

تَائِيَّةٌ لِلْبَرِّ

Ta'iyyah Al-Ilbiri

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Masud ibn Saad
Al-Tujibi known as Al-Ilbiri

Translation by Mohammad Yusuf Azizi

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. We praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and seek refuge in Him from the evils of our souls and the misdeeds of our actions. Whomever Allah guides, none can mislead, and whomever He leaves astray, none can guide.

To proceed: This is the timeless poem *Ta'iyyah* by the righteous Andalusian scholar Abu Ismail al-Ilbiri—may Allah have mercy on him. This heartfelt and wise composition is a sincere admonition, urging reflection on the shortness of life, the deception of worldly pleasures, and the importance of righteous action.

With eloquence and clarity, the poem calls the reader to repentance, humility, and preparation for the Hereafter. It encourages seeking beneficial knowledge, avoiding heedlessness, and remaining steadfast upon the truth. Its verses serve as a mirror to the soul and a reminder to prioritise what truly matters—pleasing Allah and securing eternal success.

May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his companions, all of them.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تُفْتُ فُوَادَكَ الْأَيَامُ فَتَا * وَتَنْحِثُ جِسْمَكَ السَّاعَاتُ نَهْتَا

The days crush your heart with constant crushing, and the hours chisel your body with chiselling.

وَتَدْعُوكَ الْمَنْوُنُ دُعَاءَ صِدقٍ * أَلَا يَا صَاحِ أَنْتَ أُرِيدُ أَنْتَا

And death calls you with a truthful call: "Oh companion, it is you I want, it is you."

أَرَاكَ تُحِبُّ عِرْسًا ذَاتَ خِدْرٍ * أَبَتَ طَلَاقَهَا الْأَكْيَاسُ بَتَّا

I see you love a bride who is veiled and secluded, yet the wise have firmly decided to divorce her.

تَنَامُ الدَّهْرَ وَيُنْجَكَ فِي غَطِيطٍ * بِهَا حَتَّى إِذَا مِتَّ انْتَهَتَا

You sleep your whole life—woe to you!—in deep snoring, until when you die, then you finally wake up.

فَكَمْ ذَا أَنْتَ مَخْدُوعٌ وَحَتَّى * مَتَّ لَا تَرْعَوِي عَنْهَا وَحَتَّى

So how long will you go on being deceived? and until when will you not abstain from it? Until when?

أَبَا بَكْرٍ دَعَوْتُكَ لَوْ أَجْبَتَا * إِلَى مَا فِيهِ حَظْكَ لَوْ عَقْلَتَا

Oh Abu Bakr, I called you, if only you had responded, to that which contains your benefit, if you had used your reason.

إِلَى عِلْمٍ تَكُونُ بِهِ إِمَاماً * مُطَاعًا إِنْ نَهَيْتَ وَإِنْ أَمْرَتَا

To knowledge through which you would become an Imam, obeyed when you forbid, and when you command.

وَيَجْلُلُو مَا بِعَيْنِكَ مِنْ غِشاها * وَيَهْدِيكَ السَّبِيلَ إِذَا ضَلَّلَتَا

And it clears away what is covering your eye, and it guides you to the path when you go astray.

وَتَحْمِلُ مِنْهُ فِي نَادِيكَ تَاجًا * وَيَكْسُوكَ الْجَمَالَ إِذَا عَرِيتَا

And from it, you carry a crown in your gathering, and it clothes
you with beauty when you are bare.

يَنَالُكَ نَفْعُهُ مَا دُمْتَ حَيَا * وَيَبْقَى ذِكْرُهُ لَكَ إِنْ ذَهَبْتَا

Its benefit reaches you as long as you are alive, and its mention (your
reputation through it) remains for you when you are gone.

هُوَ الْعَضْبُ الْمُهَنَّدُ لَيْسَ يَنْبُو * تُصِيبُ بِهِ مَقَايِلَ مَنْ أَرَدَتَا

It is a sharp, Indian-forged sword that does not miss its mark, you
strike with it the vital points of whomever you wish.

