

(.The Great Virtues of Imam Ali (A.S

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In praise of Ali (AS)

He said: Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husain reported to me from his father, who reported from Muhammad b. Yahya al-Attar, who reported from Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Isa, from Ali b. Al-Hakam, from Hisham b. Salim, from Sulaiman b. Khalid, from Abu Abdillah Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, from his forefathers, peace be upon them, who said:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, told Ali, peace be upon him: "O Ali, you are from me and I from you. Your friend is my friend and my friend is Allah's friend. And your enemy is my enemy and my enemy is the enemy of Allah.

O Ali, I am at war with the one who fights you and at peace with one who is at peace with you. O Ali, you have a treasure in the Heaven and you are the master of its both sides. O Ali, you are the divider of heaven and hell. None shall enter the heaven unless he has recognized you, and you have recognized him! And none shall enter hell unless he has rejected you and you have rejected him.

O Ali, you and your descendants shall be on the heights (al-A'araaf) on the Day of Judgment, recognizing the sinners by their marks, and the believers by their signs. O Ali, the believers ".would not have been distinguished, after I have departed, if you were not there

Ali (AS) on the pious companions of the Prophet

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

Once, I prayed behind Ali b. 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 ears'. 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).

Ali (AS) and the traders of Kufa

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

Abu Ja'far, Muhammad b. Ali al-Baqir, peace be upon them both, who said: Ali b. 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 Mo'mineen."

Ali (AS)'s admonition after Isha

And with the first claim of narration from Ali b. Mahzyar, from al-Hasan b. Mahboob, from Amru b. Abi al-Maqdam, from Jabir, from:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, who said: When Amirul Mo'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."

Ali (AS) guides to true reform of oneself

And with the former chains of narration from Ali b. Mahzyar (from Ali b. Hadeed), who reported from Abu Ishaq al-Khorasani, a friend of ours, that: Amirul Mo'mineen, Ali b. 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."

Ali (AS) refused to corrupt himself

And with the former chain of narration from Ali b. Mahzyar, from Ibn Abi Umayr, from Hisham, from Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, who said: Amirul Mo'mineen, Ali b. 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 "I!what can mend your ways? But I hate to redress your situation by corrupting myself

Ali (AS)'s admonition

And with the former chain of narration from Ali b. Mahzyar, from Fadhalah, from Ismail from Abu Abdillah, peace be upon him, who said: Amirul Mo'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)."

Imam Ali (AS)'s testament

He said: Abu Hafs Umar b. Muhammad b. Ali al-Sayrafi, commonly known as Ibn al-Zayyat, reported to me from Abu Ali Muhammad b. Hammam al-Iskafi, who reported from Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Malik, who reported from Ahmad b. Salamah al-Ghanawi, who reported from Muhammad b. al-Husain al-Ameri, who reported from Abu Muammar, who reported from Abu

Bakr b. Ayyash, from al-Fujay' al-Aqilee who said:

Al-Hasan b. Ali b. Abi Talib reported me that when my father was nearing his death, he began to enjoin, saying:

"This is testified by Ali b. Abi Talib, the brother of Muhammad, messenger of Allah, his cousin, his successor and his companion. My first testament is that, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that, Muhammad is His messenger and His chosen one. He chose him by His knowledge and by His selection. And that Allah will resurrect all those in the graves and take the account of their deeds from the people; and He knows what they conceal in the hearts.

Now, I enjoin upon you, O Hasan and you are a sufficient successor, all that the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, enjoined me to do.

When things are as they are, make it a habit to remain indoors and weep over your lapses. And do not let the worldly affairs become your main worry. And I enjoin upon you to perform daily prayers at their right time and to pay alms to the deserving people on the right occasion; and to remain silent when in doubt, and to maintain a balance in your acts, and to be just when pleased or angry, and to observe good neighbourliness and to be cordial to the guest, and kind

to the one in difficulty and those in adversity, and to keep good relation with the kinsmen, and to love the poor and to give them company, and to remain humble, for that is the best form of worship, and to cut short your long deluding hopes and to remember death and to detach yourself from the worldly distraction, for indeed you are mortgaged to death, targeted by afflictions and illnesses.

