

وَمِنْ خُطْبَةٍ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

From one of his sermons

وَفِيهَا يَصِفُ زَمَانَهُ بِاللَّجْوِ، وَيَقْسِمُ النَّاسَ فِيهِ خَمْسَةَ أَصْنَافٍ، ثُمَّ يَزِيدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا

About the disparagement of the world and categories of its people

[مَعْنَى جَوْرِ الزَّمَانِ: أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنَّا قَدَّمْنَا أَصْنَافًا لَنَا فِي دَهْلٍ عَنُودٍ، وَزَمَنٍ كَنُودٍ [فِي بَعْضِ النِّسْخِ: شَدِيدٍ]، يُعَدُّ فِيهِ الْمَحْسِنُ مَسِيئًا، وَيَزِيدُ دَادَ الظَّالِمِ فِيهِ عَتْوًا، لَا نَنْتَفِعُ بِمَا عَلِمْنَا، وَلَا نَسْتَأْذِنُ عَمَّا جَهَلْنَا، وَلَا نَتَخَوُّ قَارِعَةً حَتَّى تَحُلَّ بِنَا.

O people! We have been borne in such a wrongful and thankless period wherein the virtuous is deemed vicious, and the oppressor goes on advancing in his excesses. We do not make use of what we know, and do not discover what we do not know. We do not fear calamity till it befalls.

[أَصْنَافِ الْمَسِيئِينَ:] فَالنَّاسُ عَلَى أَرْبَعَةِ أَصْنَافٍ:

People are of four categories:

مِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَا يَمْلَأُهُ الْفَسَادُ [فِي بَعْضِ النِّسْخِ: الْفَسَادُ فِي الْأَرْضِ] إِلَّا مَهَانَةٌ نَفْسِهِ، وَكَلَالَةٌ حِدِّهِ وَنَضِيضٌ وَفَلَرِهِ.

Among them is one who is prevented from mischief only by his low position, lack of means and paucity of wealth.

وَمِنْهُمْ الْمَحْسِنُ لَسِيْفُهُ، وَالْمَجْعَلُ لِنُ بَشْرِهِ، وَالْمَجْعَلُ لِبُ بِيْحِهِ لِه وَرَجْلِهِ، قَدْ أَشْرَطَ نَفْسَهُ، وَأَوْبَقَ دِينَهُ لِحُطَامِ يَنْتَهَزُهُ، أَوْ مَقْلَبٍ يَقُودُهُ، أَوْ مِنْ بَرِيْفٍ رَعَهُ. وَلِبئْسَ الْمَتَلَجِرُ أَنْ تَرَى الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْسِكَ ثَمْنَا، وَمِمَّا لَكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَوْضًا!

Then there is he who has drawn his sword, openly commits mischief, has collected his horsemen and footmen, and has devoted himself to securing wealth, leading troops, rising on the pulpit, and has allowed his faith to perish. How bad is the transaction that you allow, (enjoyment of) this world to be a price for yourself as an alternative for what there is with Allāh for you.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَطْلُبُ الدُّنْيَا بِعَمَلِ الْآخِرَةِ، وَلَا يَطْلُبُ الْآخِرَةَ بِعَمَلِ الدُّنْيَا، قَدْ طَامَنَ مِنْ شَخْصِهِ، وَقَارَبَ مِنْ خُطْبُوهِ، وَشَمَّرَ مِنْ ثَوْبِهِ، وَزَخَّرَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ لِلْأَمَانَةِ، وَاتَّخَذَ سِتْرًا لِلَّهِ ذَرِيْعَةً إِلَى الْمَعْلُومَةِ.

And among them is he who seeks (benefits of) this world through actions meant for the next world, but does not seek (good of) next world through actions of this world.

He keeps his body calm (in dignity), raises small steps, holds up his clothes, embellishes his body for appearance of trustworthiness and uses the position of Allāh's connivance as a means of committing sins.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَقْبَعَهُ [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: أَبْلَعَهُ] عَنْ طَلَبِ الْمُلْكِ ضُؤُولَةً [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: ضُؤُولَةٌ] نَفَلَسَهُ وَأَنْقَطَعَ سَبِيهِ، فَكَصَّرَتْ لَهُ الْحَالُ عَلَى حَالِهِ، فَتَحَلَّى بِاسْلَمِ الْقِنَاعَةِ، وَتَزَيَّنَ بِلِبَاسِ أَهْلِ الزَّهَادَةِ، وَلِيَسَّ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فِي مِرَاحٍ وَلَا مَغْلَدَى.

Then there is one whose weakness and lack of means have held him back from conquest of lands. This keeps down his position and he has named it contentment and he clothes himself with the robe of renunciation although he has never had any connection with these qualities.

[الرَّاعِبُونَ فِي اللَّهِ:] وَبَقِيَ رِجَالٌ غَضُّ أَبْصَارِهِمْ ذِكْرُ الْمَرَجِّعِ، وَأَرَاقَ دُمُوعِهِمْ خَوْفُ الْإِمْحَاحِ شَرِّهِمْ، فَيَلْنُ شَرِيدٍ نَادٍ، وَخَائِفٍ مَقْلَمٍ مَوْعٍ، وَسَاكِتٍ مَكَلِّعٍ مَوْعٍ، وَدَاعٍ مَخْلُصٍ، وَثَكْلَانٍ مَوْجِعٍ، قَدَّمَ أَخْطَمَهُمُ التَّقِيَّةَ وَشَمَلَتْهُمْ الذَّلَّةَ، فَهَمُّ فِي بَحْلٍ أَجَاجٍ، أَفْلَواهُمْ ضَامِرَةٌ، وَقُلُوبُهُمْ قَرِحَةٌ، قَدَّمَ [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: وَقَدَّمَ] وَعَظُوا حَتَّى مَلُّوا وَقَهَرُوا حَتَّى ذَلُّوا، وَقَتَلُوا حَتَّى قَلُّوا.