وَكَنْزٌ لَا تَخَافُ عَلَيْهِ لِصًا * خَفِيفُ الْحَمْلِ يُوجَدُ حَيْثُ كُنْتَا

And it is a treasure you do not fear thieves for, Light to carry, and
found wherever you are.

يَزِيدُ بِكَثْرَةِ الْإِنْفَاقِ مِنْهُ * وَيَنْقُصُ إِنْ بِهِ كَفًا شَدَدْتَا

It increases the more you spend from it, and it decreases if you
tighten your hand over it.

فَلَوْ قَدْ ذُقْتَ مِنْ حَلْوَاهُ طَعْمًا * لَا تَرْتَتَ التَّعْلُمَ وَاجْتَهَدْتَا

If you had tasted even a bit of its sweetness, you would have
preferred learning and strived hard for it.

وَلَمْ يَشْغُلْكَ عَنْهُ هَوَى مُطَاعُهُ * وَلَا دُنْيَا بِزُخْرُفِهَا فُتِنْتَا

And no obeyed desire would have distracted you from it, nor the
worldly life with its glitter would have tempted you.

وَلَا أَلْهَاكَ عَنْهُ أَنِيقُ رَوْضٍ * وَلَا خَدْرٌ بِزِينَتِهَا كَلِفتَا

Nor would an elegant garden have distracted you from it, nor a veiled
woman, with her adornment, would you have become infatuated with.

فَقُوتُ الرُّوحُ أَرْوَاحُ الْمَعَانِي * وَلَيْسَ بِأَنْ طَعَمْتَ وَلَا شَرِبْتَا

For the nourishment of the soul is the spirits of meanings, not that you
eat or drink.

فَوَاظْبِهُ وَخُذْ بِالْجِدْ فِيهِ * فَإِنْ أَعْطَاكُهُ اللَّهُ ا�ْتَفَعْتَا

So stay committed to it, and pursue it seriously, for if Allah grants it to you, you will benefit from it.

وَإِنْ أُعْطِيْتَ فِيهِ طَوِيلَ بَاعَ * وَقَالَ النَّاسُ إِنَّكَ قَدْ عَلِمْتَا

And if you are given a long reach in it (i.e. deep knowledge), and people say, "Indeed, you have acquired knowledge."

فَلَا تَأْمَنْ سُؤَالَ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ * بِتَوْبِيخٍ عَلِمْتَ فَهَلْ عَمِلْتَا

Then do not feel safe from Allah questioning you about it, with reproach: "You knew – so did you act upon it?"

فَرَأْسُ الْعِلْمِ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ حَقًّا * وَلَيْسَ بِأَنْ يُقَالَ لَقْدَ رَأَسْتَا

For the pinnacle of knowledge is truly the fear of Allah, not that it is said: "You have become a leader."

وَأَفْضَلُ ثُوبَكَ الْإِحْسَانُ لَكِنْ * نَرَى ثُوبَ الْإِسَاءَةِ قَدْ لَبِسْتَا

And the best of your garments is righteousness (good conduct), but we see that you have worn the garment of wrongdoing.

إِذَا مَا لَمْ يُفْدِكَ الْعِلْمُ خَيْرًا * فَخَيْرٌ مِنْهُ أَنْ لَوْ قَدْ جَهَلْتَا

If knowledge does not bring you benefit, then it would have been better if you had remained ignorant.

وَإِنْ أَلْقَاكَ فَهْمُكَ فِي مَهَاوِي * فَلَيَتَكَ ثُمَّ لَيَتَكَ مَا فَهِمْتَا

And if your understanding throws you into [dangerous] pits, then if only you had never understood.

سَتَجِنِي مِنْ ثِمَارِ الْعَجْزِ جَهَلًا * وَتَصْغُرُ فِي الْعُيُونِ إِذَا كَبُرْتَا

You will reap ignorance as the fruit of laziness, and you will appear small in the eyes, even when you grow old.

وَتُفْقَدُ إِنْ جَهَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ بَاقِي * وَتُوَجَّدُ إِنْ عَلِمْتَ وَلَوْ فَقِدْتَا

You are lost (forgotten) if you are ignorant, even while you are still alive, and you will be present (remembered) if you have knowledge, even if you are gone.

