

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام) خطبها بصفين

Delivered at the battle of Şifḥīn

أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَقَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ حَقًّا بِوَلَايَةِ أَمْرِكُمْ، وَلَكُمْ عَلَيَّ مِنَ الْحَقِّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي لِي عَلَيْكُمْ، فَالْحَقُّ أَوْسَعُ الْأَشْيَاءِ فِي التَّوَاتُفِ، وَأَضْيَقُهَا فِي التَّنَاصُفِ، لَا يَجْرِي لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا جَرِي عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَجْرِي عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَرِي لَهُ وَلَوْ كَانَ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَجْرِيَ لَهُ وَلَا يَجْرِيَ عَلَيْهِ، لَكَانَ ذَلِكَ خَالِصًا لِلَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ دُونَ خَلْقِهِ، لِقُدْرَتِهِ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ، وَلِعَدْلِهِ فِي كُلِّ مَا جَرَتْ عَلَيْهِ صُرُوفُ قَضَائِهِ، وَلَكِنَّهُ جَعَلَ حَقَّهُ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ أَنْ يَطِيعُوهُ، وَجَعَلَ جَزَاءَهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِضَافَةُ الثَّوَابِ تَفَضُّلاً مِنْهُ، وَتَوْسَعاً بِمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْمَزِيدِ أَهْلُهُ.

So now, Allāh, the Glorified, has, by placing me over your affairs, created my right over you, and you too have a right over me like mine over you. A right is very vast in description but very narrow in equitability of action. It does not accrue to any person unless it accrues against him also, and right does not accrue against a person unless it also accrues in his favour. If there is any right which is only in favour of a person with no (corresponding) right accruing against him it is solely for Allāh, the Glorified, and not for His creatures by virtue of His might over His creatures and by virtue of the justice permeating all His decrees. Of course, He the Glorified, has created His right over creatures that they should worship Him, and has laid upon Himself (the obligation of) their reward equal to several times the recompense as a mark of His bounty and the generosity that He is capable of.

[حَقُّ الْوَالِي وَحَقُّ الرِّعَاةِ:] ثُمَّ جَعَلَ - سُبْحَانَهُ - مِنْ حَقَّقِهِ حَقُّوْقًا افْتَرَضَهَا لِبَعْضِ النَّاسِ عَلَى بَعْضٍ، فَجَعَلَهَا تَكَافُؤًا فِي وُجُوْهِهَا، وَيُوجِبُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا، وَلَا يَسْتَوْجِبُ بَعْضُهَا إِلَّا بَعْضًا. وَأَعْظَمُ مَا افْتَرَضَ - سُبْحَانَهُ - مِنْ تِلْكَ الْحَقُّوْقِ حَقُّ الْوَالِي عَلَى الرِّعَاةِ، وَحَقُّ الرِّعَاةِ عَلَى الْوَالِي، فَرِيْضَةٌ فَرَضَهَا اللَّهُ - سُبْحَانَهُ - لِكُلِّ عَلَى كُلِّ، فَجَعَلَهَا نِظَامًا لِّلْفَتْهِمْ، وَعِزًّا لِّدِيْنِهِمْ، فَلَيْسَتْ تَصْلَحُ الرِّعَاةُ إِلَّا بِصَلَاحِ الْوَلَاةِ، وَلَا تَصْلَحُ الْوَلَاةُ إِلَّا بِاسْتِقَامَةِ الرِّعَاةِ.

[About mutual rights of the ruler and the ruled :] Then, from His rights, He, the Glorified, created certain rights for certain people against others. He made them so as to equate with one another. Some of these rights produce other rights. Some rights are such that they do not accrue except with others. The greatest of these rights that Allāh, the Glorified, has made obligatory is the right of the ruler over the ruled and the right of the ruled over the ruler. This is an obligation which Allāh, the Glorified, has placed on each other. He has made it the basis of their (mutual) affection, and an honour for their religion. Consequently, the ruled cannot prosper unless the rulers are sound, while the rulers cannot be sound unless the ruled are steadfast.