And I enjoin upon you to be in fear of Allah in your private as well as public affairs; and forbid you to be impetuous in speech and act. And when any matter concerning the life hereafter springs up before you, initiate it; and when any matter related to this world comes up, be patient till you are rightly guided about it.

And refrain from being at places where you can be accused (of evil), and avoid the company of those who are known for the vices. Surely, an evil companion influences a change over his associate.

O my son, always work for Allah and restrain from obscenity; and enjoin good and forbid evil. Promote brotherhood among friends for the sake of Allah; and love a righteous man for his virtue. Divert the sinful from (tampering with) your faith, and abhor him with your heart and break away from him by your deeds, so that you do not become like him.

And avoid sitting in the streets and hold back from arguments and disputations with those who neither have wisdom nor knowledge. Be economic in your living and also maintain a balance in your acts of devotion and worship; adopting among them that which you can perform with

regularity.

Remain silent and you will be saved, and send forth in advance for yourself and you will benefit. Learn the ways of good and you will know, and always remember Allah. And be kind to the tender ones in your family and show reverence to the older ones. And do not eat any food till you have given away from it in charity before eating it.

And have a habit of fasting, for that is the purification of the body and a shield for its people. Fight your base desires, warn your friends, avoid your enemies and attend the gatherings where Allah is remembered. Be frequent in your supplications, for I am not going to be back for advising you - and this indeed is the parting between us.

And I enjoin upon you to be kind to Muhammad, who is your brother; the son of your father.

And you know how much I love him.

And as for your brother al-Husain, he is your mother's son; and I do not wish to add anything to that. I leave you in the care of Allah and to Him I pray for your well being and beseech Him to save you from the rebellious despots. I enjoin upon you patience, patience, till Allah decrees ".His command and there is no might but by Allah, Most High, Most Powerful

Abu Layla seeks clarification from Ali (AS)

He said: Abul Hasan Ali b. Muhammad al-Katib reported to me from al-Hasan b. Ali al-Za'farani, who reported from Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from al-Mas'oodi, who reported from Muhammad b. Katheer, from Yahya b. Hammad al-Qattan, who reported from Abu Muhammad al-Hadhrami, from Abu Ali al-Hamdani, that once Abdul Rahman b. Abu Layla called upon Amirul Mo'mineen Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be upon him and said:

"O Amirul Mo'mineen! I want to ask you so as to learn from you, (though) we have waited (for long) to hear you say something about your matter, but you never said anything. Would you not tell us whether it was a covenant from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, or was it something you had opined? We have had a lot of false sayings about you! However, we have found what we have to accept from you and what we have heard from your mouth is most reliable.

Indeed, some of us say that if Caliphate were to return to you after the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, no one would have disputed with you. By Allah, I do not know what to reply if asked. Should I consider that the people who took over were more worthy than you? And if I say so, then for what purpose did the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, appoint you at the Farewell pilgrimage, when he said:

'O People, of whosoever I am the Master, Ali is also his Master.' So, if you were worthier for the

authority than them, then on what score should we accept their authority?"

Amirul Mo'mineen, peace be upon him, said: "O Abdul Rahman, surely, when Allah, Most High, called back His Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, I was worthiest of all people for the authority. But I had a covenant with the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, as a

result of which I had to submit to the will of Allah even if they were to lead me by the nose. Surely, the first loss that was sustained was the invalidating of our right in Khums; and when our position was weakened, then the herdsmen of Quraish pounced upon us with greed. Thus, the people were indebted to us, and if they had voluntarily returned to me my rights, I would have accepted and managed it, even for a stipulated time.

So I lived among them as a creditor, for a stipulated time. If they paid back earlier, the creditor would repossess his goods and thank them; and if they delayed it, he would take it without considering them deserving any gratitude. So, I was like a person accepting easy terms, yet living among them full of grief.

The right guidance is identified by a small group of people who accept it. So when I am silent, excuse me. And if the time comes when you need my reply, I shall reply you. So withhold from me what I have withheld from you!"

Then Abdul Rahman said: "O Amirul Mo'mineen, by your soul, you are like the one of whom the earlier poet said:

"By your soul, you have indeed awakened the one who was asleep and you have caused the one with two ears to hear."