وَتَذَكُّرْ قَوْلَتِي لَكَ بَعْدَ حِينٍ * إِذَا حَقًّا بِهَا يَوْمًا عَمِلْتَا

And you will remember my words to you after some time, when, one day, you truly act upon them.

وَإِنْ أَهْمَلْتَهَا وَنَبْذَتَ نُصْحًا * وَمِلْتَ إِلَى حُطَامٍ قَدْ جَمَعْتَا

But if you neglect it and throw away the advice, and incline toward the rubble (worthless things) you have gathered,

فَسَوْفَ تَعْضُّ مِنْ نَدِمٍ عَلَيْهَا * وَمَا تُغْنِي النَّدَامَةُ إِنْ تَدِمْتَا

Then you will bite (your hands) in regret over it, and regret will be of no use to you when you regret.

إِذَا أَبْصَرْتَ صَحْبَكَ فِي سَمَاءِ * قَدِ ارْتَفَعُوا عَلَيْكَ وَقَدْ سَفَلْتَا

When you see your companions in heaven (i.e., elevated), that they have risen above you, while you have fallen low.

فَرَاجَعَهَا وَدَعْ عَنْكَ الْهُوَيْنَ * فَمَا بِالْبُطْءِ تُدْرِكُ مَا طَلَبْتَا

So return to it (knowledge), and leave off your slowness, for you will not attain what you seek through sluggishness.

وَلَا تَخْتَلِ بِمَالِكَ وَاللهُ عَنْهُ * فَلَيْسَ الْمَالُ إِلَّا مَا عَلِمْتَا

And do not become conceited with your wealth, and turn away from it, for wealth is nothing but what you have known.

وَلَيْسَ لِجَاهِلٍ فِي الثَّالِثِ مُغْنٌ * وَلَوْ مُلْكُ الْعِرَاقِ لَهُ تَأْتَى

There is no one among people who can satisfy an ignorant person, even if the kingdom of Iraq were made accessible to him.

سَيَنْطِقُ عَنْكَ عِلْمُكَ فِي مَلَأٍ * وَيُكْتَبُ عَنْكَ يَوْمًا إِنْ كَتَبْتَا

Your knowledge will speak on your behalf in public, and one day it will be written about you, if you have written.

وَمَا يُغْنِيَكَ تَشْيِيدُ الْمَبَانِي * إِذَا بِالْجَهْلِ نَفْسَكَ قَدْ هَدَمْتَا

And what benefit is there in building lofty structures, if, through ignorance, you have destroyed your own self?

جَعَلْتَ الْمَالَ فَوْقَ الْعِلْمِ جَهَلًا * لَعَمْرُوكَ فِي الْقَضِيَّةِ مَا عَدَلْتَ

You placed wealth above knowledge – out of ignorance, by your life, in this matter, you have not been just.

وَبَيْنَهُمَا بِنَصْ الْوَحْيِ بَوْنُ * سَتَعْلَمُهُ إِذَا طَهَ قَرَأْتَا

And between them (i.e., knowledge and wealth) is a clear difference by the text of revelation, you will know it when you read [Surah] Taha.

لَئِنْ رَفَعَ الْغَيْفَ لِوَاءَ مَالٍ * لَأَنْتَ لِوَاءُ عِلْمِكَ قَدْ رَفَعْتَا

If the wealthy one raises the banner of wealth, then you have raised the banner of your knowledge.

لَئِنْ جَلَسَ الْغَنِيُّ عَلَى الْحُشَائِيَا * لَأَنْتَ عَلَى الْكَوَاكِبِ قَدْ جَلَسْتَا

If the wealthy sits upon cushions, then you have sat upon the stars.

وَإِنْ رَكِبَ الْجِيَادَ مُسَوَّمَاتٍ * لَأَنْتَ مَنَاهِجَ التَّقَوَى رَكِبْتَا

And if he rides well-groomed, adorned steeds, then you have ridden the paths of piety.

