

The Counsellors

Never take counsel of a miser, for he will vitiate your magnanimity and frighten you of poverty. Do not take the advice of a coward either, for he will weaken your resolve. Do not take counsel of the greedy: for he will instill greed in you and turn you into a tyrant. Miserliness, cowardice and greed deprive man of his trust in God.

The worst of counsellors is he who has served as a counsellor to unjust rulers and shared in their crimes. So, never let men who have been companions of tyrants or shared their crimes be your counsellors. You can get better men than these, men gifted with intelligence and foresight, but unpolluted by sin, men who have never aided a tyrant in his tyranny or a criminal in his crime. Such men will never be a burden on you. On the other hand, they will be a source of help and strength to you at all times. They will be friends to you and strangers to your enemies.

Choose such men alone for companionship both in privacy and in the public. Even among these, show preference to them who have a habitual regard for truth, however trying to you at times their truth may prove to be, and who offer you no encouragement in the display of tendencies which God does not like His friends to develop.

Keep close to you the upright, and the God fearing, and make clear to them that they are never to flatter you and never to give you credit for any good that you may not have done: for, the tolerance of flattery and unhealthy praise stimulates pride in man and makes him arrogant.

Do not treat the good and the bad alike. That will deter the good from doing good, and encourage the bad in their bad pursuits. Recompense everyone according to their deserts. Remember that mutual trust and goodwill between the ruler and the ruled are bred only through benevolence, justice and service. So, cultivate goodwill among the people; for their goodwill alone will save you from troubles. Your benevolence to them will be repaid by their trust in you, and your ill-treatment by their ill-will.

Do not disregard the noble traditions established by our forbears, which have promoted harmony and progress among the people; and do not initiate anything which might minimize their usefulness. The men who had established these noble traditions have had their reward; but responsibility will be yours if they

are disturbed. Try always to learn something from the experience of the learned and wise, and frequently consult them in state matters so that you might maintain the peace and goodwill which your predecessors had established in the land.

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