

Sermon 160: Allah's verdict is judicious....

Praise of Allah

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

Allah's verdict is judicious and full of wisdom. His pleasure implies protection and mercy. He decides with knowledge and forgives with forbearance.

أَمْرُهُ قَضَاءٌ وَحِكْمَةٌ، وَرِضَاهُ أَمَانٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ، يَقْضِي بِعِلْمٍ، وَيَعْفُو بِحِلْمٍ.

O My God! Praise be to Thee for what Thou takest and givest and for that from which Thou curest or with which Thou afflictest; praise which is the most acceptable to Thee, the most liked by Thee and the most dignified before Thee; praise which fills all Thy creation and reaches where Thou desirest; praise which is not veiled from Thee and does not end, and whose continuity does not cease.

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى مَا تَأْخُذُ وَتُعْطِي، وَعَلَى مَا تُعَافِي وَتَبْتَلِي. حَمْدًا يَكُونُ أَرْضَى الْحَمْدِ لَكَ، وَأَحَبَّ الْحَمْدِ إِلَيْكَ، وَأَفْضَلَ الْحَمْدِ عِنْدَكَ. حَمْدًا يَمَلَأُ مَا خَلَقْتَ، وَيَبْلُغُ مَا أَرَدْتَ. حَمْدًا لَا يُحْجَبُ عَنْكَ، وَلَا يُقْصَرُ دُونَكَ. حَمْدًا لَا يَنْقَطِعُ عَدَدُهُ، وَلَا يَفْنَى مَدَدُهُ.

Greatness of Allah

We do not know the reality of Thy greatness except that we know that Thou art 'Ever-living and Self-subsisting by Whom all things subsist. Drowsiness or sleep does not overtake Thee' (ref. 2:255), vision does not reach Thee and sight does not grasp Thee. Thou seest the eyes and countest the ages. Thou holdest (people as slaves) **“..by foreheads and feet” (55:41).**

We see Thy creation and wonder over it because of Thy might, and describe it as (a result of) Thy great authority; whereas what is hidden from us, of which our sight has fallen short, which our intelligence has not attained, and between which and ourselves curtains of the unknown have been cast, is far greater.

فَلَسْنَا نَعْلَمُ كُنْهَ عَظَمَتِكَ إِلَّا أَنَّا نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ: حَيٌّ قَيُّومٌ، لَا تَأْخُذُكَ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ، لَمْ يَنْتَهِ إِلَيْكَ نَظْرٌ، وَلَمْ يَدْرِكْكَ بَصَرٌ،
أَدْرَكْتَ الْإِبْصَارَ، وَأَحْصَيْتَ الْأَعْمَالَ، وَأَخَذْتَ (بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ)، وَمَا الَّذِي نَرَى مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، وَنَعَجِبُ لَهُ مِنْ
قُدْرَتِكَ، وَنَصِفُهُ مِنْ عَظِيمِ سُلْطَانِكَ، وَمَا تَغَيَّبَ عَنَّا مِنْهُ، وَقَصُرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا عَنْهُ، وَانْتَهَتْ عُقُولُنَا دُونَهُ، وَحَالَتْ سَوَاتِرُ
الْغُيُوبِ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَعْظَمُ.

He who frees his heart (from all other engagements) and exerts his thinking in order to know how Thou established Thy throne, how Thou created Thy creatures, how Thou suspended the air in Thy skies and how Thou spread Thy earth on the waves of water, his eyes would return tired, his intelligence defeated, his ears eager and his thinking awander.

فَمَنْ فَرَّغَ قَلْبَهُ، وَأَعْمَلَ فِكْرَهُ، لِيَعْلَمَ كَيْفَ أَقَمْتَ عَرْشَكَ، وَكَيْفَ ذَرَأْتَ خَلْقَكَ، وَكَيْفَ عَلَّقْتَ فِي الْهَوَاءِ سَمَاوَاتِكَ،
وَكَيفَ مَدَدْتَ عَلَى مَوْرِ الْمَاءِ أَرْضَكَ، رَجَعَ طَرْفُهُ حَسِيرًا، وَعَقْلُهُ مَبْهُورًا، وَسَمْعُهُ وَالْهَأُ، وَفِكْرُهُ حَائِرًا.

