

## Letter 87

### [Justifying and Discussing the Calamity](#)

#### **Rabi' al-Awwal 9, 1330**

When he, peace be upon him, ordered them to bring him a blank sheet of paper and an ink-pot, he did not really intend to write anything in particular; he intended only to test them, that's all. Therefore, Allah guided al-Faruq, from among all other companions, to forbid them from bringing them to him. Such an opposition, therefore, must be considered to be in agreement with his Sublime Lord, and be counted among his divinely-endowed spiritual powers, may Allah be pleased with him.

This is the argument of many renowned personalities. But his statement, peace be upon him, "... you shall never stray," rejects such an argument if the principle of fairness is to be implemented, for it is a supplementary command which means "If you bring me the blank sheet and the ink-pot, and if I write you something, then you shall never stray after it."

It is obvious that interpreting such an order as being indicative of a test is a sort of flagrant lying from which Prophets are immune, especially where bringing the blank sheet and the ink-pot is more fit for the one who receives the order than his seeking such an excuse; therefore, another alibi is needed.

All that can be said is that the issue is not an invitation to a party, so that whoever refuses may simply be blamed, but it is an issue of consultation. They used to consult him [‘Umar], peace be upon him, in a few matters. And ‘Umar knew that he deep down in his heart was successful in choosing what is best for the interest of Muslims, and that itself was inspired by Allah Almighty.

He simply desired not to let the Prophet burden himself with the pain resulting from writing something in the state of sickness and agony, and he, peace be upon him, thought that it would be better not to bring the blank sheet and the ink-pot. He may also have feared that the Prophet might write things that would be quite impossible for people to carry out, thus making them liable for punishment, since such things would be texts for which the principle of ijtihad is not possible.

Or he may have feared that the hypocrites might cast doubts about the authenticity of such writing due to its being done under the influence of sickness, thus becoming a cause of dissension; therefore, he said: "The Book of Allah suffices us," supporting the verse of the Almighty:

***"We have not left aught (without explaining it) in the Book (Qur'an, 6:38)"***

and also

***"Today have I completed your religion for you (Qur'an, 5:4),"***

out of his own concern, peace be upon him, for this nation against straying after Allah had completed His religion for it and complemented His blessing unto it.

Such was their answer. His saying "... you shall never stray" indicates determination and a positive attitude. The endeavour to bring about security against straying, whenever possible and without any doubt, is a must. His disappointment with them and his telling them to leave him since they did not carry out his order is another proof that the matter was simply a response to a consultation.

So, if you say that had it been a must, the Prophet, peace be upon him, would not have repealed it simply because they disobeyed him, just like he did not stop preaching due to the opposition of the unbelievers..., if you say all this, then we would say that the case is so had the order been carried out, for it indicates that the writing of that matter was not obligatory on the Prophet, peace be upon him.

This of course does not imply that they should not have brought him the sheet and the ink-pot when he ordered them to, explaining to them that its benefits would include security for them against straying and a source of continuous guidance. The main point is that those receiving his order should have obeyed it, especially when the benefit was for the one receiving the order, and it is the reason for the statement, not for its enforcement.

Yet it is also possible that it was obligatory on him, too, and such an obligation was removed due to their insubordination and their saying that he was speaking in delirium, for the fate of such writing was then reduced to dissension, as you yourself have wisely stated.

It is also possible that some people may say that 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not take the meaning of the Prophet's statement to imply that such writing would result in protecting each and every member of the nation from straying, so much so that none of them at all would be misguided.

Rather, he understood "... you shall never stray" to mean "... you shall never agree all of you to walk the path of misguidance, nor will misguidance, after such writing, would inflict anyone among you."

Rather, he, may Allah be pleased with him, was convinced that they would never all concede to tread the path of misguidance. This is why he found no reason why the Prophet should write anything else, thinking that the intention of the Prophet was simply an additional precaution in the matter, since he was

so well-known to be overflowing with kindness and compassion.

This is all that has been said in the manner of finding an excuse for that initiation. Whoever scrutinizes it will be positive in thinking that it is far from being rational, for the simple fact that his statement, peace be upon him, "... you shall never stray" indicates that the matter required proper attention, as we have said, and his disappointment with them is a proof that they became derelict regarding one of their obligations.

It is, therefore, more fitting to say that such an incident took place when they, indeed, behaved contrarily to their custom, just like their previous slip, and it is one mistake that is not at all typical of them, and we do not really know how accurate the whole story is. Allah is the Guide to the Straight Path, Wassalamo Alaikom.

Sincerely,

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