Ali (AS) condemns varity and snobbery

He said: Abu al-Tayyib al-Husain b. Muhammad al-Nahwi al-Tammar reported to me from Muhammad b. al-Hasan, who reported from Abu Naeem, who reported from Saleh b. Abdillah, who reported from Hisham, from Abu Mikhnaf, from A'amash, from Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'ee, from al-Asbagh b. Nubatah, may Allah bless him with mercy, who said:

One day Amirul Mo'mineen, peace be upon him, addressed the people and praised Allah, and lauded His glory, and invoked His blessings upon the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny. Then he said: "O people, listen to what I have to say and assimilate my speech! Snobbery and vanity is a kind of tyranny and self-conceit is a type of arrogance! And Satan is an ever-present enemy, promising you delusion.

Be it clear to you that a Muslim is a brother to his fellow Muslim. So do not defame each other and do not betray each other! Surely, the laws of Religion (Islam) are all one, and its ways all head for one goal. He who follows it reaches, and he who abandons it falls, and he who forsakes it is destroyed.

When a Muslim is entrusted with something, he never acts dishonestly; and when he promises, he does not break it and when he speaks, he never lies. We are the inmates of mercy; our speech is truth, our acts just. And from us is the last of the Prophets and from among us are the leaders of Islam and the custodians of the Holy Book.

We call you unto Allah and His Prophet and to confront His enemies, to struggle strenuously in His affairs and to seek His pleasure. And we invite you to establishing the daily prayers, giving alms, performing the pilgrimage to the sacred House, fasting during the month of Ramadhan and to hasten payment from the surplus of the spoils of war to its rightful owner.

Be it known that it is most surprising to see Mo'awiyah, son of Abu Sufyan al-Umawi and Amru b. al-Aas al-Sahmi, inciting people to avenge for the blood of their cousin (i.e. Uthman b. Affan). While I say, with Allah as my witness, that I never acted against the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and I never disobeyed him in any matter. I protected him

with my soul in situations when the valiants turned on their heels, and writhed with fear. I did it with the might bestowed upon me by Allah and all praise is for Him. And the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) departed from this world, with his head on my laps, and I arranged to wash him with my hands while the noble angels helped me to turn him sideways. And I swear by the name of Allah, falsehood became manifest against truth in the dispute which arose among the Ummah after its Prophet's death - except that which Allah Wills."

He said: Then Ammar b. Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, stood up and said: "But Amirul Mo'mineen has clearly intimated to you that the Ummah will not remain steadfast for him."
.Then people dispersed with their eyes opened

Ibn Abbas speaks about Ali (AS)

He said: Abul Hasan Ali b. Khalid reported to me from Zaid b. al-Husain al-Kufi, who reported from Ja'far b. Nujayh, who reported from Jandal b. Waliq al-Taghlabi, who reported from Muhammad b. Umar al-Mazini, from Abu Zaid al-Ansari, from Saeed b. Bashir, from Qutadah, from Saeed b. al-Musayyib, who said:

I heard a man ask Ibn Abbas about Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be upon him. Ibn Abbas told him: "Surely, Ali is the one who prayed towards both the Qiblas and swore allegiance to the Prophet on both occasions. He never worshipped an idol nor did he divine by the arrows. He was born a Muslim and did not associate any partner to Him, even for a wink."

The man said: "I did not ask you that! I want to know from you about the sword which he proudly carried over his shoulder, came to Basrah and killed forty thousand. Then he went to Syria, confronted the Arab leaders, pitting one against the other and then killed them. Then he came to Nahrawan and killed the Muslims upto the last one."

Ibn Abbas told him: "Who do you think is more knowledgeable, Ali or myself?" He said: "If I had thought Ali to be more knowledgeable, I would not have come to you!" Upon hearing this, Ibn Abbas was enraged and he said: "May your mother mourn you! Ali is the one who taught me. And his knowledge is from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, and the Prophet received knowledge from Allah, Most High. So, the knowledge of the Prophet is from Allah, and Ali's knowledge is from the Prophet and my knowledge is from Ali. And the knowledge of all the companions of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, ".when compared to Ali's knowledge is just like a drop in the seven oceans

What Ali (AS) said to Kumail

He said: Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Husain reported to me from his father, from Muhammad b. Abul Qasim Majeelawayh, from Muhammad b. Ali al-Sayrafi, from Nasr b. Muzahim, from Amru b. Sa'd, from Fudhail b. Khudaij, from Kumail b. Ziyad al-Nakh'ee who said:

