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Twenty Third Assembly

The grand Sheikh al-Mufid Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nu'man al-Harithy – may Allah continue to guard him, narrated:

1. Abu Dharr's words of wisdom

He said: Ahmad ibn Muhammad reported to me from his father Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Walid al-Qummi, from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar, from al-Abbas ibn Ma'roof, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar from al-Husayn ibn Saeed al-Ahwazi, from al-Nadhr ibn Suwaid and Ibn Abi Najran together, from Asim from Abu Baseer from Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir, may Allah bless them both, that Abu Dharr, may Allah bless him with mercy, used to say:

"O Seeker of knowledge! Nothing in this world is worthy of mention except an act which, if good, benefits others, and if bad, harms others, except those who Allah saves with mercy.

'O Seeker of knowledge! Do not allow family and possessions to occupy you against yourself. For one day, you will depart from them, like a guest who stayed with them overnight and left during the day for others. And this world and the next are like a station where you alight, and then move towards the next. The time span between death and resurrection is like a brief sleep, from which you will wake up.

'O Seeker of knowledge! Send beforehand to establish a status in the eyes of Allah, for you are indeed mortgaged against your deeds. What you sow, so shall you reap.

'O Seeker of knowledge! Say your daily prayers, before such days and nights arrive when you are unable to pray! The example of the daily prayers is that of a person who calls upon a benign monarch, who patiently listens to his needs till he has finished. So is a Muslim in his prayers that Allah grants His attention to him till he finishes his prayers.

'O Seeker of knowledge! Give in charity before you arrive at a situation where you can neither give nor prevent. The example of one who gives charity and alms is like a person wanted for having killed and

then he implores: 'Do not kill me, and grant me a prescribed time during which I may toil to please you.' So is for a Muslim, with the permission of Allah! Every time he gives in charity, a knot around his neck is undone; thus, Allah saves people, having been pleased with them. And when Allah is pleased with someone, He frees him from hellfire.

'O Seeker of knowledge! A heart which has no Truth in it, is like a ruined house which has no restorer. 'O Seeker of knowledge! This tongue is indeed a key of good and a key of evil. So set a seal on your mouth, the way you set a seal on your gold and on your papers.

'O Seeker of knowledge! These are the examples Allah has set forth for people and none can understand them but the learned ones."

2. The Best Virtues

He said: And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ibn Abi Umayr, from al-Nadhr ibn Suwaid, from Ibn Sinan, from Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be upon them both, who said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, in his address to the people, said: "May I not inform you about the best virtues in this world and the next? (They are): to forgive one who wronged you, to make amends with the kins who severed relations with you, to oblige one who harmed you, to give to one who refused you. And (remember), hatred and mutual enmity is a remover, and I do not mean a remover (shaver) of hair; but a remover of faith."

3. Avoid being deluded

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Fadhalah ibn Ayub, from Abdullah ibn Zaid, from Ibn Abi Ya'foor who said:

Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon both, told me: "Let not people delude you against yourself, for that which is your fate shall reach you in spite of them! And let not the days prevent you from this and that, for surely, with you is the One Who protects you! And do not belittle your little good deeds, for you shall see them tomorrow in a form, which will please you.

And do not underestimate your little evil deeds, for you shall see them tomorrow in a form, which will grieve you. Do good deeds, for I have seen nothing quicker in pursuit of an old sin, so as to blot it out, than the good deed. Surely, Allah says (in the Qur'an):

'Indeed, good deeds carry away the evil deeds; and that is a reminder for those who remember Allah. (Hud, 11:114)'

4. Fulfil your duties

And with the preceding chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Fadhalah ibn Ayub from Ajlan Abu Swaleh, who said:

Abu Abdillah, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon both told me: "Be just with people in your personal matters and let them have a share in your wealth. Choose for them what you choose for yourself! And remember Allah constantly; never be lazy nor feel bored; surely, that is what my father taught me and that is what his father counseled him.

Similarly, if you feel lazy about the late night prayers, you will not be able to fulfil to Allah His right. And if you are bored and discontented, you will not be able to fulfil anyone's obligation. Always be truthful, guarding against sins and paying back that which you hold in trust. And do not fail to fulfil a promise when you make one."

5. Remain Truthful

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from 'Ali ibn Hadeed, from 'Ali ibn Nu'man, from Ishaq ibn Ammar, from Abu al-Nu'man al-Ajali, who said:

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali, peace be upon them both, told me, "O Abu Nu'man, do not support the lies and allegation against us, for that will distract you from the Straight Path; and do not devour people's wealth by using our name, for that will earn you nothing but poverty.

