

Sermon 114: Praise be to Him Who makes....

About abstemiousness, fear of Allah and importance of providing for the next life

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

وفيها مواضع للناس

Praise be to Him Who makes praise followed by bounty and bounty with gratefulness. We praise Him on His bounties as on His trials. We seek His help against these hearts which are slow to obey what they have been commended but quick towards what they have been desisted from. We seek His forgiveness from that which His knowledge covers and His document preserves – knowledge which does not leave anything and a document which does not omit anything. We believe in Him like the belief of one who has seen the unknown and has attained the promised rewards – belief, the purity whereof keeps off from belief in partners of Allah, and whose conviction removes doubt.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْوَاصِلِ الْحَمْدَ بِالنِّعَمِ وَالنِّعَمَ بِالشُّكْرِ، نَحْمَدُهُ عَلَى آيَاتِهِ كَمَا نَحْمَدُهُ عَلَى بَلَائِهِ، وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ عَلَى هَذِهِ النُّفُوسِ الْبِطْأَةِ عَمَّا أُمِرَتْ بِهِ، السِّرَّاعِ إِلَى مَا نُهِيَتْ عَنْهُ، وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ مِمَّا أَحَاطَ بِهِ عِلْمُهُ، وَأَحْصَاهُ كِتَابُهُ؛ عِلْمٌ غَيْرُ قَاصِرٍ، وَكِتَابٌ غَيْرُ مُغَادِرٍ، وَتُؤْمِنُ بِهِ إِيْمَانٌ مِّنْ عَايِنِ الْغُيُوبِ، وَوَقَفَ عَلَى الْمَوْعُودِ، إِيْمَانًا نَفَى إِخْلَاصَهُ الشِّرْكَ، وَيَقِينُهُ الشَّكَّ،

We stand witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, Who has no partner for Him, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet, Allah may bless him and his descendants. These two testimonies heighten the utterance and raise the act. The scale wherein they would be placed would not be light while the scale from which they are removed would not become heavy.

وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، شَهَادَتَيْنِ تُصْعِدَانِ الْقَوْلَ، وَتَرْفَعَانِ الْعَمَلَ،

لَا يَخِفُّ مِيزَانُ تَوْضَعَانَ فِيهِ، وَلَا يَنْقَلُ مِيزَانُ تَرْفَعَانَ مِنْهُ.

Enjoining people to Piety

O creatures of Allah! I advise you to have fear of Allah which is the provision (for the next world) and with it is (your) return. The provision would take you (to your destination) and the return would be successful. The best one who is able to make people listen has called towards it and the best listener has listened to it. So the caller has proclaimed and the listener has listened and preserved.

أَوْصِيكُمْ، عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ الَّتِي هِيَ الزَّادُ وَبِهَا الْمَعَادُ: زَادٌ مُبْلَغٌ وَمَعَادٌ مُنْجٍ، دَعَا إِلَيْهَا أَسْمَعُ دَاعٍ، وَوَعَاَهَا خَيْرٌ
وَأَعِيهَا، فَاسْمَعْ دَاعِيَهَا، وَفَارَ وَاعِيَهَا.

O creations of Allah! Certainly fear of Allah has saved the lovers of Allah from unlawful items and gave His dread to their hearts till their nights are passed in wakefulness and their noons in thirst. So they achieve comfort through trouble and copious watering through thirst. They regarded death to be near and therefore hastened towards (good) actions. They rejected their desires and so they kept death in their sight.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ حَمَتِ أَوْلِيََاءَ اللَّهِ مَحَارِمَهُ، وَالزَّيَمَتِ قُلُوبَهُمْ مَخَافَتَهُ، حَتَّى أَسْهَرَتْ لَيَالِيَهُمْ، وَأَظْمَأَتْ
هُوَاجِرَهُمْ؛ فَأَخَذُوا الرَّاحَةَ بِالنَّصَبِ، وَالرَّيَّ بِالظُّمَاءِ، وَاسْتَقْرَبُوا الْأَجَلَ فَبَادَرُوا الْعَمَلَ، وَكَذَّبُوا الْأَمَلَ فَلَا حَظُّوا الْأَجَلَ.

Then, this world is a place of destruction, tribulations, changes and lessons. As for destruction, the time has its bow pressed (to readiness) and its dart does not go amiss, its wound does not heal; it afflicts the living with death, the healthy with ailment and the safe with distress. It is an eater who is not satisfied and a drinker whose thirst is never quenched. As for tribulation, a man collects what he does not eat and builds wherein he does not live. Then he goes out to Allah without carrying the wealth or shifting the building.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا دَارُ فَنَاءٍ، وَعَنَاءٍ، وَغَيْرٍ: فَمِنْ الْفَنَاءِ أَنَّ الدَّهْرَ مُوتِرٌ قَوْسُهُ، لَا تُخْطِئُ سَهَامُهُ، وَلَا تُؤْسَى جِرَاحُهُ،
يَرْمِي الْحَيَّ بِالْمَوْتِ، وَالصَّحِيحَ بِالسَّقَمِ، وَالنَّاجِيَ بِالْعَطَبِ، أَكِلٌ لَا يَشْبَعُ، وَشَارِبٌ لَا يَنْقَعُ. وَمِنْ الْعَنَاءِ أَنَّ الْمَرْءَ يَجْمَعُ
مَا لَا يَأْكُلُ، وَيَبْنِي مَا لَا يَسْكُنُ، ثُمَّ يَخْرُجُ إِلَى اللَّهِ، لَا مَالَ حَمَلَ، وَلَا بِنَاءً نَقَلَ.