Once I was with Amirul Mo'mineen in the mosque of Kufa, and when we completed our late evening prayers (i.e. Isha), he took me by his hands and came out of the mosque. He did not say a word till we arrived at the rear part of Kufa. As he entered the desert, he heaved a sigh and said:

"O Kumail, no doubt these hearts (i.e. minds) are containers, and the best of them are those who retain most. Remember from me what I say; people are of three categories: the learned men (of piety), the students on the path of salvation, and (the third one) the riffraff of the society, following every croak of the crows, bending as the wind blows; never benefiting from the light of knowledge, nor finding a refuge with a strong supporter.

O Kumail, knowledge is better than wealth; for knowledge guards you, while you have to guard wealth; and wealth is diminished when spent, while knowledge grows and increases when put in use.

O Kumail, to have liking and affinity for a learned man is the best way to entrench ones faith in Allah, it enables one to be obedient to Him during lifetime, and to be praiseworthy after one has died.

O Kumail, dividend from wealth disappears with its loss, O Kumail, the hoarders of wealth have died, while the learned men exist for ever; their bodies have disappeared but their teachings and wisdom are ingrained in the hearts."

(And then pointing to his chest, he said): "Here is well-grounded, plentiful knowledge; I wish it had true recipients and adherents, (I would have imparted it).

But, unfortunately, some unscrupulous men of understanding have tried to misuse it, using

religion as a weapon to earn the worldly gain, and seeking undue power by divine authority over Allah's creatures, abusing His bounties which He bestowed upon them. So the feeble-minded people accepted them as reliable; or took them as compliant with (divine) wisdom, discarding the true guardians of truth. (The truth is that) such people (who they have adopted as their guides) have no insight into its ramifications; with the result that with the slightest confusion,

doubt enters their minds. Neither of them could be the true carrier of knowledge. And then there are those with insatiable lust, easily misled by the pleasures of flesh, or enticed by accumulating wealth, not at all among those who care for religion. They very much resemble the grazing cattle. Thus, knowledge dies with the death of such carriers.

Yet, the earth is never devoid of either a manifest divine power, or the one in concealment, ensuring that His clear signs are not lost. Surely, with those fewer people of enormous import, Allah protects His proof, till they succeed to transmit it further to their likes, and plant it deep in their hearts.

They are the ones overwhelmed by the (true) knowledge of certitude, and have made it easy for themselves to tread on the path which men in luxury found difficult. They derive pleasure and enjoyment from things which repel the ignorant. Though they live on earth with their bodies, their souls hang onto the higher plane. They are the (true) representatives of Allah on His earth, and the ones who invite (people) to His religion. Alas! How keen I am to have sight of them!

And I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and for you all."

".Then he {i.e. Ali (A.S.)} withdrew his hand from mine and said: "You may leave when you like

Ali (AS) writes to people of Kufa

He said: Abul Hasan Ali b. Muhammad b. Hubaysh al-Katib reported to me from al-Hasan b. Ali al-Za'farani, who reported from Aby Ishaq Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Thaqafi, who reported from Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Uthman, who reported from Ali b. Muhammad b. Abu Saeed, from Fudhail b.al-Ja'ad, from Abu Ishaq al-Hamdani, who said:

When Amirul Mo'mineen Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be upon him, appointed Muhammad b. Abu Bakr as the governor of Egypt and its provinces, he wrote him a letter asking him to read it over to the people of Egypt and to act accordingly. The letter said:

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful
From the slave of Allah, Amirul Mo'mineen, Ali b. Abi Talib, to the people of Egypt and Muhammad b. Abu Bakr. I convey to you my praise for Allah, other than Whom there is no god. Secondly, I exhort you to adopt the ways of Taqwa, to be mindful of your duties by guarding against all sins and evils, in all matters for which you are answerable to Him, for unto Him is your return. Surely, Allah, Most High, says (in Qur'an): 'Every soul is a hostage to what it has

earned' (74:38), and He says: 'Allah warns you to beware of Him, and unto Him is the ultimate return.' (3:28). And He says: 'By your Lord, We shall question them all, regarding what they used to do.' (15:92,93)

And know you all, O slaves of Allah! He surely will ask you about all your deeds, small and big.