وَمَهْمَا افْتَضَ أَبْكَارَ الْغَوَانِي * فَكَمْ يُكْرِ مِنَ الْحِكَمِ افْتَضَضْتَا

And no matter how many beautiful virgins he deflowers, how many virgins of wisdom have you deflowered?

وَلَيْسَ يَضُرُّكَ الإِقْتَارُ شَيْئًا * إِذَا مَا أَنْتَ رَبَّكَ قَدْ عَرَفْتَا

And poverty will not harm you in the least, so long as you have truly known your Lord.

فَمَاذَا عِنْدُكَ مِنْ جَمِيلٍ * إِذَا بِفِنَاءِ طَاعَتِهِ أَنْخَتَا

Then what beautiful reward does He have in store for you, if you have set yourself down at the doorstep of His obedience?

فَقَابِلٌ بِالْقَبُولِ لِنُصْحَ قَوْلِي * فَإِنْ أَعْرَضْتَ عَنْهُ فَقَدْ خَسِرْتَا

So accept my words of advice with acceptance, for if you turn away from it, then surely you have lost.

وَإِنْ رَاعَيْتُهُ قَوْلًا وَفَعْلًا * وَتَاجَرْتَ إِلَّا بِهِ رَجَحْتَا

And if you observe it in both speech and action, and trade with Allah through it – you will profit.

فَلَيْسَتْ هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا بِشَيْءٍ * تَسُوقُكَ حِقْبَةً وَتَسْرُّ وَقْتًا

This world is nothing of real worth, it harms you for a long while and pleases you for a moment.

وَغَایْتُهَا إِذَا فَكَرْتُ فِيهَا * كَفَیْئِكَ أَوْ كَحْلُمِكَ إِذْ حَلَمْتَا

And its end, if you reflect on it, it is like your shadow, or like a dream you dreamt.

سُجِنْتَ بِهَا وَأَنْتَ لَهَا مُحِبٌْ * فَكَيْفَ تُحِبُّ مَا فِيهِ سُجِنْتَا

You have been imprisoned in it, while you love it, so how can you love that in which you are imprisoned?

وَتُطْعِمُكَ الطَّعَامَ وَعَنْ قَرِيبٍ * سَتَطْعَمُ مِنْكَ مَا فِيهَا طَعِمْتَا

It feeds you food, and soon, it will consume you, just as you once consumed from it.

وَتَعْرَى إِنْ لَيْسَتْ لَهَا ثِيَابًا * وَتُكْسَى إِنْ مَلَابِسَهَا خَلَعْتَا

You become naked if you wear clothes for it, and you are clothed if you take off its garments.

وَتَشَهَّدُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ دَفْنَ خَلْلَ * كَأَنَّكَ لَا تُرَادُ لِمَا شَهَدْتَا

Every day you witness the burial of a close friend, as though you were not meant for what you have witnessed.

وَلَمْ تُخْلُقْ لِتَعْمَرَهَا وَلَكِنْ * لِتَعْبُرَهَا فَجِدَ لِمَا خُلِقْتَا

You were not created to build up (this world), but to pass through it, so strive earnestly for what you were created for.

وَإِنْ هُدِمَتْ فَزِدْهَا أَنْتَ هَذِمًا * وَحَصَنْ أَمْرَ دِينِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتَا

And if (this world) is being destroyed, then add to its destruction yourself, and fortify the matter of your religion as much as you can.

وَلَا تَحْزُنْ عَلَى مَا فَاتَ مِنْهَا * إِذَا مَا أَنْتَ فِي أُخْرَاكَ فُزْتًا

And do not grieve over what you missed from this world, if you have triumphed in your Hereafter.

فَلَيْسَ بِنَافِعٍ مَا نِلْتَ مِنْهَا * مِنَ الْفَانِي إِذَا الْبَاقِي حُرْمَتَا

What you gain of fleeting things from it is of no benefit, if you are deprived of the everlasting [the hereafter].