O Abu Nu'man, do not push yourself hard to be a head (i.e. leader), for you may end up being a tail (i.e. following the people rather than leading them). O Abu Nu'man, you will surely be stopped and asked, and there is no escape from that! If you remain truthful, we will confirm your truthfulness; and if you lie, we will confirm that you are a liar.

O Abu Nu'man, let not people delude you, for that which is your fate, shall reach you in spite of them! And do not let the days prevent you from this and that for with you there is One Who protects you. Do good deeds, for I have not seen any quicker expiation in pursuit of the old sin, than a good deed."

6. Value of Time

With the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from 'Ali ibn Hadeed from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, who has raised the report (without intervening chain) to 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, who said:

"Woe to the one whose **one** triumphs over his **ten** (meaning the verse 160, Surah al-Ana'am: **'Whoever brings one good deed shall have ten fold the like of it and whoever brings one evil deed shall be recompensed only the like of it...'**)"

And Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him used to say: "A defrauded person is one whose life is wasted hour by hour."

And 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, said: "Expect nothing from the others and that is true self-sufficiency, and minimize your needs from them, for being needful is instant poverty. And be cautious of doing things for which you may have to offer an excuse; and when you stand for daily prayers, do so as if you were offering the last and farewell prayers; and if you can manage to be better today than yesterday, or tomorrow better than today, then do so."

7. Enjoy good and forbid evil

And with the preceding chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from 'Ali ibn Hadeed, from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, from Ibn Maskan, from Dawood ibn Farqad, from Abu Saeed al-Zohari, from one the two (Imams), peace be upon them, who said:

"Woe to the people who do not make it their habit to enjoy good and forbid evil." And then he said: "Whoever professes 'there is no God but Allah, his utterance does not enter the kingdom of Heaven, till it is supplemented by one good deed. And he who seeks to be godly while lending strength to the untruth, such a man has no religion. Similarly, he who is subservient to a tyrant, has no religion." Then he said: "Every community has been distracted by rivalry for worldly gain and abundance, till they visited the graves."

8. Beware of Allah's dominance

And with the preceding chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Nadhr, from Ibrahim ibn Abdul Hamid, from Zaid ibn al-Shahham who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, say: "Beware of the dominant power of Allah, during the night and during the day." I asked: "What is that dominant power?" He said: "When He seizes you for the sins."

9. The most worshipful servant

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Abu Hamza who said:

I heard 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, say: "He who obediently acts according to what Allah has

commanded him to do, he is the best of men on earth! And he who obediently refrains from that which Allah has forbidden him, he is the most worshipping servant, the most pious. And whoever is content with what Allah has apportioned to him, is the richest of all men."

10. Living with the believers and non-believers

And with the preceding chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from al-Husayn ibn Mas'ab, from Sa'd ibn Turaif, from:

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali, peace be upon both, who said: "(Even) if you meet a hypocrite, talk to him agreeably, and if you meet a believer, then your love for him should be sincere. And (even) if a Jew sits next to you, treat him well."

11. Be kind to people

And with the preceding chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Fadhalah, from Abaan, from Abdul Rahman ibn Sayabah, from al-Nu'man, from:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, who said: "He who inquires after the well being and whereabouts of the others, people inquire after him when they miss him! And he who does not prepare himself to face the worldly afflictions with patience, ends up helpless.

And if you have a habit of passing abrasive comments against other people, then be ready for their remarks. And even if you left them, they would not leave you!" He said: "Then what shall I do?" He (i.e. Imam) said: "Keep them away from your honour, and leave it for your Day of Hunger and Want (i.e. leave it for the Day of judgement)."

12. People are for people!

And with the preceding chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from 'Ali ibn Hadeed, from Marazim, who reported that:

Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon both, said: "Always pray in the mosques and be good neighbours to the people. And always uphold your trust and covenants and attend the funerals. For surely, you cannot do without the people! No man's life can go on without needing the people!

As for us, we attend their funerals, and it is for you to do the way your leaders do! People have no alternative but to remain dependent upon each other till death does them apart; then every community will retire to join those they love."

Then he said: "Always offer your prayers properly and work for your next world and make the best choice for yourselves. Indeed, a man may be sagacious in his worldly affairs, till it is said: 'How wise is

so and so!' But surely, the sagacious is one who is wise about the hereafter."

13. Convey the knowledge of fiqh

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Muhammad ibn Ismail, from Mansur ibn Yunus, from Abu Khalid al-Qammat, from Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon both, that:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, addressed the people at Mina, saying: "May Allah bless the servant who heard my utterances and heeded them; and conveyed to those who had not heard them. How often a person carries knowledge without he himself being learned about it, and how often does a man carry knowledge to the one who knows better than him!

