

Sermon 205: Both of you frown over a small matter....

After swearing allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin, Talhah and az-Zubayr complained to him that he had not consulted them or sought their assistance in the affairs (of state).

Amir al-mu'minin replied:

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام)

كلم به طلحة والزبير بعد بيعته بالخلافة

وقد عتبا من ترك مشورتها، والاستعانة في الامور بهما

Both of you frown over a small matter and leave aside big ones. Can you tell me of anything wherein you have a right of which I have deprived you or a share which was due to you and which I have held away from you, or any Muslim who has laid any claim before me and I have been unable to decide it or been ignorant of it, or committed a mistake about it?

لَقَدْ نَقَمْتُمَا يَسِيرًا، وَأَرْجَأْتُمَا كَثِيرًا، أَلَا تُخْبِرَانِي، أَيُّ شَيْءٍ لَكُمْ فِيهِ حَقٌّ دَفَعْتُمَا عَنْهُ؟ وَأَيُّ قَسَمٍ اسْتَأْثَرْتُمْ عَلَيَكُمَا بِهِ؟ أَمْ أَيُّ حَقٍّ رَفَعَهُ إِلَيَّ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

ضَعُفْتُ عَنْهُ، أَمْ جَهْلُهُ، أَمْ أَخْطَأْتُ بَابَهُ؟!!

By Allah, I had no liking for the caliphate nor any interest in government, but you yourselves invited me to it and prepared me for it. When the caliphate came to me, I kept the Book of Allah in my view and all that Allah had put therein for us, and all that according to which He has commanded us to take decisions; and I followed it, and also acted on whatever the Prophet – may Allah bless him and his descendants – had laid down as his *sunnah*. In this matter I did not need your advice or the advice of anyone else, nor has there been any order of which I was ignorant so that I ought to have consulted you or my Muslim brethren. If it were so I would not have turned away from you or from others.

وَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَتْ لِي فِي الْخِلَافَةِ رَغْبَةٌ، وَلَا فِي الْوِلَايَةِ إِرْبَةٌ، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ دَعَوْتُمُونِي إِلَيْهَا، وَحَمَلْتُمُونِي عَلَيْهَا، فَلَمَّا أَفْضَتْ إِلَيَّ نَظَرْتُ إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَمَا وَضَعَ لَنَا، وَأَمَرْنَا بِالْحُكْمِ بِهِ فَاتَّبَعْتُهُ، وَمَا اسْتَسَنَّ النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) فَاقْتَدَيْتُهُ، فَلَمْ أَحْتَجْ فِي ذَلِكَ إِلَى رَأْيِكُمَا، وَلَا رَأْيِ غَيْرِكُمَا، وَلَا وَقَعَ حُكْمٌ جَهْلُهُ، فَاسْتَشِيرَكُمَا وَإِخْوَانِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ؛ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ لَمْ أَرْغَبْ عَنْكُمَا، وَلَا عَنْ غَيْرِكُمَا.

As regards your reference to the question of equality (in distribution of shares from the Muslim common fund), this is a matter in which I have not taken a decision by my own opinion, nor have I done it by my caprice. But I found, and you too (must have) found, that whatever the Prophet – may Allah bless him and his descendants – brought had been finalised.

Therefore, I felt no need to turn towards you about a share which had been determined by Allah and in which His verdict has been passed. By Allah, in this matter, therefore, you two or anyone else can have no favour from me. May Allah keep our hearts and your hearts in righteousness, and may He grant us and you endurance.

وَأَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتُمَا مِنْ أَمْرِ الْأَسْوَةِ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَمْرٌ لَمْ أَحْكَمْ أَنَا فِيهِ بِرَأْيِي، وَلَا وَلِيَّتُهُ هَوَى مَنِّي، بَلْ وَجَدْتُ أَنَا وَأَنْتُمَا مَا جَاءَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) قَدْ فُرِغَ مِنْهُ، فَلَمْ أَحْتَجْ إِلَيْكُمَا فِيمَا قَدْ فَرَغَ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَسْمِهِ، وَأَمْضَى فِيهِ حُكْمَهُ، فَلَيْسَ لَكُمَا، وَاللَّهِ، عِنْدِي وَلَا لِغَيْرِكُمَا فِي هَذَا عُنْبَى. أَخَذَ اللَّهُ بِقُلُوبِنَا وَقُلُوبِكُمْ إِلَى الْحَقِّ، وَالْهَمْنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ الصَّبْرَ.

Then Amir al-mu'minin added: May Allah have mercy on the person who, when he sees the truth,

supports it, when he sees the wrong, rejects it, and who helps the truth against him who is on the wrong.

ثم قال عليه السلام:

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا رَأَى حَقًّا فَأَعَانَ عَلَيْهِ، أَوْ رَأَى جَوْرًا فَرَدَّهُ، وَكَانَ عَوْنًا بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 205

(1) Abu Ja`far al-Iskafi, *Naqd al-`Uthmaniyyah*; see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh*, II, 173.

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