

Sermon 2: I praise Allah seeking completion of His Blessing...

Delivered on return from Siffin

Arabia before proclamation of Prophethood

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام) بعد انصرافه من صفين

وفيها حال الناس قبل البعثة وصفة آل النبي ثم صفة قوم آخرين

I praise Allah seeking completion of His Blessing, submitting to His Glory and expecting safety from committing His sins. I invoke His help being in need of His Sufficiency (of protection). He whom He guides does not go astray, He with whom He is hostile gets no protection. He whom He supports does not remain needy. Praise is most weighty of all that is weighed and the most valuable of all that is treasured.

أَحْمَدُهُ اسْتِثْمَاماً لِنِعْمَتِهِ، وَاسْتِسْلَاماً لِعِزَّتِهِ، وَاسْتِعْصَاماً مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ، وَأَسْتَعِينُهُ فَاقَةً إِلَى كِفَايَتِهِ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَضِلُّ مَنْ هَدَاهُ، وَلَا يَلُتُّ مَنْ عَادَاهُ، وَلَا يَفْتَقِرُ مَنْ كَفَاهُ؛ فَإِنَّهُ أَرْجَحُ مَا وَزَنَ، وَأَفْضَلُ مَا خُزِنَ

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah the One. He has no like. My testimony has been tested in its frankness, and its essence is our belief. We shall cling to it for ever till we live and shall store it for facing the tribulations that overtake us because it is the foundation stone of Belief (*iman*) and the first step towards good actions and Divine pleasure. It is the means to keep Satan away.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، شَهَادَةً مُمْتَحَنًا إِخْلَاصُهَا، مُعْتَقَدًا مُصَاصُهَا، نَتَمَسَّكُ بِهَا أَبَدًا مَا أَبْقَانَا، وَنَدْخِرُهَا لِإِهَاطِلِ مَا

يَلْقَانَا، فَأَتَتْهَا عَزِيمَةُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَفَاتِحَةُ الْأَحْسَانِ، وَمَرْضَاةُ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَمَدْحَرَةُ الشَّيْطَانِ

I also stand witness that Muhammad (S) is His slave and His Prophet. Allah sent him with the illustrious religion, effective emblem, written Book,¹ effulgent light, sparkling gleam and decisive injunction in order to dispel doubts, present clear proofs, administer warning through signs and to warn of punishments. At that time people had fallen in vices whereby the rope of religion had been broken, the pillars of belief had been shaken, principles had been sacrilegied, system had become topsy turvy, openings were narrow, passage was dark, guidance was unknown and darkness prevailed.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، أَرْسَلَهُ بِالْدِّينِ الْمَشْهُورِ، وَالْعَلَمِ الْمَأْتُورِ، وَالْكِتَابِ الْمَسْطُورِ، وَالنُّورِ السَّاطِعِ، وَالضِّيَاءِ اللَّامِعِ، وَالْأَمْرِ الصَّادِعِ، إِزَاحَةً لِلشُّبُهَاتِ، وَاحْتِجَاجاً بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ، وَتَحْذِيرًا بِالْآيَاتِ، وَتَخْوِيفاً بِالْمَثَلَاتِ، وَالنَّاسُ فِي فِتْنٍ أُنْجِزَ فِيهَا حَبْلُ الدِّينِ، وَتَزَعَزَعَتْ سَوَارِي الْيَقِينِ، وَاخْتَلَفَ النَّجْرُ، وَتَشَتَّتَ الْأَمْرُ، وَضَاقَ الْمَخْرَجُ، وَعَمِيَ الْمَصْدَرُ، فَالْهَدَى خَامِلٌ، وَالْعَمَى شَامِلٌ.

Allah was being disobeyed, Satan was given support and Belief had been forsaken. As a result the pillars of religion fell down, its traces could not be discerned, its passages had been destroyed and its streets had fallen into decay. People obeyed Satan and treaded his paths. They sought water from his watering places. Through them Satan's emblems got flying and his standard was raised in vices which trampled the people under their hoofs, and treaded upon them with their feet. The vices stood on their toes (in full stature) and the people immersed in them were strayed, perplexed, ignorant and seduced as though in a good house² with bad neighbours. Instead of sleep they had wakefulness and for antimony they had tears in the eyes. They were in a land where the learned were in bridle (keeping their mouths shut) while the ignorant were honoured.

عُصِيَ الرَّحْمَنُ، وَنُصِرَ الشَّيْطَانُ، وَخُذِلَ الْإِيمَانُ، فَأَنْهَارَتْ دَعَائِمُهُ، وَتَنَكَّرَتْ مَعَالِمُهُ، وَدَرَسَتْ سُبُلُهُ، وَعَفَتْ شُرُكُهُ.

أَطَاعُوا الشَّيْطَانَ فَسَلَكُوا مَسَالِكَهُ، وَوَرَدُوا مَنَاهِلَهُ، بِهِمْ سَارَتْ أَعْلَامُهُ، وَقَامَ لَوَاؤُهُ، فِي فِتْنٍ دَاسَتْهُمْ بِأَخْفَافِهَا، وَوَطِنَتْهُمْ بِأُظْلَافِهَا وَقَامَتْ عَلَى سَنَابِكِهَا، فَهُمْ فِيهَا تَائِهُونَ حَائِرُونَ جَاهِلُونَ مَفْتُونُونَ، فِي خَيْرِ دَارٍ، وَشَرِّ جِيرَانٍ، نَوْمُهُمْ سُهْوٌ، وَكُحْلُهُمْ دُمُوعٌ، بَارِضٌ عَالِمُهَا مُلْجَمٌ، وَجَاهِلُهَا مُكْرَمٌ.