If He punishes we are the wrongdoers, and if He forgives, He is the most Merciful. O slaves of Allah! When a slave acts for Allah in obedience to Him, he draws nearest to earning His pardon and mercy; and recommends him to penitence. Always adopt Taqwa, be mindful of your duties to Allah by guarding against sins, for that combines all good, the way nothing else does; and leads to the attainment of all good, the way nothing else does, encompassing the good of this world and of hereafter.

Allah, Most High, says (in Qur'an): 'And it is said to those who fear Allah - what has your Lord revealed? They say: Something good. To those who do good in this world is the good reward, and the hereafter is surely much better. Blessed indeed is the abode of God-fearing.' (16:30)

Know you all, O slaves of Allah! A believer acts to earn the reward for three purposes: either it is for the good of this world. Then Allah rewards him for his deed in his lifetime here. As Allah said for Ibrahim: 'And We gave him his reward in this life, and in the hereafter he shall be among the righteous.' (29:27).

Or he does for Allah, Most High; then He rewards him here and hereafter, and becomes Sufficient for him in both the abodes. Indeed, Allah, Most High has said (in Qur'an): 'O My servants who have believed, fear your Lord. Those who have been bounteous in this world will have a bounty, and Allah's earth is vast.

The steadfast will be paid their wages in full without reckoning.' (39:10) And He will not take account for what He will give them here. He says: 'To those who do the good deed is the best reward and more.' (10:26). So the best reward is the Paradise, and more is what he is rewarded here in the world.

Or he works purely for the next world. (For him) Allah expiates every sin with good deed. He, Most High, says: 'Surely, the good deeds will wipe out the evil deeds, and that is a reminder for those who remember.' (11:114). Till on the Day of Judgement, when all his good deeds will be counted, and Allah will reward him ten fold to seven hundred fold for every single act. Allah, Most High, says: 'A reward from your Lord, a sufficient gift' (78:36), and He says: 'To those who will be meted out the double reward, and they shall be secure in the lofty chambers.' (34:37)

So be desirous of this, may Allah have mercy on you, and work (hard) for it, and urge each other to do accordingly.

And be it known to you all, O, slaves of Allah! Those fearing Allah and mindful of their duties to Him, have gained both, the instant good (of this world) and the promised good (of hereafter). They share with the people of this world in their worldly gain, for Allah has made it legitimate

for them that which is necessary from this life, and thus made them content; as Allah, Most High, says (in Qur'an): 'Say, who has forbidden Allah's finery which He fashioned for His servants, or the good things He provided? Say: These are meant in the present world, for those who believe, and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection. Thus We make clear our revelations for a people who know.' (7:32).

They lived on earth the best life and ate from it its best. They shared with the people of the world in their worldly bounties, eating with them the best of what they ate, drinking with them the best of what they drank, wearing the best of their attire, lived with them in the best of abodes. They married in the happiest way as they all did, and rode on the best means of transport as they did.

Thus, they availed of the pleasures of this world with the worldly people, and at the same time, they will be in the proximity of Allah tomorrow! They will wish, and He will grant them their wish, and will not refuse them their prayers and not reduce their share in the (eternal) bliss;

O servants of Allah! It is this end that the people of wisdom crave, and work for it by adopting Taqwa. And there is no might nor any strength but that from Allah!

O servants of Allah! If you fear Allah, and safeguard the rights of your Prophet in respect of the inmates of his house, then you will have surely worshipped Him in the best way, and you will have remembered Him in the best manner; and you will have expressed your gratitude to Him in the best way. You will have then adopted the best style of patience and gratitude and the best method of endeavour.

Even if there be some one invoking longer prayers, keeping more fasts, yet you will be classified as more fearful of Allah in His estimation, and worthiest advisers to the people holding (divine) authority.

O servants of Allah! Be warned of death and its inebriating pang; and prepare yourselves for it, for it will indeed rush you into a terrible thing; it will either be good (experience) with no evil ever accompanying it; or it will be evil (experience) with no good ever going with it. So who is nearer to the Paradise than the one who works for it? And who is nearer to hellfire than the one who works for it?

