

Peak of eloquence

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Chapter 1

Lineage of al Radi and his Life

In the galaxy of the outstanding Shia Scholars two brothers fr
family of the descendants of the Prophet (saw) outshone all th
to their extraordinary brilliance in their time. They were al
Murtada, who occupied the chair of his teacher as his successo
marji'iyyah of the Shi'ah world of scholarship, and his younge
Sharif al-Radi, acclaimed to be a great genius of versatile ta
unprecedented in the history of Islamic scholarship and Arabic
Al-Radi (359-406/970-1015) died young, much earlier than his e
but left his mark on the history of Muslim thought and poetry,
way can be described as less significant than that of any othe
scholar who lived much longer than him. He shone on the bright
the fourth century Hijri, regarded as the most extraordinary p
round intellectual and cultural renaissance in the history of
for a short period of forty-seven years but generated enough l
lead human quest for excellence for centuries.

Al-Rad'i's parents' lineage came directly from the Imams (as)
Family. From his father's side he descended from al-Imam Musa
ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) ibn Muhammad al-Baqir (as) ibn 'Ali Z
(as) ibn al-Husayn (as) ibn 'Ali (as) in the following order:
Tahir al-'Awhad Dhu al-Manaqib ibn Musa ibn Muhammad ibn Musa
al Mujab ibn Musa al-Kazim (as). All his forefathers were emin
own right. From his mothers side he descended from the famous
Kabir also known as Nasir al-Haqq (225 or 230-304/840 or 844-
descended from the second son of al-'Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (
Al-Sayyid al-Murtada, in Nasiriyyat, a commentary upon al-Nasi
book Mi'at mas'alah, writes that:

> My mother Fatimah [was] the daughter of Abu Muhammad a
> Husayn al-Nasir (al-Saghir) ibn Abi al-Husayn Ahmad ib

> Abi Muhammad al-Hasan al-Nasir al-Kabir (the conqueror
> and ruler of Daylam) ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Umar al-Ashraf
> ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Al-Sharif al-Radi's name was Muhammad and his kunyah was Abu a
was the second son of al-Husayn ibn Ahmad, known as al-Tahir a
Dhu al-Manaqib. Al-Radi's title 'al-Sharif' was a common title
those who were descendants of the Prophet (saw) from both the
paternal sides.

The word which is now commonly used for al-Sharif is al-Sayyid
Urdu. Al-Radi's father was the most eminent among the Alawids
held all the important positions which a Shi'ah could attain u
regime during the fourth century H.

Al-Thalibi (d. 429), in Yatimat al-dahr, a bibliography of poe
writers of Arabic, writes about the father of al-Radi:

> His forefathers were held in high respect by the peopl
> of Iraq. His father, Abu Ahmad for a long time occupie
> the post of Naqib of the Talibiyyin, a position that
> empowered him to look after the Sayyids of Abu Talib's
> lineage. At the same time he held the office of the Na
> Diwan al-mazalim (headship of the highest court of app
> as well as the office of the chief of hajjaj (pilgrims
> the Holy Ka'bah). In the year 380/990 he relinquished
> posts in favour of his son al-Sayyid al-Radi.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid (d. 655 or 656/1257 or 1258), in his preface
Nahj al-balaghah, confirms this statement saying:

> His father al-Naqib Abu Ahmad was held in high regard
> at the courts of Banu 'Abbas and the rulers of Al
> Dayalimah, and was entitled as al-Tahir Dhu al-Manaqib

Baha' al-Dawlah al-Daylami called him al-Tahir al-'Awhad, whic
"uniquely purified". He was appointed the Naqib of the Talibiy
times, and apart from this job; he occasionally performed duti
political sensitivity also; for instance, he served as a negot
settle certain disputes between the Caliphs and the Buwayhids

hand, and the Hamdani rulers on the other. Because of his poli
influence he was so feared by Baha' al-Dawlah's son 'Adud al-D
(reigned 367-72/978-83), that in 369/980 he imprisoned him in
Fars, where he underwent the hardships of prison life for seve
'Adud al-Dawlah (d. 372/982-83) arrested along with him his br
'Abd Allah ibn Musa and another influential 'Alawid, Muhammad
also. Abu Muhammad, the chief qadi of Baghdad, and Abu Nasr Kh
were also arrested and imprisoned in the same year, that is 36
Abu Ahmad's arrest his entire property was confiscated, and hi
to live for seven long years in dire poverty. It was, most pro
this period that al-Radi and his brother al-Murtada were broug
Shaykh al-Mufid by their mother for being educated in fiqh and
religious sciences. And perhaps it was during this period that
Ibrahim ibn Ahmad al-Tabari, a Sunni Maliki faqih, gifted a ho
Sayyid al-Radi when he came to know that the brightest of his
residence of his own for his wife and had to live with his mot
the period of his father's imprisonment, al-Radi composed many
pay tribute to him. Abu Ahmad was set free by Sharaf al-Dawlah
Adud al-Dawlah, while proceeding to Baghdad from Kirman in 376
depose his brother Samsam al-Dawlah, who also had not released
and other captives. It is to be noted that 'Adud al-Dawlah was
Zaydi inclination, but for him, like most of the monarchs of t
world, political expedieney and interest were much more import
matter of faith. As even the 'Abbasid caliph of his time was a
Radi's connection with the Prophet's Family and his influence
people, probably 'Adud al-Dawlah was also afraid of al-Radi's
fearing that if at any time he aspired to wrest power out of h
could pose a serious challenge to him. Abu al-Faraj al-Jawzi h
referred to the arrest of Abu Ahmad in the course of recording
of the year 369/979-80. The influence of Abu Ahmad and his fam
greater dimensions in the eyes of the rulers due to the tense
explosive situation ereated by the rivalries and conflicts bet
Sunnis and the Shi'ah and the Turks and the Daylamites. These
resulted in looting, killing and burning of al-Karkh, a predom
Shi'ah locality, for one week continuously, in the year 361/97
was repeated in 363/974. Moreover, there was a conflict betwee
al-Daylami, the vizier, and 'Adud al-Dawlah, in which the latt
victorious later. Abu Ahmad was on good terms with Bakhtiyar a
was a sufficient reason for 'Adud al-Dawlah to regard him as a

Abu Ahmad died at the age of 97 in 403/1012-13, and the high o
by him fell upon al-Radi.

From his mother's side al-Radi belonged to a lineage that was
distinguished for its political activities than the former. Hi
al-Nasir al-Saghir al-Husayn ibn Ahmad (d. 368/979) was a piou
respected man. According to al-Sayyid al-Murtada he was held i
regard by Mu'izz al-Dawlah (reigned 320-56/932-967), who appoi
the office of the Naqib of al-Talibiyyin in 362/972-73 when Ab
stripped of this post. Al Wasir al-Saghir's father Ahmad ibn a
served as a commander in his father's army, and was known for
valour and virtue. Al-Nasir al-Kabir whose name was al-Hasan i
responsible for propagating Islam among the Daylamites after h
conquering Daylam. He was a commander of the army of his cousi
ibn Zayd al-'Alawi, popularly known as al-Da'i al-Kabir, who c
Mazandaran in 250/864 and laid down the foundation of the 'Ala
there. Al-Mas'udi, in Muruj al-dhahab, has mentioned him at tw
al-'Atrush, which meant "the deaf". At one occasion, he writes

> Al-'Atrush appeared on the seene of Tabaristan (Mazand
> in the year 301/913-14, and drove away the 'Abbasids,
> "the Black robed people, from there. He was a gifted m
> with great intelligenee,scholarship, knowledge and con
> of faith. He lived for a long time among the Daylamite
> were Zoroastrians, and some even pagans, living in com
> darkness. The people of Gilan also lived in the same
> conditions. Al-Nasir al-Kabir invited them to worship
> God, and they embraced Islam accepting his call. In th
> the Muslims reached Qazwin and the adjoinmg areas. Al
> al Kabir built a mosque in Dayларn.

At another place, mentioning al-'Atrush's efforts to convert t
to the fold of Islam, he writes that it was he who built mosqu
cities of Tabaristan (Present Mazandaran and Gilan), and exten
frontiers of the Muslim rule up to Qazwin and Chalus.

There is a common misunderstanding regarding al-Nasir al-Kabir
he supported the Daiis of the Zaydi rule and was instrumental
foundation of the Zaydi dynasty, he was called a Zaydi by many
as well as by the Zaydis themselves. Al-Najashi (d. 450/1058),

of al-Radi and al-Murtada, dispels such claims:

> Al Hasan ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ali ibn a
> Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib Abu Muhammad al-'Atrush
> believed in the imamah, and wrote several books in str
> adherenee to this faith, viz. Kitab al-'imamah, Kitab
> talliq, a larger book on the Imamah, Kitah Fadak wa al
> Kitabb al-shuhada', Kitab fasahat Abi Talib, Kitab ma'
> Bani Hashim fi ma nuqim 'alayhim, Kitab ansab al-A'imm
> mawalidihium (up to the Twelfth Imam (as)).

However, it seems to be a mere conjecture that he was a Twelve
al-Murtada, his grandson, in al-Nasiriyyat, criticized some of
for being against the Twelver Imami faith. 'Ali Dawani, subscr
views of some early Shi'i 'ulama', holds that he was a Twelver
without any conclusive evidence. Most probably he was a Zaydi

According to Ibn Abi al-Hadid, he fought battles against the c
Samanids and died in Mazandaran in 304/916 at the ripe age of
Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Dawud al-Hasani, known as Ibn 'Anabah (d. 8
Sunni descendant of the Hasani Sayyids, in his famous work 'Um
describes him as being called Nasir al-Haqq, and writes that h
Amul in the year 303/915.

Al-Nasir al-Kabir's father, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, and his grandf
Husayn ibn 'Ali, were both regarded as eminent scholars and me
The latter is reported to be a narrator of hadith also. 'Umar
al-Husayn, son of the Fourth Imam (as) and known as al-'Ashraf
the eminent personalities of the 'Alawids.) Al-Shaykh al-Mufid
writes about him:

> 'Umar b. 'Ali b. al-Husyn, peace be on them, was a man
> merit and of high standing. He was in charge of the en
> (sadaqat) of the Apostle of God may God bless him and
> Family, and the endowments (sadaqat) of the Conmmander
> Faithful, peace be on him. He was pious and God-fearin

Dawud ibn al-Qasim, on the authority of al-Husayn ibn Zayd, wh
of 'Umar al-'Ashraf, described him to be extremely honest and
dealing with the matters related to the income of the endowmen

proper management. Some traditions of the Prophet (saw) and th
also reported on his authority. He was treated with respect ev
court of the Umayyads.

Al-Sayyid al-Radi's mother Fatimah bint al-Da'i al-Saghir was
learned lady, who brought her two sons and daughters up with c
arranged for their proper education during the seven-year peri
husband's imprisonment. It is said that al-Shaykh al-Mufid wro
Ahkam al-nisa' at her instance, as she asked him to compile a
to Islamic Law, which could serve as a guide for women. It was
her two sons to al-Shaykh al-Mufid after al-Murtada and al-Rad
primary stage of their education. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, in Sharh N
narrates a story which is indicative of the high position of t
great virtue. The story goes that one night al-Shaykh al-Mufid
Fatimah (as), the Prophet's daughter, came to his place in Kar
two young sons, al-Hasan (as) and al-Husayn (as), and asked th
the task of teaching them. Al-Mufid awoke amazed at the dream.
morning Fatimah, mother of al-Sayyid al-Murtada and al-Sayyid
to his mosque surrounded by her servants, bringing her two sma
that he teach them. Al-Sayyid al Radi in his elegy on her deat
tributes to her virtue, piety, religiosity, courage and other
the heart and the mind. She died in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah
Sayyid al-Radi was twenty-six years old at the time of his mot

Al-Radi was born in 359/970 four years after his eldet brother
His genius came to the notice of his family and teachers at a
age. He started composing poetry at the tender age of nine. Hi
alertness of mind surprised all. He went to different teachers
various branches of Islamic sciences, Arabic language and lite
studied Sharh al-'Usul al-khamsah and Kitab al-'umdah under al
al Jabbar al-Mu'tazili (b. circa. 325/936, d.415/lO25), and st
language and grammar under Abu Sa'id al-Hasan ibn 'Abd Allah i
al-Sirafi (284-368/897-979), an expert of Arabic language and
He also went to study the language and literary sciences to Ab
al-'Asadi al-'Akfani, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'isa al-Rummani (2
Abu al-Fath 'Uthman ibn Jinn; (330-392/942-1002) and Ibn Nubat
946-1004). He studied hadith under Muhammad ibn 'Imran al-Marz
988) and Abu Masa Harun ibn Musa al-Tal'akbari (d. 385/995). H
fiqh, besides al-Mufid, was Muhammad ibn al-'Abbas al- Khwariz
Abu Hafs 'Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Kinani was his teacher in qira'a

Quran. Most of his teaehers were eminent scholars and writers
had started teaching at the young age of seventeen when he was
studying. He completed his education at the age of twenty. Very
acquired fame as a scholar, commentator of the Quran, thinker
His fame as a poet overshadowed his excellence in all other fi
his teachers a few other names may be mentioned: Abu 'Ali al-Ha
al-Farsi (307-77/919-87), a Mutazili; Abu al-Hasan al-Karkhi;
ibn Salih al-Rub'i (328-420/939-40-1029); and Abu Ishaq Ibrahi
al-Tabari (d. 393/1002-3), a faqih of the Maliki school. In th
to a climate of tolerance at least among scholars and students
and Sunni students used to attend classes of teachers belongin
sects. A number of al-Radi's teachers were Sunni and Mu'tazili

Al-Sharif al-Radi had intimate friendly relations of mutual re
with eminent contemporary scholars, poets and writers professi
faiths, which was an indication of his broad humanism and tole
ibn 'Abbad (326-85/938-95), one of the most influential of Mus
ministers and a great scholar of his age, was a patron of scho
Yaqut al-Hamawi says that five hundred poets composed qasa'id
Al-Radi, despite being much younger to him, was highly respect
al-Hasan al-'Umari, who is reported to be alive till the end o
half of the fifth century Hijrah, was from the descendants of
'Ali ibn Abi Talib, and was an expert of genealogy. He was in
with the al-Sharif family. Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri (363-449/97
of the greatest poets of Arabic, attended al-Murtada's lecture
great admirer of al-Radi.

Upon receiving the news of al-Radi's death in his hometown, al
rich tributes to him in an elegy, included in his book Siqt al
Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Nili al-Baghdadi, known as Ibn al-Hajjaj a
(d. 391/1001) was much respected by al-Radi, who compiled two
of his poetry, viz., 'al-Hasan min shi'r al-Husayn' and 'al-Zi
shi'r Ibn al-Hajjaj, and also wrote an elegy on his death. Abu
Ibrahim ibn Hilal al-Harrani al-Sabi (d. 384/ 994), a Sabaean
a confidant of the Buwayhids, was so close to al-Radi that onc
in a poem addressed to al-Radi: When you get the caliphate, do
my wife, son and family…

Al-Radi wrote a moving, emotionally charged elegy on his death
couplet of which became very famous:

Do you know whose coffin people are carrying?
Do you know how was the light of our company extinguis

People, particularly the Sunnis, admonished al-Radi saying how like him, belonging to the family of the Prophet (saw), praise Al-Radi said in reply that he paid tribute to his learning and his faith. Whenever he passed by the side of the grave-yard wh was buried, he used to get down from the horse as a mark of re the departed soul of the friend and the poet.

Nine years after al-Sabi's death al-Radi happened to visit the and saw his friend's grave, he composed another qasidah addres to the departed soul in the following words:

Had my companions not been angry with me for stopping nea
I would have saluted your grave O Abu Ishaq!

Al-Radi compiled a selection of al-Sabi's poetry Mukhtar Shir Sabi. Among al-Radi's close friends were two other scholarly p Ibn Ardshir (d. 416/1025), who served as the vizier of the Buw their fall at the hands of the Saljuqis, and who had placed hi of rare value at the disposal of al Radi; and Fakhr al Mulk, t Baha al Dawlah, who led al Radi's funeral congregation, and wa murdered by Sultan Dawlah in one year after al Radi's death, t 407/1016.

Chapter 2

Sources of Nahj al Balaghah

The most important work of al-Radi is the compilation of selec
sermons, letters and sayings of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as). He
241 sermons, 79 letters, and 489 sayings. Those numbers vary i
different editions of Nahj al-balaghah. The number of sermons
from 238 to 241 and the number of letters varies from 77 to 79
sayings vary from 463 to 489. Al-Radi, in the introduction to
balaghah, gives an account of the circumstances that led him t
the utterances and writings of 'Ali (as). According to this ac
busy in writing Khasa'is al-A'immah he planned to devote the l
of the book to the sayings and writings of Amir al-Mu'minin (a
task was so absorbing and fascinating that his friends and bro
desired that he should compile a book covering all the forms o
utterances such as letters, lectures, counsels, moral admoniti
aphorisms, for, they would prove to be masterpieces of eloquen
rhetoric, aphorisms and jewels of wisdom, probably the best af
Quran and hadith of the Prophet (as) in Arabic language and li
He writes:

> … And these were not collected in any other work, nor found together in any other book … Amir al-Mu'minin (a was the fountain of eloquence and (his utterances) the source of rhetoric. Through him hidden delicacies of eloquence and rhetoric came to light, and from him were learnt its principles and rules. Every speaker and orat had to tread on his footprints, and every eloquent prea availed of his utterances. Even then they could not equ him, for the credit for being the first and foremost re with him, because his utterances were those that carri the reflection of Divine knowledge and savour of the P utterances. Accordingly I acceded to their request, as

> that it meant great reward, handsome reputation and a
> treasure of recompense. The object of this compilation
> that I should bring forth Amir al-Mu'minin's greatness
> superiority in the art of rhetoric which is in additio
> his countless qualities and innumerable distinctions,
> show that he has risen to the highest pinnacle of this
> attainment, is singular among all those predecessors w
> utterances are quoted here and there, whereas his own
> are like an onrushing and irresistible stream, and suc
> treasure of subtleties in language is unmatched. Since
> trace my descent from him I feel pleasure in quoting a
> of al-Farazdaq:
>
> ***These are my forefathers O Jarir***
> ***When we get together, can you cite any as their equ***
>
> In my view Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances are divisible
> three categories: firstly sermons and decrees, secondl
> letters and communications, and thirdly maxims and cou
> Allah willing I intend to compile first the sermons, t
> letters, and then maxims and counsels, and propose a s
> chapter for each category, leaving blank pages in betw
> each of them so that if anything has been left out and
> found afterwards it may be inserted there in …

Apart from al-Radi's assessment of 'Ali's utterances and their literary as well as philosophical aspect, the important point is his reference to other sources. This is in itself enough to the allegations of the later writers like Ibn Khallikan and Ib a major portion of Nahj al-balaghah was falsely ascribed to 'A Before coming to those allegations I would like to quote anoth from al-Radi's introduction to Nahj al-balaghah which far more explicitly refers to the earlier sources from which al-Radi se contents of his compendium:

> In this compilation in some places there is repetition
> words or subject matter. The excuse for this is that A
> al-Mu'minin's utterances have been related in numerous
> Sometimes it happened that a particular utterance was
> in a particular form in a tradition and was taken down

very form. Thereafter the same utterance was found in
other tradition either with acceptable addition or in
style of expression. In such a case with a view to fur
the object of compilation and to present a beautiful u
from being lost it was decided to repeat it. It has al
that a particular utterance had appeared earlier but d
remoteness it has been entered again. This is through
not by intent. In spite of all this I do not claim tha
collected Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances from everywher
no single sentence of any type or construction has bee
out. In fact I do not rule out the possibility that wh
has been left out might be more than what has been col
and what has been in my knowledge and use is far less
has remauned beyond my reach. My task was to strive to
of my capacity and it was Allah's part to make the way
guide me to the goal; Allah may will so.

Sources of Nahj al Balaghah

Though al-Radi has not furnished a bibliography of the sources
from which he collected the writings and sayings of Amir al-Mu
he has referred occasionally to certain books and their compil
his explanatory notes on various sermons, letters and sayings.
scholars have sought to trace back the sources of different ut
and letters collected in Nahj al-balaghah to the works compile
centuries before the birth of al-Radi. The most painstaking re
in this context was done by an Indian Sunni scholar Imtiyaz 'A
'Arshi, who died a few years ago. He succeeded in tracing back
sources of 106 sermons, 37 letters and 79 stray sayings of Ami
Mu'minin (as) in his book Istinad-e Nahj al-balaghah, original
in Urdu, subsequently translated into Arabic in 1957, then int
and Persian. The translator of the Persian text adds very usef
which usually provide further knowledge about the sources of N
balaghah and occasionally point out 'Arshi's errors in some ma
However, this work still stands as the most valuable research
this field. Besides this work, some others deserve special men
as 'Abd al-Zahra' al-Husayni al-Khatib's Masadir Nahj al-balag
al-Din al-Shahristani's Ma huwa Nahj al-balaghah, Sayyid 'Ali
al-Nasirabadi's introduction to the Urdu translation of Nahj a
by Mufti Ja'far Husayn, and al-Mu'jam al-mufahras li alfaz Nah
balaghah, a joint work of al-Sayyid Kazim al-Muhammadi and al-
Shaykh Muhammad Dashti. Sayyid Muhammad 'Askari Ja'fari and

Sayyid 'Ali Rida also dealt with the issue of basic sources of
al-balaghah in their prefaces to their separate translations o
into English. Here follows with some minor corrections and add
'Arshi's list of the early sources containing the utterances a
of Ali (as)

1. Khutab Amir al-Mu'minin 'ala al-manabir fi aljuma' wa al-
   wa ghayriha; by Zayd ibn Wahab al Jahni (d. 96/714-15). Th
   available till the fifth century H, for Abu Ja'far al-Tusi
   has quoted from it in his writings.

2. Kitab khutab Amir al-Mu'minin, by Abu Ya'qub Isma'il ibn
   Mahran ibn Muhammad al-Sakuni al-Kufi (d. circa 148/765).

3. Abu Mikhnaf Lut ibn Yahya al-'Azdi (d. circa 157/773-74) h
   quoted Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances in the following work
   own: Kitab al Jamal, Kitab ahl al-Nahrawan wa al-Khawarij,
   gharat, Kitab maqtal 'Ali, Kitab maqtal Muhammad ibn Abi B
   'Ashtar wa Muhammad ibn Hudhaybah, and Kitab al-shurd wa m
   'Uthman. (Here may be added another work: al-Khutbat al-Za
   Amir al-Mu'minin.)

4. Kitab khutab Amir al-Mu'minin by Abu Muhammad Mas'adah
   ibn Sadaqah al-'Abdi al-Kufi (d. 183/799). He was a pupil
   Musa al-Kazim (as), and Ibn Shadhan has narrated tradition
   authority.

5. Kitab khutab 'Ali by Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn al-Hakam ibn Za
   al-Fazari al-Kufi (d. 177/793) Abu al-'Abbas al-Najashi (d
   has narrated on his authority.

6. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Sulayman Hashami (Nahami) al-Khazzaz
   al-Kufi (third century H.) besides compiling al-Khutab li
   Mu'minin, eompiled other books such as Kitab al-dua, Kitab
   samawat, and Kitab maqtal Amir al-Mu'minin. Al-Shaykh al-T
   quoted from his works.

7. Kitab khutab 'Ali Karram Allah wajhah by Abu Mundhir
   Hisham ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'ib al-Kalbi (d. 206/821). He al
   Maqtal 'Uthman, Kitab al Jamal, Kitab Siffin, Kitab al-Nah

Gharat and Maqtal Amir al-Mu'minin. His book containing al
'Ali's khutab was studied by al-Najashi.

8. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Waqidi (d. 207/823)
quoted al'Imam 'Ali's writings and sermons in many of his
as Kitab al Jamal, Kitab Siffin and Kitab al-sunnah waal-j
dhamm al-hawa wa tark al-Khawdrij fi al-fitan. Al-Radi has
some of his works. He also compiled Khutab Amir al-Mu'mini

9. Abu al-Fadl Nasr ibn Muzahim al-Manqari (d. 212/827)
compiled a number of books, all of which contain utterance
(as). Al-Najashi has mentioned these works: Kitab Siffin,
Jamal, Kitab al-Nahrawan and al-Gharat. He also compiled K
(as), Kitab al-manaqib, and Kitab akhbar al-Mukhtar.

10. Abu al-Khayr Salih ibn Abi Hammad al-Razi (214/829)
compiled a book Khutab 'Ali (as). He was among the compani
Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (as), and his book is mentioned i
al-Fihrist.

11. Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Mada'ini (d. 224/839)
compiled Khutab 'Ali (as) wa kutubuh ila 'ummalih and some
books including Ta'rikh al-khulafa.

12. Abu al-Qasim al-Sayyid 'Abd al-'Azim ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'A
al-Hasani (d. 250/864), popularly known as Shah 'Abd al-'A
tomb at Shahr Ray is a place of pilgrimage. He also compil
Khutab 'Ali (as).

13. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id al-Thaqafi al-Kaf
(d. 283/896) compiled different collections of al'Imam 'Al
and letters, which are: Rasa'il 'Ali, Kalam 'Ali fial-shur
almu'arrabat, Kitab al-Saqifah, Maqtal 'Uthman, Kitab bay'
Mu'minin, Kitab al-hakamayn, Kitab al-Nahrawan, and Kitab
Amir al-Mu'minin. Al-Shaykh al-Tusi says that he came to k
these books through Ahmad ibn 'Abdun.

14. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Rustam al-Tabari, one of
the contemporaries of the famous historian Ibn Jarir al-Ta
226-310/840-41-922), collected the sermons and letters of

al-Mu'minin in two of his books: al-Ruwat 'an Ahl al-Bayt a
al-mustarshid.

15. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 328/939)
quoted a number of al-Imam 'Ali's sermons and utterances i
Kafi, Rawa'at al-Kafi and Rasa'il al-'Aimmah.

16. Abu Ahmad 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Yahya ibn Ahmad ibn 'Isa
al Jalludi (d. 320/932), besides Kitab al Jamal, Kitab Sif
al-hakamayn, Kitab al-gharat, Kitab al-Khawdrij and Kitab
compiled ten volumes containing al-Imam 'Ali's writings an
ances: Khutab 'Ali, Kitab shi'r 'Ali, Rasa'il 'Ali Mawd'iz
kalaam 'Ali fi al-malahim, Qawl 'Ali fi al-shura, Kitab ma
'Ali wa 'Uthman min ai-kalam, Kitab qadd' Ali, Kitab al-du
Kitabal-'adab 'an 'Ali.

Hibat al-Din al-Shahristani has mentioned the following ot
books: Kitab dhikr 'Ali li Khadijah wa fada'il Ahl al-Bayt
al salam.

17. Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Mas'udi (d. 34
957), the author of the famous book Muruj al-dhahab, has c
numerous sermons and sayings of al-'Imam 'Ali (as) in Hada
'adhhan fi akhbar Al Muhammad and Mazahir al-'akhbar wa za
'athar.

18. Abu Talib 'Ubayd Allah ibn Abi Zayd Ahmad ibn Ya'qub ibn
Nasr al-'Anbari (d. 356/967), author of one hundred and fo
compiled a collection of supplications of the Imams (as) A
'A'immah, in which supplications of Amir al-Mu'minin (as)
included.

19. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Abi Rafi' al-Kufi al-
Baghdidi, a teacher of al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022) ha
the utterances of al-'Imam 'Ali (as) in his books al Kash
yata'allaq bi al-Saqifah and al-Diya' (al-Safa') of tarikh
Al-Shaykh al-Tusi says he was introduced to his works thro
Mufid, al-Husayn ibn 'Ubayd Allah, Ahmad ibn 'Abdun and ot

20. Abu al-Abbas Ya'qub ibn Ahmad al-Saymari, probably son of

Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Abi Rafi', mentioned a
compiled a collection of al-'Imam 'Ali's utterances and se

21. Abu Sa'id Mansur ibn al-Husayn Wazir al-Abi (d. 422/1031)
collected aphorisms by al-'Imam 'Ali (as) in Nuzhat al-'ada
muhadarat, and subsequently brought out and abridged this
under the title Nathr al-durar.

Existence of sources prior to al Radi

A number of other works were also compiled before al-Radi that
contained al-'Imam 'Ali's writings and utterances. A selected
those may be added to the above-mentioned books:

1. Abu 'Uthman 'Amr ibn Bahr al Jahiz (d. 255/869) compiled i
a book, Mi'at mukhtarah min kalam Amir al-Mu'minin, one hu
aphorisms selected from the utterances of 'Ali (as). His ma
al-Bayan wa al-tabyin also contains the words of Amir al-M
(as).

2. Ibrahim ibn Hilal al-Thaqafi (d. 283/896) edited a book en
Rasa'il Amir al-Mu 'minin wa akhburuh wa hurubuh.

3. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqi (d. 270/883 or
280/893), in his famous work al-Mahasin, considered to be
Shi'i compendium of hadith after the Four Major Compendia
Kutub al-'arba'ah), has quoted al'Imam 'Ali's writings and
He was a companion of al' Imam Muhammad al-Taqi al Jawad (
al' Imam 'Ali al-Naqi al-Hadi (as). Al-Shaykh al Saduq ben
works to a great extent.

4. Abu Muhammad al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Shuibah
al-Harrani al-Halabi (d. 320/932 or 380/990) collected som
and speeches of the Imam (as) in Tuhaf al-'uqul. He writes

> ***If we desire to quote all his ('Ali's) sermons and utt
> only in regard to the Unity of God, leaving all other
> it would equal this very book.***

5. Al-Qadi Nu'man al-Misri (d. 363/973) compiled a book Khuta
Amir al-Mu 'minin.

6. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Kufi al-Maruzi al-Dinawari known as Ibn Qutaybah (213-276/828-889) in 'Uyun 'akhbar and Ghara'ib al-hadith quoted utterances of al-Imam

7. Ahmad ibn Wadih al-Ya'qubi (d. 276/889) quoted al-Imam Ali utterances in his well-known history Ta'rikh al-Ya'qubi.

8. Abu al-'Abbas al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898) in his al-Fadil and al-Kamil.

9. Tarikh al-rusul wa al-muluk by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310/922).

10. Al-Hasan ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'id al-'Askari (d. 382j992) narrated from al-'Imam 'Ali (as) some of his sermons in al al-zawajir.

11. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Durayd al-'Azdi (d. 321/933) quoted some utterances of al-'Imam 'Ali (as) for furnishing of Arabic idioms, proverbs, and aphorisms in his major lexi Jamharah fi al-lughah.

12. Al-'Iqd al-farid by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (246-328/860-940).

13. Kitab al-'aghani and Maqatil al-Talibiyyin by Abu al-Faraj Isfahani (284-356/897-967).

14. Kitab al-nawadir by Abu 'Ali al-Qari' (d. 356/967).

15. Ibn Babawayh al Shaykh al Saduq (d. 381/991) quoted extens from al-'Imam 'Ali's utterances in Man la yahduruhu al-faq I'lal al-sharayi', 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida, al-'Amali, Ma'ani 'akhbar, al-Tawhid, al-Khisal, al-I'tiqad, Thawab al-'a'ma books.

16. Al Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022) quoted al-'Imam 'Ali's writings and sayings in many of his books, particularly de lengthy section of al-'Irshad to Amir al-Mu'minin's sermons judgements, decrees, letters, and sayings. Among the extant

that period al-'Irshad is the most systematic and comprehe
of al-'Imam 'Ali's words after Nahjal-balaghah.

Other contemporary Scholars engaged in the collection

Among the contemporaries of al-Radi, several other scholars we
collecting and quoting Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances in their
following can be named here: Ibn Miskawayh (d 421/1030) in Taj
Hafiz Abu Na'im al-Isfahani (d. 430; 1038) in Hilyat al-'awliy
ai-Ta'ifah al-Tusi (d. 460/1067) in al-Tahdhib, al-'Istibsar,
and otherworks. Al-Qadi Abu 'Abd Allah Mukammad ibn Salamah al
(d. 453/1061) in Ma'alim al-hikam.

'Aziz Allah 'Utaridi has prepared a list of sources which incl
name not found in other lists. Such names are as follows:

1. Harith al-'A'war al-Hamdani: He compiled a collection of I
khutab before Zayd ibn Wahab. Al-Kulayni through Abu Ishaq
has quoted him as narrating the sayings of the Imam (as).

2. Asbagh ibn Nubatah.

3. 'Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr al Ju'fi: The famous Sunni muhaddith
has mentioned a collection of al' Imam 'Ali's words compil
He was a poet and an admirer of al-'Imam 'Ali (as), who ne
to Mu'awiyah and was involved in anti-State activities. Al
Husayn sought his help, but he declined to come to his sid
he repented his failure to help him. Al-Najashi has referr
his al-Rijal.

4. Husayn ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Ibrahim al-Ghada'iri (d. 411/102

5. Sa'sa'ah ibn Sawhan, a companion of al-'Imam 'Ali (as), wh
Imam's instructions to Malik al-'Ashtar at the time of his
to governership of Egypt.

6. Faraj ibn Farwah compiled a collection of the Imam's sayin
authority of Mas'adah ibn Sadaqah, who narrated from al-'I
Sadiq (as). Al Sayyid 'Ali ibn Tawus wrote at the back of
of this compilation that it was written after 200/815. Thi
was in possession of Hasan ibn Sulayman al-Hilli, from whi

quoted in his works.

7. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar al-'Ash'ari al-Qummi, auth
al-darajat, had compiled al-'Irshad containing the utteran
'Imam 'Ali (as); not available now.

8. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad Abu 'Ubayd al-Harawi (d. 4
compiled a book of the uncommon words used in the Quran an
in which he quoted from Amir al-Mu'minin also.

9. Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Salam al-Harawi also wrote a book
vocabulary of hadith, in which he referred to the utteranc
'Ali (as). Al-Sayyid al-Radi has referred to this work.

10. Ahmad ibn Yahya Tha'lab (d. 291/903), the grammarian.

11. Abu al-Qasim 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad al-Ka'bi al-Balkhi (d. 3
quoted al-Khutbat al-Shiqshiqiyyah in his book al- 'Insaf.

12. Abu Ja'far ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Qubbah al-Razi has quote
al-Shiqshiqiyyah on the authority of Abu Ja'far ibn Battah
al- 'Insaf.

13. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Bayhaqi (d. 225/839) has quoted ex
from al-'Imam 'Ali (as) in al-Mahdsin wa al-masawi'.

14. Muhammad ibn Tayyib Abu Bakr al-Bahri al-Baqillani (d. 403
quoted from al-lmam 'Ali (as) in I'jaz al-Qur'an.

15. Muhammad ibn Habib al-Hashimi al-Baghdadi (d. 245/859).

16. Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah Hakim al-Nishaburi.

17. Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-'Abbas al-Shirazi, popularly known
Hayyan al-Tawhidi, an eminent scholar, quoted from al-'Ima
in al-Basa'ir.

18. Abu 'Abd Allah al Marzabani al-Khurasani, a scholar of lit
literary sciences, was one of the teachers of al-Mufid. Hi
Muwaffaq contains the utterances of al-Imam 'Ali (as).

19. Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al Jawhari; Ibn Abi al-Hadid quote
    in Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, particularly from his valuable
    Saqifah.

20. Abu Ja'far al-Baladhuri (d. 279/892), author of Ansab al-'
    Futah al-bulddn, has quoted the words of al-lmam 'Ali (as)

21. Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilali was among the first to compile a
    of hadith, in which he quoted numerous traditions from al-
    'Ali (as).

22. Abu Hanifah al-Dinawari (d. 290/903), a very authentic nar
    authority in literary sciences, quoted a number of sermons
    of al-Imam 'Ali (as) in al-'Akhbar al-tiwal.

23. Abd al-Rahman ibn Ishaq Abu al Qasim al-Zujaji (d. 339/950
    of al Jamal, in his other work, al-Amali, narrated the utt
    al-Imam 'Ali (as).

24. Abd al-Malik ibn Muhammad al-Tha'alibi (350-429/961-1037),
    Yatimat al-dahr in al-Ijaz wa al-'Ijaz, quoted many an utt
    al-Imam 'Ali (as).

25. Abu 'Umar ibn Yusuf ibn Ya'qub al-Kindi (d. 350/961) in hi
    Wulat has narrated the words of al-lmam 'Ali (as).

26. Abu Talib 'Ubayd ibn Ahmad ibn Ya'qub al-'Anbari has narra
    supplications of al-'Imam 'Ali (as) in his Kitab al-'ad'iy

27. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Abi Rafi' authored tw
    one entitled Kashf dar akhbar wa ta'rikh Saqifat Bani Sa'i
    Ta'rikh al-Aimmah, in which he quoted the utterances of al
    'Ali (as).

28. Abu Muhammad Ahmad ibn A'tham al-Kufi (d. 314/926-27)
    in Kitab al-futuh narrated the sermons and words of al-Ima

29. Abu Muhammad Husayn ibn Sa'id ibn Hammad ibn Mahran al-
    'Ahwazi collected some of the sermons and sayings of al-lm

30. Ali ibn al-Wasiti, the author of 'Uyun al-hikam, compiled a book on Fadail Ahl al-Bayt in 457/1065, from which al-'Alla Baqir al-Majlisi has quoted in the seventeenth volume of Bi al-anwar. This book contains the utterances of al-Imam 'Al

31. Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Washsha', author of a twenty-volume work Zuhrat al-Riyad, in his other work Zarf wa zura quoted from al-lmam 'Ali (as).

32. Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim al-Qummi, one of the earliest Shi'i exegetes of the Quran, has quoted extens al-Imam 'Ali (as).

33. Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Mughirah ibn Nawfal ibn Harı ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib (d. 167/783) is one of the authorities narrators of hadith. He narrated in his works the sermons o 'Ali (as). In one of his works entitled Tuhfat al-'ahbab wa imamat sayyid uli al-'albab, he has copied in full a sermon Imam 'Ali (as) that was delivered on the occasion of the as of the Third Caliph and al-'Imam 'Ali's taking reigns of th into his hands. This risalah is included in a collection of owned by Imam Yahya of Yaman. At the present it is in the B Museum Library, London.

For many centuries, Shi'i, Sunni, Mu'tazili and other scholars continued their pursuit to trace and collect the sayings and w al-Imam 'Ali (as). The early sources from which al-Radi selecte contents of Nahj al-baldghah seem to be inexhaustible. Recently letters of al-Imam 'Ali (as) were edited and translated into U Sunni scholar 'Abd al Salam of Rampur. All these letters were addressed to different Companions of the Prophet (as), and were published with replies by their addressees. However, Nahj al-ba remains among all such collections, compiled before and after a the most outstanding of all due to its philosophical depth, lit excellence, and the penetrating historical insight reflected in contents. The book has always been a source of enjoyment and inspiration for scholars and thinkers of successive generations tive of their faith and creed.

Chapter 3

The Contents of Nahj al Balaghah

Nahj al-balaghah comprises various issues that cover major prob
metaphysics, theology, fiqh, tafsir, hadith, prophetology, imam
social philosophy, history, politics, administration, civics, s
rhetoric, poetry, literature, etc. Most of the discussions abou
theological issues and philosophical notions in Islam have the
this very book. Similarly, all the controversies regarding soc
problems in the Muslim society and state left their echo in Nah
or rather those were inspired from the utterances of al-lmam 'A
book not only reflects the spirit of early Islam and the teach
Quran and the Prophet (saw) in the proper perspective, but also
a guide to traverse the future in the light of these teachings
matter of regret that Nahj al-balaghah was not properly utiliz
Muslims as a source book of Islamic philosophy, kalam, fiqh, an
to misconceptions about its attribution to al-Imam 'Ali (as) In
of strong and sufficient evidence in support of the contents o
being authentic, it was sheer prejudice and lack of the spirit
that was responsible for neglecting such a reliable source of
In recent times, the Orientalists have spread the unfounded dou
Khallikan and al-Dhahabi among Muslim and non-Muslim scholars
of objectivity in research, thus giving a respectable appearan
ignorance, which was, of course, combined and prompted by thei
alienate the Muslims from their intellectual heritage. I know
in India and Pakistan questioning the authenticity of Nahj al-
ascription to Amir al-Mu'minin using lofty words of research-o
with a hefty-pose of a dispassionate seeker of truth. None of
sure, ever studied any book about early sources of the sermons
of al-'Imam 'Ali (as), nor did any one of them ever try to gai
objective information about the book. Unfortunately none of th
to go through even the valuable research done by Imtiyaz 'Ali
a widely read and respected writer in the literary circles of

Subcontinent. It was because of my first-hand knowledge of this situation that I have intentionally devoted the major part of t article to the issue of the authenticity of the attribution of of Nahj al-Balaghah, in the light of earlier sources, to 'Ali who insist upon denying the veracity of Nahj al-balaghah are e suffering from a malady of deep-rooted prejudice spread throug propaganda of the supporters of Banu Umayyah, or their minds a have been blinded by the propagation of falsehood by the Orient under the garb of high-sounding academic jargon. If our minds a of this jaundiced perception of our own past, Nahj al-balagha the attention it deserves and its contents will be studied and will be fully explored and exploited for a better understandin ideas and realities.

A look at the subjects discussed in Nahj al-balagha will be he in ascertaining the wide scope of this invaluable treasure of w far a few attempts to classify the subject matter of the book made, none of which has been comprehensive. A subject-wise inde the contents of Nahj al-balaghah has been prepared by 'Ali Ansa and published in Arabic under the title al-Dallil 'ala mawdu'a balaghah in 1395/1975. It was translated and published three y in Persian with the sub-title Nahj al-balaghah mawdu'i. The co has divided the contents into eight categories, each dealing w specific subject further divided into various issues pertainin main theme. The main divisions are as follows:

1. Ma'rifat Allah,
2. Ma'rifat al-kawn,
3. Ma'rifat al-hujjah,
4. Ma'rifat nizam al-huqumah wa al-mujtama',
5. Ma'rifat al-'ahkam,
6. Wa'rifat al-'akhlaq,
7. Ma'rifat al-ta'rikh, and
8. Ma'rifat al-ma'dd

The major issues covered under the main categories can be summarized here:

1. Ma'rifat Allah (knowledge about God): The utterances and writings of Amir al-Mu'minin on God and His Attributes are

into eighteen sub-headings in the following manner:

1. tawhid, the Unity of God;
2. sifat al-dhat, the Attributes of Essence;
3. 'ilm wal hikmah, the Knowledge and Wisdom of God;
4. 'azamah wa qudrah, Greatness and Power of God;
5. basir, Seer;
6. sami', Hearer;
7. hayy, Living;
8. mutakallim, Speaker;
9. jabarutiyyah, Omnipotence;
10. 'adl, Divine-Justice;
11. nusrah wa intiqam, Help and vengeance of God;
12. al-tawakkul 'alayh, Dependence on God;
13. al-tahmid lahu, Praise to God;
14. al-'isti'anah bih, Seeking assistance from God;
15. al-razzdq wa al-rizq, the Provider and the provisi
    divided into further sub-issues;
16. worship and worshippers, divided into sub-headings
    dealing with various forms and kinds of worship an
    worshippers, the worst and the best human beings,
    worship of other than God;
17. manifestation of God and the Beatific Vision;
18. al-qada' wa al-qadar, Divine Will and Intention;

2. Ma'rifat al-kawn , knowledge of the universe:

    1. heaven and the earth;
    2. creation and the properties of living beings under
       topic al-'Imam 'Ali's descriptions of various anim
       as the bat, the ant, the peacock and other birds a
    3. many various aspects of human nature;
    4. angels, their worship and utterances with special
       Jibra'il and Mika'il;
    5. Satan.

3. Ma'rifat al-hujjah, knowledge about the Proofs of God,: Th
   part of it is devoted to prophetology; that is, the charac
   and the aims of the prophets, their companions and familie
   character, etc.; the next seven sections, from the second

eighth, deal with the lives of Adam, Abel and Cain, Salih,
and Aaron, Banu Isra'il, David and Solomon, and Christ; th
section is devoted to the life and character of the Prophe
(saw), spread over 230 pages further divided into sub-issu
discuss the pre Islamic Arabs, the Family of the Prophet (
the main objectives of the prophetic mission, miracles, wi
Prophet (saw), the finality of his prophethood, hadith and
criteria of reliability and grades of authenticity, hadith
interpretation, Companions, jihad and the battles of the P
demise of the Prophet (saw) and its consequences; Ahl al-B
Fatimah (as), al-Hasan (as) and al-Husayn (as), Ahl al-Bay
zakat; the Quran: classification of verses, tafsir by conj
(ra'y), the role of the Imam in the interpretation of the
attributes of the Quran, teaching of the Quran, important
understanding of the Quran, qira'ah of the Quran, tafsir o
verses. Under the life of the Prophet, the meaning and the
of Islam are also dealt with, with reference to the charac
the Muslims and their dignity. Iman and mu'min form the th
separate section; at the end, infidelity (kufr) and its ch
are discussed. The tenth issue under hujjah concerns the c
the Imamate with specific reference to the leadership of A
(as) [the Imams of the Family of the Prophet (saw). The el
deals with the issues related to the oath of allegiance (b
twelth part contains the utterances of al-Imam 'Ali (as) c
his own Imamate and his own role in the advancement of the
Islam; some sections give autobiographical details about t
'Ali's zuhd, justice, dress and food habits, humility and
The last section of this part is about Amir al-Mu'minin's
about al-Imam al-Mahdi (as), his identity and his appearan

4. Ma'rifat nizam al-hukamah wa al-mujtama' (system of govern
ance and society): This part deals with the issues of soci
politics, and is perhaps the most relevant to present-day
the Muslim world. It spreads over more than four hundred p
an in-depth treatment of the subject is indicative of the
concern for socio-political life of the Ummah. The issues
are:

    1. Justice and oppression: forms of oppression and
    traits of oppressors; responsibilities of the just

Imams; the duty of al-mu'minun vis-a-vis justice and oppression.

2. Right and wrong (haqq and batil): distinction betw right and wrong; criterion of right; reciprocal ri duties; duty towards God; and mutual duties of par and children.
3. Semblance of truth.
4. Poverty.
5. People and their kinds: causes of differences and role of various groups in social changes; people's transformation, a prerequisite for reform; role of elements in society; characteristics of evil and a elements in society; people's attitude towards soc
6. Government and society; this part is divided into fusul (chapters).

    1. The most fundamental objectives and duties government.
    2. The characteristics of rulers.
    3. The duties of rulers towards people.
    4. Ministers and advisers.
    5. People's rights: social classes and their dependence; the responsibilities of the ar functions of rulers in fulfilling people's
    6. The Islamic army and choice of commanders.
    7. The mutual rights of people and rulers.
    8. Whom to refer to resolve differences?
    9. Courts of justice and qadis.
    10. Officials and functionaries of government, mode of selection; the ruler's duty toward
    11. Information and intelligence of the State, military intelligence.
    12. Taxes, public treasury (bayt al-mal), and means of levying taxes; protection and gua public treasury; heads of expenditure of p equitable distribution of bayt al-mal; and misappropriation of bayt al-mal.
    13. Secretaries and record-keepers of official (ministers and high officials).
    14. Businessmen and industrialists: administra

economic affairs, and government's supervi
economic matters of the State.
15. The oppressed and the deprived sections of
and ruler's duties towards them.
16. Governors' direct contact with people for
their grievances, and people's right to ha
rulers.
17. Governors' personal responsibility in certa
18. Direct supervision by governors and governm
authorities of current affairs of the State
19. Ruler, his family and relatives.
20. Duty of governors vis-a-vis charges levelle
them.
21. Pacts and peace treaties with other States
22. Guidelines for performance of governors' in
and social functions.
23. Seeking God's help for being just.

5. Ma'rifat al-'ahkam (religious laws): This part is divided in
eighteen sub-headings. The first section contains the Imam's
about the philosophy of laws. The second and the third sect
with prayer (salat) and the virtue of congregation prayer,
and midnight prayer. The fourth section is devoted to the In
sayings about fasting (sawm). The fifth one comprises Amir
Mu'minin's interpretation of laws regarding women's obligat
compulsory matters. The remaining chapters deal with the fo
issues: the sixth about almsgiving (zakat); the seventh abou
laws; the eighth about Hajj pilgrimage and the Holy Ka'bah;
about al-'Amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar (enjoin
and prohibiting evil), one of the fundamentals of faith (fu
that covers all forms of activities, social, political, eco
as individual duties. The tenth and the eleventh chapters de
concerning jihad, a term with a very wide range of connotat
special meaning covers all forrns of struggle against unbel
itself embraces various forms of injustice and oppression,
God is an atrocity against one's own self. In this section,
on the laws pertaining to war and military activity; the las
headings deal with martyrdom and martyrs, and peace treaty
The twelfth chapter is about injunctions regarding the circ

necessitate hiding of faith with the purpose of defending i
well as collective existence of the Muslims (taqiyyah). The
chapter is devoted to the laws of business transactions wit
emphasis on usury (riba) and loan. The fourteenth chapter c
laws about adultery (zina). The next four chapters discuss
involved in theft, murder, dying of the hair, and laws conc
conduct in desperate situations (ahkam al-mudtarr).

6. Ma'rifat al-'akhlaiq (ethical laws): This is the longest se
the book, spreading over six hundred pages. The first part
section covers general issues of morality in the following

    1. reason, its virtue, forms, effects, and functions;
       reason and evil consequences of its misuse;
    2. contemplation and intellection;
    3. the heart as the inner faculty which is the source
       and evils; its general condition and relation with
       the body; its qualities and means of strength, wea
       and limitations;
    4. knowledge: definition and scope; useful and useles
       knowledge; relation between knowledge and practice
       knowledge; teaching and learning; limitations of h
    5. theologians and their duties;
    6. misguided and misleading 'ulama';
    7. wisdom and the role of learned persons in society;
    8. the wood and the Hereafter-salient features of wor
       comparison and contrast between the world and the
       temporality of the world and eternity of the Herea
       between the two; purpose of the creation of the wo
       and pride of the world; proper and improper utiliz
       world; world-outlook of awliya ', the Prophet of I
       pious persons, and al-'Imam 'Ali (as); man's attit
       world;
    9. capital and its distribution;
    10. good and evil.

The second part of ethical discussions deals with moral behavi
and conduct. This is itself divided into ten sections dealing
modes of conduct:

1. repentance and seeking forgirveness (tawbah and is
2. piety (taqwa);
3. characteristics of muttaqun;
4. zuhd;
5. patience and resignation (sabr);
6. the tongue, its function and its relation to other
   body; tongue-control;
7. friendship and friends: how to choose friends; rel
   dependence on friends; mutual duties of friends;
8. manners and courtesy;
9. forbearance and patience;
10. abstention from self-praise.

Moral vices are discussed under the following: lust and love (
negative sense); miserliness; extravagance; envy; pride; hypoc
hypocrites(nifaq and munafiqun);deceit or self-indulgence(narc

At the end of this section certain moral issue with reference
women are dealt with. The concluding part gives an account of
supplication, its need, circumstances and effects, with some o
supplications of al-'Imam 'Ali (as) on different occasions.

7. Mairifat al-ta'rikh (history): This section gives us an ide
   'Imam 'Ali's view of history and historical events, divided
   parts, and each part divided further into many sub-headings
   intimate picture of the life and times of al-'Imam 'Ali (as
   poraries, and the Prophet (saw):

   1. Analysis of history: main currents and traditions
      causes of the rise and fall of nations; and lesson
   2. Life history of al-'Imam 'Ali (as); glimpses of an
      cal account of the life of the Imam (as) with refe
      role in the unity of the Ummah by foregoing his ri
      snubbing divisive efforts of some opportunists.
   3. Saqifat Bani Sa'idah
   4. Fadak
   5. Al-Imam 'Ali (as) and the caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar
      'Uthman; the Imam's role as an adviser during the
      'Umar's caliphate; the Shura's role in the electio

successor; reasons of the Imam's allegiance to 'Ut
the latter's deviations; 'Ali's counsel to 'Uthman
innocence in the assassination of the third caliph
stand after the assassination.

6. The caliphate of al-'Imam 'Ali (as): the Imam's rea
being reluctant to accept the caliphate; people's
insistence; declaration of the Imam's policies and
7. Parties and groups opposing the Imam.
8. The Battle of Jamal with special reference to the
'A'ishah, Talhah and al-Zubayr; the Imam's attitud
after the battle towards his opponents (the Nakith
9. The Battle of Siffin: the role of the Qasitun; the
for fighting the Qasitun; his attempts to convince
about the evil consequences of war.
10. Tahkim: the evil of the tahkim and its roots; the
for rejecting the proposed arbitration; evil and f
consequences of the arbitration.
11. The Khawarij: the Khawarij's role and their mislea
the Imam's repeated efforts to pursuade the Khawar
before the Battle of Nahrawan; the Imam's anticipa
fate of the Khawarij.
12. The last days of the Imam: the Imam's foreknowledg
martyrdom; the last sermon; the Imam's words on th
the nineteenth of Ramadan before being fatally inj
last moments of the Imam (as) and his will.
13. Praise and criticism of the Imam's companions: bas
the disheartened elements; comparison of the Imam'
with those of the Prophet (saw) and those of Mu'aw
between the Imam (as) and his companions; their pr
consequences of disobeying the Imam (as)
14. Opponents of the Imam 'Ali's rule and the reasons
dissent.
15. Events of Egypt: the appointment of Muhammad ibn A
abrogation; the appointment of Malik al-'Ashtar; t
to the people of Egypt; the assassination of Malik
Malik al-'Ashtar's great qualities; the martyrdom
ibn Abi Bakr.
16. Personages: Abu Dharr; al-'Ash'ath ibn Qays; the c
Mada'in; Umru' al-Qays; Anas ibn Malik; al-Burj ib
Ta'-i, Banu Umayyah and their disruptive role in I

Ja'far al-Tayyar; Khabbab ibn al-'Arat; Khadijah; S
Sa'id ibn Namran; Abu Sufyan; Sa'sa'ah ibn , Sawha
'As; the Quraysh, their tribal background and thei
the Imam, and the Imam's attitude towards the Qura
Ziyad al-Nakha'i; Marwan ibn al-Hakam; Masqalah ib
Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and the Imam's correspond
al-Mughirah ibn Akhnas and a'l-Mughirah ibn Shu'ba

17. The Imam's historical and eschatological foresight
the last days of the world; destiny of Basrah and
of the Arabs; duties and responsibilities of the f
(mu'minun) in the last days.

8. Masrifat al-Ma'ad (Resurrection and the Hereafter): death,
mysteries; the mu'min's preparedness for death; the Angel o
happens after death?; learning lesson from death and gravey
Judgement: proof of Resurrection; symptoms of the Last Day;
human deeds; Sirat; human condition on the Day of Judgemen
hell.

The above-quoted index of subjects in Nahj al-balaghah reveals
of themes and issues. As it suggests, it can be used as a sour
in the theory and practice of Ijtihad. Shi'i 'ulama' have bee
al-balagha as a guide in the matters of fiqh. How far is Nahj
dependable and useful as a source book of fiqh? After the four
compendiums of hadith Nahjal-balaghah stands higher than all
collections of hadith. Besides the traditions of the Prophet (
surely the most authentic guide in theology, morality, fiqh, s
administration, political theory and its practice, and many ot
which are vital for Muslim society and are relevant to our own
in the modern age.

Nasir Makarim Shirazi, in one of his articles on the role of N
al-balagha in fiqh, has discussed the question of the worth of
traditions contained in the book. Can we use these traditions
foundation for deriving the ahkam of fiqh? Do they fulfil the
of reliability laid down in Usul al-fiqh? Does a tradition rel
moral, social and political matters need not fulfil the condit
hujbiyyah (proof) as required in the issues of fiqh? His answe

Whatever is contained in it regarding the issues of be

supported by rational and philosophical arguments. And
to have been so; for, the principles of belief are esta
conclusively only through this method. They cannot be
the basis of a single tradition. This principle is appl
most of the guidelines concerning politics and society
dependence on tradition in such matters is not require
presence of rational arguments). In the sphere of moral
also, dependence on tradition is not of fundamental imp
because the fundamentals of morality are self evident a
harmony with nature. The role of a moral guide is to in
principles in the souls of his followers, and to stimul
to move in their direction ;such a job does not depend
authority. Especially in moral matters that do not fall
the categories of the obligatory (wajib) and the prohib
(haram), but come in the jurisdiction of the desirable
the application of this criterion is obvious; for they
accepted on the well-known principle of al-tasumuh 'an
al-sunan, that is non-essentiality of citing textual ev
mustahabbat, often practised by the authorities in usul

But in legal matters (masa'il al-fiqh) in general, and
of worship wajib and haram in particular, one is bound
to an authentic tradition. In such matters howsoever st
argument may be, it will not stand on its own in the ab
a tradition. Though the importanee of authority is not
other matters too, its vital role in the matters of fi
undeniable.

1. It is a matter of regret that al-Sayyid al-Radi,
   the compiler of Nahj al-balaghah, has not paid du
   attention to support most of the sermons, letters
   and stray sayings with asnad, the chain of narrat
   As a result, Nahj al-balaghah comes down to us in
   the form of hadith mursal. However, we have acces
   to many an early souree of these traditions to p
   their authenticity through chain of reliable nar
   and most probably al-Radi didn't pay attention to
   furnish their asnad due to their well-known avail
   in other sourees. Or he had other stronger reason
   avoiding referenee to asnad. He might have consid

their contents to be above any doubt.

2. Another means of proving the reliability of a tra
is its compatibility with the Quran … We apply
criterion with regard to the traditions of the I
Imams (as). Employment of this method in the cas
al-balaghah is of much value.

3. The third way to ascertain the authority of a tra
is its fame and general acceptability among the
If we accede to this criterion, Nahj al-balaghah
the zenith of fame and is greatly respected by s
of eminence, who support their ideas with quotat
from this book and refer to its authority in var
matters …

4. Another means of arriving at the target, that is
establishing the authenticity of a tradition or
book, is the spiritual sublimity of its content.
is meant by sublimity of meaning is its higher l
of spirituality and inspiration, which implicitl
leads us to believe that it can't originate in a
fallible mind. This criterion is acceptable to a
of great fuqaha' … For instance al-Shaykh al-'A
al-'Allamah al-'Ansari, in the Rasa'il, accepts
known tradition of al-'Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari
matter of undesirable (madhmum) and desirable (m
imitation (taqlid) … or Ayatullah Burujardi ref
the words of al-Sahifat al-Sajjadiyyah in the co
of Friday prayer. Though al-Sahifat al-Sajjadiyy
not reached us through a chain of authorities, s
of its content reveals that it could not have be
from the tongue of an ordinary mortal.

On the basis of these various criteria, of which the first one
only with reference to the early sources of the tradition that
in Nahj al-balaghah, it is concluded that the book can be just
an authority in ijtihadat. The writer of the above mentioned a
furnished a long list of traditions which have been or can be

Nahj al-balaghah is also of great value in construing the Islam
to various issues of vital significance to the present world o

Chapter 4

The Commentaries on Nahj al Balaghah

Since the times of al-Radi, Nahj al-balaghah has been a subjec
interpretation. As reported earlier al Sayyid al-Murtada's dau
narrate her uncle's work, and the book had become a subject of
academic circles. The Kitab nameh yi Nahj al Balaghah publishe
Sham./1980 in Persian from Iran, enlists 370 titles of various
translations, selections and books dealing with its madarik an
(sources) in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Turkish, English, Gujrati
This bibliography cannot be considered to be complete in any w
compiled in Iran and the compiler depended on secondary source
al-Dhari'ah, Kakh-e dilawiz, Nuqaba' al-bashar, etc., as he ha
the works in other languages, particularly Indian languages. A
of titles could have been added to this list with some researc
languages unfamiliar to the Persians. A selected bibliography
this Kitab-nameh and two other books was compiled and publishe
vol. II, no. 2.

Selected Commentaries on Nahj al Balaghah

1. Alam Nahj al-balaghah by al-Sayyid 'Ali ibn Nasir
   reportedly a contemporary of al-Radi. Firstly, thi
   refers to some other commentaries, which means it
   be the first. Secondly, its style is not that of t
   century and the book may belong to a later period.

2. Ma'arij Nahj al-balaghah by Shaykh Abu al-Hasan Ab
   Zayd ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali al:Bayhaqi al-Nishaburi
   known as Farid-e Khurasan (d. 565/1169). This shar
   to be based on the copy of Nahj al-balaghah that w
   by al-Radi himself.

3. Hada'iq al-haqa'iq: al-'isbah fi Sharh Nahj al-bal
   Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi al-

known as Qutb al-Din al-Kundari, compiled in 576/1
one manuscript is in Madrasah-ye Fadiliyyah, Mashh

4. and 5. Al-Ma'arij fi Sharh Nahj al-balaghah (also
-Mi'raj) and Minhaj al-bara'ah (written in 556/117
al-Din al-Rawandi (d. 573/1177).

6. An incomplete commentary by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (
44-606/1149-50-1209), mentioned in Ta'rikh al-huka
by Jamal al-Din al-Qifti.

7. A commentary attributed to 'Abd al Jabbar al-Mu'ta
also three other scholars contemporary of al-Shayk
(385-460/995-1067-68)

8. Sharh by Diya' al-Din Abu al-Rida Fadl Allah ibn '
al-Rawandi (d. after i58/1065-66).

9. Sharh 'Izz al-Din ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili(d.
This is the most famous commentary on which severa
commentaries have been written. This has been tran
Persian, French and most probably in Urdu. Its sel
Iltiqat al-durar al-nukhab was compiled in 1283/18
Commentaries written on it number at least fifteen
authors of which are such eminent names as Ahmad i
(d. 637/1239), Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani (d. 1107/i
Shaykh Yusuf al-Bahrani (1186!1772-3), Shaykh Muhs
'Abd al-Husayn ibn Musa, Mahmud Mallah and others.
of his commentary were mainly directed against his
regarding the caliphate. Though Ibn Abi al-Hadid r
al-Khutbat al-Shiqshiqiyyah as genuinely attribute
'Ali (as), he, however, tried to interpret it in a
with Sunni belief in the legitimacy of al-Khilafat

10. Al-Sharh al-kabir by Ibn al-Maytham al-Bahrani (d.
Ibn al-Maytham wrote other commentaries on the boo
Mishah al-saliEfn and its abridgement Mukhtasar Mi
salikin, and Minhaj al-'arifin, a commentary on Mi
li-'Amir al-Mu'minin by al Jahiz.

11. Al-Dibaj al mudi' fi sharh Nahj al-balaghah li al-
    Imam al-Mu'ayyad bi Allah Yahya ibn Hamzah al-'Alaw
    (d. 749/1348-9) which deals with the difficult word
    in Nahj al-balaghah.

12. Mulhaq Nahj al-balaghah, a commentary written arou
    beginning of the eighth/ fourteenth century by Ahma
    Yahya, a manuscript of which copied in 729/1328-29
    the Kitabkhaneh-yi Astaneh-yi Quds Ridawi, Mashhad

13. Sharh al-nafa'is by an unknown Sunni author writte
    759/1357-58 available in the Kitabkhaneh-yi Astaneh
    Quds Ridawi Mashhad.

14. Sharh by Kamal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad
    al-'Ata'iqi al-Hilli compiled in 770/1368-69.

15. Minhaj al-fasahah by Kamal al-Din Husayn ibn Khwaja
    al-Din 'Abd al-Haqq al-'Ardebili Ilahi (d. 950il54

16. Minhaj al-wilayah by Mulla 'Abd al-Baqi al-Sufi al
    al-Khattat, known as Danishmand (d. 1039/1629-30).

17. Sharh by Abu Talib Taj al-Din 'Ali ibn Anjab, known
    Sa'id (d. 674/l275-6).

18. Sharh by al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al Saf
    (d. 650/1252-3).

19. Al-Tuhfat al-'Aliyyah fisharah Nahj al-balaghat at
    by Muhammad ibn Habib Allah, grandson of Khalifah
    compiled ih 881/l476.

20. Al-Mawdhib al-Ilahiyyah by al-Sayyid Afsah al-Din
    al-Shirazi (the 9th century H.).

In later centuries, numerous commentaries were written in Arab
Persian, details of which can be found in the Kitabnameh-yi Nah
and al-Tawhid (English), vol. II, no.2. In addition to these s
works were compiled with regard to the sources of the contents

balaghah in Arabic, Urdu and Persian, among which the followin
mentioned here:

Commentaries available in Persian

1. Rida Ustadi, Bahthi kutah piramun-e Nahj al-balagha
   madarik-e an (1396/1976).

2. Kitabnameh-yi Nahj al-balaghah by the above-mentio
   author (1359 Sham./ 1980).

3. Barrasi-yi Nahj al-baldghah wa asnad-e an by Sayyi
   Mustafawi.

4. Pizhuhishi dar asnad wa madarik-e Nahj al-balaghah
   Sayyid Muhammad Ja'fari (1356 Sham./ 1977).

Commentaries available in Arabic

1. Mustatrafat Nahj al-baldghah by Shaykh Fakhr al-Di
   Turayhi (d. 1085/1674).

2. Masadir Nahj al-balaghah by 'Abd al-Zahra' al-Husa
   Khatib, in four volumes (1386/1966-67).

3. Madarik Nahj al-balaghah by al Shaykh Hadi Kashif
   Ghita' (d.1361/1942), printed in 1354/1935.

4. Madarik Nahj al-balaghah by al Shaykh 'Abd Allah N
   published from Beirut

5. Mustadrak Nahj al-balaghah by Shaykh Kashif al Ghi
   printed in 1354/1935.

6. Masadir Nahj al-balaghah by Hibat al-Din al Shahri
   (1301-1386/1883-84-1966-67),

7. Ma huwa Nahj al-balaghah by al Sayyid Hibat al-Din
   Shahristani, compiled in 1352/1933-34 and printed
   same year. Also translated into Persian and publis
   twice.

A number of translations and commentaries on the Imam's letter
al-'Ashtar have been written in Persian which number around fi

which some were in verse. The authors of some of these shuruh a
of eminence like Mulla Muhammad Salih Rawghani, Muhammad Husayn
Dhaka' al-Mulk (d. 1325/1907-08), Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Furughi
Sham./ 1878-1942), Ahmad ibn Hafiz Qatil Kirmani, known as Adi
1911), Sharif al-'Amili, and al-'Allamah al-Majlisi (d. 1111/1
The complete text of Nahj al-balaghah was also translated in v
time. In Arabic, too, the letter to Malik al-'Ashtar was comme
numerous scholars.

Al-Khutbat al-Shiqshiqiyyah had been also attracting the atten
commentators and Persian translators. Nahj al-balaghah's Persi
started to appear much earlier than the Safawids came to power
Sharaf al-Din Ardebili, a contemporary of Shah Isma'il Safawi,
Nahj al-balaghah which was published in 1355/1936 with the Ara
Among the popular Persian translations we can name the ones by
Naqi Fayd al-'Islam, Jawad Fadil, and Asad Allah Mubashshiri. A
translations one was done by Nizam al-Din 'Ali ibn al-Hasan al
was completed in 1036/1626-27. The earliest Persian translatio
Fath Allah al-Kashani (d. 988/1580-81) under the title Tanbih a
third printing of which came out of the press in 1313/1895-96.
revolutionary leader and scholar Ayatullah Sayyid Mahmud Taliq
1979) also translated Nahj al-balaghah and published it with h
in 1326 Sham./1947.

Urdu translations of Nahj al Balaghah

1. al-'Isha'ah by Sayyid Awlad Hasan ibn Muhammad Hasan Am
   (d. 1338/1919-20), Nayrang-e fasahat by Dhakir Hus
   Dehlawi, and three other translations by Zafar Mah
   Warith Husayn Ja'isi, Ra'is Ahmad Ja'fari (a Sunni
   and Mufti Ja'far Husayn. All these translations we
   by notes and comments.

2. I'jaz Husayn Badayuni (d. 1350/1931-32) compiled a
   explain difficult words of the book under the name
   lughat-e Nahj al-balaghah.

3. Imtiyaz 'Ali Khan 'Arshi's Istinad-e Nahj al-balag
   already been discussed. Aqa Buzurg al-Tehrani, in
   Dhari'ah ila tasanif al-Shi'ah, has referred to an
   Tarjumah wa sharh in Urdu by Sayyid 'Ali Azhar Kha
   Hindi (d. 1352/1933-34).

4. Sayyid Sibt al-Hasan al-Hanswi's work Minhaj Nahj a
is rated among the best of its kind in Urdu. A few
Mahmud Husayn Qaysar Amruhawi published a lengthy a
many parts in an Urdu journal on the sources of Nah
and the authenticity of the ascription of its conte
Imam 'Ali (as). There are, of course, a number of a
booklets compiled about Nahj al-balaghah in Urdu.

Chapter 5

Misconceptions about Nahj al Balaghah

No scholar of Sunni or Shi'a profession has questioned the genu
authenticity of Nahj al-balagha for more than two centuries. Th
person to raise doubts about its attribution to Amir al-Mu'minin
Khallikan (d. 681/1282), who, without referring to any author c
made the following remarks about the authorship of Nahj al-bala

> People have different opinions about the compiler of Na
> balaghah, a collection of the utterances of al-'Imam 'A
> Abi Talib (as) There is difference as to whether it was
> by al-Sharif al-Murtada or his brother al-Radi. It is a
> said that it is not at all the composition of 'Ali (as
> that the one who compiled it and attributed it to him r
> himself; but Allah knows the truth.

These remarks were made in Wafayat al-aya'n in connection with
of the life and work of al-Sharif al-Murtada, al-Radi's elder b
al-'Athir al Jazari (555-630/1160-1232) in Mukhtasar al-Wafayat
Din al-Safadi (d. 764/1362) in al-Wafi bi al-wafayat, al-'Allam
(d. 768/1366) in Mir'at al Jinan, and Ibn al-'Imad in Shadharat
were content just to repeat Ibn Khallikan's conjecture without
to substantiate it. Al-'Allamah al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1347) in Mi
'i'tidal was the first person to pick up the audacity to raise
unfounded doubt to a degree of certainty a century after Ibn Kh
wrote in his account of al-Murtada:

> Al Sharif al-Murtada, who is accused of fabricating Nah
> balaghah, was a scholar of considerable knowledge. Whos
> sees his book Nahj al-balaghah would come to believe th
> was falsely attributed to Amir al-Mu'minin (as), becaus
> contains open abuse rather than downgrading of the two

> Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Contradictions and mean matters hav
> crept into it, which do not conform with the spirit of
> Companions of the Quraysh and our knowledge of the late
> Companions. One is convinced that the major part of th
> is forged and unauthentic.

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 748/1347) repeated al-Dhahabi's obj
without bothering to probe deeper into the matter.