In the same sermon Amir al-mu'minin referred to Al an-Nabi (the Household of the Holy Prophet) as under

(ومنها: ويعني آل النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم

They are the trustees of His secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, centre of His wisdom, valleys for His books and mountains of His religion. With them Allah straightened the bend of religion's back and removed the trembling of its limbs.

هُمْ مَوْضِعُ سِرِّهِ، وَاجْأُ أَمْرِهِ، وَعَيْبَةُ عِلْمِهِ، وَمَوْئِلُ حُكْمِهِ، وَكُھُوفُ كُتُبِهِ، وَجِبَالُ دِينِهِ، بِهِمْ أَقَامَ انْحِنَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ، وَأَذْهَبَ ارْتِعَادَ فَرَائِصِهِ.

In the same Sermon he spoke about the hypocrites

منها: يعني بها قوماً آخرين

They sowed vices, watered them with deception and harvested destruction.

، زَرَعُوا الْفُجُورَ، وَسَقَوْهُ الْغُرُورَ، وَحَصَدُوا الثُّبُورَ

Ali Muhammad

(آل محمد (عليه السلام

None in the Islamic community can be taken at par with the Progeny³ of the Prophet (Ali Muhammad). One who was under their obligation cannot be matched with them. They are the foundation of religion and pillar of Belief. The forward runner has to turn back to them while the follower has to overtake them. They possess the chief characteristics for vicegerency. In their favour exists the will and succession (of the Prophet). This is the time when right has returned to its owner and diverted to its centre of return.

لَا يُقَاسُ بِآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (عليهم السلام) مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَحَدٌ، وَلَا يُسَوَّى بِهِمْ مَنْ جَرَتْ نِعْمَتُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَبَدًا

هُمْ أَسَاسُ الدِّينِ، وَعِمَادُ الْبَقِيَّةِ، إِلَيْهِمْ يَفِيءُ الْغَالِي، وَبِهِمْ يُلْحَقُ التَّلَائي، وَلَهُمْ خَصَائِصُ حَقِّ الْوِلَايَةِ، وَفِيهِمُ الْوَصِيَّةُ وَالْوِرَاثَةُ، الْآنَ إِذْ رَجَعَ الْحَقُّ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَنُقِلَ إِلَى مُنْتَقَلِهِ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 2

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun, I, 326;

(2) al-Tabari, al-Mustarshid, p. 73;

(3) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, al-'Iqd, III, 112;

(4) al-'Amidi, Ghurar, 331, 354;

(5) Ibn Talhah, Matalib, I.

1. The Preserved Record.

2. Good House means 'Mecca' while the bad neighbours mean the 'Unbelievers of Quraysh.'

3. About the Progeny of the Prophet Amir al-mu'minin has said that no person in the world can be brought at par with them, nor can any one be deemed their equal in sublimity, because the world is overladen with their obligations and has been able to secure eternal blessings only through their guidance. They are the corner stone and foundation of religion and the sustenance for its life and survival. They are such strong pillars of knowledge and belief that they can turn away the stormy flow of doubt and suspicion.

They are such middle course among the paths of excess and backwardness that if some one goes far towards excess and exaggeration or falls behind then unless he comes back or steps forward to that middle course he cannot be on the path of Islam. They possess all the characteristics which give the superiority in the right for vicegerency and leadership.

Consequently, no one else in the ummah enjoys the right of patronage and guardianship. That is why the Prophet declared them his vicegerents and successors. About will and succession the commentator Ibn Abi'l-Hadid Mu'tazili writes that there can be no doubt about the vicegerency of Amir al-mu'minin but succession cannot imply succession in position although the Shi'ite sect has so interpreted it. It rather implies succession of learning.

Now, if according to him succession is taken to imply succession in learning even he does not seem to succeed in achieving his object, because even by this interpretation the right of succeeding the Prophet does not devolve on any other person. When it is agreed that learning is the most essential requirement of khilafah (caliphate) because the most important functions of the Prophet's Caliph consist of dispensation of justice, solving problems of religious laws, clarifying intricacies and administration of religious penalties. If these functions are taken away from the Prophet's deputy his position will come down to that of a worldly ruler. He cannot be regarded as the pivot of religious authority. Therefore either we should keep governmental authority separate from Prophet's vicegerency or accept the successor of Prophet's knowledge to suit that position.

The interpretation of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid could be acceptable if Amir al-mu'minin had uttered this sentence alone, but observing that it was uttered soon after 'Ali's (p.b.u.h.) recognition as Caliph and just after it the sentence "Right has returned to its owner" exists, this interpretation of his seems baseless. Rather, the Prophet's will cannot imply any other will except that for vicegerency and caliphate, and succession would imply not succession in property nor in knowledge because this was not an occasion to mention it here but it must mean the succession in the right leadership which stood proved as from Allah not only on the ground of kinship but on the ground of qualities of perfection.

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