

Sermon 83: Praise belongs to God, Who is high

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This sermon is called the al-Gharra' and it is one of the most wonderful sermons of Amir al-mu'minin.

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

"وهي من الخطب العجيبة تسمى "الغراء

وفيهما نعوذ بالله جل شأنه، ثم الوصية بتقواه، ثم التنفير من الدنيا، ثم ما يلحق من دخول القيامة، ثم تنبيه الخلق إلى ما هم فيه من الاعراض، ثم فضله (عليه السلام) في التذكير

Praise be to Allah who is High above all else, and is Near (the creation) through His bounty. He is the Giver of all reward and distinction, and Dispeller of all calamities and hardships. I praise Him for His continuous mercy and His copious bounties.

I believe in Him as He is the First of all and He is Manifest. I seek guidance from Him as He is Near and is the Guide. I seek His succour as He is Mighty and Subduer. I depend upon Him as He is Sufficer and Supporter. And I stand witness that Muhammad (blessing of Allah be on him and his progeny) is His slave and His Prophet. He sent him for enforcement of His commands, for exhausting His pleas and for presenting warnings (against eternal punishment).

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَلَا بِحَوْلِهِ وَدَنَا بِطَوْلِهِ مَا نَحِ كُلِّ غَنِيمَةٍ وَفَضَّلَ كُلِّ عَظِيمَةٍ وَأَزَلَّ أَحْمَدُهُ عَلَى عَوَاطِفِ كَرَمِهِ،
وَسَوَابِغِ - نِعَمِهِ وَأُومِنُ بِهِ أَوَّلًا بَادِيًا وَأُسْتَهْدِيهِ قَرِيبًا هَادِيًا، وَأُسْتَعِينُهُ قَاهِرًا قَادِرًا، وَأَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ كَافِيًا نَاصِرًا. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ
مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، أَرْسَلَهُ لِنَفَازِ أَمْرِهِ، وَإِنْهَاءِ عُذْرِهِ وَتَقْدِيمِ نُذْرِهِ

Enjoining people to Piety

الْوَصِيَّةُ بِالتَّقْوَى

O creatures of Allah I advise you to have fear of Allah Who has furnished illustrations and Who has timed for you your lives. He has given you covering of dress¹ and He has scattered for you livelihood. He has surrounded you with His knowledge. He has ordained rewards. He has bestowed upon you vast bounties and extensive gifts. He has warned you through far reaching arguments, and He has counted you by numbers. He has fixed for you ages (to live) in this place of test and house of instruction.

You are on test in this world and have to render account about it.

أَوْصِيَكُمْ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ الَّذِي ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ الْأَمْثَالَ وَوَقَّتَ لَكُمْ الْأَجَالَ ، وَأَلْبَسَكُمْ الرِّيَاشَ وَأَرْفَعَ لَكُمْ الْمَعَاشَ
وَأَحَاطَ بِكُمْ الْأَحْصَاءَ وَأَرْصَدَ لَكُمْ الْجَزَاءَ وَأَثَرَكُمْ بِالنِّعَمِ السَّوَاعِغِ ، وَالرِّفْدِ الرَّوَافِعِ ، وَأَنْذَرَكُمْ بِالْحُجَجِ الْبَوَالِغِ
فَأَحْصَاكُمْ عَدَدًا ، وَوَضَعَ لَكُمْ مَدَدًا فِي قَرَارِ خَبْرَةٍ وَدَارِ عِبْرَةٍ ، أَنْتُمْ مُخْتَبَرُونَ فِيهَا ، وَمُحَاسَبُونَ عَلَيْهَا

Caution against this world

التنكير من الدنيا

Certainly this world is a dirty watering place and a muddy source of drinking.

Its appearance is attractive and its inside is destructive. It is a deception, a vanishing reflection and a bent pillar. When its despiser begins to like it and he who is not acquainted with it feels satisfied with it, then it raises and puts down its feet (in joy), entraps him in its trap, makes him the target of its arrows and puts round his neck the rope of death taking him to the narrow grave and fearful abode in order to show him his place of stay and the recompense of his acts. This goes on from generation to generation. Neither death stops from cutting them asunder nor do the survivors keep aloof from committing of sins.

فَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا رَنَقٌ مَشْرِبُهَا، رَدِغٌ مَشْرَعُهَا، يُوبِقُ مَنَظَرُهَا، وَيُوبِقُ مَخْبَرُهَا، غُرُورٌ حَائِلٌ، وَضَوْءٌ أَفِلٌ، وَظِلٌّ زَائِلٌ، وَسِنَادٌ
مَائِلٌ، حَتَّى إِذَا أَنَسَ نَافِرُهَا، وَاطْمَأَنَّ نَاكِرُهَا، قَمَصَتْ بِأَرْجُلِهَا، وَقَنَصَتْ بِأَحْبِلِهَا، وَأَقْصَدَتْ بِأَسْهَمِهَا، وَأَعْلَقَتْ الْمَرْءَ
أَوْهَاقَ الْمَنِيِّ قَائِدَةً لَهُ إِلَى ضَنْكَ الْمَضْجَعِ، وَوَحْشَةِ الْمَرْجِعِ، وَمُعَايِنَةِ الْمَحَلِّ، وَثَوَابِ الْعَمَلِ، وَكَذَلِكَ الْخَلْفُ بِعَقَبِ
السَّلَفِ، لَا تُقْلَعُ الْمَنِيَّةُ اخْتِرَامًا، وَلَا يَرْعَوِي الْبَاقُونَ اجْتِرَامًا

Death and Resurrection

بعد الموت البعث

They are emulating each other and proceeding in groups towards the final objective and the rendezvous of death, till when matters come to a close, the world dies and resurrection draws near. Allah² would take them out from the corners of the graves, the nests of birds. the dens of beasts and the centres of death. They hasten towards His command and run towards the place fixed for their final return group by group, quiet, standing and arrayed in rows. They will be within Allah's sight and will hear every one who would call them.

يَحْتَدُونَ مَثَلًا، وَيَمْضُونَ أَرْسَالًا، إِلَى غَايَةِ الْإِنْتِهَاءِ، وَصَيُورِ الْفَنَاءِ. حَتَّى إِذَا تَصَرَّمَتِ الْأُمُورُ، وَتَقَضَّتِ الدُّهُورُ، وَأَزْفَ النَّشُورُ، أَخْرَجَهُمْ مِنْ ضَرَائِحِ الْقُبُورِ، وَأَوْكَارِ الطُّيُورِ، وَأَوْجَرَةِ السِّبَاعِ، وَمَطَارِحِ الْمَهَالِكِ، سِرَاعًا إِلَى أَمْرِهِ، مُهْطِعِينَ، إِلَى مَعَادِهِ، رَعِيلًا صُمُوتًا، قِيَامًا صُفُوفًا، يَنْفِذُهُمُ الْبَصَرُ وَيَسْمِعُهُمُ الدَّاعِي،

They will have the dress of helplessness and covering of submission and indignity. (At this time) contrivances would disappear, desires would be cut, hearts would sink quietly, voices would be curbed down, sweat would choke the throat, fear would increase and ears would resound with the thundering voice of the announcer calling towards the final judgement, award of recompense, striking of punishment and paying of reward.

عَلَيْهِمْ لِبُوسُ الْإِسْتِكَانَةِ، وَضَرَعُ الْإِسْتِسْلَامِ وَالذَّلَّةِ، قَدْ ضَلَّتِ الْحِيلُ، وَانْقَطَعَ الْأَمَلُ، وَهَوَتْ الْأَفئِدَةُ كَاظِمَةً، وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ مُهَيِّنَةً، وَالْجَمَّ الْعَرَقُ، وَعَظُمَ الشَّقَقُ، وَأُرْعِدَتِ الْأَسْمَاعُ لِزَبْرَةِ الدَّاعِي إِلَى فَصْلِ الْخِطَابِ، وَمَقَابِضَةِ الْجَزَاءِ، وَنَكَالِ الْعِقَابِ، وَنَوَالِ الثَّوَابِ.

The limitations of life

تنبيه الخلق

People have been created as a proof of (His) power, have been brought up with authority, they are made to die through pangs, and placed in graves where they turn into crumbs. Then they would be resurrected one by one, awarded their recompense and would have to account for their actions, each one separately.

They had been allowed time to seek deliverance, had been shown the right path and had been allowed to live and seek favours, the darkness of doubts had been removed, and they had been let free in this

period of life as a training place in order to make preparation for the race on the Day of Judgement, to search for the objective with thoughtfulness, to get time necessary to secure benefits and provide for the next place of stay.

