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Sermon 23: Verily, Divine orders descends ...

About keeping aloof from envy, and good behaviour towards kith and kin

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

وتشتمل على تهذيب الفقراء بالزهد وتأديب الاغنياء بالشفقة

Now then, verily Divine orders descend from heaven to earth like drops of rain, bringing to everyone what is destined for him whether plenty or paucity. So if any one of you observes for his brother plenty of progeny or of wealth or of self, it should not be a worry for him. So long as a Muslim does not commit such an act that if it is disclosed he has to bend his eyes (in shame) and by which low people are emboldened, he is like the gambler who expects that the first draw of his arrow would secure him gain and also cover up the previous loss.

أمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ الاْمْرَ يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّماءِ إِلَى الاْرْضِ كَقَطر المَطَرِ إِلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا قُسِمَ لَهَا مِنْ زِيَادَةٍ أَوْ نُقْصَانٍ، فإذا رَأَى أَحَدُكُمْ لاِخِيهِ غَفِيرَةًفي أَهْلٍ أَوْ مَالٍ أَوْ نَفْسٍ فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ لَهُ فِتْنَةً، فَإِنَّ المَرْءَ المُسْلِمَ مَا لَمْ يَغْشَ دَنَاءَةً تَظْهَرُ فَيَخْشَعُ لَهَا إِذَا ذُكِرَتْ، وَيُغْرَى بهَا لِئَامُ النَّاسِ، كانَ كَالفَالِجِ اليَاسِرِشة الَّذِي يَنْتَظِرُ أَوَّلَ فَوْزَةٍ مِنْ قِدَاحِهِ تُوجِبُ لَهُ المَغْنَمَ، وَيُرْفَعُ عَنْهُ بهاالمَغْرَمُ.

Similarly, the Muslim who is free from dishonesty expects one of the two good things: either call from Allah and in that case whatever is with Allah is the best for him, or the livelihood of Allah. He has already children and property while his faith and respect are with him. Certainly, wealth and children are the plantations of this world while virtuous deed is the plantation of the next world. Sometimes Allah joins all these in some groups.

كَذْلِكَ المَرْءُ المُسْلِمُ البَرِيءُ مِنَ الخِيَانَةِ يَنْتَظِرُ مِنَ اللهِ إِحْدَى الحُسْنَيَيْنِ: إِمَّا دَاعِيَ اللهِ فَمَا عِنْدَ اللهِ خَيْرٌ لَهُ، وَإِمَّا

رِزْقَ اللهِ فَإِذَا هُوَ ذُوأَهْلٍ وَمَالٍ، وَمَعَهُ دِينُهُ وَحَسَبُهُ. إِنَّ المَالَ وَالبَنِينَ حَرْثُ الدُّنْيَا، والعَمَلَ الصَّالِحَ حَرْثُ الاْخِرَةِ، وَقَدْ يَجْمَعُهُمَا اللهُ لاِقْوَامٍ،

Beware of Allah against what He has cautioned you and keep afraid of Him to the extent that no excuse be needed for it. Act without show or intention of being heard, for if a man acts for other than Allah, then Allah entrusts him to that one. We ask Allah (to grant us) the positions of the martyrs, company of the virtuous and friendship of the prophets.

فَاحْذَرُوا مِنَ اللهِ مَا حَذَّرَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ، وَاخْشَوْهُ خَشْيَةً لَيْسَتْ بِتَعْذِيرٍ وَاعْمَلُوا في غَيْرِ رِيَاءٍ وَلاَ سُمْعَةٍ؛ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ لِغَيْرِ اللهِ يَكِلْهُ اللهُ إِلَى مَنْ عَمِلَ لَهُ. نَسْأَلُ اللهَ مَنَازِلَ الشُّهَدَاءِ، وَمُعَايَشَةَ السُّعَدَاءِ، وَمُرَافَقَةَ الاْنْبِيَاءِ.

O people! Surely no one (even though he may be rich) can do without his kinsmen, and their support by hands or tongues. They alone are his support from rear and can ward off from him his troubles, and they are the most kind to him when tribulations befall him. The good memory of a man that Allah retains among people is better than the property which others inherit from him.

