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# Sermon 93: I have pulled out the eye of revolt ...

*About the annihilation of the Kharijites, the mischief mongering of Umayyads and the vastness of his own knowledge*[1]

ومن خطبة له عليه السلام

وفيها ينبِّه أَمير المؤمنين على فضله وعلمه ويبيّن فتنة بني أُميّة

Praise and eulogy be to Allah, O people, I have put out the eye of revolt. No one except me advanced towards it when its gloom was swelling and its madness was intense. Ask me before you miss me, [2] because, by Allah, who has my life in His hands, if you ask me anything between now and the Day of Judgement or about the group who would guide a hundred people and also misguide a hundred people I would tell you who is announcing its march, who is driving it in the front and who is driving it at the rear, the stages where its riding animals would stop for rest and the final place of stay, and who among them would be killed and who would die a natural death.

أَمَّا بَعْد، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَإِنِّي فَقَأْتُ عَيْنَ الْفِتْنَةِ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لِيَجْتَرِىءَ عَلَيْهَا أَحَدٌ غَيْرِي بَعْدَ أَنْ مَاجَ غَيْهَبُهَا، وَاشْتَدَّ كَلَبُهَا فَاسْأَلُونِي قَبْلَ أَنْ تَفْقِدُونِي، فَوَ الَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لاَ تَسْأَلُونِي عَنْ شَيْء فِيما بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ السَّاعَةِ، وَلاَ عَنْ فِئَة تَهْدِي مائَةً وَتُضِلُّ مائَةً إِلاَّ نَبَّأْتُكُمْ بِنَاعِقِهَا وَقَائِدِهَا وَسَائِقِهَا، وَمَنَاخِ رِكَابِهَا، وَمَحَطِّ رِحَالِهَا، وَمَنْ يُقْتَلُ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا قَتْلاً، وَمَنْ يَمُوتُ مِنْهُمْ مَوْتاً.

When I am dead, hard circumstances and distressing events will befall you, many persons in the position of asking questions will remain silent with cast down eye, while those in the position of replying will lose courage. This would be at a time when wars will descend upon you with all hardship and days will be so hard on you that you would feel them prolonged because of hardship till Allah will give victory to those remaining virtuous among you.

وَلَوْ قَدْ فَقَدْتُمُونِي وَنَزَلَتْ كَرَائِهُ الاْمُورِ، وَحَوَازِبُ الْخُطُوب، لاَطْرَقَ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ السَّائِلِينَ، وَفَشِلَ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ المَسْؤُولِينَ، وَذلِكَ إِذَا قَلَّصَتْ حَرْبُكُمْ، وَشَمَّرَتْ عَنْ سَاق، وَضَاقَتِ الدُّنْيَا عَلَيْكُمْ ضِيقاً، تَسْتَطِيلُونَ أَيَّامَ الْبَلاَءِ عَلَيْكُمْ، حَتَّى يَفْتَحَ اللهُ لِبَقِيَّةِ الاْبْرَارِ مِنْكُمْ.

When mischiefs come they confuse (right with wrong) and when they clear away they leave a warning. They cannot be known at the time of approach but are recognised at the time of return. They blow like the blowing of winds, striking some cities and missing others.

Beware that the worst mischief for you in my view is the mischief of Banu Umayyah, because it is blind and also creates darkness. Its sway is general but its ill effects are for particular people. He who remains clear-sighted in it would be affected by distress, and he who remains blind in it would avoid the distress.

By Allah, you will find Banu Umayyah after me worst people for yourselves, like the old unruly she-camel who bites with its mouth, beats with its fore-legs, kicks with its hind legs and refuses to be milked. They would remain over you till they would leave among you only those who benefit them or those who do not harm them.

Their calamity would continue till your seeking help from them would become like the seeking of help by the slave from his master or of the follower from the leader. Their mischief would come to you like evil eyed fear and pre-Islamic fragments, wherein there would be neither minaret of guidance nor any sign (of salvation) to be seen.