عِبَادُ مَخْلُوقُونَ اقْتَدَارًا، وَمَرْبُوبُونَ اقْتِسَارًا وَمَقْبُوضُونَ احْتِضَارًا وَمُضْمَنُونَ أَجْدَانًا وَكَائِنُونَ رُفَاتًا وَمَبْعُوثُونَ أَفْرَادًا،
وَمَدِينُونَ جَزَاءً، وَمُمَيَّزُونَ حِسَابًا قَدْ أُمِّهَلُوا فِي طَلَبِ الْمَخْرَجِ، وَهُدُوا سَبِيلَ الْمَنْهَجِ، وَعَمِرُوا مَهْلَ الْمُسْتَعْتَبِ
وَكُشِفَتْ عَنْهُمْ سُدُفُ الرَّيْبِ وَخُلُوا لِمِضْمَارِ الْجِيَادِ وَرَوِيَّةِ الْإِرْتِيَادِ وَأَنَاةِ الْمُقْتَبَسِ الْمُرْتَادِ فِي مُدَّةِ الْأَجْلِ، وَمُضْطَرَبِ
الْمَهْلِ .

No happiness without Piety

فضل التذكير

How appropriate are these illustrations and effective admonitions provided they are received by pure hearts, open ears, firm views and sharp wits. Fear Allah like him who listened (good advice) and bowed before it, when he committed sin he admitted it, when he felt fear he acted virtuously, when he apprehended he hastened (towards good acts), when he believed he performed virtuous acts, when he was asked to take lesson (from the happenings of this world) he did take the lesson, when he was asked to desist he abstained (from evil), when he responded to the call (of Allah) he leaned (towards him), when he turned back (to evil) he repented, when he followed he almost imitated and when he was shown (the right path) he saw it.

فَبِمَا لَهَا أَمْثَالًا صَائِبَةً وَمَوَاعِظَ شَافِيَةً، لَوْ صَادَفَتْ قُلُوبًا زَاكِيَةً، وَأَسْمَاعًا وَاعِيَةً، وَأَرْأَاءَ عَازِمَةً، وَالْأَبَابَ حَازِمَةً! فَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ تَقِيَّةً مَنْ سَمِعَ فَخْشَعَ، وَاقْتَرَفَ فَاغْتَرَفَ، وَوَجَلَ فَعَمَلَ، وَحَادَرَ فَبَادَرَ وَأَيَّنَ فَأَحْسَنَ، وَعَبَّرَ فَاغْتَبَّرَ وَحَذَرَ فَحَذَرَ،
وَزُجِرَ فَازْدَجَرَ، وَأَجَابَ فَأَنَابَ وَرَاجَعَ فَتَابَ، وَاقْتَدَى فَاخْتَدَى وَأُرِيَ فَرَأَى،

Such a man was busy in search of truth and got rid (of the worldly evils) by running away. He collected provision (of good acts) for himself, purified his inner self, built for the next world, and took with himself provision for the day of his departure, keeping in view his journey, his requirement and the position of his need. He sent ahead of him for the abode of his stay (in the next world).

O creatures of Allah, fear Allah keeping in view the reason why He created you and be afraid of Him to the extent He has advised you to do. Make yourself deserve what He has promised you, by having confidence in the truth of His promise and entertaining fear for the Day of Judgement.

فَأَسْرَعَ طَالِبًا، وَنَجَا هَارِبًا، فَأَفَادَ نَخِيرَةً وَأَطَابَ سَرِيرَةً، وَعَمَرَ مَعَادًا، وَاسْتَظْهَرَ زَادًا لِيَوْمِ رَحِيلِهِ وَوَجَّهَ سَبِيلَهُ وَحَالَ
حَاجَتِهِ، وَمَوْطِنَ فَاقَتِهِ، وَقَدَّمَ أَمَامَهُ لِدَارِ مُقَامِهِ. فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ جِهَةً مَا خَلَقَكُمْ لَهُ، وَاحْذَرُوا مِنْهُ كُنْهَ مَا حَذَرَكُمْ

مِنْ نَفْسِهِ، وَاسْتَحَقُّوا مِنْهُ مَا أَعَدَّ لَكُمْ بِالتَّنَجُّزِ لَصِدْقِ مِيعَادِهِ، وَالْحَذَرِ مِنْ هَوْلِ مَعَادِهِ

A part of the same sermon Reminding people of Allah's bounties

[منها: [في التذكير بضروب النعم

He has made for you ears to preserve what is important, eyes to have sight in place of blindness and limbs which consist of many (smaller) parts, whose curves are in proportion with the moulding of their shapes and lengths of their ages, and also bodies that are sustaining themselves and hearts that are busy in search of their food, besides other big bounties, obliging bestowings and fortresses of safety. He has fixed for you ages that are not known to you. He has retained for you remains of the past people for your instruction.

Those people enjoyed themselves fully and were completely unhampered. Death overtook them before (satisfaction of) their desires, from which the hands of death separated them. They did not provide for themselves during health of their bodies, and did not take lesson during their youth.

