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Letter 27: Instruction Given to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), when Amir al-mu'minin appointed him as the Governor of Egypt

(ومن عهد له (رضي الله عنه

إلى محمد بن أبي بكر حين قلده مصر

Behave humbly with the people, keep yourself lenient, meet them large-heartedly, accord them equal treatment so that the big should not expect injustice from you in their favour and the low should not be despondent of your justice to them. Allah, the Sublime, will certainly question you, O community of His creatures, about your actions, small or big, open or concealed. If He punishes you it is because you have been oppressive, and if He forgives, then it is because He is the Most Generous.

فَاخْفِضْ لَهُمْ جَنَاحَكَ، وَأَلِنْ لَهُمْ جَانِبَكَ، وَابْسُطْ لَهُمْ وَجْهَكَ، وَآسِ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي
اللَّحْظَةِ وَالنَّظَرَةِ، حَتَّى لَا يَطْمَعَ الْعُظَمَاءُ فِي حَيْفِكَ لَهُمْ، وَلَا يَيْئَسَ الضُّعَفَاءُ مِنْ
عَدْلِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ. وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُسَائِلُكُمْ مَعَشَرَ عِبَادِهِ عَنِ الصَّغِيرَةِ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ
وَالْكَبِيرَةِ، وَالظَّاهِرَةِ وَالْمُسْتُورَةِ، فَإِنْ يُعَذِّبْ فَاَنْتُمْ أَظْلَمُ، وَإِنْ يَغْفُ فَهُوَ أَكْرَمُ.

Know, O creatures of Allah, that the God-fearing have shared the joys of this transient world as well as the next coming world, for they shared with the people of this world in their worldly matters while their people did not share with them in the matters of the next world. They lived in this world in the best manner of living and ate the choicest food and consequently they enjoyed herein all that the people with ease of life enjoyed, and secured from it what the haughty and the vain secured. Then, they departed from it after taking provision enough to take them to the end of their journey and after doing a profitable transaction. They tasted the pleasure of renouncing the world in this world, and they firmly believed that on the coming day in their next life they would be neighbours of Allah, where their call would not be repulsed nor would their share of pleasure be small.

وَأَعْلَمُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، أَنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ذَهَبُوا بِعَاجِلِ الدُّنْيَا وَآجِلِ الْآخِرَةِ، فَشَارَكُوا أَهْلَ الدُّنْيَا فِي دُنْيَاهُمْ، وَلَمْ يُشَارِكْهُمْ أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا فِي آخِرَتِهِمْ؛ سَكَنُوا الدُّنْيَا بِأَفْضَلِ مَا سَكَنْتَ، وَأَكَلُوا بِأَفْضَلِ مَا أَكَلْتَ، فَحَظُّوا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَا حَظِيَ بِهِ الْمُتَرْفُونَ، وَأَخَذُوا مِنْهَا مَا أَخَذَهُ الْجَبَابِرَةُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ، ثُمَّ انْقَلَبُوا عَنْهَا بِالزَّادِ الْمُبْلَغِ، وَالْمُتَجَرِّ الرَّابِحِ، أَصَابُوا لَذَّةَ زُهْدِ الدُّنْيَا فِي دُنْيَاهُمْ، وَتَيَقَّنُوا أَنَّهُمْ جِيرَانُ اللَّهِ غَدًا فِي آخِرَتِهِمْ، لَا تَرُدُّ لَهُمْ دَعْوَةً، وَلَا يَنْقُصُ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِنْ لَذَّةٍ.

Therefore, O creatures of Allah, be afraid of death and its nearness and keep ready all that is needed for it. It will come as a big event and a great affair, either as a good in which there will never be any evil, or an evil in which there will never be any good. Who is nearer to Paradise than he who works towards it, and who is nearer to Hell than he who works for it?

You are being chased by death. If you stop, it will catch you, and if you run away from it, it will grip you. It is more attached to you than your shadow. Death is tied to your fore-locks while the world is being wrapped up from behind you. Therefore, fear the Fire whose hollow is deep, whose flames are severe and whose punishment is novel. It is a place wherein there is no mercy. No call is heard in it. No pain is healed in it. If it is possible for you to have severe fear of Allah and to rest hope in Him, then do both these things because every individual has hope in His Lord to the extent of his fear of His Lord. Certainly, the most hopeful person with Allah is he who fears Him most.

فَاَحْذَرُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمَوْتَ وَقُرْبَهُ، وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّتَهُ، فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي بِأَمْرٍ عَظِيمٍ، وَخَطْبٍ جَلِيلٍ، بِخَيْرٍ لَا يَكُونُ مَعَهُ شَرٌّ أَبَدًا، أَوْ شَرٍّ لَا يَكُونُ مَعَهُ خَيْرٌ أَبَدًا، فَمَنْ أَقْرَبُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ عَامِلِهَا! وَمَنْ أَقْرَبُ إِلَى النَّارِ مِنْ عَامِلِهَا! وَأَنْتُمْ طُرْدَاءُ الْمَوْتِ، إِنْ أَقَمْتُمْ لَهُ أَخَذَكُمْ، وَإِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنْهُ أَدْرَكَكُمْ، وَهُوَ أَلْزَمُ لَكُمْ مِنْ ظِلِّكُمْ، الْمَوْتُ

مَعْقُودٌ بِنَوَاصِيكُمُ، وَالْدُّنْيَا تُطَوَّى مِنْ خَلْفِكُمْ. فَاحْذَرُوا نَاراً قَعْرُهَا بَعِيدٌ، وَحَرُّهَا شَدِيدٌ، وَعَذَابُهَا جَدِيدٌ، دَارٌ لَيْسَ فِيهَا رَحْمَةٌ، وَلَا تُسْمَعُ فِيهَا دَعْوَةٌ، وَلَا تُفَرَّجُ فِيهَا كُرْبَةٌ. وَإِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ يَشْتَدَّ خَوْفُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْ يَحْسُنَ ظَنُّكُمْ بِهِ، فَاجْمَعُوا بَيْنَهُمَا، فَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِنَّمَا يَكُونُ حَسَنُ ظَنِّهِ بِرَبِّهِ عَلَى قَدَرِ خَوْفِهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ، وَإِنْ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسُ ظَنًّا بِاللَّهِ أَشَدَّهُمْ خَوْفًا لِلَّهِ.

O Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, know that I have given you charge of Egypt which is my biggest force. So you are duty-bound to oppose your passions and serve as a shield against your religion even though you may get only an hour in the world; and do not enrage Allah for pleasing others because (Allah) is such that He may take the place of others, but others cannot take the place of Allah. Say prayers at the appointed time. Do not say it earlier for the sake of (available) leisure nor delay it on account of pre-occupation. Remember that every act of yours is dependent on your prayer.

وَاعْلَمْ - يَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ - أَنِّي قَدْ وَلَّيْتُكَ أَعْظَمَ أَجْنَادِي فِي نَفْسِي أَهْلَ مِصْرَ، فَأَنْتَ مَحْقُوقٌ أَنْ تُخَالَفَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ، وَأَنْ تُنَافِحَ عَنْ دِينِكَ، وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكَ إِلَّا سَاعَةٌ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ، وَلَا تُسَخِّطِ اللَّهَ بِرِضَى أَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ، فَإِنَّ فِي اللَّهِ خَلْفًا مِنْ غَيْرِهِ، وَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ خَلْفٌ فِي غَيْرِهِ. صَلِّ الصَّلَاةَ لَوَقْتِهَا الْمُؤَقَّتَ لَهَا، وَلَا تُعَجِّلْ وَقْتُهَا لِفَرَاغٍ، وَلَا تُؤَخِّرْهَا عَنْ وَقْتِهَا لِاشْتِغَالٍ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ عَمَلِكَ تَبَعٌ لِمَصْلَاحَتِكَ.

A part of the same

ومن هذا العهد:

The leader of guidance and the leader of destruction cannot be equal, nor the friend of the Prophet and the enemy of the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah (S) has told me that: "I have no fear for my Ummah from either a believer or an unbeliever. As for the believer Allah will afford him protection because of his belief, and as for the unbeliever Allah will humiliate him because of his unbelief. But I fear for you every one who is a hypocrite in his heart and learned of speech. He speaks what you hold good but does what you dislike."

فَإِنَّهُ لَا سَوَاءَ، إِمَامُ الْهُدَى وَإِمَامُ الرَّدَى، وَوَلِيُّ النَّبِيِّ وَعَدُوُّ النَّبِيِّ، وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله): "إِنِّي لَا أَخَافُ عَلَى أُمَّتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلَا مُشْرِكًا، أَمَّا الْمُؤْمِنُ فَيَمْنَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِإِيمَانِهِ، وَأَمَّا الْمُشْرِكُ فَيَقْمَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِشُرْكَهِ، لَكِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ كُلَّ مَنَافِقِ الْجَنَانِ، عَالِمِ اللِّسَانِ، يَقُولُ مَا تَعْرِفُونَ، وَيَفْعَلُ مَا تَنْكُرُونَ".

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