The most interesting and at the same time the weakest part of
objections concerns ascription of the authorship of Nahj al-ba
al-Murtada. The objectors belonged to the Umayyad West and had
prejudices against Shiii scholars, and perhaps under the impact
Umayyad propaganda their prejudice was so deep-rooted that even
scholarship could not rise above it. Among the four contempora
al-Radi and al-Murtada, three, that is, al-Tha'alibi, al-Najash
1058), and al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463/1071) have given accou
both the brothers. Al Shaykh al-Tusi did not give any account
al-Radi in al-Fihrist or al-Rijal, but he did not count Nahj al
among the works of al-Murtada, which dispel any conjecture att
its authorship to him, because al-Tusi was very close to him as
student. Al-Tha'alibi and al-Khatib al-Baghdadi did not mentio
al-balaghah either in the account of al-Murtada or that of al-
Najashi in unambiguous terms attributed Nahj al-balagha to al-
Al-Tusi's exclusion of Nahj al-balaghah from the works of al-Mu
and al-Najashi's mention of it among the works of al-Radi are
to prove that it was without any doubt a work of al-Radi. The
objectors, who could not even determine authorship of the book
exactly, depended on nothing but their whim to raise doubts abo
authenticity.

A more convincing proof of al-Radi's authorship of Nahj al-bala
found in his own other works in which he has mentioned it. Thos
the following:

1. Khasa'is al- 'A'immah: A manuscript of this work of al-Rad
   Rida Library Rampur (India) which reveals that Fadl Allah
   Husayn al-Rawandi (d. 555/1160) accepted Khasa'is as al-Ra
   In this book, as quoted above, al-Radi has mentioned his i
   compiling Nahj al-balaghah.

2. Haqa'iq al-tanzil: Only the fifth part of this book is acc
to us. Its authorship is unanimously attributed to al-Radi
of this book al-Radi makes this remark:

> Anybody who needs a proof of our claim should refer to
> Nahj al-balaghah and think upon its contents. We have
> all forms and genres of the utteranees of Amir al-Mu'm
> in this book, which comprises sermons, letters, aphori
> admonitions, and is divided into three independent par
> containing a specific genre.

3. Majazat al-'athar al-Nabawiyyah: Al-Najashi and others hav
included this book among al-Radi's works. At two places in
al-Radi has referred to Nah; al-balagha as a work of his o
compilation.

It is important to note that even Ibn Khallikan, al-Dhahabi an
Ibn Hajar did not question the authenticity of the attribution
Nahj al-balaghah in its entirety to 'Ali (as). They were mainl
of those parts which were critical of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and
But if we find such utterances and writings of Amir al-Mu'mini
both Shi'i and non-Shi'i sources earlier than Nahjal-balaghah,
ness of al-Dhahabi's and Ibn Hajar's objections can be conclus
proved. Let us again refer to Istinad-e Nahj al-balagha by 'Ar
contemporary Sunni scholar of India. With respect to the harsh
the sermons concerning the issue of the caliphate, known as al
aldhiqshiqiyyah, 'Arshi refers to the following early sources
the sermon had occurred:

1. Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Barqi (d. 274/
quoted it in full in al-Mahasin wa al-'adab.

2. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi al-Kufi (d. 283/896) quoted
it in al-Gharat.

> In his notes on al-Gharat, Sayyid Jalal al-Din Muhaddi
> quoting Imtiyaz 'Ali Khan 'Arshi, says that this khutb
> is not found in it; even Ibn Abi al-Hadid and al-'Alla
> Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (1037-1110 or 1111/1627-1698

99) did not refer to al-Gharat as an early source of t
sermon.

3. Abu 'Ali Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab al Jubba'i al-Basri a
(d. 303/915-16) narrated it.

4. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Qubbah al-Razi
of al-Mufid and a pupil of Abu al-Qasim al-Balkhi, a Mu'ta
youth) quoted it in al-Insaf.

5. Abu al Qasim 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Mahmud al-Ka'bi al-B
Mu'tazili (d. 319/931) in al-'Insaf.

6. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Musa ibn Ba
Qummi, known as alShaykh al-Saduq (d. 318/930), has quoted
of his books: Ilal al Sharayi' and Ma'ani al-'akhbar.

7. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man, known as al-Shaykh
(d. 413/1022) inKitdb al-'irshad.

8. Shaykh al-Ta'ifah Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi
in al-'Amali.

'Arshi adds that al Shaykh al Saduq has narrated this Khutbah
authority of two different chains of narrators:

> Narrated to us Muhammad ibn 'Ali Majalawayh from his u
> Muhammad Ibn al-Qasim, he from Ahmad ibn 'Abd Allah al
> he from his father, he from Ibn Abi 'Umayr, he from Ab
> 'Uthman he from 'Aban ibn Taghlib, he from 'Ikrimah, h
> 'Abd Allah ibn al-'Abbas. ('Ilal al-sharayi' and Ma'an
> akhbar)
>
> Narrated to us Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ishaq al-Taliq
> from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Yahya al Jalludi, from Abu 'Abd
> Ahmad ibn 'Ammar ibn Khalid, from Yahya ibn 'Abd al-Ha
> Hammani, from 'Isa ibn Rashid, from 'Ali ibn Khuzaymah
> 'Ikrimah, from Ibn al-'Abbas. (Ma'ani al 'akhbar)

Al-Sayyid al-Radi has not quoted the entire chain of narrators

was content to remark that the sermon was popularly known as 'a
Shiqshiqiyyah ', while his teacher al-Mufid narrates both the
narrators and the story behind its narration. This is indicati
fact that this sermon was so famous in those days that al-Radi
find it necessary to prove its veracity by quoting the chain o
narrators. Surprisingly, the same famous sermon was used by hi
'Ali's opponents to question his veracity and to malign him by
him and/or his brother of forging it. The kind of criticism Ib
and his followers dabbled in not only discredits them as resea
also makes their other works suspicious in the eyes of impartia
objective students of history. Those who could not find any of
above-mentioned books to cross-check the veracity of Nahj al-ba
had failed miserably even in determining correctly its authors

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid has collected a number of 'Ali's speeches i
'Irshad concerning the issue of the succession to the Prophet
'Ali's criticism of the ways and means adopted by his opponent
deprive him of the caliphate. The famous Khutbah known as al-S
shiqiyyah begins with the following preface:

> (A group of traditionists report by a variety of chains
> authority (turuq) on the authority of Ibn al-'Abbas,
> who said:)
>
> I [i.e. Ibn al-'Abbas, was with the Commander of the Fa
> al-Rahabah I mentioned the [matter of] Caliphate and th
> had preeeded him. He breathed heavily and said: "By God
> Abi Quhatah took on… ."

This khutbah ends with the following words:

> Then you would have found that your world is more
> insignificant in my eyes than a goat's snot.

At this point 'Ali's speech was interrupted by a man from Kufa
al-'Abbas, after narrating the text of the speech, adds:

> I have never regretted anything nor felt such distress
> distress l felt at losing the rest of the speeeh of the
> of the Faithful, peace be on him. When he finished read

> letter, I said: "Commander of the Faithful would you c
> your speech from the point which you reached?"
>
> He answered: "In no way, in no way. It was like foam o
> camel's mouth (shiqshiqah) as it opens its mouth to be
> then falls silent."

Apart from al-'Irshad this khutbah, as claimed by 'Arshi, is f
in other sources also. In no way can it be dubbed as al-Radi's
Murtada's fabrication. Sayyid Hibat al-Din al-Shahristani, in
Nahj al-balaghah, has quoted different versions of al-Khutbat
Shiqshiqiyyah from: Nathral-durar wa nuzhat al-'adab by the vi
Abu Sa'id al-'Abi; al-'Irshad by al-Shaykh ai-Mufid; al-Mahasi
'adab by al-Barqi; al-Saduq in Ila'l al-sharayi'; and a book o
Jalludi. All the versions have minor differences, which indica
the source from which al-Radi quoted this sermon was other tha
these four. After enumerating the earlier works containing thi
Hibat al-Din al-Shahristani points out that Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, o
compilers of al-Khutbat al-Shiqshiqiyyah, was a follower of th
Umayyah and a staunch admirer of the third caliph 'Uthman ibn
writes:

> 'Affan. Much earlier than Ibn Khallikan made his remar
> questioning the authenticity of the attribution of Nah
> balaghah, certain doubts had come to circulate as indi
> by Ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili (d. 555/1257), who re
> to a discussion concerning the attribution of al-Khutb
> Shiqshiqiyyah with his teacher Abu al-Khayr Musaddiq
> ibn Shabib [sic. Shayb] al-Wasiti (d. 605/1208), who s
>
> I read this khutbah in the presenee of Abu Muhammad
> 'Abd Allah ibn Ahmad, known as Ibn al-Khashshab (493
> -567/1099-1172)… and asked him if he considered
> this khutbah to be a forged one and not of 'Ali (as).
> Ibn al-Khashshab said:
>
> > By God, I am convinced that it is from 'Ali and I
> > as sure of it as I am convineed of your truthfulne
> >
> > Al-Wasiti said to Ibn al-Khashshab: "A group is of

> that this khutbah was fabricated by al-Radi, may G
> with him." Ibn al-Khashshab said:
>
> Is it not beyond the eloquence of al-Radi or any other? How could he speak from such a high level o spirituality in such a (forceful) style? We are well acquainted with al-Radi's writings, his style and his technique. I have assessed both his poetry and prose, these words as compared to those of al-Radi are so different that there is no question of confusing them with his writings."

He further said:

> By God, I have read this sermon in books written two hundred years before the birth of al-Radi. Ye of course, I have seen it written in many books. can identify this khutbah very well and know that which of the 'ulama' and men of letters quoted it (in his work) mueh before al-Radi's father was born." (Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, vol. I)

On another occasion, in his Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, Ibn Abi al

> A group of blind followers of their own whims and wish of the opinion that the best part of Nahj al-balagha i and forged by a group of Shi'i writers and is somethin Most of them consider a part of it to be the product o pen or of others. But this group consists of prejudice whose heart's vision is blocked by partiality and who deviated from the right and straight path of truth; th from truth due to perversion, lack of knowledge, and u with literature and poetry. (vol. 1, p. 543)

At another place he writes about the words of Amir al-Mu'minin

> His eloquence is such that he is the leader of the elo guide and master of orators. It is said about his ulte words are below the Word of the Creator only, but over the words of all creatures; and from him the world has

of speech and rhetoric.

There were people in the age of al-Radi himself whose hearts a
sealed in such a manner that they attributed some of 'Ali's ut
Mu'fiwiyah. Al-Radi's commentary on the following khutbah,is i

His comment, are as follows:

> People with no ability to understand literature aserib
> Mu'awiyah whereas these are undoubtedly the words of A
> Mu'minin. How can dirt compare with pure gold?… 'Amr
> al Jahiz, a critic gifted with insight and a distinct
> has probed the matter minutely. He has included this k
> in al-Bayan wa al-tabyin, and has mentioned those who
> it to Mu'awiyah. Subsequently he says: "This speech is
> like the speeches of 'Ali (as) and is in conformity wi
> man's classification of people, and it also correspond
> manner of depicting the people's modes of behaving in
> oppression and waywardness, and in the state of dissim
> fear.

Similarly, al-Radi refers to his sources on a number of occasi
and also gives an account of the circumstances that were respo
the mood and theme of a certain sermon. He has referred to: al
al-Waqidi; Abu Ja'far al-'Iskafi; Hisham ibn al-Kalbi; Sa'id i
'Umawi, the author of al-Maghazi; Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sala
Tabari; Tha'lab; Ibn al-'A'rabi; al-Mubarrad, and many others.
could an author who allegedly forged the utterances and writin
Amir al-Mu'minin (as) be so honest in acknowledging his indebt
to his predecessors?

Those who raised doubts about the contents of Nahj al-balagha
were unaware of the high status and prestige of its compiler,
society and in the academic circles. A man of his eminence cou
even think of fabricating sermons and letters in the name of a
'Ali (as). Had any such attempt been made by anybody, Shi'i sc
themselves would have been the first to reject it, as an antho
poetry attributed to al-'Imam 'Ali (as) (Diwan-e 'Ali) was nev
accepted by the majority of Shi'i scholars as authentic. Some
such works, for example, the commentary on the Quran attribute

al-Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (as) or Fiqh al-Rida attributed to
al-Rida (as), are at issue among Shi'i scholars. But no one am
contemporaries or from the successive generations of Sunni or
'ulama' ever questioned Nahj al-balaghah's authenticity for mo
two centuries. Regarding the contents of Nahj al-balaghah the
scholars of all shades of opinion never doubted al-Radi's vera
They were aware of the presence of earlier sources of al-'Imam
utterances. There is abundant reliable evidence in support of
existence of such collections in the first and second centuries
from which 'Abd al-Hamid ibn Yahyfi, Ibn al-Muqaffa', and Zayd
ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib had quoted al-'I
sermons and letters.

In the third and fourth centuries, too, several collections of
khutab and rasa'il were compiled, some of which have been alre
referred to above. Ibn Abi al-Hadid (d. 655 or 656/1257 or 58)
Din Ahmad, known as Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728/1263-1328); and his
pupil Salah al-Din al-Safadi (d. 764/1362-63) accepted Nahj al
as a genuine collection of al Imam 'Ali's words. The former no
wrote one of the most famous commentaries on it, but also repu
all doubts about its authenticity. Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Safadi
among staunch opponents and critics of the Shi'ah, but both of
verified the authenticity of Nahj al-balagha and the veracity
Sharif al-Radi. Al-Safadi, in the account of al-Radi, writes:

> People are of the view that Nahj al-balaghah is his ow
> But I heard my teacher, al-'Imam al-'Allamah Taqi al-D
> ibn Taymiyyah say: "Nahj al-balaghah is not al-Sayyid
> product. What in this book is the utterance of 'Ali ib
> (as) is known, and whatever is from al-Radi that is al
> (al-Wafi bi al-wafayat, vol. 2, p. 375)

Instead of going into further details of the controversy about
of Nahj al-balaghah's ascription and forwarding more evidence
who created doubts about it, I would recommend the keen reader
al-Mu'jam al-mufahras li alfaz Nahj al-balaghah, edited by al-
al-Muhammadi and al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Dashti, who have done a
job in preparing a very comprehensive bibliography of the sour
book along with a detailed item-by-item list of the sources of
every sermon, letter, and saying contained in Nahj al-balaghah

since the death of al-Radi scholars of eminence have been alwa
in writing commentaries on Nahj al-balagha, which is another v
proof of its authenticity. So many Sunni, Mu'tazili, and Shi'i
would not have taken pains to comment upon al Radi's own fabri

'Ali Naqi Munzawi, in the catalogue of the library of Mishkat,
Tehran University, has enumerated 33 narrators of al-'Imam 'Al
before al-Radi and fourteen after him till the tenth Hijrah ce
Pizhoh, in his preface to Farman-e Malik Ashtar, edited by Hus
Awi, has given a list of its early commentators. Sayyid 'Abd a
Khatib, in Masadir Nahj al balagha wa asaniduh, has counted th
books written concerning the sources of Nahj al-balaghah. Hund
manuscripts of Nahj al-balaghah in various libraries of the wo
a greater number of the manuscripts of other earlier works con
'Imam 'Ali's utterances invite all seekers of truth to trace t
and ascertain the authenticity of Nahj al-balaghah. There are
documents available which contain certificates and testimonial
eminent scholars to their pupils authorizing them to narrate t
Nahj al-balaghah along with the permission to narrate ahadith
(saw) and the Imams (as). This is enough to show that Nahj al-
been considered to be of equal value in reliability with the m
compendiums of hadith. The narration of Nahj al-balagha's trad
started during the lifetime of al-Radi. Qutb al-Din al-Rawandi
in the preface of his commentary on Nahj al-balaghoh, refers t
of al-Sharif al Murtada, who had studied the book under al-Rad
was authorized to narrate its traditions to others, and she us
Nahj al-balaghah on her uncle's authority. Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahi
has narrated from this learned lady of the family of the Imams

Chapter 6

Source

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Chapter 7

Alternative Sources of the Contents of Nahj al-Balaghah

1. Praise belongs to God, Whose Glory lies beyond …

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf*, 57;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, I, 140;
(3) al-Qadi al-Quda`i, *Dustur*, 153;
(4) al-Razi, *Tafsir,* II, 164;
(5) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib*;
(6) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`*, I, *bab al-sama' wa al-kawakib*;
(7) al-Wasiti, *`Uyun*, see al-Majlisi, *Bihar*, vol.77, 300, 423;
(8) al-Rawandi, *Sharh*, see Kashif al-Ghita', *Madarik*, 69;
(9) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 150

2. I praise Him, seeking the completion of His bounty…

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun*, I, 326;
(2) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid*, p. 73;
(3) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd*, III, 112;
(4) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar*, 331, 354;
(5) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib*, I.

3. By God, so and so (Ibn Abi Quhafah)… .

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-Jamal*, 62;
(2) Ibn Qubbah, *al-'Insaf*, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh*, I, 69, see also `Abd al-Zahra', I, 309-310;
(3) al-Saduq, *Ma`ani*, 344;
(4) al-Hasan ibn `Abd Allah al-`Askari, from him al-Saduq in *Ma`ani*;
(5) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd*, IV, see *`Abd al-Zahra'*, I, 311-312 and al-Majlisi, *Bihar*, vol.8, 160;

(6) al-Ka`bi (d.319/931) - see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh*, I, 69;
(7) Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Manaqib*, see *Bihar*, vol.8, 160; and `Abd al-Zahra', I, 310-11;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad*, 135;
(9) al-Qadi `Abd al-Jabbar, *al-Mughni*, see *al-Ghadir*, VII, 83;
(10) al-Saduq, `Ilal, *bab al-`illat allati min ajliha taraka Amir al-Mu'minin (A) mujahadat ahl al-khilaf*;
(11) Abu Sa`id al-'Abi, *Nathr al-durar* and *Nuzhat al-'adib*, see `Abd al-Zahra', I, 313;
(12) al-Murtada, *al-Shafi*, 203, 204;
(13) al-Haffar, *al-'Insaf* from him al-Tusi in *al-'Amali;*
(14) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali*, I, 392;
(15) Qutb al-Din Rawandi, *Sharh*, from Ibn Mardawayh and al-Tabarani;
(16) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah*, 133;
(17) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf*, 313;
(18) al-Murtada, *Sharh al-Khutbat al-Shiqshiqiyyah*, see *A`yan al-Shi`ah*, vol. 41, p. 195;
(19) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj*; I, 95; for a detailed discussion of sources, see `Abd al-Zahra', I, 309-324.

4. Through us you were guided …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad*, 147;
(2) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid*, 95.

5. O people, tear the waves of …

(1) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah*, *bab* 6, 137;
(2) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj*, I, 127;
(3) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin*, II, 139, see `Arshi.

6. By God, I shall not be like the badger that …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* events of the year 36 H.S VI, 3107;
(2) Ibn Salam, *Gharib al-hadith,* 174;
(3) al-Jawhari, *al-Sihah*, V, 2026;
(4) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* 33*.

7. They have taken Satan to be the sovereign …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, I,* 109;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 50. *(kh-t-l)*

8. He claims that he swore allegiance …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 175, from (2)
(2) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal.*

9. They thundered and …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 177, from (2)
(2) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal.*
(3) Ibn A`tham, *Futuh,* as quoted by (4)
(4) al-Khwarazmi in *al-Manaqib.*

10. Lo, Satan has brought together …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 118; see also under Sermon:22 and Sermon:134 below.

11. Mountains shift, yet you shouldn't …

(1) Al-Mamatiri, *Nuzhat al-'absar,* see `Abd al-Zahra', I, 340;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* IV*, bab al-qatl wa al-shahadah.*

12. Does your brother love us? …

(1) Al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin,* I, 262.

13. You are a woman's army …

(1) Al-Dinawari, al-'Akhbar, 153;
(2) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 377;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* I, 217;
(4) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 328;
(5) al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* VIII, 447;
(6) `Ali ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir,* 655;
(7) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,** 78;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 210, 203.

14. Your land is close to the sea …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 217;
(2) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal, see* al-Mufid, *op. cit.;*
(3) al-Dinawari, *al-'Akhbar,* 151;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun*, I, 217;
(5) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj*, II, 368;
(6) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 169.

15. By God, even if I had found that …

(1) Al-`Askari, *al-'Awa'il,* 102;
(2) al-Qadi al-Nu`man, *Da`a'im*, I, 396;
(3) al-Mas`udi, *Ithbat,*120.

16. My word is the guarantee of my promise …

(1) Al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* I, 170;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 132;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 236;
(5) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 162;
(6) al-`Askari, *al-'Awa'il,* 102;
(7) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 369 and *Rawdat al-Kafi*, 67;
(8) al-Tusi, *al'Amali,* * 147.

17. The most detestable of creatures …

(1) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 55;
(2) Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut,* I, 290;
(3) al-Harawi, *al-Jam`*, see (4)
(4) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah (under kh-b-t);*
(5) al-Qadi al-Nu`man, *Usul al-madhahib,* 135;
(6) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 240;
(7) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 390;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 109;
(9) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* I, 61;
(10) Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharib al-hadith,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* I, 90.

18. When a case is put before …

(1) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 141;
(2) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 139;
(3) al-Qadi al-Nu`man, *Da`a'im,* I, 93;
(4) Narrated by Ibn Udhaynah from al-'Imam al-Sadiq (A) in al-Nuri, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il,* III, 174; see also al-Saffar, *Basa'ir al-darajat.*

19. What know ye what is against me … ?

(1) Abu al-Faraj, *al-'Aghani,*VIII, 59.

20. Indeed, if you could see …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 405.

21. Your ultimate goal is before you …

(1) al-Sharif al-Radi, *Khasa'is,* 87;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* * V, 157.

22. Lo, Satan has begun encouraging …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 154;
(2) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 35;
(3) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 95;
(4) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf,* 173;
(5) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 172;
(6) al-Khwarazmi, *al-Manaqib;* 117;
(7) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 171, II, 167;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* * 129; see Sermon:26 and Sermon:171 below.

23. Verily, the command descends …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* II, 56, 294, V, 56;
(2) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd*, II, 366;
(3) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Siffin,* 10;
(4) al-Ya`qubi *Ta'rikh,* II, 149;
(5) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-kasb wa al-mal;*
(6) al-Muttaqi, *Kanz,* VIII, 225;

(7) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* in the biographical account of `A1i (A);
(8) Ibn Salam, *Gharib al-hadith,* II, 183;
(9) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III, 468;
(10) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* I, 189;
(11) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 80.

24. By my life, …

(1) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III, *244 (`a.s.b).*

25. It is only Kufah …

(1) Al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* III, 149;
(2) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* III, 337;
(3) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* I, 305, X, 225;
(4) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 383;
(5) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,** 163;
(6) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat* II, 636.

26. Verily, God sent Muhammad (S) …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 154;
(2) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 303, II, 633;
(3) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid, 95;*
(4) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf, 173;*
(5) al-Kulayni, *al-Rasa'il,* mentioned by Ibn Tawus, *op. cit.*

27. Indeed, jihad is one of the doors of Paradise …

(1) Al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* I, 170, II, 66;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 236;
(3) al-Dinawari, *al-'Akhbar,* 211;
(4) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* II, 474;
(5) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* I, 13;
(6) Abu al-Faraj, *al-'Aghani,* XV, 45;
(7) Idem., *Maqatil,* 27;
(8) al-Saduq, *Ma`ani,* 309;
(9) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 442;
(10) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 403;
(11) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 69;

(12) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,** 160-164;
(13) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* IV, 5.

28. Surely, the world has turned its back …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,** 138;
(2) al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* I, 171;
(3) al-Baqillani, *I`jaz,* 222;
(4) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 35;
(5) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 365;
(6) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun*, II, 235;
(7) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 413;
(8) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* II, 633.

29.O people, who are together with their bodies, but …

(1) Al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* I, 170;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 150;
(3) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 71;
(4) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 380;
(5) al-Qadi al-Nu`man, *Da`a'im,* I, 391;
(6) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* I, 306;
(7) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 112;
(8) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* II, 483;
(9) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* * 158;
(10) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi.*

30. If I had ordered it, …

(1) Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* V, 98, 101.

31. Don't meet Talhah …

(1) Al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* II, 115;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* I, 115;
(3) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 314;
(4) al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar, *al-Muwaffaqiyyat,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 171;
(5) Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-'a`yan,* biographical account of Ibn al-Mu`allim, see `Abd al-Zahra', I, 412.

32. O people, we have been born in …

(1) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 90*;*
(2) al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* I, 175;
(3) al-Dhahabi, *Mizan,* II, 276;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 237;
(5) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* * II, 173;
(6) al-Baqillani, *I`jaz,* I, 197.

33. Verily, God sent Muhammad (S) …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 154.

34. Woe to you! I am tired of rebuking you …
(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 51;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 150;
(3) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* 380;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 79;
(5) Nasr ibn Muzahim, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 179.

35. Praise belongs to God, even though …

(1) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* 365;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 43;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 119, 141;
(4) Nasr, *Siffin,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 110;
(5) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 103;
(6) Abu al-Faraj, *al-'Aghani,* IX, 5;
(7) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 412;
(8) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Kamil,* II, 171;
(9) Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah,* VII, 286.

36. I warn you …

(1) Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar, *al-Muwaffaqiyyat,* 350;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 47;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 147;
(4) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 100;
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 97;
(6) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 402;

(7) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 371.

37. I took up the task …

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 134;
(2) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* I, 37.

38. Doubt is called doubt because …
(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 98;
(2) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 170;
(3) al-Jahiz, *Rasa'il,* 125.

39. I am faced with such who do not obey …

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 291, 297, II, 453-4;
(2) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 404;
(3) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 41, events of the year 39 H.

40. A true statement to which a false meaning …

(1) Al-Shafi`i, *Kitab al-'umm;*
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 41;
(3) Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut,* I, 530;
(4) al-Ya`qubi, *Ta'rikh,* II, 136;
(5) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* 352, 355, 361, 377;
(6) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* II, 131.

41. O people, loyalty and truthfulness are twins …

(1) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 170;
(2) al-Jahiz, *Rasa'il,* 125.

42. O people, what I fear most for you …

(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* 3, 4;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 50;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 353;
(4) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* III, 29;
(5) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 35, 47;
(6) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* * 138;

(7) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* * 73, 145;
(8) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 56;
(9) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 436.

43. My preparations for war with the Syrians …

(1) Al-Khwarazmi, *Manaqib,* 108;
(2) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Siffin,* 55;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 94;
(4) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 108;
(5) al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh,* I, 461;
(6) al-Tusi, *Misbah,* 429.

44. May God disgrace Masqalah, …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 65-77,
(2) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* 329-372;
(3) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* 411-417;
(4) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* vol. 55 in the account of Masqalah ibn Hubayrah;
(5) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* III, 419;
(6) Abu al-Faraj, *al-'Aghani,* IX, 100-106.

45. Praise belongs to God, Whose mercy …

(1) Al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh, I,* 327;
(2) al-Tusi, *Misbah,* 458; parts of it recorded by (3)
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad;*
(4) al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* I, 171;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 235;
(6) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf;*
(7) al-Baqillani, *I`jaz,* 222.

46. My God, I seek Thy refuge …

(1) A`tham al-Kufi, *al-Futuh,* II, 461;
(2) Nasr, *Siffin,* 132;
(3) al-Qadi al-Nu`man, *Da`a'im,* I, 347;
(4) narrated from the Prophet (S) in al-'Azhari, *Tahdhib,* III, 153;
(5) al-Nuri, *Riyad al-salihin,* 197, hadith 975.

47. 0 Kufah! It is as if I see you …

(1) Ibn al-Faqih, *Kitab al-buldan,* 163;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, *bab al-bilad wa al-diyar.*

48. Praise belongs to God when night …

(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* 131, 132;
(2) mentioned by a group of biographers, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 287.

49. Praise belongs to God, Who knows the inside …
(1) Al-Wasiti, *`Uyun*, see al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol.67, 304.

50. Verily, the source of misguidance lies in …

(1) al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, I, 208;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, *bab al-bida` wa al-ra'y wa al-maqayis*;
(3) *Idem., Rawdat al-Kafi*, 58;
(4) al-Ya`qubi, *Ta'rikh*, II, 136;
(5) al-Tawhidi, *al-Basa'ir*, 32.

51. They ask you to feed them …

(1) Nasr, *Siffin*, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh, I, 329.

52. Lo, the world has …

(1) al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh*, I, 329;
(2) al-Tusi, *al-Misbah,* 461;
(3) Parts of it in Abu Nu`aym, *al-Hilyah,* I, 77;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-'Amali,* 87.

52 (a). The best kind of sacrifice …

(1) Al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh,* I, 461;
(2) al-Tusi, *Misbah,* 429;
(3) al-Khwarazmi, *al-Manaqib,* 108;
(4) Nasr, *Siffin,* 201;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* 94;

(6) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 108.

53. Rush towards me …

(1) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 128 *(d.k.k)*;
(3) Abu Mikhnaf, *al-Jamal,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 340;
(4) also the sources mentioned under Sermon:26.

54. As to your statement that …

(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* 209;
(2) `Abd al-Zahra', *Masadir,* II, 27, says that statements to this effect have been widely narrated from `Ali (A).

55. In the company of the Prophet (S)

(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* 520;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, IV, *Rabi`, bab al-qatl wa al-shahadah*;
(3) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*;
(4) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal*; for (3) and (4) see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 348-355.

56. Soon after me, a man …

(1) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 373;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi* (1278) 207;
(3) al-`Ayyashi, *Tafsir*, under verse 16:106;
(4) al-Himyari, *Qurb al-'asnad*;
(5) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab*, II, 119;
(6) al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 385;
(7) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali*, I, 214, II, 374;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad*, * 184.

57. The sand-storms struck you …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 48, 3378;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 124;
(3) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 100;
(4) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 162;
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* under (a.b.r);

(6) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 369;
(7) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* II, 141.

58. The place they shall fall …

(1) Al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* 385;
(2) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 416;
(3) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* II, 120.

59. Certainly not. By God, they are yet sperm …

Sources same as that of Sermon:58.

60. Do not fight the Khawarij after me …

(1) Al-Saduq, *`Ilal,* 201;
(2) al-Tusi, *al-Tahdhib,* II, 48.

61. There is a protective shield of God …

(1) Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah,* VIII, 12, from (2)
(2) Abu Dawud, *Kitab al-qadar;*
(3) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 89;
(4) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-qatl wa al-shahadah*.

62. Lo, this world is a place …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* under *inna,* 10, 88, 199.

63. Fear God, O servants of God! …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 105, 154, 155, 246;
(2) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 145.
(3) Nasr, *Siffin,* * 7.

64. Praise belongs to God …

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid,* 29, 62;
(2) al-Wasiti, `Uyun;
(3) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 238.

65. O Muslims! …

(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 479;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* I, 110, 133;
(3) al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* II, 24;
(4) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* 45;
(5) al-Tabari, *Basharah,* 172;
(6) al-Quda`i, *Dustur*, 124;
(7) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* XII, 182;
(8) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 380;
(9) Furat, *Tafsir al-Qur'an.*

66. Why didn't you argue …

(1) Al-Nuwayri, *Nihayah,* VIII, 168;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 326;
(3) al-Karajiki, *al-Ta`ajjub,* 13;
(4) al-Jawhari, *al-Saqifah,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, at the beginning;
(5) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 263;
(6) Ibn `Abd al-Birr, *al-'Isti`ab,* in the account of `Awf ibn Athathah;
(7) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj*;
(8) al-Tawhidi, *al-Basa'ir*, 59;
(9)al-Murtada, *al-'Amali,* I, 198.

67. I had intended to make Hashim …

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 63 (events of the year 36);
(3) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 404.

68. How long shall I accord to you the consideration …

(1) Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 438, 458;
(2) al-Ya`qubi, *Ta'rikh,* II, 184;
(3) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat;*
(4) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,** VI, 3444, 3445, chronicles of the year 39.

69. I fell asleep as I sat …

(1) Ibn Sa`d, *al-Tabaqat,* III, 36;
(2) Abu al-Faraj, *Maqatil,* 16;
(3) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 298;
(4) al-Qali, *Dhayl al-'Amali,* 190;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 160;
(6) Muhammad ibn Habib, *al-Mughtalin,* on the authority of Abu `Abd al-Rahman al-Salami;
(7) Ibn `Abd al-Birr, *al-'Isti`ab,* III, 61;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 9;
(9) al-Murtada, *Ghurar,* IV, 78;
(10) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 495.

70. O people of Iraq …

(1) Ibn Da`b, *al-'Ikhtisas,* 155;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 161;
(3) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 254;
(4) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* II, 236;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 301;
(6) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 105;
(7) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 137.

71. My God, Who art the spreader …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharib al-hadith,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, IV, 364;
(2) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 159;
(3) al-Qali, *Dhayl al-'Amali,* 173;
(4) al-'Azhari, *Tahdhib*;
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah*;
(6) al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 119;
(7) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 136;
(8) al-Samahiji, *al-Sahifat al-`Alawiyyah,*
(9) al-Zamakhshari, *al-Fa'iq*; for the *asnad* of this *Khutbah* see al-Mahmudi, *Nahj al-sa`adah,* 286.

72. Didn't he give me his allegiance after …

(1) Ibn Sa`d, *al-Tabaqat,* I, in the account of Marwan;
(2) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 361;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 37;

(4) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 78;
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 67; see al-Damiri, *Hayat al-hayawan* and Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 54.

73. You know for certain that …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* chronicles of the year 23;
(2) al-'Azhari, *Tahdhib,* I, 341;
(3) al-Harawi, *al-Jam`;*
(4) al-Shaykh Warram, *Tanbih;*
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* events of the year 23.

74. Didn't the knowledge of Banu Umayyah …

(1) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* under (q.r.f);
(2) al-Turayhi, *Majma`,* under (q.r.f).

75. May God have mercy upon him who …

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 151;
(2) al-Karajiki, *Kanz,* 162;
(3) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 59;
(4) Ibn Shakir, *`Uyun al-hikam;*
(5) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 231;
(6) al-Husari, *Zahr,* I, 42;
(7) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar;*
(8) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 145.

76. The Banu Umayyah …

(1) Abu al-Faraj, *al-'Aghani,* XI, 29, II, 29;
(2) al-'Azhari, *Tahdhib,* XV, 27;
(3) Ibn Salam, *Gharib al-hadith;*
(4) Ibn Durayd, *al-Mu'talif;*
(5) Al-'Isfahani, *al-Jam` bayn al-Gharibayn;*
(6) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 186;
(7) al-`Askari, *Jamharat al-'amthal,* I, 165.

77. My God, forgive me …

(1) Al-Jahiz, *al-Mi'at al-mukhtarah.*

78. Do you claim that …

(1) Ibrahim ibn al-Hasan, *Siffin,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 203;
(2) al-Saduq, *`Uyun akhbar al-Rida,* I, 138;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 249;
(4) al-Saduq, *`Uyun al-jawahir,* see (5)
(5) Ibn Tawus, *Faraj al-mahmum,* 57-59;
(6) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 368.

79. O people, women are …

(1) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 85;
(2) Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut,* I, 282;
(3) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* V;
(4) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* Majlis 50;
(5) al-Mufid, *al-'Ikhtisas.*

80. O people, zuhd lies in …

(1) Al-Saduq, *Ma`ani al-'akhbar,* 251;
(2) Idem., *al-Khisal,* I, 11;
(3) al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin,* 234;
(4) al- 'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 119;
(5) al-Fattal, *Rawdah,* 434;
(6) al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat,*106.

81. How should I describe this house …

(1) Al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* I, 88;
(2) al-Qali, *al-'Amali,* II, 117;
(3) Ibn Durayd, *al-Mujtana,* 31;
(4) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 138;
(5) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* III, 172;
(6) al-Murtada, *al-'Amali,* 153;
(7) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 136;
(8) al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat,* 243;
(9) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 86;
(10) al-Karajiki, *Kanz,* 160.

82. Praise belongs to God, Who is high ...

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 146;
(2) al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 59,
(3) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar;*
(4) al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam;*
(5) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 77;
(6) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 132 (b.d.d), II, 287 (`a.a.z).

83. How strange of the son of al-Nabighah …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* III, 10, I, 164;
(2) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 287;
(3) al-Tawhidi, *al-'Imta`,* III, 183;
(4) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* 54;
(5) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 145, 151;
(6) al-'Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 131;
(7) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 117, III, 59, 110, IV, 59, 89;
(8) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* 513; al-Tusi narrates from Muhammad ibn `Imran al-Marzbani (d.384/994), Ibn `Uqdah (d.333/944) and al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar (d.255/869).

84. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah …

(1) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 77;
(2) al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam;*
(3) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 131;
(4) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 140.

85. He knows the secrets …

(1) Al-Dinawari, *Akhbar,* 145;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 100, 101;
(3) al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin,* 233-4;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 120;
(5) al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat,* 156;
(6) al- 'Amidi, *Ghurar.*

86. O servants of God, the most beloved of God's …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-`izz wa al-sharaf;* see also Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 132.

87. God didn't crush any tyrant before …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 62;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 173;
(3) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 46 (a.z.l.).

88. He sent him after a period …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *`Usul al-Kafi,* I, 60;
(2) al-Sayyid al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* I, 342;
(3) `Ali ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir,* p.3.

89. Praise belongs to God, Who is …

(1) Al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam;*
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 185;
(3) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 345.

90. Praise belongs to God, Who is not enriched by …

(1) Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah, author of *Khutab Amir al-Mu'minin;*
(2) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 406;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid,* 34;
(4) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, *bab al-mala'ikah;*
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* discusses its unusual *(gharib)* phrases in several places;
(6) Ibn Tawus, *Faraj al-mahmum,* 56.

91. Leave me and find someone else …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,** VI, 3066 (events of the year 35);
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah* (events of the year 35);
(3) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib al-'umam,* I, 508.

92. I have pulled out the eyes of ..

(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.

93. Blessed is God, who is not attained by …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 134;
(2) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 74.

94. He sent him when the people …

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* XVIII, 219.

95. Praise belongs to God, Who is the First …

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* XVI, 380.

96. If He gives respite to the oppressor …

(1) *Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays,* 110;
(2) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* II, 236;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 301;
(4) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 76;
(5) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 161;
(6) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 105;
(7) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 137;
(8) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* biographical account of `Ali (A);
(9) al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* II, 68;
(10) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 142;
(11) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,** 62.

97. By God, they will continue …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 151;

(2) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 100;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 157.

98. We praise Him …

(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.

99. Praise be to God, who spreads …

See `Abd al-Zahra', II, 198-199.

100. Praise be to God, the First …
(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 48;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah, (b.j.r);*
(3) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali;*
(4) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 329;
(5) al-Karajiki, *Ma`dan,* 226;
(6) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* 41;
(7) al-Jahiz, *al-Hayawan,* II, 90.

101. On that day God will collect …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 153;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 131;

(3) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* IV, 31;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 95;

(5) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I ,197.

102. O people, look at the world …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 139;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 143;
(3) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* II, 225;
(4) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 352;
(5) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 219;

(6) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 202;
(7) al-Qadi al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 48;
(8) al-Khuza`i, *al-Fitan,* see (9)
(9) Ibn Tawus, *al-Malahim,* 27;
(10) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* V, 131.

103. God Almighty sent Muhammad …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 154;
(2) al-Nasa'i, *al-Khasa'is,* 70.

104. Until God sent Muhammad …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 160;
(2) `Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, *Tafsir,* I, 384.

105. Praise belongs to God, Who laid down …
(1) Al-Ghazali, *Ihya';*
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 126;
(3) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* II, 49;
(4) al-Qali, *al-'Amali,* 171;
(5) Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut,* I, 382, 407;
(6) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 74, 75;
(7) al-Saduq, *al-Khisal,* I, 108;
(8) al-Qadi al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 121;
(9) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* * 23.

106. I have seen …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 14, events of 37 H.;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* V, 40;
(3) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Siffin,* 256.

107. Praise belongs to God, Who is Manifest …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 85, 209;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, *bab tabaddul al-'ahwal.*

108. Everything humbles itself …

(1) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 76;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-mala'ikah;*
(3) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar.*

109. The best means by which …

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 104;
(2) al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh,* I, 131;
(3) al-Saduq, *`Ilal,* 114;
(4) al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin,* 233;
(5) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 220.

110. I warn you …

(1) Al-Marzbani, *al-Muniq,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 242;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 127;
(3) al-Qadi al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 51;
(4) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* 144;
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 18, 25, 308;
(6) al-Jahiz, *al-Bayan,* II, 112;
(7) Ibn Qutaybah,*`Uyun,* II, 250.

111. Do you feel it when he enters …

(1) Al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam,* see al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol.77, p. 430.

112. I warn you …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* at the beginning;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 86, 189.

113. Praise belongs to God, Who …

(1) Al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* II, 335;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 156;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, II, at the beginning of each part;
(4) al-Qadi al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 33;
(5) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar;*
(6) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* II, 107.

114. My God, our hands have …

(1) Al-Saduq, *Man la yahduruh,* I, 335;
(2) al-Tusi, *Misbah, adab salat al-'istisqa'*, see Kashif al-Ghita', *Madarik,* 250;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-sahab wa al-matar;*
(4) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* V, 53;
(5) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 338;
(6) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 190, from (7)
(7) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal;*
(8) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139, 159;
(9) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib al-'umam,* see *Ta'sis al-Shi`ah,* 415;
(10) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 220.

115. He sent him as a caller unto …

(1) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* VI, 249;
(2) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* III, 150;
(3) al-'Azhari, *Tahdhib,* VII, 101 *(kh.d.r);*
(4) Ibn Faqih, *al-Buldan,* 181;
(5) al-Harawi, *al-Jam`,* see Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 41, V, 170;
(6) al-Muttaqi, *Kanz,* VI, 87;
(7) al-Daylami, *al-'Irshad,* I, 33.

116. You spent no wealth …

See `Abd al-Zahra', II, 260.

117. You are supporters of the truth …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh;*
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 121;
(3) al-Waqidi, in *al-Jamal* and;
(4) al-Mada'ini in his book, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* II, 259.

118. What is wrong with you? …

Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 215 *(th.f.l)* .

119. By God, I have known …

(1) *Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays.* 142;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 81, 82, 83.

120. This is the punishment …

(1) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 165;
(2) Ibn Talhah, *Matalib,* I, 100;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-'Ikhtisas,* 153, quoted from Ibn Da'b's work;
(5) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 273;
(6) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 130;
(7) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar;*
(8) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* * 135.

121. Were all of you with us …

(1) Al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 274;
(2) IbnQutaybah, *al-Ma`arif,* II, 136.

122. Whoever among you …

(1) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 338;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* V, 53;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 190, from al-Waqidi's *al-Jamal;*
(4) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139, 159;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib al-'umam,* see *Ta'sis al-Shi`ah,* 415;
(6) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 220.

123. Place the armoured at the fore …

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Siffin,* 235;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 9, events of 37 H.;
(3) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* V, 39;
(4) Ibn A`tham al-Kufi, *al-Futuh,* III, 73;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib,* I, 583;
(6) Al-Tawhidi, *al-Basa'ir,* 185;
(7) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 154.

124. We did not make persons arbiters …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 37, events of 37 H.;
(2) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 100;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 157;
(4) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 275.

125. Do you ask me to seek …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 153;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 131;
(3) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* IV, 31;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 95;
(5) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 197;
(6) al-Mada'ini, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 182;
(7) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 75.

126. If you refuse to stop claiming …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 48, events of 37 H.;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah, (b.j.r);*
(3) al-Jahiz, *al-Hayawan,* II, 90;
(4) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* 41;
(5) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali;*
(6) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 329;
(7) al-Karajiki, *Ma`dan,* 226.

127. O Ahnaf, …

See the sources mentioned under Sermon:100.

128. O servants of God, …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 320;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab tabaddul al-'ahwal.*

129. O Abu Dharr, …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 206;
(2) al-Jawhari, *Kitab al-Saqifah, see* Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* II, 375;
(3) al-Ya`qubi, *Ta'rikh,* II, 120.

130. O those of differing minds …

(1) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 120;
(2) al-Qadi al-Nu`man, *Da`a'im,* 531;
(3) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III,154 *(z.'a.r),* V, 270 *(w.`a.a).*

131. We praise Him for whatever …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 282;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 210 *(w.f.z),* V, 239 *(h.b.1).*

132. The world and the Hereafter have …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 77;
(2) See Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* II, 386.

133. God has taken upon Himself …

(1) Ibn al- 'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* IV, 250;
(2) Abu `Ubayd, *al-'Amwal,* 252.

134. O son of the accursed …

(1) Ibn A`tham al-Kufi, *al-Futuh,* II, 165.

135. Your allegiance …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 142;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, III, 467 *(f.l.t).*

136. By God, they did not …

(1) Ibn `Abd al-Birr, *al-'Isti`ab,* II, 211;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *Usd al-ghabah,* II, 61;
(3) al-Mufid in *al-'Irshad,* 146, 142, and *al-Jamal,* 143, from al-Waqidi;
(4) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III, 318 *(`a.w.dh);*
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 154;

(6) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 310;
(7) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 95;
(8) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf,* 173;
(9) Safwah, *Jamharah;*
(10) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* * VI, 3143.

137. He will made desires conform to …

(1) Al- 'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 296.

138. No one overtook me …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 39, events of 23 H.;
(2) al-'Azhari, *Tahdhib,* I, 241;
(3) al-Shaykh Warram, *Tanbih;*
(4) al-Harawi, *al-Jam`;*
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah.*

139. Verily, it befits those who are saved …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 135, 359.

140. O people, one who knows his brother …

(1) Al-Quda`i, *Dustur,* 139;
(2) Ibn Hudhayl, *`Ayn,* 215;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-Khisal,* 110;
(4) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* VI, 268.

141. One who lays goodness where it is not …

(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* 235;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 9;
(3) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* V,39;
(4) Ibn A`tham, *al-Futuh,* III, 73.

142. Lo, the earth which bears you …

(1) Al-Daylami, *A`lam,* see al-Nuri, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il,* I, 439;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 137 *(b.t.n).*

143. God sent His apostles …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* see `Abd al-Zahra', II, 322.

144. O people, you are in this world …

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 73;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139 as well as *al-'Amali;*
(3) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 220;
(4) al-Qali, *al-'Amali,* II, 67.

145. The victory in this matter …

(1) Al-Dinawari, *al-'Akhbar,* 134;
(2) Ibn A`tham, *al-Futuh,* II, 37;
(3) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* IV, 237 events of 27 H.;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 120;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib,* I, 419.

146. God sent Muhammad (S) …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 386;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 163.

147. Each of the two …

(1) Abu Mikhnaf, *al-Jamal,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* I, 78;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 142.

148. O people, every man shall meet …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 229;
(2) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 436;
(3) al-Mas`udi, *Ithbat,* 103;
(4) Ibn `Asakir, *Ta'rikh,* XII, 211.

149. They took to the right and to the left …

(1) Al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 74.

150. I praise God and seek His help …

(1) Al-Sayyid al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* I, 334.

151. Praise is God's, Who proves …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 139;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 232, 235.

152. He has been allowed a respite ..

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 108;
(2) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* V, 82;
(3) Warram, *al-Majmu`ah,* 77.

153. The enlightened heart …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 252, 324, 331;
(2) al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* I, 217.

154. Praise belongs to God, Whom epithets …

(1) Al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* I, 334.

155. Whoever can …

(1) Al-Tusi, *Talkhis al-Shafi,* I, 326;
(2) al-Hilli, *Mukhtasar Basa'ir al-darajat,* 195;
(3) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 326;
(4) al-Muttaqi, *Kanz,* VIII, 215;
(5) al-Majlisi, *Bihar, bab al-fitan wa al-mihan,* 448.

156. Praise belongs to God, Who has made …

(1) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 510 *(sh.w.l);*
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 97;
(3) al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam,* see *Bihar,* vol. XVII, 113.

157. He sent him at a time …

(1) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah, (`a.dh.r, m.q.r and n.kh.m)* I, 46, III, 198, IV, 347, V, 34;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 62;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 173.

158. I was a goodly neighbour unto you …

No sources mentioned.

159. His command is judicious and wise …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi', bab al-ya's wa al-qana`ah*

160. He sent him with a brilliant light …

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* XVIII, 222.

161. O brother of Banu Asad, …

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 368;
(2) al-Saduq, *`Ilal, bab* 119;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 172;
(4) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 64.

162. Praise belongs to God, the Creator …

(1) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 72;
(2) al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam,* see al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol.77, p.306;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, *bab al-mala'ikah.*

163. The people are behind me …

(1) Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* V, 60;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 96, events of 34 H.;
(3) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 308, II, 273;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 100;
(5) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib al-'umam* (1909), I, 478.

164. He originated them …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`*, I;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 27, II, 140 *(d.w.r),* III, 238 *(`a.s.l.j).*

165. The young among you …

(1) *Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays,* 89;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 62;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 373;
(4) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 46.

166. God Almighty sent down the Book …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 157, events of 35 H.;
(2) al-Radi, *al-Khasa'is,* 87.

167. O brothers, I am not ignorant of …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 158, events of 35 H.;
(2) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib,* I, 510.

168. Verily, God sent the Prophet …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 163.

169. Do you see, those who have sent you …

(1) Al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal,* in al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 156;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 192, events of 36 H.;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-jawabat al-muskitah wa rashaqat al-kalam.*

170. O God, the Lord of the roof raised high …

(1) Nasr ibn Muzahim, *Siffin,* 232;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 8, events of 37 H.;
(3) Ibn Tawus, in *Muhaj* from al-Husayn ibn Sa`id al-'Ahwazi, *Kitab al-du`a' wa al-dhikr.*

171. Praise belongs to God, from Whom one heaven …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 48;
(2) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* 41;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali;*
(4) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah, (bab al-ba');*
(5) al-Karajiki, *Ma`dan,* 226;
(6) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 329;
(7) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 295;
(8) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,** 45, 76.

172. The trustee of His revelations, …

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 130;
(2) Abu Ja`far al-'Iskafi, *Naqd al-`Uthmaniyyah,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 171-173.

173. As for me, I am not intimidated by war …

(1) Al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 172;
(2) al-Khwarazmi, *al-Manaqib,* 117;
(3) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 171, 282, II, 167, V, 66, 240;
(4) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat;*
(5) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 95;
(6) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf,* 173;
(7) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah*, I, 154.

174. O negligent people, …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 191;
(2) See `Abd al-Zahra', II, 422.

175. Draw benefit from God's …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 219;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* II, 443;
(3) al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin,* 6;
(4) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 153;
(5) al-`Ayyashi, *Tafsir,* II, 262;

(6) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 71.

176. You have all agreed to select …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 48 (chronicle of the year 37) from Abu Mikhnaf.

177. An engagement does not …

(1) Al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam,* see al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol. 77, 307;
(2) al-Saduq, *al-Khisal,* II, 163;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 162;
(4) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III, 282 *(`a.q.l.).*

178. Eyes perceive Him not, …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 98, 138;
(2) al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid,* 96, 320, 324;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 205;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 131;
(5) al-Mufid, *al-'Ikhtisas,* 236;
(6) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 157.

179. I praise God for what He has ordained …

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 291;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 60, events of 38 H.;
(3) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 188 *(t.r.k).*

180. Away with them …

(1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 265;
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,*VI, 65, events of 38 H.

181. Praise belongs to God, towards Whom …

(1) Al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam,* see al-Majlisi, vol. 77, 310;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 145, 198.

182. Praise belongs to God, Who is known …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 53;

(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* V, 299;
(3) al-Bahrani, *Tafsir al-burhan,* I, 9, from a source other than *Nahj.*

183. Keep silent. May God disgrace you …

(1) Al-`Askari, *Kitab al-sina`atayn,* 258.

184. Praise belongs to God Whom senses cannot perceive …

(1) Abu Talib Yahya ibn al-Husayn ibn Harun al-Husayni, *al-'Amali,* 192;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab dawabb al-barr wa al-bahr;*
(3) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 305.

185. He who attributes to Him states …
(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* I, 138;
(2) al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid,* 96, 320, 324;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 205;
(4) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 131;
(5) al-Mufid, *al-'Ikhtisas,* 236;
(6) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 157;
(7) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 299;
(8) al-Murtada, *al-'Amali,* I, 103.

186. May my father and my mother …

(1) Al-Mada'ini, *Siffin,* see `Abd al-Zahra', II, 478;
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-mal wa al-kasb.*

187. O people, I advise you to fear God …

(1) Abu Mansur al-Tha`alibi, *al-'I`jaz wa al-'Ijaz,* 31.

188. One kind of faith is one which is fixed …

(1) Al-Tha`alibi, *al-'I`jaz,* 32;
(2) al-Saffar, *Basa'ir,* 31; on p. 202 from (3)
(3) Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah, *Khutab Amir al-Mu'minin (A);*
(4) al-Saduq, *`Uyun,* I, 164;

(5) al-Saduq, *al-Khisal,* II, 164;
(6) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 80, narrated by (7)
(7) al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak,* II, 466;
(8) Ibn `Abd al-Birr, *Jami`,* I, 114;
(9) Ibn Hajar, *al-'Isabah,* II, 509;
(10) al-Tabari, *al-Riyad,* 198;
(11) al-Suyuti, *Ta'rikh al-khulafa',* 124;
(12) Dahlan, *al-Futuhat,* II, 337;
(13) al-Qunduzi, *Yanabi` al-mawaddah,* 224.

189. I praise Him in gratitude for His …

(1) Ibn Nubatah (d. 374/984) narrated this *khutbah,* see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* III, 220;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 20, 108.

190. Praise belongs to God Who has …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 87, 180, 245;
(2) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* see `Abd al-Zahra', III, 28.

191. Praise belongs to God Who has donned …

(1) Ibn Tawus, *Kitab al-yaqin,* 196;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Furu` al-Kafi,* IV, 168;
(3) al-Saduq, *al-Faqih,* I, 152;
(4) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 113;
(5) al-Mawardi, *A`lam,* 97;
(6) See al-Tehrani, *al-Dhari`ah,* VII, 204.

192. God Almighty created the creatures …

(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.*

193. We praise Him for succouring …

(1) Al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* II, 308;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 54, 269.

194. Praise belongs to God, Who has made manifest …

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol. 74, 314.

195. He sent him (the Prophet) when there wasn't …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 87.

196. Those Companions of Muhammad (S) …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 243;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-'Amali,* see al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol. 17, 105.

197. He knows the criest of the beasts in wilderness …

(1) Al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 126;
(2) al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* II, 49;
(3) al-Qali, *al-'Amali,* 171;
(4) Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut,* I, 382;
(5) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* I, 74, 75;
(6) al-Saduq, *al-Khisal,* I, 108.

198. Commit yourselves to prayer …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* V, *kitab al-jihad,* 36.

199. By God, Mu`awiyah is not smarter than me …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* II, 336, 338.

200. O people, don't be averse to …

(1) Al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin,* 208;
(2) al-Nu`mani, *al-Ghaybah,* 9;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 300;
(4) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 76;
(5) al-Bahrani, *al-Burhan,* IV, 260;
(6) al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* II, 266.

201. O Messenger of God, may peace be upon you …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* I, 458;
(2) al-Tabari, *Dala'il,* 47;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 165;
(4) al-Tusi, *al-'Amali,* I, 108;
(5) al-'Irbili, *Kashf,* II, 147;
(6) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 318.

202. O people, verily this world is a …

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 132;
(2) al-Saduq, *`Uyun akhbar al-Rida,* I, 298;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 139;
(4) al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat,* 243;
(5) Ibn Qutaybah, *`Uyun,* II, 253;
(6) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil;*
(7) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 200;
(8) Warram, *Majmu`ah,* 66;
(9) al-Qali, *al-'Amali,* I, 258;
(10) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* II, 31; see `Arshi.

203. May God's mercy be upon you, procure provision …

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-'Amali, majlis* 75;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis,* 116;
(3) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 110;
(4) al-Tabarsi, *Mishkat,* 275.

204. Addressed to Talhah and al-Zubayr …

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

205. I dislike that you should be abusers …

(1) Al-Dinawari, *al-'Akhbar,* 155;
(2) Nasr, *Siffin,* 103;
(3) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 154.

206. Hold back this young man …

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* VI, 34, events of 37 H.; V, 196, events of 36 H.

207. O people, matters between you and me …
(1) Nasr, *Siffin,* 484;
(2) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 118;
(3) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 400.

208. What will you do with this spacious house …

(1) Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut,* I, 531;
(2) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* I, 329;
(3) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi,* I, 410;
(4) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* IV, *bab al-lahw wa al-ladhdhat;*
(5) al-Mufid, *al-'Ikhtisas,* 152;
(6) Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis,* 194.

209. Verily, that which is in the people's hands …

(1) *Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays;*
(2) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi,* II, 62;
(3) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf ,136;*
(4) al-Saduq, *al-Khisal,* I, 333;
(5) al-Tawhidi, *al-'Imta`,* III, 197;
(6) al-Nu`mani, *al-Ghaybah,* 26;
(7) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 30;
(8) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah,* 142;
(9) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj,* I, 293;
(10) al-Karajiki, *al-'Intisar,* 10;

(11) al-Shaykh al-Baha'i, *al-'Arba`in,* 98.

210. It was through the sway of His power …

(1) Al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, *bab al-sama' wa al-kawakib;*
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 27 *(a.z.r).*

211. My God, whoever of Thy servants …

No sources mentioned.

212. Praise belongs to God, Who is above …

(1) Al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* IV, 319.

213. I bear witness that He is First …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar;*
(2) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh,* III, 23.

214. Praise belongs to God, Who …

(1) Al-Sayyid Ibn al-Baqi, *al-'Ikhtibar;*
(2) al-Majlisi, *Bihar,* vol. 94, 226.

215. God Almighty has given me a right …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 352.

216. My God, I beseech Thee to avenge Quraysh …
(1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Rasa'il,* see (2)
(2) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf,* 173;
(3) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 154;
(4) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat;*
(5) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 95;
(6) Safwah, *Jamharah.*

216 (a). They marched upon my officials …

Part of Sermon: 216 and sources same.

217. Abu Muhammad lies a stranger …

(1) Abu al-Faraj, *al-'Aghani,* XXI, 246;
(2) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* I, 126;
(3) al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin,* II, 53;
(4) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 279;
(5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 192;
(6) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* II, 261;
(7) al-Mas`udi, *Muruj,* II, 371.

218. He revived his intellect …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 233.

219. How far-fetched are his hopes …

(1) Al-Wasiti, *`Uyun al-hikam,* see *Bihar,* vol. 77, 432;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* II, 398;
(3) Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah,* II, 132.

220. Indeed, God Almighty has made His remembrance …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 81.

221. The addressee is without any excuse …

(1) Al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* II, 272;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 232.

222. By God, if I were to spend a night on the thorns

(1) Al-Saduq, *al-'Amali,* 369;
(2) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 155;
(3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`, bab al-khayr wa al-salah;*
(4) Ibn Shahr Ashub, *al-Manaqib,* II, 109.

223. My God, save my face …

(1) Al-Rawandi, *al-Da`awat,* see *Bihar,* vol. 75, 297;

(2) al-Yamani, *al-Taraz,* I, 119.

224. It is a house surrounded by tribulations …

(1) Sibt, *Tadhkirah,* 122;
(2) al-Khwarazmi, *al-Manaqib,* 267;
(3) al-Muttaqi, *Kanz al-`ummal,* III, 511.

225. My God, Thou art the friendliest of the friendly …

(1) Al-Tusi, *Misbah,* 249;
(2) al-Samahiji, *al-Sahifat al-`Alawiyyat al-'ula .*

226. So and so did good for God's sake …

(1) Al-Rawandi, *al-Da`awat;*
(2) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 47;
(3) see also the commentaries of Ibn Abi al-Hadid, III, 92 and Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani, IV, 97.

227. You drew my hand and I held it back …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 142;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 128, from (3);
(3) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal;*
(4) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 310;
(5) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf,* 173;
(6) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 154;
(7) al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 28;
(8) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 165;
(9) al-Kulayni, *al-Rasa'il;*
(10) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 95.

228. Verily, God-fearing is the key …

(1) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* I, 355, II, 61, 103, III, 174;
(2) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 112, 148, 213.

229. He discharged whatever he was commanded to do …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-Jamal,* 127;
(2) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad,* 115; from (3)
(3) al-Waqidi, *al-Jamal,*
(4) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* II, 227.

230. The property is neither mine nor yours …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 69.

231. Beware that the tongue is a part …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 396;
(2) al-Raghib, *Muhadarat,* I, 89;
(3) al-Watwat, *al-Ghurar,* 108;
(4) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, at the beginning;
(5) al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 82, 132.

232. The difference between them …

(1) Al-Yamani, *al-Taraz;*
(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`,* I, 110.

233. My father and my mother …

(1) Al-Mufid, *al-'Amali,* 60;
(2) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* III, 143 *(t.y.b);*
(3) Muhammad ibn Habib, *al-'Amali,* 112;
(4) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad,* hadith 228;
(5) Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah,* IV, 213;
(6) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab,* I, 571;
(7) Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn al-Sari ibn Sahl al-Nahwi, *al-'Amali;*
For (3) & (4) see `Abd al-Zahra', III, 182.

234. I began following …

(1) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah,* V, *(w.t.'a).*

235. Act while there is respite …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 54.

236. About the two arbitrators …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 154;
(2) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat,* I, 312;
(3) al-Kulayni, *al-Rasa'il;*
(4) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid,* 95;
(5) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf,* 173;
(6) Safwah, *Jamharah.*

237. They are life for knowledge …

(1) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdah,* 386;
(2) al-Harrani, *Tuhaf,* 163.

238. O Ibn `Abbas …

(1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-'Imamah,* I, 34;
(2) al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil,* I, 11;
(3) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd,* IV, 309.

239. God requires you to be grateful …

(1) Al-'Amidi, *Ghurar,* 308.

Chapter 8

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Chapter 9

SERMON 1

In this sermon he recalls the creation of Earth and Sky and the birth of Adam.

Praise is due to Allah whose worth cannot be described by speakers, whose bounties cannot be counted by calculators and whose claim (to obedience) cannot be satisfied by those who attempt to do so, whom the height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate, and the divings of understanding cannot reach; He for whose description no limit has been laid down, no eulogy exists, no time is ordained and no duration is fixed. He brought forth creation through His Omnipotence, dispersed winds through His Compassion, and made firm the shaking earth with rocks.

The foremost in religion is the acknowledgement of Him, the perfection of acknowledging Him is to testify Him, the perfection of testifying Him is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him Pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute. Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognises His like, and who recognises His like regards Him two; and who regards Him two recognises parts for Him; and who recognises parts for Him mistook Him; and who mistook Him pointed at Him; and who pointed at Him admitted limitations for Him; and who admitted limitations for Him numbered Him.

Whoever said in what is He, held that He is contained; and whoever said on what is He held He is not on something else. He is a Being but not through phenomenon of coming into being. He exists but not from non-existence. He is with everything but not in physical nearness. He is different from everything but not in physical separation. He acts but without connotation of movements and instruments. He sees even when there is none to be looked at from among His creation. He is only One,

such that there is none with whom He may keep company or whom He may miss in his absence.

The Creation of the Universe

He initiated creation most initially and commenced it originally, without undergoing reflection, without making use of any experiment, without innovating any movement, and without experiencing any aspiration of mind. He allotted all things their times, put together their variations gave them their properties, and determined their features knowing them before creating them, realising fully their limits and confines and appreciating their propensities and intricacies.

When Almighty created the openings of atmosphere, expanse of firmament and strata of winds, He flowed into it water whose waves were stormy and whose surges leapt one over the other. He loaded it on dashing wind and breaking typhoons, ordered them to shed it back (as rain), gave the wind control over the vigour of the rain, and acquainted it with its limitations. The wind blew under it while water flowed furiously over it.

Then Almighty created forth wind and made its movement sterile, perpetuated its position, intensified its motion and spread it far and wide. Then He ordered the wind to raise up deep waters and to intensify the waves of the oceans. So the wind churned it like the churning of curd and pushed it fiercely into the firmament throwing its front position on the rear and the stationary on the flowing till its level was raised and the surface was full of foam. Then Almighty raised the foam on to the open wind and vast firmament and made therefrom the seven skies and made the lower one as a stationary surge and the upper one as protective ceiling and a high edifice without any pole to support it or nail to hold it together. Then He decorated them with stars and the light of meteors and hung in it the shining sun and effulgent moon under the revolving sky, moving ceiling and rotating firmament.

The Creation of the Angels

Then He created the openings between high skies and filled them with all classes of His angels. Some of them are in prostration and do not kneel up. Others in kneeling position and do not stand up. Some of them are in array and do not leave their position. Others are extolling Allah and do not get tired. The sleep of the eye or the slip of wit, or languor of the body or the effect of forgetfulness does not effect them.

Among them are those who work as trusted bearers of His message, those who serve as speaking tongues for His prophets and those who carry to and fro His orders and injunctions. Among them are the protectors of His creatures and guards of the doors of the gardens of Paradise. Among them are those also whose steps are fixed on earth but their necks are protruding into the skies, their limbs are getting out on all sides, their shoulders are in accord with the columns of the Divine Throne, their eyes are downcast before it, they have spread down their wings under it and they have rendered between themselves and all else curtains of honour and screens of power. They do not think of their Creator through image, do not impute to Him attributes of the created, do not confine Him within abodes and do not point at Him through illustrations.

Description of the Creation of Adam

Allah collected from hard, soft, sweet and sour earth, clay which He dripped in water till it got pure, and kneaded it with moisture till it became gluey. From it He carved an image with curves, joints, limbs and segments. He solidified it till it dried up for a fixed time and a known duration. Then He blew into it out of His Spirit whereupon it took the pattern of a human being with mind that governs him, intelligence which he makes use of, limbs that serve him, organs that change his position, sagacity that differentiates between truth and untruth, tastes and smells, colours and species. He is a mixture of clays of different colours, cohesive materials, divergent contradictories and differing properties like heat, cold, softness and hardness.

Then Allah asked the angels to fulfil His promise with them and to accomplish the pledge of His injunction to them by acknowledging Him through prostration to Him and submission to His honoured position. So Allah said:

> *"Be prostrate towards Adam and they prostrated except Iblis (Satan)."* (Qur'an, 2:34; 7:11; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116)

Self-importance withheld him and vice overcame him. So that he took pride in his own creation with fire and treated contemptuously the creation of clay. So Allah allowed him time in order to let him fully deserve His wrath, and to complete (man's) test and to fulfil the promise (He had made to Satan). Thus, He said:

"Verily you have been allowed time till the known Day." (Qur'an, 15:38; 38:81)

Thereafter, Allah inhabited Adam (p.b.u.h.) in a house where He made his life pleasant and his stay safe, and He cautioned him of Iblis and his enmity. Then his enemy (Iblis) envied his abiding in Paradise and his contacts with the virtuous. So he changed his conviction into wavering and determination into weakness. He thus converted his happiness into fear and his prestige into shame. Then Allah offered to Adam (p.b.u.h.) the chance to repent, taught him words of His Mercy, promised him return to His Paradise and sent him down to the place of trial and procreation of progeny.

Allah chooses His Prophets

From his (Adam's) progeny Allah chose prophets and took their pledge for his revelation and for carrying His message as their trust. In course of time many people perverted Allah's trust with them and ignored His position and took compeers along with Him. Satan turned them away from knowing Him and kept them aloof from His worship. Then Allah sent His Messengers and series of His prophets towards them to get them to fulfil the pledges of His creation, to recall to them His bounties, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom and show them the signs of His Omnipotence namely the sky which is raised over them, the earth that is placed beneath them, means of living that sustain them, deaths that make them die, ailments that turn them old and incidents that successively betake them.

Allah never allowed His creation to remain without a Prophet deputised by Him, or a book sent down from Him or a binding argument or a standing plea. These Messengers were such that they did not feel little because of smallness of their number or of largeness of the number of their falsifiers. Among them was either a predecessor who would name the one to follow or the follower who had been introduced by the predecessor.

The Prophethood of Muhammmad

In this way ages passed by and times rolled on, fathers passed away while sons took their places till Allah deputised Muhammmad (peace be upon him and his progeny) as His Prophet, in fulfilment of His promise and in completion of His Prophethood. His pledge had been taken from

the Prophets, his traits of character were well reputed and his birth was honourable. The people of the earth at this time were divided in different parties, their aims were separate and ways were diverse. They either likened Allah with His creation or twisted His Names or turned to else than Him. Through Muhammmad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) Allah guided them out of wrong and with his efforts took them out of ignorance.

Then Allah chose for Muhammmad, peace be upon him and on his progeny, to meet Him, selected him for His own nearness, regarded him too dignified to remain in this world and decided to remove him from this place of trial. So He drew him towards Himself with honour. Allah may shower His blessing on him, and his progeny.

The Holy Qur'an and Sunnah

But the Prophet left among you the same which other Prophets left among their peoples, because Prophets do not leave them untended (in dark) without a clear path and a standing ensign, namely the Book of your Creator clarifying its permission and prohibitions, its obligations and discretion, its repealing injunctions and the repealed ones, its permissible matters and compulsory ones, its particulars and the general ones, its lessons and illustrations, its long and the short ones, its clear and obscure ones, detailing its abbreviations and clarifying its obscurities.

In it there are some verses whose knowledge (1) is obligatory and others whose ignorance by the people is permissible. It also contains what appears to be obligatory according to the Book (2) but its repeal is signified by the Prophet's action (*sunnah*) or that which appears compulsory according to the Prophet's action but the Book allows not following it. Or there are those which are obligatory in a given time but not so after that time. Its prohibitions also differ. Some are major regarding which there exists the threat of fire (Hell), and others are minor for which there are prospects of forgiveness. There are also those of which a small portion is also acceptable (to Allah) but they are capable of being expanded.

In this very sermon he spoke about Hajj

Allah has made obligatory upon you the pilgrimage (hajj) to His sacred House which is the turning point for the people who go to it as beasts or pigeons go towards spring water. Allah the glorified made it a sign of their supplication before His Greatness and their acknowledgement of His Dignity. He selected from among His creation those who on listening to His call responded to it and testified His word. They stood in

the position of His Prophets and resembled His angels who surround the Divine Throne securing all the benefits of performing His worship and hastening towards His promised forgiveness. Allah the glorified made it (His sacred House) an emblem for Islam and an object of respect for those who turn to it. He made obligatory its pilgrimage and laid down its claim for which He held you responsible to discharge it. Thus, Allah the glorified said:

> *"… And* (purely) *for Allah, is incumbent upon mankind, the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can afford to journey thither. And whoever denieth then verily, Allah is Selfsufficiently independent of the worlds"* (Qur'an, 3:96).

(1). "The foremost in religion (*din*) is His knowledge." The literal meaning of *din* is obedience, and its popular sense is code, whether literal sense is taken or the popular one, in either case, if the mind is devoid of any conception of Divinity, there would be no question of obedience, nor of following any code; because when there is no aim there is no point in advancing towards it; where there is no object in view there is no sense in making efforts to achieve it. Nevertheless, when the nature and guiding faculty of man bring him in contact with a superior Authority and his taste for obedience and impulse of submission subjugates him before a Deity, he finds himself bound by certain limitations as against abject freedom of activity. These very limitations are *din* (Religion) whose point of commencement is knowledge of Allah and acknowledgement of His Being.