جَعَلَ لَكُمْ أَسْمَاعًا لِتَعِيَ مَا عَنَاهَا، وَأَبْصَارًا لِتَجْلُو عَنْ عَشَاهَا، وَأَشْلَاءَ جَامِعَةً لِأَعْضَائِهَا، مُلَائِمَةً لِإِحْنَائِهَا فِي تَرْكِيبِ صُورِهَا، وَمُدَدَ عُمرِهَا، بِأَبْدَانٍ قَائِمَةٍ بِأَرْفَاقِهَا، وَقُلُوبٍ رَائِدَةٍ لِإِرْزَاقِهَا، فِي مُجَلَّلَاتِ نِعَمِهِ، وَمُوجِبَاتِ مَنِّهِ، وَحَوَاجِزِ عَافِيَتِهِ. وَقَدَّرَ لَكُمْ أَعْمَارًا سَتَرَهَا عَنْكُمْ، وَخَلَّفَ لَكُمْ عِبْرًا مِنْ آثَارِ الْمَاضِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ، مِنْ مُسْتَمْتَعِ خَلْقِهِمْ، وَمُسْتَفْسَحِ خَنَاقِهِمْ. أَرْهَقْتَهُمُ الْمَنَآيَا دُونَ الْأَمَالِ، وَشَدَبْتَهُمْ عَنْهَا تَحْرُمُ الْأَجَالِ، لَمْ يَمْهَدُوا فِي سَلَامَةِ الْأَبْدَانِ، وَلَمْ يَعْتَبِرُوا فِي أَنْفِ الْأَوَانِ.

Are these people who are in youth waiting for the backbending old age, and those enjoying fresh health waiting for ailments, and these living persons looking for the hour of death? When the hour of departure will be close and the journey at hand, with pangs of grief and trouble, suffering of sorrows and suffocation of saliva, and the time would arrive for calling relations and friends for help and changing sides on the bed.

فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُ أَهْلُ بَضَاضَةِ الشَّبَابِ إِلَّا حَوَائِي الْهَرَمِ؟ وَأَهْلُ غَضَارَةِ الصِّحَّةِ إِلَّا نَوَازِلَ السَّقَمِ؟ وَأَهْلُ مُدَّةِ الْبَقَاءِ إِلَّا آوَنَةَ الْفَنَاءِ؟ مَعَ قُرْبِ الزَّيَالِ، وَأُزُوفِ الْإِنْتِقَالِ، وَعَلَزِ الْقَلْقِ، وَالْأَلَمِ الْمَضَضِ، وَغُصَصِ الْجَرَضِ، وَتَلَفَّتِ الْإِسْتِغَاثَةُ بِنُصْرَةِ الْحَفْدَةِ وَالْأَقْرَبَاءِ، وَالْأَعِزَّةِ وَالْقُرَنَاءِ!

Could then the near ones stop death, or the mourning women do any good? Rather, he will be left in the graveyard, a hostage (to his sins) and alone in his constricted grave, his skin pierced all over by reptiles, and his freshness destroyed by these tribulations. Storms have removed his traces and calamities have obliterated even his signs. Fresh bodies have turned thin and withered and bones have become rotten.

The spirits are burdened with the weight of sins and have become conscious of the unknown things.

But now neither the good acts can be added to nor can evil acts be atoned for by repentance. Are you not sons, fathers, brothers and relations of these dead? Are you not to follow their footsteps and pass by their paths? But hearts are still unmoved, heedless of guidance and moving on wrong lines, as though the addressee is someone else, and as though the correct way is to amass worldly gains.