There are three things over which a Mu'min's heart will never commit a breach of the trust: Purifying the deeds solely for the sake of Allah; following the Imams of the Muslims faithfully and remaining steadfast in their groups. Their call itself protects them from all sides. The believers are brothers to each other, defending their blood; and they act as one, single hand against the enemies. And even the smallest of them tries best to fulfil his responsibility."

14. The best guidance is that of Muhammad (SAW)

With the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar from Muhammad ibn Ismail, from Mansur ibn Abu Yahya, who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, say: Once the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, climbed on the pulpit, and the colour of his cheek changed; then he approached the people saying: "O Muslims, I have been sent to you with the Day of Judgement as close in time, as these two"; then he put together two index fingers. Then he said: "O Muslim, the best guidance is that of Muhammad and the best narration is the Book of Allah. And innovations (in religion) are the worst things.

Be it known to you that every innovation leads astray, and that finally leads to hellfire. 'O People! Whoever leaves behind wealth, he leaves it for the family and his heirs; and whoever leaves behind weaklings and poor dependents, they are for me and they are my responsibility."

15. Four admonitions

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Rafaa'h who reported that:

Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon them both, said: "The Torah has four admonitions coupled with the other four. They are: He who rises in the morning sorrowful about his worldly affairs, he indeed rises displeased with his Lord!

And he who rises in the morning complaining about the misfortune he has suffered, he is complaining against Allah! He who calls upon a rich man, humbling himself so as to gain a share from his wealth, loses two-third of his faith; And if ever a reciter of the Qur'an in this Ummah enters hellfire, then he must be among those who take divine signs for a mockery and play.

And the other four are: Absolute power leads to appropriation; and he who consults, never repents; and you shall reap what you sow, and poverty is the greater death."

16. Prayers are the pillars of faith

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ismail ibn Abbad, from al-Hasan ibn Muhammad, from Sulayman ibn Sabiq, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Abdullah ibn Luhaya'h, from Abu al-Zubair, from Jabir ibn Abdillah al-Ansari, who said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, once addressed us, praising and thanking Allah and then said: "O people (after completing his speech), I recommend to you the daily prayers, I recommend to you the daily prayers! For it is the pillar of your faith. And make special efforts for the prayers during the nights and remember him often, that He may expiate your sins.

Surely, the example of these five daily prayers is that of a flowing brook near your door; in which you are washed five times a day. So just as frequent baths clean your body of the dirt, the same way, sins are washed off by constant prayers, leaving no sin behind.

O men, there is no one of the servants of Allah who is not hit by a knotty situation. Then when the two-third of a night is over and a third is left, an angel comes to him, and says: 'Rise and remember Allah, for the morning is near!' He said: If the servant rises to remember Allah at that time, his knots would be undone. And if he stood to do the wudhoo and started the prayers, all his knots would be undone; and he would enter the dawn with joy in his eyes."

17. Imam al-Sadiq (as) explains Abu Dharr's admonition

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali from Yunus ibn Ya'qoob, from Shoayb al-Aqrqoofi, who said:

I related to Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon them both, that I heard someone report from Abu Dharr who used to say: "People hate three things, while I love them. I love death, and I love poverty and I love ordeals."

He, peace upon him, said: "That is not what he meant. When he said he preferred death, he meant to say that death in the way of Allah was more likeable to him than life in sin; and ordeal in the way of Allah was more agreeable to him than health in sin; and poverty in the way of Allah was more loveable to him than plenty in sin."

18. Cover your utensils. . .

And with the preceding chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ibn Faddhal, from Yunus ibn Yaqub, from Abu Maryam, from Abu Abdillah or Abu Ja'far, peace be upon them both, from Jabir ibn Abdillah that:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said to us: "Cover your utensils and put a lid over the vessels from which you drink, and shut your doors tight, and tie down your herds, and send your family members indoors, as the sun sets till when the darkness of Isha is dispelled. Surely, the devils do not open the covers, nor do they undo the lids. And the devils are sent off when the sun sets. And put off your lamps, for sometimes the rats kindle fire from it setting the whole house on fire, on its inmates."

19. The good and the bad traditions

And with the preceding chains of narration, 'Ali ibn Mahzyar reported from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Hammad ibn Uthman, who reported that Ismail al-Jo'fi said:

I heard Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali, peace be upon them both say: "Whoever sets a balanced, just tradition, which is then followed by the people, he earns the reward of everyone who acts accordingly, without they losing anything from their rewards. And whoever sets an unjust tradition, which is then followed, he shall bear the burden of those who act accordingly, without any mitigation in the burdens of the followers."