After pointing out the essentials of Divine knowledge Amir al-mu'minin has described its important constituents and conditions. He has held those stages of such knowledge which people generally regard as the point of highest approach to be insufficient. He says that its first stage is that with the natural sense of search for the unknown and the guidance of conscience or on hearing from the followers of religions an image of the Unseen Being known as Allah is formed in the mind. This image in fact is the forerunner of the obligation to thinking and reflection and to seeking His knowledge. But those who love idleness, or are under pressure of environment, do not undertake this search despite creation of such image and the image fails to get testified. In this case they remain deprived of Divine knowledge, and since their inaccess to the stage of testifying after the formation of image is by volition they deserve to be

questioned about it. But one who is moved by the power of this image goes further and considers thinking and reflection necessary. In this way one reaches the next stage in the attainment of Divine knowledge, namely to search for the Creator through diversification of creation and species of creatures, because every picture is a solid and inflexible guide to the existence of its painter and every effect to the action of its cause. When he casts his glance around himself he does not find a single thing which might have come into existence without the act of a maker so much so that he does not find the sign of a footstep without a walker nor a construction without a builder. How can he comprehend that this blue sky with the sun and the moon in its expanse and the earth with the exuberance of its grass and flowers could have come into existence without the action of a Creator. Therefore, after observing all that exists in the world and the regulated system of the entire creation no one can help concluding that there is a Creator for this world of diversities because existence cannot come out of non-existence, nor can existence sprout forth from nothingness.

The Holy Qur'an has pointed to this reasoning thus:

> *"… What! about Allah is there any doubt, the Originator of the heavens and the earth ?… "* (14:10).

But this stage would also be insufficient if this testimony in favour of Allah is tarnished by belief in the divinity of some other deity.

The third stage is that His existence should be acknowledged along with belief in Unity and Oneness. Without this the testimony to Allah's existence cannot be complete because if more gods are believed in He would not be One whereas it is necessary that He should be One. The reason is that in case of more than one god the question would arise whether one of them created all this creation or all of them together. If one of them created it there should be some differential to distinguish him otherwise he would be accorded preferential position without reason, which is unacceptable to the mind. If all have created it collectively then the position has only two forms; either he cannot perform his functions without the assistance of others or he is above the need for their assistance. The first case means his incapability and being in need of others while the other case means that they are several regular performers of a single act and the fallacy of both has already been shown. If we assume that all the gods performed the act of creation by dividing among themselves then, in this case all the creation will, not bear the same

relationship towards the creator since each creature will bear relationship only to its own creator whereas every creature should have one and the same relationship to all creators. This is because all the creation should have one and the same relationship to all the creators as all the created in their capacity to accept effect and all the creators in their capacity to produce effect should be similar. In short there is no way but to acknowledge Him as One because in believing in numerous creators there remains no possibility of the existence of any other thing, and destruction proves implicit for the earth, the sky and everything in creation. Allah the glorified has expressed this argument in the following words:

> *"Had there been in (the heavens and the earth [other]) gods except Allah, they both had been in disorder… "* (Qur'an, 21:22).

The fourth stage is that Allah should be regarded free of all defects and deficiencies, and devoid of body, form, illustration, similarity, position of place or time, motion, stillness, incapability and ignorance because there can be no deficiency or defect in the perfect Being nor can anyone be deemed like Him because all these attributes bring down a being from the high position of the Creator to the low position of the created. That is why along with Unity, Allah has held purity from deficiency of equal importance.

> *"Say: 'He* (Allah) *is One* (alone).
> *Allah, the needless.*
> *He begetteth not, nor is He begotten.*
> *And there is none like unto Him"* (Qur'an, 112:1-4).

> *"Vision perceiveth Him not, and He perceiveth (all) vision; He is the Subtle, the All-aware"* (Qur'an, 6:104).

> *"So coin ye not any similitudes to Allah; verily Allah knoweth (every thing) and ye know not."* (Qur'an, 16:74).

> *"… Nothing whatsoever (is there) like the like of Him; and He (alone) is the All-hearing and the All-seeing."* (Qur'an, 42:11)

The fifth stage of completing His Knowledge is that attributes should not be put in Him from outside lest there be duality in His Oneness, and deviating from its proper connotation Unity may fall in the labyrinth of

one in three and three in one, because His Being is not a combination of essence and form so that attribute may cling to Him like smell in the flowers or brightness in the stars. Rather, He is the fountain head of all attributes and needs no medium for manifestation of His perfect Attributes. If He is named Omniscient it is because the signs of his knowledge are manifest. If He is called Omnipotent it is because every particle points to His Omnipotence and Activity, and if to Him is attributed the power to listen or to see it is because the cohesion of the entire creation and its administration cannot be done without hearing or seeing but the existence of these attributes in Him cannot be held to be in the same way as in the creation namely that He should be capable to know only after He acquires knowledge or He should be powerful and strong only after energy runs into His limbs because taking attributes as separate from His Being would connote duality and where there is duality unity disappears. That is how Amir al-mu'minin has rejected the idea of attributes being addition to His Being, presented Unity in its true significance, and did not allow Unity to be tainted with stains of multiplicity. This does not mean that adjectives cannot at all be attributed to Him, as this would be giving support to those who are groping in the dark abyss of negativism, although every nook and comer in the entire existence is brimming with His attributes and every particle of creation stands witness that He has knowledge, He is powerful, He hears, He sees. He nurtures under His care and allows growth under His mercy. The intention is that for Him nothing can be suggested to serve as an adjunct to Him, because His self includes attributes and His attributes connote His Self. Let us learn this very theme in the words of al-Imam Abu `Abdillah Ja`far ibn Muhammmad as-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) comparing it with the belief in Unity adopted by other religions and then appreciate who is the exponent of the true concept of Unity.

The Imam says:

> "Our Allah the Glorified, the Magnificent has ever had knowledge as His Self even though there was nothing to know, sight as His Self even though there was nothing to know, sight as His Self even though there was nothing to behold, hearing as His Self even though there was nothing to hear, and Potence as His Self even though there was nothing to be under His Potence. When He created the things and the object of knowledge came into existence His knowledge became related to the known, hearing

related to the heard, sight related to the seen, and potence related to its object." (*at-Tawhid* by ash-Shaykh as-Saduq, p.139)

This is the belief over which the Imams of the Prophet's family are unanimous, but the majority group has adopted a different course by creating the idea of differentiation between His Self and Attributes. ash-Shahristani says on page 42 of his book *Kitab al-milal wa'n-nihal*:

> According to Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash`ari, Allah knows through (the attribute of) knowledge, is Powerful through activity, speaks through speech, hears through hearing and sees through sight.

If we regard attributes distinct from Self in this manner there would be two alternatives; either the attributes must have existed in Him from ever or they must have occurred later. In the first case we have to recognise as many eternal objects as the attributes which all will share with Him in being eternal, but "Allah is above what the people deem Him to have equals." In the second case in addition to subjecting Him to the alternations it would also mean that before the acquiring of the attributes He was neither scient, nor powerful, nor hearer nor beholder and this runs counter to the basic tenet of Islam.

"… Allah hath decreed trade lawful and hath forbidden interest… " (Qur'an, 2:275)

"And when you have finished the prayer remember Allah standing, and sitting, and reacting, and when ye are secure (from danger) establish prayer … " (Qur'an, 4:103)

"O' ye men! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good and follow not the foot-steps of Satan; for verily he is an open enemy unto you." (Qur'an, 2:168)

"(And) say thou: 'I am only a man like you, it is revealed unto me that your god is but one God, therefore whosoever desireth to meet his Lord, let him do good deeds, and associate not any one in the worship of his Lord'."(Qur'an, 18:110)

"What! enjoin ye upon the people righteousness and ye forget your own selves? Yet ye read the scripture? What: do ye not understand?" (Qur'an, 2:44).

(2). About the Qur'an, Amir al-mu'minin says that it contains description of the permitted and the forbidden acts such as "Allah has allowed sale and purchase but prohibited usury."

It clarifies obligatory and optional acts such as "when you have finished the prayer (of fear) remember Allah rising, sitting or lying and when you feel safe (from the enemy) then say the prayers (as usual)."

Here prayer is obligatory while other forms of remembering (Allah) are optional. It has repealing and repealed verses such as about the period of seclusion after husband's death "four months and ten days" or the repealed one such as "till one year without going out" which shows that this period of seclusion should be one year. In particular places it permits the forbidden such as "whoever is compelled without being wilfully wrongful or transgressor, commits no sins."

It has positive injunctions such as "One should not add anyone with Allah in worship." It has particular and general injunctions. Particular is the one where the word shows generality but the sense is limited such as "I have made you superior over worlds, O' Bani Isra'il."

Here the sense of "Worlds," is confined to that particular time, although the word is general in its literal meaning. The general injunctions is one which is extensive in meaning such as "Allah has knowledge of everything." It has lessons and illustrations lessons such as "Allah caught him in the punishment of this world and the next and there is lesson in it."

> *"So seized him Allah, with the chastisement in the hereafter, and the life before* (it)." (Qur'an, 79:25)
>
> *"Verily in this there is a lesson unto him who feareth* (Allah)." (Qur'an, 79:26)
>
> *"A kind word and pardon is better than charity that is followed by injury, and verily Allah is Self-sufficient, the Most forbearing."* (Qur'an, 2:263)
>
> *"And remember when We made a covenant with you and raised the 'tur'* (the Mountain) *above you* (saying), *'Hold ye fast that which We have bestowed upon you with the strength* (of determination) *and remember that which is therein so that you may guard* (yourself) *against evil'."* (Qur'an, 2:63)

"So we made it a lesson for (those of) *their own times and for those* (of their posterity) *who came after them and an exhortation unto those who guard* (themselves) *against evil."* (Qur'an, 2:66)

"He it is Who fashioneth you in the wombs (of your mothers) *as He liketh; There is no god but He, the All-mighty, the All-wise."* (Qur'an, 3:5)

"Obedience and a fair word; but when the affair is determined then if they be true to Allah, it would certainly be better for them." (Qur'an, 47:21)

"O' those who believe! It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will; and do not straiten them in order that ye may take a part of what ye have given, unless they are guilty of manifest lewdness; but deal kindly with them, and if ye hate them, it may be that ye hate a thing while Allah hath placed in it abundant good." (Qur'an, 4:19)

"Say thou (unto the people of the Book), 'Dispute ye with us about Allah; whereas He is our Lord and your Lord, and for us are our deeds and for you are your deeds; to Him (alone) we are (exclusively) loyal?" (Qur'an, 2:139)

"There is a lesson in it for him who fears Allah," and illustration as "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a grain which grows seven ears each one of which bears hundred grains." It has unspecific and specific verses. Unspecific is one which has no limitation on specification such as "Recall when Moses told his people 'Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow.'"

Specific is one where denotation is limited such as Allah says that "the cow should be such that it has neither been used for ploughing nor for irrigation fields." There is clear and obscure in it. Clear is that which has no intricacy such as "Verily Allah has sway over everything," while obscure is that whose meaning has complication such as "the Merciful (Allah) occupies the throne," whose apparent meaning gives the impression as if Allah is bodily sitting on the Throne although the intention is to press His authority and control. In it there are brief injunctions such as "establish prayer" and those of deep meanings such as the verses about which says:

"That the sense is not known except to Allah and those immersed in knowledge." Then Amir al-mu'minin dilates upon this theme in a

different style, he says that there are some things in it which are necessary to know, such as "So know that there is no god but Allah" and there are others which are not necessary to know such as *"alif lam mim"* etc. It has also injunctions which have been repealed by the Prophet's action such as "As for your women who commit adultery get four male witnesses and if four witnesses do appear shut such women in the house till death ends their life." This punishment was current in early Islam but was later replaced by stoning in the case of married women. In it there are some injunctions which repealed the Prophet's action such as "Turn your face towards Masjid al-haram" by which the injunction for facing Bayt al-maqdis was repealed. It also contains injunctions which are obligatory only at a particular time after which their obligation ends, such as "when the call for prayer is made on Friday then hasten towards remembrance of Allah." It has also indicated grades of prohibitions as the division of sins into light and serious ones - light such as "Tell the believers to lower their eyes" and serious ones such as "whoever kills a Believer wilfully his award is to remain in Hell for ever." It also contains injunctions where a little performance is enough but there is scope for further performance such as "Read the Qur'an as much as you easily can."

> *"Verily your Lord, certainly is He the All-mighty, the All-merciful."* (Qur'an, 26:9)

> *"Say thou* (O' Our Prophet Muhammmad) *unto the believer men that they cast down their gaze and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; verily Allah is All-aware of what* (all) *ye do."* (Qur'an, 24:30)

> *"Not equal are those of the believers who sit* (holding back) *other than those hurt, and those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and their selves* (lives). *Allah hath raised the strivers with their wealth and selves*(lives), *in rank above those sitting* (holding back); *Unto all* (in faith) *Allah hath promised good; but those who strive, He hath distinguished above those who sit* (holding [by]) *a great recompense."* (Qur'an, 4:95)

> *"Verily, thy Lord knowest that thou standest up* (in the Night Prayer) *night two-third of the night, and* (sometimes) *half of it, and* (sometimes) *a third of it, and a group of those with thee; and Allah measureth* (well) *the night and the day; Knoweth He that never can ye take* (correct) *account of it, so turneth He unto you* (mercifully) *so*

recite ye whatever be easy (in the prayers) *to be read of the Qur'an; Knoweth He that there may be among you sick, and others travelling in the earth seeking of the grace of Allah, and others fighting in the way of Allah, so recite ye as much as it can easily be done of it, and establish ye the* (regular) *prayers, and pay ye the* (prescribed) *poor-rate, and offer ye unto Allah a goodly loan; and whatsoever of good ye send on before hand for yourselves, ye will* (surely) *find it with Allah, that is the best and the greatest recompense; and seek ye the forgiveness of Allah; Verily, Allah is Oft-forgiving, the Most Merciful."* (Qur'an, 73:20)

Chapter 10

SERMON 2

Delivered on return from Siffin

Arabia before proclamation of Prophethood

I praise Allah seeking completion of His Blessing, submitting to His Glory and expecting safety from committing His sins. I invoke His help being in need of His Sufficiency (of protection). He whom He guides does not get astray, He with whom He is hostile gets no protection. He whom He supports does not remain needy. Praise is most weighty of all that is weighed and the most valuable of all that is treasured.

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah the One. He has no like. My testimony has been tested in its frankness, and its essence is our belief. We shall cling to it for ever till we live and shall store it facing the tribulations that overtake us because it is the foundation stone of Belief (*iman*) and the first step towards good actions and Divine pleasure. It is the means to keep Satan away.

I also stand witness that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) is His slave and His Prophet. Allah sent him with the illustrious religion, effective emblem, written Book,(1) effulgent light, sparkling gleam and decisive injunction in order to dispel doubts, present clear proofs, administer warning through signs and to warn of punishments. At that time people had fallen in vices whereby the rope of religion had been broken, the pillars of belief had been shaken, principles had been sacrileged, system had become topsy turvy, openings were narrow, passage was dark, guidance was unknown and darkness prevailed.

Allah was being disobeyed, Satan was given support and Belief had been forsaken. As a result the pillars of religion fell down, its traces could not be discerned, its passages had been destroyed and its streets had fallen into decay. People obeyed Satan and treaded his paths. They sought water from his watering places. Through them Satan's emblems got flying and his standard was raised in vices which trampled the

people under their hoofs, and treaded upon them with their feet. The vices stood on their toes (in full stature) and the people immersed in them were strayed, perplexed, ignorant and seduced as though in a good house(2) with bad neighbours. Instead of sleep they had wakefulness and for antimony they had tears in the eyes. They were in a land where the learned were in bridle (keeping their mouths shut) while the ignorant were honoured.

In the same sermon Amir al-mu'minin referred to Al an-Nabi (the Household of the Holy Prophet) as under:

They are the trustees of His secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, centre of His wisdom, valleys for His books and mountains of His religion. With them Allah straightened the bend of religion's back and removed the trembling of its limbs.

In the same Sermon he spoke about the hypocrites

They sowed vices, watered them with deception and harvested destruction.

(Alu Muhammad)

None in the Islamic community can be taken at par with the Progeny(3) of the Prophet (Alu Muhammad). One who was under their obligation cannot be matched with them. They are the foundation of religion and pillar of Belief. The forward runner has to turn back to them while the follower has to overtake them. They possess the chief characteristics for vicegerency. In their favour exists the will and succession (of the Prophet). This is the time when right has returned to its owner and diverted to its centre of return.

(1). The Preserved Record.

(2). Good House means 'Mecca' while the bad neighbours mean the 'Unbelievers of Quraysh.'

(3). About the Progeny of the Prophet Amir al-mu'minin has said that no person in the world can be brought *at par* with them, nor can any one be deemed their equal in sublimity, because the world is overladen with their obligations and has been able to secure eternal blessings only through their guidance. They are the corner stone and foundation of religion and the sustenance for its life and survival. They are such strong pillars of knowledge and belief that they can turn away the stormy flow of doubt and suspicion. They are such middle course among the paths of

excess and backwardness that if some one goes far towards excess and exaggeration or falls behind then unless he comes back or steps forward to that middle course he cannot be on the path of Islam. They possess all the characteristics which give the superiority in the right for vicegerency and leadership. Consequently, no one else in the *ummah* enjoys the right of patronage and guardianship. That is why the Prophet declared them his vicegerents and successors. About will and succession the commentator Ibn Abi'l-Hadid Mu`tazili writes that there can be no doubt about the vicegerency of Amir al-mu'minin but succession cannot imply succession in position although the Shi`ite sect has so interpreted it. It rather implies succession of learning. Now, if according to him succession is taken to imply succession in learning even he does not seem to succeed in achieving his object, because even by this interpretation the right of succeeding the Prophet does not devolve on any other person. When it is agreed that learning is the most essential requirement of *khilafah* (caliphate) because the most important functions of the Prophet's Caliph consist of dispensation of justice, solving problems of religious laws, clarifying intricacies and administration of religious penalties. If these functions are taken away from the Prophet's deputy his position will come down to that of a worldly ruler. He cannot be regarded as the pivot of religious authority. Therefore either we should keep governmental authority separate from Prophet's vicegerency or accept the successor of Prophet's knowledge to suit that position.

The interpretation of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid could be acceptable if Amir al-mu'minin had uttered this sentence alone, but observing that it was uttered soon after `Ali's (p.b.u.h.) recognition as Caliph and just after it the sentence "Right has returned to its owner" exists, this interpretation of his seems baseless. Rather, the Prophet's will cannot imply any other will except that for vicegerency and caliphate, and succession would imply not succession in property nor in knowledge because this was not an occasion to mention it here but it must mean the succession in the right leadership which stood proved as from Allah not only on the ground of kinship but on the ground of qualities of perfection.

Chapter 11

SERMON 3

Known as the Sermon of ash-Shiqshiqiyyah(1)

Beware! By Allah the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr)(2) dressed himself with it (the caliphate) and he certainly knew that my position in relation to it was the same as the position of the axis in relation to the handmill. The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly upto me. I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it.

Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are made feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on his death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat. I watched the plundering of my inheritance till the first one went his way but handed over the Caliphate to Ibn al-Khattab after himself.

(Then he quoted al-A`sha's verse).

> *My days are now passed on the camel's back* (in difficulty) *while there were days* (of ease) *when I enjoyed the company of Jabir's brother Hayyan.(3)*

It is strange that during his lifetime he wished to be released from the caliphate but he confirmed it for the other one after his death. No doubt these two shared its udders strictly among themselves. This one put the Caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough. Mistakes were in plenty and so also the excuses therefore. One in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein the very nostril would be slit, but if he let it loose he would be thrown. Consequently, by Allah people got involved in recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation.

Nevertheless, I remained patient despite length of period and stiffness of trial, till when he went his way (of death) he put the matter (of Caliphate) in a group (4)and regarded me to be one of them. But good Heavens! what had I to do with this "consultation"? Where was any doubt about me with regard to the first of them that I was now considered akin to these ones? But I remained low when they were low and flew high when they flew high. One of them turned against me because of his hatred and the other got inclined the other way due to his in-law relationship and this thing and that thing, till the third man of these people stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder. With him his children of his grand-father, (Umayyah) also stood up swallowing up Allah's wealth(5) like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, till his rope broke down, his actions finished him and his gluttony brought him down prostrate.

At that moment, nothing took me by surprise, but the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced towards me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Hasan and Husayn were getting crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They collected around me like the herd of sheep and goats. When I took up the reins of government one party broke away and another turned disobedient while the rest began acting wrongfully as if they had not heard the word of Allah saying:

> *That abode in the hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor* (to make) *mischief* (therein)*; and the end is* (best) *for the pious ones.* (Qur'an, 28:83)

Yes, by Allah, they had heard it and understood it but the world appeared glittering in their eyes and its embellishments seduced them. Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the learned to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders, and would have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat.

(It is said that when Amir al-mu'minin reached here in his sermon a man of Iraq stood up and handed him over a writing. Amir al-mu'minin began looking at it, when Ibn `Abbas said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin, I wish

you resumed your Sermon from where you broke it." Thereupon he replied, "O' Ibn `Abbas it was like the foam of a Camel which gushed out but subsided." Ibn `Abbas says that he never grieved over any utterance as he did over this one because Amir al-mu'minin could not finish it as he wished to.)

ash-Sharif ar-Radi says: The words in this sermon "like the rider of a camel" mean to convey that when a camel rider is stiff in drawing up the rein then in this scuffle the nostril gets bruised, but if he lets it loose in spite of the camel's unruliness, it would throw him somewhere and would get out of control. "*ashnaq an-naqah*" is used when the rider holds up the rein and raises the camel's head upwards. In the same sense the word "*shanaqa an-naqah*" is used. Ibn as-Sikkit has mentioned this in *Islah al-mantiq.* Amir al-mu'minin has said "*ashnaqa laha*" instead of "*ashnaqaha*", this is because he has used this word in harmony with "*aslasa laha*" and harmony could be retained only by using both in the same form. Thus, Amir al-mu'minin has used "*ashnaqa laha*" as though in place of "*in rafa`a laha ra'saha*", that is, "if he stops it by holding up the reins."

(1). This sermon is known as the sermon of *ash-Shiqshiqiyyah*, and is counted among the most famous sermons of Amir al-mu'minin. It was delivered at ar-Rahbah. Although some people have denied it to be Amir al-mu'minin's utterance and by attributing it to as-Sayyid ar-Radi (or ash-Sharif ar-Radi) have laid blame on his acknowledged integrity, yet truth-loving scholars have denied its veracity. Nor can there be any ground for this denial because `Ali's (p.b.u.h.) difference of view in the matter of Caliphate is not a secret matter, so that such hints should be regarded as something alien. And the events which have been alluded to in this sermon are preserved in the annals of history which testifies them word by word and sentence by sentence. If the same events which are related by history are recounted by Amir al-mu'minin then what is the ground for denying them? If the memory of discouraging circumstances faced by him soon after the death of the Prophet appeared unpalatable to him it should not be surprising. No doubt this sermon hits at the prestige of certain personalities and gives a set back to the faith and belief in them but this cannot be sustained by denying the sermon to be Amir al-mu'minin's utterance, unless the true events are analysed and truth unveiled; otherwise just denying it to be Amir al-mu'minin's utterance because it contains disparagement of certain individuals carries no weight, when similar criticism has been related by other historians as well. Thus

(Abu `Uthman) `Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz has recorded the following words of a sermon of Amir al-mu'minin and they are not less weighty than the criticism in the "Sermon of *ash-Shiqshiqiyyah.*"

> Those two passed away and the third one rose like the crow whose courage is confined to the belly. It would have been better if both his wings had been cut and his head severed.

Consequently, the idea that it is the production of as-Sayyid ar-Radi is far from truth and a result of partisanship and partiality. Or else if it is the result of some research it should be brought out. Otherwise, remaining in such wishful illusion does not alter the truth, nor can the force of decisive arguments be curbed down by mere disagreement and displeasure.

Now we set forth the evidence of those scholars and traditionists who have clearly held it to be Amir al-mu'minin's production, so that its historical importance should become known. Among these scholars some are those before as-Sayyid ar-Radi's period, some are his contemporaries and some are those who came after him but they all related it through their own chain of authority.

1) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid al-Mu`tazili writes that his master Abu'l-Khayr Musaddiq ibn Shabib al-Wasiti (d. 605 A.H.) stated that he heard this sermon from ash-Shaykh Abu Muhammad `Abdullah ibn Ahmad al-Baghdadi (d. 567 A.H.) known as Ibn al-Khashshab and when he reached where Ibn `Abbas expressed sorrow for this sermon having remained incomplete Ibn al-Khashshab said to him that if he had heard the expression of sorrow from Ibn `Abbas he would have certainly asked him if there had remained with his cousin any further unsatisfied desire because excepting the Prophet he had already spared neither the predecessors nor followers and had uttered all that he wished to utter. Why should therefore be any sorrow that he could not say what he wished? Musaddiq says that Ibn al-Khashshab was a man of jolly heart and decent taste. I inquired from him whether he also regarded the sermon to be a fabrication when he replied "By Allah, I believe it to be Amir al-mu'minin's word as I believe you to be Musaddiq ibn Shabib." I said that some people regard it to be as-Sayyid ar-Radi's production when he replied: "How can ar-Radi have such guts or such style of writing. I have seen as-Sayyid ar-Radi's writings and know his style of composition. Nowhere does his writing match with this one and I have already seen it in books written two hundred years before the birth of as-Sayyid ar-

Radi, and I have seen it in familiar writings about which I know by which scholars or men of letters they were compiled. At that time not only ar-Radi but even his father Abu Ahmad an-Naqib has not been born."

2) Thereafter Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes that he saw this sermon in the compilations of his master Abu'l-Qasim (`Abdullah ibn Ahmad) al-Balkhi (d. 317 A.H.). He was the Imam of the Mu'tazilites in the reign of al-Muqtadir Billah while al-Muqtadir's period was far earlier than the birth of as-Sayyid ar-Radi.

3) He further writes that he saw this sermon in Abu Ja`far (Muhammad ibn `Abd ar-Rahman), Ibn Qibah's book *al-Insaf*. He was the pupil of Abu'l-Qasim al-Balkhi and a theologian of Imamiyyah (Shi`ite) sect. (*Sharh* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol.1, pp.205-206)

4) Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani (d. 679 A.H.) writes in his commentary that he had seen one such copy of this sermon which bore writing of al-Muqtadir Billah's minister Abu'l-Hasan `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Furat (d. 312 A.H.). (*Sharh al-balaghah*, vol.1., pp.252-253)

5) al-`Allamah Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi has related the following chain of authority about this Sermon from ash-Shaykh Qutbu'd-Din ar-Rawandi's compilation *Minhaj al-bara`ah fi Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*:

> ash-Shaykh Abu Nasr al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim informed me from al-Hajib Abu'l-Wafa' Muhammad ibn Badi`, al-Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn Badi` and al-Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn `Abd ar-Rahman and they from al-Hafiz Abu Bakr (Ahmad ibn Musa) ibn Marduwayh al-Isbahani (d. 416 A.H.) and he from al-Hafiz Abu'l-Qasim Sulayman ibn Ahmad at-Tabarani (d. 360 A.H.) and he from Ahmad ibn `Ali al-Abbar and he from Is'haq ibn Sa`id Abu Salamah ad-Dimashqi and he from Khulayd ibn Da`laj and he from `Ata' ibn Abi Rabah and he from Ibn `Abbas. (*Bihar al-anwar*, 1st ed. vol.8, pp.160-161)

6) In the context al-`Allamah al-Majlisi has written that this sermon is also contained in the compilations of Abu `Ali (Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab) al-Jubba 'i (d. 303 A.H.) .

7) In connection with this very authenticity al-`Allamah al-Majlisi writes:

> al-Qadi `Abd al-Jabbar ibn Ahmad al-Asad'abadi (d. 415A.H.) who was a strict Mu`tazilite explains some expressions of this sermon in his book *al-Mughni* and tries to prove that it does not

strike against any preceding caliph but does not deny it to be Amir al-mu'minin's composition. (*ibid*., p.161)

8) Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn `Ali, Ibn Babawayh (d. 381 A.H.) writes:

Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Is'haq at-Talaqani told us that `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Yahya al-Jaludi (d. 332 A.H.) told him that Abu `Abdillah Ahmad ibn `Ammar ibn Khalid told him that Yahya ibn `Abd al-Hamid al- Himmani (d. 228 A.H.) told him that `Isa ibn Rashid related this sermon from `Ali ibn Hudhayfah and he from `Ikrimah and he from Ibn `Abbas. (*`Ilal ash-shara'i`*,vol.1, chap. 122, p.144; *Ma`ani al-akhbar*, chap.22, pp.360-361)

9) Then Ibn Babawayh records the following chain of authorities :-

Muhammad ibn `Ali Majilawayh related this sermon to us and he took it from his uncle Muhammad ibn Abi'l-Qasim and he from Ahmad ibn Abi `Abdillah (Muhammad ibn Khalid) al-Barqi and he from his father and he from (Muhammad) Ibn Abi `Umayr and he from Aban ibn `Uthman and he from Aban ibn Taghlib and he from `Ikrimah and he from Ibn `Abbas. (*`Ilal ash-shara'i`*, vol.1, chap.122, p.l46; *Ma`ani al-akhbar*, chap.22, p.361)

10) Abu Ahmad al-Hasan ibn `Abdillah ibn Sa`id al-`Askari (d.382 A.H.) who counts among great scholars of the Sunnis has written commentary and explanation of this sermon that has been recorded by Ibn Babawayh in *`Ilal ash-shara'i`* and*Ma`ani al-akhbar*.

11) as-Sayyid Ni`matullah al-Jaza'iri writes:

The author of *Kitab al-gharat* Abu Is'haq, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ath-Thaqafi al-Kufi (d. 283 A.H.) has related this sermon through his own chain of authorities. The date of completion of writing this book is Tuesday the 13th Shawwal 255 A.H. and in the same year, Murtada al-Musawi was born. He was older in age than his brother as-Sayyid ar-Radi. (*Anwar an-Nu`maniyyah*, p.37)

12) as-Sayyid Radi ad-Din Abu'l-Qasim `Ali ibn Musa, Ibn Tawus al-Husayni al-Hulli (d. 664 A.H.) has related this sermon from *Kitab al-gharat* with the following chain of authorities:-

This sermon was related to us by Muhammad ibn Yusuf who related it from al-Hasan ibn `Ali ibn `Abd al-Karim az-Za`farani and he from Muhammad ibn Zakariyyah al-Ghallabi and he from Ya`qub ibn Ja`far ibn Sulayman and he from his father and he from his grand-father and he from Ibn `Abbas. (Translation of *at-Tara'if*, p.202)

13) Shaykh at-Ta'ifah, Muhammad ibn al- Hasan at-Tusi (d. 460 A.H.) writes:

(Abu'l-Fath Hilal ibn Muhammad ibn Ja`far) al-Haffar related this sermon to us. He related it from Abu'l-Qasim (Isma`il ibn `Ali ibn `Ali) ad-Di`bili and he from his father and he from his brother Di`bil (ibn `Ali al-Kuza`i) and he from Muhammad ibn Salamah ash-Shami and he from Zurarah ibn A`yan and he from Abu Ja`-far Muhammad ibn `Ali and he from Ibn `Abbas. (*al-Amali*, p.237)

14) ash-Shaykh al-Mufid (Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu`-man, d. 413 A.H.) who was the teacher of as-Sayyid ar-Radi writes about the chain of authorities of this sermon:

A number of relaters of traditions have related this sermon from Ibn `Abbas through numerous chains. (*al-Irshad*, p.135)

15) `Alam al-Huda (emblem of guidance) as-Sayyid al-Murtada who was the elder brother of as-Sayyid ar-Radi has recorded it on pp. 203,204 of his book *ash-Shafi.*

16) Abu Mansur at-Tabarsi writes:

A number of relaters have given an account of this sermon from Ibn `Abbas through various chains. Ibn `Abbas said that he was in the audience of Amir al-mu'minin at ar-Rahbah (a place in Ku-fah) when conversation turned to Caliphate and those who had preceded him as Caliphs, when Amir al-mu'minin breathed a sigh and delivered this sermon. (*al-Ihtijaj*, p. 101)

17) Abu'l-Muzaffar Yusuf ibn `Abdillah and Sibt ibn al-Jawzi al-Hanafi (d. 654 A.H.) writes:

Our ash-Shaykh Abu'l-Qasim an-Nafis al-Anbari related this ser-mon to us through his chain of authorities that ends with Ibn

`Abbas, who said that after allegiance had been paid to Amir al-mu'minin as Caliph he was sitting on the pulpit when a man from the audience enquired why he had remained quiet till then whereupon Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon extempore. (*Tadhkarat khawass al-ummah*, p.73)

18) al-Qadi Ahmad ibn Muhammad, ash-Shihab al-Khafaji (d. 1069 A.H.) writes with regard to its authenticity:

It is stated in the utterances of Amir al-mu'minin `Ali (Allah may be pleased with him) that "It is strange during life time he (Abu Bakr) wanted to give up the Caliphate but he strengthened its foundation for the other one after his death." (*Sharh durrat al-ghawwas*, p.17)

19) ash-Shaykh `Ala ad-Dawlah as-Simnani writes:

Amir al-mu'minin Sayyid al-`Arifin `Ali (p.b.u.h.) has stated in one of his brilliant Sermons "this is the *Shiqshiqah* that burst forth." (*al-`Urwah li ahl al-khalwah wa'l-jalwah*, p3, manuscript in Nasiriah Library, Lucknow, India)

20) Abu'l-Fadl Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Maydani (d. 518 A.H.) has written in connection with the word *Shiqshiqah*:

One sermon of Amir al-mu'minin `Ali is known as *Khutbah ash-Shiqshiqiyyah* (the sermon of the Camel's Foam). (*Majma` al-amthal*, vol.1, p.369)

21) In fifteen places in *an-Nihayah* while explaining the words of this sermon Abu's-Sa`adat Mubarak ibn Muhammad, Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari (d. 606 A.H.) has acknowledged it to be Amir al-mu'minin's utterance.

22) Shaykh Muhammad Tahir Patni while explaining the same words in *Majma` bihar al-anwar* testifies this sermon to be Amir al-mu'minin's by saying, "`Ali says so."

23) Abu'l-Fadl ibn Manzur (d. 711 A.H.) has acknowledged it as Amir al-mu'minin's utterance in *Lisan al-`Arab*, vol.12, p.54 by saying, "In the sayings of `Ali in his sermon 'It is the camel's foam that burst forth then subsided.'"

24) Majdu'd-Din al-Firuz'abadi (d. 816/817 A.H.) has recorded under the word "*Shiqshiqah*" in his lexicon (*al-Qamus*, vol.3, p.251):

Khutbah ash-Shiqshiqiyyah is by `Ali so named because when Ibn `Abbas asked him to resume it where he had left it, he said "O' Ibn `Abbas! it was the foam of a camel that burst forth then subsided."

25) The compiler of *Muntaha al-adab* writes:

Khutbah ash-Shiqshiqiyyah of `Ali is attributed to `Ali (Allah may honour his face).

26) ash-Shaykh Muhammad `Abduh, Mufti of Egypt, recognising it as Amir al-mu'minin's utterance, has written its explanations.

27) Muhammad Muhyi'd-Din `Abd al-Hamid, Professor in the Faculty of Arabic Language, al-Azhar University has written annotations on *Nahj al-balaghah* adding a foreword in the beginning wherein he recognises all such sermons which contain disparaging remarks to be the utterances of Amir al-mu'minin.

In the face of these evidences and undeniable proofs is there any scope to hold that it is not Amir al-mu'minin's production and that as-Sayyid ar-Radi prepared it himself?

(2). Amir al-mu'minin has referred to Abu Bakr's accession to the Caliphate metaphorically as having dressed himself with it. This was a common metaphor. Thus, when `Uthman was called to give up the Caliphate he replied, "I shall not put off this shirt which Allah has put on me." No doubt Amir al-mu'minin has not attributed this dressing of Caliphate to Allah but to Abu Bakr himself because according to unanimous opinion his Caliphate was not from Allah but his own affair. That is why Amir al-mu'minin said that Abu Bakr dressed himself with the Caliphate. He knew that this dress had been stitched for his own body and his position with relation to the Caliphate was that of the axis in the hand-mill which cannot retain its central position without it nor be of any use. Similarly, he held "I was the central pivot of the Caliphate, were I not there, its entire system would have gone astray from the pivot. It was I who acted as a guard for its organisation and order and guided it through all difficulties. Currents of learning flowed from my bosom and watered it on all sides. My position was high beyond imagination but lust of world seekers for government became a tumbling stone for me and I had to confine myself to seclusion. Blinding darkness prevailed all round and there was intense gloom everywhere. The young grew old and the old departed for the graves but this patience-breaking period would not end. I kept watching with my eyes the plundering of my own

inheritance and saw the passing of Caliphate from one hand to the other but remained patient as I could not stop their high-handedness for lack of means."

NEED FOR THE PROPHET'S CALIPH AND THE MODE OF HIS APPOINTMENT.

After the Prophet of Islam the presence of such a personality was inevitable who could stop the community from disintegration and guard the religious law against change, alteration and interference by those who wanted to twist it to suit their own desires. If this very need is denied then there is no sense in attaching so much importance to the succession of the Prophet that the assemblage in Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah should have been considered more important than the burial of the Prophet. If the need is recognised, the question is whether or not the Prophet too realised it. If it is held he could not attend to it and appreciate its need or absence of need it would be the biggest proof for regarding the Prophet's mind to be blank for thinking of means to stop the evils of innovations and apostasy in spite of having given warnings about them. If it is said that he did realise it but had to live it unresolved on account of some advantage then instead of keeping it hidden the advantage should be clearly indicated otherwise silence without purpose would constitute delinquency in the discharge of the obligations of Prophethood. If there was some impediment, it should be disclosed otherwise we should agree that just as the Prophet did not leave any item of religion incomplete he did not leave this matter either and did propose such a course of action for it, that if it was acted upon religion would have remained safe against the interference of others.

The question now is what was that course of action. If it is taken to be the consensus of opinion of the community then it cannot truly take place as in such consensus acquiescence of every individual is necessary; but taking into account the difference in human temperaments it seems impossible that they would agree on any single point. Nor is there any example where on such matters there has been no single voice of dissent. How then can such a fundamental need be made dependent on the occurrence of such an impossible event - need on which converges the future of Islam and the good of the Muslims. Therefore, the mind is not prepared to accept this criterion. Nor is tradition in harmony with it, as al-Qadi `Adud ad-Dinal-'Iji has written in *Sharh al-mawaqif*:

> You should know that Caliphate cannot depend upon unanimity of election because no logical or traditional argument can be advanced for it.

In fact when the advocates of unanimous election found that unanimity of all votes is difficult they adopted the agreement of the majority as a substitute for unanimity, ignoring the difference of the minority. In such a case also it often happens that the force of fair and foul or correct and incorrect ways turns the flow of the majority opinion in the direction where there is neither individual distinction nor personal merit as a result of which competent persons remain hidden while incompetent individuals stand forward. When capabilities remain so curbed and personal ends stand in the way as hurdles, how can there be expectation for the election of correct person. Even if it is assumed that all voters have an independent unbiased view, that none of them has his own objective and that none has any other consideration, it is not necessary that every verdict of the majority should be correct, and that it cannot go astray. Experience shows that after experiment the majority has held its own verdict to be wrong. If every verdict of the majority is correct then its first verdict should be wrong because the verdict which holds it wrong is also that of the majority. In this circumstances if the election of the Caliph goes wrong who would be responsible for the mistake, and who should face the blame for the ruination of the Islamic polity. Similarly on whom would be the liability for the bloodshed and slaughter following the turmoil and activity of the elections. When it has been seen that even those who sat in the audience of the Holy Prophet could not be free of mutual quarrel and strife how can others avoid it.

If with a view to avoid mischief it is left to the people of authority to choose anyone they like then here too the same friction and conflict would prevail because here again convergence of human temperaments on one point is not necessary nor can they be assumed to rise above personal ends. In fact here the chances of conflict and collision would be stronger because if not all at least most of them would themselves be candidates for that position and would not spare any effort to defeat their opponent, creating impediments in his way as best as possible. Its inevitable consequence would be mutual struggle and mischief-mongering. Thus, it would not be possible to ward off the mischief for which this device was adopted, and instead of finding a proper individual the community would just become an instrument for the achievement of personal benefits of the others. Again, what would be the criterion for

these people in authority? The same as has usually been, namely whoever collects a few supporters and is able to create commotion in any meeting by use of forceful words would count among the people of authority. Or would capabilities also be judged? If the mode of judging the capabilities is again this very common vote then the same complications and conflicts would arise here too, to avoid which this way was adopted. If there is some other standard, then instead of judging the capabilities of the voters by it why not judge the person who is considered suitable for the position in view. Further, how many persons in authority would be enough to give a verdict? Apparently a verdict once accepted would be precedent for good and the number that would give this verdict would become the criterion for future. al-Qadi `Adud ad-Din al-'Iji writes:

> Rather the nomination of one or two individuals by the people in authority is enough because we know that the companions who were strict in religion deemed it enough as the nomination of Abu Bakr by `Umar and of `Uthman by `Abd ar-Rahman. (*Sharh al-mawaqif*, p.351)

This is the account of the "unanimous election" in the Hall of Bani Sa`idah and the activity of the consultative assembly: that is, one man's action has been given the name of unanimous election and one individual's deed given the name of consultative assembly. Abu Bakr had well understood this reality that election means the vote of a person or two only which is to be attributed to common simple people. That is why he ignored the requirements of unanimous election, majority vote or method of choosing through electoral assembly and appointed `Umar by nomination. `A'ishah also considered that leaving the question of caliphate to the vote of a few particular individuals meant inviting mischief and trouble. She sent a word to `Umar on his death saying:

> Do not leave the Islamic community without a chief. Nominate a Caliph for it and leave it not without an authority as otherwise I apprehend mischief and trouble.

When the election by those in authority proved futile it was given up and only "might is right" became the criteria-namely whoever subdues others and binds them under his sway and control is accepted as the Caliph of the Prophet and his true successor. These are those self-adopted principles in the face of which all the Prophet's sayings uttered in the "Feast of the Relatives," on the night of *hijrah*, at the battle of Tabuk, on

the occasion of conveying the Qur'anic chapter "*al-Bara'ah*" (*at-Tawbah*, chap.9) and at Ghadir (the spring of) Khumm. The strange thing is that when each of the first three caliphates is based on one individual's choice how can this very right to choose be denied to the Prophet himself, particularly when this was the only way to end all the dissension, namely that the Prophet should have himself settled it and saved the community from future disturbances and spared it from leaving this decision in the hands of people who were themselves involved in personal aims and objects. This is the correct procedure which stands to reason and which has also the support of the Prophet's definite sayings.

(3). Hayyan ibn as-Samin al-Hanafi of Yamamah was the chief of the tribe Banu Hanifah and the master of fort and army. Jabir is the name of his younger brother while al-A`sha whose real name was Maymun ibn Qays ibn Jandal enjoyed the position of being his bosom friend and led a decent happy life through his bounty. In this verse he has compared his current life with the previous one that is the days when he roamed about in search of livelihood and those when he led a happy life in Hayyan's company. Generally Amir al-mu'minin's quoting of this verse has been taken to compare this troubled period with the peaceful days passed under the care and protection of the Prophet when he was free from all sorts of troubles and enjoyed mental peace. But taking into account the occasion for making this comparison and the subject matter of the verse it would not be far fetched if it is taken to indicate the difference between the unimportant position of those in power during the Prophet's life time and the authority and power enjoyed by them after him, that is, at one time in the days of the Prophet no heed was paid to them because of `Ali's personality but now the time had so changed that the same people were masters of the affairs of the Muslim world.

(4). When `Umar was wounded by Abu Lu'lu'ah and he saw that it was difficult for him to survive because of the deep wound, he formed a consultative committee and nominated for it `Ali ibn Abi Talib, `Uthman ibn `Affan, `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf, az-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam, Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, and Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah and bound them that after three days of his death they should select one of themselves as the Caliph while for those three days Suhayb should act as Caliph. On receipt of these instructions some members of the committee requested him to indicate what ideas he had about each of them to enable them to proceed further in their light. `Umar therefore disclosed his own view about each individual. He said that Sa`d was harsh-tempered and hot headed; `Abd ar-Rahman was the Pharaoh of the community; az-Zubayr was, if

pleased, a true believer but if displeased an unbeliever; Talhah was the embodiment of pride and haughtiness, if he was made caliph he would put the ring of the caliphate on his wife's finger while `Uthman did not see beyond his kinsmen. As regards `Ali he is enamoured of the Caliphate although I know that he alone can run it on right lines. Nevertheless, despite this admission, he thought it necessary to constitute the consultative Committee and in selecting its members and laying down the working procedure he made sure that the Caliphate would take the direction in which he wished to turn it. Thus, a man of ordinary prudence can draw the conclusion that all the factors for `Uthman's success were present therein. If we look at its members we see that one of them namely `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf is the husband of `Uthman's sister, next Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas besides bearing malice towards `Ali is a relation and kinsman of `Abd ar-Rahman. Neither of them can be taken to go against `Uthman. The third Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah about whom Prof. Muhammad `Abduh writes in his annotation on*Nahj al-balaghah*:

> Talhah was inclined towards `Uthman and the reason for it was no less than that he was against `Ali, because he himself was at at-Taymi and Abu Bakr's accession to the Caliphate had created bad blood between Bani Taym and Banu Hashim.

As regards az-Zubayr, even if he had voted for `Ali, what could his single vote achieve. According to at-Tabari's statement Talhah was not present in Medina at that time but his absence did not stand in the way of `Uthman's success. Rather even if he were present, as he did actually reach at the meeting (of the Committee), and he is taken to be `Ali's supporter, still there could be no doubt in `Uthman's success because `Umar's sagacious mind had set the working procedure that:

> If two agree about one and the other two about another then `Abdullah ibn `Umar should act as the arbitrator. The group whom he orders should choose the Caliph from among themselves. If they do not accept `Abdullah ibn `Umar's verdict, support should be given to the group which includes `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf, but if the others do not agree they should be beheaded for opposing this verdict. (at-Tabari, vol.1, pp.2779-2780; Ibn al-Athir, vol.3, p.67).

Here disagreement with the verdict of `Abdullah ibn `Umar has no meaning since he was directed to support the group which included

`Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf. He had ordered his son `Abdullah and Suhayb that:

> If the people differ, you should side with the majority, but if three of them are on one side and the other three on the other, you should side with the group including `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf. (at-Tabari, vol.1, pp.2725,2780; Ibn al-Athir, vol.3, pp.51,67).

In this instruction the agreement with the majority also means support of `Abd ar-Rahman because the majority could not be on any other side since fifty blood-thirsty swords had been put on the heads of the opposition group with orders to fall on their heads on `Abd ar-Rahman's behest. Amir al-mu'minin's eye had fore-read it at that very moment that the Caliphate was going to `Uthman as appears from his following words which he spoke to al-`Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib:

> "The Caliphate has been turned away from us." al-`Abbas asked how could he know it. Then he replied, "`Uthman has also been coupled with me and it has been laid down that the majority should be supported; but if two agree on one and two on the other, then support should be given to the group which includes `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf. Now Sa`d will support his cousin `Abd ar-Rahman who is of course the husband of `Uthman's sister." (*ibid*)

However, after `Umar's death this meeting took place in the room of `A'ishah and on its door stood Abu Talhah al-Ansari with fifty men having drawn swords in their hands. Talhah started the proceedings and inviting all others to be witness said that he gave his right of vote to `Uthman. This touched az-Zubayr's sense of honour as his mother Safiyyah daughter of `Abd al-Muttalib was the sister of Prophet's father. So he gave his right of vote to `Ali. Thereafter Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas made his right of vote to `Abd ar-Rahman. This left three members of the consultative committee out of whom `Abd ar-Rahman said that he was willing to give up his own right of vote if `Ali (p.b.u.h.) and `Uthman gave him the right to choose one of them or one of these two should acquire this right by withdrawing. This was a trap in which `Ali had been entangled from all sides namely that either he should abandon his own right or else allow `Abd ar-Rahman to do as he wished. The first case was not possible for him; that is, to give up his own right and elect `Uthman or `Abd ar-Rahman. So, he clung to his right, while `Abd ar-

Rahman separating himself from it assumed this power and said to Amir al-mu'minin, "I pay you allegiance on your following the Book of Allah, the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the conduct of the two Shaykhs, (Abu Bakr and `Umar). `Ali replied, "Rather on following the Book of Allah, the *sunnah* of the Prophet and my own findings." When he got the same reply even after repeating the question thrice he turned to `Uthman saying, "Do you accept these conditions." He had no reason to refuse and so he agreed to the conditions and allegiance was paid to him. When Amir al mu'minin saw his rights being thus trampled he said:

> "This is not the first day when you behaved against us. I have only to keep good patience. Allah is the Helper against whatever you say. By Allah, you have not made `Uthman Caliph but in the hope that he would give back the Caliphate to you."

After recording the events of *ash-Shura* (consultative committee), Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written that when allegiance had been paid to `Uthman, `Ali addressed `Uthman and `Abd ar-Rahman saying, "May Allah sow the seed of dissension among you," and so it happened that each turned a bitter enemy of the other and `Abd ar-Rahman did not ever after speak to `Uthman till death. Even on death bed he turned his face on seeing him.

On seeing these events the question arises whether *ash-Shura* (consultative committee) means confining the matter to six persons, thereafter to three and finally to one only. Also whether the condition of following the conduct of the two Shaykhs for Caliphate was put by `Umar or it was just a hurdle put by `Abd ar-Rahman between `Ali (p.b.u.h.) and the Caliphate, although the first Caliph did not put forth this condition at the time of nominating the second Caliph, namely that he should follow the former's footsteps. What then was the occasion for this condition here?

However, Amir al-mu'minin had agreed to participate in it in order to avoid mischief and to put an end to arguing so that others should be silenced and should not be able to claim that they would have voted in his favour and that he himself evaded the consultative committee and did not give them an opportunity of selecting him.

(5). About the reign of the third Caliph, Amir al-mu'minin says that soon on `Uthman's coming to power Banu Umayyah got ground and began plundering the *Bayt al-mal* (public fund), and just as cattle on seeing green grass after drought trample it away, they recklessly fell upon

Allah's money and devoured it. At last this self-indulgence and nepotism brought him to the stage when people besieged his house, put him to sword and made him vomit all that he had swallowed.

The maladministration that took place in this period was such that no Muslim can remain unmoved to see that Companions of high position were lying uncared for, they were stricken with poverty and surrounded by pennilessness while control over *Bayt al-mal* (public fund) was that of Banu Umayyah, government positions were occupied by their young and inexperienced persons, special Muslim properties were owned by them, meadows provided grazing but to their cattle, houses were built but by them, and orchards were but for them. If any compassionate person spoke about these excesses his ribs were broken, and if someone agitated this capitalism he was externed from the city. The uses to which *zakat* and charities which were meant for the poor and the wretched and the public fund which was the common property of the Muslims were put may be observed from the following few illustrations;

1) al-Hakam ibn Abi'l-`As who had been exiled from Medina by the Prophet was allowed back in the city not only against the Prophet's *sunnah* but also against the conduct of the first two Caliphs and he was paid three hundred thousand Dirhams from the public fund. (*Ansab al-ashraf*, vol.5, pp.27, 28, 125)

2) al-Walid ibn `Uqbah who has been named hypocrite in the Qur'an was paid one hundred thousand Dirhams from the Muslim's public fund. (*al-`Iqd al-farid*, vol.3, p.94)

3) The Caliph married his own daughter Umm Aban to Marwan ibn al-Hakam and paid him one hundred thousand Dirhams from the public fund. (*Sharh* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol.1, pp.198-199).

4) He married his daughter `A'ishah to Harith ibn al-Hakam and granted him one hundred thousand Dirhams from the public fund. (*ibid*.)

5) `Abdullah ibn Khalid was paid four hundred thousand Dirhams. (*al-Ma`arif* of Ibn Qutaybah, p.84)

6) Allowed the *khums* (one fifth religious duty) from Africa (amounting to five hundred thousand Dinars) to Marwan ibn al-Hakam. (*ibid*)

7) Fadak which was withheld from the angelic daughter of the Prophet on the ground of being general charity was given as a royal favour to Marwan ibn al-Hakam. (*ibid*.)

8) Mahzur a place in the commercial area of Medina which had been declared a public trust by the Prophet was gifted to Harith ibn al-Hakam. (*ibid*.)

9) In the meadows around Medina no camel except those of Banu Umayyah were allowed to graze. (*Sharh* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol.l, p.l99)

10) After his death (`Uthman's) one hundred and fifty thousand Dinars (gold coins) and one million Dirhams (silver coins) were found in his house. There was no limit to tax free lands; and the total value of the landed estate he owned in Wadi al-Qura and Hunayn was one hundred thousand Dinars. There were countless camels and horses. (*Muruj adh-dhahab*, vol.l, p.435)

11) The Caliph's relations ruled all the principal cities. Thus, at Kufah, al-Walid ibn `Uqbah was the governor but when in the state of intoxication of wine he led the morning prayer in four instead of two *rak`ah* and people agitated he was removed, but the Caliph put in his place a hypocrite like Sa`id ibn al-`As. In Egypt `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh, in Syria Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, and in Basrah, `Abdullah ibn `Amir were the governors appointed by him (*ibid*.)

Chapter 12

SERMON 4

Amir al-mu'minin's far-sightedness and his staunch conviction in Belief

Through us you got guidance in the darkness and secured high position, and through us you got out of the gloomy night. The ears which do not listen to the cries may become deaf. How can one who remained deaf to the loud cries (of the Qur'an and the Prophet) listen to (my) feeble voice. The heart that has ever palpitated (with fear of Allah) may get peace.

I always apprehended from you consequences of treachery and I had seen you through in the garb of the deceitful. The curtain of religion had kept me hidden from you but the truth of my intentions disclosed you to me. I stood for you on the path of truth among misleading tracks where you met each other but there was no leader and you dug but got no water.

Today I am making these dumb things speak to you (i.e. my suggestive ideas and deep musings etc.) which are full of descriptive power. The opinion of the person who abandons me may get astray. I have never doubted in the truth since it has been shown to me. Musa (Moses) (1) did not entertain fear for his own self. Rather he apprehended mastery of the ignorant and away of deviation. Today we stand on the cross-roads of truth and untruth. The one who is sure of getting water feels no thirst.

(1). The reference is to that even of Moses when sorcerers were sent for to confront him and they showed their sorcery by throwing ropes and sticks on the ground and Moses felt afraid. Thus, the Qur'an records:

> *… it seemed to him (Moses), by their sorcery as if they were running.Then Moses felt in himself a fear. We said: Fear not! Verily thou art the uppermost.* (20:66-68)

Amir al-mu'minin says that the ground for Moses fear was not that since he saw ropes and sticks moving he might have entertained fear for his life but the cause of his fear was lest people be impressed with this sorcery and get astray, and untruth might prevail on account of this craft. That is why Moses was not consoled by saying that his life was safe but by saying that he would prove superior, and his claim would be upheld. Since his fear was for the defeat of the truth and victory of the untruth, not for his own life, the consideration was given to him for the victory of truth and not for the protection of his life.

Amir al-mu'minin also means that he too had the same fear *viz*. that the people should not be caught in the trap of these (Talhah, az-Zubayr, etc.) and fail into misguidance by getting astray from the true faith. Otherwise, he himself never feared for his own life.

Chapter 13

SERMON 5

Delivered when the Holy Prophet died and `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and Abu Sufyan ibn Harb offered to pay allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin for the Caliphate

O' People! (1)

Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance, turn away from the path of dissension and put off the crowns of pride. Prosperous is one who rises with wings (i.e. when he has power) or else he remains peaceful and others enjoy ease. It (i.e. the aspiration for Caliphate) is like turbid water or like a morsel that would suffocate the person who swallows it. One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another's field.

If I speak out they would call me greedy towards power but if I keep quiet they would say I was afraid of death. It is a pity that after all the ups and downs (I have been through). By Allah the son of Abu Talib (2) is more familiar with death than an infant with the breast of its mother. I have hidden knowledge, if I disclose it you will start trembling like ropes in deep wells.

(1). When the Holy Prophet died Abu Sufyan was not in Medina. He was coming back when on his way he got the news of this tragedy. At once he enquired who had become the leader and Chief. He was told that people had paid allegiance to Abu Bakr. On hearing this the acknowledged mischief-monger of Arabia went into deep thought and eventually went to `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib with a proposal. He said to him, "Look, these people have by contrivance made over the Caliphate to the Taym and deprived Banu Hashim of it for good, and after himself this man would place over our heads a haughty man of Banu `Adi. Let us go to `Ali ibn `Abi Talib and ask him to get out of his house and take to arms to secure his right." So taking `Abbas with him he came to `Ali and said: "Let me your hand; I pay allegiance to you and if anyone rises

in opposition I would fill the streets of Medina with men of cavalry and infantry." This was the most delicate moment for Amir al-mu'minin. He regarded himself as the true head and successor of the Prophet while a man with the backing of his tribe and party like Abu Sufyan was ready to support him. Just a signal was enough to ignite the flames of war. But Amir al-mu'minin's foresight and right judgement saved the Muslims from civil war as his piercing eyes perceived that this man wanted to start civil war by rousing the passions of tribal partisanship and distinction of birth, so that Islam should be struck with a convulsion that would shake it to its roots. Amir al-mu'minin therefore rejected his counsel and admonished him severely and spoke forth the words, whereby he has stopped people from mischief mongering, and undue conceit, and declared his stand to be that for him there were only two courses - either to take up arms or to sit quietly at home. If he rose for war there was no supporter so that he could suppress these rising insurgencies. The only course left was quietly to wait for the opportunity till circumstances were favourable.

Amir al-mu'minin's quietness at this stage was indicative of his high policy and far-sightedness, because if in those circumstances Medina had become the centre of war its fire would have engulfed the whole of Arabia in its flames. The discord and scuffle that had already begun among *muhajirun* (those who came from Mecca) and *ansar* (the locals of Medina) would have increased to maximum, the wire-pullings of the hypocrites would have had full play, and Islam's ship would have been caught in such a whirlpool that its balancing would have been difficult; Amir al-mu'minin suffered trouble and tribulations but did not raise his hands. History is witness that during his life at Mecca the Prophet suffered all sorts of troubles but he was not prepared to clash or struggle by abandoning patience and endurance, because he realised that if war took place at that stage the way for Islam's growth and fruition would be closed. Of course, when he had collected supporters and helpers enough to suppress the flood of unbelief and curb the disturbances, he rose to face the enemy. Similarly, Amir al-mu'minin, treating the life of the Prophet as a torch for his guidance refrained from exhibiting the power of his arm because he was realising that rising against the enemy without helpers and supporters would become a source of revolt and defeat instead of success and victory. Therefore, on this occasion Amir al-mu'minin has likened the desire for Caliphate to turbid water or a morsel suffocating the throat. Thus, even where people had forcibly snatched this morsel and wanted to swallow it by forcible thrusting, it got stuck

up in their throat. They could neither swallow it nor vomit it out. That is, they could neither manage it as is apparent from the blunders they committed in connection with Islamic injunctions, nor were they ready to cast off the knot from their neck.

He reiterated the same ideas in different words thus: "If had I attempted to pluck the unripe fruit of Caliphate then by this the orchard would have been desolated and I too would have achieved nothing, like these people who cultivate on other's land but can neither guard it, nor water it at proper time, nor reap any crop from it. The position of these people is that if I ask them to vacate it so that the owner should cultivate it himself and protect it, they say how greedy I am, while if I keep quiet they think I am afraid of death. They should tell me on what occasion did I ever feel afraid, or flew from battle-field for life, whereas every small or big encounter is proof of my bravery and a witness to my daring and courage. He who plays with swords and strikes against hillocks is not afraid of death. I am so familiar with death that even an infant is not so familiar with the breast of its mother. Hark! The reason for my silence is the knowledge that the Prophet has put in my bosom. If I divulge it you would get perplexed and bewildered. Let some days pass and you would know the reason of my inaction, and perceive with your own eyes what sorts of people would appear on this scene under the name of Islam, and what destruction they would bring about. My silence is because this would happen, otherwise it is not silence without reason."

A Persian hemistch says:

"Silence has meaning which cannot be couched in words."

(2). About death Amir al-mu'minin says that it is so dear to him that even an infant does not so love to leap towards the source of its nourishment while in its mother's lap. An infant's attachment with the breast of its mother is under the effect of a natural impulse but the dictates of natural impulses change with the advance of age. When the limited period of infancy ends and the infant's temperament changes, he does not like even to look at what was so familiar to him but rather turns his face from it in disgust. But the love of prophets and saints for union with Allah is mental and spiritual, and mental and spiritual feelings do not change, nor does weakness or decay occur in them. Since death is the means and first rung towards this goal their love for death increases to such an extent that its rigours become the cause of pleasure for them and its bitterness proves to be the source of delight for their taste. Their love for it is

the same as that of the thirsty for the well or that of a lost passenger for his goal. Thus when Amir al-mu'minin was wounded by `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muljam's fatal attack, he said, "I was but like the walker who has reached (the goal) or like the seeker who has found (his object) and whatever is with Allah is good for the pious." The Prophet also said that there is no pleasure for a believer other than union with Allah.

Chapter 14

SERMON 6

Delivered on being advised not to chase Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah and az-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam for fighting. (1)

By Allah I shall not be like the badger, which feigns sleep on continuous (sound of) stone-throwing till he who is in search of it finds it or he who is on the look out for it overpowers it. Rather, I shall ever strike the deviators from truth with the help of those who advance towards it, and the sinners and doubters with the help of those who listen to me and obey, till my day (of death) comes. By Allah I have been continually deprived of my right from the day the Prophet died till today.

(1). When Amir al-mu'minin showed intention to chase Talhah and az-Zubayr, he was advised to leave them on their own lest he received some harm from them. Amir al-mu'minin uttered these words in reply, the sum total whereof is: "How long can I be a mere spectator to my right being snatched and keep quiet. Now, so long as I have breath of life I shall fight them and make them suffer the consequences of their conduct. They should not think that I can be easily over-powered like the badger."

*Dabu`* means badger. Its nickname is Umm `Amir and Umm Turrayq. It is also called "the glutton", because it swallows everything and eats up whatever it gets as if several bellies were contained in one, and they do not have their fill. It is also called *Na`thal*. It is a very simple and silly animal. Its slyness is apparent from the way it is easily caught. It is said that the hunter surrounds its den and strikes it with his foot or a stick, and calls out softly, "Bow you head Umm Turrayq, conceal yourself Umm `Amir." On repeating this sentence and patting the ground, it conceals itself in a corner of the den. Then the hunter says, "Umm `Amir is not in its den, it is sleeping." On hearing this it stretches its limbs and feigns sleep. The hunter then puts the knot in its feet and drags it out, and if falls like a coward into his hand without resistance.

Chapter 15

SERMON 7

They (1) have made Satan the master of their affairs, and he has taken them as partners. He has laid eggs and hatched them in their bosoms. He creeps and crawls in their laps. He sees through their eyes, and speaks with their tongues. In this way he has led them to sinfulness and adorned for them foul things like the action of one whom Satan has made partner in his domain and speaks untruth through his tongue.

(1). Amir al-mu'minin says about the hypocrites (i.e. those who opposed him before and during his Caliphate) that they are partners in action of Satan and his helpers and supporters. He too has befriended them so much that he has made his abode with them, resides on their bosoms, lays eggs and hatches young one from them there, while these young ones jump and play in their laps without demur. He means that Satanic evil ideas take birth in their bosoms and grow and thrive there. There is no restrain on them, nor restriction of any kind. He has so permeated in their blood and mingled in their spirit that both have become completely unified. Now eyes are theirs but sight is his, the tongue is theirs but the words are his, as the Prophet had said, "Verily, Satan permeates the progeny of Adam like blood." That is, just as the circulation of blood does not stop, in the same way the quick succession of Satan's evil ideas know no break and he draws man towards evil in sleep and wakefulness, and in every posture, rising or sitting. He so paints them with his dye that their word and action reflect an exact portrait of his word and action. Those whose bosoms shine with the effulgence of faith prevent such evil ideas but some are already ready to welcome those evils and these are the persons who under the garb of Islam are ever after advancement of heresy.

Chapter 16

SERMON 8

Said about az-Zubayr at a time for which it was appropriate

He asserts that he swore allegiance to me with his hand but did not swear with his heart. (1) So he does admit allegiance. As regards his claiming it otherwise than with his heart he should come forward with a clear argument for it. Otherwise, he should return to wherefrom he has gone out. (2)

(1). When after swearing allegiance on the hand of Amir al-mu'minin, az-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam broke the allegiance, then sometimes he put forth the excuse that he was forced to swear allegiance and that forced allegiance is no allegiance, and sometimes he said that allegiance was only for show. His heart did not go in accord with it. As though he himself admitted with his tongue the duplicity of his outer appearance and inner self. But this excuse is like that of the one who reverts to apostasy after adopting Islam and to avoid penalty may say that he had accepted Islam only by the tongue, not in the heart. Obviously, such an excuse cannot be heard, nor can avoid punishment by this argument. If az-Zubayr suspected that `Uthman was slain at Amir al-mu'minin's insistence, this suspicion should have existed when he was taking oath for obedience and stretching his hand for allegiance, not now that his expectations were getting frustrated and hopes had started dawning from somewhere else.

(2). Amir al-mu'minin has rejected his claim in short form thus: that when he admits that his hands had paid allegiance then until there is justification for breaking of the allegiance he should stick to it. But if, according to him his heart was not in accord with it he should produce other proof for it. Since proof about the state of heart cannot be adduced how can he bring such proof, and an assertion without proof is unacceptable to his mind.

Chapter 17

SERMON 9

Cowardice of the people of Jamal

They (1) thunder like clouds and shone like lightning but despite both these things they exhibited cowardice, while we do not thunder till we pounce upon the foe nor do we show flow (of words) until we have not virtually rained.

(1). About the people of Jamal (i.e. the enemy in the battle of Jamal) Amir al-mu'minin says that they rose thundering, shouting and stampeding but when encounter took place they were seen flying like straw. At one time they made loud claims that they would do this and would do that and now they showed such cowardice as to flee from the battlefield. About himself Amir al-mu'minin says, that "We do not threaten the enemy before battle, nor utter boasts, nor terrorise the enemy by raising unnecessary cries because it is not the way of the brave to use the tongue instead of the hand." That is why on this occasion he said to his comrades: "Beware of excessive talk as it is cowardice."

Chapter 18

SERMON 10

About Talhah and az-Zubayr

Beware! Satan (1) has collected his group and assembled his horsemen and foot-soldiers. Surely, with me is my sagacity. I have neither deceived myself nor ever been deceived. By Allah I shall fill to the brim for them a cistern from which I alone would draw water. They can neither turn away from it nor return to it.

(1). When Talhah and az-Zubayr broke away by violating the Oath of allegiance and set for Basrah in the company of `A'ishah, Amir al-mu'minin spoke in these words which are part of the long speech.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written that in this sermon Satan denotes the real Satan as well as Mu`awiyah because Mu`awiyah was secretly conspiring with Talhah and az-Zubayr and instigating them to fight against Amir al-mu'minin but the reference to the real Satan is more appropriate, obvious and in accord with the situation and circumstances.

Chapter 19

SERMON 11

Delivered in the Battle of Jamal when Amir al-mu'minin gave the standard to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah (1)

Mountains (2) may move from their position but you should not move from yours. Grit your teeth. Lend to Allah your head (in fighting for Allah, give yourself to Allah). Plant your feet firmly on the ground. Have your eye on the remotest foe and close your eyes (to their numerical majority). And keep sure that succour is but from Allah, the Glorified.

(1). Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was Amir al-mu'minin's son but called Ibn Hanafiyyah after his mother. His mother's name was Khawlah bint Ja`far. She was known as Hanafiyyah after her tribe Banu Hanifah. When people of Yamamah were declared apostates for refusing to pay *zakat* (religious tax) and were killed and their women-folk were brought to Medina as slave girls, this lady also came to Medina with them. When her tribesmen came to know it they approached Amir al-mu'minin and requested him to save her from the blemish of slavery and protect her family honour and prestige. Consequently, Amir al-mu'minin set her free after purchasing and married here whereafter Muhammad was born.

Most historians have written his surname as Abu'l-Qasim. Thus, the author of *al-Isti`ab* (vol. 3, pp. 1366, 1367-1368, 1370, 1371-1372) has narrated the opinion of Abu Rashid ibn Hafs az-Zuhri that from among the sons of the companions (of the Prophet) he came across four individuals everyone of whom was named Muhammad and surnamed Abu'l-Qasim, namely (I) Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, (2) Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr (3) Muhammad ibn Talhah and (4) Muhammad ibn Sa`d. After this he writes that Muhammad ibn Talhah's name and surname was given by the Prophet. al-Waqidi writes that the name and surname of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was suggested by `A'ishah. Apparently the Holy Prophet's giving the name of Muhammad ibn Talhah seems incorrect since from

some traditions it appears that the Prophet had reserved it for a son of Amir al-mu'minin and he was Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah.

> As regards his surname it is said that the Prophet had particularised it and that he had told `Ali that a son would be born to you after me and I have given him my name and surname and after that it is not permissible for anyone in my people to have this name and surname together.

With this opinion before us how can it be correct that the Prophet had given this very name and surname to anyone else since particularisation means that no one else would share it. Moreover, some people have recorded the surname of Ibn Talhah as Abu Sulayman instead of Abu'l-Qasim and this further confirms our view point. Similarly, if the surname of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was on the ground that his son's name was Qasim, who was among the theologians of Medina, then what is the sense in `A'ishah having suggested it. If she had suggested it along with the name how could Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr tolerate it later on since having been brought up under the care of Amir al-mu'minin the Prophet's saying could not remain concealed from him. Moreover, most people have recorded his surname as Abu `Abd ar-Rahman, which weakens the view of Abu Rashid.

Let alone these people's surname being Abu'l-Qasim, even for Ibn al-Hanafiyyah this surname is not proved. Although Ibn Khallikan (in *Wafayat al-a`yan,* vol. 4, p.170) has taken that son of Amir al-mu'minin for whom the Prophet had particularised this surname to be Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, yet al-`Allamah al-Mamaqani (in *Tanqih al-maqal*, vol. 3, Part 1, p. 112) writes:

> In applying this tradition to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, Ibn Khallikan has got into confusion, because the son of Amir al-mu'minin whom the Prophet's name and surname together have been gifted by the Prophet, and which is not permissible to be given to any one else, is to the awaited last Imam (may our lives be his ransom), and not to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, nor is the surname Abu'l- Qasim established for him, rather some of the Sunnis being ignorant of the real intention of the Prophet, have taken to mean Ibn al-Hanafiyyah.

However, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was prominent in righteousness and piety, sublime in renunciation and worship, lofty in knowledge

and achievements and heir of his father in bravery. His performance in the battles of Jamal and Siffin had created such impression among the Arabs that even warriors of consequence trembled at his name. Amir al-mu'minin too was proud of his courage and valour, and always placed him forward in encounters. ash-Shaykh al-Baha'i has written in *al-Kashkul* that `Ali ibn Abi Talib kept him abreast in the battles and did not allow Hasan and Husayn to go ahead, and used to say, "He is my son while these two are sons of the Prophet of Allah." When a Kharijite said to Ibn al-Hanafiyyah that `Ali thrust him into the flames of war but saved away Hasan and Husayn he replied that he himself was like the right hand and Hasan and Husayn like `Ali's two eyes and that `Ali protected his eyes with his right hand. But al-`Allamah al-Mamaqani has written in *Tanqih al-Maqal* that this was not the reply of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah but of Amir al-mu'minin himself. When during the battle of Siffin Muhammad mentioned this matter to Amir al-mu'minin in complaining tone he replied, "You are my right hand whereas they are my eyes, and the hand should protect the eyes."

Apparently it seems that first Amir al-mu'minin must have given this reply and thereafter someone might have mentioned it to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and he must have repeated the same reply as there could be no more eloquent reply than this one and its eloquence confirms the view that it was originally the outcome of the eloquent tongue of Amir al-mu'minin and was later appropriated by Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah. Consequently, both these views can be held to be correct and there is no incongruity between them. However, he was born in the reign of the second Caliph and died in the reign of `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan at the age of sixty-five years. Some writers have recorded the year of his death as 80 A.H. and others as 81 A.H. There is a difference about the place of his death as well. Some have put it as Medina, some Aylah and some Ta'if.

(2). When in the Battle of Jamal Amir al-mu'minin sent Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah to the battle-field, he told him that he should fix himself before the enemy like the mountain of determination and resoluteness so that the onslaught of the army should not be able to displace him, and should charge the enemy with closed teeth because by pressing teeth over the teeth tension occurs in the nerves of the skull as a result of which the stroke of the sword goes amiss, as he said at another place also *viz*. "Press together the teeth. It sends amiss the edge of the sword." Then he says, "My child, lend your head to Allah in order that you may be able to achieve eternal life in place of this one, because for a lent

article there is the right to get it back. Therefore, you should fight being heedless of your life, otherwise also if your mind clings to life you will hesitate to advance towards deathly encounters and that would tell upon your reputation of bravery. Look, don't let your steps falter because the enemy is emboldened at the faltering of steps, and faltering steps fastens the feet of the enemy. Keep the last lines of the enemy as your aim so that the enemy may be overawed with loftiness of your intentions and you may feel ease in tearing through their lives, and their movement should also not remain concealed from you. Look, do not pay heed to their superiority in numbers, otherwise your valour and courage would suffer." This sentence can also mean that one should not wide open the eyes to be dazzled by the shining of weapons, and the enemy may make an attack by taking advantage of the situation. Also, always bear it in mind that victory is from Allah. "If Allah helps you no one can over-power you." Therefore, instead of relying on material means seek His support and succour.

(Remember O' ye Believers!) *If Allah helpeth you, none shall overcome you*… (Qur'an, 3:159)

Chapter 20

SERMON 12

When (1) Allah gave him (Amir al-mu'minin) victory over the enemy at the Battle of Jamal one of his comrades said on that occasion, "I wish my brother so-and-so had been present and he too would have seen what success and victory Allah had given you," whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:

"Did your brother hold me friend?"

He said: "Yes,"

Then Amir al-mu'minin said:

In that case he was with us. Rather in this army of ours even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and wombs of women. Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them.

(1). If a person falls short in his actions despite means and equipment, this would be indicative of the weakness of his will. But if there is an impediment in the way of action or his life comes to an end as a result of which his action remains incomplete, then in that case Allah would not deprive him of the reward on the basis that actions are judged by intention. Since his intention in any case was to perform the action, therefore he should deserve reward to some extent.

In the case of action, there may be absence of reward because action can involve show or pretence but intention is hidden in the depth of heart. It can have not a jot of show or affectation. The intention would remain at the same level of frankness, truth, perfection and correctness where it is, even though there may be no action due to some impediment. Even if there is no occasion for forming intention but there is passion and zeal in the heart, a man would deserve reward on the basis of his heart's feelings. This is to what Amir al-mu'minin has alluded in this sermon, namely that "If your brother loved me he would share the reward with those who secured martyrdom for our support."

Chapter 21

SERMON 13

Condemning the people of Basrah(1)

You were the army of a woman and in the command of a quadruped. When it grumbled you responded, and when it was wounded (hamstrung) you fled away. Your character is low and your pledge is broken. Your faith is hypocrisy. Your water is brackish. He who stays with you is laden with sins and he who forsakes you secures Allah's mercy. As though I see your mosque prominent, resembling the surface of a boat, while Allah has sent chastisement from above and from below it and every one who is on it is drowned.(2)

Another version

By Allah, your city would certainly be drowned so much so that as though I see its mosque like the upper part of a boat or a sitting ostrich.

Another version

Like the bosom of a bird in deep sea.

Another version

Your city is the most stinking of all the cities as regards its clay, the nearest to water and remotest from the sky. It contains nine tenths of evil. He who enters it is surrounded with his sins and he who is out of it enjoys Allah's forgiveness. It seems as though I look at this habitation of yours that water has so engulfed it that nothing can be seen of it except the highest part of mosque appearing like the bosom of a bird in deep sea.

(1). Ibn Maytham writes that when the Battle of Jamal ended then on the third day after it Amir al-mu'minin said the morning prayer in the central mosque of Basrah and after finishing it stood on the right side of the prayer place reclining against the wall and delivered this sermon

wherein he described the lowness of character of the people of Basrah and their slyness, namely that they got enflamed at others' instigation without anything of their own and making over their command to a woman clung to a camel. They broke away after swearing allegiance and exhibited their low character and evil nature by practising double facedness. In this sermon woman implies `A'ishah and quadruped implies the camel (Jamal) after which this battle has been named the Battle of Jamal.'

This battle originated in this way that when although during the life time of `Uthman, `A'ishah used to oppose him and had left for Mecca leaving him in siege and as such she had a share in his assassination details of which would be stated at some suitable place but when on her return from Mecca towards Medina she heard from `Abdullah ibn Salamah that after `Uthman allegiance had been paid to `Ali (as Caliph) she suddenly exclaimed, "If allegiance has been paid to `Ali, I wish the sky had burst on the earth. Let me go back to Mecca." Consequently she decided to return to Mecca and began saying, "By Allah `Uthman has been killed helplessly. I shall certainly avenge his blood." On seeing this wide change in the state of affairs Abu Salamah said, "What are you saying as you yourself used to say "Kill this *Na`thal* ; he had turned unbeliever." Thereupon she replied, "Not only I but everyone used to say so; but leave these things and listen to what I am now saying, that is better and deserves more attention. It is so strange that first he was called upon to repent but before giving him an opportunity to do so he has been killed." On this Abu Salamah recited the following verses addressing her:

You started it and now you are changing and raising storms of wind and rain.

You ordered for his killing and told us that he had turned unbeliever.

We admit that he has been killed but under your orders and the real Killer is one who ordered it.

Nevertheless, neither the sky fell over us nor did the sun and moon fall into eclipse.

Certainly people have paid allegiance to one who can ward off the enemy with power and grandeur, does not allow swords to come near him and loosens the twist of the rope, that is, subdues the enemy.

He is always fully armed for combat and the faithful is never like the traitor.

However, when she reached Mecca with a passion for vengeance she began rousing the people to avenge `Uthman's blood by circulating stories of his having been victimised. The first to respond to this call was `Abdullah ibn `Amir al-Hadrami who had been the governor of Mecca in `Uthman's reign and with him Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa`id ibn al-`As and other Umayyads rose to support her. On the other side Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah and az-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam also reached Mecca from Medina. From Yemen Ya`la ibn Munabbih who had been governor there during `Uthman's caliphate and the former governor of Basrah, `Abdullah ibn `Amir ibn Kurayz also reached there, and joining together began preparing their plans. Battle had been decided upon but discussion was about the venue of confrontation. `A'ishah's opinion was to make Medina the venue of the battle but some people opposed and held that it was difficult to deal with Medinites, and that some other place should be chosen as the venue. At last after much discussion it was decided to march towards Basrah as there was no dearth of men to support the cause. Consequently on the strength of `Abdullah ibn `Amir's countless wealth, and the offer of six hundred thousand Dirhams and six hundred camels by Ya`la ibn Munabbih they prepared an army of three thousand and set off to Basrah. There was a small incident on the way on account of which `A'ishah refused to advance further. What happened was that at a place she heard the barking of dogs and enquired from the camel driver the name of the place. He said it was Haw'ab. On hearing this name she recalled the Prophet's admonition when he had said to his wives, "I wish I could know at which of you the dogs of Haw'ab would bark." So when she realised that she herself was that one she got the camel seated by patting and expressed her intention to abandon the march. But the device of her companions saved the deteriorating situation. `Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr swore to assure her that it was not Haw'ab, Talhah seconded him and for her further assurance also sent for fifty persons to stand witness to it. When all the people were on one side what could a single woman do by opposing. Eventually they were successful and `A'ishah resumed her forward march with the same enthusiasm.

When this army reached Basrah, people were first amazed to see the riding animal of `A'ishah. Jariyah ibn Qudamah came forward and said, "O' mother of the faithful, the assassination of `Uthman was one tragedy

but the greater tragedy is that you have come out on this cursed camel and ruined your honour and esteem. It is better that you should get back." But since neither the incident at Haw'ab could deter her nor could the Qur'anic injunction*: "Keep sitting in your houses"* (33:33) stop her, what effect could these voices produce. Consequently, she disregarded all this.

When this army tried to enter the city the Governor of Basrah `Uthman ibn Hunayf came forward to stop them and when the two parties came face to face they drew their swords out of the sheaths and pounced upon each other. When a good number had been killed from either side `A'ishah intervened on the basis of her influence and the two groups agreed that till the arrival of Amir al-mu'minin the existing administration should continue and `Uthman ibn Hunayf should continue on his post. But only two days had elapsed when they made a nightly attack on `Uthman ibn Hunayf, killed forty innocent persons, beat `Uthman ibn Hunayf, plucked every hair of his beard, took him in their custody and shut him up. Then they attacked public treasury and while ransacking it killed twenty persons on the spot, and beheaded fifty more after arresting them. Then they attacked the grain store, whereupon an elderly noble of Basrah Hukaym ibn Jabalah could not control himself and reaching there with his men said to `Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, "Spare some of this grain for the city's populace. After all there should be a limit to oppression. You have spread killing and destruction all round and put `Uthman ibn Hunayf in confinement. For Allah's sake keep off these ruining activities and release `Uthman ibn Hunayf. Is there no fear of Allah in your hearts?" Ibn az-Zubayr said, "This is vengeance of `Uthman's life." Hukaym ibn Jabalah retorted, "Were those who have been killed assassins of `Uthman? By Allah, if I had supporters and comrades I should have certainly avenged the blood of these Muslims whom you have killed without reason." Ibn az-Zubayr replied, "We shall not give anything out of this grain, nor will `Uthman ibn Hunayf be released." At last the battle raged between these two parties but how could a few individuals deal with such a big force? The result was that Hukaym ibn Jabalah, his son al-Ashraf ibn Hukaym ibn Jabalah, his brother ar-Ri'l ibn Jabalah and seventy persons of his tribe were killed. In short, killing and looting prevailed all round. Neither anyone's life was secure nor was there any way to save one's honour or property.

When Amir al-mu'minin was informed of the march to Basrah he set out to stop it with a force which consisted of seventy of those who had taken part in the battle of Badr and four hundred out of those

companions who had the honour of being present at the Allegiance of Ridwan (Divine Pleasure). When he stopped at the stage of *Dhiqar* he sent his son Hasan (p.b.u.h.) and `Ammar ibn Yasir to Kufah to invite its people to fighting. Consequently, despite interference of Abu Musa al-Ash`ari seven thousand combatants from there joined Amir al-mu'minin's army. He left that place after placing the army under various commanders. Eye witnesses state that when this force reached near Basrah first of all a contingent of *ansar* appeared foremost. Its standard was held by Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. After it appeared another contingent of 1000 whose commander was Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari. Then another contingent came in sight. Its standard was borne by Abu Qatadah ibn ar-Rabi`. Then a crowd of a thousand old and young persons was seen. They had signs of prostration on their foreheads and veil of fear of Allah on their face. It seemed as if they were standing before the Divine Glory on the Day of Judgement. Their Commander rode a dark horse, was dressed in white, had black turban on his head and was reciting the Qur'an loudly. This was `Ammar ibn Yasir. Then another contingent appeared. Its standard was in the hand of Qays ibn Sa`d ibn `Ubadah. Then an army came to sight. Its leader wore white dress and had a black turban on his head. He was so handsome that all eyes centred around him. This was `Abdullah ibn `Abbas. Then followed a contingent of the companions of the Prophet. Their standard bearer was Qutham ibn al-`Abbas. Then after the passing of a few contingents a big crowd was seen, wherein there was such a large number of spears that they were overlapping and flags of numerous colours were flying. Among them a big and lofty standard was seen with distinctive position. Behind it was seen a rider guarded by sublimity and greatness. His sinews were well-developed and eyes were cast downwards. His awe and dignity was such that no one could look at him. This was the Ever Victorious Lion of Allah namely `Ali ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.). On his right and left were Hasan and Husayn (p.b.u.t.). In front of him Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah walked in slow steps carrying the banner of victory and glory, and on the back were the young men of Banu Hashim, the people of Badr and `Abdullah ibn Ja`far ibn Abi Talib. When this army reached the place az-Zawiyah, Amir al-mu'minin alighted from the horse, and after performing four *rak`ah* of prayer put his cheeks on the ground. When he lifted his head the ground was drenched with tears and the tongue was uttering these words:

O' Sustainer of earth, heaven and the high firmament, this is Basrah.
Fill our lap with its good and protect us from its evils.

Then proceeding forward he got down in the battle-field of Jamal where the enemy was already camping. First of all Amir al-mu'minin announced in his army that no one should attack another, nor take the initiative. Saying this he came in front of the opposite army and said to Talhah and az-Zubayr, "You ask `A'ishah by swearing in the name of Allah and His prophet whether I am not free from the blame of `Uthman's blood, and whether I used the same words for him which you used to say, and whether I pressurised you for allegiance or you swore it of your own free will." Talhah got exasperated at these words but az-Zubayr relented, and Amir al-mu'minin turned back after it, and giving the Qur'an to Muslim (a young man from the tribe of `Abd Qays) sent him towards them to pronounce to them the verdict of the Qur'an. But people took both of them within aim and covered this godly man with their arrows. Then `Ammar ibn Yasir went to canvass and convince them and caution them with the consequences of war but his words were also replied by arrows. Till now Amir al-mu'minin had not allowed an attack as a result of which the enemy continued feeling encouraged and went on raining arrows constantly. At last with the dying of a few valiant combatants consternation was created among Amir al-mu'minin's ranks and some people came with a few bodies before him and said, "O' Commander of the faithful you are not allowing us to fight while they are covering us with arrows. How long can we let them make our bosoms the victim of their arrows, and remain handfolded at their excesses?" At this Amir al-mu'minin did show anger but acting with restraint and endurance, came to the enemy in that very form without wearing armour or any arm and shouted, "Where is az-Zubayr?" At first az-Zubayr hesitated to come forward but he noticed that Amir al-mu'minin had no arms he came out. Amir al-mu'minin said to him "O' az-Zubayr, you must remember that one day the Prophet told you that you would fight with me and wrong and excess would be on your side." az-Zubayr replied that he had said so. Then Amir al-mu'minin enquired "Why have you come then?" He replied that his memory had missed it and if he had recollected it earlier he would not have come that way. Amir al-mu'minin said, "Well, now you have recollected it" and he replied, "Yes." Saying this he went straight to `A'ishah and told her that he was getting back. She asked him the reason and he replied, "`Ali has reminded me a forgotten matter. I had gone astray, but now I have come on the right path and would not

fight `Ali ibn Abi Talib at any cost." `A'ishah said, "You have caught fear of the swords of the sons of `Abd al-Muttalib." He said, "No" and saying this he turned the reins of his horse. However, it is gratifying that some consideration was accorded to the Prophet's saying, for at Haw'ab even after recollection of the Prophet's words no more than transient effect was taken of it. On returning after this conversation Amir al-mu'minin observed that they had attacked the right and left flanks of his army. Noticing this Amir al-mu'minin said, "Now the plea has been exhausted. Call my son Muhammad." When he came Amir al-mu'minin said, "My son, attack them now." Muhammad bowed his head and taking the standard proceeded to the battle-field. But arrows were falling in such exuberance that he had to stop. When Amir al-mu'minin saw this he called out at him, "Muhammad, why don't you advance?" He said, "Father, in this shower of arrows there is no way to proceed. Wait till the violence of arrows subsides." He said, "No, thrust yourself in the arrows and spears and attack." Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah advanced a little but the archers so surrounded him that he had to hold his steps. On seeing this a frown appeared on Amir al-mu'minin's fore-head and getting forward he hit the sword's handle on the Muhammad's back and said, "This is the effect of your mother's veins." Saying this he took the standard from his hands and folding up his sleeves made such and attack that a tumult was created in the enemy's ranks from one end to the other. To whichever row he turned, it became clear and to whatever side he directed himself bodies were seen falling and heads rolling in the hoofs of horses. When after convulsing the rows he returned to his position he said to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, "Look, my son, battle is fought like this." Saying this he gave the standard to him and ordered him to proceed. Muhammad advanced towards the enemy with a contingent of *ansar*. The enemy also came out moving and balancing their spears. But the brave son of the valiant father convulsed rows over rows while the other warriors also made the battle-field glory and left heaps of dead bodies.

From the other side also there was full demonstration of spirit of sacrifice. Dead bodies were falling one over the other but they continued sacrificing their lives devotedly around the camel. Particularly the condition of Banu Dabbah was that although their hands were being severed from the elbows for holding the reins of the camel, and bosoms were being pierced yet they had the following battle-song on their tongues:

a) To us death is sweeter than honey. We are Banu Dabbah, camel rearers.

b) We are sons of death when death comes. We announce the death of `Uthman with the edges of spears.

c) Give us back our chief and there is an end to it.

The low character and ignorance from faith of these Banu Dabbah, can be well understood by that one incident which al-Mada'ini has narrated. He writes that in Basrah there was a man with mutilated ear. He asked him its reason when he said, "I was watching the sight of dead bodies in the battle-field of Jamal when I saw a wounded man who sometimes raised his head and sometimes dashed it back on the ground. I approached near. Then the following two verses were on his lips:

a) Our mother pushed us into the deep waters of death and did not get back till we had thoroughly drunk.

b) By misfortune we obeyed Banu Taym who are none but slave men and slave girls.

"I told him it was not the time to recite verses; he should rather recall Allah and recite the *kalimat ash-shahadah* (verse of testimony). On my saying this he saw me with angry looks and uttering a severe abuse and said, "You are asking me to recite *kalimat ash-shahadah*, get frightened at the last moment and show impatience." I was astonished to hear this and decided to return without saying anything further. When he saw me returning he said, "Wait; for your sake I am prepared to recite, but teach me." I drew close to teach him the *kalimah* when he asked me to get closer. When I got closer he caught my ear with his teeth and did not leave it till he tore it from the root. I did not think it proper to molest a dying man and was about to get back abusing and cursing him when he asked me to listen one more thing. I agreed to listen lest he had an unsatisfied wish. He said that when I should get to my mother and she enquired who had bitten my ear I should say that it was done by `Umayr ibn al-Ahlab ad-Dabbi who had been deceived by a woman aspiring to become the commander of the faithful (head of the state)."

However, when the dazzling lightning of swords finished the lives of thousands of persons and hundreds of Banu Azd and Banu Dabbah were killed for holding the rein of the camel, Amir al-mu'minin ordered, "Kill

the camel for it is Satan." Saying this he made such a severe attack that the cries of "Peace" and "Protection" rose from all round. When he reached near the camel he ordered Bujayr ibn Duljah to kill the camel at once. Consequently, Bujayr hit him with such full might that the camel fell in agony on the side of its bosom. No sooner than the camel fell the opposite army took to heels and the carrier holding `A'ishah was left lonely and unguarded. The companion of Amir al-mu'minin took control of the carrier and under orders of Amir al-mu'minin, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr escorted `A'ishah to the house of Safiyyah bint al-Harith.

This encounter commenced on the 10th of Jumada ath-thaniyah, 36 A.H., in the afternoon and came to an end the same evening. In it from Amir al-mu'minin's army of twenty two thousand, one thousand and seventy or according to another version five hundred persons were killed as martyrs while from `A'ishah's army of thirty thousand, seventeen thousand persons were killed, and the Prophet's saying, "That people who assigned their affairs (of state) to a woman would never prosper" was fully corroborated. (*al-Imamah wa's-siyasah; Muruj adh-dhahab; al-`Iqd al-farid; at-Tarikh*, at Tabari)

(2). Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written that as prophesied by Amir al-mu'minin, Basrah got under floods twice - once in the days of al-Qadir Billah and once in the reign of al-Qa'im bi Amri'l-lah and the state of flooding was just this that while the whole city was under water but the top ends of the mosque were seen about the surface of the water and looked like a bird sitting on the side of its bosom.

Chapter 22

SERMON 14

This also is in condemnation of the people of Basrah

Your earth is close to the sea and away from the sky. Your wits have become light and your minds are full of folly. You are the aim of the archer, a morsel for the eater and an easy prey for the hunter.

Chapter 23

SERMON 15

After resuming the land grants made by `Uthman ibn `Affan, he said:

By Allah, even if I had found that by such money women have been married or slave-maids have been purchased I would have resumed it because there is wide scope in dispensation of justice, and he who finds it hard to act justly should find it harder to deal with injustice.

Chapter 24

SERMON 16

Delivered when allegiance was sworn to him at Medina

The responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it. He to whom experiences have clearly shown the past exemplary punishments (given by Allah to peoples) is prevented by piety from falling into doubts. You should know that the same troubles have returned to you which existed when the Prophet was first sent.

By Allah who sent the Prophet with faith and truth you will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken as in sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till your low persons become high and high ones become low, those who were behind would attain forward positions and those who were forward would become backward. By Allah, I have not concealed a single word or spoken any lie and I had been informed of this event and of this time.

Beware that sins are like unruly horses on whom their riders have been placed and their reins have been let loose so that they would jump with them in Hell. Beware that piety is like trained horses on whom the riders have been placed with the reins in their hands, so that they would take the riders to Heaven. There is right and wrong and there are followers for each. If wrong dominates, it has (always) in the past been so, and if truth goes down that too has often occurred. It seldom happens that a thing that lags behind comes forward.

ash-Sharif ar-Radi says: In this small speech there is more beauty than can be appreciated, and the quantity of amazement aroused by it is more than the appreciation accorded to it. Despite what we have stated it has so many aspects of eloquence that cannot be expressed nor can anyone reach its depth, and no one can understand what I am saying unless one has attained this art and known its details.

… No one appreciates it except those who know (Qur'an, 29:43)

From the same Sermon

He who has heaven and hell in his view has no other aim. He who attempts and acts quickly, succeeds, while the seeker who is slow may also entertain hope, and he who falls short of action faces destruction in Hell. On right and left there are misleading paths. Only the middle way is the (right) path which is the Everlasting Book and the traditions of the Prophet. From it the *sunnah* has spread out and towards it is the eventual return.

He who claims (otherwise) is ruined and he who concocts falsehood is disappointed. He who opposes(1) right with his face gets destruction. It is enough ignorance for a man not to know himself. He who is strong rooted(2) in piety does not get destruction, and the plantation of a people based on piety never remains without water. Hide yourselves in your houses and reform yourselves. Repentance is at your back. One should praise only Allah and condemn only his own self.

(1).In some versions after the words *"man abda safhatahu lilhaqqi halaka:"* the words *"`inda jahalati'n-nas"* also occur. In that case the meaning of this sentence would be that he who stands in face of right dies in the estimation of the ignorant.

(2). Piety is the name of heart and mind being affected and impressed by the Divine Greatness and Glory, as an effect of which the spirit of man becomes full of fear of Allah, and its inevitable result is that engrossment in worship and prayer increases. It is impossible that heart may be full of Divine fear and there be no manifestation of it in actions and deeds. And since worship and submission reform the heart and nurture the spirit, purity of heart increases with the increase of worship. That is why in the Qur'an *"taqwa"* (piety) has been applied sometimes to fear, sometimes to worship and devotion and sometimes to purity of heart and spirit. Thus in the verse *"wa iyyaya fattaqun"* (and Me you fear [16:2]) *taqwa* implies fear, in the verse, *"ittaqu'l-laha haqqa tuqatihi"* (worship Allah as He ought to be worshipped [3:102]), *taqwa* implies worship and devotion and in the *verse "wa yakhsha'l-laha wa yattaqhi faulaika humu'l-faizun"* (24:52) *taqwa* implies purity of spirit and cleanliness of heart.

In the traditions *taqwa* has been assigned three degrees. The first degree is that a man should follow the injunctions and keep aloof from prohibitions. The second degree is that recommended matters should also be followed and disliked things should be avoided. The third degree is that for fear of falling into doubts one may abstain from the permissible

as well. The first degree is for the common men, the second for the nobles and the third for high dignitaries. Allah has referred to these three degrees in the following verse:

> *On those who believe and do good, is no blame for what they ate,* (before) *when they did guard themselves and did believe, and did good, still* (furthermore) *they guard themselves and do good; and Allah loveth the doers of good.* (Qur'an, 5:93)

Amir al-mu'minin says that only action based on piety is lasting, and only that action will blossom and bear fruit which is watered by piety because worship is only that wherein the feeling of submission exists. Thus, Allah says:

> *Is he therefore better who hath laid his foundation on fear of Allah and* (His) *goodwill or he who layeth his foundation on the brink of a crumbling hollowed bank so it crumbled down with him into the fire of Hell…* (Qur'an, 9:109)

Consequently, every such belief as is not based on knowledge and conviction is like the edifice, erected without foundation, wherein there is no stability or firmness while every action that is without piety is like the plantation which withers for lack of watering.

Chapter 25

SERMON 17

About those who sit for dispensation of justice among people but are not fit for it.

Among (1)all the people the most detested before Allah are two persons. One is he who is devoted to his self. So he is deviated from the true path and loves speaking about (foul) innovations and inviting towards wrong path. He is therefore a nuisance for those who are enamoured of him, is himself misled from the guidance of those preceding him, misleads those who follow him in his life or after his death, carries the weight of others' sins and is entangled in his own misdeeds.

The other man is he who has picked up ignorance. He moves among the ignorant, is senseless in the thick of mischief and is blind to the advantages of peace. Those resembling like men have named him scholar but he is not so. He goes out early morning to collect things whose deficiency is better than plenty, till when he has quenched his thirst from polluted water and acquired meaningless things.

He sits among the people as a judge responsible for solving whatever is confusing to the others. If an ambiguous problem is presented before him he manages shabby argument about it of his own accord and passes judgement on its basis. In this way he is entangled in the confusion of doubts as in the spider's web, not knowing whether he was right or wrong. If he is right he fears lest he erred, while if he is wrong he hopes he is right. He is ignorant, wandering astray in ignorance and riding on carriages aimlessly moving in darkness. He did not try to find reality of knowledge. He scatters the traditions as the wind scatters the dry leaves.

By Allah, he is not capable of solving the problems that come to him nor is fit for the position assigned to him. Whatever he does not know he does not regard it worth knowing. He does not realise that what is beyond his reach is within the reach of others. If anything is not clear to him he keeps quiet over it because he knows his own ignorance. Lost lives

are crying against his unjust verdicts, and properties (that have been wrongly disposed of) are grumbling against him.

I complain to Allah about persons who live ignorant and die misguided. For them nothing is more worthless than Qur'an if it is recited as it should be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Qur'an if its verses are removed from their places, nor anything more vicious than virtue nor more virtuous than vice.

(1). Amir al-mu'minin has held two categories of persons as the most detestable by Allah and the worst among people. Firstly, those who are misguided even in basic tenets and are busy in the spreading of evil. Secondly, those who abandon the Qur'an and *sunnah* and pronounce injunctions through their imagination. They create a circle of their devotees and popularise the religious code of law concocted by themselves. The misguidance and wrongfulness of such persons does not remain confined to their own selves but the seed of misguidance sown by them bears fruit and growing into the form of a big tree provides asylum to the misguided and this misguidance goes on multiplying. And since these very people are the real originators the weight of other's sins is also on their shoulders as the Qur'an says:

> *And certainly they shall bear their own burdens, and* (other) *burdens with their own burdens…* (29:13)

Chapter 26

SERMON 18

Amir al-mu'minin said in disparagement of the differences of view among the theologians.

When (1) a problem is put before anyone of them he passes judgement on it from his imagination. When exactly the same problem is placed before another of them he passes an opposite verdict. Then these judges go to the chief who had appointed them and he confirms all the verdicts, although their Allah is One (and the same), their Prophet is one (and the same), their Book (the Qur'an) is one (and the same).

Is it that Allah ordered them to differ and they obeyed Him? Or He prohibited them from it but they disobeyed Him? Or (is it that) Allah sent an incomplete Faith and sought their help to complete it? Or they are His partners in the affairs, so that it is their share of duty to pronounce and He has to agree? Or is it that Allah the Glorified sent a perfect faith but the Prophet fell short of conveying it and handing it over (to the people)? The fact is that Allah the Glorified says:

> … *We have not neglected anything in the Book* (Qur'an) … (Qur'an, 6:38)

And says that one part of the Qur'an verifies another part and that there is no divergence in it as He says:

> … *And if it had been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found in it much discrepancy.* (Qur'an, 4 :82)

Certainly the outside of the Qur'an is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never disappear, its amazements will never pass away and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself.

(1). It is a disputed problem that where there is no clear argument about a matter in the religious law, whether there does in reality exist an

order about it or not. The view adopted by Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash`ari and his master Abu `Ali al-Jubba'i is that in such a case Allah has not ordained any particular course of action but He assigned the task of finding it out and passing a verdict to the jurists so that whatever they hold as prohibited would be deemed prohibited and whatever they regard permissible would be deemed permissible. And if one has one view and the other another then as many verdicts will exist as there are views and each of them would represent the final order. For example, if one scholar holds that barley malt is prohibited and another jurist's view is that it is permissible then it would really be both prohibited and permissible. That is, for one who holds it prohibited, its use would be prohibited while for the other its use would be permissible. About this (theory of) correctness Muhammad ibn Abdi'l-Karim ash-Shahrastani writes:

> A group of theorists hold that in matters where *ijtihad* (research) is applied there is no settled view about permissibility or otherwise and lawfulness and prohibition thereof, but whatever the *mujtahid* (the researcher scholar) holds is the order of Allah, because the ascertainment of the view of Allah depends upon the verdict of the *mujtahid.* If it is not so there will be no verdict at all. And according to this view every *mujtahid*would be correct in his opinion. (*al-Milal wa'l-nihal,* p.98)

In this case, the *mujtahid* is taken to be above mistake because a mistake can be deemed to occur where a step is taken against reality, but where there is no reality of verdict, mistake has no sense. Besides this, the *mujtahid* can be considered to be above mistake if it is held that Allah, being aware of all the views that were likely to be adopted has ordained as many final orders as a result of which every view corresponds to some such order, or that Allah has assured that the views adopted by the *mujtahids* should not go beyond what He has ordained, or that by chance the view of every one of them would, after all, correspond to some ordained order or other.

The Imamiyyah sect, however, has different theory, namely that Allah has neither assigned to anyone the right to legislate nor subjected any matter to the view of the *mujtahid,* nor in case of difference of views has He ordained numerous real orders. Of course, if the *mujtahid* cannot arrive at a real order then whatever view he takes after research and probe, it is enough for him and his followers to act by it. Such an order is the apparent order which is a substitute for the real order. In this case, he is

excused for missing the real order, because he did his best for diving in the deep ocean and to explore its bottom, but it is a pity that instead of pearls he got only the sea-shell. He does not say that observers should except it as a pearl or it should sell as such. It is a different matter that Allah who watches the endeavours may price it at half so that the endeavour does not go waste, nor his passion discouraged.

If the theory of correctness is adopted then every verdict on law and every opinion shall have to be accepted as correct as Maybudhi has written in *Fawatih:*

> In this matter the view adopted by al-Ash`ari is right. It follows that differing opinions should all be right. Beware, do not bear a bad idea about jurists and do not open your tongue to abuse them.

When contrary theories and divergent views are accepted as correct it is strange why the action of some conspicuous individuals are explained as mistakes of decision, since mistake of decision by the *mujtahid* cannot be imagined at all. If the theory of correctness is right the action of Mu`awiyah and `A'ishah should be deemed right; but if their actions can be deemed to be wrong then we should agree that *ijtihad* can also go wrong, and that the theory of correctness is wrong. It will then remain to be decided in its own context whether feminism did not impede the decision of `A'ishah or whether it was a (wrong) finding of Mu`awiyah or something else. However, this theory of correctness was propounded in order to cover mistakes and to give them the garb of Allah's orders so that there should be no impediment in achieving objectives nor should anyone be able to speak against any misdeeds.

In this sermon Amir al-mu'minin has referred to those people who deviate from the path of Allah and, closing their eyes to light, grope in the darkness of imagination, make Faith the victim of their views and opinions, pronounce new findings, pass orders by their own imagination and produce divergent results. Then on the basis of the theory of correctness they regard all these divergent and contrary orders as from Allah, as though each of their order represents divine Revelation so that no order of theirs can be wrong nor can they stumble on any occasion. Thus, Amir al-mu'minin says in disproving this view that:

> 1) When Allah is One, Book (Qur'an) is one, and Prophet is one then the religion (that is followed) should also be one. And when the religion is one how can there be divergent orders about any

matter, because there can be divergence in an order only in case he who passed the order has forgotten it, or is oblivious, or senselessness overtakes him, or he wilfully desires entanglement in these labyrinths, while Allah and the Prophet are above these things. These divergences cannot therefore be attributed to them. These divergences are rather the outcome of the thinkings and opinions of people who are bent on twisting the delineations of religion by their own imaginative performances.

2) Allah must have either forbidden these divergences or ordered creating them. If He has ordered in their favour, where is that order and at what place? As for forbidding, the Qur'an says:

… Say thou! 'Hath Allah permitted you or ye forge a lie against Allah ?' (10:59)

That is, everything that is not in accordance with the Divine orders is a concoction, and concoction is forbidden and prohibited. For concocters, in the next world, there is neither success or achievement nor prosperity and good. Thus, Allah says:

And utter ye not whatever lie describe your tongues (saying): This is lawful and this is forbidden, to forge a lie against Allah; verily, those who forge a lie against Allah succeed not. (Qur'an, 16:116)

3) If Allah has left religion incomplete and the reason for leaving it halfway

was that He desired that the people should assist Him in completing the religious code and share with Him in the task of legislating, then this belief is obviously polytheism. If He sent down the religion in complete form the Prophet must have failed in conveying it so that room was left for others to apply imagination and opinion. This, Allah forbid, would mean a weakness of the Prophet and a bad slur on the selection of Allah.

4) Allah has said in the Qur'an that He has not left out anything in the Book and has clarified each and every matter. Now, if an order is carved out in conflict with the Qur'an it would be outside the religious code and its basis would not be on knowledge and perception, or Qur'an and *sunnah,* but it would be personal

opinion and one's personal judgement which cannot be deemed to have accord with religion and faith.

5) Qur'an is the basis and source of religion and the fountain head of the laws of *shari`ah.* If the laws of *shari`ah* were divergent there should have been divergence in it also, and if there were divergences in it, it could not be regarded as Divine word. When it is Divine word the laws of *shari`ah* cannot be divergent, so as to accept all divergent and contrary views as correct and imaginative verdicts taken as Qur'anic dictates.

Chapter 27

SERMON 19

Amir al-mu'minin was delivering a lecture from the pulpit of (the mosque of) Kufah when al-Ash`ath ibn Qays (1) objected and said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin this thing is not in your favour but against you." (2)Amir al-mu'minin looked at him with anger and said:

How do you know what is for me and what is against me? ! Curse of Allah and others be on you. You are a weaver and son of a weaver. You are the son of an unbeliever and yourself a hypocrite. You were arrested once by the Unbelievers and once by the Muslims, but your wealth and birth could not save you from either. The man who contrives for his own people to be put to sword and invites death and destruction for them does deserve that the near ones should hate him and the remote ones should not trust him.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: This man was arrested once when an unbeliever and once in days of Islam. As for Amir al-mu'minin's words that the man contrived for his own people to be put to sword, the reference herein is to the incident which occurred to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays in confrontation with Khalid ibn Walid at Yamamah, where he deceived his people and contrived a trick till Khalid attacked them. After this incident his people nicknamed him "`Urf an-Nar" which in the parlance stood for traitor.

AL-ASH`ATH IBN QAYS AL-KINDI

(1).His original name was Ma`di Karib and surname Abu Muhammad but because of his dishevelled hair he is better known as al-Ash`ath (one having dishevelled hair). When after Proclamation (of Prophethood) he came to Mecca along with his tribe, the Prophet invited him and his tribe to accept Islam. But all of them turned back without anyone accepting Islam. When after *hijrah* (immigration of the Holy Prophet) Islam became established and in full swing and deputations began to come to Medina

in large numbers he also came to the Prophet's audience with Banu Kindah and accepted Islam. The author of *al-`Isti`ab* writes that after the Prophet this man again turned unbeliever but when during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr he was brought to Medina as prisoner he again accepted Islam, though this time too his Islam was a show. Thus, ash-Shaykh Muhammad `Abduh writes in his annotations on *Nahj al-balaghah:*

> Just as `Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul was a companion of the Prophet, al-Ash`ath was a companion of `Ali and both were high ranking hypocrites.

He lost one of his eyes in the battle of Yarmuk. Ibn Qutaybah has included him in the list of the one-eyed. Abu Bakr's sister Umm Farwah bint Abi Quhafah, who was once the wife of an al-Azdi and then of Tamim ad-Darimi, was on the third occasion married to this al-Ash`ath. Three sons were born of her *viz.* Muhammad, Isma`il and Is'haq. Books on biography show that she was blind. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has quoted the following statement of Abu'l-Faraj wherefrom it appears that this man was equally involved in the assassination of `Ali (p.b.u.h.):

> On the night of the assassination Ibn Muljam came to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and both retired to a corner of the mosque and sat there when Hujr ibn `Adi passed by that side and he heard al-Ash`ath saying to Ibn Muljam, "Be quick now or else dawn's light would disgrace you." On hearing this Hujr said to al-Ash`ath, "O' one-eyed man, you are preparing to kill 'Ali" and hastened towards `Ali ibn Abi Talib, but Ibn Muljam had preceded him and struck 'Ali with sword when Hujr turned back people were crying, "Ali has been killed."

It was his daughter who killed Imam Hasan (p.b.u.h.) by poisoning him. Mas`udi has written that:

> His (Hasan's) wife Ja`dah bint al-Ash`ath poisoned him while Mu`awiyah had conspired with her that if she could contrive to poison Hasan he would pay her one hundred thousand Dirhams and marry her to Yazid. (*Muruj adh-dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 650)

His son Muhammad ibn al-Ash`ath was active in playing fraud with Hadrat Muslim ibn `Aqil in Kufah and in shedding Imam Husayn's

blood in Karbala. But despite all these points he is among those from whom al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah have related traditions.

(2). After the battle of Nahrawan, Amir al-mu'minin was delivering a sermon in the mosque of Kufah about ill effects of "Arbitration" when a man stood up and said "O' Amir al-mu'minin, first you desisted us from this Arbitration but thereafter you allowed it. We cannot understand which of these two was more correct and proper." On hearing this Amir al-mu'minin clapped his one hand over the other and said, "This is the reward of one who gives up firm view" that is, this is the outcome of your actions as you had abandoned firmness and caution and insisted on "Arbitration" but al-Ash`ath mistook it to mean as though Amir al mu'minin implied that "my worry was due to having accepted Arbitration," so he spoke out, "O' Amir al-mu'minin this brings blame on your own self" whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said harshly:

> What do you know what I am saying, and what do you understand what is for me or against me. You are a weaver and the son of a weaver brought up by unbelievers and a hypocrite. Curse of Allah and all the world be upon you.

Commentators have written several reasons for Amir al-mu'minin calling Ash`ath a weaver. First reason is, because he and his father like most of the people of his native place pursued the industry of weaving cloth. So, in order to refer to the lowliness of his occupation he has been called 'weaver'. Yamanese had other occupations also but mostly this profession was followed among them. Describing their occupations Khalid ibn Safwan has mentioned this one first of all.

> What can I say about a people among whom there are only weavers, leather dyers, monkey keepers and donkey riders. The hoopoe found them out, the mouse flooded them and a woman ruled over them. (*al-Bayan wa't-tabyin,* vol. 1, p. 130)

The second reason is that *"hiyakah"* means walking by bending on either side, and since out of pride and conceit this man used to walk shrugging his shoulders and making bends in his body, he has been called *"hayik"*.

The third reason is — and it is more conspicuous and clear — that he has been called a weaver to denote his foolishness and lowliness because every low person is proverbially known as a weaver. Their wisdom and

sagacity can be well gauged by the fact that their follies had become proverbial, while nothing attains proverbial status without peculiar characteristics. Now, that Amir al-mu'minin has also confirmed it no further argument or reasoning is needed.

The fourth reason is that by this is meant the person who conspires against Allah and the Holy Prophet and prepares webs of which is the peculiarity of hypocrites. Thus, in *Wasa'il ash-Shi`ah* (vol. 12, p. 101) it is stated:

> It was mentioned before Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) that the weaver is accursed when he explained that the weaver implies the person who concocts against Allah and the Prophet.

After the word weaver Amir al-mu'minin has used the word hypocrite, and there is no conjunction in between them in order to emphasise the nearness of meaning thereof. Then, on the basis of this hypocrisy and concealment of truth he declared him deserving of the curse of Allah and all others, as Allah the Glorified says:

> *Verily, those that conceal what we have sent of* (Our) *manifest evidences and guidance, after what we have* (so) *clearly shown for mankind in the Book* (they are), *those that Allah doth curse them and* (also) *curse them all those who curse* (such ones). (Qur'an, 2:159)

After this Amir al-mu'minin says that "You could not avoid the degradation of being prisoner when you were unbeliever, nor did these ignominies spare you after acceptance of Islam, and you were taken prisoner." When an unbeliever the event of his being taken prisoner occurred in this way that when the tribe of Banu Murad killed his father Qays, he (al-Ash`ath) collected the warriors of Banu Kindah and divided them in three groups. Over one group he himself took the command, and on the others he placed Kabs ibn Hani' and al-Qash`am ibn Yazid al-Arqam as chiefs, and set off to deal with Banu Murad. But as misfortune would have it instead of Banu Murad he attacked Banu al-Harith ibn Ka`b. The result was that Kabs ibn Hani' and al-Qash`am ibn Yazid al-Arqam were killed and this man was taken prisoner alive. Eventually he got a release by paying three thousand camels as ransom. In Amir al-mu'minin's words, "Your wealth or birth could not save you from either," the reference is not to real *'fidyah'* (release money) because he was actually released on payment of release money but the intention is that neither plenty of wealth nor his high position and prestige in his tribe could save

him from this ignominy, and he could not protect himself from being a prisoner .

The event of his second imprisonment is that when the Holy Prophet of Islam passed away from this world a rebellion occurred in the region of Hadramawt for repelling which Caliph Abu Bakr wrote to the governor of the place Ziyad ibn Labid al-Bayadi. al-Ansari that he should secure allegiance and collect *zakat* and charities from those people. When Ziyad ibn Labid went to the tribe of Banu `Amr ibn Mu`awiyah for collection of *zakat* he took keen fancy for a she-camel of Shaytan ibn Hujr which was very handsome and of huge body. He jumped over it and took possession of it. Shaytan ibn Hujr did not agree to spare it and said to him to take over some other she-camel in its place but Ziyad would not agree. Shaytan sent for his brother al-`Adda' ibn Hujr for his support. On coming he too had a talk but Ziyad insisted on his point and did not, by any means, consent to keep off his hand from that she-camel. At last both these brothers appealed to Masruq ibn Ma`di Karib for help. Consequently, Masruq also used his influence so that Ziyad might leave the she-camel but he refused categorically, whereupon Masruq became enthusiastic and untying the she-camel handed it over to Shaytan. On this Ziyad was infuriated and collecting his men became ready to fight. On the other side Banu Wali`ah also assembled to face them, but could not defeat Ziyad and were badly beaten at his hands. Their women were taken away and property was looted. Eventually those who had survived were obliged to take refuge under the protection of al-Ash`ath. Al-Ash`ath promised assistance on the condition that he should be acknowledged ruler of the area. Those people agreed to this condition and his coronation was also formally solemnised. After having his authority acknowledged he arranged an army and set out to fight Ziyad. On the other side Abu Bakr had written to the chief of Yemen, al-Muhajir ibn Abi Umayyah to go for the help of Ziyad with a contingent. Al-Muhajir was coming with his contingent when they came face to face. Seeing each other they drew swords and commenced fighting at ad-Zurqan. In the end al-Ash`ath fled from the battle-field and taking his remaining men closed himself in the fort of an-Nujayr. The enemy was such as to let them alone. They laid siege around the fort. Al-Ash`ath thought how long could he remain shut up in the fort with this lack of equipment and men, and that he should think out some way of escape. So one night he stealthily came out of the fort and met Ziyad and al-Muhajir and conspired with them that if they gave asylum to nine members of his family he would get the fort gate opened. They accepted this term and asked

him to write for them the names of those nine persons. He wrote down the nine names and made them over to them, but acting on his traditional wisdom forgot to write his own name in that list. After settling this he told his people that he has secured protection for them and the gate of the fort should be opened. When the gate was opened Ziyad forces pounced upon them. They said they had been promised protection whereupon Ziyad's army said that this was wrong and that al-Ash`ath had asked protection only for nine members of his house, whose names preserved with them. In short eight hundred persons were put to sword and hands of several women were chopped off, while according to the settlement nine men were left off, but the case of al-Ash`ath became complicated. Eventually it was decided he should be sent to Abu Bakr and he should decided about him. At last he was sent to Medina in chains along with a thousand women prisoners. On the way relations and others, men and women, all hurled curses at him and the women were calling him traitor and one who got his own people put to sword. Who else can be a greater traitor? However, when he reached Medina Abu Bakr released him and on that occasion he was married to Umm Farwah.

Chapter 28

SERMON 20

Death and taking lessons from it

If you could see that has been seen by those of you who have died, you would be puzzled and troubled. Then you would have listened and obeyed; but what they have seen is yet curtained off from you. Shortly, the curtain would be thrown off. You have been shown, provided you see and you have been made to listen provided you listen, and you have been guided if you accept guidance. I spoke unto you with truth. You have been called aloud by (instructive) examples and warned through items full of warnings. After the heavenly messengers (angels), only man can convey message from Allah. (So what I am conveying is from Allah).

Chapter 29

SERMON 21

Advice to keep light in this world

Your aim (reward or punishment) is before you. Behind your back is the hour (of resurrection) which is driving you on. Keep (yourself) light and overtake (the forward ones). Your last ones are being awaited by the first ones (who have preceded).

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: If this utterance of `Ali (p.b.u.h.) is weighed with any other utterance except the word of Allah or of the Holy Prophet, it would prove heavier and superior in every respect. For example, `Ali's saying "Keep light and overtake" is the shortest expression ever heard with the greatest sense conveyed by it. How wide is its meaning and how clear its spring of wisdom! We have pointed out the greatness and meaningfulness of this phrase in our book *al-Khasa'is.*

Chapter 30

SERMON 22

***About those who accused him of `Uthma*n's killing**

Beware! Satan has certainly started instigating his forces and has collected his army in order that oppression may reach its extreme ends and wrong may come back to its position. By Allah they have not put a correct blame on me, nor have they done justice between me and themselves.

They are demanding of me a right which they have abandoned, and a blood that they have themselves shed. (1)If I were a partner with them in it then they too have their share of it. But if they did it without me they alone have to face the consequences. Their biggest argument (against me) is (really) against themselves. They are suckling from a mother who is already dry, and bringing into life innovation that is already dead. How disappointing is this challenger (to battle)? Who is this challenger and for what is he being responded to? I am happy that the reasoning of Allah has been exhausted before them and He knows (all) about them.

The threat to Wage War against them

If they refuse (to obey) I will offer them the edge of the sword which is enough a curer of wrong and supporter of Right.

It is strange they send me word to proceed to them for spear-fighting and to keep ready for fighting with swords. May the mourning women mourn over them. I have ever been so that I was never frightened by fighting nor threatened by clashing. I enjoy full certainty of belief from my Allah and have no doubt in my faith.

(1). When Amir al-mu'minin was accused of `Uthman's assassination he delivered this sermon to refute that allegation, wherein he says about those who blamed him that: "These seekers of vengeance cannot say that I alone am the assassin and that no one else took part in it. Nor can they falsify witnessed events by saying that they were unconcerned with it.

Why then have they put me foremost for this avenging? With me they should include themselves also. If I am free of this blame they cannot establish their freedom from it. How can they detach themselves from this punishment? The truth of the matter is that by accusing me of this charge their aim is that I should behave with them in the same manner to which they are accustomed. But they should not expect from me that I would revive the innovations of the previous regimes. As for fighting, neither was I ever afraid of it nor am I so now. Allah knows my intention and He also knows that those standing on the excuse of taking revenge are themselves his assassins." Thus, history corroborates that the people who managed his (`Uthman's) assassination by agitation and had even prevented his burial in Muslims' graveyard by hurling stones at his coffin were the same who rose for avenging his blood. In this connection, the names of Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah, az-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam and `A'ishah are at the top of the list since on both occasions their efforts come to sight with conspicuity. Thus Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes that:

> Those who have written the account of assassination of `Uthman state that on the day of his killing Talhah's condition was that in order to obscure himself from the eyes of the people he had a veil on his face and was shooting arrows at `Uthman's house.
>
> And in this connection, about az-Zubayr's ideas he writes:
>
> Historians have also state that az-Zubayr used to say "Kill `Uthman. He has altered your faith." People said, "Your son is standing at his door and guarding him," and he replied, "Even my son may be lost, but `Uthman must be killed. `Uthman will be lying like a carcass on Sirat tomorrow." (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol.9, pp. 35-36)
>
> About `A'ishah, Ibn `Abd Rabbih writes:
>
> al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah came to `A'ishah when she said, "O' Abu `Abdillah, I wish you had been with me on the day of Jamal; how arrows were piercing through my *hawdaj* (camel litter) till some of them stuck my body." al- Mughirah said, "I wish one of them should have killed you." She said, "Allah may have pity you; why so?" He replied, "So that it would have been some atonement for what you had done against `Uthman." (*al-`Iqd al-farid*, vol. 4, p. 294)

Chapter 31

SERMON 23

About keeping aloof from envy, and good behaviour towards kith and kin

Now then, verily Divine orders descend from heaven to earth like drops of rain, bringing to every one what is destined for him whether plenty or paucity. So if any one of you observes for his brother plenty of progeny or of wealth or of self, it should not be a worry for him. So long as a Muslim does not commit such an act that if it is disclosed he has to bend his eyes (in shame) and by which low people are emboldened, he is like the gambler who expects that the first draw of his arrow would secure him gain and also cover up the previous loss.

Similarly, the Muslim who is free from dishonesty expects one of the two good things: either call from Allah and in that case whatever is with Allah is the best for him, or the livelihood of Allah. He has already children and property while his faith and respect are with him. Certainly, wealth and children are the plantations of this world while virtuous deed is the plantation of the next world. Sometimes Allah joins all these in some groups.

Beware of Allah against what He has cautioned you and keep afraid of Him to the extent that no excuse be needed for it. Act without show or intention of being heard, for if a man acts for some one else then Allah makes him over to that one. We ask Allah (to grant us) the positions of the martyrs, company of the virtuous and friendship of the prophets.

O' people! surely no one (even though he may be rich) can do without his kinsmen, and their support by hands or tongues. They alone are his support from rear and can ward off from him his troubles, and they are the most kind to him when tribulations befall him. The good memory of a man that Allah retains among people is better than the property which others inherit from him.

In the same sermon

Behold! If any one of you finds your near ones in want or starvation, he should not desist from helping them with that which will not increase if this help is not extended, nor decrease by thus spending it. Whoever holds up his hand from (helping) his kinsmen, he holds only one hand, but at the time of his need many hands remain held up from helping him. One who is sweet tempered can retain the love of his people for good.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In this sermon "*al-ghafirah*" means plenty or abundance, and this is derived from the Arab saying, "*al-jamm al-ghafir*" or "*al-jamma' al-ghafir*" meaning thick crowd. In some versions for "*al-ghafirah*" "`*afwatan*" appears. "`*afwah*" means the good and selected part of anything. It is said "*akaltu `afwata 't-ta`am*", to mean "I ate select meal." About "*wa man yaqbid yadahu `an `ashiratihi*" appearing towards the end he points out how beautiful the meaning of this sentence is, Amir al-mu'minin implies that he who does not help his own kinsmen withholds only his hand but when he is in need of their assistance and would be looking for their sympathy and support then he would remain deprived of the sympathies and succour of so many of their extending hands and marching feet.

Chapter 32

SERMON 24

Exhorting people for jihad

By my life there will be no regard for anyone nor slackening from me in fighting against one who opposes right or gropes in misguidance. O' creatures of Allah, fear Allah and flee unto Allah from His wrath (seek protection in His Mercy). Tread on the path He has laid down for you and stand by what He has enjoined upon you. In that case `Ali would stand surety for your success (salvation) eventually even though you may not get it immediately (i.e. in this world).

Chapter 33

SERMON 25

When Amir al-mu'minin received successive news that Mu`awiyah's men were occupying cities (1)and his own officers in Yemen namely `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas and Sa`id ibn Nimran came to him retreating after being overpowered by Busr ibn Abi Artat, he was much disturbed by the slackness of his own men in jihad and their difference with his opinion. Proceeding on to the pulpit he said:

Nothing (is left to me) but Kufah which I can hold and extend (which is in my hand to play with). (O' Kufah) if this is your condition that whirlwinds continue blowing through you then Allah may destroy you.

Then he illustrated with the verse of a poet:

> *O' `Amr! By your good father's life. I have received only a small bit of fat from this pot* (fat that remains sticking to it after it has been emptied).

Then he continued:

I have been informed that Busr has overpowered Yemen. By Allah, I have begun thinking about these people that they would shortly snatch away the whole country through their unity on their wrong and your disunity (from your own right), and separation, your disobedience of your Imam in matters of right and their obedience to their leader in matters of wrong, their fulfilment of the trust in favour of their master and your betrayal, their good work in their cities and your mischief. Even if I give you charge of a wooden bowl I fear you would run away with its handle.

O' my Allah they are disgusted of me and I am disgusted of them. They are weary of me and I am weary of them. Change them for me with better ones and change me for them with worse one. O' my Allah melt their hearts as salt melts in water. By Allah I wish I had only a thousand horsemen of Banu Firas ibn Ghanm (as the poet says):

If you call them the horsemen would come to you like the summer cloud.

(Thereafter Amir al-mu'minin alighted from the pulpit):

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In this verse the word "*armiyah*" is plural of "*ramiyy*" which means cloud and "*hamim*" here means summer. The poet has particularised the cloud of summer because it moves swiftly. This is because it is devoid of water while a cloud moves slowly when it is laden with rain. Such clouds generally appear (in Arabia) in winter. By this verse the poet intends to convey that when they are called and referred to for help they approach with rapidity and this is borne by the first line "if you call them they will reach you."

(1). When after arbitration Mu`awiyah's position was stabilised he began thinking of taking possession of Amir al-mu'minin's cities and extend his domain. He sent his armies to different areas in order that they might secure allegiance for Mu`awiyah by force. In this connection he sent Busr ibn Abi Artat to Hijaz and he shed blood of thousands of innocent persons from Hijaz upto Yemen, burnt alive tribes after tribes in fire and killed even children, so much so that he butchered two young boys of `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas the Governor of Yemen before their mother Juwayriyah bint Khalid ibn Qaraz al-Kinaniyyah.

When Amir al-mu'minin came to know of his slaughtering and blood shed he thought of sending a contingent to crush him but due to continuous fighting people had become weary and showed heartlessness instead of zeal. When Amir al-mu'minin observed their shirking from war he delivered this sermon wherein he roused them to enthusiasm and self respect, and prompted them to *jihad* by describing before them the enemy's wrongfulness and their own short-comings. At last Jariyah ibn Qudamah as-Sa`di responded to his call and taking an army of two thousand set off in pursuit of Busr and chased him out of Amir al-mu'minin's domain.

Chapter 34

SERMON 26

Arabia before proclamation of Prophethood

Allah sent Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) as a warner (against vice) for all the worlds and a trustee of His revelation, while you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided among rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty water and ate filthy food. You shed blood of each other and cared not for relationship. Idols are fixed among you and sins are clinging to you.

Part of the same sermon on the attentiveness of the people **after the death of the Holy Prophet**

I looked and found that there is no supporter for me except family, so I refrained from thrusting them unto death. I kept my eyes closed despite motes in them. I drank despite choking of throat. I exercised patience despite trouble in breathing and despite having to take sour colocynth as food.

Part of the same sermon on the settlement between **Mu`awiyah and `Amr ibn al-`As**

He did not swear allegiance till he got him to agree that he would pay him its price. The hand of this purchaser (of allegiance) may not be successful and the contract of the seller may face disgrace. Now you should take up arms for war and arrange equipment for it. Its flames have grown high and its brightness has increased. Clothe yourself with patience for it is the best to victory.(1)

(1). Amir al-mu'minin had delivered a sermon before setting off for Nahrawan. These are three parts from it. In the first part he has described the condition of Arabia before Proclamation (of Prophethood); in the second he has referred to circumstances which forced him to keep quiet and in the third he has described the conversation and settlement

between Mu`awiyah and `Amr ibn al-`As. The position of this mutual settlement was that when Amir al-mu'minin sent Jarir ibn `Abdillah al-Bajali to Mu`awiyah to secure his allegiance he detained Jarir under the excuse of giving a reply, and in the meantime he began exploring how far the people of Syria would support him. When he succeeded in making them his supporters by rousing them to avenge `Uthman's blood he consulted his brother `Utbah ibn Abi Sufyan. He suggested, "If in this matter `Amr ibn al-`As was associated he would solve most of the difficulties through his sagacity, but he would not be easily prepared to stabilise your authority unless he got the price he desired for it. If you are ready for this he would prove the best counsellor and helper." Mu`awiyah liked this suggestion, sent for `Amr ibn al-`As and discussed with him, and eventually it was settled that he would avenge `Uthman's blood by holding Amir al-mu'minin liable for it in exchange for the governorship of Egypt, and by whatever means possible would not let Mu`awiyah's authority in Syria suffer. Consequently, both of them fulfilled the agreement and kept their words fully.

Chapter 35

SERMON 27

Exhorting people for jihad

Now then, surely *jihad* is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armour of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing *jihad*. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him.

Beware! I called you (insistently) to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you, because by Allah, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace; but you put it off to others and forsook it till destruction befell you and your cities were occupied. The horsemen of Banu Ghamid(1) have reached al-Anbar and killed Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison.

I have come to know that every one of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under protection of Islam and took away their ornaments from legs, arms, necks and ears and no woman could resist it except by pronouncing the verse, *"We are for Allah and to Him we shall return."* (Qur'an, 2 :156) Then they got back laden with wealth without any wound or loss of life. If any Muslim dies of grief after all this he is not to be blamed but rather there is justification for him before me.

How strange! How strange! By Allah my heart sinks to see the unity of these people on their wrong and your dispersion from your right. Woe and grief befall you. You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked but you do not attack. Allah is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it. When I ask you to move against them in summer you say it is hot weather. Spare us till heat subsides from us. When I order you to march

in winter you say it is severely cold; give us time till cold clears from us. These are just excuses for evading heat and cold because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by Allah, running away (in a greater degree) from sword (war).

O' you semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (women kept in seclusion from the outside world). I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By Allah, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May Allah fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthful of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraysh started saying that the son of Abi Talib is brave but does not know (tactics of) war. Allah bless them ! Is any one of them more fierce in war and more older in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion.

(1). After the battle of Siffin, Mu`awiyah had spread killing and bloodshed all round, and started encroachments on cities within Amir al-mu'minin's domain. In this connection he deputised Sufyan ibn `Awf al-Ghamidi with a force of six thousand to attack Hit, al-Anbar and al-Mada'in. First he reached al-Mada'in but finding it deserted proceeded to al-Anbar. Here a contingent of five hundred soldiers was posted as guard from Amir al-mu'minin's side, but it could not resist the fierce army of Mu`awiyah. Only a hundred men stuck to their position and they did face them stoutly as far as they could but collecting together the enemy's force made such a severe attack that they too could no more resist and the chief of the contingent Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri was killed along with thirty others. When the battlefield was clear the enemy ransacked al-Anbar with full freedom and left the city completely destroyed.

When Amir al-mu'minin got the news of this attack he ascended the pulpit, and exhorted the people for crushing the enemy and called them to *jihad*, but from no quarter was there any voice or response. He alighted from the pulpit utterly disgusted and worried and in the same condition set off for the enemy on foot. When people observed this their sense of self respect and shame was also awakened and they too followed him. Amir al-mu'minin stopped at an-Nukhaylah. People then surrounded and insisted upon him to get back as they were enough with the enemy. When their insistence increased beyond reckoning, Amir al-

mu'minin consented to return and Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani proceeded forward with a force of eight thousand. But Sufyan ibn `Awf al-Ghamidi had gone, so Sa`id came back without any encounter. When Sa`id reached Kufah then - according to the version of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid - Amir al-mu'minin was so deeply grieved and indisposed during those days to an extent of not wishing to enter the mosque, but instead sat in the corridor of his residence (that connects the entrance of the mosque) and wrote this sermon and gave it to his slave Sa`d to read it over to the people. But al-Mubarrad (*al-Kamil*, vol. 1, pp. 104-107) has related from `Ubaydullah ibn Hafs al-Taymi, Ibn `A'ishah, that Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon on a high pace in an-Nukhaylah. Ibn Maytham has held this view preferable.

Chapter 36

SERMON 28

***About the transient nature of this world and* importance of the next world**

So now, surely this world has turned its back and announced its departure while the next world has appeared forward and proclaimed its approach. Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Is there no one to offer repentance over his faults before his death? Or is there no one to perform virtuous acts before the day of trial?

Beware, surely you are in the days of hopes behind which stands death. Whoever acts during the days of his hope before approach of his death, his action would benefit him and his death would not harm him. But he who fails to act during the period of hope before the approach of death his action is a loss and his death is a harm to him. Beware, and act during a period of attraction just as you act during a period of dread. Beware, surely I have not seen a coveter for Paradise asleep nor a dreader from Hell to be asleep. Beware, he whom right does not benefit must suffer the harm of the wrong, and he whom guidance does not keep firm will be led away by misguidance towards destruction.

Beware, you have been ordered insistently to march and been guided how to provide for the journey. Surely the most frightening thing which I am afraid of about you is to follow desires and to widen the hopes. Provide for yourself from this world what would save you tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: If there could be an utterance which would drag by neck towards renunciation in this world and force to action for the next world, it is this sermon. It is enough to cut off from the entanglements of hopes and to ignite the flames of preaching (for virtue) and warning (against vice). His most wonderful words in this sermon are "Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell," because

besides sublimity of words, greatness of meaning, true similes and factual illustrations, there are wonderful secrets and delicate implications therein.

It is his saying that he place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Here he has used two different words to convey two different meanings. For Paradise he has used the word "the place to proceed to" but for Hell this word has not been used. One proceeds to a place which he likes and desires, and this can be true for Paradise only. Hell does not have the attractiveness that it may be liked or proceeded to. We seek Allah's protection from it. Since for Hell it was not proper to say "to be proceeded to" Amir al-mu'minin employed the word "doom" implying the last place of stay where one reaches even though it may mean grief and worry or happiness and pleasure.

This word is capable of conveying both senses. However, it should be taken in the sense *of "al-masir"* or *"al-ma'al"*, that is, last resort. Qur'anic verse is "*say thou "Enjoy ye* (your pleasures yet a while), *for your last resort is unto the* (hell) *fire"* (14:30). Here to say *"sabqatakum"* that is, "the place for you to proceed to" in place of the word *"masirakum"* that is, your doom or last resort would not be proper in any way. Think and ponder over it and see how wondrous is its inner implication and how far its depth goes with beauty. Amir al-mu'minin's utterance is generally on these lines. In some versions the word *"sabqah"* is shown as *"subqah"* which is applied to reward fixed for the winner in a race. However, both the meanings are near each other, because a reward is not for an undesirable action but for good and commendable performance.

Chapter 37

SERMON 29

About those who found pretexts at the time of jihad

O' people, your bodies are together but your desires are divergent. Your talk softens the hard stones and your action attracts your enemy towards you. You claim in your sittings that you would do this and that, but when fighting approaches, you say (to war), "turn thou away" (i.e. flee away). If one calls you (for help) the call receives no heed. And he who deals hardly with you his heart has no solace. The excuses are amiss like that of a debtor unwilling to pay. The ignoble can not ward off oppression. Right cannot be achieved without effort. Which is the house besides this one to protect? And with which leader (Imam) would you go for fighting after me?

By Allah! deceived is one whom you have deceived while, by Allah! he who is successful with you receives only useless arrows. You are like broken arrows thrown over the enemy. By Allah! I am now in the position that I neither confirm your views nor hope for your support, nor challenge the enemy through you. What is the matter with you? What is your ailment? What is your cure? The other party is also men of your shape (but they are so different in character). Will there be talk without action, carelessness without piety and greed in things not right? ! (1)

(1). After the battle of Nahrawan, Mu`awiyah sent ad-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri with a force of four thousand towards Kufah with the purpose that he should create disorder in this area, kill whomever he finds and keep busy in bloodshed and destruction so that Amir al-mu'minin should find no rest or peace of mind. He set off for the achievement of this aim, and shedding innocent blood and spreading destruction all round reached upto the place of ath-Tha`labiyyah. Here he attacked a caravan of pilgrims (to Mecca) and looted all their wealth and belongings. Then at al-Qutqutanah he killed the nephew of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, the Holy Prophet's companion, namely `Amr ibn `Uways ibn

Mas`ud together with his followers. In this manner he created havoc and bloodshed all round. When Amir al-mu'minin came to know of this rack and ruin he called his men to battle in order to put a stop to this vandalism, but people seemed to avoid war. Being disgusted with their lethargy and lack of enthusiasm he ascended the pulpit and delivered this sermon, wherein he has roused the men to feel shame and not to try to avoid war but to rise for the protection of their country like brave men without employing wrong and lame excuses. At last Hujr ibn `Adi al-Kindi rose with a force of four thousand for crushing the enemy and overtook him at Tadmur. Only a small encounter had taken place between the parties when night came on and he fled away with only nineteen killed on his side. In Amir al-mu'minin's army also two persons fell as martyrs.

Chapter 38

SERMON 30

Disclosing real facts about assassination of `Uthman Ibn `Affan(1) Amir al-mu'minin said:

If I had ordered his assassination I should have been his killer, but if I had refrained others from killing him I would have been his helper. The position was that he who helped him cannot now say that he is better than the one who deserted him while he who deserted him cannot say that he is better than the one who helped him. I am putting before you his case. He appropriated (wealth) and did it badly. You protested against it and committed excess therein. With Allah lies the real verdict between the appropriator and the protester.

(1). `Uthman is the first Umayyad Caliph of Islam who ascended the Caliphate on the 1st Muharram, 24 A.H. at the age of seventy and after having wielded full control and authority over the affairs of the Muslims for twelve years was killed at their hands on the 18th Dhi'l-hijjah, 35 A.H. and buried at Hashsh Kawkab.

This fact cannot be denied that `Uthman's killing was the result of his weaknesses and the black deeds of his officers, otherwise, there is no reason that Muslims should have unanimously agreed on killing him while no one except a few persons of his house stood up to support and defend him. Muslims would have certainly given consideration to his age, seniority, prestige and distinction of companionship of the Prophet but his ways and deeds had so marred the atmosphere that no one seemed prepared to sympathise and side with him. The oppression and excesses perpetrated on high ranking companions of the Prophet had roused a wave of grief and anger among the Arab tribes. Everyone was infuriated and looked at his haughtiness and wrong doings with disdainful eyes. Thus, due to Abu Dharr's disgrace, dishonour and exile Banu Ghifar and their associate tribes, due to `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud's merciless beating Banu Hudhayl and their associates, due to breaking of

the ribs of `Ammar ibn Yasir, Banu Makhzum and their associates Banu Zuhrah, and due to the plot for the killing of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, Banu Taym all had a storm of rage in their hearts. The Muslims of other cities were also brimful of complaints at the hands of his officers who under intoxication of wealth and the effects of luxury did whatever they wished and crushed whomever they wanted. They had no fear of punishment from the centre nor apprehension of any enquiry. People were fluttering to get out of their talons of oppression but no one was ready to listen to their cries of pain and restlessness; feelings of hatred were rising but no care was taken to put them down. The companions of the Prophet were also sick of him as they saw that peace was destroyed, administration was topsy turvy and Islam's features were being metamorphosed. The poor and the starving were craving for dried crusts while Banu Umayyah were rolling in wealth. The Caliphate had become a handle for belly-filling and a means of amassing wealth. Consequently, they too did not lag behind in preparing the ground for killing him. Rather, it was at their letters and messages that people from Kufah, Basrah and Egypt had collected in Medina. Observing this behaviour of the people of Medina, `Uthman wrote to Mu`awiyah:

> So now, certainly the people of Medina have turned heretics, have turned faith against obedience and broken the (oath of) allegiance. So you send to me the warriors of Syria on brisk and sturdy horses.

The policy of action adopted by Mu`awiyah on receipt of this letter also throws light on the condition of the companions. Historian at-Tabari writes after this:

When the letter reached Mu`awiyah he pondered over it and considered it bad to openly oppose the companions of the Prophet since he was aware of their unanimity.

In view of these circumstances to regard the killing of `Uthman as a consequence of merely enthusiasm and temporary feelings and to hurl it at some insurgents is to veil the fact, since all the factors of his opposition existed within Medina itself, while those coming from without had collected for seeking redress of their grievances at their call. Their aim was only improvement of the position, not killing or bloodshed. If their complaints had been heard then the occasion for this bloodshed would not have arisen.

