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Sermon 115: O my God! Surely our mountains....

Seeking rain

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

في الاستسقاء

O my God! Surely our mountains have dried up and our earth has become dusty. Our cattle are thirsty and are bewildered in their enclosures. They are moaning like the moaning of mothers for their (dead) sons. They are tired of going to their meadows and longing for their watering places. O My God! Have mercy on the groan of the groaning and yearn of the yearning. O My God! Have mercy on their bewilderment and their passages and their groaning in their yards.

اللَّهُمَّ قَدِ انْصَاحَتْ جِبَالُنَا، وَاغْبَرَّتْ أَرْضُنَا، وَهَامَتْ دَوَابُّنَا، وَتَحَيَّرَتْ في مَرَابِضِهَا وَعَجَّتْ عَجِيجَ الثَّكَالَى عَلَى أَوْلاَدِهَا، وَمَلَّتِ التَّرَدُّدَ في مَرَاتِعِهَا، وَالحَنِينَ إِلَى مَوَارِدِهَا . اللَّهُمَّ فَارْحَمْ أَنِينَ الاَنَّةِ وَحَنِينَ الْحَانَّةِ اللَّهُمَّ فَارْحَمْ حَيْرَتَهَا فِي مَذَاهِبِهَا، وَأَنِينَهَا في مَوَالِجِهَا.

O My God! We have come out to Thee when the years of drought have crowded over us like (a herd of) thin camels, and rain clouds have abandoned us. Thou art the hope for the afflicted and succour for the seeker. We call Thee when the people have lost hopes, cloud has been denied and cattle have died, that do not seize us for our deeds and do not catch us for our sins, and spread Thy mercy over us through raining clouds, rain-fed blossoming, amazing vegetation, and heavy down-pours with which all that was dead regains life and all that was lost returns.

اللَّهُمَّ خَرَجْنَا إِلَيْكَ حِينَ اعْتَكَرَتْ عَلَيْنَا حَدَابِيرُ السِّنِينَ، وَأَخْلَفَتْنَا مَخَايِلُ الْجُودِ فَكُنْتَ الرَّجَاءَ لِلْمُبْتَئِسِ، وَالْبَلاَغَ لِلْمُلْتَمِسِ. نَدْعُوكَ حِينَ قَنَطَ الاَنَامُ، وَمُنِعَ الْغَمَامُ، وَهَلَكَ السَّوَامُ أَلاَّ تُؤَاخِذَنَا بِأَعْمَالِنَا، وَلاَ تَأْخُذَنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا، وَانْشُرْ عَلَيْنَا

رَحْمَتَكَ بِالسَّحَابِ الْمُنْبَعِقِ وَالرَّبِيعِ الْمُغْدِقِ وَالنَّبَاتِ الْمُونِقِ سَحّاً وَابِلاً تُحْيِي بِهِ مَا قَدْ مَاتَ، وَتَرُدُّ بِهِ مَا قَدْ فَاتَ

O My God! Give rain from Thee which should be life giving, satisfying, thorough, wide-scattered, purified, blissful, plentiful and invigorating. Its vegetation should be exuberant, its branches full of fruits and its leaves green. With it Thou reinvigorates the weak among Thy creatures and bringeth back to life the dead among Thy cities.

O My God! Give rain from Thee with which our high lands get covered with green herbage, streams get flowing, our sides grow green, our fruits thrive, our cattle prosper, our far-flung areas get watered and our dry areas get its benefit, with Thy vast blessing and immeasurable grant on Thy distressed universe and Thy untamed beasts.

And pour upon us rain which is drenching, continuous and heavy; wherein one cycle of rain clashes with the other and one rain drop pushes another (into a continuous chain), its lightning should not be deceptive, its cheek not rainless, its white clouds not scattered and rain not light, so that the famine-stricken thrive with its abundant herbage and the drought stricken come to life with its bliss. Certainly, Thou pourest down rain after the people lose hopes and spreadest Thy mercy, since Thou art the Guardian, the praiseworthy.

