

Sermon 193: Now then, Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, created...

It is related that a companion of Amir al-mu'minin called Hammam¹ who was a man devoted to worship said to him, "O' Amir al-mu'minin, describe to me the pious man in such a way as though I see them." Amir al-mu'minin avoided the reply and said, "O Hammam, fear Allah and perform good acts because **'Verily, Allah is with those who guard (themselves against evil), and those who do good (to others)'**" (*Qur'an, 16: 128*). Hammam was not satisfied with this and pushed him to speak. Thereupon, Amir al-mu'minin praised Allah and extolled Him and sought His blessings on the Holy Prophet and then spoke:

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام)

يصف فيها المتقين

روي أنّ صاحباً لامير المؤمنين (عليه السلام) يقال له همّامٌ كان رجلاً عبداً،
فقال له:

يا أمير المؤمنين، صف لي المتقين كأنّي أنظر إليهم.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ) فتناقل عن جوابه، ثم قال (عليه السلام): يا همام، اتق الله وأحسن فـ (

فلم يقنع همامٌ بذلك القول حتى عزم عليه

قال: فحمد الله وأثنى عليه، وصلى على النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله)، ثم قال (عليه السلام):

Now then, Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, created (the things of) creation. He created them without any need for their obedience or being safe from their sinning, because the sin of anyone who sins does not harm Him nor does the obedience of anyone who obeys Him benefit Him. He has distributed among them their livelihood, and has assigned them their positions in the world.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ - سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى - خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ حِينَ خَلَقَهُمْ غَنِيًّا عَنْ طَاعَتِهِمْ
أَمِنًا مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِمْ، لِأَنَّهُ لَا تَضُرُّهُ مَعْصِيَةٌ مِنْ عَصَاهُ، وَلَا تَنْفَعُهُ طَاعَةٌ مِنْ أَطَاعَتِهِ،
فَقَسَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ مَعَايِشَهُمْ، وَوَضَعَهُمْ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا مَوَاضِعَهُمْ.

Thus, the God-fearing, in it are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put their ears to that knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain in the time of trials as though they remain in comfort. If there had not been fixed periods (of life) ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of (their) eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart, and, so, everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus to them Paradise is as though they see it and are enjoying its favours. To them, Hell is also as if they see it and are suffering punishment in it.

فَالْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا هُمْ أَهْلُ الْفَضَائِلِ: مَنْطِقُهُمُ الصَّوَابُ، وَمَلْبَسُهُمُ الْأَقْتِصَادُ، وَمَشْيُهُمُ
التَّوَاضُعُ. غَضُّوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَوَقَفُوا أَسْمَاعَهُمْ عَلَى الْعِلْمِ
النَّافِعِ لَهُمْ. نَزَلَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ مِنْهُمْ فِي الْبَلَاءِ كَالَّتِي نَزَلَتْ فِي الرَّخَاءِ. لَوْ لَا الْأَجَلُ

الَّذِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ لَمْ تَسْتَقِرَّ أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ، شَوْقًا إِلَى الثَّوَابِ، وَخَوْفًا مِنَ الْعِقَابِ. عَظُمَ الْخَالِقُ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَصَغُرَ مَا دُونَهُ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ، فَهُمْ وَالْجَنَّةُ كَمَنْ قَدْ رَأَاهَا، فَهُمْ فِيهَا مُنَعَّمُونَ، وَهُمْ وَالنَّارُ كَمَنْ قَدْ رَأَاهَا، فَهُمْ فِيهَا مُعَذَّبُونَ.

Their hearts are grieved, others are protected from their evils, their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste. They endured (hardship) for a short while, and in consequence they secured comfort for a long time. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them. The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by a ransom.