What happened was that when, having been disgusted with the oppression and excesses of `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh, who was foster brother of `Uthman, the people of Egypt proceeded towards Medina and camped in the valley of Dhakhushub near the city. They sent a man with a letter to `Uthman and demanded that oppression should be stopped, the existing ways should be changed and repentance should be offered for the future. But instead of giving a reply `Uthman got this man turned out of the house and did not regard their demands worth attention. On this these people entered the city to raise their voice against this pride and haughtiness, and complained to the people of this behaviour besides other excesses. On the other side many people from Kufah and Basrah had also arrived with their complaints and they, after joining these ones, proceeded forward with the backing of the people of Medina and confined `Uthman within his house, although there was no restriction on his going and coming to the mosque. But in his sermon on the very first Friday he severely rebuked these people and even held them accursed, whereupon people got infuriated and threw pebbles at him as a result of which he lost control and fell from the pulpit. After a few days his coming and going to the mosque was also banned.

When `Uthman saw matters deteriorating to this extent he implored Amir al-mu'minin very submissively to find some way for his rescue and to disperse the people in whatever way he could. Amir al-mu'minin said, "On what terms can I ask them to leave when their demands are justified?" `Uthman said, "I authorise you in this matter. Whatever terms you would settle with them I would be bound by them." So Amir al-mu'minin went and met the Egyptians and talked to them. They consented to get back on the condition that all the tyrannies should be wiped off and Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr be made governor by removing Ibn Abi Sarh. Amir al-mu'minin came back and put their demand before `Uthman who accepted it without any hesitation and said that to get over these excesses time was required. Amir al-mu'minin pointed out that for matters concerning Medina delay had no sense. However, for other places so much time could be allowed that the Caliph's message could reach them. `Uthman insisted that for Medina also three days were needed. After discussion with the Egyptians Amir al-mu'minin agreed to it also and took all the responsibility thereof upon himself. Then they dispersed at his suggestion. Some of them went to Egypt with Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr while some went to the valley of Dhakhushub and stayed there and this whole matter ended. On the second day of this event Marwan ibn al-Hakam said to `Uthman, "It is good, these people

have gone, but to stop people coming from other cities you should issue a statement so that they should not come this way and sit quiet at their places and that statement should be that some people collected in Medina on hearing some irresponsible talk but when they came to know that whatever they heard was wrong they were satisfied and have gone back." `Uthman did not want to speak such a clear lie but Marwan convinced him and he agreed, and speaking in the Holy Prophet's mosque, he said:

> These Egyptians had received some news about their Caliph and when satisfied that they were all baseless and wrong they went back to their cities.

No sooner he said this than there was great hue and cry in the mosque, and people began to shout to `Uthman, "Offer repentance, fear Allah; what is this lie you are uttering?" `Uthman was confused in this commotion and had to offer repentance. Consequently, he turned to the Ka`bah, moaned in the audience of Allah and returned to his house.

Probably after this very event Amir al-mu'minin advised `Uthman that, "You should openly offer repentance about your past misdeeds so that these uprisings should subside for good otherwise if tomorrow people of some other place come you will again cling to my neck to rid you of them." Consequently, he delivered a speech in the Prophet's mosque wherein admitting his mistakes he offered repentance and swore to remain careful in future. He told the people that when he alighted from the pulpit their representatives should meet him, and he would remove their grievances and meet their demands. On this people acclaimed this action of his and washed away their ill-feelings with tears to a great extent. When he reached his house after finishing from here Marwan sought permission to say something but `Uthman's wife Na'ilah bint Farafisah intervened. Turning to Marwan she said, "For Allah's sake you keep quiet. You would say only such a thing as would bring but death to him." Marwan took it ill and retorted, "You have no right to interfere in these matters. You are the daughter of that very person who did not know till his death how to perform ablution." Na'ilah replied with fury, "You are wrong, and are laying a false blame. Before uttering anything about my father you should have cast a glance on the features of your father. But for the consideration of that old man I would have spoken things at which people would have shuddered but would have confirmed every such word." When `Uthman saw the conversation

getting prolonged he stopped them and asked Marwan to tell him what he wished.

Marwan said, "What is it you have said in the mosque, and what repentance you have offered? In my view sticking to the sin was a thousand times better than this repentance because however much the sins may multiply there is always scope for repentance, but repentance by force is no repentance. You have said what you have but now see the consequences of this open announcement, that crowds of people are at your door. Now go forward and fulfil their demands." `Uthman then said, "Well, I have said what I have said, now you deal with these people. It is not in my power to deal with them." Consequently, finding out his implied consent Marwan came out and addressing the people spoke out, "Why have you assembled here? Do you intend to attack or to ransack? Remember, you cannot easily snatch away power from our hands, take out the idea from your hearts that you would subdue us. We are not to be subdued by anyone. Take away your black faces from here. Allah may disgrace and dishonour you."

When people noticed this changed countenance and altered picture they rose from there full of anger and rage and went straight to Amir al-mu'minin and related to him the whole story. On hearing it Amir al-mu'minin was infuriated and immediately went to `Uthman and said to him, "Good Heavens. How badly you have behaved with the Muslims. You have forsaken faith for the sake of a faithless and characterless man and have lost all wit. At least you should have regard and consideration for your own promise. What is this that at Marwan's betokening you have set off with folded eyes. Remember he will throw you in such a dark well that you will never be able to come out of it. You have become the carrier animal of Marwan so that he can ride on you howsoever he desires and put you on whatever wrong way he wishes. In future I shall never intervene in your affair nor tell people anything. Now you should manage your own affairs."

Saying all this Amir al-mu'minin got back and Na'ilah got the chance, she said to `Uthman, "Did I not tell you to get rid of Marwan otherwise he would put such a stain on you that it would not be removed despite all effort. Well, what is the good in following the words of one who is without any respect among the people and low before their eyes. Make `Ali agree otherwise remember that restoring the disturbed state of affairs is neither within your power nor in that of Marwan." `Uthman was impressed by this and sent a man after Amir al-mu'minin but he refused to meet him. There was no siege around `Uthman but shame deterred

him. With what face could he come out of the house? But there was no way without coming out. Consequently, he came out quietly in the gloom of night and reaching Amir al-mu'minin's place, he moaned his helplessness and loneliness, offered excuses, and also assured him of keeping promises but Amir al-mu'minin said, "You make a promise in the Prophet's mosque standing before all the people but it is fulfilled in this way that when people go to you they are rebuked and even abuses are hurled at them. When this is the state of your undertakings which the world has seen, then how and on what ground can I trust any word of yours in future. Do not have any expectation from me now. I am not prepared to accept any responsibility on your behalf. The tracks are open before you. Adopt whichever way you like and tread whatever track you choose." After this talk `Uthman came back and began blaming Amir al-mu'minin in retort to the effect that all the disturbances were rising at his instance and that he was not doing anything despite being able to do everything.

On this side the result of repentance was as it was. Now let us see the other side. When after crossing the border of Hijaz, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr reached the place Aylah on the coast of the Red Sea people caught sight of a camel rider who was making his camel run so fast as though the enemy was chasing him. These people had some misgivings about him and therefore called him and enquired who he was. He said he was the slave of `Uthman. They enquired wherefore he was bound. He said Egypt. They enquired to whom he was going. He replied to the Governor of Egypt. People said that the Governor of Egypt was with them. To whom was he going then? He said he was to go to Ibn Abi Sarh. People asked him if any letter was with him. He denied. They asked for what purpose he was going. He said he did not know that. One of these people thought that his clothes should be searched. So the search was made, but nothing was found on

him. Kinanah ibn Bishr at-Tujibi said, "See his water-skin." People said, "Leave him, how can there be a letter in water! Kinanah said, "You do not know what cunning these people play. " Consequently, the water-skin was opened and seen. There was a lead pipe in it wherein was a letter. When it was opened and read, the Caliph's order in it was that "When Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr and his party reaches you then from among them kill so and so, arrest so and so, and put so and so in jail, but you remain on your post." On reading this all were stunned and thus began to look at one another in astonishment.

A Persian hemistich says:

Mind was just burst in astonishment as to what wonder it was!

Now proceeding forward was riding into the mouth of death, consequently they returned to Medina taking the slave with them. Reaching there they placed that letter before all the companions of the Prophet. Whoever heard this incident remained stunned with astonishment, and there was no one who was not abusing `Uthman. Afterwards a few companions went to `Uthman along with these people, and asked whose seal was there on this letter. He replied that it was his own. They enquired whose writing it was. He said it was his secretary's. They enquired whose slave was that man. He replied that it was his. They enquired whose riding beast it was. He replied that it was that of the Government. They enquired who had sent it. He said he had no knowledge of it. People then said, "Good Heavens. Everything is yours but you do not know who had sent it. If you are so helpless, you leave this Caliphate and get off from it so that such a man comes who can administer the affairs of the Muslims." He replied, "It is not possible that I should put off the dress of Caliphate which Allah has put on me. Of course, I would offer repentance." The people said, "Why should you speak of repentance which has already been flouted on the day when Marwan was representing you on your door, and whatever was wanting has been made up by this letter. Now we are not going to be duped into these bluffs. Leave the Caliphate and if our brethren stand in our way we will hold them up; but if they prepare for fighting we too will fight. Neither our hands are stiff nor our swords blunt. If you regard all Muslims equally and uphold justice hand over Marwan to us to enable us to enquire from him on whose strength and support he wanted to play with the precious lives of Muslims by writing this letter." But he rejected this demand and refused to hand over Marwan to them, whereupon people said that the letter had been written at his behest.

However, improving conditions again deteriorated and they ought to have deteriorated because despite lapse of the required time every thing was just as it had been and not a jot of difference had occurred. Consequently, the people who had stayed behind in the valley of Dhakhushub to watch the result of repentance again advanced like a flood and spread over the streets of Medina, and closing the borders from every side surrounded his house.

During these days of siege a companion of the Prophet, Niyar ibn `Iyad desired to talk to `Uthman, went to his house and called him. When he peeped out from the above he said, "O' `Uthman, for Allah's sake give

up this Caliphate and save Muslims from this bloodshed." While he was just conversing, one of `Uthman's men aimed at him with an arrow and killed him, whereupon people were infuriated and shouted that Niyar's killer should be handed over to them. `Uthman said it was not possible that he would hand over his own support to them. This stubbornness worked like a fan on fire and in the height of fury people set fire to his door and began advancing for entering, when Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa`id ibn al-`As and Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas together with their contingents pounced upon the besiegers and killing and bloodshed started at his door. People wanted to enter the house but they were being pushed back. In the meanwhile, `Amr ibn Hazm al-Ansari whose house was adjacent to that of `Uthman opened his door and shouted for advancing from that side. Thus through this house the besiegers climbed on the roof of `Uthman's house and descending down from there drew their swords. Only a few scuffles had taken place when all except people of `Uthman's house, his well-wishers and Banu Umayyah ran away in the streets of Medina and a few hid themselves in the house of Umm Habibah bint Abi Sufyan (Mu`awiyah's sister) the rest were killed with `Uthman defending him to the last. (*at-Tabaqat*, Ibn Sa`d, vol. 3, Part 1, pp. 50-58; at-Tabari, vol. 1, pp. 2998-3025; *al-Kamil*, Ibn al-Athir, vol. 3, pp. 167-180; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 2, pp. 144-161).

At his killing several poets wrote elegies. A couplet from the elegy by Abu Hurayrah is presented:

> *Today people have only one grief but I have two griefs - the loss of my money bag and the killing of `Uthman.*

After observing these events the stand of Amir al-mu'minin becomes clear, namely that he was neither supporting the group that was instigating at `Uthman's killing nor can be included in those who stood for his support and defence but when he saw that what was said was not acted upon he kept himself aloof.

When both the parties are looked at then among the people who had raised their hands off from `Uthman's support are seen `A'ishah, and according to the popular versions (which is not right) the then living persons out of the ten Pre-informed ones (who had been pre-informed in this world by the Prophet for their being admitted in Paradise), out of those who took part in the consultative committee (formed for `Uthman's selection for Caliphate), *ansar*, original*muhajirun*, people who took part in the battle of Badr and other conspicuous and dignified individuals,

while on the side (of Uthman) are seen only a few slaves of the Caliph and a few individuals from Banu Umayyah. If people like Marwan and Sa`id ibn al-`As cannot be given precedence over the original *muhajirun* their actions too cannot be given precedence over the actions of the latter. Again, if *ijma`* (consensus of opinion) is not meant for particular occasions only then it would be difficult to question this overwhelming unanimity of the companions.

Chapter 39

SERMON 31

***When before the commencement of the Battle of Jamal Amir al-mu'minin sent `Abdullah ibn `Abbas to az-Zubayr ibn al-* `Awwam with the purpose that he should advise him back to obedience, he said to him on that occasion:**

Do not meet Talhah (ibn `Ubaydillah). If you meet him you will find him like an unruly bull whose horns are turned towards its ears. He rides a ferocious riding beast and says it has been tamed. But you meet az-Zubayr because he is soft-tempered. Tell him that your maternal cousin says that, "(It looks as if) in the Hijaz you knew me (accepted me), but (on coming here to) Iraq you do not know me (do not accept me). So, what has dissuaded (you) from what was shown (by you previously)?!"

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: The last sentence of this sermon *"fama `ada mimma bada"* has been heard only from Amir al-mu'minin.

Chapter 40

SERMON 32

About the disparagement of the world **and categories of its people**

O' people! we have been borne in such a wrongful and thankless period wherein the virtuous is deemed vicious and the oppressor goes on advancing in his excess. We do not make use of what we know and do not discover what we do not know. We do not fear calamity till it befalls.

People are of four categories. Among them is one who is prevented from mischief only by his low position, lack of means and paucity of wealth.

Then there is he who has drawn his sword, openly commits mischief, has collected his horsemen and foot-men and has devoted himself to securing wealth, leading troops, rising on the pulpit and has allowed his faith to perish. How bad is the transaction that you allow (enjoyment of) this world to be a price for yourself as an alternative for what there is with Allah for you.

And among them is he who seeks (benefits of) this world through actions meant for the next world, but does not seek (good of) the next world through actions of this world. He keeps his body calm (in dignity), raises small steps, holds up his clothes, embellishes his body for appearance of trust-worthiness and uses the position of Allah's connivance as a means of committing sins.

Then there is one whose weakness and lack of means have held him back from conquest of lands. This keeps down his position and he has named it contentment and he clothes himself with the robe of renunciation although he has never had any connection with these qualities.

Then there remain a few people in whose case the remembrance of their return (to Allah on Doomsday) keeps their eyes bent, and the fear of resurrection moves their tears. Some of them are scared away (from the world) and dispersed; some are frightened and subdued; some are quiet as if muzzled; some are praying sincerely, some are grief-stricken and pain-ridden whom fear has confined to namelessness and disgrace

has shrouded them, so they are in (the sea of) bitter water, their mouths are closed and their hearts are bruised. They preached till they were tired, they were oppressed till they were disgraced and they were killed till they remained few in number.

The world in your eyes should be smaller than the bark of acacia and the clippings of wool. Seek instruction from those who preceded you before those who follow you take instruction from you, and keep aloof from it realising its evil because it cuts off even from those who were more attached to it than you.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Some ignorant persons attributed this sermon to Mu`awiyah but it is the speech of Amir al-mu'minin. There should be no doubt about it. What comparison is there between gold and clay or sweet and bitter water. This has been pointed out by the skilful guide and the expert critic `Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz as he has mentioned this sermon in his book, *al-Bayan wa't-tabyin* (vol. 2, pp. 59-61). He has also mentioned who attributed it to Mu`awiyah and then states that it is most akin to be the speech of `Ali and most in accord with his way of categorising people and information about their oppression, disgrace, apprehension and fear. (On the other hand) we never found Mu`awiyah speaking on the lives of renunciates or worshippers .

Chapter 41

SERMON 33

***`Abdullah ibn `Abbas says that when Amir al-mu'minin set out* for war with the people of Basrah he came to his audience at Dhiqar and saw that he was stitching his shoe. Then Amir al-mu'minin said to me, "What is the price of this shoe?" I said: "It has no value now." He then said, "By Allah, it should have been more dear to me than ruling over you but for the fact that I may establish right and ward off wrong." Then he came out and spoke:**

Verily, Allah sent Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) when none among the Arabs read a book or claimed prophethood. He guided the people till he took them to their (correct) position and their salvation. So their spears (i.e. officers) became straight and their conditions settled down.

By Allah, surely I was in their lead till it took shape with its walls. I did not show weakness or cowardice. My existing march is also like that. I shall certainly pierce the wrong till right comes out of its side.

What (cause of conflict) is there between me and the Quraysh? By Allah, I have fought them when they were unbelievers and I shall fight them when they have been misled. I shall be the same for them today as I was for them yesterday.

By Allah, the Quraysh only take revenge against us because Allah has given us (i.e. the Holy Prophet and his progeny) preference over them. So, we have allowed them into our domain, whereupon they have become as the former poet says:

By my life, you continued drinking fresh milk every morning,
And (continued) *eating fine stoned dates with butter;*
We have given you the nobility which you did not possess before;
And surrounded (protected) *you with thoroughbred horses and tawny-coloured spears* (strong spears) (1).

(1). In fact, the aim of the poet here is to say that the condition of the addressee's life, from the moral and material point of view, had been worse in the past, and that the poet and his tribe have given him the best means of leading their lives. But as the result of this improved condition the addressee has completely lost himself and forgotten his past condition and thinks that he had had this kind of life previously.

Now, Amir al-mu'minin wants to convey the same idea here to the Quraysh as Fatimah (p.b.u.h.) the holy daughter of the Holy Prophet said in her speech on Fadak:

> (O' People) … *You were on the brink of the pit of Hell Fire* (Qur'an, 3:103). You were as worthless as the mouthful of water. You were minority like the handful greedy and a spark of the hasty. You were as down-trodden as the dust under feet. You drank dirty water. You ate untanned skin. You were abased and condemned. But Allah has rescued you through my father Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.)…

Chapter 42

SERMON 34

To prepare the people for fighting with the people of Syria (ash-Sham)(1) Amir al-mu'minin said:

Woe to you. I am tired of rebuking you. Do you accept this worldly life in place of the next life? Or disgrace in place of dignity? When I invite you to fight your enemy your eyes revolve as though you are in the clutches of death, and in the senselessness of last moments. My pleadings are not understood by you and you remain stunned. It is as though your hearts are affected with madness so that you do not understand. You have lost my confidence for good. Neither are you a support for me to lean upon, nor a means to honour and victory. Your example is that of the camels whose protector has disappeared, so that if they are collected from one side they disperse away from the other side.

By Allah, how bad are you for igniting flames of war. You are intrigued against but do not intrigue (against the enemy). Your boundaries are decreasing but you do not get enraged over it. Those against you do not sleep but you are unmindful. By Allah, those who leave matters one for the other are subdued. By Allah, I believed about you that if battle rages and death hovers around you, you will cut away from the son of Abi Talib like the severing of head from the trunk. (2)

By Allah, he who makes it possible for his adversary to so overpower him as to remove the flesh (from his bones), crush his bones and cut his skin into pieces, then it means that his helplessness is great and his heart surrounded within the sides of his chest is weak. You may become like this if you wish. But for me, before I allow it I shall use my sharp edged swords of al-Mushrafiyyah which would cut as under the bones of the head and fly away arms and feet. Thereafter, Allah will do whatever He wills.

O' people, I have a right over you and you have a right over me. As for your right over me, that is to counsel you, to pay you your dues fully, to teach you that you may not remain ignorant and instruct you in

behaviourism that you may act upon. As for my right over you, it is fulfilment of (the obligation of) allegiance, well-wishing in presence or in absence, response when I call you and obedience when I order you.

(1). The word "ash-Sham" was a name used for a vast geographical area occupied by Muslim countries in those days. This area included present-day Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Its capital was Damascus. Wherever the word Syria is mentioned (in this book) it should be understood in its larger meaning.

(2). This sentence is employed for such severance after which there is no occasion or possibility of joining. The author of *Durrah Najafiyyah* has quoted several views in its explanation:

i)

Ibn Durayd's view is that it means that. "Just as when the head is severed its joining again is impossible, in the same way you will not join me after once deserting me."

ii)

al-Mufaddal says *ar-ra's*(head) was the name of a man, and a village of Syria, Bayt ar-ra's is named after him. This man left his home and went away somewhere and never again returned to his village after which the proverb sprang up "you went as *ar-ra's* had gone."

iii)

One meaning of it is that "Just as if the joints of the bones of the head are opened they cannot be restored, in the same way you will not join me after cutting from me.

iv)

It has also been said that this sentence is in the sense of separating completely. After copying this meaning from the *Sharh* of ash-Shaykh Qutbu'd-Din ar-Rawandi, the commentator Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written that this meaning is not correct because when the word *"ar-ra's"* is used in the sense of whole it is not preceded by *"alif"* and *"lam"*

v)

It is also taken to mean that "You will so run away from me as one (fleeing for life) to save his head." Besides this, one or two other meanings have also been stated but being remote they are disregarded.

First of all it was used by the philosopher of Arabia Aktham ibn Sayfi while teaching unity and concord to his children. He says:

> O' my children do not cut away (from each other) at the time of calamities like the cutting of head, because after that you will never get together.

Chapter 43

SERMON 35

Amir al-mu'minin said after Arbitration.

(1)

All praise is due to Allah even though time has brought (for us) crushing calamity and great occurrence. And I stand witness that there is no god but Allah the One, there is no partner for Him nor is there with Him any god other than Himself, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet (May Allah's blessing and greeting be upon him and his progeny).

So now, certainly the disobedience of sympathetic counsellor who has knowledge as well as experience brings about disappointment and result in repentance. I had given you my orders about this arbitration and put before you my hidden view, if Qasir's (2) orders were fulfilled but you rejected it (my orders) like rough opponents and disobedient insurgents till the counsellor himself fell in doubt about his counsel and the flint (of his wit) ceased to give flame. Consequently, mine and your position became as the poet of Hawazin says:

> *I gave you my orders at Mun`araji'l-liwa but you did not see the good of my counsel till the noon of next day (when it was too late).(3)*

(1). When the Syrians' spirit was broken by the bloody swords of the Iraqis, and the incessant attacks of the night of al-Harir lowered their morale and ended their aspirations `Amr ibn al-`As suggested to Mu`awiyah the trick that the Qur'an should be raised on spears and shouts urged forth to treat it as the arbitrator. Its effect would be that some people would try to stop the war and others would like to continue it. We would thus divide them and be able to get the war postponed for another occasion. Consequently, copies of the Qur'an were raised on spears. The result was that some brainless persons raised hue and cry and created division and disturbance in the army and the efforts of

simple Muslims turned slow after having been near victory. Without understanding anything they began to shout that they should prefer the verdict of the Qur'an over war.

When Amir al-mu'minin saw the Qur'an being the instrument of their activities, he said:

"O' people do not fall in this trap of deceit and trickery. They are putting up this device only to escape the ignominy of defeat. I know the character of each one of them. They are neither adherents of the Qur'an nor have they any connection with the faith or religion. The very purpose of our fighting has been that they should follow the Qur'an and act on its injunctions. For Allah's sake do not fall in their deceitful device. Go ahead with determination and courage and stop only after vanquishing the dying foe." Nevertheless, the deceitful instrument of wrong had worked. The people took to disobedience and rebellion. Mis`ar ibn Fadaki at-Tamimi and Zayd ibn Husayn at-Ta'i each with twenty thousand men came forward and said to Amir al-mu'minin, 'O' `Ali, if you do not respond to the call of the Qur'an we will deal with you in the same manner as we did with `Uthman. You end the battle at once and bow before the verdict of the Qur'an. Amir al-mu'minin tried his best to make them understand but Satan was standing before them in the garb of the Qur'an. He did not allow them to do so, and they compelled Amir al-mu'minin that he should send someone to call Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar from the battlefield. Being obliged, Amir al-mu'minin sent Yazid ibn Hani to call Malik back. When Malik heard this order he was bewildered and said, "Please tell him this is not the occasion to leave the position. He may wait a bit then I will come to his audience with the tidings of victory." Hani conveyed this message on return but people shouted that Amir al-mu'minin must have sent word to him secretly to continue. Amir al-mu'minin said he never got any occasion to send any secret message to him. Whatever he said was said before them. People said he should be sent again and that if Malik delayed his return Amir al-mu'minin should forsake his life. Amir al-mu'minin again sent Yazid ibn Hani and sent word that rebellion had occurred, he should return in whatever condition he was. So Hani went and told Malik "You hold victory dear or the life of Amir al-mu'minin. If his life is dear you should raise hands off the battle and go to him." Leaving the chances of victory Malik stood up and came to the audience of Amir al-mu'minin with grief and disappointment. Chaos raged there. He rebuked the people very much but matters had taken such a turn that could not be corrected.

It was then settled that either party should nominate an arbitrator so that they should settle the (matter of) Caliphate according to the Qur'an. From Mu`awiyah's side `Amr ibn al-`As was decided upon and from Amir al mu'minin's side people proposed the name of Abu Musa al-Ash`ari. Seeing this wrong selection Amir al-mu'minin said, "Since you have not accepted my order about arbitration at least now agree that do not make Abu Musa the arbitrator. He is not a man of trust. Here is `Abdullah ibn `Abbas and here is Malik al-Ashtar. Select one of them." But they did not at all listen to him and stuck to his name. Amir al-mu'minin said, "All right, do whatever you want. The day is not far when you will cut your own hands through your misdeeds."

After the nomination of arbitrators when the deed of agreement was being written, then with `Ali ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.) the word Amir al-mu'minin was also written. `Amr ibn al-`As said, "This should be rubbed off. If we regarded him Amir al-mu'minin why should this battle have been fought?" At first Amir al-mu'minin refused to rub it off but when they did not in any way agree, he rubbed it off and said, "This incident is just similar to the one at al-Hudaybiyah when the unbelievers stuck on the point that the words 'Prophet of Allah' with the name of the Prophet should be removed and the Prophet did remove it." On this `Amr ibn al-`As got angry and said, "Do you treat us as unbelievers?" Amir al-mu'minin said, "On what day have you had anything to do with believers and when have you been their supporters?" However, after this settlement, the people dispersed, and after mutual consultation these two arbitrators decided that by removing both `Ali and Mu`awiyah from the Caliphate the people should be accorded the power to choose whomever they desired. When time came to its announcement there was a meeting at Dumatu'l-Jandal, a place between Iraq and Syria, and then two arbitrators also reached there to announce the judgement on the fate of the Muslims. Acting cunningly `Amr ibn al-`As said to Abu Musa, "I regard it ill manner to precede you. You are older in years and age so first you make the announcement." Abu Musa succumbed to his flattery and came out proudly and stood before the gathering. Addressing them he said, "O' Muslims we have jointly settled that `Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu`awiyah should be removed and the right to choose a Caliph be accorded to the Muslims. They should choose whomever they like." Saying this he sat down. Now the turn was for `Amr ibn al-`As and he said, "O' Muslims you have heard that Abu Musa removed `Ali ibn Abi Talib. I also agree with it. As for Mu`awiyah, there is no question of removing him. Therefore I place him in his position." No sooner that he said this

there were cries all round. Abu Musa cried hoarse that it was a trick, a deceit and told `Amr ibn al-`As that, "You have played a trick, and your example is that of a dog on which if you load something he would gasp, or leave him he would gasp." `Amr ibn al-`As said, "Your example is like the ass on whom books are loaded." However `Amr ibn al-`As's trick was effective and Mu`awiyah's shaking feet were again stabilised. This was the short sketch of the Arbitration whose basis was laid in the Qur'an and *sunnah*. But was it a verdict of the Qur'an or the result of those deceitful contrivances which people of this world employ to retain their authority? Could these pages of history be made a torch-guide for the future and the Qur'an and *sunnah* be not used as a means of securing authority or as an instrument of worldly benefits.

When Amir al-mu'minin got the news of this lamentable result of arbitration, he climbed on the pulpit and delivered this sermon every word of which savours of his grief and sorrow and at the same time it throws light on soundness of his thinking, correctness of his opinion and foresighted sagacity.

(2). This is a proverb which is used on an occasion where the advice of a counsellor is rejected and afterwards it is repented. The fact of it was that the ruler of al-Hirah namely Jadhimah al-Abrash killed the ruler of al-Jazirah named `Amr ibn Zarib whereafter his daughter az-Zabba' was made the ruler of al-Jazirah. Soon after accession to the throne she thought out this plan to avenge her father's blood, that she sent a message to Jadhimah that she could not alone carry on the affairs of the state and that if he could become her patron by accepting her as his wife she would be grateful. Jadhimah was more than puffed up at this proposal, and prepared himself to set off for al-Jazirah with a thousand horsemen. His slave Qasir advised him much that this was just a deceit and trick and that he should not place himself in this danger; but his wit had been so blinded that he could not think over why az-Zabba' should select the Murderer of her father for her life companionship. Anyhow, he set off and when he reached the border of al-Jazirah although az-Zabba's army was present for his reception but she neither gave any special reception nor offered any warm welcome. Seeing this state Qasir was again suspicious and he advised Jadhimah to get back, but nearness to the goal had further fanned his passion. He paid no heed and stepping further entered the city. Soon on arrival there he was killed. When Qasir saw this he said, "Had the advice of Qasir been followed." From that time this proverb gained currency.

(3). The poet of Hawazin implies Durayd ibn as-Simmah. He wrote this couplet after the death of his brother `Abdullah ibn as-Simmah. Its facts are that `Abdullah along with his brother led an attack of two groups of Banu Jusham and Bani Nasr who were both from Hawazin, and drove away many camels. On return when they intended to rest at Mun`araji'l-liwa, Durayd said it was not advisable to stay there lest the enemy attacks from behind, but `Abdullah did not agree and stayed there. The result was that as soon as dawn appeared the enemy attacked and killed `Abdullah on the spot. Durayd also received wounds but he slipped away alive, and after this he wrote a few couplets out of which one couplet is this wherein he has referred to the destruction resulting from his advice having been rejected.

Chapter 44

SERMON 36

***Warning the people of Nahrawan** (1)* **of their fate**

I am warning you that you will be killed on the bend of this canal and on the level of this low area while you will have no clear excuse before Allah nor any open authority with you. You have come out of your houses and then divine decree entangled you. I had advised you against this arbitration but you rejected my advice like adversaries and opponents till I turned my ideas in the direction of your wishes. You are a group whose heads are devoid of wit and intelligence. May you have no father! (Allah's woe be to you!) I have not put you in any calamity nor wished you harm.

(1). The cause of the battle of Nahrawan was that when after Arbitration Amir al-mu'minin was returning to Kufah, the people who were foremost in pleading acceptance of Arbitration began to say that appointment of anyone other than Allah as arbitrator is heresy, and that, Allah forbid, by accepting the Arbitration Amir al-mu'minin turned heretic. Consequently, by distorting the meaning of "There is no authority same with Allah" they made simple Muslims share their views and separating from Amir al-mu'minin encamped at Hanira' near Kufah. When Amir al-mu'minin learned of these plottings he sent Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-`Abdi and Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi in the company of Ibn `Abbas towards them and afterwards himself went to the place of their stay and dispersed them after discussion.

When these people reached Kufah they began to spread the news that Amir al-mu'minin had broken the agreement of Arbitration and that he is again ready to fight against the Syrians. When Amir al-mu'minin learned this he contradicted it whereupon these people stood up in rebellion and encamped twelve miles from Baghdad in the low area of the canal called Nahrawan.

On the other side, after hearing the verdict of Arbitration Amir al-mu'minin rose for fighting the army of Syria and wrote to the Kharijites that the verdict passed by the two arbitrators in pursuance of their heart's wishes instead of the Qur'an and *sunnah* was not acceptable to him, that he had therefore decided to fight with them and they should support him for crushing the enemy. But the Kharijites gave him this reply, "When you had agreed to Arbitration in our view you had turned heretic. Now if you admit your heresy and offer repentance we will think over this matter and decide what we should do." Amir al-mu'minin understood from their reply that their disobedience and misguidance had become very serious. To entertain any kind of hope from them now was futile. Consequently, ignoring them he encamped in the valley of an-Nukhaylah with a view to marching towards Syria. When the army had been arrayed he came to know that the men desired to deal with the people of Nahrawan first, and to move towards Syria afterwards. Amir al-mu'minin, however, said that they should be left as they were, that they themselves should first move towards Syria while the people of Nahrawan could be dealt with afterwards. People said that they were prepared to obey every order of his with all their might whether he moved this way or that way. The army had not moved when news about the rebellion of Kharijites began to reach, and it was learnt that they had butchered the governor of Nahrawan namely `Abdullah ibn Khabbab ibn al-Aratt and his slave maid with the child in her womb, and have killed three women of Banu Tayyi and Umm Sinan as-Saydawiyyah. Amir al-mu'minin sent al-Harith ibn Murrah al-`Abdi for investigation but he too was killed by them. When their rebellion reached this stage it was necessary to deal with them. Consequently, the army turned towards Nahrawan. On reaching there Amir al-mu'minin sent them word that those who had killed `Abdullah ibn Khabbab ibn al-Aratt and innocent women should be handed over to him for avenging blood. Those people replied that they had killed these persons jointly and that they considered it lawful to shed the blood of all the people on his side. Even at this Amir al-mu'minin did not take the initiative for the battle, but sent Abu Ayyub al-Ansari with a message of peace. So he spoke to them aloud, "Whoever comes under this banner or separates from that party and goes to Kufah or al-Mada'in would get amnesty and he would not be questioned. As a result of this Farwah ibn Nawfal al-Ashja'i said that he did not know why they were at war with Amir al-mu'minin. Saying this he separated along with five hundred men. Similarly group after group began to separate and some of them joined Amir al-mu'minin. Those

who remained numbered four thousand, and according to at-Tabari's account they numbered two thousand eight hundred. These people were not in any way prepared to listen to the voice of truth, and were ready to kill or be killed. Amir al-mu'minin had stopped his men to take the initiative but the Kharijites put arrows in their bows and broke and threw away the sheathes of their swords. Even at this juncture Amir al-mu'minin warned them of the dire consequences of war and this sermon is about that warning and admonition. But they were so brimming with enthusiasm that they leapt on Amir al-mu'minin's force all of a sudden. This onslaught was so severe that the foot men lost ground but they soon fixed themselves firmly that the attack of arrows and spears could not dislodge them from their position and they soon so cleared away the Kharijites that except for nine persons who fled away to save their lives not a single person was left alive. From Amir al-mu'minin's army only eight persons fell as martyrs. The battle took place on the 9th Safar, 38 A.H.

Chapter 45

SERMON 37

Amir al-mu'minin's utterance which runs like a Sermon

About his own steadfastness in religion and precedence in (acceptance of) belief.

I discharged duties when others lost courage (to do so), and I came forward when others hid themselves. I spoke when others remained mum. I stroke with Divine light when others remained standing. I was the quietest of them in voice but the highest in going forward. I cleaved to its rein and applied myself solely to its pledge, like the mountain which neither sweeping wind could move nor storm could shake. No one could find fault with me nor could any speaker speak ill of me.

The low is in my view worthy of honour till I secure (his) right for him while the strong is in my view weak till I take (other's) right from him. We are happy with the destiny ordained by Allah and have submitted to the command of Allah. Do you think I would speak lie about the Prophet of Allah? By Allah, I am surely the first to testify him, so I will not be the first to falsify him. I looked at my affairs and found that my obedience should have precedence over my allegiance while my pledge with him is a burden on my neck.

Chapter 46

SERMON 38

About naming of doubt as such and disparagement of those in doubt

Doubt is named doubt because it resembles truth. As for lovers of Allah, their conviction serves them as light and the direction of the right path (itself) serves as their guide; while the enemies of Allah, in time of doubt call to misguidance in the darkness of doubt and their guide is blindness (of intelligence). One who fears death cannot escape it nor can one who fears for eternal life secure it.

Chapter 47

SERMON 39

In disparagement of those who shrink from fighting

I am faced with men who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call them. May you have no father! (Woe to you!) What are you waiting for to rise for the cause of Allah? Does not faith join you together, or sense of shame rouse you? I stand among you shouting and I am calling you for help, but you do not listen to my word, and do not obey my orders, till circumstances show out their bad consequences. No blood can be avenged through you and no purpose can be achieved with you. I called you for help of your brethren but made noises like the camel having pain in stomach, and became loose like the camel of thin back. Then a wavering weak contingent came to me from amongst you: "*as if they are being led to death and they are only watching*." (1) (Qur'an, 8:6)

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Amir al-mu'minin's word "*mutadha'ib*" means "*mudtarib*" (i.e. moved or troubled), as they say "*tadha'abat ar-rih*" (i.e. the winds blow in troubled manner). Similarly the wolf is called "*dhi'b*" because of its troubled movement.

(1). Mu`awiyah sent a contingent of two thousand soldiers under an-Nu`man ibn Bashir to assault `Aynu't-Tamr. This place was a defence base of Amir al-mu'minin near Kufah whose incharge was Malik ibn Ka`b al-Arhabi. Although there were a thousand combatants under him, but at the moment only hundred men were present there. When Malik noticed the offensive force advancing he wrote to Amir al-mu'minin for help. When Amir al-mu'minin received the message he asked the people for his help but only three hundred men got ready as a result of which Amir al-mu'minin was much disgusted and delivered this sermon in their admonition. When Amir al-mu'minin reached his house after delivering the sermon `Adi ibn Hatim at-Ta'i came and said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin a thousand men of Banu Tayyi' are under me. If you say I shall send them off." Amir al-mu'minin said, "It does not look nice that people

of one tribe only should meet the enemy. You prepare your force in the Valley of an-Nukhaylah." Accordingly he went there and called people to *jihad*, when besides Banu Tayyi' one thousand other combatants also assembled. They were still preparing to set off when word reached from Malik ibn Ka`b that there was no need for help as he had repulsed the enemy.

The reason of this was that Malik had sent off `Abdullah ibn Hawalah al-Azdi hastily to Qarazah ibn Ka`b al-Ansari and Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym al-Azdi so that if there was delay in the arrival of support from Kufah he could get help from here in time. `Abdullah went to both, but got no help from Qarazah. However, Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym got ready fifty persons under `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mikhnaf and they reached there near evening. Upto that time the two thousand men (of the enemy) had not been able to subdue the hundred men of Malik. When an-Nu`man saw these fifty men he thought that their forces had started coming in so he fled away from the battlefield. Even in their retreat Malik attacked them from rear and killed three of their men.

Chapter 48

SERMON 40

When Amir al-mu'minin heard the cry of Kharijites that "Verdict is only that of Allah" he said:

The sentence is right but what (they think) it means, is wrong. It is true that verdict lies but with Allah, but these people say that (the function of) governance is only for Allah. The fact is that there is no escape for men from ruler good or bad. The faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. During the rule, Allah would carry everything to end. Through the ruler tax is collected, enemy is fought, roadways are protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoys peace and allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked.

Another version:

When Amir al-mu'minin heard the cry of the Kharijites on the said verdict he said:

I am expecting the verdict (destiny) of Allah on you.

Then he continued:

As for good government the pious man performs good acts in it, while in a bad government the wicked person enjoys till his time is over and death overtakes him.

Chapter 49

SERMON 41

In condemnation of treason

O' people! Surely fulfilment of pledge is the twin of truth. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realises the reality of return (to the next world) never betrays. We are in a period when most of the people regard betrayal as wisdom. In these days the ignorants call it excellence of cunning. What is the matter with them? Allah may destroy them. One who has been through thick and thin of life finds the excuses to be preventing him from orders and prohibitions of Allah but he disregards them despite capability (to succumb to them and follows the commands of Allah), while one who has no restraints of religion seizes the opportunity (and accepts the excuses for not following the commands of Allah).

Chapter 50

SERMON 42

About heart's desires and extended hopes

O' people what I fear most about you are two things - acting according to desires and extending of hopes. As regards acting according to desires, this prevents from truth; and as regards extending of hopes, it makes one forget the next world. You should know this world is moving rapidly and nothing has remained out of it except last particles like the dregs of a vessel which has been emptied by someone. Beware, the next world is advancing, and either of them has sons i.e. followers. You should become sons of the next world and not become sons of this world because on the Day of Judgement every son would cling to his mother. Today is the Day of action and there is no reckoning while tomorrow is the Day of reckoning but there would be no (opportunity for) action.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: *"al-hadhdha' "* means rapid but some people have read it "*jadhdha' "*. According to this version the meaning would be that the cycle of worldly enjoyments would end soon.

Chapter 51

SERMON 43

After Amir al-mu'minin had sent Jarir ibn `Abdillah al-Bajali to Mu`awiyah (for securing his allegiance) some of his companions suggested preparation to fight with him then he said:

My preparation for war with the people of Syria (ash-Sham) while Jarir ibn `Abdillah al-Bajali is still there would be closing the door for Syria and prevention of its people from good action (i.e. allegiance) if they intend doing it. However, I have fixed a time limit for Jarir after which he would not stay without either deception or in disobedience. My opinion is in favour of patience, so wait a while. (In the meantime) I do not dislike your getting ready.

I have observed this matter thoroughly from all sides but I do not find any way except war or heresy. Certainly, there was over the people a ruler (before me) who brought about new (un-Islamic) things and compelled the people to speak out. So they did speak, then rose up and thereafter changed the whole system.

Chapter 52

SERMON 44

When Masqalah(1) ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani fled to Mu`awiyah because he had purchased some prisoners of Banu Najiyah from an executive of Amir al-mu'minin, but when he demanded the price the latter avoided and ran to Syria, Amir al-mu'minin said:

Allah may be bad to Masqalah. He acted like the noble but fled away like a slave. Before his admirer could speak (about him) he silenced him and before his eulogist could testify to his good deeds he closed his mouth. If he had stayed behind we would have taken from him what he could easily pay and waited for the balance till his money increased.

(1). When after Arbitration the Kharijites rose, a man of Bani Najiyah from them named al-Khirrit ibn Rashid an-Naji stood up for instigating people and set off towards al-Mada'in with a group killing and marauding. Amir al-mu'minin sent Ziyad ibn Khasafah with three hundred men to check him. When the two forces met at al-Mada'in they attacked each other with swords. Only one encounter or so had taken place when the gloom of evening prevailed and the battle had to be stopped. When morning appeared Ziyad's men noticed that five dead bodies of the Kharijites were lying and they themselves had cleared off the battlefield. Seeing this Ziyad set off for Basrah along with his men. There he came to know that the Kharijites had gone to Ahwaz. Ziyad did not move onwards for paucity of force and informed Amir al-mu'minin of it. Amir al-mu'minin called back Ziyad and sent Ma`qil ibn Qays ar-Riyah'i with two thousand experienced combatants towards Ahwaz and wrote to the governor of Basrah `Abdullah ibn `Abbas to send two thousand swordsmen of Basrah for the help of Ma`qil. Consequently, the contingent from Basrah also joined them at Ahwaz and after proper organisation they got ready for attacking the enemy. But al-Khirrit marched on along with his men to the hills of Ramhurmuz. These people also followed him and overtook him near these hills. Both arrayed their forces and started

attacking each other. The result of this encounter was also that three hundred and seventy Kharijites were killed in the battlefield while the rest ran away. Ma`qil informed Amir al-mu'minin of his performance and of the enemy's running away when Amir al-mu'minin directed him to chase them and so to shatter their power that they should not be able to raise heads again. On receipt of this order he moved on and overtook him on the coast of the Persian gulf where al-Khirrit had by persuasion secured the co-operation of the people and enlisting men from here and there, had collected a considerable force. When Ma`qil reached there, he raised the flag of peace and announced that those who had collected from here and there should get away. They would not be molested. The effect of this announcement was that save for his own community all others deserted him. He organised those very men and commenced the battle but valorous combatants of Basrah and Kufah displayed such excellent use of swords that in a short time one hundred and seventy men of the insurgents were killed while an-Nu`man ibn Suhban ar-Rasib'i encountered al-Khirrit (ibn Rashid an-Naji) and eventually felled him and killed him. Soon upon his fall the enemy lost ground and they fled away from the battlefield. Thereafter Ma`qil collected all the men, women and children from their camps at one place. From among them those who were Muslims were released after swearing of allegiance. Those who had turned heretics were called upon to resume Islam. Consequently except one old Christian all others secured release by accepting Islam and this old man was killed. Then he took with him those Christians of Bani Najiyah who had taken part in this revolt together with their families. When Ma`qil reached Ardashir Khurrah (a city of Iran) these prisoners wailed and cried, before its governor Masqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani and beseeched humiliatively to do something for their release. Masqalah sent word to Ma`qil through Dhuhl ibn al-Harith to sell these prisoners to him. Ma`qil agreed and sold those prisoners to him for five hundred thousand Dirhams and told him to dispatch the price immediately to Amir al-mu'minin. He said that he was sending the first instalment at once and the remaining instalments would also be sent soon. When Ma`qil met Amir al-mu'minin he related the whole event before him. Amir al-mu'minin ratified this action and waited for the price for some time, but Masqalah observed such deep silence as if nothing was due from him. At last Amir al-mu'minin sent a messenger to him and sent him word to either send the price or to come himself. On Amir al-mu'minin's order he came to Kufah and on demand of the price paid two hundred thousand Dirhams but to evade the

balance went away to Mu`awiyah's who made him the governor of Tabarastan. When Amir al-mu'minin came to know all this he spoke these words (as in this sermon). Its sum total is that, "If he had stayed we would have been considerate to him in demanding the price and would have waited for improvement of his financial condition, but he fled away like slaves after displaying a showy act. Talk about his high perseverance had just started when people began to discuss his baseless and lowliness."

Chapter 53

SERMON 45

About Allah's greatness and lowliness of this world

Praise is due to Allah from Whose mercy no one loses hope, from Whose bounty no one is deprived, from Whose forgiveness no one is disappointed and for Whose worship no one is too high. His mercy never ceases and His bounty is never missed.

This world is a place for which destruction is ordained and for its inhabitants departure from here is destined. It is sweet and green. It hastens towards its seeker and attaches to the heart of the viewer. So depart from here with the best of provision available with you and do not ask herein more than what is enough and do not demand from it more than subsistence.

Chapter 54

SERMON 46

***When Amir al-mu'minin decided to march towards Syria* (ash-Sham) he spoke these words:**

My Allah, I seek Thy protection from the hardships of journey, from the grief of returning and from the scene of devastation of property and men. O' Allah, Thou art the companion in journey and Thou art one who is left behind for (protection of the) family. None except Thee can join these two because one who is left behind cannot be a companion in journey nor one who is in company on a journey can at the same time be left behind.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: The earlier part of this sermon is related from the Prophet but Amir al-mu'minin has completed it very aptly by adding most eloquent sentences at the end. This addition is from "None except Thee can join" upto the end.

Chapter 55

SERMON 47

About calamities befalling Kufah

O' Kufah, as though I see you being drawn like the tanned leather of `Ukazi(1) in the market, you are being scraped by calamities and being ridden by severe troubles. I certainly (2) know that if any tyrant intends evil for you Allah will afflict him with worry and fling him with a killer (set someone on him to kill him).

(1). During pre-Islamic days a market used to be organised every year near Mecca. Its name was `Ukaz where mostly hides were traded as a result of which leather was attributed to it. Besides sale and purchase literary meetings were also arranged and Arabs used to attract admiration by reciting their works. After Islam, because of the better congregation in the shape of *hajj* this market went down.

(2). This prophecy of Amir al-mu'minin was fulfilled word by word and the world saw how the people who had committed tyranny and oppression on the strength of their masterly power had to face tragic end and what ways of their destruction were engendered by their blood-shedding and homicidal activities. Consequently, the end of Ziyad ibn Abih (son of unknown father) was that when he intended to deliver a speech for vilification of Amir al-mu'minin suddenly paralysis overtook him and he could not get out of his bed thereafter. The end of the blood-shed perpetrated by `Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad was that he fell a prey to leprosy and eventually blood thirsty swords put him to death. The ferocity of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi drove him to the fate that snakes cropped up in his stomach as a result of which he died after severe pain. `Umar ibn Hubayrah al-Fazari died of leucoderma. Khalid ibn `Abdillah al-Qasri suffered the hardships of prison and was killed in a very bad way. Mus`ab ibn az-Zubayr and Yazid ibn al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah were also killed by swords.

Chapter 56

SERMON 48

Delivered at the time of marching towards Syria.

Praise is due to Allah when night spreads and darkens, and praise be to Allah whenever the star shines and sets. And praise be to Allah whose bounty never misses and whose favours cannot be repaid.

Well, I have sent forward my vanguard (1) and have ordered them to remain in camp on this bank of the River till my order reaches them. My intention is that I should cross this water over to the small habitation of people residing on the sides of the Tigris and rouse them to march with you towards the enemy and keep them as auxiliary force for you.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Here by "*mitat* " Amir al-mu'minin has meant the direction where he had ordered the men to camp and that was the bank of the Euphrates, and "*mitat* " is used for the bank of a river although its literal meaning is level ground whereas by "*nutfah* " he means the water of the Euphrates, and these are amazing expressions.

(1). Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon when he camped at the Valley of an-Nukhaylah on Wednesday the 5th Shawwal 37 A.H. on his way to Siffin. The Vanguard mentioned herein means the twelve thousand persons whom he had sent towards Siffin under the command of Ziyad ibn an-Nadr and Shurayh ibn Hani, while the small force of al-Mada'in mentioned by him was a contingent of twelve hundred men who had come up in response to Amir al-mu'minin's call.

Chapter 57

SERMON 49

About Allah's greatness and sublimity

Praise be to Allah Who lies inside all hidden things, and towards Whom all open things guide. He cannot be seen by the eye of an onlooker, but the eye which does not see Him cannot deny Him while the mind that proves His existence cannot perceive Him. He is so high in sublimity that nothing can be more sublime than He, while in nearness, He is so near that no one can be nearer than He. But his sublimity does not put Him at a distance from anything of His creation, nor does His nearness bring them on equal level to Him. He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing essential knowledge of Him. So he is such that all signs of existence stand witness for Him till the denying mind also believes in Him. Allah is sublime beyond what is described by those who liken Him to things or those who deny Him.

Chapter 58

SERMON 50

Admixture of right and wrong

The basis of the occurrence of evils are those desires which are acted upon and the orders that are innovated. They are against the Book of Allah. People co-operate with each other about them even though it is against the Religion of Allah. If wrong had been pure and unmixed it would not be hidden from those who are in search of it. And if right had been pure without admixture of wrong those who bear hatred towards it would have been silenced. What is, however, done is that something is taken from here and something from there and the two are mixed! At this stage Satan overpowers his friends and they alone escape for whom virtue has been apportioned by Allah from before.

Chapter 59

SERMON 51

When in Siffin the men of Mu`awiyah overpowered the men of Amir al-mu'minin and occupied the bank of River Euphrates and prevented them from taking its water, Amir al-mu'minin said:

They(1) are asking you morsels of battle. So either you remain in ignominy and the lowest position or drench your swords with blood and quench your thirst with water. Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying as subjugators. Beware, Mu`awiyah is leading a small group of insurgents and has kept them in dark about the true facts with the result that they have made their bosoms the targets of death.

(1). Amir al-mu'minin had not reached Siffin when Mu`awiyah posted forty thousand men on the bank of the River to close the way to the watering place, so that none except the Syrians could take the water. When Amir al-mu'mimin's force alighted there they found that there was no watering place except this one for them to take water. If there was one it was difficult to reach there by crossing high hillocks. Amir al-mu'minin sent Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-`Abdi to Mu`awiyah with the request to raise the control over water. Mu`awiyah refused. On this side Amir al-mu'minin's army was troubled by thirst. When Amir al-mu'minin noticed this position he said, "Get up and secure water by dint of sword." Consequently, these thirsty persons drew their swords out of sheaths, put arrows in their bows and dispersing Mu`awiyah's men went right down into the River and then hit these guards away and occupied the watering place themselves.

Now, Amir al-mu'minin's men also desired that just as Mu`awiyah had put restriction on water by occupation of the watering place, the same treatment should be accorded to him and his men and no Syrian should be allowed water and everyone of them should be made to die of thirst. But Amir al-mu'minin said, "Do you want to take the same brutal step which these Syrians had taken? Never prevent anyone from water.

Whoever wants to drink, may drink and whoever wants to take away may take away." Consequently, despite occupation of the River by Amir al-mu'minin's army no one was prevented from the water and everyone was given full liberty to take water.

Chapter 60

SERMON 52

(This sermon has already appeared earlier but due to the difference between the two versions we have quoted it again here). Its subject is the downfall of the world and reward and punishment in the next world.

Beware, the world is wrapping itself up and has announced its departure. Its known things have become strangers and it is speedily moving backward. It is advancing its inhabitants towards destruction and driving its neighbours towards death. Its sweet things (enjoyments) have become sour, and its clear things have become polluted. Consequently, what has remained of it is just like the remaining water in a vessel or a mouthful of water in the measure. If a thirsty person drinks it his thirst is not quenched.

O' creatures of Allah get ready to go out of this world for whose inhabitants decay is ordained, and (beware) heart's wishes should overpower you, nor should you take your stay (in life) to be long. By Allah, if you cry like the she-camel that has lost its young one, call out like the cooing of pigeons, make noise like devoted recluses and turn to Allah leaving your wealth and children as a means to secure His nearness and high position with Him or the forgiveness of sins which have been covered by His books and recorded by His angels it would be less than His reward that I expect for you or His retribution that I fear about you.

By Allah, if your hearts melt down thoroughly and your eyes shed tears of blood either in hope for Him or for fear from Him and you are also allowed to live in this world all the time that it lasts even then your actions cannot pay for His great bounties over you and His having guided you towards faith.

A part of the same sermon on the description of the Day of Sacrifice (`Id al-Adha) and the qualities of the animal for sacrifice

For an animal to be fully fit for sacrifice it is necessary that both its ears should be raised upwards and its eyes should be healthy. If the ears and

the eyes are sound the animal of sacrifice is sound and perfect, even though its horn be broken or it drags its feet to the place of sacrifice.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Here place of sacrifice means place of slaughter.

Chapter 61

SERMON 53

On the swearing of allegiance

They leapt upon me as the camels leap upon each other on their arrival for drinking water, having been let loose after unfastening of their four legs till I thought they would either kill me or kill one another in front of me. I thought over this matter in and out to the extent that it prevented me from sleeping. But I found no way except to fight them or else to reject whatever has been brought by Muhammad (PBUHAHP). I found that to face war was easier for me than to face the retribution, and the hardships of this world were easier than the hardships of the next world.

Chapter 62

SERMON 54

When Amir al-mu'minin's men showed impatience on his delay in giving them permission to fight in Siffin , he said:

Well, as for your idea whether this (delay) is due to my unwillingness for death, then by Allah I do not care whether I proceed towards death or death advances towards me. As for your impression that it may be due to my misgivings about the people of Syria (ash-Sham) ,well by Allah, I did not put off war even for a day except in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me and see my light with their weak eyes. This is dearer to me than to kill them in the state of their misguidance although they would be bearing their own sins.

Chapter 63

SERMON 55

About steadiness in the battlefield

In the company of the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) we used to fight our parents, sons, brothers and uncles, and this continued us in our faith, in submission, in our following the right path, in endurance over the pangs of pain and in our fight against the enemy. A man from our side and one from the enemy would pounce upon each other like energetic men contesting as to who would kill the other; sometime our man got over his adversary and some-time the enemy's man got over ours.

When Allah had observed our truth He sent ignominy to our foe and sent His succour to us till Islam got established (like the camel) with neck on the ground and resting in its place. By my life, if we had also behaved like you, no pillar of (our) religion could have been raised, nor the tree of faith could have borne leaves. By Allah, certainly you will now milk our blood (instead of milk) and eventually you will face shame. (1)

(1). When Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr had been killed Mu`awiyah sent `Abdullah ibn `Amir al-Hadrami to Basrah to exhort the people of Basrah for avenging `Uthman's blood because the natural inclination of most of the inhabitants of Basrah and particularly of Banu Tamim was towards `Uthman. Consequently, he stayed with Banu Tamim. This was the time when `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, the governor of Basrah had gone to Kufah for condolence about Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, leaving Ziyad ibn `Ubayd (Abih) as his substitute. When the atmosphere in Basrah began to deteriorate Ziyad informed Amir al-mu'minin of all the facts. Amir al-mu'minin tried to get Banu Tamim of Kufah ready but they kept complete silence and gave no reply. When Amir al-mu'minin saw this weakness and shamelessness on their part he gave this speech namely that "During the days of the Prophet (PBUH) we did not see whether those killed at our hands were our kith and kin, but whoever collided with Right, we were prepared to collide with him. If we too had acted

carelessly or been guilty of inaction like you then neither religion could have taken root nor could Islam prosper. "The result of this shaking was that A`yan ibn Dabi`ah al-Mujashi`i prepared himself but on reaching Basrah he was killed by the swords of the enemy. Thereafter, Amir al-mu'minin sent off Jariyah ibn Qudamah as-Sa`di with fifty men of Bani Tamim. First he tried his best to canvass his own tribe but instead of following the right path they stooped down to abusing and fighting. Then Jariyah called Ziyad and the tribe of Azd for his help. Soon on their arrival (`Abdullah) Ibn al-Hadrami also came out with his men. Swords were used from both sides for some time but eventually Ibn al-Hadrami fled away with seventy persons and took refuge in the house of Sabil as-Sa`di. When Jariyah saw no other way he got this house set on fire. When fire rose into flames they came out in search of safety but could not succeed in running away. Some of them were crushed to death under the wall while others were killed.

Chapter 64

SERMON 56

Amir al-mu'minin said to his companions about Mu`awiyah

Soon after me there would be put on you a man with a broad mouth and a big belly. He would swallow whatever he gets and would crave for what he does not get. You should kill him but (I know) you would not kill him. He would command you to abuse me and to renounce me. As for abusing, you do abuse me because that would mean purification for me and salvation for you. As regards renunciation, you should not renounce me because I have been born on the natural religion (Islam) and was foremost in accepting it as well as in Hijrah (migrating from Mecca to Medina). (1)

(1). About the person to whom Amir al-mu'minin has alluded in this sermon some people hold that he is Ziyad ibn Abih; some hold that he is al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi and some hold that he is Mughirah ibn Shu`bah. But most of the commentators have held him to be Mu`awiyah and this is correct because the qualities that Amir al-mu'minin has described prove true fully on him alone .Thus Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written about the gluttonous quality of Mu`awiyah that once the prophet sent for him and he was informed that Mu`awiyah was busy eating. Then a second and third time a man was sent to call him but he brought the same news. Thereupon the Prophet said , "May Allah never satisfy his belly." The effect of this curse was that when he felt tired of eating he would say , "Take away, for, by Allah I am not satiated but I am tired and disgusted." Similarly, his abusing Amir al-mu'minin and ordering his officers for it are such accepted facts of history about which there is no scope of denying. In this connection such words were used on the pulpit that even Allah and the Prophet were hit by them. Thus, Umm al-mu'minin Umm Salamah wrote to Mu`awiyah, "Certainly you people abuse Allah and the Prophet, and this is like this that you hurl abuses on

`Ali and those who love him, while I do stand witness that Allah and the Prophet did love him." *(al-`Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 3, p. 131)*

Thanks to `Umar ibn `Abdil-`Aziz who put a stop to it, and introduced the following verse in place of abuse in the sermons:

Verily Allah enjoineth justice and benevolence (to others) *and giving unto the kindred, and forbidden lewdness, and evil, and rebellion; He exhorteth you that ye may take heed* (Qur'an 16:90)

In this sermon Amir al-mu'minin has ordered his killing on the basis of the Prophet's order that "When you (O' Muslims) see Mu`awiyah on my pulpit, kill him." (*Kitab Siffin*, pp. 243, 248; *Sharh* of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Vol. 1, p.348; *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, Vol. 12, p. 181; *Mizan al-I`tidal*, Vol. 2, p. 128; *Tahdhib at-tahdhib*, Vol. 2, p. 428; Vol. 5, p. 110; Vol. 7, p. 324)

Chapter 65

SERMON 57

Addressing the Kharijites, Amir al-mu'minin said:

Storm may overtake you while there may be none to prick you (for reforms). Shall I be witness to my becoming heretic after acceptance of Faith and fighting in the company of the Prophet*?! "In that case I shall be misguided and I shall not be on the right path."* (Qur'an, 6:56). So you should return to your evil places, and get back on the traces of your heels. Beware! Certainly you will meet, after me, overwhelming disgrace and sharp sword and tradition that will be adopted by the oppressors as a norm towards you. (1)

***As-Sayyid ar-Radi says*:** In the *words "wala baqiyah minkum abirun"* used by Amir al-mu'minin the *"abir"* has been related with *"ba'"* and *"ra'"* and it has been taken from the Arab saying *"rajulun abirun"* which means the man who prunes the date-palm trees and improves them. In one version the word is *"athir"* and its meaning is "relator of good news." In my view this is more appropriate, as though Amir al-mu'minin intends to say that there should remain none to carry news. In one version the word appears as *"abiz"* with *"za'"* which means one who leaps. One who dies is also called *"abiz"*.

(1). History corroborates that after Amir al-mu'minin, the Kharijites had to face all sorts of ignominy and disgrace and wherever they raised their heads for creating trouble, they were met with swords and spears. Thus Ziyad ibn Abih, `Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Mus`ab ibn az-Zubayr and al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah left no stone unturned in annihilating them from the surface of the globe, particularly al-Muhallab chased them for nineteen years, routed them thoroughly and rested only after completing their destruction.

At-Tabari writes that when ten thousand Kharijites collected in *Silla wa sillibra* (the name of a mountain in Ahwaz) then al-Muhallab faced them so steadfastly that he killed seven thousand Kharijites, while the

remaining three thousand fled towards Kirman for life. But when the Governor of Persia noticed their rebellious activities he surrounded them in Sabur and killed a good number of them then and there. Those remained again fled to Isfahan and Kirman. From there they again formed a contingent and advanced towards Kufah via Basrah. Al-Harith ibn Abi Rabi`ah al-Makhzumi and `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mikhnaf al-Azdi stood up with six thousand combatants to stop their advance, and turned them out of Iraq's boundaries. In this way successive encounters completely trampled their military power and turning them out of cities compelled them to roam about in the deserts. Afterwards also, when they rose in the form of groups they were crushed. (*at-Ta'rikh*, Vol. 2, pp. 580-591); Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, pp. 196-206).

Chapter 66

SERMON 58

When Amir al-mu'minin showed his intention to fight the Kharijites he was told that they had crossed the bridge of Nahrawan and gone over to the other side. Amir al-mu'minin said:

Their falling place is on this side of the river. By Allah, not even ten of them will survive while from your side not even ten will be killed. (1)

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In this sermon *"nutfah"* implies the River Euphrates, and for water this is the nicest expression, even though water may be much.

(1). This prophecy cannot be attributed to wit and farsightedness, because farsighted eyes may forecast victory or defeat and preconceive the outcome of war but to tell about the correct figures of the killed on either side is beyond their capacity. This can be done only by one who can unveil the unknown future and see the coming scene with his eyes and who sees the sketches yet to appear on the page of the future with the help of the light of knowledge possessed by him as Imam.

Consequently, events occurred just according to what this inheritor of the Prophet's knowledge had said, and from among the Kharijites all except nine persons were killed. Two of them fled away to `Uman, two to Sijistan, two to Kirman and two to al-Jazirah while one escaped to Tall Mawzan. Of Amir al-mu'minin's party only eight men fell as martyrs.

Chapter 67

SERMON 59

When Amir al-mu'minin was told that the Kharijites had been totally killed, he said:

By Allah, no, not yet. They still exist in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief would appear from among them, he would be cut down till the last of them would turn thieves and robbers. (1)

(1). This prophecy of Amir al-mu'minin also proved true word by word. Every chief of Kharijites who rose was put to sword. A few of their chiefs who were badly put to death are mentioned here:

1) Nafi` ibn Azraq al-Hanafi: the largest group of the Kharijites namely al-Azariqah is named after him. He was killed by Salamah al-Bahili during encounter with the army of Muslim ibn `Ubays.

2) Najdah ibn `Amir: the an-Najadat al-`Adhiriyyah sect of Kharijites is named after him. Abu Fudayk al-Khariji got him killed.

3) `Abdullah ibn Ibad at-Tamimi: the sect Ibadite (Ibadiyyah) is named after him. He was killed during encounter with `Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn `Atiyyah.

4) Abu Bayhas Haysam ibn Jabir ad-Duba`i: the sect of al-Bayhasiyyah is named after him. `Uthman ibn Hayyan al-Murri the governor of Medina got his hands and feet severed and then killed him.

5) `Urwah ibn Udayyah at-Tamimi: Ziyad ibn Abih killed him during the reign of Mu`awiyah.

6) Qatari ibn al-Fuja'h al-Mazini at-Tamimi: when he encountered the army of Sufyan ibn al-Abrad al-Kalbi in Tabarastan then Sawrah ibn al-Hurr ad-Darimi killed him.

7) Abu Bilal Mirdas ibn Udayyah at-Tamimi: was killed in encounter with `Abbas ibn Akhdar al-Mazini.

8) Shawdhab al-Khariji al-Yashkuri: was killed during encounter with Sa`id ibn `Amr al-Harashi.

9) Hawtharah ibn Wada` al-Asadi: was killed at the hands of a man of Banu Tayyi'

10) al-Mustawrid ibn `Ullafah at-Taymi: was killed by Ma`qil ibn Qays ar-Riyahi in the reign of Mu`awiyah.

11) Shabib ibn Yazid ash-Shaybani: died by being drowned in river.

12) `Imran ibn al-Harith ar-Rasibi: was killed in the battle of Dulab.

13, 14) Zahhaf at-Ta'i and Qurayb ibn Murrah al-Azdi: were killed in encounter with Banu Tahiyah.

15) az-Zubayr ibn `Ali as-Saliti at-Tamimi: was killed in encounter with `Attab ibn Warqa' ar-Riyahi.

16) `Ali ibn Bashir ibn al-Mahuz al-Yarbu`i: al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi got him killed.

17) `Ubaydullah ibn Bashir: was killed in encounter with al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah in the battle of Dulab.

18) Abu'l-Wazi` ar-Rasibi: a man in the graveyard of Banu Yashkur felled a wall on him and killed him.

19) `Abdu Rabbih as-Saghir: was killed in encounter with al-Muhallab ibn Abi Sufrah.

20) Al-Walid ibn Tarif ash-Shaybani: was killed in encounter with Yazid ibn Mazyad ash-Shaybani.

21-24) `Abdullah ibn Yahya al-Kindi, al-Mukhtar ibn `Awf al-Azdi (Abu Hamzah ash-Shari), Abrahah ibn as-Sabbah and Balj ibn `Uqbah al-Asadi: were killed by `Abd al-Malik ibn `Atiyyah as-Sa`di in the reign of Marwan ibn Muhammad (the last of the Umayyad caliphs).

Chapter 68

SERMON 60

Amir al-mu'minin also said:

Do not fight(1) the Kharijites after me, because one who seeks right but does not find it, is not like one who seeks wrong and finds it.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Amir al-mu'minin means Mu`awiyah and his men.

(1). The reason for stopping people from fighting the Kharijites was that Amir al-mu'minin was clearly perceiving that after him authority and power would devolve on people who would be ignorant of the proper occasion of *jihad*, and who will make use of sword only to maintain their sway. And there were those who excelled even Kharijites in holding and calling Amir al-mu'minin bad. So those who are themselves in the wrong have no right to fight others in the wrong. Again, those who are wilfully in the wrong can be allowed to fight those who are in the wrong by mistake. Thus, Amir al-mu'minin's words make this fact clear that the misguidance of Kharijites was not wilful but under Satan's influence. They mistook wrong as right and stuck to it. On the other hand, the position of misguidance of Mu`awiyah and his party was that they rejected right realising it as right and appropriated wrong as the code of their conduct fully knowing that it was wrong. Their audacity in the matter of religion reached the stage that it can neither be regarded as a result of misunderstanding nor can it be covered under the garb of error of judgement, because they openly transgressed the limits of religion and paid no heed to the Prophet's injunctions in comparison with their own view. Thus, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written (vol. 5, p. 130) that when the Prophet's companion Abu'd-Darda' saw utensils of gold and silver being used by Mu`awiyah he said he had heard the Prophet saying, "One who drinks in vessels of gold and silver will feel flames of the fire of Hell in his stomach" whereupon Mu`awiyah said, "As for me, l do not find any harm in it." Similarly, creating Ziyad ibn Abih's blood relationship

with himself by his own opinion in total disregard of the Prophet's injunction, abusing the descendants of the Prophet over the pulpit, transgressing the limits of *shari`ah*, shedding blood of innocent persons and placing over Muslims (as so called Khalifah) a vicious individual and thus opening the way to disbelief and atheism are events that to attribute them to any misunderstanding is like wilfully closing eyes to facts.

Chapter 69

SERMON 61

When Amir al-mu'minin was warned of being killed by deceit, he said:

Surely, there is a strong shield of Allah over me. When my day would come it would get away from me and hand me over to death. At that time neither an arrow would go amiss nor a wound would heal up.

Chapter 70

SERMON 62

About the transience of the world

Beware ! surely this world is a place from which protection cannot be sought except while one is in it. The action which is performed only for this world cannot secure salvation. People are tested in it through calamities. Those who have taken worldly pleasures here will be taken out from them (by death) and will be questioned about them. And whatever (good actions) they have achieved for the other world, they will get them there and stay in them. For the intelligent this world is like the shade - one moment it is spread out and extended but soon it shrinks and contracts.

Chapter 71

SERMON 63

About decline and destruction of the world

O' creatures of Allah! Fear Allah and anticipate your death by good actions. Purchase everlasting joy by paying transitory things - pleasures of this world. Get ready for the journey, for you are being driven, and prepare yourselves for death, since it is hovering over you. Be a people who wake up when called, and who know that this world is not their abode, and so have it changed (with the next).

Certainly, Allah has not created you aimlessly nor left you as useless. There is nothing between anyone of you and Paradise or Hell except death that must befall him. The life that is being shortened every moment and being dismantled every hour must be regarded very short. The hidden thing namely death which is being driven (to you) by two over new phenomena, the day and the night, is certainly quick of approach. The traveller which is approaching with success or failure (namely death) deserves the best of provision. So acquire such provision from this world while you are here with which you may shield yourself tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

So everyone should fear Allah, should admonish himself, should send forward his repentance and should overpower his desire, because his death is hidden from him, his desires deceive him and Satan is posted on him and he beautifies for him sin so that he may commit it and prompts him to delay repentance till his desires make him the most negligent. Piety is for the negligent person whose life itself would be a proof against him and his own days (passed in sin) would lead him to punishment.

We ask Allah, the Glorified, that He may make us and you like one whom bounty does not mislead, whom nothing can stop from obedience of Allah and whom shame and grief do not befall after death.

