

٢٨٩. وَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): كَانَ لِي فِيمَا مَضَى أَخٌ فِي اللَّهِ وَكَانَ يُعْظِمُهُ فِي عَيْنِي صَغِيرُ الدُّنْيَا فِي عَيْنِهِ وَكَانَ خَارِجًا مِنْ سُلْطَانِ بَطْنِهِ فَلَا يَشْتَهِي مَا لَا يَجِدُ وَلَا يَكْثُرُ إِذَا وَجِدَ وَكَانَ أَكْثَرَ دَهْرِهِ صَامِتًا فَإِنْ قَالَ بَدَّ الْقَائِلِينَ وَنَقَعَ غَلِيلَ السَّائِلِينَ وَكَانَ ضَعِيفًا مُسْتَضْعَفًا فَإِنْ جَاءَ الْجِدَ فَهُوَ لَيْثٌ غَابٍ وَصَلَّ وَادٍ.

289. Amīr al-mu'minīn, peace be upon him, said: In the past I had a brother-in-faith [1], and he was prestigious in my view because the world was humble in his eyes, the needs of the stomach did not have sway over him, he did not long for what he did not get; if he got a thing he would not ask for more; most of his time he was silent, if he spoke he silenced the other speakers, he quenched the thirst of questioners, he was weak and feeble but at the time of fighting he was like the lion of the forest or the serpent of the valley.

لَا يُدَلِّي بِحُجَّةٍ حَتَّى يَأْتِي قَاضِيًا وَكَانَ لَا يَلُومُ أَحَدًا عَلَيَّ مَا يَجِدُ الْعُذْرَ فِي مِثْلِهِ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ اعْتِذَارَهُ وَكَانَ لَا يَشْكُو وَجَعًا إِلَّا عِنْدَ بَرِّئِهِ وَكَانَ يَقُولُ مَا يَفْعَلُ وَلَا يَقُولُ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُ وَكَانَ إِذَا غَلِبَ عَلَيَّ الْكَلَامَ لَمْ يَغْلِبْ عَلَيَّ السَّكُوتَ وَكَانَ عَلَيَّ مَا يَسْمَعُ أَحْرَصَ مِنْهُ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَتَكَلَّمَ وَكَانَ إِذَا بَدَّه أَمْرَانِ يَنْظُرُ أَيُّهُمَا أَقْرَبُ إِلَى الْهَوَى فَيُخَالِفُهُ.

He would not put forth an argument unless it was decisive, he would not abuse anyone in an excusable matter unless he had heard the excuse, he would not speak of any trouble except after its disappearance, he would say what he would do, and would not say what he would not do, even if he could be exceeded in speaking, he could not be excelled in silence, he was more eager for keeping quiet than speaking and if two things confronted him he would see which was more akin to the longing of the heart and he would oppose it.

فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِهَذِهِ الْخَلَائِقِ فَالزُّمُوهَا وَتَنَافَسُوا فِيهَا فَإِنَّ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعُوا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَخْذَ الْقَلِيلِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ تَرْكِ الْكَثِيرِ.

These qualities are incumbent upon you. So, you should acquire them and excel each other in them. Even if you cannot acquire them you should know that acquiring a part is better than giving up the whole.

Footnote :

[1] The man whom Amīr al-mu'minīn has referred to as his brother and whose qualities he has stated, has been taken by some commentators to be Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, by some 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn al-Jumahī and by some al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī; but it is not unlikely that no particular individual is referred to at all, because it is customary with Arabs for them to speak of a brother or a comrade although they have no particular individual in mind.