

Sermon 4: Through us you got guidance in the darkness...

Amir al-mu'minin's far-sightedness and his staunch conviction in Belief

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

،وهي من أفصح كلامه (عليه السلام)، وفيها يعظ الناس ويهديهم من ضلالتهم

ويقال: إنه خطبها بعد قتل طلحة والزبير

Through us you got guidance in the darkness and secured high position, and through us you got out of the gloomy night. The ears which do not listen to the cries may become deaf. How can one who remained deaf to the loud cries (of the Qur'an and the Prophet) listen to (my) feeble voice? The heart that has ever palpitated (with fear of Allah) may get peace.

بِنَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ فِي الظُّلُمَاءِ، وَتَسَنَّمْتُمُ الْعُلْيَاءَ، وَبِنَا انْفَجَرْتُمْ عَنِ السَّرَارِ، وَقَرَّ سَمْعٌ لَمْ يَفْقَهِ الْوَاعِيَةَ، كَيْفَ يُرَاعِي النَّبَأَ مَنْ أَصَمَّتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ؟ رُبَّ جَنَانٍ لَمْ يَفَارِقْهُ الْخَفَقَانُ

I always apprehended from you consequences of treachery and I had seen you through in the garb of the deceitful. The curtain of religion had kept me hidden from you but the truth of my intentions disclosed you to me. I stood for you on the path of truth among misleading tracks where you met each other but there was no leader and you dug but got no water.

مَا زِلْتُ أُنْتَظِرُ بِكُمْ عَوَاقِبَ الْغَدْرِ، وَأَتَوَسَّمُكُمْ بِحِلْيَةِ الْمُغْتَرِبِينَ، سَتَرَنِي عَنْكُمْ جِلْبَابُ الدِّينِ، وَبَصَّرَنِيكُمْ صِدْقُ النَّبِيِّ، أَقَمْتُ لَكُمْ عَلَى سَنَنِ الْحَقِّ فِي جَوَادِ الْمَضَلَّةِ، حَيْثُ تَلْتَقُونَ وَلَا دَلِيلَ، وَتَحْتَفِرُونَ وَلَا تُمِهُونَ

Today I am making these dumb things speak to you (i.e. my suggestive ideas and deep musings etc.) which are full of descriptive power. The opinion of the person who abandons me may get astray. I have never doubted in the truth since it has been shown to me. Musa (Moses)¹ did not entertain fear for his own self. Rather he apprehended mastery of the ignorant and away of deviation. Today we stand on the cross-roads of truth and untruth. The one who is sure of getting water feels no thirst.

الْيَوْمَ أَنْطِقُ لَكُمْ الْعَجْمَاءَ ذَاتَ الْبَيَانِ! عَزَبَ رَأْيِي أَمْرِيءَ تَخَلَّفَ عَنِّي، مَا شَكَنْتُ فِي الْحَقِّ مُذْ أُرِيتُهُ! لَمْ يُوجِسْ مُوسَى خِيفَةً عَلَى نَفْسِهِ، أَشْفَقَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الْجُهَالِ وَدُولِ الضَّلَالِ! الْيَوْمَ تَوَاقَفْنَا عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْحَقِّ وَالْبَاطِلِ، مَنْ وَثِقَ بِمَا لَمْ يُظْمَأْ!

Alternative Sources for Sermon 4

(1) Al-Mufid, al-Irshad, 147;

(2) al-Tabari, al-Mustarshid, 95.

¹ The reference is to that event of Moses when sorcerers were sent for to confront him and they showed their sorcery by throwing ropes and sticks on the ground and Moses felt afraid. Thus, the Qur'an records: .

. it seemed to him (Moses), by their sorcery as if they were running. Then Moses felt in himself a fear. We said: Fear not! Verily thou art the uppermost. (20:66-68)

Amir al-mu'minin says that the ground for Moses' fear was not that since he saw ropes and sticks moving he might have entertained fear for his life but the cause of his fear was lest people be impressed with this sorcery and get astray, and untruth might prevail on account of this craft. That is why Moses was not consoled by saying that his life was safe but by saying that he would prove superior, and his claim would be upheld.

Since his fear was for the defeat of the truth and victory of the untruth, not for his own life, the consideration was given to him for the victory of truth and not for the protection of his life. Amir al-mu'minin also means that he too had the same fear viz. that the people should not be caught in the trap of these (Talhah, az-Zubayr, etc.) and fail into misguidance by getting astray from the true faith. Otherwise, he himself never feared for his own life.

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