

١٤٧. وَمِنْ كَلَامٍ لَهُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) لِكُمَيْلِ بْنِ زِيَادِ النَّخَعِيِّ

147. Amīr al-mu'minīn's Conversation with Kumayl Ibn Ziyād an-Nakha'ī [1]

قَالَ كُمَيْلُ بْنُ زِيَادٍ: أَخَذَ بِيَدِي أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ)، فَأَخْرَجَنِي إِلَى الْجَبَانِ فَلَمَّا أَصْحَرَ تَنَفَّسَ الصَّعْدَاءُ ثُمَّ قَالَ:

Kumayl ibn Ziyād has related: Amīr al-mu'minīn, peace be upon him, caught hold of my hand and took me to the graveyard. When he had passed through the graveyard and left the city behind, he breathed a deep sigh and said:

يَا كُمَيْلُ بْنُ زِيَادٍ، إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْقُلُوبَ أَوْعِيَةٌ فَخَيْرُهَا أَوْعَاهَا فَاحْفَظْ عِنْدِي مَا أَقُولُ لَكَ:

O Kumayl, these hearts are containers. The best of them is that which preserves (its contents). So, preserve what I say to you:

الذَّائِسُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: فِعَالِمٌ رَبَّانِيٌّ وَمُتَعَلِّمٌ عَلَى سَبِيلِ نَجَاةٍ، وَهَمَّجٌ رَعَاعٌ أَتْبَاعُ كُلِّ نَاعِقٍ يَمِيلُونَ مَعَ كُلِّ رِيحٍ، لَمْ يَسْتَضِيئُوا بِنُورِ الْعِلْمِ، وَلَمْ يَلْجِئُوا إِلَى رُكْنٍ وَثِيقٍ.

People are of three types: One is the scholar and divine; then the seeker of knowledge who is also on the way to deliverance. Then (lastly) the common rot who run after every caller and bend in the direction of every wind. They seek no light from the effulgence of knowledge and do not take protection of any reliable support.

يَا كُمَيْلُ، الْعِلْمُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَالِ: الْعِلْمُ يَحْرُسُكَ وَأَنْتَ تَحْرُسُ الْمَالَ، وَالْمَالُ تَنْقُصُهُ النِّفْقَةُ، وَالْعِلْمُ يَزْكُو عَلَى الْإِنْفَاقِ، وَصَنِيعُ الْمَالِ يَزُولُ بِزَوَالِهِ.

O Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you have to guard the wealth. Wealth decreases by spending, while knowledge multiplies by spending, and the results of wealth die as wealth decays.

يَا كُمَيْلُ بْنُ زِيَادٍ مَعْرِفَةُ الْعِلْمِ دِينٌ يَدَانُ بِهِ يَكْسِبُ الْإِنْسَانُ الطَّاعَةَ فِي حَيَاتِهِ وَجَمِيلَ الْأُحْدُوثَةِ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِهِ وَالْعِلْمُ حَاكِمٌ وَالْمَالُ مَحْكُومٌ عَلَيْهِ.

O Kumayl, knowledge is belief which is acted upon. With it man acquires obedience during his life and a good name after his death. Knowledge is the ruler while wealth is ruled upon.

يَا كُمَيْلُ هَلْكَ خَزَانُ الْأَمْوَالِ وَهُمْ أَحْيَاءُ وَالْعُلَمَاءُ بِأَقْوَانِ مَا بَقِيَ الدَّهْرُ أَعْيَانُهُمْ مَفْقُودَةٌ وَأَمْثَالُهُمْ فِي الْقُلُوبِ مَوْجُودَةٌ إِنْ هَاهُنَا

لَعَلِّمًا جَمًّا وَأَشَارَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ لَوْ أَصَبَتْ لَهُ حِمْلَةٌ بَلِيٌّ أَصَبَتْ لِقَنَا غَيْرَ مَأْمُونٍ عَلَيْهِ مُسْتَعْمَلًا آلَةَ الدِّينِ لِلدُّنْيَا وَمُسْتَظْهَرًا بِنِعْمِ
اللَّهِ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ وَبِحُجْجِهِ عَلَى أَوْلِيَائِهِ أَوْ مَنَقَادًا لِحِمْلَةِ الْحَقِّ لَا بَصِيرَةَ لَهُ فِي أَحْنَائِهِ يَنْقَدِحُ الشُّكُّ فِي قَلْبِهِ لِأَوَّلِ عَارِضٍ مِنْ شَبَهَةٍ.

O Kumayl, those who amass wealth are dead even though they may be living while those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives. Their bodies are not available but their figures exist in the hearts. Look, here is a heap of knowledge (and Amīr al-mu'minīn pointed to his bosom). I wish I could get someone to bear it. Yes, I did find (such a one); but either he was one who could not be relied upon. He would exploit the religion for worldly gains, and by virtue of Allāh's favours on him he would domineer over the people and through Allāh's pleas he would lord over His devotees. Or he was one who was obedient to the hearers of truth but there was no intelligence in his bosom. At the first appearance of doubt he would entertain misgivings in his heart.

أَلَا لَا ذَا وَلَا ذَاكَ أَوْ مِنْهُمَا بِاللَّذَّةِ سَلَسَ الْقِيَادَ لِلشَّهْوَةِ أَوْ مُغْرَمًا بِالْجَمْعِ وَالْإِدَّاءِ خَارٍ لَيْسَا مِنْ رِعَاةِ الدِّينِ فِي شَيْءٍ أَقْرَبَ شَيْءٍ
شَبَهَا بِهِمَا الْأَنْعَامَ السَّائِمَةَ كَذَلِكَ يَمُوتُ الْعِلْمُ بِمَوْتِ حَامِلِيهِ.

So, neither this nor that was good enough. Either the man is eager for pleasures, easily led away by passions, or is covetous for collecting and hoarding wealth. Neither of them has any regard for religion in any matter. The nearest example of these is the loose cattle. This is the way that knowledge dies away with the death of its bearers.

اللَّهُمَّ بَلِيٌّ! لَا تَخْلُو الْأَرْضَ مِنْ قَائِمٍ لِلَّهِ بِحُجَّةٍ، إِمَّا ظَاهِرًا مَشْهُورًا، وَإِمَّا خَائِفًا مَغْمُورًا لئَلَّا تَبْطُلَ حُجُجُ اللَّهِ وَبَيِّنَاتِهِ. وَكَمْ ذَا
وَأَيْنَ أَوْلِيَاكَ؟ أَوْلِيَاكَ - وَاللَّهِ - الْأَقْلُونَ عَدَدًا، وَالْأَعْظَمُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قَدْرًا، يَحْفَظُ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ حُجُجَهُ وَبَيِّنَاتِهِ، حَتَّى يُوَدِّعُهَا نَظْرَاءَهُمْ،
وَيُزْرِعُهَا فِي قُلُوبِ أَشْبَاهِهِمْ.

O My Allāh! Yes; but the earth is never devoid of those who maintain Allāh's plea either openly and reputedly or, being afraid, as hidden in order that Allāh's pleas and proofs should not be rebutted. How many are they and where are they? By Allāh, they are few in number, but they are great in esteem before Allāh. Through them Allāh guards His pleas and proofs till they entrust them to others like themselves and sow the seeds thereof in the hearts of those who are similar to them.

هَجَمَ بِهِمُ الْعِلْمُ عَلَى حَقِيقَةِ الْبَصِيرَةِ، وَيَا شُرُورَ رُوحِ الْيَقِينِ، وَاسْتَلَانُوا مَا اسْتَوْعَرَهُ الْمُتَرَفُونَ وَأَنْسُوا بِمَا اسْتَوْحَشَ مِنْهُ الْجَاهِلُونَ،
وَصَحَبُوا الدُّنْيَا بِأَبْدَانٍ أَرْوَاحَهَا مَعْلُوقَةٌ بِالْمَحَلِّ الْأَعْلَى، أَوْلِيَاكَ خُلَفَاءُ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ، وَالِدَعَاةُ إِلَى دِينِهِ،

Knowledge has led them to real understanding and so they have associated

themselves with the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easygoing regard as hard. They endear what the ignorant take as strange. They live in this world with their bodies here but their spirits resting in the high above. They are the vicegerents of Allah on His earth and callers to His religion.

أَهْ آهٍ شَوْقًا إِلَى رُؤْيَتِهِمْ! انصَرِفْ يَا كُمَيْلُ إِذَا شِئْتَ.

Oh, oh, how I yearn to see them! Go away now, O Kumayl, wherever you wish!

Footnote :

[1] Kumayl ibn Ziyād an-Nakha'ī was the holder of the secrets of the Imāmate and one of the chief companions of Amīr al-mu'minīn. He held a great position in knowledge and attainment and a chief place in abstinence and Godliness. He was Amīr al-mu'minīn's Governor of Hīt for sometime. He was killed by al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī in the year 83 A.H. at the age of ninety years and was buried outside Kūfah.