قُلُوبُهُمْ مَحْزُونَةٌ، وَشُرُورُهُمْ مَأْمُونَةٌ، وَأَجْسَادُهُمْ نَحِيفَةٌ، وَحَاجَاتُهُمْ خَفِيفَةٌ، وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ عَفِيفَةٌ. صَبَرُوا أَيَّامًا قَصِيرَةً أَعْقَبَتْهُمْ رَاحَةً طَوِيلَةً، تِجَارَةً مَرِيحَةً، يَسَرَّهَا لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ. أَرَادَتْهُمْ الدُّنْيَا وَلَمْ يَرِيدُوهَا، وَأَسْرَتَهُمْ فَفَدَوْا أَنْفُسَهُمْ مِنْهَا.

During a night they are upstanding on their feet reading portions of the Qur'an and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear (of Hell) they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears.

They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate themselves on their foreheads, their palms, their knees and their toes, and beseech Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them he believes they are sick, although they are not sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern (i.e., fear) has made them mad.

أَمَّا اللَّيْلَ فَصَافُونَ أَقْدَامَهُمْ، تَالِينَ لِأَجْزَاءِ الْقُرْآنِ يُرْتَلُونَهَا تَرْتِيلًا، يُحْزِنُونَ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ، وَيَسْتَثِيرُونَ بِهِ دَوَاءَ دَائِهِمْ، فَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِآيَةٍ فِيهَا تَشْوِيقٌ رَكَنُوا إِلَيْهَا طَمَعًا، وَتَطَلَّعَتْ نَفُوسُهُمْ إِلَيْهَا شَوْقًا، وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهَا نُصِبَ أَعْيُنِهِمْ، وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِآيَةٍ فِيهَا تَخْوِيفٌ أَصْغَوْا إِلَيْهَا مَسَامِعَ قُلُوبِهِمْ، وَظَنُّوا أَنَّ زَفِيرَ جَهَنَّمَ وَشَهيقَهَا فِي أُصُولِ آذَانِهِمْ، فَهُمْ حَائِنُونَ عَلَى أَوْسَاطِهِمْ، مُفْتَرِشُونَ لِجِبَاهِهِمْ وَأَكْفِهِمْ، وَأَطْرَافِ

أَقْدَامِهِمْ، يَطْلُبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي فَكَاحِ رِقَابِهِمْ.

وَأَمَّا النَّهَارَ فَحُلَمَاءُ عُلَمَاءُ، أَبْرَارٌ أَتْقِيَاءُ، قَدْ بَرَّاهُمْ الْخَوْفُ بَرِّي الْقِدَاحِ، يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمُ
النَّاظِرُ فَيَحْسِبُهُمْ مَرْضَى، وَمَا بِالْقَوْمِ مِنْ مَرَضٍ، وَيَقُولُ: قَدْ خَوْلَطُوا! وَلَقَدْ
خَالَطَهُمْ أَمْرٌ عَظِيمٌ!

They are not satisfied with their meagre good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deeds. When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he says: "I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know. O Allah, do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know."

لَا يَرْضَوْنَ مِنْ أَعْمَالِهِمُ الْقَلِيلَ، وَلَا يَسْتَكْثِرُونَ الْكَثِيرَ، فَهُمْ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ مُتَهَمُونَ، وَمِنْ
أَعْمَالِهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ. إِذَا زُكِّيَ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ خَافَ مِمَّا يُقَالُ لَهُ، فَيَقُولُ: أَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِنَفْسِي
مِنْ غَيْرِي، وَرَبِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنِّي بِنَفْسِي! اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا يَقُولُونَ، وَاجْعَلْنِي أَفْضَلَ
مِمَّا يَظُنُّونَ، وَاغْفِرْ لِي مَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

Among the signs of anyone of them is that you will see that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness for knowledge, and knowledge with forbearance, moderation in riches, devotion in worship, gracefulness in starvation, endurance in hardship, desire for the lawful, pleasure in guidance and hatred from greed. He performs virtuous deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning his anxiety is to remember (Allah).

He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy – fear lest night is passed in forgetfulness, and joy over the favour and mercy received by him. If his self refuses to endure a thing which it does not like he does not grant its request towards what it likes. The coolness of his eye lies in what is to last for ever, while from the things (of this world) that will not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance, and speech with action.

