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Eighteenth Assembly

Met on Saturday, 24th Shaban, in the year 407 Hijra; from what Abul Fawaris heard alone, and from what I heard together with my brother Abu Abdul Rahman and what al-Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Nishaburi heard, from the utterance of the grand Sheikh. The grand Sheikh al-Mufid Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nu'man – may Allah continue His beneficence upon him, narrated thus:

1. Believer's tears in the fear of Allah

He said: Abul Qasim Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Qawlawayh – may Allah bless him with mercy, reported to me from his father, from Sa'd ibn Abdillah, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa al-Ashari, from al-Hasan ibn Mehboob, from Hisham ibn Salim, from Muhammad ibn Marwan, that:

Abu Ja'far al-Baqir, peace be upon him, said: "There is no eye that gets filled with tears due to the fear of Allah, except that Allah saves its whole body from hell fire; and the cheeks upon which the tears stream down, shall have neither gloom nor disgrace overspreading the face; and every good deed has a fixed weight and reward, except the tears which flow due to the fear of Allah, for with every drop, Allah shall put out oceans of fire of the Day of Judgement. Surely, when one person among a group of Muslim people (i.e. Ummah) weeps with the fear of Allah, He blesses that whole Ummah with mercy because of that believer's tears."

2. Before the advent of Hujjat (as)

He said: Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Ji'abi – may Allah bless him with mercy, reported to me from Muhammad ibn Musa al-Hazrami, who reported from Malik ibn Abdillah ibn Saif, who reported from 'Ali ibn Mu'bid who reported from Ishtaq ibn Yahya al-Ka'bi, from Sufyan al-Thori, from Mansur, from Rab'ee ibn Harash, from Huzaifa ibn al-Yaman, who said:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, say: "Allah will distinguish His sincere servants and the pure ones, so that the earth is cleansed of the hypocrites and of those who have gone astray

and their generations. Till such time, when there could be fifty women meeting a man, each asking: O servant of Allah, take me as a maid, O servant of Allah, give me refuge."

3. Whoever doubts the excellence of 'Ali (as)

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Khalid al-Maraghi reported to me from Abu Abdillah al-Asadi, who reported from Ja'far ibn Abdullah at Alawi al-Muhammadi; who reported from Yahya ibn Hashim al-Simsar al-Ghassani, who reported from Abu al-Sabah Abdul Ghafoor al-Wasiti, from Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Qarshi, from Abu 'Ali al-Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Rasibi, from al-Dhahhak ibn Muzahim, from Ibn Abbas - may Allah bless him with mercy, who reported that:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny said: "Whoever doubts the excellence of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, will rise from his grave on the Day of Reckoning, with a collar of fire around his neck, having three hundred prongs. On each prong, there will be a Satan frowning upon him, spitting at his face."

4. The tradition of Ayyub

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Katib reported to me from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Zafarani, who reported from Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from Ismail ibn Aban, who reported from Fadhl ibn al-Zubair, from Imran ibn Mitham, from Abayah al-Asadi, who said:

I heard 'Ali, peace be upon him, say: "I am the master of the aged ones. And in me is the tradition of Ayyub (i.e. his sufferings), and by Allah, He will gather together my family for me, the way He did for Ya'qooibn"

5. The one who stood on a clear sign from His Sustainer and his witness from Him

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Bilal al-Mahlabi reported to me from 'Ali ibn Abdillah ibn Asad al-Ishfahani, who reported from Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from Ismail ibn Aban, who reported from al-Sabbah ibn Yahya al-Muzni, from al-A'mash from al-Minhal ibn Amru, from Abbad ibn Abdillah, who said:

That a person called upon Amirul Mu'mineen, peace be upon him, and asked: "O Amirul Mu'mineen, explain to me the verse of Qur'an in which Allah says:

'Is the one who stands upon a clear sign from his Sustainer and a witness to him follows him?' (Hud, 11:17)

He ('Ali) said: "The messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, is the one who stood on a

clear sign from His Sustainer; and I am his witness from Him. By He Who controls my breath, Allah has mentioned in His Book about every group from Quraish. By Him Who controls my soul, for the people to understand what Allah has destined for us Ahlul Bayt, through the revelation to His unlearned Prophet, is more lovable to me than for me to have the whole expanse filled with gold. By Allah, our example in this Ummah is like Noah's Arc or like the Gate of Forgiveness for the children of Israel."

6. 'Ali (as) mobilizing his army for Jihad

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Hubaish al-Katib reported to me from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Zafarani, who reported from Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from Muhammad ibn Ismail, from Zaid ibn al-Muaddal, from Yahya ibn Swaleh, from al-Harith ibn Husairah, from Abu Sadiq, from Jundab ibn Abdillah al-Azadi, who said:

I heard Amirul Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, say to his companions, after having urged them for days on end to march forth for Jihad but in vain: "O people! I have ordered you to march forth, but you did not, and I have admonished you, but you did not acquiesce. So, you are like the absentees in spite of your presence and the deaf in spite of your hearing! I recite unto you words of wisdom and preach to you beautiful preaching and exhort you to fight your despotic adversaries; but when I come to the close of my speech, I find you as disunited as the hands of Saba' (i.e. ten children of a Yamani chief who were each separated from the other).