فَهَلْ دَفَعَتِ الْأَقَارِبُ، أَوْ نَفَعَتِ النَّوَاحِبُ؟ وَقَدْ غُوِرَ فِي مَحَلَّةِ الْأَمْوَاتِ رَهِينًا، وَفِي ضَيْقِ الْمَضْجَعِ وَحِيدًا، قَدْ هَتَكَتِ
الْهُوَامُ جِلْدَتَهُ، وَأَبْلَتِ النَّوَاهِكُ جِدَّتَهُ، وَعَفَتِ الْعَوَاصِفُ آثَارَهُ، وَمَحَا الْحَدَثَانُ مَعَالِمَهُ، وَصَارَتِ الْأَجْسَادُ شَحْبَةً بَعْدَ
بَضْتِهَا، وَالْعِظَامُ نَخْرَةً بَعْدَ قُوَّتِهَا، وَالْأَرْوَاحُ مُرْتَهَنَةً بِثَقْلِ أَعْبَائِهَا مُوقِنَةً بِغَيْبِ أَنْبَائِهَا، لَا تُسْتَزَادُ مِنْ صَالِحِ عَمَلِهَا، وَلَا
تُسْتَعْتَبُ مِنْ سَيِّئِ زَلَلِهَا! أَوْلَسْتُمْ أَبْنَاءَ الْقَوْمِ وَالْآبَاءِ، وَإِخْوَانَهُمْ وَالْأَقْرَبَاءَ؟ تَحْتَذُونَ أَمَلَتَهُمْ، وَتَرْكِبُونَ قِدَتَهُمْ، وَتَطْوُونَ
جَادَتَهُمْ؟! فَالْقُلُوبُ قَاسِيَةٌ عَنْ حَظِّهَا، لَاهِيَةٌ عَنْ رُشْدِهَا، سَالِكَةٌ فِي غَيْرِ مَضْمَارِهَا! كَأَنَّ الْمَعْنَى سِوَاهَا، وَكَأَنَّ الرُّشْدَ
فِي إِحْرَازِ دُنْيَاهَا.

Preparation for the Day of Judgement

التحذير من هول الصراط

And know that you have to pass over the pathway (of Sirat) where steps waver, feet slip away and there are fearful dangers at every step. O creatures of Allah, fear Allah, like the fearing of wise man whom the thought (of next world) has turned away from other matters, fear (of Allah) has afflicted his body with trouble and pain, his engagement in the night prayer has turned even his short sleep into awakening, hope (of eternal recompense) keeps him thirsty in the day, abstention has curbed his desires, and remembrance of Allah is ever moving his tongue. He entertains fear before dangers.

He avoids uneven ways in favour of clear ones. He follows the shortest route to secure his purpose, wishfulness does not twist his thinking and ambiguities do not blind his eyes. He enjoys deep sleep and passes his day happily because of the happiness of good tidings and pleasure of (eternal bounties).

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ مَجَازِكُمْ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ وَمَزَالِقِ دَحْضِهِ، وَأَهَاوِيلِ زَلَلِهِ، وَتَارَاتِ أَهْوَالِهِ؛ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ تَقِيَّةَ ذِي لُبٍّ شَغَلَ
التَّفَكُّرُ قَلْبَهُ، وَأَنْصَبَ الْخَوْفُ بَدَنَهُ، وَأَسْهَرَ التَّهَجُّدُ غِرَارَ نَوْمِهِ، وَأَظْمَأَ الرَّجَاءُ هَوَاجِرَ يَوْمِهِ، وَظَلَفَ الزُّهْدُ شَهَوَاتِهِ،
وَأَوْجَفَ الذِّكْرُ بِلِسَانِهِ، وَقَدَّمَ الْخَوْفُ لِإِمَانِهِ، وَتَنَكَّبَ الْمُخَالِجُ عَنْ وَضَحِ السَّبِيلِ، وَسَلَكَ أَقْصَدَ الْمَسَالِكِ إِلَى النَّهْجِ
الْمَطْلُوبِ؛ وَلَمْ تَفْتَلِهِ فَاتِلَاتُ الْعُرُورِ، وَلَمْ تَعَمَّ عَلَيْهِ مُسْتَبْهَاتُ الْأُمُورِ، ظَافِرًا بِفَرَحَةِ الْبُشْرَى، وَرَاحَةَ النُّعْمَى، فِي أَنْعَمِ
نَوْمِهِ، وَأَمِنَ يَوْمِهِ.

He passes the pathway of this world in praiseworthy manner. He reaches the next world with virtues. He hastens (towards virtue) out of fear (for vice). He moves briskly during the short time (of life in this

world). He devotes himself in seeking (eternal good), he runs away from evil. During today he is mindful of tomorrow, and keeps the future in his view. Certainly Paradise is the best reward and achievement, while hell is appropriate punishment and suffering. Allah is the best Avenger and Helper and the Qur'an is the best argument and confronter.

قَدْ عَبَّرَ مَعْبَرِ الْعَاجِلَةِ حَمِيداً، وَقَدَّمَ زَادَ الْأَجَلَةِ سَعِيداً، وَيَادَرَ مِنْ وَجَلٍ، وَأَكْمَشَ فِي مَهَلٍ، وَرَغِبَ فِي طَلَبٍ، وَذَهَبَ
عَنْ هَرَبٍ، وَرَاقَبَ فِي يَوْمِهِ غَدَهُ، وَنَظَرَ قُدَمَاءَ أَمَامَهُ. فَكَفَى بِالْجَنَّةِ ثَوَاباً وَتَوَالاً، وَكَفَى بِالنَّارِ عِقَاباً وَوَبَالاً! وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ
مُنْتَقِماً وَنَصِيحاً! وَكَفَى بِالْكِتَابِ حَاجِجاً وَخَصِيماً

Warning against Satan

الوصية بالتقوى

I enjoin upon you fear of Allah Who has left no excuse against what He has warned, has exhausted argument (of guidance) about the (right) path He has shown. He has warned you of the enemy that steals into hearts and stealthily speaks into ears, and thereby misguides and brings about destruction, makes (false) promises and keeps under wrong impression, he represents evil sins in attractive shape, and shows as light even serious crimes.