As for its changes, you see a pitiable man becoming enviable and an enviable man becoming pitiable. This is because the wealth has gone and misfortune has come to him. As for its lessons, a man reaches near (realisation of) his desires when (suddenly) the approach of his death cuts them; then neither the desire is achieved nor the desirer spared. Glory to Allah, how deceitful are its pleasures, how thirst-rousing its quenching and how sunny its shade. That which approaches (i.e. death) cannot be sent back,

he who goes away does not return. Glory to Allah, how near is the living to the dead because he will meet him soon and how far is the dead from the living because he has gone away from him.

وَمَنْ غَيْرَهَا أَنْكَ تَرَى الْمَرْحُومَ مَغْبُوطاً، وَالْمَغْبُوطَ مَرْحُوماً، لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا نَعِيماً زَلَّ، وَيُوساً نَزَلَ. وَمِنْ عِبَرِهَا أَنَّ الْمَرْءَ يُشْرِفُ عَلَى أَمَلِهِ فَيَقْطَعُهُ حُضُورُ أَجَلِهِ، فَلَا أَمَلٌ يَدْرِكُ، وَلَا مُؤَمِّلٌ يَتْرَكُ. فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، مَا أَعَزَّ سُرُورَهَا! وَأَظْمَأَ رِيَّهَا! وَأَضْحَى فَيَنْبُهَا! لَا جَاءَ يُرَدُّ، وَلَا مَاضٍ يَرْتَدُّ. فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، مَا أَقْرَبَ الْحَيِّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ لِلْحَاقِقِ بِهِ، وَأَبْعَدَ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ لِانْقِطَاعِهِ عَنْهُ!

Certainly nothing is viler than evil except its punishment and nothing is better than good except its reward. In this world everything that is heard is better than what is seen, while of everything of the next world that is seen is better than what is heard. So you should satisfy yourself by hearing rather than seeing and by the news of the unknown. You should know that what is little in this world but much in the next is better than what is much in this world but little in the next. In how many cases little is profitable while much causes loss.

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ بِشَرٍّ مِنَ الشَّرِّ إِلَّا عِقَابُهُ، وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ بِخَيْرٍ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ إِلَّا تَوَابُهُ، وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا سَمَاعُهُ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ عِيَانِهِ، وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ عِيَانُهُ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ سَمَاعِهِ، فَلْيَكْفِكُمْ مِنَ الْعِيَانِ السَّمَاعُ، وَمِنْ الْغَيْبِ الْخَبَرُ.

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ مَا نَقَصَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَزَادَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا نَقَصَ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ وَزَادَ فِي الدُّنْيَا: فَكَمْ مِنْ مَنْقُوصٍ رَابِحٍ وَمَزِيدٍ خَاسِرٍ!

Certainly that which you have been commanded to do is wider than what you have been refrained from, and what has been made lawful for you is more than what has been prohibited. Then give up what is less for what is much, and what is limited for what is vast. Allah has guaranteed your livelihood and has commanded you to act. Therefore, the pursuit of that which has been guaranteed to you should not get preference over that whose performance has been enjoined upon you.

إِنَّ الَّذِي أُمِرْتُمْ بِهِ أَوْسَعُ مِنَ الَّذِي نُهِيتُمْ عَنْهُ، وَمَا أَجَلَ لَكُمْ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّا حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ، فَذَرُّوا مَا قَلَّ لِمَا كَثُرَ، وَمَا ضَاقَ لِمَا اتَّسَعَ. قَدْ تُكْفَلُ لَكُمْ بِالرِّزْقِ، وَأُمِرْتُمْ بِالْعَمَلِ، فَلَا يَكُونَنَّ الْمَضْمُونُ لَكُمْ طَلَبُهُ أَوْلَى بِكُمْ مِنَ الْمَفْرُوضِ عَلَيْكُمْ عَمَلُهُ،

But by Allah, most certainly the position is that doubt has overtaken and certainty has been shattered and it seems as if what has been guaranteed to you is obligatory on you and what was made obligatory on you has been taken away from you. So, hasten towards (good) actions and dread the suddenness of death, because the return of age cannot be hoped for, as the return of livelihood can be hoped for. Whatever is missed from livelihood today may be hoped tomorrow with increase, but whatever is lost from the age yesterday, its return cannot be expected today. Hope can be only for that which is to come,

while about that which is passed there is only disappointment. So

"fear Allah as He ought to be feared and do not die until you are (true) Muslim." (Qur'an , 3:102)

مَعَ أَنَّهُ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ اعْتَرَضَ الشُّكُّ، وَدَخَلَ الْيَقِينُ، حَتَّى كَأَنَّ الَّذِي ضَمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ فُرِضَ عَلَيْكُمْ، وَكَأَنَّ الَّذِي قَدْ فُرِضَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَدْ وُضِعَ عَنْكُمْ. فَبَادِرُوا الْعَمَلَ، وَخَافُوا بَعْتَةَ الْأَجَلِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُرْجَى مِنْ رَجْعَةِ الْعُمُرِ مَا يُرْجَى مِنْ رَجْعَةِ الرِّزْقِ، مَا فَاتَ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ رُجِي غَدًا زِيَادَتُهُ، وَمَا فَاتَ أَمْسٍ مِنَ الْعُمُرِ لَمْ يُرَجَ الْيَوْمَ رَجْعَتُهُ. الرَّجَاءُ مَعَ الْجَائِي، وَالْيَأْسُ مَعَ الْمَاضِي، فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ .)

Alternative Sources for Sermon 114

- (1) Al-Yamani, *al-Taraz*, II, 335;
- (2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf*, 156;
- (3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi'*, I, II, at the beginning of each part;
- (4) al-Qadi al-Quda'i, *Dustur*, 33;
- (5) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar*;
- (6) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali*, II, 107.

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