

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام) في رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) ومن هو جدير بأن يكون للخلافة وفي هوان الدنيا

On eligibility for the Caliphate

[رسول الله:] [أَمِينٌ وَحِيَّةٌ، وَخَاتَمُ رُسُلِهِ، وَبَشِيرٌ رَحْمَتِهِ، وَنَذِيرٌ نِقْمَتِهِ.]

The Prophet is the trustee of Allāh's revelation, the Last of His Prophets, the giver of tidings of His mercy and the warner for His chastisement.

[الجدير بالخلافة:] [أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّ أَحَقَّ النَّاسِ بِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ أَقْوَاهُمْ عَلَيْهِ، وَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ فِيهِ، فَإِنْ شَغِبَ شَاغِبٌ اسْتُعْتَبَ، فَإِنْ أَبِي قَوْتَلٍ.]

O people, the most rightful of all persons for this matter (namely the caliphate) is he who is most competent among them to maintain it, and he who knows best Allāh's commands about it. If any mischief is created by a mischief-monger, he will be called upon to repent. If he refuses, he will be fought.

وَلَعَمْرِي، لَئِنْ كَانَتْ الْإِمَامَةُ لَا تَتَعَقَّدُ حَتَّى يَحْضُرَهَا عَامَّةُ النَّاسِ، فَمَا إِلَى ذَلِكَ سَبِيلٌ، وَلَكِنْ أَهْلِهَا يَحْكُمُونَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ غَابَ عَنْهَا، ثُمَّ لَيْسَ لِلشَّاهِدِ أَنْ يَرْجِعَ، وَلَا لِلْغَائِبِ أَنْ يَخْتَارَ. أَلَا وَإِنِّي أَقَاتِلُ رَجُلَيْنِ: رَجُلًا ادَّعَى مَا لَيْسَ لَهُ، وَآخَرَ مَنَعَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ.

By my life, [1] if the question of Imāmah was not to be decided unless all the people were present, then there would be no such case. But those who agreed about it imposed the decision on those who were absent, so much so that he who was present could not dissent and the one who was absent could not choose (any one else). Know that I shall fight two persons — one who claims what is not his and the other who ignores what is obligatory upon him.

أَوْ صِيكُمُ عِيَادِ اللَّهِ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّهَا خَيْرٌ مِمَّا تَوَاصَى الْعِبَادُ بِهِ، وَخَيْرُ عَوَاقِبِ الْأُمُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، وَقَدْ فَتِحَ بَابُ الْحَرْبِ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ أَهْلِ الْقِبْلَةِ، وَلَا يَحْمِلُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ إِلَّا أَهْلُ الْبَصْرِ وَالصَّبْرِ وَالْعِلْمِ بِمَوَاضِعِ الْحَقِّ، فَاْمَضُوا لِمَا تَأْمُرُونَ بِهِ، وَقِفُوا عِنْدَ مَا تَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ، وَلَا تَعْجَلُوا فِي أَمْرِ حَتَّى تَتَّبِعُوا، فَإِنَّ لَنَا مَعَ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ تَنْكَرُونَهُ غَيْرًا

[The need for sagacity in fighting against Muslims :] O creatures of Allāh! I advise you to have fear of Allāh because it is the best advice to be mutually given by persons, and the best of all things before Allāh. The door of war has been opened between you and the other Muslims. And this banner will be borne only by him who is a man of sight, of endurance and of knowledge of the position of rightfulness. Therefore, you should go ahead with what you are ordered and desist from what you are refrained. Do not make haste in any matter till you have clarified it. For in the case of every matter which you dislike we have a right to change it.

هوان الدنيا: [ألا وإن هذه الدنيا التي أصبحت تمنونها وترغبون فيها، وأصبحت تغضبكم وترضيكُم، ليست بداركم، ولا منزلكم الذي خلقتُم له ولا الذي دعيتُم إليه، ألا وإنها ليست بباقية لكم ولا تبقون عليها، وهي وإن غرتكم منها فقد حذرتكم شرها.

[The behaviour of this world with its adherents :] Know that this world which you have started to covet and in which you are interested, and which sometimes enrages you and sometimes pleases you is not your (permanent) abode, nor the place of your stay for which you might have been created, nor one to which you have been invited. Know that it will not last for you nor will you live along with it. If anything out of this world deceives you (into attraction), its evils warn you too.

فدعوا غرورها لتحذيرها، وأطماعها لتخويفها، وسابقوا فيها إلى الدار التي دعيتُم إليها، وانصرفوا بقلوبكم عنها، ولا يخزن أحدكم خنين الأمة على ما زوى عنه منها، واستتموا نعمة الله عليكم بالصبر على طاعة الله والمحافظة على ما استحفظكم من كتابه.

You should give up (the objects of) its deceits in favour of (the objects of) its warning and (the objects of) its attractions in favour of (the objects of) its terrors. And while here in it, advance towards that house to which you have been called, and turn away your hearts from the world. None of you should cry like a maid slave over anything which she has been deprived of. Seek the perfection of Allāh's bounty over you by endurance in obedience to Allāh and in guarding what He has asked you to guard, namely His Book.

ألا وإنه لا يضركم تضييع شيء من دنياكم بعد حفظكم قائمة دينكم، ألا وإنه لا ينفعكم بعد تضييع دينكم شيء حافظتم عليه من أمر دنياكم، أخذ الله بقلوبنا وقلوبكم إلى الحق، وألهمنا وإياكم الصبر!

Know that the loss of anything of this world will not harm you, if you have guarded the principles of your religion. Know also that after the loss of your religion nothing of this world for which you have cared will benefit you. May Allāh carry our hearts and your hearts towards the right and may He grant us and you endurance.

Footnote :

[1] When the people collected in the Saqīfah of Banū Sā'idah in connection with the election, even those who were not present there were made to follow the decision taken there, and the principle was adopted that those present at the election had no right to reconsider the matter or to break the allegiance and those not present could do nothing but acquiesce in the agreed decision. But when the people of Medina swore allegiance at the hands of Amīr al-mu'minīn, the Governor of Syria (Mu'āwiyah) refused to follow suit on the ground that since he was not present on the occasion he was not bound to abide by it, whereupon Amīr al-mu'minīn gave a

reply in this sermon on the basis of these accepted and agreed principles and conditions which had been established among these people and had become uncontrovertible namely that: “When the people of Medina and the anṣār and the muhājirūn have sworn allegiance on my hand, Mu‘āwiyah had no right to keep aloof from it on the ground that he was not present on the occasion, nor were Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr entitled to break the pledge after swearing allegiance.”

On this occasion, Amīr al-mu‘minīn did not argue on the strength of any saying of the Prophet which would serve as his final say about the caliphate, because the grounds for refusal in his case was in respect of the modus operandi of the principle of election. Therefore, in keeping with the requirements of the situation a reply based on the agreed principles of the adversary could alone quieten him. Even if he had argued on the strength of the Prophet’s command it would have been subjected to various interpretations and the matter would have been prolonged instead of being settled. Again Amīr al-mu‘minīn had seen that soon after the death of the Prophet all his sayings and commands had been set aside. Therefore, how after the lapse of a long time, could one be expected to accept it when habit had been established to follow one’s free will against the Prophet’s sayings.