Chapter 72

SERMON 64

About Allah's attributes

Praise be to Allah for Whom one condition does not proceed another so that He may be the First before being the Last or He may be Manifest before being Hidden. Everyone called one (alone) save Him is by virtue of being small (in number); and everyone enjoying honour other than Him is humble. Every powerful person other than Him is weak. Every master (owner) other than Him is slave (owned).

Every knower other than Him is seeker of knowledge. Every controller other than Him is sometimes imbued with control and sometimes with disability. Every listener other than Him is deaf to light voices while loud voices make him deaf and distant voices also get away from him. Every onlooker other than Him is blind to hidden colours and delicate bodies. Every manifest thing other than Him is hidden, but every hidden thing other than Him is incapable of becoming manifest.

He did not create what He created to fortify His authority nor for fear of the consequences of time, nor to seek help against the attack of an equal or a boastful partner or a hateful opponent. On the other hand all the creatures are reared by him and are His humbled slaves. He is not conditioned in anything so that it be said that He exists therein, nor is He separated from anything so as to be said that He is away from it. The creation of what He initiated or the administration of what He controls did not fatigue Him. No disability overtook Him against what He created. No misgiving ever occurred to Him in what He ordained and resolved. But His verdict is certain, His knowledge is definite, His governance is overwhelming. He is wished for at time of distress and He is feared even in bounty.

Chapter 73

SERMON 65

In some of the days of Siffin Amir al-mu'minin said to his followers about ways of fighting

O' crowd of Muslims! Make fear of Allah the routine of your life. Cover yourselves with peace of mind and clinch your teeth because this makes the sword slip off from the skull. Complete your armour and shake your swords in their sheathes before showing them out. Have your eyes on the enemy. Use your spears on both sides and strike (the enemy) with swords. Keep in mind that you are before Allah and in the company of the Prophet's cousin. Repeat your attacks and feel ashamed of running away, because it is a shame for posterity and (cause of awarding you) fire on the Day of Judgement. Give your lives (to Allah) willingly and walk towards death with ease. Beware of this great majority, and the pitched tent and aim at its centre because Satan is hiding in its cornet. He has extended his hand for assault and has kept back his foot for running away. Keep one enduring till the light of Truth dawns upon you.

> *While ye have the upper hand, and Allah is with you, and never will He depreciate your deeds.* (Qur'an, 47:35)

Chapter 74

SERMON 66

When after the death of the Prophet news reached Amir al-mu'minin about the happening in Saqifah of Bani Sa`idah, (1)he enquired what the ansar said. People said that they were asking for one chief from among them and one from the others, Amir al-mu'minin said:

Why did you not argue against them (*ansar*) that the Prophet had left his will that whoever is good among ansar should be treated well and whoever is bad he should be forgiven.

People said: "What is there against them in it?"

Amir al-mu'minin said:

"If the Government was for them there should have been no will in their favour."

Then he said:

"What did the Quraysh plead?"

People said: "They argued that they belong to the lineal tree of the Prophet.

Then Amir al-mu'minin said:

"They argued with the tree but spoiled the fruits."

(1). From what happened in the Saqifah of Bani Sa`idah it appears that the greatest argument of *muhajirun* against *ansar* and the basis of the former's success was this very point that since they were the kith and kin of the Prophet no one else could deserve the Caliphate. On this very

ground the big crowd of *ansar* became ready to lay down their weapons before three *muhajirun*, and the latter succeeded in winning the Caliphate by presenting their distinction of descent. Thus in connection with the events of Saqifah at-Tabari writes that when the *ansar* assembled in Saqifah of Bani Sa`idah to swear allegiance on the hand of Sa`d ibn `Ubadah, somehow Abu Bakr, `Umar and Abu `Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah also got the hint and reached there. `Umar had thought out something for this occasion and he rose to speak but Abu Bakr stopped him, and he himself stood up. After praise of Allah and the immigration of the *muhajirun* and their precedence in Islam he said:

> They are those who worshipped Allah first of all and accepted belief in Allah and his Prophet's friends and his Kith and Kin. These alone therefore must deserve the Caliphate. Whoever clashes with them commits excess.

When Abu Bakr finished his speech al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir stood up and, turning to the *ansar,* he said: "O' group of *ansar* ! Do not give your reins in the hands of others. The populace is under your care. You are men of honour, wealth and tribe and gathering. If the *muhajirun* have precedence over you in some matters you too have precedence over them in other matters. You gave them refuge in your houses. You are the fighting arm of Islam. With your help Islam stood on its own feet. In your cities prayer of Allah was established with freedom. Save yourselves from division and dispersion and stick to your right unitedly. If the *muhajirun* do not concede to your right tell them there should be one chief from us and one from them."

No sooner al-Hubab sat down after saying this then `Umar rose and spoke thus:

> This can't be that there be two rulers at one time. By Allah, the Arabs will never agree to have you as the head of the state since the Prophet was not from amongst you. Certainly, the Arabs will not care the least objection in that the Caliphate is allowed to one in whose house Prophethood rests so that the ruler should also be from the same house. For those who dissent clear arguments can be put forth. Whoever comes in conflict with us in the matter of the authority and rulership of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) he is leaning towards wrong, is a sinner and is falling into destruction.

After `Umar, al-Hubab again stood up and said to the *ansar*, "Look, stick to your point and do not pay heed to the views of this man or his supporters. They want to trample your right, if they do not consent turn him and them out of your cities and appropriate the Caliphate. Who else than you can deserve it more?"

When al-Hubab finished `Umar scolded him. There was use of bad words from that side also, and the position began to worsen. On seeing this Abu `Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah spoke with the intention of cooling down *ansar* and to win them over to his side and said:

"O' *ansar* ! You are the people who supported us and helped us in every manner. Do not now change your ways and do not give up your behaviour." But the *ansar* refused to change their mind. They were prepared to swear allegiance to Sa`d and people just wanted to approach him when a man of Sa`d's tribe Bashir ibn `Amr al-Khazraji stood up and said:

"No doubt we came forward for *jihad*, and gave support to the religion, but our aim in doing thus was to please Allah and to obey His Prophet. It does not behove us to claim superiority and create trouble in the matter of the caliphate. Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) was from Quraysh and they have a greater right for it, and are more appropriate for it." As soon as Bashir uttered these words division occurred among the *ansar*, and this was his aim, because he could not see a man of his own tribe rising so high. The *muhajirun* took the best advantage of this division among the *ansar*, and `Umar and Abu `Ubaydah decided to swear allegiance to Abu Bakr. They had just got forward for the act when Bashir first of all put his hand on that of Abu Bakr and after that `Umar and Abu `Ubaydah swore the allegiance. Then the people of Bashir's tribe came and swore allegiance, and trampled Sa`d ibn `Ubadah under their feet.

During this time Amir al-mu'minin was occupied in the funeral bath and burial of the Prophet. When afterwards he heard about the assemblage at the Saqifah and he came to know that the *muhajirun* had won the score over*ansar* by pleading themselves to be from the tribe of the Prophet he uttered the fine sentence that then argued on the lineal tree being one but spoiled its fruits, who are the members of his family. That is, if *muhajirun's* claim was acceded for being from the lineal tree of the Prophet, how can those who are the fruits of this tree be ignored? It is strange that Abu Bakr who connects with the Prophet in the seventh generation above and `Umar who connects with him in the ninth generation above may be held of the tribe and family of the Prophet and he who was his first cousin, he is refused the status of a brother.

Chapter 75

SERMON 67

When Amir al-mu'minin appointed Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr (1) Governor of Egypt and he was overpowered and killed, Amir al-mu'minin said:

I had intended to send Hashim ibn `Utbah to Egypt and had l done so he would have made way for the opponents nor given them time (to get hold of him). This is without reproach to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr as I loved him and had brought him up.

(1) Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr's mother was Asma' bint `Umays whom Amir al-mu'minin married after Abu Bakr's death. Consequently, Muhammad lived and was brought up under the care of Amir al-mu'minin and he im.bibed his ways and manners. Amir al-mu'minin too loved him much and regarded him as his son, and used to say "Muhammad is my son from Abu Bakr." He was born in the journey for the last *hajj* (of the Prophet) and died as martyr in 38 A.H. at the age of twenty eight years.

On accession to the Caliphate Amir al-mu'minin had selected Qays ibn Sa`d ibn `Ubadah as the Governor of Egypt but circumstances so developed that he had to be removed and Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr had to be sent there as Governor. The policy of Qays there was that he did not want to take any serious step against the `Uthmani group but Muhammad's view was different. After the lapse of a month he sent them word that in case they did not obey him their existence there would be impossible. Upon this these people organised a front against him, and engaged themselves in secret wire-pullings, but became conspicuous soon. After arbitration they started creating trouble with the slogan of vengeance. This polluted the atmosphere of Egypt. When Amir al-mu'minin came to know these deteriorated conditions he gave the governorship of Egypt to Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar and sent him off there in order that he might suppress insurgent elements and save the

administration from getting worse, but he could not escape the evil designs of the Umayyads and was killed by poison while on his way. Thus, the governorship of Egypt remained with Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr.

On this side, the performance of `Amr ibn al-`As in connection with the Arbitration made Mu`awiyah recall his own promise. Consequently, he gave him six thousand combatants and set him off to attack Egypt. When Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr knew of the advancing force of the enemy he wrote to Amir al-mu'minin for help. Amir al-mu'minin replied that he would be soon collecting help for him but in the meantime he should mobilise his own forces. Muhammad mobilised four thousand men under his banner and divided them into two parts. He kept one part with himself and on the other he placed Kinanah ibn Bishr at-Tujibi in command and ordered him to go forward to check the enemy's advance. When they settled down in camp before the enemy various parties of the enemy began attacking them but they faced them with courage and valour. At last Mu`awiyah ibn Hudayj as-Sakuni al-Kindi made an assault with full force. These people did not turn away from the enemy's swords but faced them steadfastly and fell as martyrs in action. The effect of this defeat was that Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr's men got frightened and deserted him. Finding himself alone Muhammad fled away and sought refuge in a deserted place. The enemy however got news about him through someone and traced him out when he was dying with thirst. Muhammad asked for water but these cruel men refused and butchered him thirsty. Then they put his body in the belly of a dead ass and burnt it.

Malik ibn Ka`b al-Arhabi had already left Kufah with two thousand men but before he could reach Egypt it had been occupied by the enemy.

Chapter 76

SERMON 68

Admonishing his companions about careless behaviour Amir al-mu'minin said:

How long shall I accord you consideration that is accorded to camels with hollow hump, or to worn clothes which when stitched on one side give way on the other. Whenever a vanguard force of Syria (ash-Sham) hovers over you, everyone of you shuts his door and hides himself like the lizard in its hole or a badger it its den. By Allah, he whom people like you support must suffer disgrace and he who throws arrows with your support is as if he throws arrows that are broken both at head and tail. By Allah, within the courtyard you are quite numerous but under the banner you are only a few. Certainly, I know what can improve you and how your crookedness can be straightened. But I shall not improve your condition by marring myself. Allah may disgrace your faces and destroy you. You do not understand the right as you understand the wrong and do not crush the wrong as you crush the right.

Chapter 77

SERMON 69

Spoken on the morning of the day when Amir al-mu'minin was fatally struck with sword.

I was sitting when sleep overtook me. I saw the Prophet of Allah appear before me, and I said: "O' Prophet of Allah ! what crookedness and enmity I had to face from the people. " The prophet of Allah said: "Invoke (Allah) evil upon them," but I said, "Allah may change them for me with better ones and change me for them with a worse one.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: *"al-awad"* means crookedness and *"al-ladad"* means enmity, and this is the most eloquent expression.

Chapter 78

SERMON 70

In condemnation of the people of Iraq

Now then, O ' people(1) of Iraq! You are like the pregnant woman who, on completion of the period of pregnancy delivers a dead child and her husband is also dead and her period of widowhood is long while only remote relation inherits her. By Allah, I did not come to you of my own accord. I came to you by force of circumstances. I have come to know that you say `Ali speaks lie. May Allah fight you! Against whom do I speak lie? Whether against Allah? But I am the first to have believed in him. Whether against His Prophet? But I am the first who testified to him. Certainly not. By Allah it was a way of expression which you failed to appreciate, and you were not capable of it. Woe to you. I am giving out these measures of nice expression free of any cost. I wish there were vessels good enough to hold them.

Certainly, you will understand it after some time. (Qur'an, 38:88)

(1). When after Arbitration the Iraqis displayed lethargy and heartlessness in retaliating the continuous attacks of Mu`awiyah, Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon abusing and admonishing them. Herein he has referred to their being deceived at Siffin and has likened them to a woman who has five qualities:

i)

Firstly, she is pregnant. This implies that these people had full capability to fight, and were not like a barren woman from whom nothing is expected

ii)

Secondly, she has completed the period of pregnancy. That is they had passed over all difficult stages and had approached near the final goal of victory.

iii)

Thirdly, she wilfully miscarries her child. That is after coming close to victory they came down to settlement and instead of achieving the coveted goal faced disappointment.

iv)

Fourthly, her period of widowhood is long. That is they fell in such a state as though they had no protector or patron and they were roaming about without any ruler.

v)

Fifthly, her successors would be distant persons. That is the people of Syria who had no relationship with them would occupy their properties.

Chapter 79

SERMON 71

Herein Amir al-mu'minin tells people how to pronounce "as-salat" (to invoke Divine blessing) on the Prophet.

My Allah, the Spreader of the surfaces (of earth) and Keeper (intact) of all skies, Creator of hearts on good and evil nature, send Thy choicest blessings and growing favours on Muhammad Thy servant and Thy Prophet who is the last of those who preceded (him) and an opener for what is closed, proclaimer of truth with truth, repulser of the forces of wrong and crusher of the onslaughts of misguidance. As he was burdened (with responsibility of prophethood) so he bore it standing by Thy commands, advancing towards Thy will, without shrinking of steps of weakness of determination, listening to Thy revelation, preserving Thy testament, proceeding forward in the spreading of Thy commands till he lit fire for its seeker and lighted the path for the groper in the dark.

Hearts achieved guidance through him after being ridden with troubles. He introduced clearly guiding signs and shining injunctions. He is Thy trusted trustee, the treasurer of Thy treasured knowledge, Thy witness on the Day of Judgement, Thy envoy of truth and Thy Messenger towards the people. My Allah prepare large place for him under Thy shade and award him multiplying good by Thy bounty.

My Allah, give height to his construction above all other constructions, heighten his position with Thee, grant perfection to his effulgence and perfect for him his light. In reward for his discharging Thy prophetship, grant him that his testimony be admitted and his speech be liked for his speech is just, and his judgements are clear-cut. My Allah put us and him together in the pleasures of life, continuance of bounty, satisfaction of desires, enjoyment of pleasures. ease of living, peace of mind and gifts of honour.

Chapter 80

SERMON 72

Amir al-mu'minin said about Marwan ibn al-Hakam at Basrah. When Marwan was taken on the day of Jamal, he asked Hasan and Husayn (p.b.u.t.) to intercede on his behalf before Amir al-mu'minin. So they spoke to Amir al-mu'minin about him and he released him. Then they said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin he desires to swear you allegiance" Whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:

Did he not swear me allegiance after the killing of `Uthman? Now I do not need his allegiance, because his is the hand of a Jew. If he swears me allegiance with his hand he would violate it after a short while. Well, he is to get power for so long as a dog licks his nose. He is the father of four rams (who will also rule). The people will face days through him and his sons.(1)

(1). Marwan ibn al-Hakam was the nephew (brother's son) and son-in-law of `Uthman. Due to thin body and tall stature he was known with the nickname "Khayt Batil" (the thread of wrong). When `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan killed `Amr ibn Sa`id al-Ashdaq, his brother Yahya ibn Sa`id said:

> O' sons of Khayt Batil (the thread of the wrong) you have played deceit on `Amr and people like you build their houses (of authority) on deceit and treachery.

Although his father al-Hakam ibn Abi al-`As had accepted Islam at the time of the fall of Mecca but his behaviour and activities were very painful to the Prophet. Consequently, the Prophet cursed him and his descendants and said, "Woe will befall my people from the progeny of this man." At last in view of his increasing intrigues the Prophet externed him from Medina towards the valley of Wajj (in Ta'if) and Marwan also went with him. Prophet did not thereafter allow them entry in Medina all his life. Abu Bakr and `Umar did likewise, but `Uthman sent for both

of them during his reign, and raised Marwan to such height as though the reins of caliphate rested in his hands. Thereafter his circumstances became so favourable that on the death of Mu`awiyah ibn Yazid he became the Caliph of the Muslims. But he had just ruled only for nine months and eighteen days that death overtook him in such a way that his wife sat with the pillow on his face and did not get away till he breathed his last.

The four sons to whom Amir al-mu'minin has referred were the four sons of `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan namely al-Walid, Sulayman, Yazid and Hisham, who ascended the Caliphate one after the other and coloured the pages of history with their stories. Some commentators have regarded this reference to Marwan's own sons whose names are `Abd al-Malik, `Abd al-`Aziz, Bishr and Muhammad. Out of these `Abd al-Malik did become Caliph of Islam but `Abd al-`Aziz became governor of Egypt, Bishr of Iraq and Muhammad of al-Jazirah.

Chapter 81

SERMON 73

When the Consultative Committee (or Shura) decided to swear allegiance to `Uthman, Amir al-mu'minin said:

You have certainly known that I am the most rightful of all others for the Caliphate. By Allah, so long as the affairs of Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression in it save on myself I shall keep quiet seeking reward for it (from Allah) and keeping aloof from its attractions and allurements for which you aspire.

Chapter 82

SERMON 74

When Amir al-mu'minin learnt that the Umayyads blamed him for killing `Uthman, he said:

Umayyads's knowledge about me did not desist them from accusing me, nor did my precedence (in accepting Islam) keep off these ignorant people from blaming me. Allah's admonitions are more eloquent than my tongue. I am the contester against those who break away from Faith and the opposer of those who entertain doubts. Uncertainties should be placed before Qur'an, the Book of Allah (for clarification). Certainly, people will be recompensed according to what they have in their hearts.

Chapter 83

SERMON 75

About preaching and counselling

Allah may bless him who listens to a point of wisdom and retains it, when he is invited to the right path he approaches it, he follows a leader (by catching his waist band) and finds salvation, keeps Allah before his eyes and fears his sins, performs actions sincerely and acts virtuously, earns treasure of heavenly rewards, avoids vice, aims at (good) objectives and reaps recompense, faces his desires and rejects (fake) hopes, makes endurance the means to his salvation and piety the provision for his death, rides on the path of honour and sticks to the highway of truth, makes good use of his time and hastens towards the end and takes with him the provision of (good) actions.

Chapter 84

SERMON 76

About Umayyads

The Banu Umayyah (Umayyads) are allowing me the inheritance of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) bit (by bit). By Allah, if I live I would throw them away as the butcher removes the dust from the dust-covered piece of flesh.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In one version for *"al-widhamu't-taribah"* (dust covered piece of flesh) the words *"at-turabu'l-wadhimah"* (the soil sticking on a piece of flesh) have been shown. That is, for the adjective the qualified noun and for the qualified noun the adjective has been placed. Any by the word *"layufawwiqunani"* Amir al-mu'minin implies that they allow him bit by bit just as a she-camel may be milked a little and then its young one may be made to suck milk so that it may be ready to be milked. And *"al-widham"* is the plural of *"wadhamah"* which means the piece of stomach or of liver which falls on the ground and then the dust is removed from it.

Chapter 85

SERMON 77

Supplications of Amir al-mu'minin.

O' my Allah! Forgive me what Thou knowest about me more than I do. If I return (to the sins) Thou return to forgiveness. My Allah forgive me what I had promised to myself but Thou didst not find its fulfilment with me. My Allah forgive me that with what I sought nearness to Thee with my tongue but my heart opposed and did not perform it. My Allah forgive me winkings of the eye, vile utterances, desires of the heart and errors of speech.

Chapter 86

SERMON 78

When(1) Amir al-mu'minin decided to set out for the battle with the Kharijites someone said, "If you set out at this moment then according to astrology I fear you will not be successful in your aim," whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:

Do you think you can tell the hour when a man goes out and no evil befall him or can warn of the time at which if one goes out harm will accrue? Whoever testifies to this falsifies the Qur'an and becomes unmindful of Allah in achieving his desired objective and in warding off the undesirable. You cherish saying this so that he who acts on what you say should praise you rather than Allah because according to your misconception you have guided him about the hour in which he would secure benefit and avoid harm.

Then Amir al-mu'minin advanced towards the people and said:

O' People! Beware of learning the science of stars except that with which guidance is sought on land or sea, because it leads to divining and an astrologer is a diviner, while the diviner is like the sorcerer, the sorcerer is like the unbeliever and the unbeliever would be in Hell. Get forward in the name of Allah.

(1). When Amir al-mu'minin decided to march towards Nahrawan to suppress the rising of the Kharijites, `Afif ibn Qays al-Kindi said to him, "This hour is not good. If you set out at this time. then instead of victory and success you will face defeat and vanquishment." But Amir al-mu'minin paid no heed to his view and ordered the army to march that very moment. In the result the Kharijites suffered such a clear defeat that out of their nine thousand combatants only nine individuals saved their lives by running away while the rest were killed.

Amir al-mu'minin has argued about astrology being wrong or incorrect in three ways, firstly, that if the view of an astrologer is accepted as

correct it would mean falsification of the Qur'an, because an astrologer claims to ascertain hidden things of the future by seeing the stars while the Qur'an says:

> *Say: "None (either) in the heavens or in the earth knoweth the unseen save Allah… "* (27:65)

Secondly that under his misconception the astrologer believes that he can know his benefit or harm through knowing the future. In that case he would be regardless of turning to Allah and seeking His help, while this indifference towards Allah and self-reliance is a sort of heresy and atheism, which puts an end to his hope in Allah. Thirdly, that if he succeeds in any objective, he would regard this success to be the result of his knowledge of astrology, as a result of which he would praise himself rather than Allah, and will expect that whomever he guides in this manner he too should be grateful to him rather than to Allah . These points do not apply to astrology to the extent it may be believed that the astrological findings are in the nature of effect of medicines which are subject to alteration at the will of Allah. The competence achieved by most of our religious scholars in astrology is correct in this very ground that they did not regard its findings as final.

Chapter 87

SERMON 79

After the Battle of Jamal,(1) Concerning Women and Their Short comings.

O' ye peoples! Women are deficient in Faith, deficient in shares and deficient in intelligence. As regards the deficiency in their Faith, it is their abstention from prayers and fasting during their menstrual period. As regards deficiency in their intelligence it is because the evidence of two women is equal to that of one man. As for the deficiency of their shares that is because of their share in inheritance being half of men. So beware of the evils of women. Be on your guard even from those of them who are (reportedly) good. Do not obey them even in good things so that they may not attract you to evils.

(1).Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon after the devastation created by the Battle of Jamal. Since the devastation resulting from this battle was the outcome of blindly following a woman's command, in this sermon he has described women's physical defects and their causes and effects. Thus their first weakness is that for a few days in every month they have to abstain from prayer and fasting, and this abstention from worship is a proof of their deficiency in Faith. Although the real meaning of *`iman* (belief) is heart-felt testimony and inner conviction yet metaphorically it also applies to action and character. Since actions are the reflection of Belief they are also regarded as part of Belief. Thus, it is related from Imam `Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (p.b.u.t.) that:

> *`iman* (belief) is testimony at heart, admission by the tongue and action by the limbs.

The second weakness is that their natural propensities do not admit of full performance of their intelligence. Therefore, nature has given them the power of intelligence only in accordance with the scope of their activities which can guide them in pregnancy, delivery, child nursing, child

care and house-hold affairs. On the basis of this weakness of mind and intelligence their evidence has not been accorded the status of man's evidence, as Allah says:

> *… then call to witness two witnesses from among your men and if there not be two men then (take) a man and two women, of those ye approve of the witnesses, so that should one of the two (women) forget the (second) one of the two may remind the other…* (Qur'an, 2:282)

The third weakness is that their share in inheritance is half of man's share in inheritance as the Qur'an says:

> *Allah enjoineth you about your children. The male shall have the equal of the shares of two females…* (4:11)

This shows woman's weakness because the reason for her share in inheritance being half is that the liability of her maintenance rests on man. When man's position is that of a maintainer and care taker the status of the weaker sex who is in need of maintenance and care-taking is evident.

After describing their natural weakness, Amir al-mu'minin points out the mischief of blindly following them and wrongly obeying them. He says that not to say of bad things but even if they say in regard to some good things it should not be done in a way that these should feel as if it is being done in pursuance of their wish, but rather in a way that they should realise that the good act has been performed because of its being good and that their pleasure or wish has nothing to do with it. If they have even the doubt that their pleasures has been kept in view in it they would slowly increase in their demands and would wish that they should be obeyed in all matters however evil, the inevitable consequence whereof will be destruction and ruin. ash-Shaykh Muhammad `Abduh writes about this view of Amir al-mu'minin as under:

> Amir al-mu'minin has said a thing which is corroborated by experiences of centuries.

Chapter 88

SERMON 80

About the way of preaching and counselling

O' people! abstinence is to shorten desires, to thank for bounties and to keep off prohibitions. If this is possible then (at least) the prohibitions should not overpower your patience. Allah has exhausted the excuse before you through clear, shining arguments and open, bright books.

Chapter 89

SERMON 81

About the world and its people

In what way shall I describe this world whose beginning is grief and whose end is destruction?(1) The lawful actions performed here have to be accounted for, while for the forbidden ones there is punishment. Whoever is rich here faces mischief and whoever is poor gets grief. One who hankers after it does not get it. If one keeps away from it then it advances towards him. If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it then it would blind him.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: If a thinker thinks over this phrase of Amir al-mu'minin *"waman absara biha bassarat'hu"* ("If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight") he would find thereunder very amazing meaning and far-reaching sense whose purpose cannot be appreciated and whose aim cannot be understood particularly when he joins it with Amir al-mu'minin's phrase *"waman absara ilayha a`mat'hu"* ("If one, has his eye on it, them it would blind him) he would find the difference between *"absara biha"* and *"absara laha"*, clear, bright, wonderful and shining.

(1). "The beginning of the world is grief and its end is destruction." This sentence contains the same truth which the Qur'an has presented in the verse:

Indeed We have created man (to dwell) *amidst hardship.* (90:4)

It is true that right from the narrow womb of the mother upto the vastness of the firmament the changes of human life do not come to an end. When man first tastes life he finds himself closed in such a dark prison where he can neither move the limbs nor change the sides. When he gets rid of this confinement and steps in this world he has to pass through innumerable troubles. In the beginning he can neither speak with the tongue so as to describe his difficulty or pain nor possesses energy in the

limbs so as to accomplish his needs himself. Only his suppressed sobs and flowing tears express his needs and translate his grief and sorrow. When after the lapse of this period he enters the stage of learning and instruction, then on every step voices of admonition and abuse welcome him. All the time he seems frightened and terrified. When he is relieved of this period of subjugation he finds himself surrounded by the worries of family life and livelihood, where sometimes, there is clash with comrades in profession, sometimes collision with enemies, sometimes confrontation with vicissitudes of time, sometimes attack of ailments and sometimes shock of children, till old age approaches him with the tidings of helplessness and weakness, and eventually he bids farewell to this world with mortification and grief in the heart.

Thereafter Amir al-mu'minin says about this world, that in its lawful actions there is the question of reckoning and in its forbidden acts there are hardships of punishment, as a result of which even pleasant joys also produce bitterness in his palate. If there is plenty of wealth and money in this world then man finds himself in such a whirlpool (of worries) that he loses his joy and peace of mind. But if there is want and poverty, he is ever crying for wealth. He who hankers after this world there is no limit for his desires. If one wish is fulfilled the desire for fulfilment of another wish crops up. This world is like the reflection. If you run after it then it will itself run forward but if you leave it and run away from it then it follows you. In the same way, if a person does not run after the world, the world runs after him. The implication is that if a person breaks the clutches of greed and avarice and keeps aloof from undesirable hankering after the world, he too gets (pleasures of) the world and he does not remain deprived of it. Therefore, he who surveys this world from above its surface and takes lesson from its chances and happenings, and through its variation, and alterations gains knowledge about Allah's Might, Wisdom and Sagacity, Mercy, Clemency and Sustaining power, his eyes will gain real brightness and sight. On the other hand the person who is lost only in the colourfulness of the world and its decorations, he loses himself in the darkness of the world that is why Allah has forbidden to view the world thus:

> *And strain not thine eyes unto that which We have provided* (different) *parties of them,* (of) *the splendour of the life of this world, so that We may try them in it; for the provision of thy Lord is better and more abiding.* (Qur'an, 20:131)

Chapter 90

SERMON 82

This sermon is called the al-Gharra' and it is one of the most wonderful sermons of Amir al-mu'minin.

Praise be to Allah who is High above all else, and is Near (the creation) through His bounty. He is the Giver of all reward and distinction, and Dispeller of all calamities and hardships. I praise Him for His continuous mercy and His copious bounties.

I believe in Him as He is the First of all and He is Manifest. I seek guidance from Him as He is Near and is the Guide. I seek His succour as He is Mighty and Subduer. I depend upon Him as He is Sufficer and Supporter. And I stand witness that Muhammad (blessing of Allah be on him and his progeny) is His slave and His Prophet. He sent him for enforcement of His commands, for exhausting His pleas and for presenting warnings (against eternal punishment).

Enjoining people to Piety

O' creatures of Allah I advise you to have fear of Allah Who has furnished illustrations and Who has timed for you your lives. He has given you covering of dress(1) and He has scattered for you livelihood. He has surrounded you with His knowledge. He has ordained rewards. He has bestowed upon you vast bounties and extensive gifts. He has warned you through far reaching arguments, and He has counted you by numbers. He has fixed for you ages (to live) in this place of test and house of instruction.

You are on test in this world and have to render account about it.

Caution against this world

Certainly this world is a dirty watering place and a muddy source of drinking.

Its appearance is attractive and its inside is destructive. It is a deception, a vanishing reflection and a bent pillar. When its despiser begins to

like it and he who is not acquainted with it feels satisfied with it, then it raises and puts down its feet (in joy), entraps him in its trap, makes him the target of its arrows and puts round his neck the rope of death taking him to the narrow grave and fearful abode in order to show him his place of stay and the recompense of his acts. This goes on from generation to generation. Neither death stops from cutting them asunder nor do the survivors keep aloof from committing of sins.

Death and Resurrection

They are emulating each other and proceeding in groups towards the final objective and the rendezvous of death, till when matters come to a close, the world dies and resurrection draws near. Allah(2)would take them out from the corners of the graves, the nests of birds. the dens of beasts and the centres of death. They hasten towards Him command and run towards the place fixed for their final return group by group, quiet, standing and arrayed in rows. They will be within Allah's sight and will hear every one who would call them.

They would be having the dress of helplessness and covering of submission and indignity. (At this time) contrivances would disappear, desires would be cut, hearts would sink quietly, voices would be curbed down, sweat would choke the throat, fear would increase and ears would resound with the thundering voice of the announcer calling towards the final judgement, award of recompense, striking of punishment and paying of reward.

The limitations of life

People have been created as a proof of (His) power, have been brought up with authority, they are made to die through pangs, and placed in graves where they turn into crumbs. Then they would be resurrected one by one, awarded their recompense and would have to account for their actions, each one separately. They had been allowed time to seek deliverance, had been shown the right path and had been allowed to live and seek favours, the darkness of doubts had been removed, and they had been let free in this period of life as a training place in order to make preparation for the race on the Day of Judgement, to search for the objective with thoughtfulness, to get time necessary to secure benefits and provide for the next place of stay.

No happiness without Piety

How appropriate are these illustrations and effective admonitions provided they are received by pure hearts, open ears, firm views and sharp wits. Fear Allah like him who listened (good advice) and bowed before it, when he committed sin he admitted it, when he felt fear he acted virtuously, when he apprehended he hastened (towards good acts), when he believed he performed virtuous acts, when he was asked to take lesson (from the happenings of this world) he did take the lesson, when he was asked to desist he abstained (from evil), when he responded to the call (of Allah) he leaned (towards him), when he turned back (to evil) he repented, when he followed he almost imitated and when he was shown (the right path) he saw it.

Such a man was busy in search of truth and got rid (of the worldly evils) by running away. He collected provision (of good acts) for himself, purified his inner self, built for the next world, and took with himself provision for the day of his departure, keeping in view his journey, his requirement and the position of his need. He sent ahead of him for the abode of his stay (in the next world). O' creatures of Allah, fear Allah keeping in view the reason why He created you and be afraid of Him to the extent He has advised you to do. Make yourself deserve what He has promised you, by having confidence in the truth of His promise and entertaining fear for the Day of Judgement.

A part of the same sermon

Reminding people of Allah's bounties

He has made for you ears to preserve what is important, eyes to have sight in place of blindness and limbs which consist of many (smaller) parts, whose curves are in proportion with the moulding of their shapes and lengths of their ages, and also bodies that are sustaining themselves and hearts that are busy in search of their food, besides other big bounties, obliging bestowings and fortresses of safety. He has fixed for you ages that are not known to you. He has retained for you remains of the past people for your instruction. Those people enjoyed themselves fully and were completely unhampered. Death overtook them before (satisfaction of) their desires, from which the hands of death separated them. They did not provide for themselves during health of their bodies, and did not take lesson during their youth.

Are these people who are in youth waiting for the backbending old age, and those enjoying fresh health waiting for ailments, and these living persons looking for the hour of death? When the hour of departure

would be close and the journey at hand, with pangs of grief and trouble, suffering of sorrows and suffocation of saliva, and the time would arrive for calling relations and friends for help and changing sides on the bed. Could then the near ones stop death, or the mourning women do any good? He would rather be left alone in the graveyard confined to the narrow corner of his grave.

His skin has been pierced all over by reptiles, and his freshness has been destroyed by these tribulations. Storms have removed his traces and calamities have obliterated even his signs. Fresh bodies have turned thin and withered and bones have become rotten. The spirits are burdened with the weight of sins and have become conscious of the unknown things. But now neither the good acts can be added to nor evil acts can be atoned for by repentance. Are you not sons, fathers, brothers and relations of these dead and are not to follow their footsteps and pass by their paths? But hearts are still unmoved, heedless of guidance and moving on wrong lines, as though the addressee is someone else, and as though the correct way is to amass worldly gains.

Preparation for the Day of Judgement

And know that you have to pass over the pathway (of sirat) where steps waver, feet slip away and there are fearful dangers at every step. O' creatures of Allah, fear Allah, like the fearing of wise man whom the thought (of next world) has turned away from other matters, fear (of Allah) has afflicted his body with trouble and pain, his engagement in the night prayer has turned even his short sleep into awakening, hope (of eternal recompense) keeps him thirsty in the day, abstention has curbed his desires, and remembrance of Allah is ever moving his tongue. He entertains fear before dangers. He avoids uneven ways in favour of clear ones. He follows the shortest route to secure his purpose, wishfulness does not twist his thinking and ambiguities do not blind his eyes. He enjoys deep sleep and passes his day happily because of the happiness of good tidings and pleasure of (eternal bounties).

He passes the pathway of this world in praiseworthy manner. He reaches the next world with virtues. He hastens (towards virtue) out of fear (for vice). He moves briskly during the short time (of life in this world). He devotes himself in seeking (eternal good), he runs away from evil. During today he is mindful of tomorrow, and keeps the future in his view. Certainly Paradise is the best reward and achievement, which hell is appropriate punishment and suffering. Allah is the best Avenger and Helper and the Qur'an is the best argument and confronter.

Warning against Satan

I enjoin upon you fear of Allah Who has left no excuse against what He has warned, has exhausted argument (of guidance) about the (right) path He has shown. He has warned you of the enemy that steals into hearts and stealthily speaks into ears, and thereby misguides and brings about destruction, makes (false) promises and keeps under wrong impression, he represents evil sins in attractive shape, and shows as light even serious crimes. When he has deceived his comrades and exhausted the pledge he begins to find fault with what he presented as good, and considers serious what he had shown as light, and threatens from what he had shown as safe.

Part of the same sermon dealing with creation of man

Or look at man whom Allah has created in the dark wombs and layers of curtains from what was overflowing semen, then shapeless clot, then embryo, then suckling infant, then child and then fully grown up young man. Then He gave him heart with memory, tongue to talk and eye to see with, in order that he may take lesson (from whatever is around him) and understand it and follow the admonition and abstain from evil.

When he attained the normal growth and his structure gained its average development he fell in self-conceit and got perplexed. He drew bucketfuls of his desires, got immersed in fulfilling his wishes for pleasures of the world and his (sordid) aims. He did not fear any evil nor got frightened of any apprehension. He died infatuated with his vices. He spent his short life in rubbish pursuits. He earned no reward nor did he fulfil any obligation. Fatal illness overtook him while he was still in his enjoyments and perplexed him. He passed the night in wakefulness in the hardships of grief and pricking of pains and ailments in the presence of real brother, loving father, wailing mother, crying sister, while he himself was under maddening uneasiness, serious senselessness, fearful cries, suffocating pains, anguish of suffocating sufferings and the pangs of death.

Thereafter he was clad in the shroud while he remained quiet and thoroughly submissive to others. Then he was placed on planks in such a state that he had been down-trodden by hardships and thinned by ailments. The crowd of young men and helping brothers carried him to his house of loneliness where all connections of visitors are severed. Thereafter those who accompanied him went away and those who were wailing for him returned and then he was made to sit in his grave for

terrifying questioning and slippery examination. The great calamity of that place is the hot water and entry into Hell, flames of eternal Fire and intensity of blazes. There is no resting period, no gap for ease, no power to intervene, no death to bring about solace and no sleep to make him forget pain. He rather lies under several kinds of deaths and moment-to-moment punishment. We seek refuge with Allah.

The lesson to be learnt from those who have passed away

O' creatures of Allah! where are those who were allowed (long) ages to live and they enjoyed bounty. They were taught and they learnt; they were given time and they passed it in vain; they were kept healthy and they forgot (their duty). They were allowed long period (of life), were handsomely provided, were warned of grievous punishment and were promised big rewards. You should avoid sins that lead to destruction and vices that attract wrath (of Allah).

O' people who possess eyes and ears and health and wealth! Is there any place of protection, any shelter of safety, or asylum or haven, or occasion to run away or to come back (to this world)? If not,*"how are you then turned away"* (Qur'an, 6:95; 10:34; 35:3; 40:62) and wither are you averting? By what things have you been deceived? Certainly, the share of every one of you from this earth is just a piece of land equal to his own stature and size where he would lie on his cheeks covered with dust. The present is an opportune moment for acting.

O' creatures of Allah, since the neck is free from the loop, and spirit is also unfettered, now you have time for seeking guidance: you are in ease of body; you can assemble in crowds, the rest of life is before you; you have opportunity of acting by will; there is opportunity for repentance, and peaceful circumstances. (But you should act) before you are overtaken by narrow circumstances and distress, or fear and weakness, before the approach of the awaited death and before seizure by the Almighty, the Powerful.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: It is related that when Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon people began to tremble, tears flowed from their eyes and their hearts were frightened. Some people call this sermon the Brilliant Sermon (*al-Khutbatu'l-Gharra'*)

(1). Allah has furnished every creature with natural dress, which is the means of protecting it from cold and heat. Thus, some animals are covered in feathers and some carry apparels of wool on their bodies. But the high degree of intelligence of man and the quality of shame and

modesty in him demands distinction from other creatures. Consequently, to maintain this distinction he has been taught the ways of covering his body. It was this natural impulse that when Adam was made to give up his dress he began to cover his body with leaves. The Qur'an says:

> *So when they tested* (of) *the tree their shameful things got displayed unto them and they began covering themselves with leaves of the garden …* (Qu'ran, 7:22)

This was the punishment awarded for his committing what was better for him to omit. When removal of dress is punishment its putting on would be a favour, and since this is peculiar to man it has been particularly mentioned.

(2). The intention is that Allah would resurrect all the dead, even though they had been eaten by beasts and been merged in their bodies. Its aim is to refute the view of the philosophers who hold that the resurrection of the non-existent is impossible and who do not therefore believe in the physical resurrection. Their argument briefly is that a thing which has lost existence by death cannot return to life. Consequently, after the destruction of this world the return of any of its beings to life is out of question. But this belief is not correct because dispersal of the parts does not mean its non-existence, so as to say that putting these parts together again would involve resurrection of the non-existent. On the other hand separated and dispersed parts continue to exist in some form or the other. Of course, in this connection this objection has some force that when every person is to be resurrected in his own form, then in case one person has eaten the other, then in such a case it would be impossible to resurrect either of them with his own constituent parts, since this would involve creating deficiency of parts in that who had eaten the other.

To this metaphysicians have replied that in everybody there are some constituents which are essential and others which are non-essential. The essential constituents remain constant from the beginning till end of life and suffer no change or alteration, and resurrection with regard to such constituents would not create any deficiency in the man who ate the other.

Chapter 91

SERMON 83

About `Amr ibn al-`As

I am surprised at the son of an-Nabighah that he says about me among the people of Syria (ash-Sham) that I am a jester and that I am engaged in frolics and fun. He said wrong and spoke sinfully. Beware, the worst speech is what is untrue. He speaks and lies. He promises and breaks the promise. He begs and sticks, but when someone begs from him he withholds miserly. He betrays the pledge and ignores kinship.

When in a battle, he commands and admonishes but only uptil the swords do not come into action. When such a moment arrives his great trick is to turn naked (1)before his adversary. By Allah, surely the remembrance of death has kept me away from fun and play while obliviousness about the next world has prevented him from speaking truth. He has not sworn allegiance to Mu`awiyah without purpose; but has beforehand got him to agree that he will have to pay its price, and gave him an award for forsaking religion.

(1). Amir al-mu'minin here refers to the incident when the 'Conqueror of Egypt' `Amr ibn al-`As exhibited the feat of his courage by displaying his private parts. What happened was that when in the battlefield of Siffin he and Amir al-mu'minin had an encounter, he rendered himself naked in order to ward off the blow of the sword. At this Amir al-mu'minin turned his face away and spared him his life. The famous Arab poet al-Farazdaq said about it:

> There is no good in warding off trouble by ignominy as was done one day by `Amr ibn al-`As by display of his private parts.

Even in this ignoble act `Amr ibn al-`As had not the credit of doing it himself, but had rather followed another one who had preceded him, because the man who first adopted this device was Talhah ibn Abi Talhah who had saved his life in the battle of Uhud by becoming naked before

Amir al-mu'minin, and so he showed this way to the others. Thus, besides `Amr ibn al-`As this trick was played by Busr ibn Abi Artat also to save himself from the sword of Amir al-mu'minin. When after the performance of this notable deed Busr went to Mu`awiyah the latter recalled `Amr ibn al-`As's act as precedent in order to remove this man's shamefulness and said, "O' Busr, no matter. There is nothing to feel shameful about it in view of `Amr ibn al-`As's precedent before you."

Chapter 92

SERMON 84

About the perfection of Allah and counselling

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah, He is One and there is no partner with Him. He is the First, such that nothing was before Him. He is the Last, such that there is not limit for Him. Imagination cannot catch any of His qualities. Hearts cannot entertain belief about His nature. Analysis and division cannot be applied to Him. Eyes and hearts cannot compare Him.

A part of the same sermon

O' creatures of Allah! take lesson from useful items of instruction and shining indications. Be cautioned by effective items of warning. Get benefit from preaching and admonition. It is as though the claws of death are pressed in you, the connection of hope and desires has been cut asunder, hard affairs have befallen you and your march is towards the place where everyone has to go, namely death. Hence, *"with every person there is a driver and a witness"* (Qur'an, 50:21). The driver drives him towards resurrection while the witness furnishes evidence about his deeds.

A part of the same sermon (about Paradise)

In Paradise there are high classes and different places of stay. Its boundary never ends. He who stays in it will never depart from it. He who is endowed with everlasting abode in it will not get old, and its resident will not face want.

Chapter 93

SERMON 85

About getting ready for the next world and following Allah's commandments

Allah knows hidden matters and is aware of inner feelings. He encompasses everything. He has control over everything and power over everything. Everyone of you should do whatever he has to do during his days of life before the approach of death, in his leisure before his occupation, and during the breathing of his breath before it is overtaken by suffocation, should provide for himself and his journey and should collect provision from his place of halt for his place of stay.

So remember Allah, O' people, about what He has asked you in His Book to take care of, and about His rights that He has entrusted to you. Verily, Allah has not created you in vain nor left you unbridled nor left you alone in ignorance and gloom. He has defined what you should leave behind. taught you your acts, ordained your death, sent down to you. *"the Book* (Qur'an) *explaining everything"* (Qur'an, 16:89) and made His Prophet live among you for a long time till He completed for him and for you the message sent through the Qur'an namely the religion liked by Him, and clarified through him His good acts and evil acts, His prohibitions and His commands.

He placed before you His arguments and exhausted his excuses upon you. He put forth to you His promises and warned you of severe retribution. You should therefore make full atonement during your remaining days and let yourselves practice endurance in these days. These days are fewer as against the many days during which you have shown obliviousness and heedlessness towards admonition. Do not allow time to yourselves because it will put you on the path of wrong-doers and do not be easy-going because this will push you towards sinfulness.

O' creatures of Allah! the best adviser for himself is he who is the most obedient to Allah, and the most deceiving for himself is he who is the most disobedient to Allah. Deceived is he who deceived his own self.

Enviable is he whose Faith is safe. Fortunate is he who takes lesson from others, while unfortunate is he who fell victim to his desires. You should know that even the smallest hypocrisy is like believing in more than one God, and keeping company of people who follow their desires is the key to obliviousness from religion, and is the seat of Satan.

Be on your guard against falsehood because it is contrary to Faith. A truthful person is on the height of salvation and dignity, while the liar is on the edge of ignominy and degradation. Do not be jealous because jealousy eats away Faith just as fire eats away dried wood. Do not bear malice because, it is a scraper (of virtues). And know that desires make wit forgetful and make memory oblivious. You should falsify desire because it is a deception, and he who has desires is in deceit.

Chapter 94

SERMON 86

The Qualities of a faithful believer

O' creatures of Allah! the most beloved of Allah is he whom Allah has given power (to act) against his passions, so that his inner side is (submerged in) grief and the outer side is covered with fear. The lamp of guidance is burning in his heart. He has provided entertainment for the day that is to befall him. He regards what is distant to be near himself and takes the hard to be light. He looks at and perceives; he remembers (Allah) and enhances (the tempo of his) actions. He drinks sweet water to whose source his way has been made easy. So he drinks to satisfaction and takes the level path. He has put off the clothes of desires and got rid of worries except one worry peculiar to him. He is safe from misguidance and the company of people who follow their passions. He has become the key to the doors of guidance, and the lock for the doors of destruction.

He has seen his way and is walking on it. He knows his pillar (of guidance) and has crossed over his deep water. He has caught hold of the most reliable supports and the strongest ropes. He is on that level of conviction which is like the brightness of the sun. He has set himself for Allah, the Glorified, for performance of the most sublime acts of facing all that befalls him and taking every step needed for it. He is the lamp in darkness. He is the dispeller of all blindness, key to the obscure, remover of complexities, and a guide in vast deserts. When he speaks he makes you understand whereas when he remains silent then it is safe to do so. He did everything only for Allah and so Allah also made him His own. Consequently, he is like the mines of His faith and as a stump in His earth. He has enjoined upon himself (to follow) justice.

The first step of his justice is the rejection of desires from his heart. He describes right and acts according to it. There is no good which he has not aimed at nor any likely place (of virtue) of the Qur'an. Therefore the

Qur'an is his guide and leader. He gets down when the Qur'an puts down his weight and he settles where the Qur'an settles him down.

The Characteristics of an unfaithful believer

While the other (kind of) man is he who calls himself learned but he is not so. He has gleaned ignorance from the ignorant and misguidance from the misguided. He has set for the people a trap (made) of the ropes of deceit and untrue speech. He takes the Qur'an according to his own views and right after his passions. He makes people feel safe from big sins and takes light the serious crimes. He says that he is waiting for (clarification of) doubts but he remains plunged therein, and that he keeps aloof from innovations but actually he is immersed in them. His shape is that of a man, but his heart is that of a beast. He does not know the door of guidance to follow nor the door of misguidance to keep aloof therefrom. These are living dead bodies.

About the Descendants (`Itrah) of the Holy Prophet

"So wither are you going to" (Qur'an, 81:26) and *"how are you then turned away?"* (Qur'an, 6:95; 10:34; 35:3; 40:62). Ensigns (of guidance) are standing, indications (of virtue) are clear, and the minarets (of light) have been fixed. Where are you being taken astray and how are you groping while you have among you the descendants of the Prophet? They are the reins of Right, ensigns of Faith and tongues of truth. Accord to them the same good position as you accord to the Qur'an, and come to them (for quenching the thirst of guidance) as the thirsty camels approach the water spring.

O' people take this saying(1) of the last of the Prophets that he who dies from among us is not dead, and he who decays (after dying) from among us does not really decay. Do not say what you do not understand, because most of the Right is in what you deny. Accept the argument of one against whom you have no argument. It is I. Did I not act before you on the greater thaqal (ath-thaqal al-akbar, i.e. the Qur'an) and did I not retain among you the smaller thaqal (ath-thaqal-al-asghar, i.e. the descendants of the Prophet).(2) I fixed among you the standard of faith, and I taught you the limits of lawful and unlawful. I clothed you with the garments of safety with my justice and spread for you (the carpet of) virtue by my word and deed.

I showed you high manners through myself. Do not exercise your imagination about what the eye cannot see or the mind cannot conceive.

A part of the same sermon, about Banu Umayyah

Till people begin thinking that the world is attached to the Umayyads, would be showering its benefits on them, and lead them to its clear spring for watering, and that their whip and sword will not be removed from the people. Whoever thinks so is wrong. There are rather a few drops from the joys of life which they would suck for a while and then vomit out the whole of it.

(1). This saying of the Prophet is a definite proof of the view that the life of any one from among the Ahlu'l-bayt (Household of the Holy Prophet) does not come to an end and that apparent death makes no difference in their sense of living, although human intelligence is unable to comprehend the conditions and happenings of that life. There are many truths beyond this world of senses which human mind cannot yet understand. Who can say how in the narrow corner of the grave where it is not possible even to breathe, replies will be given to the questions of the angels Munkar and Nakir? Similarly, what is the meaning of life of the martyrs in the cause of Allah, who have neither sense nor motion, can neither see nor hear? Although to us they appear to be dead, yet the Qur'an testifies to their life.

> *And say not of those who are slain in the path of Allah that they are dead; Nay, (they are) living, but ye perceive not.* (2:154)

At another place it says about their life:

> *Reckon not those who are slain in the way of Allah, to be dead; Nay! alive they are with their Lord being sustained.* (3:169)

When restriction has been placed on mind and tongue even in respect of the common martyrs that they should not be called dead nor considered dead, how would not those individuals whose necks were reserved for sword and palate for poison be living for all times to come.

About their bodies Amir al-mu'minin has said that by passage of time no signs of ageing or decay occur in them, but they remain in the same state in which they fell as martyrs. There should be nothing strange in it because dead bodies preserved through material means still exist. When it is possible to do so through material means will it be out of the Power of the Omnipotent Creator to preserve against change and decay the bodies of those upon whom He has bestowed the sense of everlasting life? Thus about the martyrs of Badr, the Holy Prophet said:

> Shroud them even with their wounds and flowing blood because when they would rise on the Day of Judgement blood would be pushing out of their throats.

(2). *"ath-thaqal al-akbar"* implies the Qur'an and *"ath-thaqal al-asghar"* means Ahlu'l-bayt (the Household of the Holy Prophet) as in the Prophet's saying: "Verily, I am leaving among you (the) two precious things (of high estimation and of care)," the reference is to Qur'an and Ahlu'l-bayt. There are several reasons for using this word Firstly, *"thaqal"* means the kit of a traveller, and since the kit is much in need, it is protected carefully. Secondly, it means a precious thing; and since this is of great importance, one is bound to follow the injunctions of the Qur'an and the actions of Ahlu'l-bayt. So they have been called 'precious things'. Since Allah has made arrangements for the protection of the Qur'an and Ahlu'l-bayt till doomsday so they have been called *"thaqalayn"* . So the Prophet before leaving this world for the next, declared them to be his valuable possessions and ordered people to preserve them. Thirdly, then have been called *"Thaqalayn"* (precious things) in view of their purity and high value. Thus Ibn Hajar al-Haytami writes:

> The Prophet has called the Qur'an and his Descendants as *"thaqalayn"* (two precious things) because *"thaqal"* means a pure, chaste and preserved thing, and either of these two were really so, each of them is the treasure of Divine knowledge and a source of scholarly secrets and religious commandments. For that reason the Prophet desired the people to follow them and to stick to them and to secure knowledge from them. Among them the most deserving of attachment is the Imam and Scholar of the family of the Prophet namely `Ali ibn Abi Talib (Allah may honour his face) because of his great insight and copiousness of knowledge which we have already described. (*as-Sawa`iq al-muhriqah*, p. 90)

Since the Prophet has with regard to apparent implication attributed the Qur'an to Allah and the descendants to himself, therefore in keeping with the natural status the Qur'an has been called the bigger weight while the descendants, the smaller weight. Otherwise from the point of view of being followed both are equal and from the point of view of utility in the development of character there can be no question in the status of the speaking party (the Ahlu'l-bayt) being higher than the silent one (the Qur'an).

Chapter 95

SERMON 87

About the division of the community into factions

So now, certainly, Allah did not break the neck of any unruly tyrant in this world except after allowing him time and opportunity and did not join the broken bone of any people *(ummah)* until He did not inflict calamity and distress upon them. Even less than what sufferings and misfortunes have yet to fall upon you or have already befallen you are enough for giving lessons. Every man with a heart is not intelligent, every ear does not listen and every eye does not see.

I wonder, and there is no reason why I should not wonder, about the faults of these groups who have introduced alterations in their religious pleas, who do not move on the footsteps of their Prophet nor follow the actions of the vicegerent. They do not believe in the unknown and do not avoid the evil. They act on the doubts and tread in (the way of) their passions. For them good is whatever they consider good and evil is whatever they consider evil. Their reliance for resolving distresses is on themselves. Their confidence in regard to dubious matters is on their own opinions as if every one of them is the Leader (Imam) of himself. Whatever he has decided himself he considers it to have been taken through reliable sources and strong factors.

Chapter 96

SERMON 88

About the Holy Prophet

Allah sent the Prophet when the mission of other Prophets had stopped and the peoples were in slumber for a long time. Evils were raising heads, all matters were under disruption and in flames of wars, while the world was devoid of brightness, and full of open deceitfulness. Its leaves had turned yellow and there was absence of hope about its fruits. While water had gone underground. The minarets of guidance had disappeared and signs of destruction had appeared. It was stern to its people and frowned in the face of its seeker. Its fruit was vice and its food was carcass. Its inner dress was fear and outer cover was sword.

So take lesson, O' creatures of Allah, and recall that (evil doing) with which your fathers and brothers are entangled, and for which they have to account. By my life, your time is not much behind theirs, nor have long periods or centuries lapsed between you and them, nor are you much distant from when you were in their loins.

By Allah, whatever the Prophet told them, I am here telling you the same and whatever you hear today is not different from what they heard yesterday. The eyes that were opened for them and the hearts that were made for them at that time, just the same have been given to you at this time. By Allah, you have not been told anything that they did not know and you have not been given anything which they were deprived. Certainly you have been afflicted by a calamity (which is like a she-camel) whose nose-string is moving about and whose strap is loose So in whatever condition these deceitful people are should not deceive you, because it is just a long shadow whose term is fixed.

Chapter 97

SERMON 89

Allah's attributes and some advice

Praise be to Allah who is well-known without being seen, Who creates without pondering over, Who has ever been existent when there was no sky with domes, nor curtains with lofty doors, nor gloomy night, nor peaceful ocean, nor mountains with broad pathways, nor curved mountain roads, nor earth of spread floors, nor self-reliant creatures. He is the Originator of creation and their Master. He is the God of the creation and its feeder. The sun and the moon are steadily moving in pursuit of His will. They make every fresh thing old and every distant thing near.

He distributed their sustenance and has counted their deeds and acts, the number of their breaths, their concealed looks, and whatever is hidden in their bosoms. He knows their places of stay and places of last resort in the loins and wombs till they reach their end.

His punishment on enemies is harsh despite the extent of His Mercy, and His compassion on His friends is vast despite His harsh punishment. He overpowers one who wants to overcome Him, and destroys one who clashes with Him. He disgraces one who opposes Him and gains sway over one who bears Him hostility. He is sufficient for one who relies on Him. He gives one who asks Him. He repays one who lends to Him. He rewards one who thanks Him.

O' creatures of Allah, weigh yourselves before you are weighed and assess yourselves before you are assessed. Breathe before suffocation of the throat. Be submissive before you are harshly driven. Know that if one does not help himself in acting as his own adviser and warner then no one else can (effectively) be his adviser or warner.

Chapter 98

SERMON 90

This sermon is known as the Sermon of Skeletons(1) (Khutbatu'l-Ashbah) and it holds one of the highest positions among the sermons of Amir al-mu'minin. Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah has related from al-Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (p.b.u.t.) saying: "Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon from the pulpit of (the mosque of) Kufah when someone asked him, 'O' Amir al-mu'minin! describe Allah for us in such a way that we may imagine that we see Him with eyes so that our love and knowledge may increase about Him.' Amir al-mu'minin became angry at this (request of the questioner) and ordered the Muslims to gather in the mosque. So many Muslims gathered in the mosque that the place was over-crowded. Then Amir al-mu'minin ascended the pulpit while he was still in a state of anger and his colour was changed. After he had praised Allah and extolled Him and sought His blessings on the Prophet he said:

Description of Allah

Praise be to Allah whom refusal to give away and stinginess do not make rich and Whom munificence and generosity do not make poor, although everyone who gives away loses (to that extent) except He, and every miser is blamed for his niggardliness. He obliges through beneficial bounties and plentiful gifts and grants. The whole creation is His dependants (in sustenance)(2). He has guaranteed their livelihood and ordained their sustenance. He has prepared the way for those who turn to Him and those who seek what is with Him. He is as generous about what He is asked as He is about that for which He is not asked. He is the First for whom there was no 'before' so that there could be anything before Him. He is the Last for whom there is no 'after' so that there could be anything after Him. He prevents the pupils of the eyes from seeing Him or perceiving Him. Time does not change over Him, so as to admit

of any change of condition about Him. He is not in any place so as to allow Him movement (from one place to another).

If He gives away all that the mines of the mountains emit out or the gold, silver, pearls and cuttings of coral which the shells of the ocean vomit out, it would not affect his munificence, nor diminish the extent of what He has. (In fact) He would still have such treasures of bounty as would not decrease by the demands of the creatures, because He is that generous Being Whom the begging of beggars cannot make poor nor the pertinacity of beseechers make miser.

Attributes of Allah as described in the Holy Qur'an

Then look on questioner, be confined to those of His attributes which the Qur'an had described and seek light from the effulgence of its guidance. Leave to Allah that knowledge which Satan has prompted you to seek and which neither the Qur'an enjoins you to seek nor is there any trace of it in the actions or sayings of the Prophet and other leaders *(A`immah)* of guidance. This is the extreme limit of Allah's claim upon you. Know that firm in knowledge are those who refrain from opening the curtains that lie against the unknown, and their acknowledgement of ignorance about the details of the hidden unknown prevents them from further probe. Allah praises them for their admission that they are unable to get knowledge not allowed to them. They do not go deep into the discussion of what is not enjoined upon them about knowing Him and they call it firmness. Be content with this and do not limit the Greatness of Allah after the measure of your own intelligence, of else you would be among the destroyed ones.

He is Powerful, such that when imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the extremity of His power, and mind, making itself free of the dangers of evil thoughts, tries to find Him in the depth of His realm, and hearts long to grasp realities of His attributes and openings of intelligence penetrate beyond description in order to secure knowledge about His Being, crossing the dark pitfalls of the unknown and concentrating towards Him He would turn them back. They would return defeated admitting that the reality of His knowledge cannot be comprehended by such random efforts, nor can an iota of the sublimity of His Honour enter the understanding of thinkers.

About Allah's creation

He originated the creation without any example which He could follow and without any specimen prepared by any known creator that was

before Him. He showed us the realm of His Might, and such wonders which speak of His Wisdom. The confession of the created things that their existence owes itself to Him made us realise that argument has been furnished about knowing Him (so that there is no excuse against it). The signs of His creative power and standard of His wisdom are fixed in the wonderful things He has created. Whatever He has created is an argument in His favour and a guide towards Him. Even a silent thing is a guide towards Him as though it speaks, and its guidance towards the Creator is clear.

(O' Allah) I stand witness that he who likens Thee with the separateness of the limbs or with the joining of the extremities of his body did not acquaint his inner self with knowledge about Thee, and his heart did not secure conviction to the effect that there is no partner for Thee. It is as though he has no heard the (wrongful) followers disclaiming their false gods by sayings *"By Allah, we were certainly in manifest error when we equalled you with the Lord of the worlds."* (Qur'an, 26:97-98). They are wrong who liken Thee to their idols, and dress Thee with apparel of the creatures by their imagination, attribute to Thee parts of body by their own thinking and consider Thee after the creatures of various types, through the working of their intelligence. I stand witness that whoever equated Thee with anything out of Thy creation took a match for Thee, and whoever takes a match for Thee is an unbeliever, according to what is stated in Thy unambiguous verses and indicated by the evidence of Thy clear arguments. (I also stand witness that) Thou art that Allah who cannot be confined in (the fetters of) intelligence so as to admit change of condition by entering its imagination nor in the shackles of mind so as to become limited and an object of alterations.

A part of the same sermon

About the greatest perfection in Allah's creation

He has fixed limits for every thing He has created and made the limits firm, and He has fixed its working and made the working delicate. He has fixed its direction and it does not transgress the limits of its position nor fall short of reaching the end of its aim. It did not disobey when it was commanded to move at His will; and how could it do so when all matters are governed by His will. He is the Producer of varieties of things without exercise of imagination, without the urge of an impulse, hidden in Him, without (the benefit of) any experiment taken from the

vicissitudes of time and without any partner who might have assisted Him in creating wonderful things.

Thus the creation was completed by His order and it bowed to His obedience and responded to His call. The laziness of any slug or the inertness of any excuse-finder did not prevent it from doing so. So He straightened the curves of the things and fixed their limits. With His power He created coherence in their contradictory parts and joined together the factors of similarity. Then He separated them in varieties which differ in limits, quantities, properties and shapes. All this is new creation. He made them firm and shaped them according as He wished and invented them.

A part of the same sermon, containing description of the sky

He has arranged the depressions and elevations of the openings of the sky. He has joined the breadths of its breaches, and has joined them with one another. He has made easy the approach to its heights for those (angels) who come down with His commands and those (angels) who go up with the deeds of the creatures. He called it when it was yet (in the form of) vapour. At once the links of its joints joined up. Then Allah opened up its closed door and put the sentinels of meteors at its holes, and held them with His hands (i.e. power) from falling into the vastness of air.

He commanded it to remain stationary in obedience to His commands. He made its sun the bright indication for its day, and moon the gloomy indication for its night. He then put them in motion in their orbits and ordained their (pace of) movement in the stages of their paths in order to distinguish with their help between night and day, and in order that the reckoning of years and calculations may be known by their fixed movements. Then He hung in its vastness its sky and put therein its decoration consisting of small bright pearls and lamp-like stars. He shot at the over-hearers arrows of bright meteors. He put them in motion on their appointed routine and made them into fixed stars, moving stars, descending stars, ascending stars, ominous stars and lucky stars.

A part of the same sermon, containing description of Angels

Then Allah, the Glorified, created for inhabiting of His skies and populating the higher strata of his realm new (variety of) creatures namely the angels. With them He filled the openings of its cavities and populated with them the vastness of it circumference. In between the openings of these cavities there resounds the voices of angels glorifying Him in the

enclosures of sublimity, (behind) curtains of concealment and in veils of His Greatness. And behind this resounding which deafens the ears there is the effulgence of light which defies the approach of sight to it, and consequently the sight stands, disappointed at its limitation.

He created them in different shapes and with diverse characteristics. They have wings. They glorify the sublimity of His Honour. They do not appropriate to themselves His skill that shows itself in creation. Nor do they claim they create anything in which He is unparalleled. *"But they are rather honoured creatures who do not take precedence over Him in uttering anything, and they act according to His command."* (Qur'an, 21: 26-27). He has made them the trustees of His revelation and sent them to Prophets as holders of His injunctions and prohibitions. He has immunised them against the waviness of doubts. Consequently no one among them goes astray from the path of His will. He has helped them with the benefits of succour and has covered their hearts with humility and peace. He has opened for them doors of submission to His Glories. He has fixed for them bright minarets as signs of His Oneness. The weights of sins do not burden them and the rotation of nights and days does not make them move. Doubts do not attack with arrows the firmness of their faith. Misgivings do not assault the bases of their beliefs. The spark of malice does not ignite among them. Amazement does not tarnish what knowledge of Him their hearts possess, or His greatness and awe of His glory that resides in their bosoms. Evil thoughts do not lean towards them to affect their imagination with their own rust.

Among them are those who are in the frame of heavy clouds, or in the height of lofty mountains, or in the gloom of over-powering darkness. And there are those whose feet have pierced the lowest boundaries of the earth. These feet are like white ensigns which have gone forth into the vast expanse of wind. Under them blows the light wind which retains them upto its last end.

Occupation in His worship has made them carefree, and realities of Faith have served as a link between them and His knowledge. Their belief in Him has made them concentrate on Him. They long from Him not from others. They have tasted the sweetness of His knowledge and have drunk from the satiating cup of His love. The roots of His fear have been implanted in the depth of their hearts. Consequently they have bent their straight backs through His worship. The length of the humility, and extreme nearness has not removed from them the rope of their fear.

They do not entertain pride so as to make much of their acts. Their humility before the glory of Allah does not allow them to esteem their own

virtues. Languor does not affect them despite their long affliction. Their longings (for Him) do not lessen so that they might turn away from hope in (Allah) their Sustainer. The tips of their tongues do not get dry by constant prayers (to Allah). Engagements (in other matters) do not betake them so as to turn their (loud) voices for Him into faint ones. Their shoulders do not get displaced in the postures of worship. They do not move their necks (this and that way) for comfort in disobedience of His command. Follies of negligence do not act against their determination to strive, and the deceptions of desires do not overcome their courage.

They regard the Master of the Throne (Allah) as the store for the day of their need. Because of their love (for Him) they turn to Him even when others turn to the creatures. They do not reach the ending limit of His worship. Their passionate fondness for His worship does not turn them except to the springs of their own hearts, springs which are never devoid of His hope and His fear. Fear (of Allah) never leaves them so that they might slacken in their efforts, nor have temptations entrapped them so that they might prefer this light search over their (serious) effort.

They do not consider their past (virtuous) deeds as big, for if they had considered them big then fear would have wiped away hopes from their hearts. They did not differ (among themselves) about their Sustainer as a result of Satan's control over them. The vice of separation from one another did not disperse them. Rancour and mutual malice did not overpower them. Ways of wavering did not divide them. Differences of degree of courage did not render them into divisions. Thus they are devotees of faith. Neither crookedness (of mind), nor excess, nor lethargy nor languor breaks them from its rope. There is not the thinnest point in the skies but there is an angel over it in prostration (before Allah) or (busy) in quick performance (of His commands). By long worship of their Sustainer they increase their knowledge, and the honour of their Sustainer increases in their hearts.

A part of the same sermon, in description of earth and its spreading on water

Allah spread the earth on stormy and tumultuous waves and the depths of swollen seas, where waves clashed with each other and high surges leapt over one another. They emitted foam like the he-camel at the time of sexual excitement. So the tumult of the stormy water was subdued by the weight of the earth, when the earth pressed it with its chest its shooting agitation eased, and when the earth rolled on it with its shoulder bones the water meekly submitted. Thus after the tumult of its

surges it became tame and overpowered, and an obedient prisoner of the shackles of disgrace, while the earth spread itself and became solid in the stormy depth of this water. (In this way) the earth put an end to the pride, self conceit, high position and superiority of the water, and muzzled the intrepidity of its flow. Consequently it stopped after its stormy flow and settled down after its tumult.

When the excitement of water subsided under the earth's sides and under the weight of the high and lofty mountains placed on its shoulders, Allah flowed springs of water from its high tops and distributed them through plains and low places and moderated their movement by fixed rocks and high mountain tops. Then its trembling came to a standstill because of the penetration of mountains in (various) parts of its surface and their being fixed in its deep areas, and their standing on its plains. Then Allah created vastness between the earth and firmament, and provided blowing wind for its inhabitants. Then He directed its inhabitants to spread all over its convenient places. Thereafter He did not leave alone the barren tracts of the earth where high portions lacked in water-springs and where rivers could not find their way, but created floating clouds which enliven the unproductive areas and grow vegetation.

He made a big cloud by collecting together small clouds and when water collected in it and lightning began to flash on its sides and the flash continued under the white clouds as well as the heavy ones He sent it raining heavily. The cloud was hanging towards the earth and southerly winds were squeezing it into shedding its water like a she-camel bending down for milking. When the cloud prostrated itself on the ground and delivered all the water it carried on itself Allah grew vegetation on the plain earth and herbage on dry mountains. As a result, the earth felt pleased at being decorated with its gardens and wondered at her dress of soft vegetation and the ornaments of its blossoms. Allah made all this the means of sustenance for the people and feed for the beasts. He has opened up highways in its expanse and has established minarets (of guidance) for those who tread on its highways.

On the Creation of Man and the sending of the Prophet

When He has spread out the earth and enforced His commands He chose Adam (peace be upon him) as the best in His creation and made him the first of all creation. He made him to reside in Paradise and arranged for his eating in it, and also indicated from what He had prohibited him. He told him that proceeding towards it meant His disobedience

and endangering his own position. But Adam did what he had been refrained from, just as Allah already knew beforehand. Consequently, Allah sent him down after (accepting) his repentance, to populate His earth with his progeny and to serve as a proof and plea for Him among his creatures.

Even when He made Adam die He did not leave them without one who would serve among them as proof and plea for His Godhead, and serve as the link between them and His knowledge, but He provided to them the proofs through His chosen Messengers and bearers of the trust of His Message, age after age till the process came to end with our Prophet Muhammad - Allah may bless him and his descendants - and His pleas and warnings reached finality.

He ordained livelihoods(3) with plenty and with paucity. He distributed them narrowly as well as profusely. He did it with justice to test whomever He desired, with prosperity or with destitution, and to test through it the gratefulness or endurance of the rich and the poor. Then He coupled plenty with misfortunes of destitution, safety with the distresses of calamities and pleasures of enjoyment with pangs of grief. He created fixed ages and made them long or short and earlier or later, and ended them up with death. He had made death capable of pulling up the ropes of ages and cutting them asunder.

