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Thirty First Assembly

Met on Monday, the 16th of the month of Ramadhan in 409 Hijrah, heard by me and Abu al-Fawaris. The grand Sheikh al-Mufid, Abu Abdillah, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man, may Allah enhance his capabilities, narrated:

1. Blessings from Allah are a gift

He said: Abu Ghalib Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Zurari, may Allah bless him with mercy, reported to me from his maternal uncle Abu al-Abbas Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Razzaz al-Qurashi, who reported from Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Abu al-Khattab, from al-Hasan ibn Mahboob, from Jamil ibn Swaleh, from Barid ibn Mu'awiyah al-Ajali, from Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir, peace be upon him, from his forefathers, that:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said Allah, Most High, says: "Grace and Blessing are My gift to My believing servant. If he accepts them, that is My mercy and from Me. And if he rejects them, that is because of his sins which deprive him; and it is his doing and not Mine. And I have guided every creature to Faith, and fashioned him in a shapely manner. And I never made him a victim of miserliness, for I always wished him good."

2. 'Fatimah (as) is part of me'

He said: Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Khalid al-Maraghi reported to me from Abul Qasim al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn al-Hasan al-Kufi, who reported from Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan al-Ghazzal, who reported from his father, who reported from Abdullah ibn al-Hasan al-Ahmasi who reported from Khalid ibn Abdillah, from Yazid ibn Abu Ziyad, from Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Nawfil, who reported from Sa'd ibn Malik, meaning Ibn Abi Waqqas, who said:

I heard the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, say: "Fatimah is a part of me; whoever pleases her, pleases me, and whoever displeases her, displease me. She is dearer to me than

all beings."

3. 'Ali (as) writes to people of Kufa

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

When Amirul Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, appointed Muhammad ibn 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 Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, to the people of Egypt and Muhammad ibn 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),

'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 ibn 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 ibn 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 enjoy 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."

4. Never gloat over misfortunes of others

He said: Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Ji'abi reported to me from Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Umar al-Nishaburi, who reported from Muhammad ibn Abu Sary, who reported from his father, who reported from Hafs ibn Ghiyas, from Bard ibn Sinan, from Makhool, from Wathilah ibn al-Asqa, who said:

The Prophet said: "Never gloat over the misfortune of your brother, for he may be freed from it and you may be the next victim."

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

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