أَيُّهَا النّاسُ، إِنَّهُ لاَ يَسْتَغْنِي الرَّجُلُ ـ وَإِنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ ـ عَنْ عَشِيرَتِهِ، وَدِفَاعِهِمْ عَنْهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَلسِنَتِهِمْ، وَهُمْ أَعْظَمُ النَّاسِ حَيْطَةً مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَأَلَمُّهُمْ لِشَعَثِهِ، وَأَعْطَفُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ عِنْدَ نَازِلَةٍ إِنْ نَزَلَتْ بِهِ. وَلِسَانُ الصِّدْقِ يَجْعَلُهُ اللهُ لِلْمَرْءِ في النَّاسِ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنَ المَالِ يُورِثُهُ غيرَهُ.

In the same Sermon

Behold! If any one of you finds your near ones in want or starvation, he should not desist from helping them with that which will not increase if this help is not extended, nor decrease by thus spending it. Whoever holds up his hand from (helping) his kinsmen, he holds only one hand, but at the time of his need many hands remain held up from helping him. One who is sweet tempered can retain the love of his people for good.

أَلاَ لاَيَعْدِلَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ عَنِ القَرَابَةِ يَرَى بِهَا الخَصَاصَةَ أَنْ يَسُدَّهَا بِالَّذِي لايَزِيدُهُ إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُ وَلاَ يَنْقُصُهُ إِنْ أَهْلَكَهُ، وَمَنْ يَقْبِضْ يَدَهُ عَنْ عَشِيرَتِهِ، فَإِنَّمَا تُقْبَضُ مِنْهُ عَنْهُمْ يَدٌ وَاحِدَةٌ، وَتُقْبَضُ مِنْهُمْ عَنْهُ أَيْد كَثِيرَةٌ; وَمَنْ تَلِنْ حَاشِيَتُهُ يَسْتَدِمْ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ المَوَدَّةَ.

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In this sermon "*al-ghafirah*" means plenty or abundance, and this is derived from the Arab saying, "*al-jamm al-ghafir*" or "*al-jamma' al-ghafir*" meaning thick crowd. In some versions for "*al-ghafirah*" "*'afwatan*" appears. "*'afwah*" means the good and selected part of anything.

It is said "*akaltu 'afwata 't-ta'am*", to mean "I ate select meal." About "*wa man yaqbid yadahu 'an*

'ashiratihi" appearing towards the end he points out how beautiful the meaning of this sentence is, Amir al-mu'minin implies that he who does not help his own kinsmen withholds only his hand but when he is in need of their assistance and would be looking for their sympathy and support then he would remain deprived of the sympathies and succour of so many of their extending hands and marching feet.

قال السيد الشريف: اقول: الغفيرة ها هنا الزيادة و الكثرة ، من قولهم للجمع الكثير: الجم الغفير، و الجماء الغفير. و يروي "عِفوة من اهل أو مال" و العِفوة: الخيار من الشيء، يقال: اكلت عِفوة الطعام، اي خياره. وما أحسن المعنى الذي أراده (عليه السلام) بقوله: «ومن يقبض يده عن عشيرته...» إلى تمام الكلام، فإن الممسك خيره عن عشيرته إنما يمسك نفع يد واحدة; فإذا احتاج إلى نصرتهم، واضطر إلى مرافدتهم قعدوا عن نصره، وتثاقلوا عن صوته، فمنع ترافد الايدي الكثيرة، وتناهض الاقدام الجمة.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 23

(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* II, 56, 294, V, 56;

(2) Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd*, II, 366;

(3) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Siffin,* 10;

(4) al-Ya'qubi *Ta'rikh,* II, 149;

(5) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi', bab al-kasb wa al-mal;*

(6) al-Muttaqi, *Kanz,* VIII, 225;

(7) Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* in the biographical account of 'A1i (A);

(8) Ibn Salam, *Gharib al-hadith,* II, 183;

(9) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III, 468;

(10) Ibn Qutaybah, *'Uyun,* I, 189;

(11) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 80.

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