He(4) knows the secrets of those who conceal them, the secret conversation of those who engage in it, the inner feelings of those who indulge in guesses, the established certainties, the inklings of the eyes, the inner contents of hearts and depths of the unknown. He also knows what can be heard only by bending the holes of the ears, the summer resorts of ants and winter abodes of the insects, resounding of the cries of wailing women and the sound of steps. He also knows the spots in the inner sheaths of leaves where fruits grow, the hiding places of beasts namely caves in mountains and valleys, the hiding holes of mosquitoes on the trunks of trees and their herbage, the sprouting points of leaves in the branches, the dripping points of semen passing through passages of loins, small rising clouds and the big giant ones, the drops of rain in the thick clouds, the particles of dust scattered by whirlwinds through their skirts, the lines erased by rain floods, the movements of insects on sand-dunes, the nests of winged creatures on the cliffs of mountains and the singing of chattering birds in the gloom of their brooding places.

And He knows whatever has been treasured by mother-of-pearls, and covered under the waves of oceans, all that which is concealed under the darkness of night and all that on which the light of day is shining, as well

as all that on which sometimes darkness prevails and sometimes light shines, the trace of every footstep, the feel of every movement, the echo of every sound, the motion of every lip, the abode of every living being, the weight of every particle, the sobs of every sobbing heart, and whatever is there on the earth like fruits of trees or falling leaf, or the settling place of semen, or the congealing of blood or clot and the developing of life and embryo.

On all this He suffers no trouble, and no impediment hampers Him in the preservation of what he created nor any languor or grief hinders Him from the enforcement of commands and management of the creatures. His knowledge penetrates through them and they are within His counting. His justice extends to all of them and His bounty encompasses them despite their falling short of what is due to Him.

O' my Allah! thou deservest handsome description and the highest esteem. If wish is directed towards Thee, Thou art the best to be wished for. If hope is reposed in Thee, Thou art the Most Honoured to be hoped from. O' my Allah! Thou hast bestowed on me such power that I do not praise any one other than Thee, and I do not eulogise any one save Thee. I do not direct my praise towards others who are sources of disappointment and centres of misgivings. Thou hast kept away my tongue from the praises of human beings and eulogies of the created and the sustained. O' my Allah! every praiser has on whom he praises the right of reward and recompense. Certainly, I have turned to Thee with my eye at the treasures of Thy Mercy and stores of forgiveness.

O' my Allah! here stands one who has singled Thee with Oneness that is Thy due and has not regarded any one deserving of these praises and eulogies except Thee. My want towards Thee is such that nothing except Thy generosity can cure its destitution, nor provide for its need except Thy obligation and Thy generosity. So do grant us in this place Thy will and make us free from stretching hands to anyone other than Thee. *"Certainly, Thou art powerful over every thing."* (Qur'an, 66:8).

(1). The name of this sermon is the Sermon of *"al-Ashbah". "ashbah"* is the plural of *shabah* which means skeleton, since it contains description of angels and other kinds of beings it has been named by this name.

The ground for being angry on the questioner was that his request was unconnected with the obligations of *shari`ah* and beyond limits of human capacity.

(2). Allah is the Guarantor of sustenance and Provider of livelihood as He says:

*No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on Allah… (*Qur'an, 11:6)

But His being guarantor means that He has provided ways for everyone to live and earn livelihood, and has allowed every one equal shares in forests, mountains, rivers, mines and in the vast earth, and has given everyone the right to make use of them. His bounties are not confined to any single person, nor is the door of His sustenance closed to any one. Thus, Allah says:

All We do aid, these and (also) those out of the bounty of thy Lord; and the bounty of thy Lord is not confined. (Qur'an, 17:20)

If some one does not secure these things through languor or ease and sits effortless it is not possible that livelihood would reach his door. Allah has laid the table with multifarious feeds but to get them it is necessary to extend the hand. He has deposited pearls in the bottom of the sea but it requires diving to get them out. He has filled the mountains with rubies and precious stones but they cannot be had without digging the stones. The earth contains treasures of growth but benefit cannot be drawn from them without sowing of seed. Heaps of edibles lie scattered on all four sides of the earth but they cannot be collected without the trouble of travelling. Thus, Allah says:

… Traverse ye then its broad sides, and eat ye of His provision … (Qur'an, 67:15)

Allah's providing livelihood does not mean that no effort is needed in searching livelihood or no going out of the house is required for it, and that livelihood should itself finds its way to the seeker. The meaning of His being the provider of livelihood is that He has given earth the property of growing, He has sent rain from clouds for germination, created fruits, vegetables and grains. All this is from Allah but securing them is connected with human effort. Whoever will strive will reap the benefits of his efforts, and whoever abstains from strife would face the consequences of his idleness and laziness. Accordingly Allah says:

And that man shall have nothing but what he striveth for. (Qur'an, 53:39)

The order of universe hinges on the maxim "Sow and reap." It is wrong to expect germination without sowing, to hope for results without effort. Limbs and faculties have been given solely to be kept active. Thus, Allah addresses Mary and says:

> *And shake towards thee the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on thee dates fresh* (and) *ripe. Then eat and drink and refresh the eye…*
> (Qur'an, 19:25-26)

Allah provided the means for Mary's livelihood. He did not however pluck the dates from the tree and put them in her lap. This was because so far as production of food goes it is His concern. So he made the tree green, put fruits on it and ripened the fruits. But when the stage arrived for plucking them He did not intervene. He just recalled to Mary her job namely that she should now move her hand and get her food.

Again, if His providing the livelihood means that whatever is given is given by Him and whatever is received from Him, then whatever a man would earn and eat, and in whatever manner he would obtain it would be permissible for him, whether he obtains it by theft, bribery, oppression or violence, because it would mean Allah's act and the food would be that given by Him, wherein he would have no free will, and where anything is out of the limits of free action there is no question of permissible or forbidden for it, nor is there any liability to account for it. But when it is not

actually so and there is the question of permissible and forbidden then it should have bearing on human actions, so that it could be questioned whether is was secured in lawful or unlawful manner. Of course, where He has not bestowed the power of seeking the livelihood, there He has taken upon Himself the responsibility to provide the livelihood. Consequently, He has managed for the feeding of the embryo in the mother's womb, and it reaches him there according to its needs and requirements. But when this very young life enters the wide world and picks up energy to move its limbs, then it can't get its food from the source without moving his lips (for sucking).

(3). In the management of the affairs of this world Allah has connected the sequence with the cause of human acts as a result of which the power of action in man does not remain idle, in the same way He had made these actions dependent on His own will, so man should not rely on his own power of action and forget the Creator. This is the issue of the will between two wills in the controversy of "free will or compulsion". Just as

in the entire Universe nature's universal and sovereign law is in force, in the same way the production and distribution of food also is provided in a set manner under the dual force of Divine ordainment and human effort. And this is somewhere less and somewhere more depending on the proportion of human effort and the aim of Divine ordainment. Since He is the Creator of the means of livelihood, and the powers of seeking food have also been bestowed by Him, the paucity or plenty of livelihood has been attributed to Him because He has fixed different and separate measures for livelihood keeping in view the difference in efforts and actions and the good of the creatures. Somewhere there is poverty and somewhere affluence, somewhere distress and somewhere comfort, and some one is enjoying pleasure while some one else is suffering the hardships of want.

Qur'an says:

> *...amplifieth He their sustenance unto whomsoever He willeth and straiteneth; Verily He knoweth all things.* (Qur'an, 42:12)

In sermon 23 Amir al-mu'minin has referred to this matter and said:

> The Divine command descends from the sky towards the earth with whatever is ordained for every one, whether less or more, just like rain drops.

So just as there is a fixed process and manner for the benevolence of rain namely that vapours rise from the sea with the store of water, spread over in the sky in the shape of dark clouds and then ooze the water by drops till they form themselves in regular lines. They irrigate plains as well as high lands thoroughly and proceed onwards to collect in the low areas, so that the thirsty may drink it, animals may use it and dry lands may be watered from it. In the same way Allah has provided all the means of livelihood but His bounty follows a particular mode in which there is never a jot of deviation. Thus Allah says:

> *And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down but in a known measure.* (Qur'an, 15:21)

If man's greed and avarice exceeds its bounds, then just as excess of rain ruins crops instead of growing and bringing them up, so the abundance of the article of livelihood and necessaries of life would make man

oblivious of Allah and rouse him to revolt and unruliness. Consequently, Allah says:

> *And should Allah amplify the sustenance unto his servants, they would certainly rebel in the earth, but He sendeth it down by measure as he willeth; Verily of His servants, He is All-aware, All-seeing*. (Qur'an, 42:27)

If He lessens the food then just as stoppage of rain makes the land arid and kills the animals, in the same way, by closure of the means of livelihood, human society would be destroyed and so there would remain no means of living and livelihood. Allah accordingly says:

> *Or who is that who can provide you with sustenance should He withhold His sustenance?*...(Qur'an, 67:21)

Consequently, Allah, the Wise the Omniscient has put the organisation for livelihood on moderate and proportionate lines, and in order to emphasise the importance of livelihood and sustenance and to keep them correlated with each other has introduced differences in the distribution of livelihood. Sometimes, this difference and unequal distribution owes itself to the difference of human effort and sometimes it is the consequence of overall arrangement of the affairs of the Universe and Divine acts of wisdom and objectives. This is because, if by poverty and want He has tested the poor in endurance and patience, in affluence and wealth there is severe test of the rich by way of thanks-giving and gratifying the rights of others, namely whether the rich person gratifies the claims of the poor and the distressed, and whether he takes care of the destitute or not. Again, where there is wealth there would also be dangers of all sorts. Sometimes there would be danger to the wealth and property and sometimes fear of poverty and want.

Consequently, there would be many persons who would be more satisfied and happy for lack of wealth. For them this destitution and want would be far better than the wealth which might snatch away their comfort and peace. Moreover sometimes this very wealth which one holds dearer than life becomes the cause of loss of one's life. Further, it has also been seen that so long as wealth was lacking character was above reproach, life was unblemished, but the moment property and wealth changed into plenty the conduct worsened, character became faulty and there appeared the vice of drink, crowd of beauties and gathering of singing and music. In such a case the absence of wealth was a blessing.

However, being ignorant of Allah's objectives, man cries out and being affected by transitory distress begins complaining but does not realise from how many vices which could have accrued owing to wealth he has remained aloof. Therefore, if wealth produces conveniences, poverty serves as a guard for the character.

(4). The eloquence with which Amir al-mu'minin has thrown light on Allah's attributes of knowledge and the sublime words in which he has pictured the all-engrossing quality of His knowledge cannot but impress the mind of the most die-hard opponent. Thus, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written:

> If Aristotle, who believed that Allah is only aware of the universe and not of its particulars, had heard this speech, his heart too would have inclined, his hair would have stood on end and his thinking would have undergone a dramatic change. Do you not see the brightness, force, vehemence, sublimity, glory, seriousness and ripeness of this speech? Besides these qualities, there is sweetness, colourfulness, delicacy and smoothness in it. I have not found any utterance similar to it. Of course, if there is any utterance matching it, that can be the word of Allah only. And there is no wonder in it, because he is an off-shoot of the same tree (of the Prophet Ibrahim, who set up the Unity of Allah), a distributory of the same river and a reflection of the same light. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol.7, pp. 23-24)

Those who regard Allah to possess only over-all knowledge argue that since details undergo changes, to believe Him to have knowledge of the changing details would necessitate changes in His knowledge but since knowledge is the same as His Being, His Being would have to be regarded as the object of change the result of which would be that He would have to be taken as having come into existence. In this way He would lose the attribute of being from ever. This is a very deceptive fallacy because changes in the object of knowledge can lead to changes in the knower only when it is assumed that the knower does not already possess knowledge of these changes. But since all the forms of change and alteration are crystal clear before Him there is no reason that with the changes in the objects of knowledge He too should be regarded changeable, although really this change is confined to the object of knowledge and does not affect knowledge in itself.

Chapter 99

SERMON 91

When people decided to Swear allegiance(1) at Amir al-mu'minin's hand after the murder of `Uthman, he said:

Leave me and seek some one else. We are facing a matter which has (several) faces and colours, which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky, and faces are not discernible. You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse. If you leave me then I am the same as you are. It is possible I would listen to and obey whomever you make in charge of your affairs. I am better for you as a counsellor than as chief.

(1). When with the murder of `Uthman the seat of Caliphate became vacant, Muslims began to look at `Ali (p.b.u.h.) whose peaceful conduct, adherence to principles, and *politia lacumen* had been witnessed by them to a great extent during this long period. Consequently, they rushed for swearing allegiance in the same way as a traveller who had lost his way and catches sight of the objective would have rushed towards it, as the historian at-Tabari (in *at-Tarikh*, vol .I, pp. 3066, 3067, 3076) records:

> People thronged on Amir al-mu'minin and said, "We want to swear allegiance to you and you see what troubles are befalling Islam and how we are being tried about the near ones of the Prophet."

But Amir al-mu'minin declined to accede to their request whereupon these people raised a hue and cry and began to shout loudly, "O' Abu'l-Hasan, do you not witness the ruination of Islam or see the advancing flood of unruliness and mischief? Do you have no fear of Allah?" Even then Amir al-mu'minin showed no readiness to consent because he was noticing that the effects of the atmosphere that had come into being after the Prophet had overcome hearts and minds of the people, selfishness

and lust for power had become rooted in them, their thinking affected by materialism and they had become habituated to treating government as the means for securing their ends. Now they would like to materialise the Divine Caliphate too and play with it. In these circumstances it would be impossible to change the mentalities or turn the direction of temperaments. In addition to these ideas he had also seen the end in view that these people should get further time to think over so that on frustration of their material ends hereafter they should not say that the allegiance had been sworn by them under a temporary expediency and that thought had not been given to it, just as `Umar's idea was about the first Caliphate, which appears from his statement that:

> Abu Bakr's Caliphate came into being without thought but Allah saved us from its mischief. If anyone repeats such an affair you should kill him. (*as-Sahih*, al-Bukhari, vol 8, pp.210, 211; *al-Musnad*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol.1, p.55; at-Tabari, vol.1, p.l822; Ibn al-Athir, vol.2, p.327; Ibn Hisham, vol.4, pp.308-309; Ibn Kathir, vol.5, p.246)

In short, when their insistence increased beyond limits, Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon wherein he clarified that "If you want me for your worldly ends, then I am not ready to serve as your instrument. Leave me and select someone else who may fulfil your ends. You have seen my past life that I am not prepared to follow anything except the Qur'an and *sunnah* and would not give up this principle for securing power. If you select someone else I would pay regard to the laws of the state and the constitution as a peaceful citizen should do. I have not at any stage tried to disrupt the collective existence of the Muslims by inciting revolt. The same will happen now. Rather, just as keeping the common good in view I have hitherto been giving correct advice, I would not grudge doing the same. If you let me in the same position it would be better for your worldly ends, because in that case I won't have power in my hands so that I could stand in the way of your worldly affairs, and create an impediment against your hearts' wishes. However, if you are determined on swearing allegiance on my hand, bear in mind that if you frown or speak against me I would force you to tread on the path of right, and in the matter of the right I would not care for anyone. If you want to swear allegiance even at this, you can satisfy your wish."

The impression Amir al-mu'minin had formed about these people is fully corroborated by later events. Consequently, when those who had

sworn allegiance with worldly motives did not succeed in their objectives they broke away and rose against his government with baseless allegations.

Chapter 100

SERMON 92 (l)

About the annihilation of the Kharijites, the mischief mongering of Umayyads and the vastness of his own knowledge

So now, 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.

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

When mischief 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 no minaret of guidance nor any sign (of salvation) to be seen. We *Ahlu'l-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.

(1). Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon after the battle of Nahrawan. In it, mischief imply the battles fought in Basrah, Siffin and Nahrawan because their nature was different from the battles of the Prophet. There the opposite party were 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 worships 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.l39,140; *ad-Durr*

al-manthur, vol.6, p.l8; 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.l103; Ibn al-Athir in *Usd al-ghabah*, vol.4, p.22; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid in *Sharh Nahj al-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.

Chapter 101

SERMON 93

Allah's praise and eulogy of the prophets

Exalted is Allah Whom heights of daring cannot approach and fineness of intelligence cannot find. He is such First that there is no extremity for Him so that He be contained within it, nor is there an end for Him where would cease.

A part of the same sermon about the Prophet

Allah kept the Prophets in deposit in the best place of deposit and made them stay in the best place of stay. He moved them in succession from distinguished fore-fathers to chaste wombs. Whenever a predecessor from among them died the follower stood up for the cause of the religion of Allah.

About the Holy Prophet and his Descendants (`Itrah)

Until this distinction of Allah, the Glorified, reached Muhammad - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants. Allah brought him out from the most distinguished sources of origin and the most honourable places of planting, namely from the same (lineal) tree from which He brought forth other Prophets and from which He selected His trustees. Muhammad's descendants are the best descendants, his kinsmen the best of kin and his lineal tree the best of trees. It grew in esteem and rose in distinction. It has tall branches and unapproachable fruits.

He is the leader (Imam) of all who exercise fear (of Allah) and a light for those who seek guidance. He is a lamp whose flame is burning, a meteor whose light is shining and a flint whose spark is bright. His conduct is upright, his behaviour is guiding, his speech is decisive and his decision is just. Allah sent him after an interval from the previous Prophets when people had fallen into errors of action and ignorance. Allah may have mercy on you.

May Allah shower His mercy on you ! Do act according to the clear signs, because the way is straight and leads to the house of safety while you are in the place of seeking Allah's favour, and have time and opportunity. The books (of your doings) are open and pens (of angels) are busy (to record your actions) while your bodies are healthy, tongues are free, repentance is accepted and deeds are accorded recognition.

Chapter 102

SERMON 94

About the condition of the people at the time of the Prophet's proclamation and his actions to do with the dissemination of his message

Allah sent the Prophet at a time when the people were going astray in perplexity and were moving here and there in mischief. Desires had deflected them and self-conceit had swerved them. Extreme ignorance had made them foolish. They were confounded by the unsteadiness of matters and the evils of ignorance. Then the Prophet - blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - did his best in giving them sincere advice, himself trod on the right path and called (them) towards wisdom and good counsel.

Chapter 103

SERMON 95

In eulogy of the Holy Prophet

Praise be to Allah who is such First that nothing is before Him and such Last that there is nothing after Him. He is such Manifest that there is nothing above Him and such Hidden that there is nothing nearer than He.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet

His place of stay is the best of all places and his origin the noblest of all origins in the mines of honour and the cradles of safety. Hearts of virtuous persons have been inclined towards him and the reins of eyes have been turned towards him. Through him Allah buried mutual rancour and put off the flames of revolt. Through him He gave them affection like brothers and separated those who were together (through unbelief). Through him He gave honour to the low and degraded honour (of unbelief). His speaking is clear and his silence is (indicative) like tongue.

Chapter 104

SERMON 96 (1)

Admonishing his own companions

Although Allah gives time to the oppressor, His catch would not spare him. Allah watches him on the passage of his way and the position of that which suffocates the throats.

By Allah in Whose power my life lies, these people (Mu`awiyah and his men) will overcome you not because they have a better right than you but because of their hastening towards the wrong with their leader and your slowness about my right (to be followed). People are afraid of the oppression of their rulers while I fear the oppression of my subjects.

I called you for war but you did not come. I warned you but you did not listen. I called you secretly as well as openly, but you did not respond. I gave you sincere counsel, but you did not accept it. Are you present like the absent, and slaves like masters? I recite before you points of wisdom but you turn away from them, and I advise you with far reaching advice but you disperse away from it. I rouse you for *jihad* against the people of revolt but before I come to the end of my speech, I see you disperse like the sons of Saba.(2) You return to your places and deceive one another by your counsel. I straighten you in the morning but you are back to me in the evening as curved as the back of a bow. The sraightener has become weary while those to be straightened have become incorrigible.

O' those whose bodies are present but wits are absent, and whose wishes are scattered. Their rulers are on trial. Your leader obeys Allah but you disobeyed him while the leader of the people of Syria (ash-Sham) disobeys Allah but they obey him. By Allah, I wish Mu`awiyah exchanges with me like Dinars with Dirhams, so that he takes from me ten of you and gives me one from them.

O' people of Kufah, I have experienced in you three things and two others: you are deaf in spite of having ears, dumb in spite of speaking, and blind in spite of having eyes. You are neither true supporters in

combat nor dependable brothers in distress. Your hands may be soiled with earth. O' examples of those camels whose herdsman has disappeared, if they are collected together from one side they disperse from the other. By Allah, I see you in my imagination that if war becomes intense and action is in full swing you would run away from the son of Abi Talib like the woman who becomes naked in the front. I am certainly on clear guidance from my Lord (Allah) and on the path of my Prophet and I am on the right path which I adhere to regularly.

About the Household of the Holy Prophet

Look at the people of the Prophet's family. Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they would never let you out of guidance, and never throw you into destruction. If they sit down, you sit down, and if they rise up you rise up. Do not go ahead of them, as you would thereby go astray and go not lag behind of them as you would thereby be ruined.

I have seen the companions of the Prophet but I do not find anyone resembling them. They began the day with dust on the hair and face (in hardship of life) and passed the night in prostration and standing in prayers. Sometimes they put down their foreheads and sometimes their cheeks. With the recollection of their resurrection it seemed as though they stood on live coal. It seemed that in between their eyes there were signs like knees of goats, resulting from long prostrations. When Allah was mentioned their eyes flowed freely till their shirt collars were drenched. They trembled for fear of punishment and hope of reward as the tree trembles on the day of stormy wind.

(1).In the atmosphere that had been created soon after the Prophet the *Ahlu'l-bayt* (members of his family) had no course except to remain secluded as a result of which world has remained ignorant of their real qualities and unacquainted with their teachings and attainments, and to belittle them and keeping them away from authority has been considered as the greatest service to Islam. If `Uthman's open misdeeds had not given a chance to the Muslims to wake up and open their eyes there would have been no question of allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin and temporal authority would have retained the same course as it had so far followed. But all those who could be named for the purpose had no courage to come forward because of their own shortcomings while Mu`awiyah was sitting in his capital away from the centre. In these circumstances there was none except Amir al-mu'minin who could be

looked at. Consequently people's eyes hovered around him and the same common people who, following the direction of the wind, had been swearing allegiance to others jumped at him for swearing allegiance. Nevertheless, this allegiance was not on the count that they regarded his Caliphate as from Allah and him as an Imam (Divine Leader) to obey whom was obligatory. It was rather under their own principles which were known as democratic or consultative. However, there was one group who was swearing allegiance to him as a religious obligation regarding his Caliphate as determined by Allah. Otherwise, the majority regarded him a ruler like the other Caliphs, and as regards precedence, on the fourth position, or at the level of the common men after the three caliphs. Since the people, the army, and the civil servants had been impressed by the beliefs and actions of the previous rulers and immersed in their ways whenever they found anything against their liking they fretted and frowned, evaded war and were ready to rise in disobedience and revolt. Further, just as among those who fought in*jihad* with the Prophet there were some seekers of this world and others of the next world, in the same way here too there was no dearth of worldly men who were, in appearance, with Amir al-mu'minin but actually they had connections with Mu`awiyah who has promised some of them positions and had extended to others temptation of wealth. To hold them as Shi`ahs of Amir al-mu'minin and to blame Shi`ism for this reason is closing the eyes to facts, because the beliefs of these people would be the same as of those who regarded Amir al-mu'minin fourth in the series. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid throws light on the beliefs of these persons in clear words:

> Whoever observes minutely the events during the period of Caliphate of Amir al-mu'minin would know that Amir al-mu'minin had been brought to bay because those who knew his real position were very few, and the swarming majority did not bear that belief about him which was obligatory to have. They gave precedence to the previous Caliphs over him and held that the criterion of precedence was Caliphate, and in this matter those coming later followed the predecessors, and argued that if the predecessors had not the knowledge that the previous Caliphs had precedence over Amir al-mu'minin they would not have preferred them to him. Rather, these people knew and took Amir al-mu'minin as a citizen and subject. Most of those who fought in his company did so on grounds of prestige or Arab partisanship,

not on the ground of religion or belief. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah,* vol.7, p.72)

(2). The progeny of Saba' ibn Yashjub ibn Ya`rub ibn Qahtan is known as the tribe of Saba'. When these people began to falsify prophets then to shake them Allah sent to them a flood of water by which their gardens were submerged and they left their houses and property to settle down in different cities. This proverb arose out of this event and it is now applied wherever people so disperse that there can be no hope of their joining together again.

Chapter 105

SERMON 97

Oppression of the Umayyads

By Allah, they would continue like this till there would be left no unlawful act before Allah but they would make it lawful and no pledge but they would break it, and till there would remain no house of bricks or of woollen tents but their oppression would enter it. Their bad dealings would make them wretched, till two groups of crying complainants would rise, one would cry for his religion and the other for this world and the help of one of you to one of them would be like the help of a slave to his master, namely when he is present he obeys him, but when the master is away he backbites him. The highest among you in distress would be he who bear best belief about Allah. If Allah grants you safety accept it, and if you are put in trouble endure it, because surely (good) result is for the God-fearing.

Chapter 106

SERMON 98

About abstinence of the world and vicissitudes of time

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.

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.

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 misfortunate because its honour and pride would end while its beauty and bounty would perish, and its damages and misfortunes would 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?

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.

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.

Chapter 107

SERMON 99

About the Holy Prophet and his Descendants

Praise be to Allah Who spreads His bounty throughout the creation, and extends His hand of generosity among them. We praise Him in all His affairs and seek His assistance for fulfilment of His rights. We stand witness that there is no god except He and that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) is His slave and Prophet. He sent him to manifest His commands and speak about His remembrance. Consequently, he fulfilled it with trustworthiness, and he passed away while on the right path.

He left among us the standard of right. Whoever goes further from it goes out of Faith, whoever lags behind it is ruined. Whoever sticks to it would join (the right). Its guide is short of speech, slow of steps, and quick when he rises. When you have bent your necks before him and pointed towards him with your fingers his death would occur and would take him away. They would live after him as long as Allah wills, till Allah brings out for you one who would collect you together and fuse you after diffusion. Do not place expectations in one who does not(1) come forward and do not lose hope in one who is veiled, because it is possible that one of the two feet of the veiled one may slip while the other may remain sticking, till both return to position and stick.

Beware! The example of the descendant (Al) of Muhammad - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - is like that of stars in the sky. When one star sets another one rises. So you are in a position that Allah's blessings on you have been perfected and He has shown you what you used to wish for.

(1). The implication is that if for the time being your expectations are not being fulfilled, you should not be disappointed. It is possible matters may improve, the impediments in the way of improvement may be removed and matters may be settled as you wish.

Chapter 108

SERMON 100

About the vicissitudes of time

He (Allah) is the First before every first and the Last after every last. His Firstness necessitates that there is no (other) first before Him and His Lastness necessitates that there is no other last after Him. I do stand witness that there is no god but Allah both openly as well as secretly, with heart as well as with tongue.

O' people, do not commit the crime of opposing me, do not be seduced into disobeying me and do not wink at each other with eyes when you hear me. By Allah, Who germinates the seed and blows the wind, whatever I convey to you is from the Prophet. Neither the conveyor (of Allah's message, i.e. the Prophet) lied nor the hearer misunderstood.

Well, it is as though I see a misguided man(1) who is shouting in Syria (ash-Sham) and has put his banners in the out-skirt of Kufah. When his mouth would be fully opened, his recalcitrance would become intense and his steps on earth would become heavy (and tyrannical) then the disorder (so created) would cut the people with its teeth and war would rage with (all) its waves, days would become severe and night full of toil. So when the crops grows and stands on stalks, its foam shoots forth and its lightning shines, the banners of misguiding rebellion would fire up and shoot forth like darkening night and surging sea. This and how many other storms would rend Kufah and gales would sweep over it, and shortly heads would clash with heads, the standing crop would be harvested and the harvest would be smashed.

(1). Some people have taken this to refer to Mu`awiyah and others to `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan.

Chapter 109

SERMON 101

On the same subject - Day of Judgement

That day would be such that Allah would collect on it the anteriors and the posteriors, to stand in obedience for exaction of accounts and for award of recompense for deeds. Sweat would flow upto their mouths like reins while the earth would be trembling under them. In the best condition among them would be he who has found a resting place for both his feet and an open place for his breath.

A part of the same sermon about future troubles (fitan)

The troubles are like a dark night. Horses would not stand for (facing) them nor would their banners turn back. They would approach in full reins and ready with saddles. Their leader would be driving them and the rider would be exerting (them). The trouble-mongers are a people whose attacks are severe. Those who would fight them for the sake of Allah would be a people who are low in the estimation of the proud, unknown in the earth but well known on the sky. Woe to you O' Basrah, when an army of Allah's infliction would face upon you without (raising) dust of cries. Your inhabitants would then face bloody death and dire hunger.

Chapter 110

SERMON 102

About abstemiousness and fear of Allah

O' people! look at the world like those who abstain from it, and turn away from it. By Allah, it would shortly turn out its inhabitants and cause grief to the happy and the safe. That which turns and goes away from it never returns and that which is likely to come about is not known or anticipated. Its joy is mingled with grief. Herein men's firmness inclines towards weakness and languidness. The majority of what pleases you here should not mislead you because that which would help you would be little.

Allah may shower His mercy on him who ponders and takes lesson thereby, and when he takes lesson he achieves enlightenment. Whatever is present in this world would shortly not exist, while whatever is to exist in the next world is already in existence. Every countable thing would pass away. Every anticipation should be taken to be coming up and every thing that is to come up should be taken as just near.

A part of the same sermon on the attributes of a learned person

Learned is he who knows his worth. It is enough for a man to remain ignorant if he knows not his worth. Certainly, the most hated man with Allah is he whom Allah has left for his own self. He goes astray from the right path, and moves without a guide. If he is called to the plantation of this world he is active, but if he is called to the plantation of the next world he is slow. As though what he is active for is obligatory upon him whereas in whatever he is slow was not required of him.

A part of the same sermon concerning future times

There would be a time wherein only a sleeping (inactive) believer would be safe (such that) if he is present he is not recognised but if he is absent he is not sought after. These are the lamps of guidance and banners of night journeys. They do not spread calumnies nor divulge

secrets, nor slander. They are those for whom Allah would open the doors of His mercy and keeps off from them the hardships of His chastisement.

O' people ! a time will come to you when Islam would be capsized as a pot is capsized with all its contents. O' people, Allah has protected you from that He might be hard on you but He has not spared you from being put on trial. Allah the Sublimest of all speakers has said:

Verily in this are signs and We do only try (the people). (Qur'an, 23:30)

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: As regards Amir al-mu'minin's words *"kullu mu'minin nuwamah"* (every sleeping believer), he implies thereby one who is talked of little and causes no evil. And the word *"al-masayih"* is the plural of *"misyah"*. He is one who spreads trouble among people through evils and calumnies. And the word *"al-madhayi"* is the plural of *"midhya"*. He is one who on hearing of an evil about some one spreads it and shouts about it. And *"al-budhur"* is the plural of *"badhur"*. He is one who excels in foolishness and speaks rubbish.

Chapter 111

SERMON 103

About the condition of the people before the proclamation of prophethood and the Prophet's performance in spreading his message

So now, certainly Allah deputised Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) as the Prophet while no one among the Arabs read the Book nor claimed prophethood or revelation. He had to fight those who disobeyed him in company with those who followed him, leading them towards their salvation and hastening with them lest death overtook them. When any weary person sighed or a distressed one stopped he stood at him till he got him his aim, except the worst in whom there was not virtue at all. Eventually he showed them their goal and carried them to their places (of deliverance). Consequently, their affairs moved on and their hand-mill began to rotate (i.e. position gained strength), their spears got straightened.

By Allah, I was among their rear-guard till they turned back on their sides and were flocked in their rope. I never showed weakness or lack of courage, nor did I betray or become languid. By Allah, I shall split the wrong till I extract right from its flanks.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: I have quoted a selected part of this sermon before, but since I have found in the narration that this part differs from the previous one, more or less, I deemed it necessary to quote it again here.

Chapter 112

SERMON 104

In eulogy of the Holy Prophet

Then Allah deputised Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) as a witness, giver of good tidings and warner, the best in the universe as a child and the most chaste as a grown up man, the purest of the purified in conduct, the most generous of those who are approached for generosity.

About the Ummayads

This world did not appear sweet to you in its pleasures and you did not secure milk from its udders except after having met it when its nose-rein was trailing and its leather girth was loose. For certain people its unlawful items were like bent branches (laden with fruit) while its lawful items were far away, not available. By Allah, you would find it like a long shade upto a fixed time. So the earth is with you without let or hindrance and your hands in it are extended while the hands of the leaders are held away from you. Your swords are hanging over them while their swords are held away from you.

Beware that for every blood (that is shed) there is an avenger and for every right there is a claimant. The avenger for our blood is like the judge for his own claim, and it is Allah who is such that if one seeks Him, then He does not disappoint him, and one who runs away from Him cannot escape Him. I swear by Allah, O' Banu Umayyah, shortly you will see it (i.e. your possession) in the hands of others and in the house of your enemy. Know that the best looking eye is that whose sight catches virtue and know that the best hearing ear is that which hears good advice and accepts it.

About the functions of the Imams

O' people, secure light from the flame of lamps of the preacher who follows what he preaches and draw water from the spring which has been cleaned of dirt.

O' creatures of Allah, do not rely on your ignorance, do not be obedient to your desires, because he who stays at this place is like one who stays on the brink of a bank undermined by water carrying ruin on his back from one portion to the other following his opinion which he changes (one after the other). He wants to make adhere what cannot adhere and to bring together what cannot keep together. So fear Allah and do not place your complaints before him who cannot redress your grievance, nor undo with his opinion what has been made obligatory for you.

Certainly, there is no obligation on the Imam except what has been devolved on him from Allah, namely to convey warnings, to exert in good advice, to revive the *sunnah*, to enforce penalties on those liable to them and to issue shares to the deserving. So hasten towards knowledge before its vegetation dries up and before you turn yourselves away from seeking knowledge from those who have it. Desist others from the unlawful and abstain from it yourself, because you have been commanded to abstain (yourself) before abstaining (others).

Chapter 113

SERMON 105

About Islam

Praise be to Allah who established Islam and made it easy for those who approach it and gave strength to its columns against any one who tries to overpower it. So Allah made it (a source of) peace for him who clings to it, safety for him who enters it, argument for him who speaks about it, witness for him who fights with its help, light for him who seeks light from it, understanding for him who provides it, sagacity for him who exerts, a sign (of guidance) for him who perceives, sight for him who resolves, lesson for him who seeks advice, salvation for him who testifies, confidence for him who trusts, pleasure for him who entrusts, and shield for him who endures.

It is the most bright of all paths, the clearest of all passages. It has dignified minarets, bright highways, burning laps, prestigious field of activity, and high objective. It has a collection of race horses. It is approached eagerly. Its riders are honourable. Testimony (of Allah, Prophet etc.) is its way, good deeds are its minarets, death is its extremity, this world is its race-course, the Day of Judgement is its horses and Paradise is its point of approach.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet

The Prophet lighted flames for the seeker and put bright signs for the impeded. So he is Thy trustworthy trustee, Thy witness on the Day of Judgement, Thy deputy as a blessing and Thy messenger of truth as mercy. My Allah distribute to him a share from Thy Justice and award him multiples of good by Thy bounty. My Allah heighten his construction over the constructions of others, honour him when he comes to Thee, dignify his position before Thee, give him honourable position, and award him glory and distinction, and bring us out (on the Day of Judgement) among his party, neither ashamed, nor repentant, nor deviators, nor pledge-breakers, nor strayers, nor misleaders. nor seduced.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: This sermon had already appeared earlier but we have repeated it here because of the difference between the two versions.

A part of the same sermon addressed to his followers

By bounty of Allah over you, you have acquired a position where even your slave maids are honoured, your neighbours are treated well. Even he over whom you enjoy no distinction or obligation honours you. Even those people fear you who had no apprehension of attack from you or any authority over you. You now see pledges to Allah being broken but do not feel enraged although you fret and frown on the breaking of the traditions of your forefathers. Allah's matters have been coming to you, and going from and again coming back to you; but you have made over your place to wrong-doers and thrown towards them your responsibilities, and have placed Allah's affairs in their hands. They act in doubts and tread in (fulfilment of) desires. By Allah, even if they disperse you under every star Allah would surely collect you on the day that would be worst for them.

Chapter 114

SERMON 106

Delivered during one of the days of Siffin

I have seen your flight and your dispersal from the lines. You were surrounded by rude and low people and Bedouins of Syria (ash-Sham), although you are the chiefs of Arabs and summit of distinction, and possess dignity as that of the high nose and big hump of the camel. The sigh of my bosom can subside only when I eventually see you surrounding them as they surrounded you, and see you dislodging them from their position as they dislodged you, killing them with arrows and striking them with spears so that their forward rows might fall on the rear ones just like the thirsty camels who have been turned away from their place of drink and removed from their water-points.

Chapter 115

SERMON 107

It is one of the sermons about the vicissitudes of time

Praise be to Allah Who is Manifest before His creation because of themselves. Who is apparent to their hearts because of clear proof; Who created without meditating, since meditating does not befit except one who has thinking organs while He has no thinking organ in Himself. His knowledge has split forth the inside of unknown secrets and covered the bottom of deep beliefs.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet

Allah chose him from the lineal tree of prophets, from the flame of light, from the forehead of greatness, from the best part of the valley of al-Bat'ha', from the lamps for darkness, and from the sources of wisdom.

A part of the same sermon

The Prophet was like a roaming physician who has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence and places of perplexity.

Blaming Muslims

They (people) did not take light from the lights of his wisdom nor did they produce flame from the flint of sparkling knowledge . So in this matter they are like grazing cattle and hard stones. Nevertheless, hidden things have appeared for those who perceive, the face of right has become clear for the wanderer, the approaching moment has raised the veil from its face and signs have appeared for those who search for them.

What is the matter with me! I see you just bodies without spirits and spirits without bodies, devotees without good, traders without profits, wakeful but sleeping, present but unseen, seeing but blind, hearing but deaf and speaking but dumb.

I notice that misguidance has stood on its centre and spread (all round) through its off-shoots. It weighs you with its weights and confuses you with its measures. Its leader is an out-cast from the community. He persists on misguidance. So on that day none from among you would remain except as the sediment in a cooking pot or the dust left after dusting a bundle. It would scrape you as leather is scraped, and trample you as harvest is trampled, and pick out the believer as a bird picks out a big grain from the thin grain.

Where are these ways taking you, gloom misleading you, and falsehoods deceiving you? Whence are you brought and where are you driven? For every period there is a written document and everyone who is absent has to return. So listen to your godly leader and keep your hearts present. If he speaks to you be wakeful. The forerunner must speak truth to his people, should keep his wits together and maintain presence of mind. He has clarified to you the matter as the stitch-hole is cleared, and scraped it as the gum is scraped (from the twigs).

Nevertheless, now the wrong has set itself on its places and ignorance has ridden on its riding beasts. Unruliness has increased while the call for virtue is suppressed. Time has pounced upon like a devouring carnivore, and wrong is shouting like a camel after remaining silent. People have become brothers over ill-doings. have forsaken religion, are united in speaking lie but bear mutual hatred in the matter of truth.

When such is the case, the son would be a source of anger (instead of coolness of the eye to parents) and rain the cause of heat, the wicked would abound and the virtuous would diminish. The people of this time would be wolves, its rulers beasts, the middle class men gluttons and the poor (almost) dead. Truth would go down, falsehood would overflow, affection would be claimed with tongues but people would be quarrelsome at heart. Adultery would be the key to lineage while chastity would be rare and Islam would be worn overturned like the skin.

Chapter 116

SERMON 108

About the Might of Allah

Everything submits to Him and everything exists by Him. He is the satisfaction of every poor, dignity of the low, energy for the weak and shelter for the oppressed. Whoever speaks, He hears his speaking, and whoever keeps quiet, He knows his secret. On Him is the livelihood of everyone who lives, and to Him returns whoever dies.

(O' Allah!) The eyes have not seen Thee so as to be aware of Thee, but Thou wert before the describers of Thy creation. Thou didst not create the creation on account of loneliness, nor didst make them work for gain. He whom Thou catchest cannot go farther than Thee, and he whom Thou holdest cannot escape Thee. He who disobeys Thee does not decrease Thy authority, and he who obeys Thee does not add to Thy Might. He who disagrees with Thy judgement cannot turn it, and he who turns away from Thy command cannot do without Thee. Every secret before Thee is open and for Thee every absent is present.

Thou art everlasting, there is no end to Thee. Thou art the highest aim, there is no escape from Thee, Thou art the promised (point of return) from which there is no deliverance except towards Thee. In Thy hand is the forelock of every creature and to Thee is the return of every living being. Glory to Thee! How great is Thy creation that we see, but how small is this greatness by the side of Thy Might. How awe-striking is Thy realm that we notice, but how humble is this against what is hidden from us out of Thy authority. How extensive are Thy bounties in this world, but how small are they against the bounties of the next world.

A part of the same sermon about the Angels

Thou (O' Allah) made angels reside in Thy skies and place them high above from Thy earth. They have the most knowledge about Thee and Thy whole creation, the most fearing from Thee, and the nearest to Thee. They never stayed in loins nor were retained in wombs. They were not

created "*from mean water* (semen)" (Qur'an , 32:8; 77:20). They were not dispersed by vicissitudes of time. They are on their places (distinct) from Thee and in their positions near Thee. Their desires are concentrated in Thee. Their worship for Thee is much. Their neglect from Thy command is little. If they witness what remains hidden about Thee they would regard their deeds as very little, they would criticise themselves and would realise that they did not worship Thee according to Thy right for being worshipped and did not obey Thee as Thou hast the right of being obeyed.

About the bounties and guidance of Allah, and those who are ungrateful

Glorified art Thou, the Creator, the Worshipped, on account of Thy good trials of Thy creatures. Thou created a house (the Paradise) and provided in it for feasting, drinks, foods, spouses, servants, places, streams, plantations and fruits. Then Thou sent a messenger to invite towards it, but the people did not respond to the caller, and did not feel persuaded to what Thou persuaded them nor showed eagerness towards what Thou desired them to feel eager. They jumped on the carcass (of this world), earned shame by eating it and became united on loving it.

When one loves a thing it blinds him and sickens his heart. Then he sees but with a diseased eye, hears but with unhearing ears. Desires have cut asunder his wit, and the world has made his heart dead, while his mind is all longing for it. Consequently, he is a slave of it and of everyone who has any share in it. Wherever it turns, he turns towards it and wherever it proceeds, he proceeds towards it. He is not desisted by any desister from Allah, nor takes admonition from any preacher. He sees those who have been caught in neglect whence there is neither rescission nor reversion.

About Death

Whatever they were ignoring has befallen them, separation from this world, from which they took themselves safe, has come to them and they have reached that in the next world which they had been promised. Whatever has befallen them cannot be described. Pangs of death and grief for losing (this world) have surrounded them. Consequently, their limbs become languid and their complexion changes. Then death increases its struggle over them.

In some one it stands in between him and his power of speaking although he lies among his people, looking with eyes, hearing with his

ears, with full wits and intelligence. He then thinks over how he wasted his life and in what (activities) he passed his time. He recalls the wealth he collected when he had blinded himself in seeking it, and acquired it from fair and foul sources. Now the consequences of collecting it have overtaken him. He gets ready to leave it. It would remain for those who are behind him. They would enjoy it and benefit by it.

It would be an easy acquisition for others but a burden on his back, and the man cannot get rid of it. He would thereupon bite his hands with teeth out of shame for what was disclosed to him about his affairs at the time of his death. He would dislike what he coveted during the days of his life and would wish that he who envied him on account of it and felt jealous over him for it should have amassed it instead of he himself.

Death would go on affecting his body till his ears too would behave like his tongue (and lose functioning). So he would lie among his people, neither speaking with his tongue or hearing with his ears. He would be rotating his glance over their faces, watching the movements of their tongues, but not hearing their speaking. Then death would increase its sway over him, and his sight would be taken by death as the ears had been taken and the spirit would depart from his body. He would then become a carcass among his own people. They would feel loneliness from him and get away from near him. He would not join a mourner or respond to a caller. Then they would carry him to a small place in the ground and deliver him in it to (face) his deeds. They abandoned visiting him.

About the Day of Judgement

Till whatever is written as ordained approaches its end, the affairs complete their destined limits, the posteriors join the anteriors and whatever Allah wills takes place in the shape of resurrection of His creation. Then He would convulse the sky and split it. He would quake the earth and shake it. He would root out the mountains and scatter them. They would crush each other out of awe of His Glory and fear of His Dignity.

He would take out everyone who is in it. He would refresh them after they had been worn out and collect them after they had been separated. Then He would set them apart for questioning about the hidden deeds and secret acts. He would then divide them into two groups, rewarding one and punishing the other. As regards the obedient people He would reward them with His nearness and would keep them for ever in His house from where those who settle therein do not move out. Their

position would not undergo change, fear would not overtake them, ailments would not befall them, dangers would not affect them and journey would not force them (from place to place).

As for people of sins, He would settle them in the worst place, would bind their hands with the necks, bind the forelocks with feet and would clothe them in shirts of tar and dresses cut out of flames. They would be in punishment whose heat would be severe, door would be closed on the inmates - in fire which is full of shouts and cries and rising flames and fearful voices. Its inmate does not move out of it. its prisoner cannot be released by ransom and its shackles cannot be cut. There is no fixed age for this house so that it might perish, nor period for its life that might pass away.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet

He treated this world disdainfully and regarded it low. He held it contemptible and hated it. He realised that Allah kept it away from him with intention and spread it out for others by way of contempt. Therefore, he remained away from it by his heart, banished its recollection from his mind and wished that its attraction should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not acquire any clothing from it, or hope for staying in it. He conveyed from Allah the pleas (against committing sins), counselled his people as a warner (against Divine chastisement) and called (people) towards Paradise as a conveyor of good tidings.

About the Descendants of the Holy Prophet

We are the tree of prophethood, staying place of (Divine) Message, descending place of angels, mines of knowledge and the sources of wisdom. Our supporter and lover awaits mercy while our enemy and he who hates us awaits wrath.

Chapter 117

SERMON 109

About Islam

The best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah, the Glorified, the Exalted, seek nearness, is the belief in Him and His Prophet, fighting in His cause, for it is the high pinnacle of Islam, and (to believe) in the *kalimatu'l-'ikhlas* (the expression of Divine purification) for it is just nature and the establishment of prayer for it is (the basis of) community, payment of *zakat* (Islamic tax) for it is a compulsory obligation, fasting for the month of *Ramadan* for it is the shield against chastisement, the performance of *hajj* of the House of Allah (i. e . Ka`bah) and its *`umrah* (other than annual visit) for these two acts banish poverty and wash away sins, regard for kinship for it increases wealth and length of life, to giving alms secretly for it covers shortcomings, giving alms openly for it protects against a bad death and extending benefits (to people) for it saves from positions of disgrace.

About the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah

Go ahead with the remembrance of Allah for it is the best remembrance, and long for that which He has promised to the pious, for His promise is the most true promise. Tread the course of the Prophet for it is the most distinguished course. Follow the *sunnah* of the Prophet for it is the most right of all behaviours. Learn the Qur'an for it is the fairest of discourses and understand it thoroughly for it is the best blossoming of hearts. Seek cure with its light for it is the cure for hearts. Recite it beautifully for it is the most beautiful narration. Certainly, a scholar who acts not according to his knowledge is like the off-headed ignorant who does not find relief from his ignorance, but on the learned the plea of Allah is greater and grief more incumbent, and he is more blameworthy before Allah.

Chapter 118

SERMON 110

Caution about this world

So now, certainly I frighten you from this world for it is sweet and green, surrounded by lusts, and liked for its immediate enjoyments. It excites wonder with small things, is ornamented with (false) hopes and decorated with deception. Its rejoicing does not last and its afflictions cannot be avoided. It is deceitful, harmful, changing, perishable, exhaustible, liable to destruction, eating away and destructive. When it reaches the extremity of desires of those who incline towards it and feel happy with it, the position is just what Allah, the Glorified, says (in the Qur'an):

> *… like the water which send We down from heaven, and the herbage of the earth mingleth with it, then it becometh dry stubble which the winds scatter; for Allah over all things hath power.* (18:45)

No person gets rejoicing from this world but tears come to him after it, and no one gets its comforts in the front but he has to face hardships in the rear. No one receives the light rain of ease in it but the heavy rain of distress pours upon him. It is just worthy of this world that in the morning it supports a man but in the evening it does not recognise him. If one side of it is sweet and pleasant the other side is bitter and distressing.

No one secures enjoyment from its freshness but he has to face hardship from its calamities. No one would pass the evening under the wing of safety but that his morning would be under the feathers of the wing-tip of fear. It is deceitful, and all that is there in it is deception. It is perishable and all that is on it is to perish. There is no good in its provisions except in piety. Whoever takes little from it collects much of what would give him safety, while one who takes much from it takes much of what would ruin him. He would shortly depart from his collection. How many people relied on it but it distressed them; (how many) felt peaceful with it but it tumbled them down; how many were prestigious but it

made them low and how many were proud but it made them disgraceful.

Its authority is changing. Its life is dirty. Its sweet water is bitter. Its sweetness is like myrrh. Its foods are poisons. Its means are weak. The living in it is exposed to death; the healthy in it is exposed to disease. Its realm is (liable to be) snatched away. The strong in it is (liable to be) defeated and the rich is (liable to be) afflicted with misfortune. The neighbour in it is (liable to be) plundered.

Are you not (residing) in the houses of those before you, who were of longer ages, better traces, had bigger desires, were more in numbers and had greater armies. How they devoted themselves to the world and how they showed preference to it! Then they left it without any provision that could convey them through, or the back (of a beast for riding) to carry them.

Did you get the news that the world was ever generous enough to present ransom for them, or gave them any support or afforded them good company? It rather inflicted them with troubles, made them languid with calamities, molested them with catastrophes, threw them down on their noses, trampled them under hoofs and helped the vicissitudes of time against them. You have observed its strangeness towards those who went near it, acquired it and appropriated it, till they depart from it for good. Did it give them any provision other than starvation or make them stay in other than narrow places, or give them light other than gloom, or give them in the end anything other than repentance? Is this what you much ask for or remain satisfied with, or towards which you feel greedy? How bad is this abode for him who did not suspect it (to be so) and did not entertain fear from it?

You should know as you do know, that you have to leave it and depart from it. While in it, take lesson from those *"who proclaimed 'who is more powerful than we'"* (Qur'an , 41 :15) but they were carried to their graves, though not as riders. They were then made to stay in the graves, but not as guests. Graves were made for them from the surface of the ground. Their shrouds were made from earth. Old bones were made their neighbour. They are neighbours who do not answer a caller nor ward off trouble, nor pay heed to a mourner.

If they get rain they do not feel happy, and if they face famine they do not get disappointed. They are together but each one apart. They are close together but do not see each other. They are near but do not meet. They are enduring and have no hatred. They are ignorant and their malice has died away. There is no fear of trouble from them and no hope

of their warding off (troubles). They have exchanged the back (surface) of the earth with its stomach (interior), vastness with narrowness, family with loneliness, and light with darkness. They have come to it (this world) as they had left it with bare feet and naked bodies. They departed from it with their acts towards the continuing life and everlasting house as Allah has said:

> *… As We caused the first creation, so will We get it return.* (It is*) a promise binding Us, verily We were doing it.* (Qur'an , 21 :104)

Chapter 119

SERMON 111

About the Angel of Death and depart of spirit

Do you feel when the Angel of Death enters a house, or do you see him when he takes out life of anyone? How does he take out the life of an embryo in the womb of his mother? Does he reach it through any part of her body or the spirit responded to his call with the permission of Allah? Or does he stay with him in the mother's interior? How can he who is unable to describe a creature like this, describe Allah?

Chapter 120

SERMON 112

About this world and its people

I warn you of the world for it is the abode of the unsteady. It is not a house for foraging. It has decorated itself with deception and deceives with its decoration. It is a house which is low before Allah. So He has mixed its lawful with its unlawful, its good with its evil, its life with its death, and its sweetness with its bitterness. Allah has not kept it clear for His lovers, nor has He been niggardly with it towards His foes. Its good is sparing. Its evil is ready at hand. Its collection would dwindle away. Its authority would be snatched away. Its habitation would face desolation. What is the good in a house which falls down like fallen construction or in an age which expires as the provision exhausts, or in time which passes like walking?

Include whatever Allah has made obligatory on you in your demands. Ask from Him fulfilment of what He has asked you to do. Make your ears hear the call of death before you are called by death. Surely the hearts of the abstemious weep in this world even though they may (apparently) laugh, and their grief increases even though they may appear happy. Their hatred for themselves is much even though they may be envied for the subsistence they are allowed. Remembrance of death has disappeared from your hearts while false hopes are present in you. So this world has mastered you more than the next world, and the immediate end (of this world) has removed you away from the remote one (of the next life). You are brethren in the religion of Allah. Dirty natures and bad conscience have separated you. Consequently you do not bear burdens of each other nor advise each other, nor spend on each other, nor love each other.

What is your condition? You feel satisfied with what little you have secured from this world while much of the next world of which you have been deprived does not grieve you. The little of this world which you lose pains you so much so that it becomes apparent in your faces, and in

the lack of your endurance over whatever is taken away from you; as though this world is your permanent abode, and as though its wealth would stay with you for good. Nothing prevents anyone among you to disclose to his comrade the shortcomings he is afraid of, except the fear that the comrade would also disclose to him similar defects. You have decided together on leaving the next world and loving this world. Your religion has become just licking with the tongue. It is like the work of one who has finished his job and secured satisfaction of his master.

Chapter 121

SERMON 113

About abstemiousness, fear of Allah and importance of providing for the next life

Praise be to Him Who makes praise followed by bounty and bounty with gratefulness. We praise Him on His bounties as on His trials. We seek His help against these hearts which are slow to obey what they have been commended but quick towards what they have been desisted from. We seek His forgiveness from that which His knowledge covers and His document preserves - knowledge which does not leave anything and a document which does not omit anything. We believe in Him like the belief of one who has seen the unknown and has attained the promised rewards - belief, the purity whereof keeps off from belief in partners of Allah, and whose conviction removes doubt.

We stand witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, Who has no partner for Him, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet, Allah may bless him and his descendants. These two testimonies heighten the utterance and raise the act. The scale wherein they would be placed would not be light while the scale from which they are removed would not become heavy.

Enjoining people to Piety

O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to have fear of Allah which is the provision (for the next world) and with it is (your) return. The provision would take you (to your destination) and the return would be successful. The best one, who is able to make people listen has called towards it and the best listener has listened to it. So the caller has proclaimed and the listener has listened and preserved.

O' creations of Allah! certainly fear of Allah has saved the lovers of Allah from unlawful items and gave His dread to their hearts till their nights are passed in wakefulness and their noons in thirst. So they achieve comfort through trouble and copious watering through thirst.

They regarded death to be near and therefore hastened towards (good) actions. They rejected their desires and so they kept death in their sight.

Then, this world is a place of destruction, tribulations, changes and lessons. As for destruction, the time has its bow pressed (to readiness) and its dart does not go amiss, its wound does not heal; it afflicts the living with death, the healthy with ailment and the safe with distress. It is an eater who is not satisfied and a drinker whose thirst is never quenched. As for tribulation, a man collects what he does not eat and builds wherein he does not live. Then he goes out to Allah without carrying the wealth or shifting the building.

As for its changes, you see a pitiable man becoming enviable and an enviable man becoming pitiable. This is because the wealth has gone and misfortune has come to him. As for its lessons, a man reaches near (realisation of) his desires when (suddenly) the approach of his death cuts them; then neither the desire is achieved nor the desirer spared. Glory to Allah, how deceitful are its pleasures, how thirst-rousing its quenching and how sunny its shade. That which approaches (i.e. death) cannot be sent back, he who goes away does not return. Glory to Allah, how near is the living to the dead because he will meet him soon and how far is the dead from the living because he has gone away from him.

Certainly nothing is viler than evil except its punishment, and nothing is better than good except its reward. In this world everything that is heard is better than what is seen, while of everything of the next world that is seen is better than what is heard. So you should satisfy yourself by hearing rather than seeing and by the news of the unknown. You should know that what is little in this world but much in the next is better than what is much in this world but little in the next. In how many cases little is profitable while much causes loss.

Certainly that which you have been commanded to do is wider than what you have been refrained from, and what has been made lawful for you is more than what has been prohibited. Then give up what is less for what is much, and what is limited for what is vast. Allah has guaranteed your livelihood and has commanded you to act. Therefore, the pursuit of that which has been guaranteed to you should not get preference over that whose performance has been enjoined upon you.

But by Allah, most certainly the position is that doubt has overtaken and certainty has been shattered and it seems as if what has been guaranteed to you is obligatory on you and what was made obligatory on you has been taken away from you. So, hasten towards (good) actions and dread the suddenness of death, because the return of age cannot be

hoped for, as the return of livelihood can be hoped for. Whatever is missed from livelihood today may be hoped tomorrow with increase, but whatever is lost from the age yesterday, its return cannot be expected today. Hope can be only for that which is to come, while about that which is passed there is only disappointment. So *"fear Allah as He ought to be feared and do not die until you are (true) Muslim."* (Qur'an , 3:102)

Chapter 122

SERMON 114

Seeking rain

O' my Allah! surely our mountains have dried up and our earth has become dusty. Our cattle are thirsty and are bewildered in their enclosures. They are moaning like the moaning of mothers for their (dead) sons. They are tired of going to their meadows and longing for their watering places. O' my Allah! have mercy on the groan of the groaning and yearn of the yearning. O' my Allah! have mercy on their bewilderment and their passages and their groaning in their yards.

O' my Allah ! we have come out to Thee when the years of drought have crowded over us like (a herd of) thin camels, and rain clouds have abandoned us. Thou art the hope for the afflicted and succour for the seeker. We call Thee when the people have lost hopes, cloud has been denied and cattle have died, that do not seize us for our deeds and do not catch us for our sins, and spread Thy mercy over us through raining clouds, rain-fed blossoming, amazing vegetation, and heavy down-pours with which all that was dead regains life and all that was lost returns.

O' my Allah! give rain from Thee which should be life giving, satisfying, thorough, wide-scattered, purified, blissful, plentiful and invigorating. Its vegetation should be exuberant, its branches full of fruits and its leaves green. With it Thou reinvigorates the weak among Thy creatures and bringeth back to life the dead among Thy cities. O' my Allah! give rain from Thee with which our high lands get covered with green herbage, streams get flowing, our sides grow green, our fruits thrive, our cattle prosper, our far-flung areas get watered and our dry areas get its benefit, with Thy vast blessing and immeasurable grant on Thy distressed universe and Thy untamed beasts. And pour upon us rain which is drenching, continuous and heavy; wherein one cycle of rain clashes with the other and one rain drop pushes another (into a continuous chain), its lightning should not be deceptive, its cheek not rainless, its white clouds not scattered and rain not light, so that the famine-stricken

thrive with its abundant herbage and the drought stricken come to life with its bliss. Certainly, Thou pourest down rain after the people lose hopes and spreadest Thy mercy, since Thou art the Guardian, the praiseworthy.

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: The wonderful expressions of this sermon: Amir al-mu'minin's words *"insahat jibaluna"* means the mountains cracked on account of drought. It is said *"insaha'ththawbu"* when it is torn. It is also said *"insaha'n-nabtu"* or *"saha"* or *"sawwaha"* when vegetation withers and dries up.

His words *"wa hamat dawabbuna"* means became thirsty, as *"huyam"* means thirst.

His words *"hadabiru's-sinin"*. This is plural of *"hidbar"*. It means the camel whom treading has made thin. So Amir al-mu'minin likened with such a camel the year in which drought had occurred. The Arab poet Dhu ar-Rummah has said:

> *These thin camels remain in their places, facing hardships and move only when we take them to some dry area.*

His words *"wa la qaza`in rababuha"*. Here *"al-qaza"* means small pieces of cloud scattered all round.

His words *"wa la shaffanin dhihabuha"*. It stands for *"wa la dhata shaffanin dhihabuha"*. *"ash-shaffan"* means the cold wind and *"adh-dhihab"* means light rain. He omitted the world *"dhata"* from here because of the listener's knowledge of it.

Chapter 123

SERMON 115

About troubles which would arise and the Day of Judgement

Allah deputised him (the Prophet) as a caller towards Truth and a witness over the creatures. The Prophet conveyed the messages of Allah without being lazy and without any short-coming, and he fought His enemies in the cause of Allah without being languid and without pleading excuses. He is the foremost of all who practise piety and the power of perception of all those who achieve guidance.

A part of the same sermon, complaining about his men

If you know what I know of the unknown that is kept wrapped up from you certainly you would have gone out into the open weeping over your deeds and beating yourselves in grief and you would have abandoned your properties without any guard for it or any substitute over it. Everyone would then have cared for his own self without paying attention to anyone else. But you have forgotten what was recalled to you and felt safe from what you had been warned. Consequently, your ideas went astray and your affairs were dispersed.

I do long that Allah may cause separation between me and you and give me those who have a better right to be with me than you. By Allah, they are people of blissful ideas, enduring wisdom and true speech. They keep aloof from revolt. They trod forward on the path (of Allah) and ran on the high road. Consequently, they achieved the everlasting next life and easeful honours.

Beware! by Allah, a tall lad of swinging gait from Banu Thaqif would be placed over you. He would eat away your vegetation and melt your fat. So, O' Aba Wadhahah, is that all?

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: *"al-Wadhahah"* means *"al-khunfusa'* (dung-beetle)." In this sentence Amir al-mu'minin has referred to al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi and he had an incident with*"al-Khunfusa '"*, which need not be related here.(1)

(1). The detail of this incident is that one day al-Hajjaj stood up for saying prayers when al-khunfusa' advanced towards him. al-Hajjaj held out his hand to stop him but he bit him whereby his hand got swollen and eventually he died of it.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written that *"al-Wadhahah"* means the dung that remains sticking to the tail of an animal, and this surname is intended to disgrace him.

Chapter 124

SERMON 116

Rebuking Misers

You spend no wealth in the cause of Him Who gave it, nor do you risk your lives for the sake of Him Who created them. You enjoy honour through Allah among His creatures, but you do not honour Allah among His creatures. You should derive lessons from your occupying the places of those who were before you and from the departure of your nearest brothers.

Chapter 125

SERMON 117

In praise of his faithful companions

You are supporters of Truth and brethren in faith. You are the shield on the day of tribulation, and (my) trustees among the rest of the people. With your support I strike the runner away and hope for the obedience of him who advances forward. Therefore, extend to me support which is free from deceit and pure from doubt because, by Allah, I am the most preferable of all for the people.

Chapter 126

SERMON 118

Amir al-mu'minin collected the people and exhorted them(1). to jihad but they observed long silence. Then he said: "What is the matter with you. Have you become dumb?" A group of them replied: "O' Amir al-mu'minin if you go forth we shall be with you." Whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:

What has happened to you? You may not be guided aright or shown the right path. Should in these circumstances I go forth? In fact, at this time one of the brave and the valorous among you whom I select should go out. It does not suit me to leave the army, the city, the public treasury, the land revenue, the dispensation of justice among Muslims and looking after the demands of the claimants and to follow one contingent after the other moving here and there like a featherless arrow moving in the quiver.

I am the axis of the mill. It rotates on me while I remain in my position. As soon as I leave it the centre of its rotation would be disturbed and its lower stone would also be disturbed. By Allah, this is a very bad advice. By Allah, if I had not been hoping for martyrdom by my meeting with the enemy - and my meeting with him has been ordained, I would have secured my carrier and went away from you and would not have sought you so long as North and South differed.

There is no benefit in the majority of your numbers because of lack of unity of your hearts. I have put you on the clear path whereon no one will perish except who perishes by himself. He who sticks to it would achieve Paradise and he who deviates goes to Hell.

(1). When after the Battle of Siffin, Mu'awiyah's forces began to attack various places in Amir al-mu'minin's area, he asked the Iraqis to check them but they declined on the plea that they would follow him if he himself came forward. Thereupon he delivered this sermon, and clarified his limitations, that if he himself went out it was impossible to run the

affairs of the state, and that the enemy's attacks had already started on all sides. In these circumstances it was impolitic to keep the centre unguarded. But what could be hoped from those who changed the victory at Siffin into defeat and opened the door for these attacks.

Chapter 127

SERMON 119

About the greatness of Ahlu'l-bayt and the importance of the laws of Islam

By Allah, I have knowledge of the conveyance of messages, fulfilment of promises and of entire expressions. We the people of the house (of the Prophet - Ahlu'l-bayt) possess the doors of wisdom and light of governance. Beware that the paths of religion are one and its highways are straight. He who follows them achieves (the aim) and secures (the objective). And he who stood away from it went astray and incurred repentance.

Do act for the day for which provisions are stored, and when the intentions would be tested. If a person's own intelligence which is present with him does not help him, the wits (of others) which are remote from him are more unhelpful and those which are away from him more useless. Dread the fire whose flame is severe, whose hollow is deep, whose dress is iron and whose drink is bloody pus. Beware! The(1) good name of a man retained by Allah, the Sublime, among the people is better than wealth inherited by those who would not praise him.

(1). If a person gives away something in his life time then the recipient feels obliged to him. But if wealth is extracted by force then the extractor does not feel himself under his obligation, nor does he praise it. The same is the case of one who dies. His successors think that whatever he had left behind was their right and they should have received it. In this there is no obligation of his to be acknowledged. But if he had done some good act with this very wealth his name would have remained behind him and people would have praised him also.

A Persian couplet says:

Happy is he who is remembered well after himself, for nothing save the name remains after the man is dead.

Chapter 128

SERMON 120

A man from among the companions of Amir al-mu'minin stood up and said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin, you first stopped us from Arbitration and thereafter gave order for it. We do not know which of these two was more appropriate." Amir al-mu'minin struck one hand over the other and said:

This is the reward of one who breaks pledge. By Allah, when I gave you my orders (namely) to abide by arbitration I had led you to an undesirable thing (namely war) in which Allah had ordained good. If you had been steadfast I would have guided you, if you had been bent I would have straightened you and if you had refused I would have rectified you. This was the surest way. But with whom and to whom. I wanted my treatment from you but you proved to be my disease, like the extractor of thorn with the thorn when he knows that the thorn bends towards itself.

My Allah, the physicians have despaired of this fatal ailment and water-drawers have become tired with the rope of this well. Where (1) are those who were invited to Islam and they accepted it? They read the Qur'an and decided according to it. They were exhorted to fight and they leapt (towards it) as she-camels leap towards their young. They took their swords out of the sheaths and went out into the world in groups and rows. Some of them perished and some survived. The good news of survival does not please them nor do they get condoled about the dead. Their eyes have turned white with weeping. Their bellies are emaciated because of fasting. Their lips are dry because of (constant) praying. Their colour is pale because of wakefulness. Their faces bear the dust of God-fearing. These are my comrades who have departed. We should be justified if we feel eager for them and bite our hands in their separation.

Certainly, Satan has made his ways easy for you and wants to unfasten the knots of religion one by one and to cause division among you

in place of unity. Keep away from his evil ideas and enchantments and accept good advice of one who offers it to you and preserve it in your minds.

(1) Although all those who fought under the banner of Amir al-mu'minin were called Shi`ahs of `Ali, yet only those who had tears in their eyes, paleness on their faces, the Qur'anic verses on their tongues, zeal of religion in their hearts, steadfastness in their feet, determination and courage in their spirits, and patience and endurance in their minds could in true sense he called Shi`ahs of `AIi. These were the people in whose separation Amir al-mu'minin's feelings were coming out in the shape of sighs through the breath, while the flames of the fire of separation were consuming his heart and spirit. These were the people who leapt towards death like mad men and did not feel happy if they survived. Rather, their heart's slogan was as the Persian hemistich says:

We are ashamed why we have remained alive.

He who has even a slight brilliance of these qualities can alone be called the follower of the Descendants of the Prophet or the Shi`ah of `Ali, otherwise it would be a word which has lost its meaning and been bereft of its dignity through misuse. Thus tradition has it that Amir al-mu'minin saw a group of men at his door and enquired from Qanbar who they were and he answered they were his Shi`ahs. On hearing this Amir al-mu'minin had a frown on his forehead and said. "Why are they called Shi`ahs? They have no sign of Shi`ahs." Thereupon Qanbar enquired what were the signs of Shi`ahs and Amir al-mu'minin replied:

> Their bellies are thin through hunger, their lips dry through thirst and their eyes bleared through weeping.

Chapter 129

SERMON 121

When the Kharijites persisted in their rejecting the Arbitration, Amir al-mu'minin went to their camp and addressed them thus:

Were all of you(1) with us in Siffin? They replied that some of them were but some of them were not. Amir al-mu'minin said:

Then you divide yourselves into two groups. One of those who were in Siffin and other of those who were not present there, so that I may address each as I see suitable. Then he shouted to the people:

Stop talking and keep quiet to listen to what I say. Turn your hearts to me. Whomever we ask for evidence, he should give it according to his knowledge about it.

Then he had a long conversation with them during which he said:

When they had raised the Qur'an by way of deceit, craft, artifice and cheat, did you not say "They are our brothers and our comrades in accepting Islam. They want us to cease fighting, and ask for protection through the Book of Allah, the Glorified. Our opinion is to agree with them and to end their troubles." Then I said to you, "In this affair the outer side is Faith but the inner side is enmity. Its beginning is pity and the end is repentance. Consequently you should stick to your position, and remain steadfast on your path. You should press your teeth (to put all your might) in*jihad* and should not pay heed to the shouts of the shouter (2). If he is answered he would mislead, but if he is left (unanswered) he would be disgraced."

But when this thing (Arbitration) was done I found that you agreed to it. By Allah, if I had refused it, it would not have been obligatory on me. Nor would Allah have laid its sin on me. And by Allah, not that I have accepted it, I alone am the rightful person who should be followed, for certainly the Qur'an is with me. I never forsake it since I adopted its company. We have been with the Prophet in battles wherein those killed were fathers, sons, brothers and relations of one another. Nevertheless,

every trouble and hardship just increased us in our belief, in our treading on the right path, in submission to (divine) command and in endurance of the pain of wounds.

We now had to fight our brethren in Islam because of entry into Islam of misguidance, crookedness, doubts and (wrong) interpretation. However, if we find any way by which Allah may collect us together in our disorder and by which we may come near each other in whatever common remains between us we would accept it and would give up everything else.

(1). Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes that this sermon comprises three parts which do not fit together, because as-Sayyid ar-Radi selected some parts of Amir al-mu'minin's sermons and did not record other parts as a result of which the continuity of utterance was not maintained. Thus, one part ends at "if he is left unanswered he would be disgraced", the other at "and endurance at the pain of wound" and the third runs till the end of the sermon.

(2). This reference is to Mu`awiyah or `Amr ibn al-`As.