[A part of the same sermon about hope and fear in Allah.](#)

منها: كيف يكون الرجاء

He claims according to his own thinking that he hopes from Allah. By Allah, the Great, he speaks a lie. The position is that his hope (in Allah) does not appear through his action although the hope of every one who hopes is known through his action. Every hope is so, except the hope in Allah, the Sublime, if it is impure; and every fear is established except the fear for Allah if it is unreal.

يَدْعِي بِزُعْمِهِ أَنَّهُ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ، كَذَبَ وَالْعَظِيمِ! مَا بِالْهُ لَا يَتَّبِعُنُ رَجَاؤُهُ فِي عَمَلِهِ؟ فَكُلُّ مَنْ رَجَا عُرْفَ رَجَاؤُهُ فِي عَمَلِهِ،
وَكُلُّ رَجَاءٍ - إِلَّا رَجَاءَ اللَّهِ - فَإِنَّهُ مَدْخُولٌ، وَكُلُّ خَوْفٍ مُحَقَّقٌ، إِلَّا خَوْفَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَعْلُولٌ.

He hopes big things from Allah and small things from men but he gives to man (such consideration as) he does not give to Allah. What is the matter with Allah, glorified be His praise? He is accorded less (consideration) than what is given to His creatures. Do you ever fear to be false in your hope in Allah? Or do you not regard Him the centre of your hope?

Similarly, if a man fears man he gives him (such consideration) out of his fear which he does not give to Allah. Thus, he has made his fear for men ready currency while his fear from the Creator is mere deferment or promise. This is the case of every one in whose eye this world appears big (and important)

and in whose heart its position is great. He prefers it over Allah, so he inclines towards it, and becomes its devotee.

يَرْجُو اللَّهَ فِي الْكَبِيرِ، وَيَرْجُو الْعِبَادَ فِي الصَّغِيرِ، فَيُعْطِي الْعَبْدَ مَا لَا يُعْطِي الرَّبَّ! فَمَا بَالُ اللَّهِ جَلَّ تَنَاوُهُ يُقْصِرُ بِهِ عَمَّا يُصْنَعُ بِهِ بِعِبَادِهِ؟ أَتَخَافُ أَنْ تَكُونَ فِي رَجَائِكَ لَهُ كَانِبًا؟ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَا تَرَاهُ لِلرَّجَاءِ مَوْضِعًا؟ وَكَذَلِكَ إِنْ هُوَ خَافَ عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبِيدِهِ، أَعْطَاهُ مِنْ خَوْفِهِ مَا لَا يُعْطِي رَبَّهُ، فَجَعَلَ خَوْفَهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ نَقْدًا، وَخَوْفَهُ مِنْ خَالِقِهِ ضِمَارًا وَوَعْدًا، وَكَذَلِكَ مَنْ عَظُمَتِ الدُّنْيَا فِي عَيْنِهِ، وَكَبُرَ مَوْقِعُهَا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ، آثَرَهَا عَلَى اللَّهِ، فَانْقَطَعَ إِلَيْهَا، وَصَارَ عَبْدًا لَهَا.

The example of the Holy Prophet

(رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم

Certainly, in the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was sufficient example for you and a proof concerning the vices of the world, its defects, the multitude of its disgraces and its evils, because its sides had been constrained for him, while its flanks had been spread for others; he was deprived of its milk and turned away from its adornments.

وَلَقَدْ كَانَ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) كَافَ لَكَ فِي الْأُسُوةِ، وَدَلِيلُ لَكَ عَلَى ذَمِّ الدُّنْيَا وَعَيْبِهَا، وَكَثْرَةِ مَخَازِبِهَا وَمَسَاوِيهَا، إِذْ قُبِضَتْ عَنْهُ أَطْرَافُهَا، وَوُطِنَتْ لِغَيْرِهِ أَكْنَافُهَا، وَقُطِمَ مِنْ رِضَاعِهَا، وَزُويَ عَنْ زَخَارِفِهَا.