وَلَا تَضْحَكْ مَعَ السُّفَهَاءِ يَوْمًا * فَإِنَّكَ سَوْفَ تَبْكِي إِنْ ضَحِكْتَأ

Do not laugh with the foolish for even a day, for if you laugh (with them), you will surely weep [in the hereafter].

وَمَنْ لَكَ بِالسُّرُورِ وَأَنْتَ رَهْنٌ * وَمَا تَدْرِي أَئْتُفْدَى أَمْ غُلَلْتَا

And who can give you joy while you are a captive, and you don't know – will you be ransomed or held in chains?

وَسَلْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ التَّوْفِيقَ فِيهَا * وَأَخْلِصْ فِي السُّؤَالِ إِذَا سَأَلْتَأ

Ask your Lord for success (tawfiq) in it (i.e., in life or religion), and be sincere in your asking when you ask.

وَنَادِ إِذَا سَجَدْتَ لَهُ اعْتِرَافًا * بِمَا نَادَاهُ ذُو النُّونِ بْنُ مَتَّى

And call upon Him in prostration with confession, with the same words that Dhu Al-Nun, son of Matta, called with.

وَلَا زِمْ بَابُهُ قَرْعًا عَسَاهُ * سَيْفُتَحُ بَابُهُ لَكَ إِنْ قَرْعَتَا

And persist in knocking at His door – perhaps He will open His door for you if you knock.

وَأَكْثُرْ ذِكْرَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ دَأْبًا * لِتُذَكَّرَ فِي السَّمَاءِ إِذَا ذَكَرْتَا

Increase His remembrance constantly on earth, so that you may be mentioned in the heavens when you remember Him.

وَلَا تَقْلُ الصَّبَا فِيهِ امْتِهَالٌ * وَفَكَرْ كَمْ صَغِيرٍ قَدْ دَفَنْتَا

And do not say, "Youth allows delay", but reflect – how many young ones have you buried?

وَقُلْ يَا نَاصِحِي بَلْ أَنْتَ أَوْلَى * بِنُصْحِكَ لَوْ بِعَقْلِكَ قَدْ نَظَرْتَا

And say: "Oh my adviser, rather you are more deserving of your own advice – if only you had reflected with your mind."

تُقَطِّعُنِي عَلَى التَّفْرِيطِ لَوْمًا * وَبِالْتَّفْرِيطِ دَهْرَكَ قَدْ قَطَعْتَا

You tear me apart with blame for my negligence, while you've spent your whole life in negligence yourself.

وَفِي صِغَرِي تُخَوِّفِنِي الْمَنَائِيَا * وَمَا تَدْرِي بِحَالِكَ حَيْثُ شِخْتَا

In my youth, you used to frighten me with death, yet you do not even know your own state now that you've grown old.

وَكُنْتَ مَعَ الصَّبَا أَهْدَى سَيِّلًا * فَمَا لَكَ بَعْدَ شَيْلَكَ قَدْ نَكْثَتَا

You were more rightly guided in your youth, so what happened to you – now that you're grey-haired – that you've broken (your path)?

وَهَا أَنَا لَمْ أَخُضْ بَحْرَ الْخَطَايَا * كَمَا قَدْ خُضْتَهُ حَتَّى غَرِقْتَا

And here I am – I did not plunge into the sea of sins, as you have plunged until you drowned.

وَلَمْ أَشْرَبْ حُمَيَا أُمّ دَفِيرِ * وَأَنْتَ شَرِبْتَهَا حَتَّى سَكِيرْتَا

I never drank the bitter wine of this foul life, while you drank it until you became drunk.

وَلَمْ أَنْشَأْ بِعَصْرٍ فِيهِ نَفْعٌ * وَأَنْتَ نَشَأْ فِيهِ وَمَا انتَفَعْتَا

I was not raised in a time where there was benefit. while you were – but did not benefit.

وَلَمْ أَحْلُلْ بِوَادٍ فِيهِ ظُلْمٌ * وَأَنْتَ حَلَّتَ فِيهِ وَانْتَهَكْتَا

I never settled in a valley where there was injustice, but you settled there – and violated (its sanctity).