اللَّهُمَّ سُقْيَا مِنْكَ مُحْيِيَةً مُرْوِيَةً، تَامَّةً عَامَّةً، طَيِّبَةً مُبَارَكَةً، هَنِيئَةً مَرِيعَةً زَاكِياً نَبْتُهَا، ثَامِراًفَرْعُهَا، نَاضِراً وَرَقُهَا، تُنْعِشُ بِهَا الضَّعِيفَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ، وَتُحْيِي بِهَا الْمَيِّتَ مِنْ بِلاَدِكَ. اللَّهُمَّ سُقْيَا مِنْكَ تُعْشِبُ بِهَا نِجَادُنَا وَتَجْرِي بِهَا وِهَادُنَا وَيُخْصِبُ بِهَا جَنَابُنَا وَتُقْبِلُ بِهَا ثِمَارُنَا، وَتَعِيشُ بِهَا مَوَاشِينَا، وَتَنْدَى بِهَا أَقَاصِينَا وَتَسْتَعِينُ بِهَا ضَوَاحِينَا مِنْ بَرَكَاتِكَ الْوَاسِعَةِ، وَعَطَايَاكَ الْجَزِيلَةِ، عَلَى بَرِيَّتِكَ الْمُرْمِلَةِ وَوَحْشِكَ الْمُهْمَلَةِ. وَأَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا سَمَاءً مُخْضِلَةً مِدْرَاراً هَاطِلَةً، يُدَافِعُ الْوَدْقُ مِنْهَا الْوَدْقَ، وَيَحْفِزُ الْقَطْرُ مِنْهَا الْقَطْرَ، غَيْرَ خُلَّبٍ بَرْقُهَا وَلاَ جَهَامٍ عَارِضُهَا وَلاَ قَزَعٍ رَبَابُهَا، وَلاَ شَفَّانٍ ذِهَابُهَا حَتَّى يُخْصِبَ لِامْرَاعِهَا الْمجْدِبُونَ، وَيَحْيَا بِبَرَكَتِهَا المُسْنِتُونَ فَإِنَّكَ تُنْزِلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا، وَتَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَكَ، وَأَنْتَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ.

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: The wonderful expressions of this sermon:

Amir al-mu'minin's words *"insahat jibaluna"* means the mountains cracked on account of drought. It is said *"insaha'ththawbu"* when it is torn. It is also said *"insaha'n-nabtu"* or *"saha"* or *"sawwaha"* when vegetation withers and dries up.

قال السيد الشريف: تفسير ما في هذه الخطبة من الغريب. قولُهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: «انْصاحَتْ جِبالُنا» اَىْ تَشَقَّقَتْ مِنَ الْمُحُولِ، يُقالُ: «انْصاحَ الثَّوْبُ» اِذا انْشَقَّ. وَ يُقالُ اَيْضاً: «انْصاحَ النَّبْتُ» وَ «صاحَ وَ صَوَّحَ» اِذا جَفَّ وَيَبِسَ. كلّه بمعنىً.

His words *"wa hamat dawabbuna"* means became thirsty, as *"huyam"* means thirst.

His words *"hadabiru's-sinin".* This is plural of *"hidbar".* It means the camel whom treading has made thin. So Amir al-mu'minin likened with such a camel the year in which drought had occurred. The Arab poet Dhu ar-Rummah has said:

These thin camels remain in their places, facing hardships and move only when we take them to some dry area.

وَقَوْلُهُ: «وَ هامَتْ دَوابُّنا» اَىْ عَطِشَتْ، وَالْهُيامُ: الْعَطْشُ. وَ قَوْلُهُ: «حَدابيرُ السِّنينَ» جَمْعُ «حِدْبار» وَ هِىَ النّاقَةُ الَّتى اَنْضاها السَّيْرُ، فَشَبَّهَ بِهَا السَّنَةَ الَّتى فَشا فيها الْجَدْبُ. قالَ ذُوالرُّمَّةِ: حَدابيرُ ما تَنْفَكُّ اِلاّ مُناخَةً *** عَلَى الْخَسْفِ اَوْ نَرْمى بِها بَلَداً قَفْرا

His words *"wa la qaza'in rababuha".* Here *"al-qaza"* means small pieces of cloud scattered all round.

His words *"wa la shaffanin dhihabuha".* It stands for *"wa la dhata shaffanin dhihabuha". "ash-shaffan"* means the cold wind and *"adh-dhihab"* means light rain. He omitted the world *"dhata"* from here because of the listener's knowledge of it.

وَ قَوْلُهُ: «وَلا قَزَع رَبابُها» الْقَزَعُ: الْقِطَعُ الصِّغارُ الْمُتَفَرِّقَةُ مِنَ السَّحابِ. وَ قَوْلُهُ: «وَلا شَفّان ذِهابُها» فَاِنَّ تَقْديرَهُ وَلا ذاتِ شَفّان ذِهابُها. وَالشَّفّانُ: الرِّيحُ الْبارِدَةُ، وَالذِّهابُ: الاَمْطارُ اللَّيِّنَةُ. فَحَذَفَ «ذاتَ» لِعِلْمِ السّامِعِ بِهِ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 115

(1) Al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh,* I, 335;

(2) al-Tusi, *Misbah, adab salat al-'istisqa'*, see Kashif al-Ghita', *Madarik,* 250;

(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi', bab al-sahab wa al-matar;*

(4) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* V, 53;

(5) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd,* IV, 338;

(6) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 190, from (7)

(7) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal;*

(*8*) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139, 159;

(9) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib al-'umam,* see *Ta'sis al-Shi'ah,* 415;

(10) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 220.

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