

Sermon 165: Allah has provided wonderful creations...

Describing the wonderful creation of the peacock

ومن خطبة له

يذكر فيها عجب خلقه الطاووس

About the wonderful creation of birds

خلقة الطيور

Allah has provided wonderful creations including the living, the lifeless, the stationary, and the moving. He has established such clear proofs for His delicate creative power and great might that minds bend down to Him in acknowledgement thereof and in submission to Him, and arguments about His Oneness strike our ears. He has created birds of various shapes which live in the burrows of the earth, in the openings of high passes and on the peaks of mountains.

ابْتَدَعَهُمْ خَلْقًا عَجِيبًا مِنْ حَيَوَانَ وَمَوَاتٍ، وَسَاكِنٍ وَذِي حَرَكَاتٍ، وَأَقَامَ مِنْ شَوَاهِدِ الْبَيِّنَاتِ عَلَى لَطِيفِ صُنْعَتِهِ، وَعَظِيمِ قُدْرَتِهِ، مَا انْقَادَتْ لَهُ الْعُقُولُ مُعْتَرِفَةً بِهِ، وَمُسَلِّمَةً لَهُ، وَنَعَقَتْ فِي أَسْمَاعِنَا دَلَالُهُ عَلَى وَحْدَانِيَّتِهِ، وَمَا ذَرَأَ مِنْ مُخْتَلِفِ صُورِ الْأَطْيَارِ الَّتِي أَسْكَنَهَا أَحَادِيدَ الْأَرْضِ، وَخُرُوقَ فِجَاجِهَا، وَرَوَاسِي أَعْلَامِهَا

They have different kinds of wings, and various characteristics. They are controlled by the rein of (Allah's) authority. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the vast firmament and the open atmosphere. He brought them into existence from non-existence in strange external shapes, and

composed them with joints and bones covered with flesh. He prevented some of them from flying easily in the sky because of their heavy bodies and allowed them to use their wings only close to the ground. He has set them in different colours by His delicate might and exquisite creative power.

مِنْ ذَوَاتِ أَجْنَحَةٍ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ، وَهَيْئَاتٍ مُتَبَايِنَةٍ، مُصَرَّفَةٍ فِي زِمَامِ التَّسْخِيرِ، وَمُرْفَرَفَةٍ بِأَجْنَحَتِهَا فِي مَخَارِقِ الْجَوِّ الْمُتَفَسِّحِ
وَالْفَضَاءِ الْمُتَفَرِّجِ. كَوْنَهَا بَعْدَ إِذْ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِي عَجَائِبِ صُورِ ظَاهِرَةٍ، وَرَكَّبَهَا فِي حِقَاقِ مَفَاصِلٍ مُحْتَجِبَةٍ، وَمَنَعَ بَعْضَهَا
بِعِبَالَةٍ خَلَقَهُ أَنْ يَسْمُوَ فِي الْهَوَاءِ خُفُوفًا، وَجَعَلَهُ يَدِفُ دَفِيفًا، وَنَسَقَهَا عَلَى اخْتِلَافِهَا فِي الْأَصَابِعِ بِلَطِيفِ قُدْرَتِهِ، وَدَقِيقِ
صَنْعَتِهِ؛

Among them are those which are tinted with one hue and there is no other hue except the one in which they have been dyed. There are others which are tinted with one colour, and they have a neck ring of a different colour than that with which they are tinted.

فَمِنْهَا مَغْمُوسٌ فِي قَالِبٍ لَوْنٌ لَا يَشُوبُهُ غَيْرُ لَوْنٍ مَا غُمِسَ فِيهِ، وَمِنْهَا مَغْمُوسٌ فِي لَوْنٍ صَبِغَ قَدْ طُوِّقَ بِخِلَافٍ مَا صُبِغَ
بِهِ.

About the Peacock

الطاووس

The most amazing among them in its creation is the peacock, which Allah has created in the most symmetrical dimensions, and arranged its hues in the best arrangement with wings whose ends are inter-leaved together and whose tail is long. When it moves to its female it spreads out its folded tail and raises it up so as to cast a shade over its head, as if it were the sail of a boat being pulled by the sailor. It feels proud of its colours and swaggers with its movements. It copulates like the cocks. It leaps (on the female) for fecundation like lustful energetic men at the time of fighting.