لَقَدْ صَاحَبْتَ أَعْلَامًا كِبَارًا * وَلَمْ أَرَكَ اقْتَدِيَتْ بِمَنْ صَاحِبْتَا

Indeed, you accompanied great scholars, yet I never saw you follow those you accompanied.

وَنَادَاكَ الْكِتَابُ فَلَمْ تُجِبْهُ * وَنَبَّهَكَ الْمَشِيبُ فَمَا انتَبَهْتَا

The Book called out to you, but you did not respond, and grey hair alerted you – but you did not awaken.

وَيَقْبُحُ بِالْفَتَى فِعْلُ التَّصَابِي * وَأَقْبَحُ مِنْهُ شَيْخٌ قَدْ تَفَقَّ

Childish behaviour is unbecoming of a young man, but even uglier is an old man acting like a youth.

وَنَفْسَكَ ذُمَّ لَا تَذُمُّ سِوَاهَا * بِعَيْنٍ فَهِيَ أَجَدَرُ مَنْ ذَمَّتَا

Blame your own soul – do not blame others, for of all the flawed, it is most worthy of your blame.

وَأَنْتَ أَحَقُّ بِالْتَّفْنِيدِ مِنِّي * وَلَوْ كُنْتَ الْلَّيِّبَ لَمَا نَظَقْتَا

You are more deserving of criticism than I am, and if you were truly wise, you would not have spoken.

فَلَوْ بَكَّتِ الدَّمَا عَيْنَاكَ خَوْفًا * لِذَنْبِكَ لَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ قَدْ أَمِنْتَا

Even if your eyes were to weep blood out of fear for your sin, I still would not say to you: "You are safe."

وَمَنْ لَكَ بِالْأَمَانِ وَأَنْتَ عَبْدٌ * أُمِرْتَ فَمَا اتَّمَرْتَ وَلَا أَطْعَنْتَا

And who can grant you safety while you are a slave, who was commanded – yet neither acted nor obeyed?

ثَقُلْتَ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ وَلَسْتَ تَخْشَى * لِجَهَلِكَ أَنْ تَخِفَّ إِذَا وُزِنْتَا

You've become heavy with sins – yet you don't fear that, out of ignorance, you might be found light when weighed (on the scales).

وَتُشْفِقُ لِلْمُصِرِّ عَلَى الْمَعَاصِي * وَتَرْحَمُهُ وَنَفْسَكَ مَا رَجِمْتَا

You feel compassion for the one who persists in sin, you show him mercy – yet your own soul you have not shown mercy to.

رَجَعْتَ الْقَهْرَى وَخَبَطْتَ عَشْوًا * لَعْمَرُكَ لَوْ وَصَلْتَ لَمَا رَجَعْتَا

You turned backward and stumbled blindly, by your life! If you had truly reached [the goal], you wouldn't have turned back.

وَلَوْ وَاقِيتَ رَبَّكَ دُونَ ذَنْبٍ * وَنُوقِشْتَ الحِسَابَ إِذَا هَلَكْتَا

Even if you met your Lord with no sin, if you were reckoned in detail, you would perish.

وَلَمْ يَظْلِمْكَ فِي عَمَلٍ وَلَكِنْ * عَسِيرٌ أَنْ تَقُومَ بِمَا حَمَلْتَا

He has not wronged you in any deed, but it's difficult for you to stand with what you've carried.

وَلَوْ قُدْ جِئْتَ يَوْمَ الْحُشْرِ فَرْدًا * وَأَبْصَرْتَ الْمَنَازِلَ فِيهِ شَتَّى

And if you were to come on the Day of Gathering alone, and saw the ranks (of people) there scattered.

لَا أَعْظَمْتَ النَّدَامَةَ فِيهِ لَهْفًا * عَلَى مَا فِي حَيَاةِكَ قَدْ أَضَعْتَا

You will feel great regret and anguish in that moment over what you had wasted of your life.

تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْهَجِيرِ وَتَتَّقِيْهِ * فَهَلَّا مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ قَدْ فَرَرْتَا

You flee from the midday heat and protect yourself from it, so why haven't you fled from Hell (Jahannam)?