فَمِنْ عِلْمِهِمْ أَنَّكَ تَرَى لَهُ قُوَّةً فِي دِينِهِ، وَحَزْمًا فِي لَيْلِهِ، وَإِيمَانًا فِي يَقِينِهِ،
وَحِرْصًا فِي عِلْمِهِ، وَعِلْمًا فِي حِلْمِهِ، وَقَصْدًا فِي غِنَى، وَخُشُوعًا فِي عِبَادَةٍ، وَتَجَمُّلاً
فِي فَاقَةٍ، وَصَبْرًا فِي شِدَّةٍ، وَطَلْبًا فِي حَلَالٍ، وَنَشَاطًا فِي هُدًى، وَتَحَرُّجًا عَنْ

طَمَعٌ. يَعْمَلُ الْأَعْمَالَ الصَّالِحَةَ وَهُوَ عَلَى وَجَلٍ، يُمْسِي وَهَمُّهُ الشُّكْرُ، وَيُصْبِحُ وَهَمُّهُ الذِّكْرُ، يَبِيتُ حَذْرًا، وَيُصْبِحُ فَرِحًا، حَذْرًا لَمَّا حُذِرَ مِنَ الْغَفْلَةِ، وَفَرِحًا بِمَا أَصَابَ مِنَ الْفَضْلِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ. إِنْ اسْتَمْعَبَتْ عَلَيْهِ نَفْسُهُ فِيمَا تَكَرَّرَ لَمْ يُعْطَهَا سُؤْلَهَا فِيمَا تُحِبُّ. قُرَّةُ عَيْنِهِ فِيمَا لَا يَزُولُ، وَزَهَادَتُهُ فِيمَا لَا يَبْقَى، يَمْزُجُ الْحِلْمَ بِالْعِلْمِ، وَالْقَوْلَ بِالْعَمَلِ.

You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Good alone is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah) he is counted among those who remember (Him), but if he is among the rememberers he is not counted among the forgetful. He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him.

تَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا أَمَلُهُ، قَلِيلًا زَلُّهُ خَاشِعًا قَلْبُهُ، قَانِعَةً نَفْسُهُ، مَنزُورًا أَكْلُهُ، سَهْلًا أَمْرُهُ، حَرِيزًا دِينَهُ، مَيِّتَةً شَهْوَتُهُ، مَكْظُومًا غَيْظُهُ. الْخَيْرُ مِنْهُ مَأْمُولٌ، وَالشَّرُّ مِنْهُ مَأْمُونٌ. إِنْ كَانَ فِي الْغَافِلِينَ كُتِبَ فِي الذَّاكِرِينَ، وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي الذَّاكِرِينَ لَمْ يُكْتَبَ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ. يَعْفُو عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَهُ، وَيُعْطِي مَنْ حَرَمَهُ، وَيَصِلُ مَنْ قَطَعَهُ.

Indecent speech is far from him, his utterance is lenient, his evils are non-existent his virtues are ever present, his good is ahead and mischief has turned its face (from him). He is dignified during calamities, patient in distresses, and thankful during ease. He does not commit excess over him whom he hates, and does not commit sin for the sake of him whom he loves. He admits truth before evidence is brought against him. He does not misappropriate what is placed in his custody, and does not forget what he is required to remember. He does not call others bad names, he does not cause harm to his neighbour, he does not feel happy at others misfortunes, he does not enter into wrong and does not go out of right.