Surely, no soul leaves its body till it has known to which of the two abodes it will reach; to Paradise or to hellfire? Is he the enemy of Allah or His friend? So if he is a friend of Allah, the gates of Paradise will be opened for him, and its paths paved. He will see what Allah has kept

ready for him. Then he will feel free from all worries, and he will find all burdens lifted from him. And if he is an enemy of Allah, the gates of hell will be opened for him, and its paths paved. Then he will find what Allah has prepared for him. He will face all the discomfort, and be deprived of all joy. All this will be at the time of death, and at that moment shall the certitude be. Allah says (in Qur'an):

'Those whom the angels will carry off while in state of grace, saying: Peace upon you, enter Paradise for what you did.' (16:32). And then He says: 'Those who are carried off by the angels while still wrongdoing themselves; then they will offer submission saying: we did no evil. Yes, Allah surely knows well what you were doing. Enter them the gates of hell, abiding therein forever. Wretched indeed is the abode of the arrogant.' (16:28,29)

O slaves of Allah! There is no escape from death, so beware of it before it occurs and be prepared for it. You are being hunted by death; if you stop, it will capture you, and if you be a fugitive, it will find you. Its company with you is more constant than your own shadow! It is tied to your forelocks, and the (life on) earth is being folded (like a scroll from) behind you. So remember death frequently, (especially) when your mind fights you for temptations, for death is a sufficient admonisher. And the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, often reminded his companions to remember death, saying: 'Remember death as often as you can, for it demolishes all pleasures, and is a barrier between you and your base desires.'

O slaves of Allah! That which will happen to the unforgiven one, after death, is indeed more severe than death itself. The grave! Beware of its constriction, its hardship, its darkness and the loneliness in it. Every day, the grave exclaims: 'I am the house of loneliness, I am the house of dust; I am the house of gloom, I am the house of insects and vermins.' So, a grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or a pit from the pits of hell.

When a believing slave is buried, the earth says: 'Welcome! You were among those who I loved when they walked on my back. When you will be in my charge, you will see how I deal with you!' Then it will expand for as far as one can see. But when an unbeliever is interred, the earth says: 'You are not welcome! For you were among those who I hated most as they walked on my back. When you will be in my charge, you will know how I deal with you!' Then it will squeeze it hard, till the ribs will come together.

Surely, the life of hardship for which Allah has warned (in Qur'an) refers to the grave, where Allah will make an unbeliever a victim of ninety nine dragons, which will devour his flesh and break his bones, frequenting upon him the same way till resurrection. If only one of those dragons were to blow into the earth, nothing would ever grow from it.

Know you, O slaves of Allah! Your weak spirits and your delicate bodies for which little

discomfort is enough (to break it down), will be terribly weakened because of this. So, if you can have mercy over your bodies and your spirits by saving them from what they can not bear, then act according to what Allah likes, and discard that which He dislikes.

O slaves of Allah! And the day of resurrection is more severe than the grave. It will be a day when the young will grow old, and the old ones will get inebriated; the wombs will abort, and every suckling mother will be distracted from the child she is suckling; it will be a dark dreadful day, a day whose evil will be rampant.

The angels, who have no sins, will be scared by the terror of that day, and the hard seven (skies) will tremble, together with the peg-like mountains, and the couch-like earth. The heavens will be rent asunder and on that day it will be tottering, and it will turn red like pigment.

And the mountains shall turn into heaps of sand, after it had once been hard rock. And then the trumpet will be blown, so those in the heavens and on earth will be terrified, except for whoever Allah wills: (So what will be for those who have sinned with their ears, eyes, tongue, hand, foot, private parts and the stomach; if Allah does not forgive them and be compassionate on that day?

For they will be judged and then consigned to the fire whose pit is deep, whose heat is severe, and where stinking water is for drink. There will be ever renewed chastisement with iron rods. They will not be relieved of its torment, nor will the inmates die. An abode where there will be no mercy and where prayers of the inmates will not be heard.

And know you O slaves of Allah! Together with this there will be mercy of Allah, which will not be thwarted from the slaves, with Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who fear Allah.

There will be good, with no evil accompanying it at any time; its pleasures will never be satiated and its meeting will never disperse. Its inmates will be in proximity of the Merciful, attended by the youths with golden saucers containing fruits and sweet basils.

