

Sermon 69: How long shall I accord to you the consideration ...

Admonishing his companions about careless behaviour Amir al-mu'minin said:

(ومن كلام له (عليه السلام

في ذم أصحابه

How long shall I accord you consideration that is accorded to camels with hollow hump, or to worn clothes which when stitched on one side give way on the other. Whenever a vanguard force of Syria (ash-Sham) hovers over you, everyone of you shuts his door and hides himself like the lizard in its hole or a badger in its den.

By Allah, he whom people like you support must suffer disgrace and he who throws arrows with your support is as if he throws arrows that are broken both at head and tail. By Allah, within the courtyard you are quite numerous but under the banner you are only a few.

Certainly, I know what can improve you and how your crookedness can be straightened. But I shall not improve your condition by marring myself. Allah may disgrace your faces and destroy you. You do not understand the right as you understand the wrong and do not crush the wrong as you crush the right.

كَمْ أَدَارِيكُمْ كَمَا تُدَارَى الْبِكَارُ الْعَمِدَةُ وَالنِّيَابُ الْمَتَدَاعِيَةُ! كُلُّمَا حِيصْنَا مِنْ جَانِبٍ تَهْتَكَتْ مِنْ آخَرٍ، كُلُّمَا أَطْلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ مَنْسِرٌ مِنْ مَنَاسِرِ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ أَغْلَقَ كُلُّ رَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ بَابَهُ، وَانْجَحَرَ انْجِحَارَ الضَّبَّةِ فِي جُحْرِهَا، وَالضَّبُعُ فِي وَجَارِهَا. الذَّلِيلُ وَاللَّهُ مَنْ نَصَرْتُمُوهُ! وَمَنْ رُمِيَ بِكُمْ فَقَدْ رُمِيَ بِأَفْوَقٍ نَاصِلٍ

إِنَّكُمْ - وَاللَّهِ - لَكَثِيرٌ فِي الْبَاهَاتِ قَلِيلٌ تَحْتَ الرَّايَاتِ، وَإِنِّي لَعَالِمٌ بِمَا يُصْلِحُكُمْ، وَيُقِيمُ أَوْدَكُمْ وَلَكِنِّي وَاللَّهِ لَا أَرَى

إِصْلَاحُكُمْ بِإِفْسَادِ نَفْسِي. أَضْرَعَ اللَّهُ خُدُودَكُمْ وَأَتَعَسَ جُدُودَكُمْ لَا تَعْرِفُونَ الْحَقَّ كَمَعْرِفَتِكُمُ الْبَاطِلَ، وَلَا تُبْطِلُونَ
الْبَاطِلَ كِبَاطِلِكُمُ الْحَقَّ!

Alternative Sources for Sermon 69

- (1) Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab*, II, 438, 458;
- (2) al-Ya'qubi, *Ta'rikh*, II, 184;
- (3) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*;
- (4) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, * VI, 3444, 3445, chronicles of the year 39.

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