20. Kindness to father

And with the preceding chains of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Bakr ibn Swaleh who said:

My son-in-law wrote to Abu Ja'far the second Imam Muhammad Taqi (as), peace be upon him, that: "My father is a *Nasibi* and has wretched views about Ahlul Bayt. And I have experienced a lot of hardship and pressure from him. I write to request for special prayers for me, may I be your ransom, and to advise me what should be my line of action. Should I confront him or comply with his whims?"

He, peace be upon him, wrote back: "I have understood your letter and what you have mentioned about your father. God willing, I shall never forget you in my prayers. And it is better to be compliant rather than resorting to open confrontation. For with every hardship, there is ease. Be patient, for the end result is always in favour of those who are mindful of duties towards Allah. May Allah keep you firm on the path of those who you have accepted as the authority. You and we are all entrusted in the care of Allah, and with Him, no trust is lost!"

Bakr said: Then Allah caused a change of heart in his father, so that he in turn became compliant to the son.

21. The descent of Jibrael at unusual hour

And with the first chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Hashami, from Abi Hafs al-Attar, who said, I heard Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, relating from his father, from his grandfather, who said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: Once Jibrael came to me at an unusual hour and on an unusual day. So, I told him: "O Jibrael, you have indeed come to me at an unusual hour and unusual day. You have struck me with awe!" He said: "O Muhammad, you have no cause of fear, for Allah has forgiven you your past and future lapse."

I said: "Then what is the message (this time) from your Lord?" He said: "Your Lord forbids you to worship the idols and to drink any type of intoxicants and to vilify the people. And there is one more (worth remembering) here and hereafter; your Lord says to you: O Muhammad, I have never felt indignation at any container as much as at a filled stomach."

22. Virtues of a Shi'ah

And with the first chain of narrations, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from Ismail ibn Abbad, from (Abdullah) ibn Bikair, from:

Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon both of them, who said: "Surely, we love from amongst our Shi'ahs, one who is wise, understanding, well-versed in religion, tolerant, obliging, patient, truthful and faithful." Then he said: "Surely, Allah has specially blessed His Prophets with the noble virtues of good behaviour. So, whoever has those qualities, should praise and thank Allah for it, and whoever does not have them, should earnestly entreat and seek from Allah."

He said: "I asked: May I be your ransom, what are the virtues?" He said: "Piety, contentment, patience, being grateful, tolerant, modesty, generosity, jealousy, guarding ones honour, beneficence, truthful in speech and honesty about anything held on trust."

23. The meaning of remembering Allah

With the first chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, (from al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Faddhal), from 'Ali ibn Uqba, from Jarood ibn al-Mandhar, who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him say: 'The most difficult performance are three: to maintain justice and equity between yourself and the people, so that you may not prefer for

yourself anything from the people, till you have preferred the same for the people to have from you; to make your (needy) brother an equal partner in your wealth; and to remember Allah in all situations. And that is not just to say: 'Glory be to Allah,' 'Praise be to Allah,' 'there is no God but Allah,' or 'Allah is Great.' Rather, when anything comes your way, which Allah has forbidden, you refrain from it."

24. No act with taqwa is small

And with the first chain of narrations from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan, from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from al-Fudhail ibn Uthman, from Abi Obaidah, from Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir, peace be upon both, who said:

Amirul Mu'mineen ('Ali) peace be upon him, used to say: "Any act performed with taqwa is not little. How can that which is accepted (by Allah) be called little?"

25. Al-Sadiq (as) exhorts Taqwa

And with the first chain of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, (from al-Hassan), from 'Ali ibn Uqba, from Abi Kahmas, from Amru ibn Saeed ibn Hilal, who said:

I requested Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him: 'Guide me.' He said: 'My admonition to you is to be mindful of your duties to Allah (taqwa), to refrain from that which is forbidden and to make a strenuous effort (to win His Pleasure). And you should know that any effort, which is not coupled with abstaining from that, which is forbidden, has no benefit.

And always look at those who are lower than you, and do not look at those who are above you. For how often has Allah, Most High, advised His messenger:

'So do not be deluded by their wealth and their children', (al-Tawbah, 9:55),

and again He said:

'And do not even look at the worldly wealth. We have let some pairs of disbelievers to gain, it is only an allurement of the life of this world....' (Taha, 20: 131)."

And if your passion (or desires) drive you towards any of those things, then you should be aware that the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his progeny, had barley for daily subsistence, dates for his sweet dish, when available, and the source of warmth (firewood, fuel) was from the branches of the palm tree. And when any calamity befalls you, then remember how you were tested by the passing away of the Prophet, peace be upon him; for the people will never face a similar tribulation ever again."

26. Good deeds prepare for the doers. . .

And with the first chain of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, from Dawood ibn Farqad, who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon both of them, say: "Surely, the righteous deeds will go to the Paradise to prepare for theirs doers, the way a person sends his servant to furnish for him. Then he recited:

'And as for those who believe, and do righteous deeds, they prepare for their own souls' (al-Rum, 30:44)."