The example of Musa (Moses)

(موسى (عليه السلام

If you want, I will, as a second example, relate to you concerning Musa, the Interlocutor of Allah (p.b.u.h.) when he said:

O' Allah! I need whatever good Thou mayest grant me (Qur'an, 28:24).

By Allah, he asked Him only for bread to eat because he was used to eating the herbs of the earth, and the greenness of the herbs could be seen from the delicate skin of his belly due to his thinness and paucity of his flesh.

وَإِنْ شِئْتَ تَنْبِئْتُ بِمُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) إِذْ يَقُولُ: (رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ)، وَاللَّهُ، مَا سَأَلَهُ إِلَّا خُبْزًا يَأْكُلُهُ، لِإِنَّهُ كَانَ يَأْكُلُ بَقْلَةَ الْأَرْضِ، وَلَقَدْ كَانَتْ خُضْرَةُ الْبَقْلِ تَرَى مِنْ شَفِيفِ صِفَاقِ بَطْنِهِ، لَهُزَالِهِ وَتَشَدُّبِ لَحْمِهِ

The example of Dawud (David)

(داوود (عليه السلام

If you desire I can give you a third example of Dawud (p.b.u.h.). He is the holder of the Psalms and the reciter among the people of Paradise. He used to prepare baskets of date palm leaves with his own hands and would say to his companions: "Which of you will help me by purchasing it?" He used to eat barley bread (bought) out of its price.

وَإِنْ شِئْتَ تَلَّثْتُ دَاوُودَ صَاحِبِ الْمَزَامِيرِ، وَقَارِيءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَلَقَدْ كَانَ يَعْمَلُ سَفَائِفَ الْخُوصِ بِيَدِهِ، وَيَقُولُ لِجُلَسَائِهِ: أَيُّكُمْ يَكْفِينِي بِبِعْهَا! وَيَأْكُلُ قُرْصَ الشُّعِيرِ مِنْ ثَمَنِهَا.

The example of 'Isa (Jesus)

(عيسى (عليه السلام

If you desire I will tell you about 'Isa (p.b.u.h.) son of Maryam (Mary). He used a stone for his pillow, put on coarse clothes and ate rough food. His condiment was hunger. His lamp at night was the moon. His shade during the winter was just the expanse of earth eastward and westward. His fruits and flowers were only what grows from the earth for the cattle. He had no wife to allure him, nor any son to give grief, nor wealth to deviate (his attention), nor greed to disgrace him. His two feet were his conveyance and his two hands his servant.

وَإِنْ شِئْتَ قُلْتُ فِي عِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ (عليه السلام)، فَلَقَدْ كَانَ يَتَوَسَّدُ الْحَجَرَ، وَيَلْبَسُ الْخَشِينَ، وَيَأْكُلُ الْجَشِيبَ، وَكَانَ إِدَامُهُ الْجُوعَ، وَسِرَاجُهُ بِاللَّيْلِ الْقَمَرَ، وَظِلَالُهُ فِي الشِّتَاءِ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا، وَفَاكِهَتُهُ وَرَبْحَانُهُ مَا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ لِلْبِهَائِمِ، وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ زَوْجَةٌ تَفْتِنُهُ، وَلَا وَلَدٌ يَحْزُنُهُ، وَلَا مَالٌ يَلْفِتُهُ، وَلَا طَمَعٌ يُذِلُّهُ، دَابَّتُهُ رِجَالُهُ، وَخَادِمُهُ يَدَاهُ.

Following the example of the Holy Prophet

(الرسول الاعظم (صلى الله عليه وآله

You should follow your Prophet, the pure, the chaste, may Allah bless him and his descendants. In him is the example for the follower, and the consolation for the seeker of consolation. The most beloved person before Allah is he who follows His Prophet and who treads in his footsteps. He took the least (share) from this world and did not take a full glance at it. Of all the people of the world he was the least

satiated and the most empty of stomach.