When he has deceived his comrades and exhausted the pledge he begins to find fault with what he presented as good, and considers serious what he had shown as light, and threatens from what he had shown as safe.

أَوْصِيَكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَعْدَرَ بِمَا أُنْذَرَ، وَاحْتَجَّ بِمَا نَهَجَ، وَحَذَرَ كُمْ عَدُوًّا نَفَذَ فِي الصُّدُورِ خَفِيًّا، وَنَفَثَ فِي الْأَذَانِ
نَجِيًّا، فَأَضَلَّ وَأَرْدَى، وَوَعَدَ فَمَنِّي، وَزَيَّنَ سَيِّئَاتِ الْجَرَائِمِ، وَهَوَّنَ مُوبِقَاتِ الْعِظَائِمِ، حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَدْرَجَ قَرِينَتَهُ، وَاسْتَغْلَقَ
رَهِينَتَهُ، أَنْكَرَ مَا زَيَّنَ، وَاسْتَعْظَمَ مَا هَوَّنَ، وَحَذَرَ مَا أَمَّنَ.

Part of the same sermon dealing with creation of man

منها: في صفة خلق الانسان

Or look at man whom Allah has created in the dark wombs and layers of curtains from what was overflowing semen, then shapeless clot, then embryo, then suckling infant, then child and then fully grown up young man. Then He gave him heart with memory, tongue to talk and eye to see with, in order that he may take lesson (from whatever is around him) and understand it and follow the admonition and abstain from evil.

أَمْ هَذَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهُ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْحَامِ، وَشَغَفَ الْأَسْتَارِ، نُطْفَةً دِفَاقاً، وَعَلَقَةً مِحَاقاً، وَجَنِيناً وَرَاضِعاً، وَوَلِيداً وَيَافِعاً
تُمْ مَنَحَهُ قَلْباً حَافِظاً، وَلِسَاناً لَافِظاً، وَبَصِراً لَاحِظاً، لِيَفْهَمَ مُعْتَبِراً، وَيُقْصِرَ مُزْدَجِراً

When he attained the normal growth and his structure gained its average development he fell in self-conceit and got perplexed. He drew bucketfuls of his desires, got immersed in fulfilling his wishes for pleasures of the world and his (sordid) aims. He did not fear any evil nor got frightened of any apprehension. He died infatuated with his vices. He spent his short life in rubbish pursuits. He earned no reward nor did he fulfil any obligation.

Fatal illness overtook him while he was still in his enjoyments and perplexed him. He passed the night in wakefulness in the hardships of grief and pricking of pains and ailments in the presence of real brother, loving father, wailing mother, crying sister, while he himself was under maddening uneasiness, serious senselessness, fearful cries, suffocating pains, anguish of suffocating sufferings and the pangs of death.

حَتَّى إِذَا قَامَ اعْتِدَالُهُ، وَاسْتَوَى مِثَالُهُ، نَفَرَ مُسْتَكْبِراً، وَخَبَطَ سَادِراً، مَاتِحاً فِي غَرْبِ هَوَاهُ، كَادِحاً سَعِيّاً لِدُنْيَاهُ، فِي
لَذَاتِ طَرِيهِ، وَيَدَوَاتِ أَرِيهِ؛ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ رِزْيَةً، وَلَا يَخْشَعُ تَقِيَّةً؛ فَمَاتَ فِي فِتْنَتِهِ غَرِيراً، وَعَاشَ فِي هَفْوَتِهِ أُسِيراً، لَمْ يُفِدْ
عَوْضاً، وَلَمْ يَقْضِ مُفْتَرَضاً. دَهَمَتْهُ فَجَعَاتُ الْمَنِيَّةِ فِي غُبَرِ جِمَاحِهِ، وَسَنَنَ مِرَاجِهِ، فَظَلَّ سَادِراً، وَبَاتَ سَاهِراً فِي
غَمَرَاتِ الْأَلَامِ، وَطَوَارِقِ الْأَوْجَاعِ وَالْأَسْقَامِ، بَيْنَ أَخٍ شَفِيقٍ، وَوَالِدٍ شَفِيقٍ، وَدَاعِيَةٍ بِالْوَيْلِ جَزَعاً، وَلَادِمَةٍ لِلصَّدْرِ قَلَقاً.
وَالْمَرءُ فِي سَكْرَةِ مُلْهِيَةٍ، وَغَمْرَةِ كَارِثَةٍ، وَأَنَّةٍ مُوجِعَةٍ، وَجَذْبَةٍ مُكْرِبَةٍ وَسَوْقَةٍ مُتَعَبَةٍ.