27. Between fear and hope

And with the first chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from al-Husayn ibn Abi Sarah, who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon them both, say: "A believer does not become a (true and steadfast) Mu'min, till he comes to a situation of being both, fearful as well as hopeful. And that does not occur till he starts performing deeds as one who fears and (also) hopes."

28. The verse of Qur'an interpreted

And with the first chain of narration, from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from 'Ali who said:

I asked Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him about the verse from the Qur'an:

'And those who strive with righteous deeds to the greatest extent and their hearts are filled with fear....' (al-Mu'minoon. 23:60).

He said: "That is their fear and hope. They fear that their acts may be rejected because of their sins, and at the same time, hope that they might be accepted from them."

29. The Prophet (SAW) inspects our deeds

And with the first chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan, from Uthman ibn Isa, from Sama'ah, who said:

I heard him say (i.e. Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him): "Why do you cause grief to the Prophet of Allah?" Someone asked: "May I be your ransom, how do we do that?" He said: "Do you not know that

your deeds are persented before him; when he sees the sins committed, he is grieved. So do not cause him grief. Make him happy (with good deeds and obedience)."

30. 'Ali (as) on the pious companions of the Prophet

And with the first chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from (Muhammad) ibn Sinan, from Abu Muaz al-Suddiy, from Abi Arakah who said:

Once, I prayed behind 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, the morning prayers in this mosque of yours. Then (after the prayers), he turned to the right with evident gloom over his face. He stayed that way, till the sun rose over the lancer long wall of the mosque of yours, which was then not as high as it is now. Then turning to the people he said:

"By Allah, the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, endured discomfort on such a night, passing it between prostration and standing for the prayers. As if they heard the roar of hellfire in their ears¹. And in the morning, they rose covered with dust and pale, with callous skin, resembling the knees of the goat between their eyes. When Allah was remembered in their presence, they quivered the way a tree shakes on a windy day, and tears rolled from their eyes till their clothes were wet."

He said: Then he (i.e. 'Ali) rose, saying: "By Allah, it seems that people have now become heedless."

Thereafter, he (i.e. 'Ali) was not seen in a cheerful temperament, till the event at the hands of Ibn Muljam took place – may Allah curse him (i.e. Ibn Muljam).

31. 'Ali (as) and the traders of Kufa

With the first chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Amru ibn Abi al-Miqdam (from Jabir), from:

Abu Ja'far, Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir, peace be upon them both, who said: 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, was among you in Kufa and he used to come out early in the morning from his residence, visiting each market of Kufa, one after another, with a whip on his shoulder. It had two sharp ends and was thus called *al-Sabibah*.

He said: He (i.e. 'Ali) would stand in every market and say: "O business people! Seek providence of Allah and earn His bounty by easy trade! Endear yourselves to the buyers and adorn yourselves with patience. And do not swear or take oath; refrain from lies and do not associate with inequity. Come to the rescue of the wronged ones by obtaining justice for them, and do not deal in usury. Give full measure and weight and do not diminish for people their things, and do not work corruption on the

earth."

He said: Thus he (i.e. 'Ali) toured all the markets of Kufa and then returned to his place for listening to the common people. He said: When the market people saw him approaching them, exclaiming: "O People!, they would stop their dealings, listen to him carefully and regard him respectfully till he finished." Then they would respond: "With all readiness, we obey you O, Amirul Mu'mineen."

32. 'Ali (as)'s admonition after Isha

And with the first claim of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Amru ibn Abi al-Maqqdam, from Jabir, from:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, who said: When Amirul Mu'mineen, peace be upon him, was at Kufa, he would announce three times after people had prayed their last evening prayers, so that all in the mosque would hear it: "O people! Be prepared, may Allah bless you with mercy, for the call for departure has been made. So what is the meaning of clinging to the world, after the departing call? Be prepared, may Allah have mercy upon you, and move onwards with the best of supplies you have with you and that is *Taqwa*.

And be it known to you that your path is the place of Resurrection, passing over the *al-Siraat*; and the great shock is confronting you. And in your path, there are mountains difficult to climb and stations through which you have to pass and also halt, despite its fright and terror. It will be His Mercy, which will redeem from its fright and save from its great danger, horrid scenes and from its severe test. And if it is perdition, then there is no solace after it."

33. Imam Sajjad's book on asceticism

And with the first chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Malik ibn Atiyya, from Abu Hamza al-Thumali, who said:

"I had not heard of anyone more pious and ascetic than 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, till I learnt about 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him."

Then Abu Hamza said: "Whenever 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, spoke about piety and asceticism and admonished people, he made all those present weep."