The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. When he knew that Allah, the Glorified, hated a thing, he too hated it; that Allah held a thing low, he too held it low; that Allah held a thing small, he too held it small. If we love what Allah and His Prophet hate and hold great what Allah and His Prophet hold small, that would be enough isolation from Allah and transgression of His commands.

فَتَأْسَىٰ بِنَبِيِّكَ الْأَطْيَبِ الْأَطْهَرِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) فَإِنَّ فِيهِ أَسْوَأَ لِمَنْ تَأْسَىٰ، وَعَزَاءً لِمَنْ تَعَزَىٰ - وَأَحَبُّ الْعِبَادِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْمُتَأْسَىٰ بِنَبِيِّهِ، وَالْمُقْتَصُّ لِأْتَرِهِ - قَضَمَ الدُّنْيَا قَضْمًا، وَلَمْ يُعْرِهَا طَرْفًا، أَهْضَمَ أَهْلَ الدُّنْيَا كَشْحًا، وَأَخْمَصَهُمْ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا بَطْنًا، عُرِضَتْ عَلَيْهِ الدُّنْيَا فَأَبَىٰ أَنْ يَقْبَلَهَا، وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ أَبْغَضَ شَيْئًا فَأَبْغَضَهُ، وَحَفَرَ شَيْئًا فَحَقَّرَهُ، وَصَغَّرَ شَيْئًا فَصَغَّرَهُ. وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِينَا إِلَّا حُبْنَا مَا أَبْغَضَ اللَّهُ، وَتَعْظِيمَنَا مَا صَغَّرَ اللَّهُ، لَكَفَىٰ بِهِ شِفَاقًا لِلَّهِ، وَمُحَادَّةً عَنِ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ.

The Prophet used to (sit and) eat on the ground, and sit like a slave. He repaired his shoe with his own hands, and patched his clothes with his own hands. He would ride an unsaddled ass and would seat someone behind him. If there was a curtain on his door with pictures on it he would say to one of his wives. "O such-and-such, take it away out of my sight because if I look at it I recall the world and its allurements."

Thus, he removed his heart from this world and destroyed its remembrance from his mind. He loved that its allurements should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not secure good dress from it, should not regard it a place of stay and should not hope to live in it. Consequently, he removed it from his mind, let it go away from his heart and kept it hidden from his eyes, just as a person who hates a thing hates to look at it or to hear about it.

وَلَقَدْ كَانَ (صلى الله عليه وآله) يَأْكُلُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ، وَيَجْلِسُ جَلِيسَةَ الْعَبْدِ، وَيَخْصِفُ بِيَدِهِ نَعْلَهُ، وَيَرْفَعُ بِيَدِهِ نَوْبَهُ، وَيَرْكَبُ الْجِمَارَ الْعَارِيَّ، وَيُرْدِفُ خَلْفَهُ، وَيَكُونُ السِّتْرُ عَلَىٰ بَابِ بَيْتِهِ فَتَكُونُ فِيهِ التَّصَاوِيرُ فَيَقُولُ: "يَا فَلَانَةُ - لِأَحْدَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِ - غَيْبِيهِ عَنِّي، فَإِنِّي إِذَا نَظَرْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذَكَرْتُ الدُّنْيَا وَزَخَارِفَهَا". فَأَعْرَضَ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا بِقَلْبِهِ، وَأَمَاتَ ذِكْرَهَا مِنْ نَفْسِهِ، وَأَحَبَّ أَنْ تَغِيبَ زِينَتُهَا عَنْ عَيْنِهِ، لِكَيْلَا يَتَّخِذَ مِنْهَا رِيَاشًا، وَلَا يَعْتَقِدَهَا قَرَارًا، وَلَا يَرْجُو فِيهَا مَقَامًا، فَأَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ النَّفْسِ، وَأَشْخَصَهَا عَنِ الْقَلْبِ، وَغَيْبَهَا عَنِ الْبَصَرِ. وَكَذَلِكَ مَنْ أَبْغَضَ شَيْئًا أَبْغَضَ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَيْهِ، وَأَنْ يُذَكَّرَ عِنْدَهُ.