وَلَسْتَ تُطِيقُ أَهْوَانَهَا عَذَابًا * وَلَوْ كُنْتَ الْحَدِيدَ بِهَا لَذُبْتَا

You are unable to endure the lightest of its punishments, and even if you were iron, you would melt in it.

وَلَا تُنْكِرْ فَإِنَّ الْأَمْرَ جِدًّا * وَلَيْسَ كَمَا حَسِبْتَا وَلَا ظَنَنتَا

And do not deny (it), for the matter is serious, it is not as you assumed or thought.

أَبَا بَكْرٍ كَشَفْتَ أَقْلَ عَيْبِي * وَأَكْثَرَهُ وَمُعْظَمَهُ سَرَرْتَا

Oh Abu Bakr, you uncovered the least of my faults, and most of them – the greatest of them – you concealed.

فَكُلْ مَا شِئْتَ فِيَ مِنَ الْمَخَازِي * وَضَاعِفْهَا فَإِنَّكَ قَدْ صَدَقْتَا

So say whatever you wish about my disgraces, and double them – for you have spoken the truth.

وَمَهْمَا عَبْتَنِي فَلِفَرْطِ عَلْمِي * بِبَاطِنَتِي كَانَكَ قَدْ مَدْحُثًا

And no matter how much you criticise me, because of my deep knowledge of my inner self, it's as if you praised me.

فَلَا تَرْضَ الْمَعَابِ فَهُنَّ عَارٌ * عَظِيمٌ يُورِثُ الْمَحْبُوبَ مَقْتًا

So do not be content with disgraceful traits, for they are a great shame, a grave dishonour that brings hatred even to the beloved.

وَيَهُوِي بِالْوَجِيهِ مِنَ الثَّرِيَّا * وَيُبَدِّلُهُ مَكَانَ الْفَوْقِ تَحْتًا

And it (disgrace) brings down the noble person from the Pleiades (the highest stars), and replaces his high position with one below.

كَمَا الظَّاعَاتُ تُبَدِّلُكَ الدَّرَارِي * وَتَجْعَلُكَ الْقَرِيبَ وَإِنْ بَعْدَتَا

Just as acts of obedience elevate you to the stars, and make you near [to Allah], even if you were far.

وَتَنْشُرُ عَنْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا جَمِيلًا * وَتَلْقَى الْبِرَّ فِيهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتَ

And it (obedience) spreads a beautiful reputation for you in the world, and you encounter righteousness in it wherever you go.

وَتَمْشِي فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا عَزِيزًا * وَتَجْنِي الْحَمْدَ فِيمَا قَدْ غَرَسْتَ

And you walk through its (the world's) pathways in honour, and you reap praise from what you have planted.

وَأَنْتَ الْآنَ لَمْ تُعْرَفْ بِعَيْنِِي * وَلَا دَنَسْتَ ثَوْبَكَ مُذْ نَشَأْتَا

And until now, you have not been known for any fault, nor have you stained your garment (i.e. reputation) since you were born.

وَلَا سَابَقْتَ فِي مَيْدَانِ زُورٍ * وَلَا أَوْضَعْتَ فِيهِ وَلَا خَبَبْتَا

And you have never raced in the field of falsehood, nor have you sped within it, nor swindled in it.

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَنَا عَنْهُ نَشِبْتَ فِيهِ * وَمَنْ لَكَ بِالخَلَاصِ إِذَا نَشِبْتَا

If you do not distance yourself from it, you will become entangled in it, and who can deliver you once you're entangled?

تُدَنِّسُ مَا تَطَهَّرَ مِنْكَ حَتَّىٰ * كَأَنَّكَ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مَا ظَهَرْتَا

You defile what had been purified from you, until it is as if you had never been pure at all.

وَصِرْتَ أَسِيرًا دَنِيْلَكَ فِي وَثَاقٍ * وَكَيْفَ لَكَ الْفِكَارُ وَقَدْ أُسِرْتَا

And you have become a prisoner of your sin, bound in chains, so how can you escape, when you've already been captured?

