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Twentieth Assembly

Met on Saturday, 8th of the month of Ramadhan, in the year 407; narration heard by Abul Fawaris, by audition from my brother Abu Muhammad – may Allah keep him, and al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali al-Nishaburi, among the people attending the session before this. The grand Sheikh al-Mufid Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu’man – may Allah grant him beneficence, said:

1. Do not transgress Divine limits

He said: Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Ji’abi reported to me from Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn A'yan al-Bazzaz, who reported from Zakariyya ibn Yahya ibn Sabeeh, who reported from Khalaf ibn Khalifa, from Saeed ibn Ubaid al-Taee, from ‘Ali ibn Rabee'ah al-Walibi, from Amirul Mu’mineen, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, who said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: "Surely, Allah has set for you limits, so do not transgress them; and has made certain acts obligatory upon you, so do not waste them; and has set some traditions for you, so follow them; and has made sacred some sanctities, so do not desecrate them; and He has excused you about certain matters as a token of mercy for you, without forgetting them, so do not burden yourselves with them."

2. Let no hopes or ambitions digress you

He said: Abu Ubaidullah Muhammad ibn Imran al-Marzbani reported to me from Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Makki, who reported from Abu al-Ayna, from Muhammad ibn al-Hakam, from Lut ibn Yahya, from al-Harith ibn Ka'b, from Mujahid who reported that:

Amirul Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, said: "Be least interested in this world from which no one from your predecessors ever benefited, nor will it remain for anyone after you have gone! The path you are walking on is the same as that of the bygones, totally cut off and subjected to annihilations, their good deeds forgotten and unknown.

This world warns its inmates of destruction, and its residents of Death. That which was once sweet from

it has become bitter; and that which was once clear has become turbid. Nothing has ever remained in it except like the last droplets of water in a vessel, or a few gulps, which if a thirsty were to suck up, would not be satiated.

So, be prepared for a journey from this abode, whose residents are destined to perish, and prevented from living forever. They have been submitted to dying, therefore no life should crave perpetuity. Everyone here awaits death. Let no hopes and expectations digress you, nor should you regard it as a long age; and do not be deceived by its promises.

And, if you were to roam about like a camel yearning to find its heifer and coo like a dove, calling its young one, and raise your beseeching cry like a worshipful hermit, and come out together with your wealth and children, so as to seek nearness to Him, and be elevated in His estimation; or to be forgiven the sins which His angels and scribes have recorded, it would all be too little to earn His reward which I hope for you, or to be saved from His wrath which I fear for you. May Allah keep us and you among the repentents and the worshipping ones."

3. The Prophet's address on the day of Arafah

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Bilal al-Mahlabi reported to me from 'Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Asad al-Ishfahani, who reported from Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Hashim, who reported from Yahya ibn al-Husayn al-Bijilli, from Abu Haroon al-Abdi, from Zadhan, who reported from Salman al-Farsi - may Allah bless him with mercy, that:

The messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, once appeared on the day of *Arafah* and said: "O, people, surely Allah glorified Himself because of you on this day, so that He may pardon you generally and pardon 'Ali in particular." Then he said: "Come near me, O 'Ali." So 'Ali drew near. Then the Prophet took him by his hand and said: "Surely, the blessed, completely and truly blessed is the one who obeyed you and loved you after I have gone. And surely, the wretched, completely and truly wretched is the one who disobeyed you, and showed his hostility after I have gone."

4. Abu Dharr . . . the fearless

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Bilal al-Mahlabi reported to me from 'Ali ibn Abdullah al-Ishfahani, who reported from Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from Muhammad ibn 'Ali, who reported from al-Husayn ibn Sufyan, from his father, from Abu Jahdham al-Azdi, from his father who said that:

When Uthman ordered Abu Dharr al-Ghifari - may Allah bless him with mercy, into exile from Medinah to Syria, he (i.e. Abu Dharr) used to stand up everyday admonishing people, exhorting them to obey Allah, warning them against committing sins. And he used to narrate from the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, whatever he had heard about the virtues and excellence of his Ahlul Bayt, peace be upon them, enjoining upon them to follow his progeny.

So, Mu'awiyah wrote to Uthman: "Be it known to you that Abu Dharr, at all times during the day, morning and evening, has a large group of people around him and to them he says such and such things. Well, if you have any need of me among the people, then I would send Abu Dharr to you, for I fear that he will instigate people against you; with Salaams."

Then Uthman wrote to him: "As this letter reaches you, send Abu Dharr back to me; with Salaams." Then Moawiyah sent for Abu Dharr and made him read the letter from Uthman, saying: "Make haste, and go now." Abu Dharr came to his camel fastened his saddle to set off. The people gathered around him saying: "O Abu Dharr! May Allah have mercy on you, where are you going?"

He said: "They drove me out to come to you, as they were angry with me, and now they are driving me away from you to them, messing around with me. And this will continue as I see it, because of my difference with them, till the righteous relaxes or is relieved of the wicked one." Then he left.

