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Sermon 99: We praise Allah for what has happened...

About abstinence of the world and vicissitudes of time

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

في التزهيد من الدنيا

We praise Allah for what has happened and seek His succour in our affairs for what is yet to happen, and we beg Him for safety in the faith just as we beg Him for safety in our bodies.

نَحْمَدُهُ عَلَى مَا كَانَ، وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنا عَلَى مَا يَكُونُ، وَنَسْأَلُهُ الْمُعَافَاةَ في الاْدْيَانِ، كَمَا نَسَأَلُهُ الْمُعَافَاةَ فِي الاْبْدَانِ.

O creatures of Allah! I advise you to keep away from this world which is (shortly) to leave you even though you do not like its departure, and which would make your bodies old even though you would like to keep them fresh. Your example and its example is like the travellers who travel some distance and then as though they traverse it quickly or they aimed at a sign and reached it at once. How short is the distance to the aim if one heads towards it and reaches it. And how short is the stage of one who has only a day which he cannot exceed while a swift driver is driving him in this world till he departs from it.

أُوصِيكُمْ عِبادَاللهِ بِالرَّفْضِ لِهذهِ الدُّنْيَا التَّارِكَةِ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُحِبُّوا تَرْكَهَا، وَالْمُبْلِيَةِ لاَجْسَامِكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ تَجْدِيدَهَا، فَإِنَّمَا مَثَلُكُمْ وَمَثَلُهَا كَسَفْرٍ(1) سَلَكُوا سَبِيلاً فَكَأَنَّهُمْ قَدْ قَطَعُوهُ، وَأَمُّوا(2) عَلَماً فَكَأَنَّهُمْ قَدْ بَلَغُوهُ، وَكَمْ عَسَى الْـمُجْرِي إِلَى الْغَايَةِ(3) أَنْ يَجْرِيَ إِلَيْهَا حَتَّى يَبْلُغَهَا! وَمَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ بَقَاءُ مَنْ لَهُ يَوْمٌ لاَ يَعْدُوهُ، وَطَالِبٌ حَثِيثٌ يَحْدُوهُ(1) فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى يُفَارِقَهَا!

So do not hanker after worldly honour and its pride, and do not feel happy over its beauties and bounties nor wail over its damages and misfortunes because its honour and pride will end while its beauty and bounty will perish, and its damages and misfortunes will pass away. Every period in it has an end and every living being in it is to die. Is not there for you a warning in the relics of the predecessors and an eye opener and lesson in your fore-fathers, provided you understand?

فَلاَ تَنَافَسُوا فِي عِزِّ الدُّنْيَا وَفَخْرِهَا، وَلاَ تَعْجَبُوا بَزِينَتِهَا وَنَعِيمِهَا، وَلاَ تَجْزَعُوا مِنْ ضَرَّائِهَا وَبُؤْسِهَا، فَإِنَّ عِزَّهَا وَفَخْرَهَا إِلَى انْقِطَاع، وَزِينَتَهَا وَنَعِيمَهَا إِلَى زَوَال، وَضَرَّاءَهَا وَبُؤْسَهَا إِلَى نَفَاد، وَكُلُّ مُدَّة فِيهَا إِلَى انْتِهَاء، وَكُلُّ حَيٍّ فِيهَا إِلَى فَنَاء. أَوَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ في آثَارِ الأوَّلِينَ مُزْدَجَرٌ، وَفِي آبَائِكُمُ الْمَاضِينَ تَبْصِرَةٌ وَمُعْتَبَرٌ، إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ!

Do you not see that your predecessors do not come back and the surviving followers do not remain? Do you not observe that the people of the world pass mornings and evenings in different conditions? Thus, (somewhere) the dead is wept for, someone is being condoled, someone is prostrate in distress, someone is enquiring about the sick, someone is passing his last breath, someone is hankering after the world while death is looking for him, someone is forgetful but he is not forgotten (by death), and on the footsteps of the predecessors walk the survivors.

أَوَلَمْ تَرَوْا إِلَى الْمَاضِينَ مِنْكُمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ، وَإِلَى الْخَلَفِ الباقِي لاَ يَبْقَوْنَ! أَوَلَسْتُمْ تَرَوْنَ أَهْلَ الدُّنْيَا يُمْسُونَ ويُصْبِحُونَ عَلَى أَحْوَال شَتَّى: فَمَيِّتٌ يُبْكَى، وَآخَرُ يُعَزَّى، وَصَرِيعٌ مُبْتَلىً، وَعَائِدٌ يَعُودُ، وَآخَرُ بِنَفْسِهِ يَجُودُ، وَطَالِبٌ لِلدُّنْيَا وَالْمَوْتُ يَطْلُبُهُ، وَغَافِلٌ وَلَيْسَ بِمَغْفُول عَنْهُ; وَعَلَى أَثَرِ الْمَاضِي مَا يَمْضِي الْبَاقِي!

Beware! At the time of committing evil deeds remember the destroyer of joys, the spoiler of pleasures, and the killer of desires (namely death). Seek assistance of Allah for fulfilment of His obligatory rights, and for (thanking Him) for His countless bounties and obligations.

أَلاَ فَاذْكُرُوا هَادِمَ اللَّذَّاتِ، وَمُنَغِّصَ الشَّهَوَاتِ، وَقَاطِعَ الأمْنِيَاتِ، عِنْدَ الْمُسَاوَرَةِ لِلأعْمَالِ الْقَبِيحَةِ، وَاسْتَعِينُوا اللهَ عَلَى أَدَاءِ وَاجِبِ حَقِّهِ، وَمَا لاَ يُحْصَى مِنْ أَعْدَادِ نِعَمِهِ وَإِحْسَانِهِ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 99

(1) Al-Saduq, *Ma'ani,* 184;

(2) al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh,* I, 270;

(3) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* II, 50;

(4) al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat,* 107.

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