وَمِنْ أَعْجَبِهَا خَلْقًا الطَّائِفُوسُ، الَّذِي أَقَامَهُ فِي أَحْكَمِ تَعْدِيلٍ، وَنَصَدَّ أَلْوَانَهُ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَنْضِيدٍ، بِجَنَاحٍ أَشْرَجَ قَصَبُهُ،
وَوَذَنْبٍ أَطَالَ مَسْحَبُهُ. إِذَا دَرَجَ إِلَى الْأُنْثَى نَشَرَهُ مِنْ طِيَّهِ، وَسَمَّا بِهِ مُطْلًا عَلَى رَأْسِهِ كَأَنَّهُ قَلْعٌ دَارِي عَنَجُهُ نُوتِيُهُ.

يَخْتَالُ بِأَلْوَانِهِ، وَيَمِيسُ بِزَيْفَانِهِ، يُفْضِي كَأَفْضَاءِ الدِّيكَةِ، وَيُورُّ بِمَلَاقِحِهِ أَرَّ الْفُحُولِ الْمُغْتَلِمَةِ لِلضَّرَابِ

I am telling you all this from observation, unlike he who narrates on the basis of weak authority, as for example, the belief of some people that it fecundates the female by a tear which flows from its eyes and when it stops on the edges of the eyelids the female swallows it and lays its eggs thereby and not

through fecundation by a male other than by means of this flowing tear. Even if they say this, it would be no amazing than (what they say about) the mutual feeding of the crows (for fecundation).

You would imagine its feathers to be sticks made of silvers and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing thereon to be of pure gold and pieces of green emerald. If you likened them to anything growing on land, you would say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected during every spring. If you likened them to cloths, they would be like printed apparels or amazing variegated cloths of Yemen. If you likened them to ornaments then they would be like gems of different colour with studded silver.

أَحْيَلُكَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مُعَايَنَةٍ، لَا كَمَنْ يُحِيلُ عَلَى ضَعِيفِ إِسْنَادِهِ، وَلَوْ كَانَ كَزَعَمٍ مَنْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ يُلْقِحُ بِدَمْعَةٍ تَسْفَحُهَا
مَدَامِعُهُ، فَتَقِفُ فِي ضَفَّتَيْ جُفُونِهِ، وَأَنَّ أَنْثَاهُ تَطْعُمُ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ تَبِيضُ لَا مِنْ لِقَاحِ فَحْلٍ سِوَى الدَّمْعِ الْمُنْبَجَسِ، لَمَا كَانَ
ذَلِكَ بِأَعْجَبَ مِنْ مَطَاعِمَةِ الْغُرَابِ! تَخَالُ قَصْبَهُ مَدَارِي مِنْ فَضَّةٍ، وَمَا أُنْبِتَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ عَجِيبِ دَارَاتِهِ وَشُمُوسِهِ
خَالِصِ الْعَقْيَانِ، وَفَلَذِ الزَّرْجَدِ. فَإِنْ شَبَّهْتَهُ بِمَا أُنْبِتَتِ الْأَرْضُ قُلْتُ: جَنَى جُنَى مِنْ زَهْرَةٍ كُلِّ رَبِيعٍ، وَإِنْ ضَاهَيْتَهُ
بِالْمَلَابِسِ فَهُوَ كَمَوْشَى الْحُلَلِ أَوْ كَمُونِقِ عَصَبِ الْيَمَنِ، وَإِنْ شَاكَلْتَهُ بِالْحَلِيِّ فَهُوَ كَفُصُوصِ ذَاتِ أَلْوَانٍ، قَدْ نَطَقَتْ
بِاللُّجَيْنِ الْمُكَلَّلِ .

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, and throws open its tail and wings and laughs admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace of gems. But when it casts its glance at its legs it cries loudly with a voice which indicates its call for help and displays its true grief, because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks.

At the end of its shin there is a thin thorn and on the crown of its head there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and its stretch up to its belly is like the hair-dye of Yemen in colour or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror which looks as if it has been covered with a black veil, except that on account of its excessive lustre and extreme brightness it appears that a lush green colour has been mixed with it.

Along the openings of its ears there is a line of shining bright daisy colour like the thin end of a pen. Whiteness shines on the black background. There is hardly a hue from which it has not taken a bit and improved it further by regular polish, lustre, silken brightness and brilliance. It is therefore like scattered blossoms which have not been seasoned by the rains of spring or the sun of the summer.