As people heard of his departure, they followed him till outside Damascus and remained in his company till he reached the monastery of *Murran.* He alighted and with him the people also stopped. He was asked to lead, so he prayed with them and then he addressed: "O people! I admonish you about things, which will benefit you, and I do not resort to speeches and eloquence. All of you praise Allah, Most High."

So they said: "All praise be to Allah." He said: "I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger." They repeated what he uttered. Then he said: "I testify that the resurrection is truth and that the heaven is truth and that the hell is truth; and I confirm what he (i.e. Muhammad) has come with from Allah. So bear witness for me over what I have confirmed." And they said: "And we are among those who testify."

He said: "Whoever among you dies on these tenets of faith, may he have good tidings of Allah's mercy and honour; as long as he does not support the wrongdoers, and does not justify the torture of the tyrants nor does he assist them in anyway.

'O people! Let your daily prayers and fasts be combined with your displeasure for the sake of Allah, whenever He is disobeyed on the earth! Do not please your leaders to incur the wrath of Allah. And if they come up with innovations of which you know not, stay aloof from them; and remain strong against them, even if you were tortured, deprived or rusticated, so that Allah may be pleased with you! Surely, Allah is Most High and it does not behave to displease Him, by pleasing His creatures. May Allah forgive me and you all. I entrust you to His care, and sent you greetings and the grace of Allah."

Then people exclaimed: "May Allah greet you with safety and shower upon you His mercy, O, Abu Dharr; O companion of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny; we will not send you back if they expel you and we will not refuse you entry." Abu Dharr said: "Return to your places, may Allah have mercy upon you; for I am more tolerant of the adversities than you are. And be careful, never be disunited."

So, he went away till he arrived at Uthman's and upon his arrival, Uthman told him: "May Allah show no favour to the eyes, which behold Amru." Upon this, Abu Dharr reported: "My parents did not name me Amr. But may Allah not favour the one who disobeys Him, acts against His commands and follows his own base desires."

At that time, Ka'b al-Ahbar stood up against him and said: "You old man! Do you not fear Allah when you talk back this way to Amirul Mu'mineen?" Then Abu Dharr raised the stick, which he had in his hands and hit Ka'b on his head, saying: "O son of the Jewish parents, why do you have to speak on behalf of the Muslims? For, By Allah, your jewishness has not come out of your heart yet."

Then Uthman said: "May Allah not unite me with you under one roof! You have indeed gone senile and you have lost your senses. Get him away out of my sight, mount him on a bare camel and then hasten the camel to reach him uncomfortably to Rabdhah. Then drop him there alone, till Allah may decide his fate." So he was pushed away with humiliation, with his ribs prodded.

It was declared in advance that no one should bid him farewell. When the news reached 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, he wept till his beard was wet with tears and then he said: "Is this the way to treat the companion of the messenger of Allah? We are for Allah, and unto Him shall we return!"

Then he stood up, accompanied by al-Hasan, al-Husayn, Abdullah ibn Abbas, al-Fadhl, Qathum and Ubaidullah and proceeded till they drew close to Abu Dharr. They continued following him. When Abu Dharr, may Allah have mercy on him, saw them, he wept in sympathy for them and said: "May my father be ransom for the faces which remind me of the Prophet (peace be upon him, and his progeny) when I see them; and mere sight of them overwhelms me with divine blessings."

Then he raised his hands towards the heavens and said: "O Allah! I love them; and shall remain steadfast even if I were cut into pieces because of their love! And that is only for Your pleasure and for the next abode! Return to your places, may Allah have mercy upon you, and I pray to Allah that He may keep me in the best relationship with you." Then they bid him farewell and returned with tears in their eyes.

5. Quickest evil consequences

He said: Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Ji'abi reported to me from Abul Qasim al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn al-Hasan, who reported from Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan, from his father, who reported from Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Hashimi, who reported from Abdul Mu'min, who reported from Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, that Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari narrated:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: "The quickest evil consequence is for a man to whom you do a good turn and he pays you back by evil deeds; and a man with whom you have entered into a covenant wishing to fulfil it, while he intends to deceive you; and a person to who you are not

insolent, but he persists in his insolence against you; and a person with whom you mend your blood relationship but he cuts you off."

6. The prayer of ‘Ali (as)

He said: Abu ‘Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Suliy reported to me in the mosque of Baratha, in the year 353, from Abul Aziz ibn Yahya al-Jaloodi, who reported from Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Ghalabiy, who reported from Qais ibn Hafs al-Daramiy, who reported from al-Husayn al-Ashqar, from Umar (or Amru) ibn Abdul Ghaffar, from Ishaq ibn al-Fadhl al-Hashimi, who said:

"Among the supplications of Amirul Mu’mineen, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, there was the following:

"O Allah! I seek refuge with you from being hostile to a person who is Your saint; or from being friendly to one who is Your adversary, or to choose Your permanent wrath. O Allah! Our blessings be for those You have blessed, and our curse be upon those You have cursed; O Allah! relieve us by the demise of one whose death is a relief for us and for all the Muslims; and grant us in exchange one who is better for us than he; so that You may show us, by Your acceptance, that which we wish to realize in our faith and in our lives; O Most Merciful among the merciful."

And may Allah bless our master Muhammad and his progeny.

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