdom to be like Sālim.’

Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya (9/235)

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee