

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام) خاطب به أهل البصرة على جهة اقتصاص الملاحم

About the malice borne by 'Ā'ishah; and warning the people of Baṣrah about what was to occur

فَمَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ يَعْتَقِلَ نَفْسَهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، فَلْيَفْعَلْ، فَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُونِي فَإِنِّي حَامِلُكُمْ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ ذَا مَشَقَّةٍ شَدِيدَةٍ وَمَذَاقَةٍ مَرِيرَةٍ.

Whoever can at this time keep himself clinging to Allāh should do so. If you follow me I shall certainly carry you, if Allāh so wills, on the path of Paradise, even though it may be full of severe hardship and of bitter taste.

وَأُمًّا فَلَانَةً، فَأَدْركَهَا رَأْيُ النِّسَاءِ، وَضَعْنَ غَلَا فِي صَدْرِهَا كَمَرَجَلِ الْقَيْنِ، وَلَوْ دُعِيَتْ لِتَنَالَ مِنْ غَيْرِي مَا أَتَتْ إِلَيَّ، لَمْ تَفْعَلْ، وَلَهَا بَعْدُ حَرَمَتُهَا الْأُولَى، وَالْحِسَابُ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

As regards a certain woman, [1] she is in the grip of womanly views, and malice is boiling in her bosom like the furnance of the blacksmith. If she were called upon to deal with others as she is dealing with me she would not have done it. (As for me), even hereafter she will be allowed her original respect, while the reckoning (of her misdeeds) is an obligation on Allāh.

مِنْهُ فِي وَصْفِ الْإِيمَانِ : سَبِيلُ أَلْبَجِ الْمُنْهَاجِ، أَنْوَرُ السَّرَاجِ، فَبِالْإِيمَانِ يُسْتَدَلُّ عَلَى الصَّالِحَاتِ، وَبِالصَّالِحَاتِ يُسْتَدَلُّ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ، وَبِالْإِيمَانِ يَعْمرُ الْعِلْمُ، وَبِالْعِلْمِ يَرْهَبُ الْمَوْتُ، وَبِالْمَوْتِ تَخْتَمُ الدُّنْيَا، وَبِالدُّنْيَا تَحْرُزُ الْآخِرَةُ، وَبِالْقِيَامَةِ تَزْلَفُ الْجَنَّةُ وَتَبْرُزُ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ ﴿١﴾ وَإِنَّ الْخَلْقَ لَا مَقْصَرَ لَهُمْ عَنِ الْقِيَامَةِ، مَرْقَلِينَ فِي مِضْمَارِهَا إِلَى الْغَايَةِ الْقُصْوَى.

[A part of the same sermon :] This path is the lightest course and the brightest lamp. Guidance towards virtuous actions is sought through faith while guidance towards faith is achieved through virtuous actions. Knowledge is made to prosper through faith, and death is feared because of knowledge. This world comes to an end with death, while the next world is secured (by virtuous actions) in this world. For people there is no escape from resurrection. They are heading for this last end in its appointed course.

مِنْهُ فِي جَالِ أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ : قَدْ شَخَّصُوا مِنْ مُسْتَقَرِّ الْأَجْدَاثِ، وَصَارُوا إِلَى مَصَائِرِ الْغَايَاتِ، لِكُلِّ دَارٍ أَهْلُهَا، لَا يَسْتَبْدِلُونَ بِهَا وَلَا يَنْقَلِبُونَ عَنْهَا. وَإِنَّ الْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَالنَّهْيَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، لَخَلْقَانِ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ، وَإِنَّهُمَا لَا يَقْرَبَانِ مِنْ أَجْلِ، وَلَا يَنْقُصَانِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ.

[A part of the same sermon :] They have got up from the resting places in their graves and have set off for the final objectives. Every house has its own people.

They are not changed nor shifted from there. Commanding for good and refraining from evil are two characteristics-of Allāh, the Glorified. They can neither bring death near nor lessen sustenance.

وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّهُ الْجَبَلُ الْمَتِينُ، وَالنُّورُ الْمُبِينُ، وَالشِّفَاءُ النَّافِعُ، وَالرِّيُّ النَّافِعُ، وَالْعَصِمَةُ لِلْمُتَمَسِّكِ، وَالذِّجَاجَةُ لِلْمُتَعَلِّقِ، لَا يَعْوجُ فَيْقَامُ، وَلَا يَزِيغُ فَيَسْتَعْتَبُ، وَلَا تَخْلُقُهُ كَثْرَةُ الرَّدِّ، وَوُلُوجُ السَّمْعِ، مَنْ قَالَ بِهِ صَدَقَ، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ بِهِ سَبَقَ.

You should adhere to the Book of Allāh because it is the strong rope, a clear light, a benefiting cure, a quenching for thirst, protection for the adherent and deliverance for the attached. It does not curve so as to need straightening and does not deflect so as to be corrected. Frequency of its repetition and its falling on ears does not make it old. Whoever speaks according to it, speaks truth and whoever acts by it is forward (in action).

وقام إليه (عليه السلام) رجل فقال: أخبرنا عن الفتنة، وهل سألت عنها رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله)؟

A man stood up and said : O Amīr al-mu'minīn tell us about this disturbance and whether you enquired about it from the Holy Prophet.

فَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) : لَمَّا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ، قَوْلُهُ : ﴿الْم. أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يَتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ﴾ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ الْفِتْنَةَ لَا تَنْزِلُ بِنَا وَرَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِنَا.

Thereupon Amīr al-mu'minīn said : When Allāh, the Glorified sent down the verse : “Alif lām mīm (A.L.M.) What! Do people imagine that they will be let off on (their) saying: ‘We believe!’ and they will not be tried?” (Qur’ān, 29:1—2) I came to know that the disturbance would not befall us so long as the Prophet — peace and blessing of Allāh be upon him and his progeny — is among us.

فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا هَذِهِ الْفِتْنَةُ الَّتِي أَخْبَرَكَ اللَّهُ بِهَا؟ فَقَالَ: يَا عَلِيُّ، إِنَّ أُمَّتِي سَيُفْتَنُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي. فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَوَلَيْسَ قَدْ قُلْتُ لِي يَوْمَ أَحَدٍ حَيْثُ اسْتَشْهَدَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَحِيزَتْ عَنِّي الشَّهَادَةُ، فَشَقَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَيَّ، فَقُلْتُ لِي: «أَبْشِرْ، فَإِنَّ الشَّهَادَةَ مِنْ وَرَائِكَ؟». فَقَالَ لِي: «إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَكَذَلِكَ، فَكَيْفَ صَبْرُكَ إِذَنْ؟». فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، لَيْسَ هَذَا مِنْ مَوَاطِنِ الصَّبْرِ، وَلَكِنْ مِنْ مَوَاطِنِ الْبُشْرَى وَالشُّكْرِ.

So I said, “O Prophet of Allāh, what is this disturbance of which Allāh, the Sublime, has informed you?” and he replied, “O ‘Alī, my people will create trouble after me.” I said, “O Prophet of Allāh on the day of Uhud, when people had fallen martyrs and I was not among them, and this had been very annoying to me, did you not say to me, ‘cheer up, as martyrdom is for you hereafter?’” The Prophet replied, “Yes it is so, but what about your enduring at present?” I said, “O Prophet of Allāh, this is not

an occasion for endurance, but rather an occasion for cheering up and gratefulness.”

وَقَالَ: «يَا عَلِيُّ، إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ سَيُفْتِنُونَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ، وَيَمْنُونَ بِدِينِهِمْ عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ، وَيَتَمَنُّونَ رَحْمَتَهُ، وَيَأْمِنُونَ سَطَوْتَهُ، وَيَسْتَحِلُّونَ حَرَامَهُ بِالْشَبْهَاتِ الْكَاذِبَةِ، وَالْأَهْوَاءِ السَّاهِيَةِ، فَيَسْتَحِلُّونَ الْخَمْرَ بِالْبَيْذِ، وَالسَّجْتَ بِالْهَدِيَةِ، وَالرَّبَا بِالْبَيْعِ». قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَبِأَيِّ الْمَنَازِلِ أَنْزَلَهُمْ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ؟ أَمِنْزِلَةِ رَدَّةٍ، أَمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ فِتْنَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: «بِمَنْزِلَةِ فِتْنَةٍ».

Then he said : “O ‘Alī, people will fall into mischief through their wealth, will show obligation to Allāh on account of their faith, will expect His mercy, will feel safe from His anger and regard His unlawful matters as lawful by raising false doubts and by their misguiding desires. They will then hold lawful (the use of) wine by calling it barley water, a bribe by calling it a gift, and taking of usurious interest by calling it sale.” I said, “O Prophet of Allāh, how should I deal with them at the time, whether to hold them to have gone back in heresy or just in revolt.” He said, “in revolt.”

Footnote :

[1] There is no denying the fact that ‘Ā’ishah’s behaviour towards Amīr al-mu’minīn was throughout inimical, and very often her heart’s turbidity expressed itself on her face, and her hatred and dislike became quite apparent, so much so that if in connection with some affair Amīr al-mu’minīn’s name came up a frown appeared on her forehead and she did not relish pronouncing it with her tongue. For example, when ‘Ubaydullāh ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn ‘Utbah mentioned to ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās the narration by Ā’ishah namely that “in his death-illness the Prophet, taking support on al-Faḍl ibn ‘Abbās and another person, came to her (‘Ā’ishah’s) house,” ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās said : “Do you know who this ‘other man’ was?” He said, “No.” Then he said, “‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, but she is averse to name him in a good context.” (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 6, pp. 34,228; Ibn Sa’d, at-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr, vol. 2, part 2, p. 29; at-Ṭabarī, at-Tārīkh, vol. I, pp. 1800-1801; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-ashrāf, vol. 1, pp. 544-545; al-Bayhaqī, as-Sunan al-kubrā, vol. 3, p. 396).

One cause for this hatred and malice was the presence of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah (a.s.) whose wholesome dignity and esteem pricked her heart like a thorn. Her jealousy towards the other wives (of the Prophet) did not allow her to let the Prophet love the daughter of his other wife to such a degree that he should stand on her approach, seat her in his own place, declare her most honourable of all the women of the world and bear such love towards her children as to call them his own sons. All these things pained her much and naturally her feelings on such an occasion were that if she had borne children they would have been the Prophet’s sons and they

would have been the pivot of the Prophet's affection instead of Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn. But she was not gifted with any issue and she gratified her own desire to be a mother by adopting the surname Umm 'Abdillāh (mother of the slave of Allāh) after her sister's son. In short all these things created the passion of hatred in her heart, as a result of which she off and on complained to the Prophet against Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah but could not succeed in diverting the Prophet's attention from her.

News about this mortification and estrangement also reached the ears of Abū Bakr. That would only perturb him as he too could do nothing, except that his verbal sympathies were with his daughter. At last the Prophet left this world and the reins of Government fell into his hands. Now was the opportunity for him to avenge as best as he could and to perpetrate whatever violence he had in mind. Consequently the first step he took was that, in order to deprive Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah of inheritance, he denied the principle of inheritance in the case of the prophets and held that neither do the prophets inherit nor are they inherited from, but the property left by them escheats to the state. Fāṭimah was so much affected that she gave up speaking to him and passed away from this world with these very feelings. 'Ā'ishah did not even take the trouble to express any sorrow at her tragic death. Thus Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd has written:

When Fāṭimah expired all the wives of the Prophet came to Banī Hāshim in condolence except 'Ā'ishah. She did not come and showed herself sick and words from her reached 'Alī which displayed her joy. (Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah, vol. 9, p. 198)

As long as she bore so much malice against Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, how could Fāṭimah's spouse be spared similar enmity and malice. Particularly when such events also occurred which worked like a fan and roused her feeling of hatred, such as the incident of "If k" when Amīr al-mu'minīn said to the Prophet: "She is no better than the buckles of your shoe, leave her and divorce her away." On hearing this 'Ā'ishah must have felt miserable in her bed, and must have developed the severest feeling of hatred against him. There were also moments when distinction was conferred on Amīr al-mu'minīn in preference to Abū Bakr. For instance, in connection with the dispatch of the Qur'ānic verses on Barā'ah (innocence), the Prophet removed Abū Bakr from the job, recalled him and assigned it to Amīr al-mu'minīn saying that he had been commanded by Allāh to take it himself or send it through a member of his family. Similarly the Prophet closed all the doors opening into the mosque including that of Abū Bakr but allowed the door of Amīr al-mu'minīn's house to continue to open thereinto.

‘Ā’ishah could not relish Amīr al-mu’minīn’s distinction over her father, and whenever there was any occasion for such distinction she did her best to undo it. When in his last days the Prophet ordered the contingent under Usāmah ibn Zayd to march, and ordered Abū Bakr and ‘Umar also to go under his command, they received a message from the wives of the Prophet that his condition was serious and therefore the contingent should come back instead of proceeding further. This was because their far-reaching sight had realized that the only purpose in getting Medina vacated by the muhājirūn and the anṣār could be that after the death of the Prophet no one should stand in Amīr al-mu’minīn’s way and that he should get the caliphate without any trouble. On receipt of this message the contingent under Usāmah came back. When the Prophet learnt this he again ordered Usāmah to march with the contingent and even said, “Allāh may curse him who keeps away from the contingent,” whereupon they again set off, but they were again called back till the Prophet’s illness assumed serious proportions, but Usāmah’s contingent did not go out as it did not want to. After this Abū Bakr was sent word through Bilāl that he should deputise the Prophet in leading the prayers in order to pave the way for his Caliphateship. Accordingly keeping this in view he was first shown as the Prophet’s caliph (deputy) in prayers and eventually was accepted as his caliph for all purposes.

Thereafter matters were so contrived that Amīr al-mu’minīn could not get the Caliphate. However, after the reign of the third caliph circumstances took such a turn that people were obliged to swear allegiance at Amīr al-mu’minīn’s hand. On this occasion ‘Ā’ishah was present in Mecca. When she learnt about Amīr al-mu’minīn’s caliphate her eyes began emitting flames, and rage and anger perturbed her mind, and her hatred for Amīr al-mu’minīn assumed such seriousness that she rose against him on the excuse of avenging blood of the same man (‘Uthmān) whom she had herself proclaimed fit to be killed, and openly declared war as a result of which so much bloodshed occurred that the whole land of Baṣrah was smeared with the blood of those killed, and the door of disunity was opened for good. (Sharḥ, Ibn Abi’l-Ḥadīd, vol. 9, pp. 190-200)