يَمْشِي مَشْيَ الْمَرْحِ الْمُخْتَالِ، وَيَتَصَفَّحُ ذَنْبَهُ وَجَنَاحَهُ، فَيَقْهَقُهُ ضَاحِكًا لِجَمَالِ سِرْبَالِهِ، وَأَصَابِيغِ وَشَاحِيهِ؛ فَإِذَا رَمَى
بِمَصْرِهِ إِلَى قَوَائِمِهِ زَقًا مُغُولًا بِصَوْتٍ يَكَادُ يَبِينُ عَنْ اسْتِغَاثَتِهِ، وَيَشْهَدُ بِصَادِقِ تَوَجُّعِهِ، لِأَنَّ قَوَائِمَهُ حُمُسٌ كَقَوَائِمِ
الدِّيَكَةِ الْخِلَاسِيَّةِ. وَقَدْ نَجَمَتْ مِنْ ظُنُوبِ سَاقِهِ صَبِيبَةٌ خَفِيَّةٌ، وَلَهُ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْعُرْفِ قُنْزَعَةٌ خَضْرَاءُ مُوشَاءَ،
وَمَخْرَجُ عُنُقِهِ كَالْأَبْرِيقِ، وَمَعْرِزُهَا إِلَى حَيْثُ بَطْنُهُ كَصَبْغِ الْوَسْمَةِ الْيَمَانِيَّةِ، أَوْ كَحَرِيرَةٍ مُلْبَسَةٍ مِرَاءَ ذَاتِ صِقَالٍ،
وَكَأَنَّهُ مُتَلَفِّعٌ بِمِعْجَرِ أَسْحَمٍ؛ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ يُخَيَّلُ لِكَثْرَةِ مَائِهِ، وَشِدَّةِ بَرِيقِهِ، أَنَّ الْخُضْرَةَ النَّاضِرَةَ مُمْتَزِجَةٌ بِهِ، وَمَعَ فَتَقِ سَمْعِهِ
خَطٌّ كَمُسْتَدَقِّ الْقَلَمِ فِي لَوْنِ الْأَفْحْوَانِ، أَبْيَضُ يَقْقُ، فَهُوَ بِبَيَاضِهِ فِي سَوَادِ مَا هُنَاكَ يَأْتَلِقُ. وَقَلَّ صَبْغٌ إِلَّا وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ
بِقِسْطٍ، وَعَلَاهُ بِكَثْرَةِ صِقَالِهِ وَبَرِيقِهِ، وَبَصِيصِ دِيْبَاجِهِ وَرَوْقِهِ، فَهُوَ كَالْأَزَاهِيرِ الْمُبْتُوتَةِ، لَمْ تُرَبِّهَا أَمْطَارُ رَبِيعٍ، وَلَا

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its dress. They all fall away and grow again. They fall way from the feather stems like the falling of leaves from twigs, and then they begin to join together and grow till they return to the state that existed before their falling away. The new hues do not change from the previous ones, nor does any colour occur in other than its own place. If you carefully look at one hair from the hairs of its feather stems it would look like red rose, then emerald green and then golden yellow.

وَقَدْ يَنْحَسِرُ مِنْ رِيْشِهِ، وَيَعْرِى مِنْ لِبَاسِهِ، فَيَسْقُطُ تَتْرَى، وَيَنْبُتُ تَبَاعاً، فَيَنْحَتُ مِنْ قَصَبِهِ انْحِتَاتٍ أَوْرَاقِ الْأَغْصَانِ، ثُمَّ يَتَلَاَحَقُ نَامِياً حَتَّى يَعُودَ كَهَيْئَتِهِ قَبْلَ سُقُوطِهِ، لَا يُخَالِفُ سَالِفَ اللَّوَانِ، وَلَا يَقَعُ لَوْنٌ فِي غَيْرِ مَكَانِهِ

وَإِذَا تَصَفَّحَتْ شَعْرَةً مِنْ شَعْرَاتِ قَصَبِهِ أَرْتَكَ حُمْرَةً وَرْدِيَّةً، وَتَارَةً خُضْرَةً زَبْرَجْدِيَّةً، وَأَحْيَاناً صُفْرَةً عَسْجَدِيَّةً

How can sharpness of intellect describe such a creation, or faculty of mind, or the utterances of describers manage to tell of it. Even its smallest parts have made it impossible for the imagination to pick them out or for tongues to describe them. Glorified is Allah who has disabled intellects from describing the creation which He placed openly before the eyes and which they see bounded, shaped, arranged and coloured. He also disabled tongues from briefly describing its qualities and also from expanding in its praise.