إِنّ الْفِتَنَ إِذَا أَقْبَلَتْ شَبَّهِتْ، وَإِذَا أَدْبَرَتْ نَبَّهَتْ، يُنْكَرْنَ مُقْبِلاَت، وَيُعْرَفْنَ مُدْبِرَات، يَحُمْنَ حَوْمَ الرِّيَاحِ، يُصِبْنَ بَلَداً وَيُخْطِئْنَ بَلَداً.

أَلاَ وَإِنَّ أَخْوَفَ الْفِتَنِ عِنْدِي عَلَيْكُمْ فَتْنَةُ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ، فإِنَّهَا فِتْنَةٌ عَمْيَاءُ مُظْلِمَةٌ: عَمَّتْ خُطَّتُهَا، وَخَصَّتْ بَلِيَّتُهَا، وَأَصَابَ الْبَلاَءُ مَنْ أَبْصَرَ فِيهَا، وَأَخْطَأَ الْبَلاَءُ مَنْ عَمِيَ عَنْهَا. وَايْمُ اللهِ لَتَجِدُنَّ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ لَكُمْ أَرْبَابَ سُوْء بَعْدِي، كَالنَّابِ الضَّرُوسِ: تَعْذِمُ بِفِيهَا، وَتَخْبِطُ بِيَدِهَا، وتَزْبِنُ بِرِجْلِهَا، وَتَمْنَعُ دَرَّهَا، لاَ يَزَالُونَ بِكُمْ حَتَّى لاَ يَتْرُكُوا مَنْكُمْ إِلاَّ نَافِعاً لَهُمْ، أَوْ غَيْرَ ضَائِر بِهِمْ، وَلاَ يَزَالُ بَلاَؤُهُمْ حَتَّى لاَ يَكُونَ انْتِصَارُ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْهُمْ إِلاَّ مثل انْتِصَارِ الْعَبْدِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ، وَالصَّاحِبِ مِنْ مُسْتَصْحِبِهِ، تَرِدُ عَلَيْكُمْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ شَوْهَاءَ مَخْشَيَّةً، وَقِطَعاً جَاهِلِيَّةً، لَيْسَ فِيهَا مَنَارُ هُدىً، وَلاَ عَلَمٌ يُرَى.

We *Ahlul Bayt* (the Household of the Prophet) are free from this mischief and we are not among those who would engender it. Thereafter, Allah would dispel it from you like the removal of the skin (from flesh) through him who would humble them, drag them by necks, make them drink full cups (of hardships), not extend them anything but sword and not clothe them save with fear. At that time Quraysh would wish at the cost of the world and all its contents to find me even only once and just for the duration of the slaughter of a camel in order that I may accept from them (the whole of) that of which at present I am asking them only a part but they are not giving me.

نَحْنُ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ مِنْهَا بنجاة، وَلَسْنَا فِيهَا بِدُعَاة، ثُمَّ يُفَرِّجُهَا اللهُ عَنْكُمْ كَتَفْرِيجِ الاْدِيمِ: بِمَنْ يَسُومُهُمْ خَسْفاً، وَيَسُوقُهُمْ عُنْفاً، وَيَسْقِيهِمْ بِكَأْس مُصَبَّرَة، لاَ يُعْطِيهِمْ إِلاَّ السَّيْفَ، وَلاَ يُحْلِسُهُمْ إِلاَّ الْخَوْفَ، فَعِنْدَ ذلِكَ تَوَدُّ قُرَيْشٌ ـ بِالدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا ـ لَوْ يَرَوْنَنِي مَقَاماً وَاحِداً، وَلَوْ قَدْرَ جَزْرِ جَزُور، لاِقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ مَا أَطْلُبُ الْيَوْمَ بَعْضَهُ فَلاَ يُعْطُونِيهِ!