Abu Hamza said: "I read a page which contained 'Ali ibn al-Husayn's admonition on piety and asceticism, so I copied from it and brought it before him. He recognized it and confirmed its content. It said:

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful.

"May Allah be sufficient for us and you to thwart the evil planning of the oppressors, the rancour of the jealous and the power of the tyrants. O believers, your main affliction is from the insolents who love this world, are grossly inclined towards it and are tempted by it. They fall for it and for that which will soon become lifeless chaff and dead straw tomorrow. So be aware of what Allah has cautioned you from, and detach yourselves from things Allah has enjoined you to remain aloof; and do not incline to worldly things like the one who has taken it as permanent abode or native place.

And by Allah, the mundane has enough warning pointers for you, to its (wilting) flourish, to its changing times, to its revolutionary changes and to its exemplary punishments; and to the way it plays with its people. Surely, it raises the lowly and cuts down the noble ones, and it will despatch to hellfire many nations tomorrow. In this, indeed, is a lesson to draw and a test and a deterrent for the one who is cautious.

Surely, the hearts (and minds) are prevented from awakening (to the truth) by the events which occur to you every day and night, like the misleading trials, the unprecedented events, the rampant inequities, the disasters wrought in every age and era; the fear of the ruling powers and the whispers of the devils. They distract them from the existing (divine) guidance and the recognition of the Truth; except a few who Allah has saved.

And none can understand and appraise the influence of those days, its capriciousness and the harmful end of its temptation, except those who have been saved by Allah; those who have walked the path of right guidance, progressing on the way of temperance, seeking help from Him through abstinence and renunciation.

Such a person persistently ponders, draws lessons from the happenings and is so deterred; remains unattended to the fleeting allurements of the world and its delectations. He is inclined towards the permanent bliss of the next abode (i.e. hereafter) and works hard for it. He is ever watchful about death and finds life in the company of the tyrants most loathsome.

And then he is able to see the world with the sharp, penetrating eyes, appraising and perceiving the trials and tribulations, the misleading new events, the darkness of the tyrannical powers. And by my soul, you have had enough experience from the dark tyrannical order of the bygone days to guide you to disassociating from the despots, from the partisans of innovations and torment and from those who unjustly spread corruption on the earth. So seek help from Allah; return to His obedience and to the obedience of those who deserve best to be followed and obeyed.

So, take your precautions before (the day of) remorse and distress dawns and before you are in presence of Allah, standing before Him! By Allah, whenever a nation proceeded from divine disobedience, it always ended up in His chastisement; and whenever a nation preferred this world over the hereafter, evil has been their road and evil has been their final abode!

And Knowledge about Allah and acting in obedience to Him are nothing but the intimate couple. So,

whoever knows Allah, fears Him and that fear prompts him to act obediently. Surely, the people of (that) knowledge and their followers have recognized Him, acted for Him and have remained inclined towards Him; and thus, Allah says (in the Qur'an):

***'Surely, those of His servants who have knowledge fear Allah alone.'* (35:28)**

Do not solicit anything of this world in a sinful manner (or by transgressing the law of Allah) and engage yourselves in the world His way. So, take the advantage of its days and work hard in it to gain salvation tomorrow. Indeed, that is the least which is required of a true follower, nearest to the excuse (should he lapse) and most hopeful for salvation.

Therefore, in all your affairs, put forward the command of Allah, His obedience and of those whose obedience He has made obligatory. And do not put forward the affairs brought upon you by the despots in the form of the worldly temptation of this world, before the commands of Allah, His obedience and the obedience of those who have divine authority upon you.

Know you all that all of us are slaves of Allah; and He, the Master Judge, will judge us tomorrow. Before Him, you will be ranged and asked; so prepare for the answer before the halt, the interrogation and before presentation to the Lord of all the worlds.

***'On that Day, no souls shall speak except by His leave.'* (11:105).**

And know you that on that Day, Allah will not confirm the liars, nor will He belie the truthful. And He will not reject the justifiable excuse, nor will He excuse the wilful sinner. Rather, He will have the conclusive authority over His creatures for having sent His messengers and their successors. So, O slaves of Allah, be mindful of your duties to Allah (and fear him); meet Him with your reformed selves, in obedience unto Him and unto those who He made you follow.

Lest there be one who repents (on the day) for having neglected his duties to Allah, or having wasted the rights of Allah! So, seek forgiveness from Allah and return unto Him! Indeed, He accepts repentance and forgives the sins and knows all that you do.

Do not ever be in the company of the sinners, nor helpful to the oppressors, nor close to the transgressors. Be careful of their temptations and remain at a distance from their spheres.

