

Sermon 149: O people! Every one shall meet...

Before his martyrdom (last will)

(ومن كلامه (عليه السلام

قبل موته

O people! Every one shall meet what he wishes to avoid by running away. ¹ Death is the place to which life is driving. To run away from it means to catch it. How many days did I spend in searching for the secret of this matter, but Allah did not allow save its concealment. Alas! It is a treasured knowledge. As for my last will, it is that concerning Allah, do not believe in a partner for Him, and concerning Muhammad (S), do not disregard his *Sunnah*. Keep these two pillars and burn these two lamps. Till you are not divided, no evil will come to you. ²

Every one of you has to bear his own burden. It has been kept light for the ignorant. Allah is Merciful. Faith is straight. The leader (Prophet) is the holder of knowledge. Yesterday I was with you; today I have become the object of a lesson for you, and tomorrow I shall leave you. May Allah forgive me and you!

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، كُلُّ امْرِئٍ لَاقٍ بِمَا يَفِرُّ مِنْهُ فِي فِرَارِهِ، وَالْأَجَلَ مَسَاقُ النَّفْسِ، وَالْهَرَبُ مِنْهُ مُوَأْفَاتُهُ. كَمْ أَطْرَدْتُ الْإَيَّامَ
أُبْحَثُهَا عَنْ مَكْنُونِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ، فَأَبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِخْفَاءَهُ، هَيْهَاتَ! عَلِمَ مَخْزُونًا! أَمَّا وَصِيَّتِي: فَاللَّهُ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا،
وَمُحَمَّدًا فَلَا تُضَيِّعُوا سُنَّتَهُ، أَقِيمُوا هَدْيَ الْعَمُودِينَ، وَأَوْقِدُوا هَدْيَ الْمَصْبَاحِينَ، وَخَلَاكُمْ ذَمُّ مَالِمٍ تَشْرُدُوا، حَمَلُ كُلِّ
امْرِئٍ مَجْهُودُهُ، وَخُفِّفَ عَنِ الْجَهْلَةِ، رَبُّ رَحِيمٌ، وَدِينٌ قَوِيمٌ، وَإِمَامٌ عَلِيمٌ. أَنَا بِالْأَمْسِ صَاحِبِكُمْ، وَأَنَا الْيَوْمَ عِبْرَةٌ لَكُمْ،
!وَعَدَا مُفَارِقَكُمْ! غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ

If the foot remains firm in this slippery place, well and good! But if the foot slips, this is because we are under the shade of branches, the passing of the winds and the canopy of the clouds whose layers are dispersed in the sky, and whose traces disappeared ³ in the earth. I was your neighbour.

My body kept you company for some days and shortly you will find just an empty body of mine which would be stationary after (all its) movement and silent after speech so that my calmness, the closing of my eyes, and the stillness of my limbs may provide you counsel, because it is more of a counsel for those who take a lesson (from it) than eloquent speech and a ready word. I am departing from you like one who is eager to meet (someone). Tomorrow you will look at my days, then my inner side will be disclosed to you and you will understand me after the vacation of my place and its occupation by someone else.

إِنْ تَتَّبِعِ الْوِطَاءَ فِي هَذِهِ الْمَزَلَّةِ فَذَلِكَ، وَإِنْ تَدْحَضِ الْقَدَمُ فَإِنَّا كُنَّا فِي أَفْيَاءِ أَعْصَانِ، وَمَهَابِ رِيَّاحٍ، وَتَحْتَ ظِلِّ غَمَامٍ،
اضْمَحَلَّ فِي الْجَوِّ مُتَلَفِّقُهَا، وَعَفَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَخْطُهَا. وَإِنَّمَا كُنْتُ جَارًا جَاوَرَكُمُ بَدَنِي أَيَّامًا، وَسَتُعَقَّبُونَ مِنِّي جُنَّةً خَلَاءَ
سَاكِنَةً بَعْدَ حَرَكَ، وَصَامِتَةً بَعْدَ نَطْقٍ لِيَعِظَكُمُ هُدُوءِي، وَخُفُوتُ إِطْرَاقِي، وَسُكُونُ أُطْرَاقِي، فَإِنَّهُ أَوْعَظُ لِلْمُعْتَبِرِينَ مِنْ
الْمُنْطِقِ الْبَلِيغِ وَالْقَوْلِ الْمَسْمُوعِ. وَدَاعِيكُمْ وَدَاعِ أَمْرِيءَ مُرْصِدٍ لِلتَّلَاقِي! غَدًا تَرَوْنَ أَيَّامِي، وَيُكْشَفُ لَكُمْ عَنْ سَرَائِرِي،
وَتَعْرِفُونَنِي بَعْدَ خُلُوقِ مَكَانِي وَقِيَامِ غَيْرِي مَقَامِي.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 149

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, I, 229;

(2) al-Mas'udi, *Muruj*, II, 436;

(3) al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat*, 103;

(4) Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh*, XII, 211.

1. This means that during all the time spent in the attempts that a man makes to avoid death and in the means he adopts for it, it is only the span of life that is shortened. As the time passes the objective of death approaches near, so much so that in one's attempt to seek life one meets death.

2. "wa khalakum dhammun" (No evil will come to you). This sentence is used as a proverb. It was first employed by Qasir, slave of Jadhimah ibn Malik al-Abrash.

3. The intention is that when all these things die, how can those who inhabit them remain safe? Certainly they too, like every thing else, have to pass away some day or other. Then why should there be any wonder at my life coming to an end?

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