فَإِذَا أَدَّتِ الرِّعَاةُ إِلَى الْوَالِي حَقَّهُ، وَأَدَّى الْوَالِي إِلَيْهَا حَقَّهَا، عَزَّ الْحَقُّ بَيْنَهُمْ، وَقَامَتْ مَنَهِجُ الدِّيْنِ، وَاعْتَدَلَتْ مَعَالِمُ الْعَدْلِ، وَجَرَتْ عَلَى أَذْلَالِهَا السَّنَنُ. فَصَلَحَ بِذَلِكَ الزَّمَانُ، وَطَمَعُ فِي بَقَاءِ الدَّوْلَةِ، وَبُسَّتْ مَطَامِعُ الْأَعْدَاءِ.

If the ruled fulfil the rights of the ruler and the ruler fulfils their rights, then right attains the position of honour among them, the ways of religion become established, signs of justice become fixed and the sunnah gains currency. In this way time will improve, the continuance of government will be expected, and the aims of the enemies will be frustrated.

وَإِذَا غَلَبَتِ الرَّعِيَّةُ وَالْيَهُاءُ، أَوْ أَجْحَفَ الْوَالِي بِرَعِيَّتِهِ اخْتَلَفَتْ هُنَالِكَ الْكَلِمَةُ، وَظَهَرَتْ مَعَالِمُ الْجَوْرِ، وَكَثُرَ الْإِدْغَالُ فِي الدِّينِ، وَتَرَكْتُ مُحَاجَّ السُّنَنِ، فَعَمِلَ بِالْهَوَى، وَعَظَمْتُ الْأَحْكَامَ، وَكَثُرَتْ عَلَلُ النُّفُوسِ، فَلَا يَسْتَوْحِشُ لِعَظِيمِ حَقِّ عَطَلٍ، وَلَا لِعَظِيمِ بَاطِلٍ فَعِلَ! فَهَنَالِكَ تَذَلُّ الْأَبْرَارِ، وَتَعَزُّ الْأَشْرَارِ، وَتَعْظُمُ تَبِعَاتُ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ الْعِبَادِ

But if the ruled gain sway over the ruler, or the ruler oppresses the ruled, then difference crops up in every word, signs of oppression appear, mischief enters religion and the ways of the sunnah are forsaken. Then desires are acted upon, the commands (of religion) are discarded, diseases of the spirit become numerous and there is no hesitation in disregarding even great rights, nor in committing big wrongs. In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honoured, and there are serious chastisements from Allāh, the Glorified, onto the people.

فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالتَّوَّابِ فِي ذَلِكَ، وَحَسِّنِ التَّعَاوُنَ عَلَيْهِ، فَلَيْسَ أَحَدٌ - وَإِنْ اشْتَدَّ عَلَى رِضَى اللَّهِ حَرْصُهُ، وَطَالَ فِي الْعَمَلِ اجْتِهَادُهُ - بِبَالِغِ حَقِيقَةِ مَا اللَّهُ سَبَّحَانَهُ أَهْلُهُ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ لَهُ، وَلَكِنْ مِنْ وَاجِبِ حَقُوقِ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ النَّصِيحَةِ بِمَبْلَغِ جَهْدِهِمْ، وَالتَّعَاوُنِ عَلَى إِقَامَةِ الْحَقِّ بَيْنَهُمْ. وَلَيْسَ أَمْرٌ - وَإِنْ عَظُمَتْ فِي الْحَقِّ مَنَزَلَتُهُ، وَتَقَدَّمتْ فِي الدِّينِ فَضِيلَتُهُ - بِفَوْقِ أَنْ يَعَانِ عَلَى مَا حَمَلَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَقِّهِ. وَلَا أَمْرٌ - وَإِنْ صَغُرَتْهُ النُّفُوسُ، وَاقْتَحَمَتْهُ الْعْيُونُ - بِدُونِ أَنْ يَعِينَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ أَوْ يَعَانِ عَلَيْهِ.

You should therefore counsel each other (for the fulfilment of your obligations) and co-operate with each other. However extremely eager a person may be to secure the pleasure of Allāh, and however fully he strives for it, he cannot discharge (his obligation for) obedience to Allāh, the Glorified, as is really due to Him, and it is an obligatory right of Allāh over the people that they should advise each other to the best of their ability and co-operate with each other for the establishment of truth among them. No person, however great his position in the matter of truth, and however advanced his distinction in religion may be, is above co-operation in connection with the obligations placed on him by Allāh. Again, no man, however small he may be regarded by others, and however humble he may appear before eyes, is too low to co-operate or to be afforded co-operation in this matter.

فَأَجَابَهُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ بِكَلَامٍ طَوِيلٍ، يَكْثُرُ فِيهِ الثَّنَاءُ عَلَيْهِ، وَيَذْكُرُ سَمْعَهُ وَطَاعَتَهُ فَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ):

One of Amīr al-mu'minīn's companions replied to him by a long speech wherein he

praised him much and mentioned his own listening to him and obeying him, whereupon Amīr al-mu'minīn said:

إِنَّ مِنْ حَقِّ مَنْ عَظُمَ جَلَالُ اللَّهِ فِي نَفْسِهِ، وَجَلَّ مَوْضِعُهُ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ، أَنْ يَصْغُرَ عِنْدَهُ - لِعَظَمِ ذَلِكَ - كُلُّ مَا سِوَاهُ، وَإِنْ أَحَقَّ مَنْ كَانَ كَذَلِكَ لِمَنْ عَظُمَتْ نِعْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَطَفَ إِحْسَانُهُ إِلَيْهِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ تَعْظُمْ نِعْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَزْدَادَ حَقِّ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ عَظْمًا، وَإِنْ مِنْ أَسْخَفِ حَالَاتِ الْوَلَاةِ عِنْدَ صَالِحِ النَّاسِ، أَنْ يَظُنَّ بِهِمْ حُبَّ الْفَخْرِ، وَيُوضِعَ أَمْرَهُمْ عَلَى الْكِبَرِ،

If a man in his mind regards Allāh's glory as being high and believes in his heart that Allāh's position is sublime, then it is his right that on account of the greatness of these things he should regard all other things small. Among such persons, he on whom Allāh's bounty is great and Allāh's favours are kind has a greater obligation, because Allāh's bounty over any person does not increase without an increase in Allāh's right over him. In the view of virtuous people, the worst position of rulers is that it may be thought about them that they love glory, and their affairs may be taken to be based on pride.

وَقَدْ كَرِهْتُ أَنْ يَكُونَ جَالٌ فِي ظَنِّكُمْ أَذْيُّ أَحَبِّ الْأَطْرَافِ، وَاسْتِمَاعَ الثَّنَاءِ، وَلَسْتُ - بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ - كَذَلِكَ، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَحَبُّ أَنْ يَقَالَ ذَلِكَ لِتَرْكْتُهُ انْحِطَاطًا لِلَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ عَنْ تَنَاوُلِ مَا هُوَ أَحَقُّ بِهِ مِنَ الْعَظَمَةِ وَالْكَبَرِيَاءِ. وَرَبِّمَا اسْتَحْلَى النَّاسُ الثَّنَاءَ بَعْدَ الْبَلَاءِ فَلَا تَنْتَوَا عَلَيَّ بِجَمِيلِ ثَنَاءٍ، لِأَخْرَاجِي نَفْسِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ التَّقِيَّةِ فِي حَقَّقِي لَمْ أَفْرَغْ مِنْ أَدَائِهَا، وَفَرَائِضُ لَا بَدَّ مِنْ إِمْضَائِهَا فَلَا تَكَلِّمُونِي بِمَا تَكَلِّمُ بِهِ الْجَبَابِرَةَ، وَلَا تَحْفَظُوا مِنِّي بِمَا يَتَحَفَّظُ بِهِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ الْبَادِرَةِ وَلَا تَخَالِطُونِي بِالصَّنَاعَةِ وَلَا تَظُنُّوا بِي اسْتِثْقَالًا فِي حَقِّ قِيلَ لِي، وَلَا التَّمَاسُ إِعْظَامٌ لِنَفْسِي، فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ اسْتِثْقَالِ الْحَقِّ أَنْ يَقَالَ لَهُ أَوْ الْعَدْلُ أَنْ يَعْرِضَ عَلَيْهِ، كَانَ الْعَمَلُ بِهِمَا أَثْقَلَ عَلَيْهِ.