Then there remain a few people in whose case the remembrance of their return (to Allāh on Doomsday) keeps their eyes bent, and the fear of resurrection moves their tears. Some of them are scared away (from the world) and dispersed; some are frightened and subdued; some are quiet as if muzzled; some are praying sincerely, some are grief-stricken and pain-ridden whom fear has confined to namelessness and disgrace has shrouded them, so they are in (the sea of) bitter water, their mouths are closed and their hearts are bruised. They preached till they were tired, they were oppressed till they were disgraced and they were killed till they remained few in number.

[التَّزْهِيدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا:] فَلَمَّا تَكَنَّ الدُّنْيَا أَصْلَغَ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: فَلَمَّا تَكَنَّ الدُّنْيَا فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ] أَصْلَغَ [مِنْ حَثَالَةِ الْبَقْرَةِ وَقِرَاضَةِ الْجَلْمِ وَأَتَعَّظُوا بِمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ] قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتَعَّظَ بِكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ؛ وَارْتَفَضُوهَا ذَمِيمَةً، فَإِنَّهَا قَدْ رَفَضَتْ مِنْ كَانَ أَشْلَغَ بِهَا مِنْكُمْ.

The world in your eyes should be smaller than the bark of acacia and the clippings of wool. Seek instruction from those who preceded you before those who follow you take instruction from you, and keep aloof from it realising its evil because it cuts off even from those who were more attached to it than you.

أَقُولُ: [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: قَالَ السَّيِّدُ الشَّرِيفُ: أَقُولُ، أَوْ: قَالَ الشَّرِيفُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَقُولُ، أَوْ: قَالَ السَّيِّدُ الشَّرِيفُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَقُولُ] هَلْ ذَهَبَ [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: وَهَلْ ذَهَبَ] الْإِخْطَابُ رِيْمًا نَسَبَهَا مِنْ لَأِ عِلْمٍ لَهُ إِلَيَّ [فِي بَعْضِ النَّسْخِ: بِهَا إِلَيَّ] مَعَاوِيَةَ، وَهِيَ مِنْ كَلَامِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ الَّذِي لَا يَشْكُ فِيهِ، وَأَيْلَنَ الذَّهَبَ مِنَ الرِّغَامِ؟ وَاللَّعْدَابُ مِنَ الْأَجَاجِ؟ وَقَدْ دَلَّ عَلَى

ذَلِكَ الدَّلِيلُ الدَّخْرِيُّ، وَنَقَلَهُ النَّاقِدُ البَصِيرُ عَمَلُوهُ بِأَنَّ بَحْرَ الذَّجَاحِظِ؛ فَإِنَّهُ ذَكَرَ هَذِهِ الذَّخْطَبَةَ فِي كِتَابِهِ «الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالتَّبَيِّنَاتِ»، وَذَكَرَ مِنْهَا نِسْبَتَهَا إِلَى مُعَاوِيَةَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: هِيَ بِكَلَامِ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَشَدَّ بِهِ [فِي بَعْضِ النِّسْخِ: ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ مِنْهَا بِعَلْمِهَا بِكَلَامٍ فِي مَعْلَمَاتِهَا، جَمَلْتَهُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: وَهَذَا الذَّكْرُ بِكَلَامِ عَلِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَشَدَّ بِهِ]، وَيَمْدَحُهُ فِي تَصْنِيفِ النَّاسِ وَيَاخُذُ بِأَرْبَابِ [فِي بَعْضِ النِّسْخِ: وَفِي الذَّخْطَبَاتِ] عَمَّا هُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْقَهْرِ وَالْإِذْلَالِ وَمِنَ التَّقِيَّةِ وَالْخَوْفِ أَلْفِيقًا. قَالَ: وَمَتَى وَجَدْنَا مُعَاوِيَةَ فِي حَالٍ مِنَ الْأَحْوَالِ يَسَلِّمُكَ فِي كَلَامِهِ مَسَلِّمَكَ الزَّهَادِ، وَمَذَاهِبِ الْعِبَادَةِ؟

as-Sayyid ar-Raḍī says: Some ignorant persons attributed this sermon to Mu‘āwiyah, but it is the speech of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn. There should be no doubt about it. What comparison is there between gold and clay, or sweet and bitter water? This has been pointed out by the skilful guide and expert critic, ‘Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, as he has mentioned this sermon in his book, al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn (vol. 2, pp. 59–61). He has also mentioned who attributed it to Mu‘āwiyah and then states that it is more akin to be the speech of ‘Alī and more in accord with his way of categorising people and informing about their oppression, disgrace, dissimulation, and fear. (On the other hand) we never found Mu‘āwiyah in his speech, to behave the behaviour of the ascetics and to adopt the beliefs of the servants (of Allāh).