فَخِفْ أَبْنَاءَ جِنِسَكَ وَاحْشُ مِنْهُمْ * كَمَا تَخْشَى الصَّرَاغَمَ وَالسَّبَنَتَى

So fear the sons of your own kind (i.e. people) and be wary of them, just as you would fear lions and savage beasts.

وَخَالِطُهُمْ وَزَائِلُهُمْ حِذَارًا * وَكُنْ كَالْسَّامِرِيِّ إِذَا لُمِسْتَا

Mix with them, but separate from them cautiously, and be like As-Samiri when you are touched.

وَإِنْ جَهِلُوا عَلَيْكَ فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ * لَعَلَّكَ سَوْفَ تَسْلُمُ إِنْ فَعَلْتَا

And if they behave ignorantly toward you, then say: 'Peace', perhaps you will be safe if you do so.

وَمَنْ لَكَ بِالسَّلَامَةِ فِي زَمَانٍ * تَنَالُ الْعِصْمَ إِلَّا إِنْ عُصِّمْتَا

And who can guarantee you safety in a time where protection is only attained if you are [already] protected?

وَلَا تَلْبِثْ بِحَيٍّ فِيهِ ضَيْمٌ * يُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ إِلَّا إِنْ كُبِلْتَا

Do not remain in a community (or among people) where there is injustice, for it kills the heart – unless you are bound (i.e. have no choice).

وَغَرْبٌ فَالْتَّغَرْبُ فِيهِ خَيْرٌ * وَشَرٌّ قَبْلَكَ قَدْ شَرِقْتَا

So go west, for in exile, there can be goodness, and go east, if you've choked on your own spit.

فَلَيْسَ الرُّهْدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حُمُولًا * لَأَنْتَ بِهَا الْأَمِيرُ إِذَا زَهِدْتَا

Renouncing the world is not sluggishness, in fact, you are its leader if you renounce it.

وَلَوْ فَوْقَ الْأَمِيرِ تَكُونُ فِيهَا * سُمُّوا وَارْتَفَاعًا كُنْتَ أَنْتَا

And even if there were someone above the prince in status within it in loftiness and elevation – that would be you.

وَإِنْ فَارَقْتَهَا وَخَرَجْتَ مِنْهَا * إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ فَقَدْ سَلِمْتَا

And if you part from it (the world) and depart from it, to the Abode of Peace – then truly, you will be saved.

وَإِنْ أَكْرَمْتَهَا وَنَظَرْتَ فِيهَا * بِإِكْرَامٍ فَنَفْسَكَ قَدْ أَهْنَتَا

And if you honour it (the world) and look upon it with esteem, then it is your own soul that you have disgraced.

جَمَعْتُ لَكَ النَّصَائِحَ فَامْتَثِلْهَا * حَيَاةَكَ فَهِيَ أَفْضَلُ مَا امْتَثَلْتَا

I have gathered for you the advice – so follow it, in your life, for it is the best thing you could ever follow.

وَطَوَّلْتُ الْعِتَابَ وَزِدْتُ فِيهِ * لِأَنَّكَ فِي الْبَطَالَةِ قَدْ أَطْلَتَا

And I lengthened the reproach and increased it, because you have prolonged your time in idleness.

وَلَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقْصِيرِي وَسَهْوِي * وَخُذْ بِوَصِيَّتِي لَكَ إِنْ رَشَدْتَا

And let not my shortcomings or forgetfulness deceive you, take my advice to heart, if you are rightly guided.

وَقَدْ أَرْدَفْتُهَا تِسْعًا حِسَانًا * وَكَانَتْ قَبْلَ ذَا مِئَةً وَسِتَّا

And I followed it up with nine beautiful ones, and before that, they were a hundred and six.

وَصَلَّى عَلَى تَمَامِ الرُّسُلِ رَبِّي * وَعِثْرَاتِهِ الْكَرِيمَةُ مَا ذُكِرَتَا

And send Salawat on the seal of the prophets of my Lord, and upon his noble family, whenever you are reminded.