Then know you, O Muhammad b. Abu Bakr! I have indeed appointed you to govern the greatest of my troops in my mind, the people of Egypt. So, when I have given you that type of appointment, you deserve most to be cautious about yourself! And to be watchful over your faith. And try your best not to displease your Lord,

Most High, for the sake of the people's pleasure. For in (the pleasure of) Allah, there is a substitute for everything else; but in anything else, there is no substitute for Him (i.e. His pleasure). Be severe to the oppressors, and censure them. Be lenient to the righteous, bring them closer, and appoint them in your inner circle of brotherhood.

And watch your daily prayers, as how you perform them, for you will be leading the people, and

therefore you must fulfil all its conditions, and not try to belittle it. Whenever an Imam leads the prayers with deficiency, he bears the responsibility, while the people following him suffer no loss in their prayers. So fulfil it and guard it; you will earn the same reward as theirs without their reward being reduced.

Then be mindful of your Wudhoo, for it is a condition for the fulfilment of the prayers. You must wash your mouth three times, draw water in your nose three times, then wash your face, then the right hand, followed by the left hand, and then wipe your head and two feet. Surely, I saw the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, do the same way. And know that Wudhoo is half of the faith.

Then be watchful about the time of Daily Prayers. Do not offer them before time because you are free, nor delay them because you are busy. For someone asked the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, about the timings of the Daily Prayers, and the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, replied: 'Jibraeel came to me and showed me the timings.

He prayed Zohr when the sun passed the meridian as it declined to his right, and then he showed me the time of Asr, when the shadows of every object become equal to its size. Then he prayed Maghrib when the sun set, and he prayed Isha when the twilight disappeared. And he prayed the Subh prayers in the last part of the night's darkness (near dawn) as the stars flickered. So you say your prayers on these times, and remain constant on the known tradition and upon the clear path.

Then look at your Ruku and Sujood, for the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, prayed the most complete prayers, though in practice, it was least burdensome. And known that all your affairs follow your Prayers. Whoever is negligent of his Prayers, will be more negligent in other acts of worship. I beseech Him Who sees and cannot be seen, and He is on the highest horizon;

that He may take us and you among those He loves and with whom He is pleased; so that He may help us be among those who remember and praise Him, and who worship Him best and fulfil His covenant, and in all that He determines in our affairs here and hereafter.

And you, O people of Egypt! Let your speech be confirmed by your conduct, and your public life be confirmed by your private life; and let not your tongues contradict your hearts. Let it be known, to you that a leader who guides to the right path cannot be equated to a leader who lends to ruination, nor does the successor of your Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) compare with his adversary.

And I am not anxious or afraid about a believer or an unbeliever doing you any harm. As for the believer, Allah prevents him from causing harm because of his faith, and as for the unbelievers,

Allah constrains him from you because of his disbelief. But I am worried about the hypocrites misleading you, for he says what you approve, but does what you disapprove. O Muhammad b. Abu Bakr, the best instruction in religion is piety in the practice of religion, and to act in His obedience. And I exhort you to be God-fearing in your private and public matters, and in any situation you may be. This world is a place of test and tribulation, and the hereafter is an abode of reward and eternity. So act for the abode, which is forever, and turn away from that which will perish, but do not forget your portion from the bounties of this world.

And I enjoin you seven virtues; they represent complete Islam:

Fear Allah and in His Presence, do not fear people;

The best speech is that when its truth is confirmed by conduct;

Do not give two contradicting judgements in one matter, for that will cause discrepancy in your directive, and you will deviate from truth;

Love for your subjects what you love for yourself and your family, and detest for them what you detest for yourself and your family, for that is most appropriate to establish the authority and most beneficial to the people;

Fight in the way of Truth, and do not fear any reproach in the way of Allah;

Give good advice when someone consults you;

Make yourself an ideal for those Muslims who are around you, and also for those who are far away.

May Allah tie us with the bond of love in religion, and adorn us with the adornment of those who fear Allah. And may your obedience to Allah subsist till you and I meet as brothers reclining on the beds, facing each other (i.e. in Paradise).

O people of Egypt! Do your best to support your governor Muhammad, and remain unflinchingly in your obedience, till when you arrive near the Prophet at his Pool. May Allah help you and us ".on the way of His pleasure. Peace be upon you from Allah and His mercy and blessings