And the moment I turn away from you, you return to your meetings, forming group circles. (There) you set up similitudes, chant poems and ask each other the news. You have forgotten the art of preparedness for war, and have occupied your minds with unavailing things. Your hands are weakened! Rise to fight the enemy before they overwhelm you! By Allah! Never was a community attacked in its own houses, except that it was humiliated and vanquished.

And I swear in the name of Allah, I do not see you do it, till they have done! And I would love to confront them (alone) with my (firm) determination and vision, (and get killed in the way of Allah) so that I am relieved of enduring you. For, you are like a hoard of camels, which has lost its herdsman; no sooner are they herded on one side, than they fall apart from each other on the other side. By Allah, I can visualize about you that if the war were to rage on, and the hostilities were to flame up, you would separate yourselves from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as easily as the heads are cut off and) the way a woman shirks as she delivers (her child)."

At that time, al-Ash'ath ibn Qais al-Kindi stood up and said: "O Amirul Mu'mineen, why didn't you do what Uthman ibn Affan did?" (i.e. granting favours for the sake of compromising). He, peace upon him, said: "O, pusher to the hellfire! Woe unto you! The act of Ibn Affan was a disgraceful one, even for the one who has no religion, nor any authority with him; so, how can I, who stands on a manifest proof from my Sustainer and the rightful authority is in my hand, do that?

By Allah, that man is indeed weak, who himself makes it possible for his enemy to carve his flesh, crush his bones, tear down his skin and spill his blood! Such a man is not blessed with a brave heart. If you so desire, be like him! As far as I am concerned, the least I can give that enemy is a hit of my sword, which will send the bones of the skull flying, palm falling together with the arms. Then Allah shall do what He intends."

Then Abu Ayyub al–Ansari Khalid ibn Zaid, the host of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, rose, and said: "O people, surely Amirul Mu'mineen has conveyed to those who have heeding ears and remembering hearts. Allah has indeed blessed you with an honour, which you do not accept in the way you should! He has left with you your Prophet's cousin, master of all the Muslims after him (i.e. the Prophet). He (i.e. 'Ali) makes you learned in Religion and calls you to fight against those who have descended upon you to afflict you. It seems as if you have gone deaf, hearing nothing. Or that your hearts are impermeably wrapped, so that you do not understand! Are you not ashamed?

O servants of Allah! Did you not have an era of injustice and hostility yesterday? (i.e. in the days gone by). An era in which affliction was common, spread all over the country? When the rightfuls were deprived, their faces smacked, their bellies trampled upon, hurled down on an open ground, and borne by the sandstorms.

There was nothing to protect them from heat or cold, from being scorched by the sun and its glare, except the tattered clothes on their bodies, or the shaggy old huts.

Till Allah brought unto you Amirul Mu'mineen, peace be upon him, who declared the truth and spread justice, and acted according to the Book (i.e. the Qur'an). So, O people, be thankful to Allah for the bounty with which He has blessed you, and do not turn away on your backs. And be not of those who say "we hear", but they hear not.

Sharpen your swords and prepare to fight your enemies. Respond when you are summoned and listen and obey when commanded. Let that what you say happen; and prove yourselves among the truthful by following what you have been ordered to do."

7. Pray with all your heart and mind. . .

He said: Abul Hasan Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Walid – may Allah bless him with mercy, reported to me from his father, from Sa'd ibn Abdillah, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Ibrahim al-Karkhi who said:

I heard Abu Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, say: "When Allah combines in the heart of a believer the virtues of guarding from the forbidden evils and renouncing the world, I pray that Allah grant him paradise."

Then he added: "I love to find a believing person from you standing for his daily prayers, with all his heart

and mind set for Allah; not digressed by any worldly anxieties. And when a faithful comes to his Sustainer with all his heart and mind, then Allah turns His attention towards him; and after He has confirmed His love for him, He fills the people's heart with His love."

8. Believers are all brothers

He said: Abu Hafs, Umar ibn Muhammad al-Sayrafi, reported from Muhammad ibn Hammam al-Katib al-Iskafi, who reported from Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Himyari, who reported from Muhammad ibn Isa al-Ash'ari, who reported from Abdullah ibn Ibrahim, who reported from al-Husayn ibn Zaid, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father who said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: "The believers are all brothers; each one fulfilling the needs of the other. And because they help each other when in need, Allah will fulfill their needs on the Day of Judgement."

And may Allah bless upon our master Muhammad, the Prophet, and upon his progeny.

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