Certainly there was in the Prophet of Allah all that would apprise you of the evils of this world and its defects, namely that he remained hungry along with his chief companions, and despite his tremendous station and nearness (to Allah), the allurements of the world remained remote from him. Now, one should see with one's intelligence whether Allah honoured Muhammad (the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his descendants) as a result of this or disgraced him. If he says that Allah disgraced him, he certainly lies and perpetrates a great untruth. If he says Allah honoured him, he should know that Allah dishonoured the others when He extended the (benefits of the) world for him but held them away from him who was the nearest to Him of all men.

وَلَقَدْ كَانَ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) مَا يَدُلُّكَ عَلَى مَسَاوِيءِ الدُّنْيَا وَعُيُوبِهَا: إِذْ جَاعَ فِيهَا مَعَ خَاصَّتِهِ، وَزُوِيَتْ عَنْهُ زَخَارِفُهَا مَعَ عَظِيمِ زُلْفَتِهِ. فَلْيَنْظُرْ نَاطِرٌ بِعَقْلِهِ: أَكْرَمَ اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدًا (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) بِذَلِكَ أَمْ أَهَانَهُ! فَإِنْ قَالَ: أَهَانَهُ، فَقَدْ كَذَبَ - وَاللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ - وَإِنْ قَالَ: أَكْرَمَهُ، فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهَانَ غَيْرَهُ حَيْثُ بَسَطَ الدُّنْيَا لَهُ، وَزَوَّاهَا عَنْهُ. أَقْرَبَ النَّاسِ مِنْهُ.

Therefore, one should follow His Prophet, tread in his footsteps and enter through his entrance. Otherwise he will not be safe from ruin. Certainly, Allah made Muhammad (the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants) a sign for the Day of Judgement. a conveyor of tidings for Paradise and a warner of retribution.

He left this world hungry but entered upon the next world safe. He did not lay one stone upon another (to make a house) till he departed and responded to the call of Allah. How great is Allah's blessing in that He blessed us with the Prophet as a predecessor whom we follow and a leader behind whom we tread.

فَتَأْسَى مُتَأَسِّ بْنِبِيهِ، وَاقْتَصَّ أَثْرَهُ، وَوَلَجَ مَوْلَجُهُ، وَإِلَّا فَلَا يَأْمَنُ الْهَلَكَةَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ جَعَلَ مُحَمَّدًا (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) عَلَمًا لِلْسَّاعَةِ، وَمُبَشِّرًا بِالْجَنَّةِ، وَمُنْذِرًا بِالْعُقُوبَةِ. خَرَجَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا خَمِيصًا، وَوَرَدَ الْأَخْرَةَ سَلِيمًا، لَمْ يَضَعْ حَجْرًا عَلَى حَجْرٍ، حَتَّى مَضَى لِسَبِيلِهِ، وَأَجَابَ دَاعِيَ رَبِّهِ، فَمَا أَعْظَمَ مِنَّةَ اللَّهِ عِنْدَنَا حِينَ أَنْعَمَ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ سَلَفًا نَتَّبِعُهُ، وَقَائِدًا نَطُّهُ عَقْبَهُ .

The example of himself

By Allah, I have been putting patches in my shirts so much that now I feel shy of the patcher. Someone asked me whether I would not put it off, but I said, "Get away from me." Only in the morning do people (realise the advantage of and) speak highly of the night journey.

وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ رَفَعْتُ مِدْرَعَتِي هَذِهِ حَتَّى اسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْ رَاقِعِهَا، وَكَفَدْتُ قَالَ لِي قَائِلٌ: أَلَا تَتَنَبِّدُهَا؟ فَقُلْتُ: اغْرُبْ عَنِّي، فَعِنْدَ الصَّبَاحِ يَحْمَدُ الْقَوْمُ السُّرَى.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 160

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi'*, *bab al-ya's wa al-qana'ah*

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