And know you all that he who opposes the righteous slaves of Allah and adopts a way other than His religion, and doggedly follows his own whims in the face of the guidance given by the righteous slaves of Allah, such a man is (already) in the bursting flame of fire, which eats up the bodies which have lost their souls, overwhelmed by their adversities.

They are dead, insensitive to the heat of fire! So, take warning those who have eyes to see! And praise Allah with gratitude for having guided you. And know that you cannot get out of domain of His power to any other! Allah shall soon see your deeds and then you will be gathered to Him. So, take the benefit of

the admonition and adopt the ways of the virtuous."

34. Entrust your affairs to Allah

And with the former chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan, from 'Ali ibn al-Hakam, from Abu Hafs al-A'asha, from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from a person from Banu Asad, from Abu Hamza al-Thumali, that:

'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, said: Once, I came out till I reached this wall and stood leaning against it. There, I suddenly saw a man wearing two white apparels, looking at me. Then he said: "O 'Ali, son of al-Husayn, how is that I see you gloomy and distressed? Is it for the worldly matter? The provision from Allah is readily available for both; the good and the evil!" I said: "No, I am not sad because of that, and the fact is as stated by you."

He said: "Then is it because of the hereafter? Then that is a promise by the Truthful (Allah) and the Almighty will be the judge on that Day!" I said: "It is not because of that! Though the fact is as you stated." He said: "Then what greives you?" I said: "I am distressed by the mischief of Ibn Zubair." He laughed and then said: "O 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, did you see anyone who fears Allah, not delivered by Him?" I said: "No." He said: "O 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, did you see anyone who entrusted Him all his affairs and Allah failed to be sufficient for him?" I said: "No."

Then I looked and saw no one before me!

35. When the deeds become heartbreaking anguish

And with the former chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahyzar, from al-Qasim ibn Urwah, from a person, from either of them, peace be upon them, who explained the verse:

'Thus will Allah show them their deeds as heartbreaking anguish for them....' (2:167).

He said: "It is parable of a man who amasses wealth but is averse to spending it in a charitable manner and then he dies, bequeathing it to the others. And the heirs spend the same wealth for good deeds; so the man who originally earned the wealth rises on the Day of Judgement to witness the reward of the good deeds going to someone else's credit."

36. Hasten to do good

And with the former chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahyzar from Ibn Abi Umayr, from Hisham ibn Salim, that:

Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, said: "When you are determined to do something good, then do not delay doing it. For when Allah, Most Glorious, sees His slave intent upon performing an act according to

one of His commands, He says: 'By My Might and Greatness, I shall never subject you to any chastisement.' And when you feel inclined to commit a sin, do not do it, for when Allah, Most Benevolent and High, finds a slave on the verge of committing a sin, He says: 'By My Might and Greatness, I will never forgive you.'"

37. Do not delay doing good

And with the foregoing chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from 'Ali ibn Hadeed, from 'Ali ibn al-Nu'man, from Hamzah ibn Hamran who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, say: "Whenever anyone of you is determined to do good, then he should not delay doing it. For it might so be that a slave of Allah offered prayers or kept a day's fast and then he is told: Do whatever you desire after this, for I have forgiven you."

38. 'Ali (as) guides to true reform of oneself

And with the former chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar (from 'Ali ibn Hadeed), who reported from Abu Ishaq al-Khorasani, a friend of ours, that:

Amirul Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, used to say: "Do not be shaken in your faith, for that will make you a doubter; and do not be doubters, for that will lead to disbelief. And do not make yourself cheap falling victim to flattery and adulation; and do not be sycophant in matters of truth, for that will cause you a great loss.

Firmness lies in becoming more learned in Religion and the sign of true religious learning is not to be conceited nor deceitful. The most honest and sincere to oneself among you is the one who is most obedient to his Sustainer; and the most deceitful to oneself among you is the one who is most insubordinate to his Sustainer.

He who obeys Him, is secure and guided; and he who disobeys Him, is disappointed and remorseful. Seek certitude from Allah and set your hearts inclined to Him, when you are free from all harm; for the best experience of heart is that of certitude. O people! refrain from lying. And anyone who expects, proceeds to demand and anyone who fears, flees."

39. Allah's Will and His Power

And with the foregoing chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, raising it up to Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, who said:

Amirul Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, used to say: "Always consider that which is distant as quite near and that which is difficult as very easy. And, know that, even if a slave of Allah is

weak in his strategy and having failing in his plans, it will not reduce anything from what Allah has destined for him. And if he is powerful in his strategy and forceful in his plan, it will not increase anything in what Allah has destined for him."

40. 'Ali (as) refused to corrupt himself

And with the former chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ibn Abi Umayr, from Hisham, from Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, who said:

Amirul Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, used to say to the people at Kufa: 'O people of Kufa, do you think I am not aware of what can mend your ways? But I hate to redress your situation by corrupting myself!"