فَكَيْفَ تَصِلُ إِلَى صِفَةِ هَذَا عَمَائِقُ الْفِطَنِ، أَوْ تَبْلُغُهُ قَرَائِحُ الْعُقُولِ، أَوْ تَسْتَظَنُّمْ وَصْفُهُ أَقْوَالُ الْوَاصِفِينَ؟! وَأَقْلُ أَجْزَائِهِ قَدْ أَعْجَزَ الْأَوْهَامَ أَنْ تُدْرِكَهُ، وَالْأَلْسِنَةَ أَنْ تَصِفَهُ! فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بَهَرَ الْعُقُولَ عَنْ وَصْفِ خَلْقِ جَلَالِهِ لِلْعُيُونِ، فَأَذْرَكَهُ مُحْدُوداً مُكَوَّناً، وَمُؤَلَّفاً مُلَوَّناً، وَأَعْجَزَ الْأَلْسُنَ عَنْ تَلْخِيصِ صِفَتِهِ، وَقَعَدَ بِهَا عَنْ تَأْدِيَةِ نَعْتِهِ

The magnificence of the Creator in great and small creation

صغار المخلوقات

Glorified is Allah who has assigned feet to small ants and gnats and also to those above them, the serpents and the elephants. He has made it obligatory upon Himself that no skeleton in which He infuses the spirit would move, but that death is its promised place and destruction its final end.

فَسُبْحَانَ مَنْ أَدْمَجَ قَوَائِمَ الذَّرَّةِ وَالْهَمَجَةِ إِلَى مَا فَوْقَهُمَا مِنْ خَلْقِ الْحَيَاتَانِ وَالْأَفِيلَةِ! وَوَأَى عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَلَّا يَضْطَرِبَ شَبَحٌ مِمَّا أَوْلَجَ فِيهِ الرُّوحَ، إِلَّا وَجَعَلَ الْحِمَامَ مَوْعِدَهُ، وَالْفَنَاءَ غَايَتَهُ.

A part of the same sermon describing Paradise

منها: في صفة الجنة

If you cast your mind's eye at what is described to you about Paradise, your heart would begin to hate the delicacies of this world that have been displayed here, namely its desires and its pleasures, and the beauties of its scenes, and you would be lost in the rustling of the trees whose roots lie hidden in the mounds of musk on the banks of the rivers in Paradise and in the attraction of the bunches of fresh pearls in the twigs and branches of those trees, and in the appearance of different fruits from under the cover of their leaves. These fruits can be picked without difficulty as they come down at the desire of their pickers. Pure honey and fermented wine will be handed round to those who settle down in the courtyards of its palaces.

فَلَوْ رَمَيْتَ بِبَصَرِ قَلْبِكَ نَحْوَ مَا يُوصَفُ لَكَ مِنْهَا لَعَرَفْتَ نَفْسُكَ عَنْ بَدَائِعِ مَا أُخْرِجَ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا مِنْ شَهَوَاتِهَا وَلَذَائِهَا، وَزَخَارِفِ مَنَاطِرِهَا، وَلَذَهَلْتَ بِالْفِكْرِ فِي اصْطِفَاقِ أَشْجَارٍ غُيِّبَتْ عُرُوقُهَا فِي كُتُبَانِ الْمُسْكِ عَلَى سَوَاحِلِ أَنْهَارِهَا، وَفِي تَعْلِيقِ كَبَائِسِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الرُّطْبِ فِي عَسَالِيحِهَا وَأَفْنَانِهَا، وَطُلُوعِ تِلْكَ الثَّمَارِ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ فِي غُلْفِ أَكْمَامِهَا، تُجْنَى مِنْ غَيْرِ تَكْلَفٍ فَتَأْتِي عَلَى مَنِيَّةٍ مُجْتَنِبِهَا، وَيُطَافُ عَلَى نَزَالِهَا فِي أَفْنِيَّةِ قُصُورِهَا بِالْأَعْسَالِ الْمُصَفَّقَةِ، وَالْخُمُورِ الْمُرَوَّقَةِ.