I would really hate that it may occur to your mind that I love high praises or to hear eulogies. By the grace of Allāh, I am not like this. Even If I had loved to be mentioned like this, I would have given it up in submissiveness before Allāh, the Glorified, rather than accept greatness and sublimity to which He is more entitled. Generally, people feel pleased at praise after good performances; but do not mention for me handsome praise for the obligations I have discharged towards Allāh and towards you, because of (my) fear about those obligations which I have not discharged and for issuing injunctions which could not be avoided, and do not address me in the manner despots are addressed. Do not evade me as the people of passion are (to be) evaded, do not meet me with flattery and do not think that I shall take it ill if a true thing is said to me, because the person who feels disgusted when truth is said to him or a just matter is placed before him would find it more difficult to act upon them.

فَلَا تَكْفُرُوا عَنْ مَقَالَةٍ بِحَقِّ، أَوْ مَشُورَةٍ بَعْدَلٍ، فَإِذَا بِي لَسْتُ فِي نَفْسِي بِفَوْقِ أَنْ أُخْطِئَ، وَلَا آمِنُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فِعْلِي، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكْفِيَنِي اللَّهُ مِنْ نَفْسِي مَا هُوَ أَمْلَكُ بِهِ مِنِّي فَإِذَا مَا أَنَا وَأَنْتُمْ عِبِيدٌ مَمْلُوكُونَ لِرَبِّ لَا رَبَّ غَيْرِهِ، يَمْلِكُ مِنَّا مَا لَا نَمْلِكُ مِنْ أَنْفُسِنَا، وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِمَّا كُنَّا فِيهِ إِلَى مَا صَلَحْنَا عَلَيْهِ، فَأَبْدَلْنَا بَعْدَ الضَّلَالَةِ بِالْهُدَى، وَأَعْطَانَا الْبَصِيرَةَ بَعْدَ الْعَمَى.

Therefore, do not abstain from saying a truth or pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself above erring. [1] I do not escape erring in my actions but that Allāh helps me (in avoiding errors) in matters in which He is more powerful than I. Certainly, I and you are slaves owned by Allāh, other than Whom there is no Lord except Him. He owns our selves which we do not own. He took us from where we were towards what means prosperity to us. He altered our straying into guidance and gave us intelligence after blindness.

Footnote :

[1] That the innocence of angels is different from the innocence of man needs no detailed discussion. The innocence of angels means that they do not possess the impulse to sin, but the innocence of man means that, although he has human frailties and passions, yet he possesses a peculiar power to resist them and he is not over-powered by them so as to commit sins. This very ability is called innocence and it prevents the rising up of personal passions and impulses. Amīr al-mu'minīn's saying that "I do not regard myself above erring" refers to those human dictates and passions, and his saying that "Allāh helps me in avoiding 'errors'" refers to innocence. The same tone is found in the Qur'ān in the words of Prophet Yūsuf that:

I exculpate not myself, verily (one's) self is wont to bid (him to) evil, except such as my Lord hath had mercy on; verily my Lord is Oft- forgiving, All-merciful. (12:53)

Just as in this verse, because of the existence of exception, its first part cannot be used to argue against his innocence, similarly, due to the existence of the exception "but that Allāh helps me in avoiding errors" in Amīr al-mu'minīn's saying, its first part cannot be used to argue against his innocence, otherwise the Prophet's innocence too will have to be rejected. In the same way, the last sentence of this sermon should not be taken to mean that before the proclamation of prophethood he had been under the influence of pre-Islamic beliefs, and that just as others had been unbelievers he too might have been in darkness and misguidance, because from his very birth Amīr al-mu'minīn was brought-up by the Prophet and the effect of his training and up-bringing permeated him. It cannot therefore be imagined that he who had from infancy trod in the foot-prints of the Prophet would deviate from guidance even for a moment. Thus, al-Mas'ūdī has written:

Amīr al-mu'minīn never believed in any other god than Allāh so that there could be the question of his accepting Islam. He rather followed the Prophet in all his actions and (virtually) initiated him, and in this very state he attained majority. (Murūj adh-dhahab, vol. 2, p. 3).

Here, by those whom Allāh led from darkness into guidance, the reference is to the persons whom Amīr al-mu'minīn was addressing. Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd writes in this connection:

The reference here is not to his own self because he had never been an unbeliever so as to have accepted Islam after that, but in these words he is referring to those group of people whom he was addressing. (Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah, vol. 11, p. 108)