

Sermon 162: O brother of Banu Asad....

One of Amir al-mu'minin's companions (from Banu Asad) asked him: "How was it that your tribe (Quraysh) deprived you of this position (Caliphate) although you deserved it most." Then in reply he said:

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام)

لبعض أصحابه وقد سأله: كيف دفعكم قومكم عن هذا المقام وأنتم أحق به؟
فقال

O brother of Banu Asad! Your girth is loose and you have put it on the wrong way. Nevertheless you enjoy in-law kinship and also the right to ask, and since you have asked, listen. As regards the dominance over us in this station (of caliphate) although we were the loftiest in lineage and the strongest in relationship with the Messenger of Allah, it was an act of appropriation by some who became greedy for it, while others relinquished it through their generosity. The Arbiter is Allah and to Him is the return on the Day of Judgement.

"Now leave this story of devastation about which there is hue and cry all round. –

And let me know the story of what happened to the riding camels" 1

يَا أَخَا بَنِي أَسَدَ، إِنَّكَ لَلْقَلْبُ الْوَضِيحُ، تُرْسِلُ فِي غَيْرِ سَدَدٍ، وَلَكَ بَعْدُ زِمَامَةُ الصِّهْرِ،
وَحَقُّ الْمَسْأَلَةِ، وَقَدْ اسْتَعْلَمْتَ فَأَعْلَمَ: أَمَّا الْاسْتِبْدَادُ عَلَيْنَا بِهَذَا الْمَقَامِ وَنَحْنُ
الْأَعْلَوْنَ نَسَبًا، وَالْأَشَدُّونَ بِالرَّسُولِ نَوَاطًا، فَإِنَّهَا كَانَتْ أَثْرَةً شَحَّتْ عَلَيْهَا نُفُوسُ

قَوْمٌ، وَسَخَتْ عَنْهَا نُفُوسُ آخَرِينَ، وَالْحَكْمُ اللَّهُ، وَالْمَعُودُ إِلَيْهِ الْقِيَامَةُ.

وَدَعَّ عَنْكَ نَهَبًا صِيحَ فِي حَجَرَاتِهِ * وَلَكِنْ حَدِيثًا مَا حَدِيثُ الرَّوَاحِلِ

Come and look at the son of Abu Sufyan (Mu`awiyah). Time has made me laugh after making me weep. No wonder, by Allah; what is this affair which surpasses all wonder and which has increased wrongfulness. These people have tried to put out the flame of Allah's light from His lamp and to close His fountain from its source. They mixed epidemic-producing water between me and themselves. If the trying hardships were removed from among us, I would take them on the course of truthfulness, otherwise:

"... *So let not thy self go (in vain) in grief for them; verily Allah knoweth all that they do.*" (Qur'an, 35:8)

وَهَلُمَّ الْخَطْبَ فِي ابْنِ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، فَلَقَدْ أَضْحَكَنِي الدَّهْرُ بَعْدَ إِبْكَائِهِ، وَلَا غَرُورَ وَاللَّهِ،
فِيَا لَهُ خَطْبًا يَسْتَفْرِغُ الْعَجَبَ، وَيُكْثِرُ الْأَوْدَ، حَاوَلَ الْقَوْمُ إِطْفَاءَ نَوْرِ اللَّهِ مِنْ
مِصْبَاحِهِ، وَسَدَّ فَوَارِهِ مِنْ يَنْبُوعِهِ، وَجَدَحُوا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ شَرِبًا وَبَيْئًا، فَإِنْ تَرْتَفَعُ
عَنَّا وَعَنْهُمْ مَحَنُ الْبَلْوَى، أَحْمَلُهُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ عَلَى مَحْضِهِ، وَإِنْ تَكُنِ الْأُخْرَى، (فَلَا
تَذْهَبُ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ).

Alternative Sources for Sermon 162

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-'Amali*, 368;

(2) al-Saduq, *'Ilal*, bab 119;

(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad*, 172;

(4) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid*, 64.

1. This is a couplet of the famous Arab poet Imri'u'l-Qays al-Kindi. The incident behind this couplet is that when the father of Imri'u'l-Qays namely Hujr ibn al-Harith was killed, he roamed about the various Arab tribes to avenge his father's life with their help. In this connection he stayed with a man of Jadilah (tribe) but finding himself unsafe left that place, and stayed with Khalid ibn Sadus an-Nabhani. In the meantime a man of Jadilah named Ba'ith ibn Huways drove away some of his

camels. Imriul-Qays complained of this matter to his host and he asked him to send with him his she-camels then he would get back his camels.

Consequently, Khalid went to those people and asked them to return the camels of his guest which they had robbed. They said that he was neither a guest nor under his protection. Thereupon Khalid swore that he was really his guest and showed them his she-camels that he had with him. They then agreed to return the camels. But actually instead of returning the camels they drove away the she-camels as well. One version is that they did return the camels to Khalid but instead of handing them over to Imriul-Qays he kept them for himself. When Imriul-Qays came to know this he composed a few couplets out of which this is one. It means 'now you leave the story of these camels which were robbed but now let me know about the she-camels snatched from my hands.'

Amir al-mu'minin's intention in quoting this verse as an illustration is that "Now that Mu`awiyah is at war, we should talk about it and should leave the discussion about the devastation engendered by those who had usurped my rights. That time has gone away. Now is the time for grappling with the mischiefs of the hour. So discuss the event of the moment and do not start untimely strain." Amir al-mu'minin said this because the man had put the question to him at the time of the battle of Siffin, when the battle was raging and bloodshed was in full swing.

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