They are a people whom honour has always followed till they were made to settle in the house of eternal abode, and they obtained rest from the movement of journeying. O listener! If you busy yourself in advancing towards these wonderful scenes which will rush towards you, then your heart will certainly die due to eagerness for them, and you will be prepared to seek the company of those in the graves straight away from my audience here and hasten towards them. Allah may, by His mercy, include us and you too among those who strive with their hearts for the abodes of the virtuous.

قَوْمٌ لَمْ تَزَلِ الْكَرَامَةُ تَتَمَادَى بِهِمْ حَتَّى حَلُّوا دَارَ الْفَرَارِ، وَأَمِنُوا نُقْلَةَ الْأَسْفَارِ. فَلَوْ شَغَلْتَ قَلْبَكَ أَيُّهَا الْمُسْتَمِعُ بِالْأُصُولِ إِلَى مَا يَهْجُمُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْمَنَاطِرِ الْمُؤَنِقَةِ، لَزَهَقَتْ نَفْسُكَ شَوْقًا إِلَيْهَا، وَلَتَحَمَلْتَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِي هَذَا إِلَى مُجَاوِرَةِ أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ اسْتِعْجَالًا بِهَا. جَعَلَنَا اللَّهُ وَإِيَّاكُمْ مِمَّنْ يَسْعَى بِقَلْبِهِ إِلَى مَنَازِلِ الْأَبْرَارِ بِرَحْمَتِهِ.

Note explaining some of the wonderful and obscure portions of this sermon

تفسير بعض ما في هذه الخطبة من الغريب

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In Amir al-mu'minin's words "*ya'urru bimalaqihi*", "*al-arr*" implies "copulation",

e.g. when it is said "*arra'r-rajulu al-mar'ata ya'urruha*", it means "He copulated with the woman."

In his words "*ka'annahu qal'u dariyyin 'anajahu nutiyyuhu*", "*al-qal*" means the sail of a boat. "*dari*" means belonging to Darin which is a small town on the coast from where scents are bought. And "*anajahu*" means "turned it". It is said "*anajtun'h-naqata* – like *nasartu* – *a'najuha 'anjan*". "When you turn the she-camel." And "*an-nuti*" means sailor. His words "*daffatay jufunihi*" means edges of the eyelids, since "*ad-daffatan*" means the two edges. His words "*wa filadhu'z-zabarjadi*": "*al-filadh*" is the plural of "*al-fildhah*" it means piece. His words "*ka ba'si'l-lu'lu'i'r-ratibi*". "*al-kibasah*" means bunch of dates. "*al-asalij*" means twigs. Its singular is "*usluj*".

قال السيد الشريف: قَوْلُهُ (عليه السلام): «وَيَوُرُّ بِمَلَاقِحِهِ» الْأُرُّ: كِنَايَةٌ عَنِ النِّكَاحِ، يُقَالُ: أَرَّ الْمَرْأَةُ يَوُرُّهَا، إِذَا نَكَحَهَا. وَقَوْلُهُ (عليه السلام): «كَأَنَّهُ قَلْعُ دَارِيٍّ عَنَجَهُ نُوتِيَهُ» الْقَلْعُ: شِرَاعُ السَّفِينَةِ، وَدَارِيٍّ: مَنْسُوبٌ إِلَى دَارِينَ، وَهِيَ بَلَدَةٌ عَلَى الْبَحْرِ يُجْلَبُ مِنْهَا الطَّيِّبُ. وَعَنَجَهُ: أَيَّ عَطَفَهُ. يُقَالُ: عَنَجْتُ النَّاقَةَ أَعْنَجُهَا عَنَجًا إِذَا عَطَفْتُهَا. وَالنُّوتِي: الْمَلَّاحُ. وَقَوْلُهُ: «ضَفَّتِي جُفُونِهِ» أَرَادَ جَانِبِي جُفُونِهِ. وَالضَّفَّتَانِ: الْجَانِبَانِ. وَقَوْلُهُ: «وَقَلَذَ الزَّبْرَجِدِ» الْفَلَذُ: جَمْعُ فَلَذَةٍ، وَهِيَ الْقِطْعَةُ. وَقَوْلُهُ: «كَبَائِسِ اللَّوْلُؤِ الرَّطْبِ» الْكِبَاسَةُ: الْعِدْقُ. وَالْعَسَالِيحُ: الْغُصُونُ، وَاحِدُهَا عَسْلُوجٌ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 165

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi'*, I;

(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah*, I, 27, II, 140 (d.w.r), III, 238 ('a.s.l.j).

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