بَعِيدًا فُحْشَهُ، لَيِّنًا قَوْلَهُ، غَائِبًا مُنْكَرَهُ، حَاضِرًا مَعْرُوفَهُ، مُقْبَلًا خَيْرَهُ، مُدْبِرًا شَرَّهُ. فِي الزَّلَازِلِ وَقُورٍ، وَفِي الْمَكَارِهِ صَبُورٍ، وَفِي الرِّخَاءِ شُكُورٍ. لَا يَحِيفُ عَلَى مَنْ يُبْغِضُ، وَلَا يَأْتِمُ فِيمَنْ يُحِبُّ. يَعْتَرِفُ بِالْحَقِّ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُشْهَدَ عَلَيْهِ. لَا يُضَيِّعُ مَا اسْتُحْفِظَ، وَلَا يَنْسَى مَا ذُكِّرَ، وَلَا يُنَابِزُ بِالْأَلْقَابِ، وَلَا يُضَارُّ بِالْجَارِ، وَلَا يَشْتَمُ بِالْمَصَائِبِ، وَلَا يَدْخُلُ فِي الْبَاطِلِ، وَلَا يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْحَقِّ.

If he is silent his silence does not grieve him, if he laughs he does not raise his voice, and if he is wronged he endures till Allah takes revenge on his behalf. His own self is in distress because of him, while the people are in ease from him. He puts himself in hardship for the sake of his next life, and makes people feel safe from himself. His keeping away from those who distance themselves from him is by way of asceticism and purification, and his nearness to those who draw near to him is by way of leniency and mercifulness. His keeping away is not by way of vanity or feeling of greatness, nor his nearness by way of deceit and cheating.

إِنْ صَمَتَ لَمْ يَغْمَهُ صَمْتُهُ، وَإِنْ ضَحِكَ لَمْ يَعْلُ صَوْتُهُ، وَإِنْ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ صَبَرَ حَتَّى يَكُونَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي يَنْتَقِمُ لَهُ. نَفْسُهُ مِنْهُ فِي عَنَاءٍ، وَالنَّاسُ مِنْهُ فِي رَاحَةٍ. أَتَعَبَ نَفْسَهُ لِإِخْرَتِهِ، وَأَرَّاحَ النَّاسَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ. بَعْدَهُ عَمَّنْ تَبَاعَدَ عَنْهُ زُهْدٌ وَنَزَاهَةٌ، وَدُنُوهُ مِنْ دُنَا مِنْهُ لِينٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ، لَيْسَ تَبَاعُدُهُ بِكِبَرٍ وَعَظَمَةٍ، وَلَا دُنُوهُ بِمَكْرٍ وَخَدِيعَةٍ.

It is related that Hammam passed into a deep swoon and then expired. Then Amir al-mu'minin said: Verily, by Allah I had this fear about him. Then he added: Effective advice produces such effects on receptive minds. Someone 2 said to him: O Amir al-mu'minin, how is it you do not receive such an effect? Amir al-mu'minin replied: Woe to you! For death there is a fixed hour which cannot be exceeded, and a cause which does not change. Now look, never repeat such talk which Satan had put on your tongue.

قال: فصعق همّام رحمه الله صعقةً كانت نفسه فيها. فقال أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام): أما والله لقد كنت أخافها عليه. ثم قال: هكذا تصنع المواعظ البالغة بأهلها!

فقال له قائل: فما بالك يا أمير المؤمنين؟ فقال (عليه السلام): ويحك، إن لكل أجل وقتاً لا يعدوه، وسبباً لا يتجاوزهُ، فمهلاً، لا تعد لمثلها، فإنما نفث الشيطان على لسانك!

Alternative Sources for Sermon 193

(1) *Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays*, 211;

(2) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali*, 340;

(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *'Uyun*, II, 352;

(4) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf*, 159;

(5) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah*, 148;

(6) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib*, I, 151;

(7) al-Karajiki, *Kanz*, 31;

(8) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj*, II, 420. `Abd al-Zahra' mentions 8 commentaries on this famous *khutbah al-Qasi`ah*.

1. According to Ibn Abi'l-Hadid this is Hammam ibn Shurayh but al-`Allamah al-Majlisi says that apparently this is Hammam ibn `Ubadah.

2. This man was `Abdullah ibn al-Kawwa' who was in the fore-front of the Kharijite movement and was a great opponent of Amir al-mu'minin.

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