Thereafter he was clad in the shroud while he remained quiet and thoroughly submissive to others. Then he was placed on planks in such a state that he had been down-trodden by hardships and thinned by ailments. The crowd of young men and helping brothers carried him to his house of loneliness where all connections of visitors are severed.

Thereafter those who accompanied him went away and those who were waiting for him returned and then he was made to sit in his grave for terrifying questioning and slippery examination. The great calamity of that place is the hot water and entry into Hell, flames of eternal Fire and intensity of blazes.

There is no resting period, no gap for ease, no power to intervene, no death to bring about solace and no sleep to make him forget pain. He rather lies under several kinds of deaths and moment-to-moment punishment. We seek refuge with Allah.

تُمْ أُدْرَجَ فِي أَكْفَانِهِ مُبْلِساً، وَجُذِبَ مُنْقَاداً سَلِساً، تُمْ أُلْقِيَ عَلَى الْأَعْوَادِ رَجِيعَ وَصَبٍ، وَنَضَوْ سَقَمَ، تَحْمِلُهُ حَفْدَةُ
الْوِلْدَانِ، وَحَشْدَةُ الْأَخْوَانِ، إِلَى دَارِ غُرْبَتِهِ، وَمُنْقَطِعِ زَوْرَتِهِ؛ حَتَّى إِذَا انْصَرَفَ الْمُسَيِّعُ، وَرَجَعَ الْمُتَفَجِّعُ أَقْعَدَ فِي حُفْرَتِهِ
نَجِياً لِبَهْتَةِ السُّؤَالِ، وَعَثْرَةِ الْإِمْتِحَانِ. وَأَعْظَمُ مَا هُنَاكَ بَلِيَّةٌ نُزِلُ الْحَمِيمِ، وَتَصْلِيَةُ الْجَحِيمِ، وَفُورَاتُ السَّعِيرِ، وَسُورَاتُ
السَّعِيرِ، لَا فِتْرَةَ مُرَبِّحَةٍ، وَلَا دَعَا مُرَبِّحَةٍ، وَلَا قُوَّةَ حَاجِزَةٍ، وَلَا مَوْتَةَ نَاجِزَةٍ، وَلَا سَنَةَ مُسْلِيَّةٍ، بَيْنَ أَطْوَارِ الْمَوْتَاتِ،
وَعَذَابِ السَّاعَاتِ! إِنَّا بِاللَّهِ عَائِدُونَ

The lesson to be learnt from those who have passed away

O creatures of Allah! Where are those who were allowed (long) ages to live and they enjoyed bounty? They were taught and they learnt; they were given time and they passed it in vain; they were kept healthy and they forgot (their duty). They were allowed long period (of life), were handsomely provided, were warned of grievous punishment and were promised big rewards. You should avoid sins that lead to destruction and vices that attract wrath (of Allah).

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، أَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عُمِرُوا فَتَعَمُّوا، وَعُلِّمُوا فَفَهِمُوا، وَأُنْظِرُوا فَلَهَوُوا، وَسَلِّمُوا فَنَسُوا؟ أُمِّهَلُوا طَوِيلًا، وَمُنَحُوا جَمِيلًا، وَحُذِّرُوا أَلِيمًا، وَوُعِدُوا جَسِيمًا! احْذَرُوا الذُّنُوبَ الْمُرِطَةَ، وَالْعُيُوبَ الْمُسْخِطَةَ.

O people who possess eyes and ears and health and wealth! Is there any place of protection, any shelter of safety, or asylum or haven, or occasion to run away or to come back (to this world)? If not,

“How are you then turned away” (Qur’an, 6:95; 10:34; 35:3; 40:62)

and whither are you averting? By what things have you been deceived? Certainly, the share of every one of you from this earth is just a piece of land equal to his own stature and size where he would lie on his cheeks covered with dust.