41. Base desires and long hopes. . .

And with the foregoing chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Asim, from Fudhail al-Rassan, from Yahya ibn Aqeel, who reported that:

'Ali, peace be upon him, said: "I fear for you two things: following the desire of soul and being deluded by long hope. As for following the base desire, it keeps you away from truth, and as for the long hope, it causes you to forget the hereafter. The next world moves to encounter you, while this world moves to turn its back! And each has its own children. So be the children of the next world and do not be among the children of this world. Today, there are deeds and no account, but tomorrow there will be account and no deeds."

42. 'Ali (as)'s admonition

And with the former chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Fadhalah, from Ismail from Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, who said:

Amirul Mu'mineen (as) used to say: "Awaken your heart by reflection and let your side forsake (long) sleep, and fear Allah, your Sustainer (by guarding against sins and evil)."

43. What Isa (as) told his disciples

And with the former chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Wasil ibn Sulaiman, from Ibn Sinan, who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, say that Isa, peace be upon him, used to say to his disciples: "If you are my friends and my brothers, then prepare your minds to reconcile with all the hostility and hatred coming from people. If you are not so mentally prepared, then you are not my brothers."

I teach you so that you may learn; and I do not teach you to please you. You will not attain your goal till you renounce your desires and by forbearance over that which you hate.

I warn you against the evil glance, for it sows the seeds of lust in the heart of the beholder; and that is enough to tempt him.

Blessed is he who beholds with his two eyes the tempting love of lust, but does not allow his heart to err. How far is that which one has missed; and how close is that which is to come!

Woe unto those beguiled by vanity, should that which they loathe come to them too soon, and that which they love dearly depart, and that of which they had been warned arrive! Indeed, in the creation of these nights and days, there is a lesson.

Woe unto him whose entire concern is about this world only, and whose deeds are all evil and sins. How will he stand exposed before his Sustainer tomorrow!

And do not talk much about things other than remembering Allah! Surely, those who talk much other than remembering Allah, have their hearts hardened, but they do not know. Do not engage yourselves in looking into other people's shortcomings and faults, as if you were their spies; instead, look into ways of freeing yourselves; for surely you are possessed slaves.

How often does water flow on the mountain, but it does not soften? For how long have you studied words of wisdom, but your hearts do not soften for them? Slaves of the evil people and not of the pious! Nor are you liberated men of honour! Your example is that of oleander whose flower pleases the beholder, but its taste kills – Peace be with you."

44. Avoid fame

And with the foregoing chains of narration from ‘Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ibn Abi Najran, from al-Hasan ibn Bahr, from Furat ibn Ahnaf, from one of the companions of Amirul Mu’mineen, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, who said:

"Be among the commoner, inconspicuous people and do not make yourself noticeable; conceal yourself so that you are neither mentioned nor known. Guard your secret, maintain silence and you will remain in peace." Then he pointed towards his chest and said: "Thus, you will please the virtuous and raise the anger of the impious."

45. Be ready to forgive

And with the first chain of narration from ‘Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Faddhal, who said:

I heard Abul Hassan (i.e. ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha) peace be upon him say:

"Never did the two warring factions meet to fight except that Allah helped the one which is more forgiving."

46. When Allah spoke to Musa (as)

And with the former chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Hisham ibn Salim, from Habib al-Sajistani, from:

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir, peace be upon him, who said: It is written in Torah that among the revelations from Allah, Most High, to Musa, peace be upon him, Allah spoke to him thus: "O Musa, be mindful of Me and fear Me in your private affairs; and I will guard your secrets; and remember My presence when you are alone, and when tempted to gratify your pleasures; and I will remember you during your lapses.

And restrain your anger against those you rule and control, and I will withhold My displeasure against you; and conceal My well-kept secret in your inner self; and in the presence of My enemy and yours, who I have created, make a show of repulsion against Me. Do not invite derision and abuse from them by revealing My well-kept secret, else you will be a partner to them in the abuse levelled at Me."

47. The meaning of "Imma'ah. . ."

And with the foregoing chains of narration from 'Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Ibn Mahboob, from al-Fadhl ibn Yunus, from:

Abul Hasan, the first, peace be upon him said: "Convey that which is good, and speak that which is good and do not be *Imma'ah*! I said: "What is Imma'ah?" He said: "Do not have a habit of saying: I am from the people and I am just like any one of them.

Surely, the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: O people, there are but two paths: path of good and path of evil. What is the matter with you that I find the path of evil is more loved by you than the path of good?"

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may Allah bless our master, Muhammad and his pure progeny, and salutations upon them.

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