## Alternative Sources for Sermon 93

(1) Al-Ya'qubi, *Tar'ikh,* II, 182;

(2) Abu Nu'aym, *Hilyah,* I, 68;

(3) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 6, 7, 16;

(4) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 377 (*h.z.b*), III, 200 (*'a.dh.m*);

(5) al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak,* II, 466;

(6) Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, *Jami',* I, 114;

(7) Ibn Hajar, *al-'Isabah,* II, 509;

(8) al-Tabari, *al-Riyad,* 198;

(9) al-Suyuti, *Ta'rikh al-khulafa',* 124;

(10) Dahlan, *al-Futuhat,* II, 337;

(11) al-Qunduzi, *Yanabi',* 224.

1. Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon after the battle of Nahrawan. In it, mischiefs imply the battles fought in Basrah, Siffin and Nahrawan because their nature was different from the battles of the Prophet. There the opposite party was the unbelievers while here the confrontation was with those who had veils of Islam on their faces. So people were hesitant to fight against Muslims, and asked why they should fight with those who recited the call to the prayers and offered the prayers. Thus, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari did not take part in the Battle of Siffin till the falling of `Ammar ibn Yasir as martyr did not prove that the opposite party was rebellious. Similarly the presence of companions like Talhah and az-Zubayr who were included in the "Foretold Ten" on the side of `A'ishah in Basrah, and the prayer signs on foreheads of the Kharijites in Nahrawan and their prayers and worship were creating confusion in the minds. In these circumstances only those could have the courage to rise against them were aware of the secrets of their hearts and the reality of their faith. It was the peculiar perception of Amir al-mu'minin and his spiritual courage that he rose to oppose them, and testified the saying of the Holy Prophet:
You will fight after me with the breakers of allegiance (people of Jamal), oppressors (people of Syria) and deviators (the Kharijites). (al-Mustadrak `ala as-Sahihayn, al-Hakim, vol.3, p.I39,140; ad-Durr al-manthur, vol.6, p.I8; al-Ist`ab, vol.3, p.1117; Usd al-ghabah, vol.4 pp.32,33; Tarikh Baghdad, vol.8, p.340; vol.13, pp.186,187; at-Tarikh, Ibn `Asakir, vol. 5, p. 41; at-Tarikh, Ibn Kathir, vol.7, pp.304,305,306; Majma` az-zawa'id, vol.7, p.238; vol.9, p.235; Sharh al-mawahib, vol.3, pp.316-317; Kanz al-`ummal, vol. 6, pp.72,82,88,155,319,391,392; vol. 8, p.215)
2. After the Holy Prophet no one save Amir al-mu'minin could utter the challenge "Ask whatever you want to." Ibn `Abd al-Barr in Jami` bayan al-`ilm wa fadlihi, vol.1 p.58 and in al-Isti`ab, vol.3, p.I103; Ibn al-Athir in Usd al-ghabah, vol.4, p.22;

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid in Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, vol.7, p.46; as-Suyuti in Tarikh al-Khulafa', p.171 and Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in as-Sawa`iq al-muhriqah, p.76 have written that "None among the companions of the Holy Prophet ever said 'Ask me whatever you want to' except `Ali ibn Abi Talib." However, among other than the companions a few names do appear in history who did utter such a challenge, such as Ibrahim ibn Hisham al-Makhzumi, Muqatil ibn Sulayman, Qatadah ibn Di`amah, `Abd ar-Rahman (Ibn al-Jawzi) and Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi`i etc. but everyone of them had to face disgrace and was forced to take back his challenge. This challenge can be urged only by him who knows the realities of the Universe and is aware of the happenings of the future. Amir al-mu'minin, the opener of the door of the Prophet's knowledge, as he was, was the only person who was never seen being unable to answer any question on any occasion, so much so that even Caliph `Umar had to say that "I seek Allah's protection from the difficulty for the solution of which `Ali would not be available." Similarly, the prophecies of Amir al-mu'minin made about the future proved true word by word and served as an index to his vast knowledge, whether they be about the devastation of Banu Ummayyah or the rising of the Kharijites, the wars and destruction by the Tartars or the attacks of the English, the floods of Basrah of the ruination of Kufah. In short, when these events are historical realities there is no reason why this challenge of Amir al-mu'minin should be wondered at.

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