أُولَى الْأَبْصَارِ وَالْأَسْمَاعِ، وَالْعَافِيَةِ وَالْمَتَاعِ، هَلْ مِنْ مَنَاصٍ أَوْ خَلَاصٍ، أَوْ مَعَادٍ أَوْ مَلَادٍ، أَوْ فِرَارٍ أَوْ مَجَازٍ أَوْ مَحَارٍ! أَمْ لَا؟ (فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ)! أَمْ أَيْنَ تُصْرَفُونَ! أَمْ بِمَاذَا تَغْتَرُونَ؟ وَإِنَّمَا حَظُّ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، ذَاتِ الطُّولِ وَالْعَرْضِ، قَبْدٌ قَدَدِهِ، مُتَعَفِّرًا عَلَى خَدِّهِ!

The present is an opportune moment for acting, O creatures of Allah, since the neck is free from the loop, and spirit is also unfettered, now you have time for seeking guidance: you are in ease of body; you can assemble in crowds, the rest of life is before you; you have opportunity of acting by will; there is opportunity for repentance, and peaceful circumstances. (But you should act) before you are overtaken by narrow circumstances and distress, or fear and weakness, before the approach of the awaited death and before seizure by the Almighty, the Powerful.

الْآنَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ وَالْخِنَاقُ مُهْمَلٌ، وَالرُّوحُ مُرْسَلٌ، فِي فَيَئَةِ الْإِرْشَادِ، وَرَاحَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ، وَبَاحَةِ الْإِحْتِسَادِ، وَمَهَلِ الْبَقِيَّةِ، وَأُنْفِ الْمَشِيَّةِ، وَإِنْظَارِ التَّوْبَةِ، وَأَنْفَسَاحِ الْحَوِيَّةِ قَبْلَ الضَّنْكِ وَالْمَضْيِقِ، وَالرُّوعِ وَالزُّهُوقِ، وَقَبْلَ قُدُومِ الْغَائِبِ الْمُنْتَظَرِ، وَإِخْذَةِ الْعَزِيزِ الْمُفْتَدِرِ.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: It is related that when Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon people began to tremble, tears flowed from their eyes and their hearts were frightened. Some people call this sermon the Brilliant Sermon (*al-Khutbatu'l-Gharra*)

قال الشريف: وفي الخبر: أَنَّهُ (عليه السلام) لَمَّا خطب بهذه الخطبة اقشعرت لها الجلود، وبكت العيون، ورجفت «القلوب». ومن الناس من يسمي هذه الخطبة: «الغراء».

Alternative Sources for Sermon 83

- (1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf*, 146;
- (2) al-Quda'i, *Dustur*, 59,
- (3) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar*;
- (4) al-Wasiti, *'Uyun al-hikam*;
- (5) Abu Nu'aym, *Hilyah*, I, 77;
- (6) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah*, I, 132 (b.d.d), II, 287 ('a.a.z).

1. Allah has furnished every creature with natural dress, which is the means of protecting it from cold and heat. Thus, some animals are covered in feathers and some carry apparels of wool on their bodies. But the high degree of intelligence of man and the quality of shame and modesty in him demands distinction from other creatures. Consequently, to maintain this distinction he has been taught the ways of covering his body. It was this natural impulse that when Adam was made to give up his dress he began to cover his body with leaves. The Qur'an says: So when they tested (of) the tree their shameful things got displayed unto them and they began covering themselves with leaves of the garden ... (Qu'ran, 7:22) This was the punishment awarded for his committing what was better for him to omit. When removal of dress is punishment its putting on would be a favour, and since this is peculiar to man it has been particularly mentioned.

2. The intention is that Allah would resurrect all the dead, even though they had been eaten by beasts and been merged in their bodies. Its aim is to refute the view of the philosophers who hold that the resurrection of the non-existent is impossible and who do not therefore believe in the physical resurrection. Their argument briefly is that a thing which has lost existence by death cannot return to life. Consequently, after the destruction of this world the return of any of its beings to life is out of question. But this belief is not correct because dispersal of the parts does not mean its non-existence, so as to say that putting these parts together again would involve resurrection of the non-existent. On the other hand separated and dispersed parts continue to exist in some form or the other. Of course, in this connection this objection has some force that when every person is to be resurrected in his own form, then in case one person has eaten the other, then in such a case it would be impossible to resurrect either of them with his own constituent parts, since this would involve creating deficiency of parts in that who had eaten the other.

To this metaphysicians have replied that in everybody there are some constituents which are essential and others which are non-essential. The essential constituents remain constant from the beginning till end of life and suffer no change or alteration, and resurrection with regard to such constituents would not create any deficiency in the man who ate the other.

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