Chapter 130

SERMON 122

Amir al-mu'minin's address to his followers on the battlefield of Siffin About supporting the weak and the low-spirited during the fighting

Whoever among you feels spiritedness of heart during the action and finds any of his comrades feeling disheartened should ward off (the enemies) from him just as he would do from himself, because of the superiority he enjoys over the other, for if Allah had willed He would have made the former also like him. Certainly death is a quick seeker. Neither does the steadfast escape it nor can the runner-away defy it. The best death is to be killed. By Allah in Whose hand (power) lies the life of the son of Abu Talib, certainly a thousand strikings of the sword on me are easier to me than a death in bed which is not in obedience to Allah.

A part of the same sermon

It is as if I see you uttering voices like the rustling sound of lizards! You do not seek your own claims nor do you defend against oppression. You have been let free on the path. He who rushes (into the battle) achieves salvation, while he who lags behind, hesitating, gets destruction.

Chapter 131

SERMON 123

To exhort his followers to fight (1)

Put the armoured man forward and keep the unarmoured one behind. Grit your teeth because this will make the swords skip off the skull, and dodge on the sides of the spears for it changes the direction of their blades. Close the eyes because it strengthens the spirit and gives peace to the heart. Kill the voices because this will keep off spiritlessness .

Do not let your banner bend down, nor leave it alone. Do not give it to anyone except the brave and the defenders of honour among you because they alone endure the befalling of troubles; they surround the banners and encircle them on both sides, their rear and their front. They do not separate from them lest they give them over (to the enemy). They do not go ahead of them lest they leave them alone. Everyone should deal with his adversary and also help his comrade by his own life, and should not leave the adversary to his comrade lest both his own adversary and his comrade join against him.

By Allah, even if you run away from the sword of today you would not remain safe from the sword of the next world. You are the foremost among the Arabs and great figures. Certainly in running away there is the wrath of Allah, unceasing disgrace and lasting shame. And certainly a runner-away does not lengthen his life, nor does any thing come to intervene between him and his day (of death). Who is there to go towards Allah like the thirsty going to the water? Paradise lies under the edges of spears. Today the reputations (about the valour of warriors) will be tested.

By Allah! I am more eager to meet them (in combat) than they are for (returning to) their houses. O' my Allah! If they reject truth disperse their group, divide their words (opinion) and destroy them on account of their sins.

They will not budge from their stand till the continuous striking of spears causes piercings (of wounds) through which wind may pass, and

the hitting of swords cuts through the skull, cleaves bones and breaks forearms and legs, till they are attacked by contingent after contingent and assaulted by detachments which are followed by reserves for support, till their cities are continuously assailed by force after force, and till the horses trample even the extreme ends of the lands, the tracks of their beast and their meadows.

***as-Sayyid ar-Radi says**: "ad-da`q"* means trampling, e.g., *"taduqqu'l-khuyulu bihawafiriha ardahum"* (the horses trample the ground with their hoofs). *"nawahini ardihim"* means lands opposite each other, it is said, *"manazilu bani fulanin tatanaharu"* meaning the 'houses of so-and-so are opposite each other.'

(1). Amir al-mu'minin delivered this Sermon on the occasion of the battle of Siffin. This battle was fought in the year 37 A.H. between Amir al-mu'minin and the Governor of Syria (ash-Sham), Mu`awiyah, for the so-called avenging for the killing of Caliph `Uthman. But in reality it was nothing more than Mu`awiyah who had been the Autonomous Governor of Syria from Caliph `Umar's days not wanting to lose that position by swearing allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin but wanting to keep his authority intact by exploiting the killing of Caliph `Uthman, for later events proved that after securing the government he did not take any practical step to avenge `Uthman's blood, and never spoke, not even through omission, about the killers of `Uthman.

Although from the first day Amir al-mu'minin realised that war was inevitable, it was still necessary to exhaust all pleas. Therefore when on Monday the 12th Rajeb, 36 A.H. he returned to Kufah after the battle of Jamal he sent Jarir ibn `Abdallah al-Bajali with a letter to Mu`awiyah at Damascus wherein he wrote that the *muhajirun* and the *ansar* had sworn allegiance to him and that he too should first swear him allegiance and thereafter place the case of `Uthman's killing before him so that he could pass verdict thereon according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. But Mu`awiyah detained Jarir on several pretexts and after consulting `Amr ibn al-`As staged a revolt on the excuse of `Uthman's killing, and with the help of important persons of Syria convinced the ignorant people that the liability for `Uthman's life lay on `Ali (p.b.u.h) and that he, with his conduct had encouraged the besiegers and had given them protection. Meanwhile he hung the blood-stained shirt of `Uthman and the amputated fingers of his wife Na'ilah bint al-Farafisah on the pulpit in the Central Mosque of Damascus around which seventy thousand Syrians cried and swore the pledge to avenge `Uthman's blood. When

Mu`awiyah had roused the feelings of the Syrians to such an extent that they were determined to lay down their lives and be killed, he secured their allegiance on the cause of avenging `Uthman's blood and busied himself in equipping for the battle. Thereafter, he showed all this to Jarir and then sent him back mortified.

When Amir al-mu'minin learnt of these matters through Jarir ibn `Abdallah al-Bajali he was forced to rise against Mu`awiyah, and ordered Malik ibn Habib al-Yarbu`i to mobilise the forces in the valley of An-Nukhaylah. Consequently, people from the suburbs of Kufah began arriving there in large numbers, till they exceeded eighty thousand. First of all, Amir al-mu'minin sent a vanguard contingent, eight thousand strong, under Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi and another of four thousand strong under Shurayh ibn Hani al-Harithi towards Syria. After the departure of this vanguard contingent he himself set out for Syria at the head of the remaining army on Wednesday the 5th of Shawwal. When he was out of the boundary of Kufah he offered zuhr (noon) prayer and after staying at Dayr Abi Musa, Nahr (river) Nars, Qubbat Qubbin, Babil, Dayr Ka`b, Karbala', Sabat, Bahurasini, al-Anbar and al-Jazirah arrived at ar-Riqqah. The people of this place were in favour of `Uthman, and at this very place Simak ibn Makhtamah al-Asadi was putting up with his eight hundred men. These people had left Kufah to join Mu`awiyah after deserting Amir al-mu'minin; when they had seen Amir al-mu'minin's force they had dismantled the bridge over the River Euphrates so that Amir al-mu'minin's army should not cross over to the other side of the River. But at the threatening of Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakha`i they were frightened, and after consultations among themselves they put the bridge together again and Amir al-mu'minin passed over it with his army. When he alighted on the other side of the River he saw that Ziyad and Shurayh were also putting up there along with their men since both of them had adopted the land route. When, on reaching here, they found that Mu`awiyah was advancing with his armies towards the Euphrates and thinking that they would not be able to face him, they stopped there waiting for Amir al-mu'minin. When they had given the reason for their stopping there, Amir al-mu'minin accepted their plea and sent them forward. When they reached Sur ar-Rum they found that Abu al-A`war as-Sulami was camping there with his army. Both of them informed Amir al-mu'minin of this, whereupon he despatched Ma1ik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakha`i in their wake as the Officer in Command and cautioned him not to initiate the fighting but to try to counsel them and apprise them of the correct position as far as possible. In this way, on

reaching there Malik al-Ashtar encamped a little distance away. Fighting could have commenced any moment, but he did not interfere with the other side nor did he take any step by which fighting could have been commenced. But Abu al-A`war suddenly attacked them at night, whereupon they took their swords out of the sheaths and prepared to repulse them. Clashes between the two sides went on for sometime but in the end, taking benefit of the darkness of night Abu al-A`war fled away. Since fighting had already commenced, soon after the appearance of dawn an Iraqi commander, Hashim ibn `Utbah al-Mirqal az-Zuhri, took his position in the battlefield. From the other side also a contingent came to face him, and the flames of fighting rose high. At last Malik al-Ashtar challenged Abu al-A`war to fight him, but he did not dare to face him, and towards the evening Malik al-Ashtar went onwards with his men. The next day Amir al-mu'minin reached there with his force and set off for Siffin with the vanguard contingent and other forces. Mu`awiyah had already reached there and had set up his bases. He had also placed a guard on the Euphrates and had occupied it. On reaching there Amir al-mu'minin sent him word to remove the guard from Euphrates, but he refused, whereupon the Iraqis took out their swords and in a courageous attack captured the Euphrates. When this stage was over Amir al-mu'minin sent Bashir ibn `Amr al-Ansari, Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani and Shabath ibn Rib`i at-Tamimi to Mu`awiyah to apprise him of the consequences of war and to make him agree to settlement and allegiance. But his reply was that they could not by any means let `Uthman's blood remain neglected, and that now the sword alone would arbitrate between them. Consequently in the month of Dhi'l-hijjah 36 A.H. both the parties decided on war and warriors from each side came out into the field to face their adversary. Those who entered the battlefield from Amir al-mu'minin's side were: Hujr ibn `Adi al-Kindi, Shabath ibn Rib`i at-Tamimi, Khalid ibn al-Mu`ammar, Ziyad ibn an-Nadr al-Harithi, Ziyad ibn Khasafah at-Taymi, Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani, Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari and Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakha`i while from the Syrians there were, `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn Walid al-Makhzuni, Abu al-A`war as-Sulami, Habib ibn Maslamah al-Fihri, `Abdallah ibn Dhi'l-Kala` al-Himyari, `Ubaydallah ibn `Umar ibn al-Khattab, Shurahbil ibn Simt al-Kindi, and Hamzah ibn Malik al-Hamdani. When the month of Dhi'l-hijjah came to end the fighting had to be stopped for Muharram, but from the first of Safar fighting was resumed and both parties arrayed themselves opposite each other, equipped with swords, spears and other weapons. On Amir al-mu'minin's side Malik al-Ashtar was in command

of the horsemen and `Ammar ibn Yasir of the foot soldiers of Kufah while Sahl ibn Hunayf al-Ansari was in command of the horsemen and Qays ibn Sa`d of the foot soldiers of Basrah. The banner of the army was given to Hashim ibn `Utbah. In the army of the Syrians on the right hand contingent Ibn Dhi'l-Kala` was in command, while on the left hand contingent Habib ibn Maslamah, on horsemen `Amr ibn al-`As and on foot soldiers ad-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri were in command.

On the first day Malik ibn al-Ashtar entered the battle-field with his men, and from the other side Habib ibn Maslamah came out with his men to face him and from both sides a fierce battle ensued. Throughout the day swords clashed with swords and spears with spears.

Next day, Hashim ibn `Utbah came out with `Ali's army and from the other side Abu al-A`war with his footmen came to face him. When the two armies approached near to each other, horsemen fell upon horsemen and footmen upon footmen and continued attacking each other. and they endured with great patience and steadfastness.

On the third day, `Ammar ibn Yasir and Ziyad ibn an-Nadr came out with horsemen and foot soldiers and from the other side `Amr ibn al-`As came forward with a big force. Ziyad attacked the horsemen of the opposite side and Malik al-Ashtar attacked the foot soldiers so furiously that the enemy's men lost ground and, failing to offer resistance, returned to their camps.

On the fourth day Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah appeared on the battle-field with his men. From the other side `Ubaydallah ibn `Umar came forward with the Syrian army and both the armies had a serious encounter.

On the fifth day `Abdallah ibn `Abbas came forward and from the other side al-Walid ibn `Uqba ibn Abi Mu`ayt came to face him. `Abdallah ibn `Abbas carried the assaults with great steadfastness and courage and gave such a brave fight that the enemy left the field in retreat.

On the sixth day Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari came forward with the army and to face him Ibn Dhi'l-Kala` came out with his contingent, and such a severe fighting ensued that at every step bodies were seen falling and blood flowing like streams. At last the darkness of the night separated the two armies.

On the seventh day Malik al-Ashtar came out and to face him, Habib ibn Maslamah came forward with his men, and fighting raged till zuhr (noon).

On the eighth day Amir al-mu'minin himself came out with the army and made such an assault that the entire battlefield quaked, and piercing

through the ranks and warding off shots of arrows and spears he came and stood between both the lines. Then he challenged Mu`awiyah, whereupon the latter, along with `Amr ibn al-`As, came a bit closer. Then Amir al-mu'minin said to him: "Come out and face me. Let whoever kills the other be the ruler." Whereupon `Amr ibn al-`As said to Mu`awiyah: "`Ali is right. Gather up a little courage and face him. Mu`awiyah replied: "l am not prepared to waste my life ar your taunting." Saying this he went back. When Amir al-mu'minin saw him retreating he smiled and himself too returned. The daring with which Amir al-mu'minin led the attacks in Siffin can only be called a miraculous feat. Thus, whenever he came out challenging in the battlefield, the enemy lines were dispersed into utter disarray and confusion, and even courageous combatants hesitated to appear against him. That is why on a few occasions he came onto the battlefield in changed dress so that the enemy should not recognise him and someone should be prepared to engage with him personally. Once `Arar ibn Ad'ham came from the other side to engage with al-`Abbas ibn Rabi`ah al-Harith ibn `Abd al-Muttalib. They remained engaged but neither could defeat the other, until al-`Abbas chanced to see that a link of his adversary's armour was loose. With a swift stroke he entangled the point of his sword in it, and then with a quick jerk he cut through a few more links. Then with true aim he gave such a blow that his sword went straight into his bosom. Seeing this, people raised the call of *takbir*. Mu`awiyah was startled at this noise and on coming to know that `Arar ibn Ad'ham had been slain he was much disturbed and shouted if there was anyone to take revenge for `Arar ibn Ad'ham and kill al-`Abbas, whereupon some tired swordsmen of the tribe of Lakhm came out challenging al-`Abbas. Al-`Abbas said he would come after taking his Chief's permission. Saying al-`Abbas came to Amir al-mu'minin to seek permission. Amir al-mu'minin detained him, put on al-`Abbas's dress. and riding on al-`Abbas's horse entered the battlefield. Taking him to be al-`Abbas, the Lakhms said: "So you have got your Chief's permission." In reply Amir al-mu'minin recited the following verse:

Permission (to fight) is given unto those upon whom war is made for they have been oppressed, and verily, to help them, Allah is Most Potent. (Qur'an, 22:39)

Now one man came out from the other side shouting like an elephant, ran amok and assaulted Amir al-mu'minin, but he avoided the blow and then gave such a clean cut with his sword to the other's back that he was split into two. People thought the blow had gone without avail, but

when his horse jumped his two separate parts fell on the ground. After him another man came out but he too was finished in the twinkling of an eye. Then Amir al-mu'minin challenged others but from the strokes of his sword the enemy came to know that it was Amir al-mu'minin in the dress of al-`Abbas and so none dared come to face him.

On the ninth day the right wing was under the command of `Abdullah ibn Budayl and the left wing under that of `Abdullah ibn al-`Abbas. In the centre was Amir al-mu'minin himself. On the other side Habib ibn Maslamah commanded the Syrian army. When both the lines had come face to face with each other, the valiant soldiers drew out their swords and pounced upon one another like ferocious lions, and fighting raged on all sides. The banner of the right wing Amir al-mu'minin's army was revolving in the hands of Banu Hamdan. Whenever anyone of them fell, martyred, someone else would pick up the banner. First of all Kurayb ibn Shurayh raised the banner, on his fall Shurahbil ibn Shurayh took it up, then Marthad ibn Shurayh, then Hubayrah ibn Shurayh then Yarim ibn Shurayh, then Sumayr ibn Shurayh and after the killing of all these six brothers the banner was taken up by Sufyan, then `Abd, then Kurayb, the three sons of Zayd, who all fell martyred. After that the banner was lifted by two brothers (sons) of Bashir namely `Umayr and al-Harith and when they too fell martyred, Wahb ibn Kurayb took up the banner. On this day the enemy's greater attention was on the right wing and its assaults were so fierce that the men lost ground and began to retreat from the battlefield. Only three hundred men remained with the Officer in Command `Abdullah ibn Budayl. On seeing this Amir al-mu'minin asked Malik al-Ashtar to call them back and challenge them as to where they were fleeing. "If the days of life are over they cannot avoid death by running away." Now the defeat of the right wing could not be without effect on the left wing, so Amir al-mu'minin turned to the left wing and advanced forward, forcing through the enemy lines, whereupon a slave of Banu Umayyah named Ahmar said to him, "Allah may make me die if I fail to slay you today." On hearing this Amir al-mu'minin's slave Kaysan leapt over him but was killed by him. When Amir al-mu'minin saw this he caught him by the skirt of his armour and, picking him up, threw him down so forcefully that all his joints were smashed, whereupon Imam Hasan (p.b.u.h.) and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah came forward and despatched him to Hell. Meanwhile, after having been called to Malik al-Ashtar and his having made them feel ashamed, the retreaters came back and again assaulted so steadfastly that pushing back the enemy they reached the place where `Abdullah ibn Budayl was

surrounded by the enemy. When he saw his own men he picked up courage and leapt towards Mu`awiyah's tent with drawn sword. Malik al-Ashtar tried to stop him but he couldn't, and, killing seven Syrians, he reached the tent of Mu`awiyah. When Mu`awiyah noticed him close by he ordered him to be stoned, as a result of which he was overpowered and the Syrians crowded over him and killed him. When Malik al-Ashtar saw this he proceeded forward with the combatants of Banu Hamdan and Banu Madh'hij for an attack on Mu`awiyah, and began dispersing the contingent on guard around him. When, out of the five circles of his guards only one remained to be dispersed, Mu`awiyah put his foot in the stirrup of his horse in order to run away, but on someone's encouragement again stopped. On another side of the battlefield a tumult was raging from one end to the other by the swords of `Ammar ibn Yasir and Hashim ibn `Utbah. From whatever side `Ammar passed, the companions (of the Holy Prophet) flocked around him and then made such a joint assault that destruction spread throughout the enemy lines. When Mu`awiyah saw them advancing he threw his fresh forces towards them. But he continued displaying the excellence of his bravery under the storm of swords and spears. At last Abu al-`Adiyah al-Juhani hit him with a spear from which he could not balance himself and then Ibn Hawiy (Jawn as-Saksiki) came forward and slew him. `Ammar ibn Yasir's death caused tumult in Mu`awiyah's ranks because about him they had heard the Holy Prophet (PBUH) having said: " `Ammar will be killed at the hands of a rebellious party." Thus before he fell as martyr Dhu'l-Kala` had said to `Amr ibn al-`As: "I see `Ammar on `Ali's side; are we that rebellious party?" `Amr ibn al-`As had assured him that eventually `Ammar would join them, but when he killed fighting on `Ali's side the rebellious party stood exposed and no scope was left for any other interpretation. Nevertheless Mu`awiyah started telling the Syrians that: "We did not kill `Ammar, but `Ali did it because he brought him to the battlefield." When Amir al-mu'minin heard this cunning sentence he remarked: "In that case the Holy Prophet (PBUH) killed Hamzah as he had brought him to the battlefield of Uhud." Hashim ibn `Utbah also fell in this conflict. He was killed by al-Harith ibn Mundhir at-Tanukhi. After him the banner of the contingent was taken over by his son `Abdullah.

When such fearless warriors were gone Amir al-mu'minin said to the warriors from the tribes of Hamdan and Rabi`ah: "To me you are like armour and spear. Get up and teach these rebels a lesson. " Consequently, twelve thousand combatants of the tribes of Rabi`ah and Hamdan stood up, swords in hand. The banner was taken up by Hudayn ibn al-

Mundhir. Entering the lines of the enemy, they used their swords in such a way that heads began to drop, bodies fell in huge heaps and on every side streams of blood flowed. And the assaults of these swordsmen knew no stopping till the day began to end with all its devastation and the gloom of eve set in, ushering in that fearful night which is known in history as the night of al-Harir, wherein the clashing of weapons, the hoofs of horses and the hue and cry of the Syrians created such notice that even voices reaching the ears could not be heard. On Amir al-mu'minin's side, his wrong-crushing slogans raised waves of courage and valour, and on the enemy's side they shook the hearts in their bosoms. The battle was at its zenith. The quivers of the bowmen had become empty. The stalks of the spears had been broken. Hand to hand fighting went on with swords only and dead bodies collected in heaps, till by morning the number of killed had exceeded thirty thousand.

On the tenth day Amir al-mu'minin's men showed the same morale. On the right wing Malik al-Ashtar held the command and on the left wing `Abdullah ibn al-`Abbas.

Assaults went on like the assaults of new soldiers. Signs of defeat appeared on the Syrians, and they were about to leave the battlefield and run away, when five hundred

Qur'ans were raised on spears changing the entire face of the battle. Moving swords stopped, the weapon of deceit was successful, and the way was clear for wrong to hold its sway.

In this battle forty-five thousand Syrians were killed while twenty-five thousand Iraqis fell as martyrs. (*Kitab Siffin* by Nasr ibn Muzahim al-Minqari [d. 212 A.H.] and *at-Tarikh at-Tabari*, vol. 1, pp. 3256-3349).

Chapter 132

SERMON 124

About the Kharijites and their opinion on Arbitration

We did not name people the arbitrators but we named the Qur'an the arbitrator. The Qur'an is a book, covered, between two flaps, and it does not speak. It should therefore necessarily have an interpreter. Men alone can be such interpreters. When these people invited us to name the Qur'an as the arbitrator between us, we could not be the party turning away from the Book of Allah. since Allah has said:

… And then if ye quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Prophet . . (Qur'an, 4:59)

Reference to Allah means that we decide according to the Qur'an while reference to the Prophet means that we follow his Sunnah. Now therefore, if arbitration were truly done through the Book of Allah (Qur'an). we would be the most rightful of all people for the Caliphate; or if it were done by the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), we would be the most preferable of them.

Concerning your point why I allowed a time lag between myself and them with regard to the Arbitration, I did so in order that the ignorant may find out (the truth) and one who already knows may hold with it firmly. Possibly Allah may, as a result of this peace, improve the condition of these people, and they will not be caught by the throats and will not, before indication of the right, fall into rebellion as before. Certainly the best man before Allah is he who loves most to act according to right, even though it causes him hardship and grief rather than according to wrong, even though it gives him benefit and increase.

So, where are you being misled and from where have you been brought (to this state)? Be prepared to march to the people who have deviated from the right and do not see it, have been entangled in wrongdoing and are not corrected. They are away from the Book and turned from the (right) path. You are not trustworthy to rely upon, nor are you holders of honour to be adhered to. You are very bad in kindling the fire

of fighting. Woe to you! I had to bear a lot of worries from you. Some day I call you (to jihad) and some day I speak to you in confidence, you are neither true free men at the time of call, nor trustworthy brothers at the time of speaking in confidence.

Chapter 133

SERMON 125

When Amir al-mu'minin was spoken ill of for showing equality in the distribution (of shares from Bayt al-mal or the Muslim Public Treasury) he said:

Do you command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed? By Allah, I won't do so as long as the world goes on, and as long as one star leads another in the sky. Even if it were my property, I would have distributed it equally among them, then why not when the property is that of Allah. Beware; certainly that giving of wealth without any right for it is wastefulness and lavishness. It raises its doer in this world, but lowers him in the next world. It honours him before people, but disgraces him with Allah. If a man gives his property to those who have no right for it or do not deserve it, Allah deprives him of their gratefulness, and their love too would be for others. Then if he falls on bad days and needs their help, they would prove the worst comrades and ignoble friends.

Chapter 134

SERMON 126

About the Kharijites

If you do not stop believing that I have gone wrong and been misled, why do you consider that the common men among the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) have gone astray like me, and accuse them with my wrong, and hold them unbelievers on account of my sins. You are holding your swords on your shoulders and using them right and wrong. You are confusing those who have committed sins with those who have not. You know that the Prophet (PBUH) stoned the protected (married) adulterer, then he also said his burial prayer and allowed his successors to inherit from him. He killed the murderer and allowed his successors to inherit from him. He amputated (the hand of) the thief and whipped the unprotected (unmarried) adulterer, but thereafter allowed their shares from the booty, and they married Muslim women. Thus the Prophet (PBUH) took them to ask for their sins and also abided by Allah's commands about them, but did not disallow them their rights created by Islam, nor did he remove their names from its followers.

Certainly you are the most evil of all persons and are those whom Satan has put on his lines and thrown out into his wayless land. With regard to me, two categories of people will be ruined, namely he who loves me too much and the love takes him away from rightfulness, and he who hates me too much and the hatred takes him away from rightfulness. The best man with regard to me is he who is on the middle course. So be with him and be with the great majority (of Muslims) because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the one isolated from the group is (a prey) to Satan just as the one isolated from the flock of sheep is (a prey) to the wolf.

Beware; whoever calls to this course, kill him, even though he may be under this headband of mine. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what the Qur'an revives and to destroy what the Qur'an destroys. Revival means to unite on it (in a matter) and destruction

means to divide on a matter. If the Qur'an drives us to them we should follow them, and if it drives them to us they should follow up. May you have no father! (Woe to you), I did not cause you any misfortune, nor have I deceived you in any matter, nor created any confusion. Your own group had unanimously suggested in favour of these two men and we bound them that they would not exceed the Qur'an but they deviated from it and abandoned the right although both of them were conversant with it. This wrong-doing was the dictate of their hearts and so they trod upon it, although we had stipulated that in arbitrating with justice and sticking to rightfulness they would avoid the evil of their own views and the mischief of their own verdict (but since this has happened the award is not acceptable to us).

Chapter 135

SERMON 127

About Important happenings in Basrah

O' Ahnaf! It is as though I see him advancing with an army which has neither dust nor noise, nor rustling of reins, nor neighing of horses. They are trampling the ground with their feet as if they are the feet of ostriches.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Amir al-mu'minin pointed to the Chief of the Negroes, (*Sahibu'z-Zanj*) .(1)

Then Amir al -mu'minin said:

Woe to you (the people of Basrah's) inhabited streets and decorated houses which possess wings like the wings of vultures and trunks like the trunks of elephants; they are the people from among whom if one is killed he is not mourned and if one is lost he is not searched for. I turn this world over on its face, value it only according to its (low) value, and look at it with an eye suitable to it.

A part of the same sermon
Referring to the Turks (Mongols)

I (2) can see a people whose faces are like shields covered with rough-scraped skins. They dress themselves in silken and woollen clothes and hold dear excellent horses. Their killing and bloodshed shall take place freely till the wounded shall walk over the dead and the number of runners-away shall be less than those taken prisoner:

One of his companions said to him: O' Amir al-mu'minin, you have been given knowledge of hidden things. **Whereupon Amir al-mu'minin laughed and said to the man who belonged to the tribe of Banu Kalb:**

O' brother of Kalb! This is not knowledge of hidden things (*`ilmu'l-ghayb*), (3) these matters have been acquired from him (namely in Proph-et) who knew them. As regard knowledge of hidden things, that means knowledge of the Day of Judgement, and the things covered by Allah in the verse.

Verily, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour…
(Qur'an, 31:34)

Therefore, Allah alone knows what is there in the wombs, whether male or female, ugly or handsome, generous or miserly, mischievous or pious, and who will be the fuel for Hell and who will be in the company of the Prophets in Paradise. This is the knowledge of the hidden things which is not known to anyone save Allah. All else is that whose knowledge Allah passed on to His Prophet and he passed it on to me, and prayed for me that my bosom may retain it and my ribs may hold it.

(1). `Ali ibn Muhammad was born in the village of Warzanin in the suburbs of Ray and belonged to the Azariqah sect of the Kharijites. He claimed to be a *sayyid* (descendant of the Holy Prophet) by showing himself the son of Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Mukhtafi ibn `Isa ibn Zayd ibn `Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn `Ali ibn Abi Talib, but the experts on lineality and biographers have not accepted his claim to being a *sayyid* and have given his father's name as Muhammad ibn `Abd ar-Rahim instead of Muhammad ibn Ahmad. The former was from the tribe of `Abd al-Qays and had been born of a Sindi maid-slave.

`Ali ibn Muhammad rose as an insurgent in 255 A.H. in the reign of al-Muhtadi Billah and associated with him the people from the suburbs of Basrah on promise of money, wealth and freedom. He entered Basrah on the 17th *Shuwwal*, 255 A.H. killing and looting, and in only two days he put to death thirty thousand individuals, men, women and children, and displayed extreme oppression, bloodshed, savageness and ferocity. He dismantled houses, burnt mosques, and after continuous killing and devastation for fourteen years, was killed in the month of *Safar*, 270 A.H. in the reign of Muwaffaq Billah. Then people got rid of his devastating deeds.

Amir al-mu'minin's prophecy is one of those prophecies which throw light on his knowledge of the unknown. The details of his army given by Amir al-mu'minin namely that there would be neither neighing of horses nor rustling of weapons therein is a historical fact. The historian at-Tabari has written that when this man reached near al-Karkh (a sector of Baghdad) with the intention of insurrection, the people of that place welcomed him, and a man presented him a horse for which no rein could be found despite a search. At last he rode it using a rope for the rein. Similarly there were at that time only three swords in his force - one with

himself, one with `Ali ibn Aban al-Muhallabi, and one with Muhammad ibn Salm, but later they collected some more weapons by marauding.

(2). This prophecy of Amir al-mu'minin is about the attack of the Tartars (Mongols) who were inhabitants of the Mongolian desert in the north west of Turkistan. These semi-savage tribes lived by marauding, killing and devastating. They used to fight among themselves and attack neighbouring areas. Each tribe had a separate chief who was deemed responsible for their protection. Chingiz Khan (Temujin) who was one of the ruling chiefs of these tribes and was very brave and courageous had risen to organise all their divided tribes into one, and, despite their opposition he succeeded in overpowering them through his might and sagacity. Collecting a large number under his banner he rose in 606 A.H. like a torrent and went on dominating cities and ruining populations till he conquered the area upto North China.

When his authority was established he offered his terms of settlement to `Alau'd-Din Khwarazm Shah, ruler of the neighbouring country of Turkistan, and through a deputation concluded an agreement with him that the Tartar traders would be allowed to visit his country for trade and their life and property would not be subject to any harm. For some time they traded freely without fear but on one occasion `Alau'd-Din accused them of spying, seized their goods and had them killed by the Chief of Atrar. When Chingiz Khan learnt of the breach of the agreement and the killing of Tartar merchants his eyes cast forth flames and he began trembling with rage.

He sent word to `Alau'd-Din to return the goods of the Tartar merchants and to hand over to him the ruler of Atrar. `Alau'd-Din, who was mad with power and authority, did not pay any heed, and acting shortsightedly killed even the plenipotentiary of Chingiz Khan. Now Chingiz Khan lost all patience and his eyes filled with blood. He rose with his sword in hand, and the Tartar warriors leapt towards Bukhara on their speedy stallions. `Alau'd-Din came out with four hundred thousand combatants to face him but could not resist the incessant assaults of the Tartars, and having been vanquished only after a few attacks ran away to Nishabur across the river Jaxartes (Sihun). The Tartars smashed Bukhara and razed it to the ground. They pulled down schools and mosques, burning to ashes the houses and killing men and women without distinction. Next year they assaulted Samarqand and devastated it completely. After the flight of `Alau'd-Din, his son Jalalu'd-Din Khwarazm Shah had assumed the reins of government The Tartars chased him also, and for ten years he fled from one place to the other but did not

fall in their hands. At last he crossed over the river out of the boundaries of his realm. During this time the Tartars did their utmost to ruin populated lands and to annihilate humanity. No city escaped their ruining and no populace could avoid their trampling. Wherever they went they upset the kingdom, overthrew governments, and in a short time established their authority over the northern portion of Asia.

When Chingiz Khan died in 622 A.H. his own son Ogedei Khan succeeded him. He searched out Jalalu'd-Din in 628 A.H. and killed him. After him Mongka Khan, the son of the other son of Chingiz Khan, occupied the throne. After Mongka Khan, Qubilai Khan succeeded to a part of the country and the control of Asia fell to the share of his brother Hulagu Khan. On the division of the whole realm among the grandsons of Chingiz Khan, Hulagu Khan was thinking of conquering Muslims areas when the Hanafite of Khurasan in enmity with the Shafi`ite invited him to attack Khurasan. He therefore led an assault on Khurasan, and the Hanafite, thinking themselves to be safe from the Tartars, opened the city gates for them. But the Tartars did not make any distinction between Hanafite and Shafi`ite and killed whoever fell to their hands. After killing most of its population they took it in occupation. These very differences between the Hanafite and the Shafi`ite opened for him the door of conquest upto Iraq. Consequently, after conquering Khurasan his courage increased and in 656 A.H. he marched on Baghdad with two hundred thousand Tartars. al-Musta`sim Billah's army and the people of Baghdad jointly faced them, but it was not in their power to stop this torrent of calamity. The result was that the Tartars entered Baghdad on the day of `Ashura' carrying with them bloodshed and ruin. They remained busy in killing for forty days. Rivers of blood flowed in the streets and all the alleys were filled with dead bodies. Hundred of thousands of people were put to the sword while al-Musta`sim Billah was trampled to death under foot. Only those people who hid themselves in wells or underground places and hid from their sight could survive. This was the devastation of Baghdad which shook the `Abbasid Kingdom to its foundation, so that its flag could never fly thereafter.

Some historians have laid the blame of this ruin on Ibn al-`Alqami (Abu Talib, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Baghdadi), the minister of al-Musta`sim Billah, by holding that, moved by the general masses of the Shi`ahs and the ruin of al-Karkh sector (of Baghdad), he invited Hulagu Khan through the latter's minister, the great scholar Nasiru'd-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad at-Tusi, to march on Baghdad. Even if it be so, it is not possible to ignore the historical fact that before this the

`Abbasid Caliph an-Nasir Lidini'llah had initiated the move for the attack on the Muslim areas. When the Khwarazm Shahs declined to acknowledge the authority of the Caliphate he had sent word to Chingiz Khan to march on Khwarazm, from which the Tartars had understood that there was no unity and co-operation among the Muslims. Thereafter the Hanafite had sent for Hulagu Khan to crush the Shafi`ite as a consequence of which the Tartars secured control over Khurasan, and prepared the way to march towards Baghdad. In these circumstances to hold only Ibn al-`Alqami responsible for the ruination of Baghdad and to ignore the move of an-Nasir Lidini'llah and the dispute between the Hanafite and the Shafi`ite would be covering up the facts, when in fact the cause for the ruin of Baghdad was this very conquest of Khurasan, whose real movers were the Hanafite inhabitants of the place. It was by this conquest that Hulagu Khan had the courage to march on the centre of Islam; otherwise it cannot have been the result of a single individual's message that he assaulted an old capital like Baghdad, the awe of whose power and grandeur was seated in the hearts of a large part of the world.

(3). To know hidden things on a personal level is one thing, while to be gifted by Allah with knowledge of any matter and to convey it to others is different. The knowledge of the future which the prophets and vicegerents possess is gained by them through Allah's teaching and informing. Allah alone has knowledge of events which are to happen in the future. Of course, He passes this knowledge on to whoever He wills. Thus He says:

> (He alone is) *the "Knower of the unseen, neither doth He reveal His secrets unto any* (one else) *save unto that one of the Messengers whom He chooseth… "* (Qur'an, 72:26-27)

In this way Amir al-mu'minin also received knowledge of the future through the instructions of the Prophet or inspiration from Allah, for which these words of Amir al-mu'minin stand evidence. Of course, sometimes it is not proper or expedient to disclose certain matters and they are allowed to remain under a veil. Then no one can be acquainted with them as Allah says:

> *Verily, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour and He sendeth down the rain, and knoweth He what is in the wombs; and knoweth not any soul what he shall earn the morrow, and knoweth not any soul in what lands he shall die: Verily Allah is All-knowing, All-aware.* (Qur'an, 31:34)

Chapter 136

SERMON 128

About measures and weights, the transience of this world and the condition of its people

O' creatures of Allah! You and whatever you desire from this world are like guests with fixed period of stay, and like debtors called upon to pay. Life is getting short while (the records of) actions are being preserved. Many strivers are wasting (their efforts) and many of those who exert are heading towards harm. You are in a period when steps of virtue are moving backwards, steps of evil are moving forward and Satan is increasing his eagerness to ruin people. This is the time that his equipment is strong, his traps have been spread and his prey has become easy (to catch).

Cast your glance over people wherever you like, you will see either a poor man suffering from poverty, or a rich man ignoring Allah despite His bounty over him, or a miser increasing his wealth by trampling on Allah's obligations, or an unruly person closing his ears to all counsel. Where are your good people; where are your virtuous people? Where are your high spirited men and generous men? Where are those of you who avoid deceit in their business and remain pure in their behaviour? Have they not all departed from this ignoble, transitory and troublesome world? Have you not been left among people who are just like rubbish and so low that lips avoid mention of them and do not move even to condemn their low position.

> … *"Verily we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return."* (Qur'an, 2:156)

Mischief has appeared and there is no one to oppose and change it, nor anyone to dissuade from it or desist from it. Do you, with these qualities, hope to secure abode in the purified neighbourhood of Allah and to be regarded His staunch lovers? Alas! Allah cannot be deceived about His paradise and His will cannot be secured save by His obedience.

Allah may curse those who advise good but they themselves avoid it, and those who desist others from evil but they themselves act upon it.

Chapter 137

SERMON 129

Delivered when Abu Dharr (1) was exiled towards ar-Rabadhah

O' Abu Dharr! You showed anger in the name of Allah therefore have hope in Him for whom you became angry. The people were afraid of you in the matter of their (pleasure of this) world while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them taking away what you fear them about. How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you. You will shortly know who is the gainer tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) and who is more enviable. Even if these skies and earth were closed to some individual and he feared Allah, then Allah would open them for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions they would have loved you and if you had shared in it they would have given you asylum.

(1). Abu Dharr al-Ghifari's name was Jundab ibn Junadah. He was an inhabitant of ar-Rabadhah which was a small village on the east side of Medina. When he heard about the proclamation of the Prophet, he came to Mecca and after making enquires saw the Prophet and accepted Islam whereupon the unbelievers of Quraysh gave him all sorts of troubles and inflicted pain after pain, but he remained steadfast. Among the acceptors of Islam he is the third, fourth or fifth. Along with this precedence in Islam his renunciation and piety was so high that the Prophet said:

> Among my people Abu Dharr is the like of `Isa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary) in renunciation and piety.

In the reign of Caliph `Umar, Abu Dharr left for Syria and during `Uthman's reign also remained there. He spent his days in counselling, preaching, acquainting people with the greatness of the members of the Prophet's family and guiding the people to the rightful path. The traces

of Shi`ism now found in Syria and Jabal `Amil (north of Lebanon) are the result of his preaching and activity and the fruit of seeds sown by him.

The Governor of Syria, Mu`awiyah, did not like the conduct of Abu Dharr and was much disgusted with his open criticism and mention of the money-making and other wrongful activities of `Uthman. But he could do nothing. At last he wrote to `Uthman that if he remained there any longer he would rouse the people against the Caliph. There should therefore be some remedy against this. On this, `Uthman wrote to him that Abu Dharr should be seated on an unsaddled camel and dispatched to Medina. The order was obeyed and Abu Dharr was sent to Medina. On reaching Medina he resumed his preaching of righteousness and truth. He would recall to the people the days of the Holy Prophet and refrain them from displays of kingly pageantry, whereupon `Uthman was much perturbed and tried to restrict his speaking. One day he sent for him and said: "I have come to know that you go about propagating that the Holy Prophet said that:

> "When Banu Umayyah will become thirty in number they will regard the cities of Allah as their property, His creatures their slaves and His religion the tool of their treachery."

Abu Dharr replied that he had heard the Prophet say so. `Uthman said that he was speaking a lie and enquired from those beside him if any one had heard this tradition and all replied in the negative. Abu Dharr then said that enquiry should be made from Amir al-mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.). He was sent for and asked about it. He said it was correct and Abu Dharr was telling the truth. `Uthman enquired on what basis he gave evidence for the correctness of this tradition. Amir al-mu'minin replied that he had heard the Holy Prophet say that:

> There is no speaker under the sky or over the earth more truthful than Abu Dharr.

Now `Uthman could do nothing. If he still held him to be liar it would mean falsification of the Prophet. He therefore kept quiet despite much perturbation, since he could not refute him. On the other side Abu Dharr began speaking against the usurping of Muslims' property quite openly and whenever he saw `Uthman he would recite this verse:

> *And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's way; announce thou unto them a painful chastisement. On the Day* (of

Judgement) *when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then shall be branded with it their foreheads and their sides and their backs;* (saying unto them) *"This is what ye hoarded up for yourselves, taste ye then what ye did hoard up."* (Qur'an, 9:34-35)

`Uthman promised him money but could not entrap this free man in his golden net, then resorted to repression but could not stop his truth-speaking tongue. At last he ordered him to leave and go to ar-Rabadhah and deputised Marwan, son of the man (al-Hakam) exiled by the Prophet, to turn him out of Medina. At the same time he issued the inhuman order that no one should speak to him nor see him off. But Amir al-mu'minin, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, `Aqil ibn Abi Talib, `Abdullah ibn Ja`far and `Ammar ibn Yasir did not pay any heed to this order and accompanied him to see him off, and Amir al-mu'minin uttered these sentences (i.e., the above sermon) on that occasion.

In ar-Rabadhah, Abu Dharr had to put up with a very had life. It was here that his son Dharr and his wife died and the sheep and goats that he was keeping for his livelihood also died. Of his children only one daughter remained, who equally shared his starvation and troubles. When the means of subsistence were fully exhausted and day after day passed without food she said to Abu Dharr: "Father, how long shall we go on like this. We should go somewhere in search of livelihood." Abu Dharr took her with him and set off for the wilderness. He could not find even any foliage. At last he was tired and sat down at a certain place. Then he collected some sand and, putting his head on it, lay down. Soon he began gasping, his eyes rolled up and pangs of death gripped him .

When the daughter saw this condition she was perplexed and said, "Father, if you die in this vast wilderness, how shall I manage for your burial quite alone." He replied, "Do not get upset. The Prophet told me that I shall die in helplessness and some Iraqis would arrange for my burial. After my death you put a sheet over me and then sit by the roadway and when some caravan passes that way tell them that the Prophet's companion Abu Dharr has died." Consequently, after his death she went and sat by the roadside. After some time a caravan passed that way. It included Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar an-Nakha`i, Hujr ibn `Adi at-Ta'i, `Alqamah ibn Qays an- Nakha`i, Sa`sa`ah ibn Suhan al-`Abdi, al-Aswad ibn Yazid an-Nakha`i etc. who were all fourteen persons in number. When they heard about the passing away of Abu Dharr they were shocked at his helpless death. They stopped their riding beasts and postponed the onward journey for his burial. Ma1ik al-Ashtar gave a sheet of

cloth for his shroud. It was valued at four thousand Dirhams. After his funeral rites and burial they departed. This happened in the month of *Dhi'l-hijjah*, 32 A.H.

Chapter 138

SERMON 130

Grounds for accepting the Caliphate and the qualities of a ruler and governor

O' (people of) differing minds and divided hearts, whose bodies are present but wits are absent. I am leading you (amicably) towards truthfulness, but you run away from it like goats and sheep running away from the howling of a lion. How hard it is for me to uncover for you the secrets of justice, or to straighten the curve of truthfulness.

O' my Allah! Thou knowest that what we did was not to seek power nor to acquire anything from the vanities of the world. We rather wanted to restore the signs of Thy religion and to usher prosperity into Thy cities so that the oppressed among Thy creatures might be safe and Thy forsaken commands might be established. O' my Allah! I am the first who leaned (towards Thee) and who heard and responded (to the call of Islam). No one preceded me in prayer (*salat*) except the Prophet.

You certainly know that he who is in charge of honour, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commandments and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth, nor be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor be of rude behaviour who would estrange them with his rudeness, nor should he deal unjustly with wealth thus preferring one group over another, nor should he accept a bribe while taking decisions, as he would forfeit (others) rights and hold them up without finality, nor should he ignore *sunnah* as he would ruin the people.

Chapter 139

SERMON 131

Warning about death and counselling

We praise Him for whatever He takes or gives or whatever He inflicts on us or tries us with. He is aware of all that is hidden and He sees all that is concealed. He knows all that breasts contain or eyes hide. We render evidence that there is no god except He and that Muhammad - peace be upon him and his progeny - has been chosen by Him and deputised by Him -evidence tendered both secretly and openly, by heart and by tongue.

A part of the same sermon

By Allah, certainly it is reality not fun, truth not falsehood. It is none else than death. Its caller is making himself heard and its dragsman is making haste. The majority of the people should not deceive you. You have seen those who lived before you, amassed wealth, feared poverty and felt safe from its (evil) consequences, the longevity of desires and the (apparent) distance from death. How, then, death overtook them, turned them out of their homelands and took them out of their places of safety. They were borne on coffins, people were busy about them one after another, carrying them on their shoulders and supporting them with their hands.

Did you not witness those who engaged in long-reaching desires, built strong buildings, amassed much wealth but their houses turned to graves and their collections turned into ruin. Their property devolved on the successors and their spouses on those who came after them. They cannot (now) add to their good acts nor invoke (Allah's) mercy in respect of evil acts. Therefore, whoever makes his heart habituated to fear Allah achieves a forward position and his action is successful. Prepare yourself for it and do all that you can for Paradise. Certainly this world has not been made a place of permanent stay for you. But it has been created as a pathway in order that you may take from it the provisions of your

(good) actions for the permanent house (in Paradise). Be ready for departure from here and keep close your riding animals for setting off.

Chapter 140

SERMON 132

On the Glory of Allah

This world and the next have submitted to Him their reins, and the skies and earths have flung their keys towards Him. The thriving trees bow to Him in the morning and evening, and produce for Him flaming fire from their branches, and at His command, turn their own feed into ripe fruits.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Qur'an

The Book of Allah is among you. It speaks and its tongue does not falter. It is a house whose pillars do not fall down, and a power whose supporters are never routed.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet

Allah deputised the Prophet after a gap from the previous prophets when there was much talk (among the people). With him Allah exhausted the series of prophets and ended the revelation. He then fought for Him those who were turning away from Him and were equating others with Him.

A part of the same sermon about this world

Certainly this world is the end of the sight of the (mentally) blind who see nothing beyond it. The sight of a looker (who looks with the eye of his mind) pierces through and realises that the (real) house is beyond this world. The looker therefore wants to get out of it while the blind wants to get into it. The looker collects provision from it (for the next world) while the blind collects provision for this very world.

A part of the same sermon - A caution

You should know that a man gets satiated and wearied with everything except life, because he does not find for himself any pleasure

in death. It is in the position of life for a dead heart, sight for the blind eye, hearing for the deaf ear, quenching for the thirsty and it contains complete sufficiency and safety.

The Book of Allah is that through which you see, you speak and you hear. Its one part speaks for the other part, and one part testifies to the other. It does not create differences about Allah nor does it mislead its own follower from (the path of) Allah. You are joined together in hatred of each other and in the growing of herbage on your filth (i.e., for covering inner dirt by good appearance outside). You are sincere with one another in your love of desires and bear enmity against each other in earning wealth. The evil spirit (Satan) has perplexed you and deceit has misled you. I seek the help of Allah for myself and you.

Chapter 141

SERMON 133

Delivered when Caliph `Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted (1) Amir al-mu'minin about himself, taking part in the march towards Rome (Byzantine Empire).

Allah has taken upon Himself for the followers of this religion the strengthening of boundaries and hiding of the secret places. Allah helped them when they were few and could not protect themselves. He is living and will not die. If you will your self proceed towards the enemy and clash with them and fall into some trouble, there will be no place of refuge for the Muslims other than their remote cities, nor any place they would return to. Therefore, you should send there an experienced man and send with him people of good performance who are well-intentioned. If Allah grants you victory, then this is what you want. If it is otherwise, you would serve as a support for the people and a returning place for the Muslims.

(1). About Amir al-mu'minin, the strange position is adopted that on the one hand, it is said that he was ignorant of practical politics and unacquainted with ways of administration from which it is intended that the revolts created by the Umayyad's lust for power should be shown to be the outcome of Amir al-mu'minin's weak administration. On the other hand, much is made of the various occasions when the then Caliphs consulted Amir al-mu'minin in important affairs of State in the matter of wars with unbelievers. The aim in this is not to exhibit his correctness of thinking and judgement or deep sagacity but to show that there was unity and concord between him and the Caliphs so that attention should not be paid to the fact that in some matters they also differed and that mutual clashes had also occurred. History shows that Amir al-mu'minin did have differences of principles with the Caliphs and did not approve every step of theirs. In the sermon of *ash-Shiqshiqiyyah* he has expressed in loud words his difference of opinion and anger about each regime.

Nevertheless, this difference does not mean that correct guidance should be withheld in collective Islamic problems. Again, Amir al-mu'minin's character was so high that no one could imagine that he would ever evade giving counsel which concerned the common weal, or would give such counsel which would damage public interests. That is why, despite differences of principle, he was consulted. This throws light on the greatness of his character and the correctness of his thinking and judgement. Similarly, it is a prominent trait of the Holy Prophet's character that despite rejecting his claim to prophethood the unbelievers acknowledged him the best trustee and could never doubt his trustworthiness. Rather, even during clashes of mutual opposition they entrusted to him their property without fear and never suspected that their property would be misappropriated. Similarly, Amir al-mu'minin was held to occupy so high a position of trust and confidence that friend and foe both trusted in the correctness of his counsel. So, just as the Prophet's conduct shows his height of trustworthiness, and just as it cannot be inferred from it that there was mutual accord between him and the unbelievers, because trust has its own place while the clash of Islam and unbelief has another, in the same way, despite having differences with the Caliphs, Amir al-mu'minin was regarded as the protector of national and community interests and as the guardian of Islam's wellbeing and prosperity. Thus when national interests were involved he was consulted and he tendered his unbiased advice raising himself above personal ends and keeping in view the Prophet's tradition to the effect that "He who is consulted is a trustee" never allowed any dishonesty or duplicity to interfere. When on the occasion of the battle of Palestine, the Caliph `Umar consulted him about his taking part in it himself, then, irrespective of whether or not his opinion would accord with `Umar's feelings, he kept in view Islam's prestige and existence and counselled him to stay in his place and to send to the battlefront such a man who should be experienced and well-versed in the art of fighting, because the going of an inexperienced man would have damaged the established prestige of Islam and the awe in which the Muslims were held which had existed from the Prophet's days would have vanished. In fact, in the Caliph `Umar's going there Amir al-mu'minin saw signs of defeat and vanquishment. He therefore found Islam's interest to lie in detaining him and indicated his view in the words that:

"If you have to retreat from the battlefield, it would not be your personal defeat only, but the Muslims would lose heart by it and leave the battle-field and disperse here and there, because with the officer in

command leaving the field the army too would lose ground. Furthermore, with the centre being without the Caliph there would be no hope of any further assistance from behind which could sustain courage of the combatants."

This is that counsel which is put forth as a proof of mutual accord although this advice was tendered in view of Islam's prestige and life which was dearer to Amir al-mu'minin than any other interest. No particular individual's life was dear to him for which he might have advised against participation in the battle.

Chapter 142

SERMON 134

There was some exchange of words between `Uthman ibn `Affan and Amir al-mu'minin when al-Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas (1) said to `Uthman that he would deal with Amir al-mu'minin on his behalf whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said to al-Mughirah:

O' son of the accursed and issueless, and of a tree which has neither root nor branch. Will you deal with me? By Allah, Allah will not grant victory to him whom you support, nor will he be able to stand up whom you raise. Get away from us. Allah may keep you away from your purpose. Then do whatever you like. Allah may not have mercy on you if you have pity on me.

(1).al-Mughirah ibn al-Akhnas ath-Thaqafi was among the wellwishers of `Uthman ibn `Affan and the son of his paternal aunt. His brother Abu'l Hakam ibn al-Akhnas was killed at the hands of Amir al-mu'minin in the battle of Uhud, because of which he bore malice against Amir al-mu'minin. His father was one of those people who accepted Islam at the time of the fall of Mecca but retained heresy and hypocrisy in heart. That is why Amir al-mu'minin called him accursed, and he called him issueless because he who has a son like al-Mughirah deserves to be called issueless.

Chapter 143

SERMON 135

About the sincerity of his own intention and support of the oppressed

Your allegiance to me was not without thinking, (1)nor is my and your position the same. I seek you for Allah's sake but you seek me for your own benefits. O' people! support me despite your heart's desires. By Allah, I will take revenge for the oppressed from the oppressor and will put a string in the nose of the oppressor and drag him to the spring of truthfulness even though he may grudge it.

(1). Here Amir almu'minin points to the view of `Umar ibn al-Khattab which he had on the allegiance of Abu Bakr on the day of Saqifah when he said: " … let me clarify this to you that the allegiance with Abu Bakr was a mistake and without thinking (*faltah*) but Allah saved us from its evil. Therefore, whoever (intends to) acts like this you must kill him… " (*as-Sahih*, al-Bukhari, vol. 8, p. 211; *as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah*, Ibn Hisham, vol. 4, pp. 308309; *at-Tarikh*, at-Tabari, vol. l, p. l822; *al-Kamil*, Ibn al-Athir, vol. 2, p. 327; *at-Tarikh*, Ibn Kathir, vol. 5, pp. 245246; *al-Musnad*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. l, p. 55; *as-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 388, 392; *al-Ansab*, al-Baladhuri, vol. 5, p. l5; *at-Tamhid*, al-Baqilani, p. l96; *ash-Sharh*, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 2, p. 23)

Chapter 144

SERMON 136

About Talhah and az-Zubayr

By Allah, they did not find any disagreeable thing in me, nor did they do justice between me and themselves. Surely, they are now demanding a right which they have abandoned and blood which they have themselves shed. If I partook in it with them then they too have a share in it, but if they committed it without me the demand should be against them. The first step of their justice should be that they pass verdict against themselves. I have my intelligence with me.

I have never mixed matters nor have they appeared mixed to me. Certainly, this is the rebellious group in which there is the near one (az-Zubayr), the scorpion's venom (`A'ishah) and doubts which cast a veil (on facts). But the matter is clear, and the wrong has been shaken from its foundation. Its tongue has stopped uttering mischief. By Allah, I will prepare for them a cistern from which I alone will draw water. They will not be able to drink from it nor would they be able to drink from any other place.

A part of the same sermon

You advanced towards me shouting "allegiance, allegiance" like she-camels having delivered newly born young ones leaping towards their young. I held back my hand but you pulled it towards you., I drew back my hand but you dragged it. O' my Allah! these two have ignored my rights and did injustice to me. They both have broken allegiance to me, and roused people against me. Unfasten Thou what they have fastened, and do not make strong what they have woven. Show them the evil in what they aimed at and acted upon. Before fighting I asked them to be steadfast in allegiance and behaved with them with consideration but they belittled the blessing and refused (to adopt the course of) safety.

Chapter 145

SERMON 137

Referring to events in the future

He will direct desires towards (the path of) guidance while people will have turned guidance towards desires, and he will turn their views to the direction of the Qur'an while the people will have turned the Qur'an to their views.

A part of the same sermon

(Before this Enjoiner of Good (1), matters will deteriorate) till war will rage among you with full force, showing forth its teeth, with udders full of sweet milk but with a sour tip. Beware, it will be tomorrow and the morrow will come soon with things which you do not know. The Man in power, not from this crowd, will take to task all those were formerly appointed for their ill deeds and the earth will pour forth its eternal treasures and fling before him easily her keys. He will show you the just way of behaviour and revive the Qur'an and *sunnah* which have become lifeless (among people).

A part of the same sermon

As if I see (him), he (the Enjoiner of Evil) (2) is shouting in Syria (ash-Sham) and is extending his banners to the outskirts of Kufah. He is bent towards it like the biting of the she-camel. He has covered the ground with heads. His mouth is wide open and (the trampling of) his footsteps on the ground have become heavy. His advance is broad and his attacks are severe.

By Allah, he will disperse you throughout the earth till only a few of you remain, like kohl in the eye. You will continue like this till the Arabs return to their sense. You should therefore stick to established ways, clear signs and the early period which has the lasting virtues of the Prophethood. You should know that Satan makes his ways easy so that you may follow him on his heels.

(1). This prophecy of Amir al-mu'minin is with regard to the appearance of the Twelfth Imam, Abu'l-Qasim Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi (p.b.u.h.).

(2). This refers to `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan who came to power in Syria (ash-Sham) after his father Marwan ibn al-Hakam and then after the killing of al-Mukhtar ibn Abi `Ubayd ath-Thaqafi in his encounter with Mus`ab ibn az-Zubayr he proceeded towards Iraq. He clashed with Mus`ab's force at Maskin near Dayru'l-jathaliq in the outskirts of Kufah. After defeating him he made a victorious entry into Kufah and took allegiance from its inhabitants. Then he sent al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi to Mecca to fight with `Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr. Consequently this man besieged Mecca and stoned it, and shed the blood of thousands of innocent persons like water. He killed Ibn az-Zubayr and hung his body on the gallows. He perpetrated such atrocities on the people that one shudders at the thought of them.

Chapter 146

SERMON 138

On the occasion of the Consultative Committee
(after the death of `Umar ibn al-Khattab)

No one preceded me in inviting people to truthfulness, in giving consideration to kinship and practising generosity. So, hear my word and preserve what I say. Maybe you will see soon after today that over this matter swords will be drawn and pledges will be broken, so much so that some of you will become leaders of the people of misguidance and followers of people of ignorance.

Chapter 147

SERMON 139

About backbiting and speaking ill of others (1)

Those who do not commit sins and have been gifted with safety (from sins) should take pity on sinners and other disobedient people. Gratefulness should be mostly their indulgence and it should prevent them from (finding faults with) others. What about the backbiter who blames his brother and finds fault with him? Does he not remember that Allah has concealed the sins which he committed while they were bigger than his brother's sins pointed out by him? How can he vilify him about his sins when he has himself committed one like it? Even if he has not committed a similar sin he must have committed bigger ones. By Allah, even if he did not commit big sins but committed only small sins, his exposing the sins of people is itself a big sin.

O' creature of Allah, do not be quick in exposition anyone's sin for he may be forgiven for it, and do not feel yourself safe even for a small sin because you may be punished for it. Therefore, every one of you who comes to know the faults of others should not expose them in view of what he knows about his own faults, and he should remain busy in thanks that he has been saved from what others have been indulging in.

(1). The habit of fault finding and backbiting has become so common that even the feeling of its evilness has disappeared. And at present neither the high avoid it nor the low; neither the high position of the pulpit prevents it nor the sacredness of the mosque. Whenever a few companions sit together their topic of conversation and engaging interest is just to discuss the faults of their opponents with added colourisation, and to listen to them attentively. Although the fault finder is himself involved in the faults which he picks up in others, yet he does not like that his own faults should be exposed. In such a case, he should have consideration for similar feelings in others and should avoid searching for their

faults and hurting their feelings. He should act after the proverb: "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you."

Backbiting is defined as the exposure of the fault of a brother-in-faith with the intent to vilify him in such a way as to irritate him, whether it be by speaking, acting, implication or suggestion. Some people take backbiting to cover only that which is false or contrary to fact. According to them to relate what was seen or heard, exactly as it was, is not backbiting, and they say that they are not backbiting but only relating exactly what they saw or heard. But in fact backbiting is the name of this very relating of the facts, because if it is not factually correct it would be false accusation and wrong blame. It is related about the Prophet that he said:

> "Do you know what backbiting is?" People said, "Allah and His Prophet know better." Then he said, "Backbiting means that you say about your brother a thing which pains him." Someone said, "But what if I say what is actually true about him?" The Prophet replied, "It is backbiting only when it is factually true, otherwise you would be accusing him falsely."

There are many causes for indulging in backbiting, and because of this a man commits it sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali has recounted these causes in detail in his book *Ihya' `ulumu'd-din*. A few of the important ones are:

1)

To make fun of anyone or to make him appear abased.

2)

To make people laugh and to display one's own jolliness and high spiritedness.

3)

Expressing one's feelings under the influence of rage and anger.

4)

To establish one's feelings under the influence of rage and anger.

5)

To disprove one's connection or involvement in a matter; namely that a particular evil was not committed by oneself but by someone else.

6)

To associate oneself with some group when in their company in order to avoid strangeness with them.

7)

To belittle a person from whom it is feared that he will expose some fault of one's.

8)

To defeat a competitor in the same calling.

9)

To seek position in the audience of someone in power.

10)

To express sorrow by saying it is sad that so-and-so has fallen in such and such a sin.

11)

To express astonishment, for example, to say it is wonderful that so and so has done this.

12)

To name the committer of an act when expressing anger over it.

However, in some cases fault finding or criticising does not fall under backbiting.

1)

If the oppressed complains of the oppressor in order to seek redress, it is not backbiting. Allah says about it:

Loveth not Allah open utterance of evil in speech except by one who hath been wronged.. (Qur'an, 4:148)

2)

To relate anyone's fault while giving advice is no backbiting because dishonesty and duplicity is not permissible in counselling.

3)

If in connection with seeking the requirements of a religious commandment the naming of a particular individual cannot be avoided,

then to state the fault of such person to the extent necessary would not be backbiting.

4)

To relate the misappropriation or dishonesty committed by someone with a view to saving a Muslim brother from harm would not be backbiting.

5)

To relate the fault of someone before one who can prevent him from committing it is not backbiting.

6)

Criticism and expression of opinion about a relater of traditions is not backbiting.

7)

If a person is well acquainted with someone's shortcoming, then to relate such a fault in order to define his personality, for example, describing a deaf, dumb, lame or handless person as thus, is not backbiting.

8)

To describe any fault of a patient before a physician for purposes of treatment is not backbiting.

9)

If someone claims wrong lineage then to expose his correct lineage is not backbiting.

10)

If the life, property or honour of someone can be protected only by informing him of some fault, it would not be backbiting.

11)

If two persons discuss a fault of another which is already known to both it would not be backbiting, although to avoid discussing it is better, since it is possible one of the two might have forgotten it.

12)

To expose the evils of one who openly commits evils is not back-biting as the tradition runs:

"There is no backbiting in the case of he who has torn away the veil of shamefulness."

Chapter 148

SERMON 140

Against reliance on heresy

O' people! If a person knows his brother to be steadfast in faith and of correct ways he should not lend ear to what people may say about him. Sometimes the bowman shoots arrows but the arrow goes astray; similarly talk can be off the point. Its wrong perishes, while Allah is the Hearer and the Witness. There is nothing between truth and falsehood except four fingers.

Amir al-mu'minin was asked the meaning of this whereupon he closed his fingers together and put them between his ear and eye and said: It is falsehood when you say, "I have heard so," while it is truth when you say, "have seen."

Chapter 149

SERMON 141

Against misplaced generosity

He who shows generosity to those who have no claim to it or who are not fit for it would not earn anything except the praise of the ignoble and appreciation of bad persons, although as long s he continues giving, the ignorant will say how generous his hand is, even though in the affairs of Allah he is a miser.

Therefore, to whosoever Allah gives wealth he should use it in extending good behaviour to his kinsmen, in entertaining, in releasing prisoners and the afflicted; in giving to the poor and to debtors, and he should endure (the troubles arising out of) the fulfilment of rights (of others) and hardships in expectation of reward. Certainly, the achievement of these qualities is the height of greatness in this world and achievement of the distinctions of the next world; if Allah so wills.

Chapter 150

SERMON 142

Praying for rain

Beware; the earth which bears you and the sky which overshadows you are obedient to their Sustainer (Allah). They have not been bestowing their blessings on you for any feeling of pity on you or inclination towards you, nor for any good which they expect from you, but they were commanded to bestow benefits on you and they are obeying, and were asked to maintain your good and so they are maintaining it.

Certainly, Allah tries his creatures in respect of their evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and closing the treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to turn away (from evils) may turn away, he who wishes to recall (forgotten good) may recall, and he who wishes to abstain (from evil) may abstain. Allah, the Glorified, has made the seeking of (His) forgiveness a means for the pouring down of livelihood and mercy on the people as Allah has said:

> *… Seek ye the forgiveness of your Lord! Verily, He is the Most-forgiving, He will send (down) upon you the cloud raining in torrents, and help you with wealth and sons (children) …* (Qur'an, 17:10-12)

Allah may shower mercy on him who took up repentance, gave up sins and hastened (in performing good acts before) his death.

O' my Allah! we have come out to Thee from under the curtains and coverings (of houses) when the beasts and children are crying, seeking Thy Mercy, hoping for the generosity of Thy bounty an fearing Thy chastisement and retribution. O' my Allah! give us to drink from Thy rain and do not disappoint us, nor kill us by years (of drought) nor punish us for what the foolish among us have committed, O' the Most Merciful of all.

O' my Allah! we have come out to Thee to complain to Thee who is (already) not hidden from Thee, when the seven troubles have forced us, droughty famines have driven us, distressing wants have made us

helpless and troublesome mischiefs have incessantly befallen us. O' my Allah! we beseech Thee not to send us back disappointed nor to return us with down-cast eyes, nor to address us (harshly) for our sins, nor deal with us according to our deeds.

O' my Allah! do pour on us Thy mercy, Thy blessing, Thy sustenance and Thy pity, and make us enjoy a drink which benefits us, quenches our thirst, produces green herbage with which all that was lost gets a growing and all that had withered comes to life again. It should bring about the benefit of freshness and plentifulness of ripe fruits. With it plains may be watered, rivers may begin flowing, plants may pick up foliage and prices may come down. Surely, Thou art powerful over whatever Thou willest.

Chapter 151

SERMON 143

Deputation of Prophets

Allah deputed prophets and distinguished them with His revelation. He made them as pleas for Him among His creation, so that there should not remain any excuse for people. He invited people to the right path through a truthful tongue. You should know that Allah fully knows creation. Not that He was not aware of what they concealed from among their hidden secrets and inner feelings, but in order to try them as to whom from among them performs good acts, so that there is reward in respect of good acts and chastisement in respect of evil acts.

The position of Ahlu'l-bayt (the Household of the Holy Prophet)

Where are those who falsely and unjustly claimed that they are deeply versed in knowledge, as against us, although Allah raised us in position and kept them down, bestowed upon us knowledge but deprived them, and entered us (in the fortress of knowledge) but kept them out. With us guidance is to be sought and blindness (of misguidance) is to be changed into brightness. Surely Imams (divine leaders) will be from the Quraysh. They have been planted in this line through Hashim. It would not suit others nor would others be suitable as heads of affairs.

A part of the same sermon about those who are against the Ahlu'l-bayt

They have adopted this world and abandoned the next world; left clean water and drunk stinking water. I can almost see their wicked one(1) who committed unlawful acts, associated himself with them, befriended them and accorded with them till his hair grew grey and his nature acquired their tinge. He proceeded onward emitting foam like a torrential stream not caring whom he drowned, or, like fire in straw, without realising what he burnt.

Where are the minds which seek light from the lamps of guidance, and the eyes which look at minarets of piety? Where are the hearts dedicated to Allah, and devoted to the obedience of Allah? They are all crowding towards worldly vanities and quarrelling over unlawful issues. The ensigns of Paradise and Hell have been raised for them but they have turned their faces away from Paradise and proceeded to Hell by dint of their performances. Allah called them but they showed dislike and ran away. When Satan called them they responded and proceeded (towards him).

(1). Here the reference is to `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan who committed extreme atrocities through his officer al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi.

Chapter 152

SERMON 144

About this world

O' people, you are, in this world, the target for the arrows of death. With every drinking there is choking and with every eating there is suffocation. You do not get any benefit in it except by foregoing another (benefit) and no one among you advances in age by a day except by the taking away of a day from his life. Nothing more is added to his eating unless it reduces what was there before. No mark appears for him unless a mark disappears. Nothing new comes into being unless the new becomes old. No new crop comes up unless a crop has been reaped. Those roots are gone whose off-shoots we are. How can an off-shoot live after the departure of its root?

A part of the same sermon on innovation (bid`ah)

No innovation is introduced unless one *sunnah* is forsaken, keep away from innovations and stick to the broad road. Surely the old tested ways are the best and the innovated ones are bad.

Chapter 153

SERMON 145

Spoken when `Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Amir al-mu'minin about taking part in the battle of Persia. (1)

In this matter, victory of defeat is not dependent on the smallness or greatness of forces. It is Allah's religion which He has raised above all faiths, and His army which He has mobilised and extended, till it has reached the point where it stands now, and has arrived its present positions. We hold a promise from Allah, and He will fulfil His promise and support His army.

The position of the head of government is that of the thread for beads, as it connects them and keeps them together. If the thread is broken, they will disperse and be lost, and will never come together again. The Arabs today, even though small in number are big because of Islam and strong because of unity. You should remain like the axis for them, and rotate the mill (of government) with (the help of) the Arabs, and be their root. Avoid battle, because if you leave this place the Arabs will attack you from all sides and directions till the unguarded places left behind by you will become more important than those before you.

If the Persians see you tomorrow they will say, "He is the root (chief) of Arabia. If we do away with him we will be in peace." In this way this will heighten their eagerness against you and their keenness to aim at you. You say that they have set out to fight against the Muslims. Well, Allah detests their setting out more than you do, and He is more capable of preventing what He detests. As regards your idea about their (large) number, in the past we did not fight on the strength of large numbers but we fought on the basis of Allah's support and assistance.

(1). When some people advised Caliph `Umar to partake in the battle of al-Qadisiyyah or Nahawand, he finding it against his personal inclination, thought it necessary to consult Amir al-mu'minin, so that if he advised against it he would plead before others that he had stayed back on

Amir al-mu'minin's advice, but also if he advised partaking in the battle some other excuse would be found. However, unlike others, Amir al-mu'minin advised him to stay back. The other people had advised him to join in fighting, because the Holy Prophet did not send only others to fight but took part in it himself as well, keeping his close relations also with him. What Amir al-mu'minin had in view was that `Umar's presence in the battle could not be beneficial to Islam, but rather his staying back would save the Muslims from dispersion.

Amir al-mu'minin's view that "the position of the head of government is that of the axis around which the system of the government rotates" is a point of principle and does not concern any particular personality. Whether the ruler is a Muslim or an unbeliever, just or despotic, virtuous or vicious, for the administration of the state his presence is a necessity, as Amir al-mu'minin has explained elsewhere at greater length:

> The fact is that there is no escape for men from a ruler good or bad. Faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. During the rule, Allah will carry everything to its end. Through the ruler tax is collected, the enemy is fought, roads are protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoy peace and are allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked. (*Sermon 40*)

The words which Amir al-mu'minin uttered in his advice are not indicative of any quality of Caliph `Umar except his being the ruler. There is no doubt that he held worldly authority, irrespective of the question of whether it was secured in the right way or wrong way. And where there is authority there is centring of people's affairs. That is why Amir al-mu'minin said that if `Umar would go out the Arabs would follow him in large numbers towards the battlefield, because when the ruler is on the march the people will not like to stay behind. The result of their going would be that city after city would become vacant, while the enemy will infer from their reaching the battlefield that the Islamic cities are lying vacant, and that if these people were repulsed no assistance would reach the Muslims from the centre. Again, if the ruler were killed the army would disperse automatically, because the ruler is as its foundation. When the foundation is shaken the walls cannot remain standing. The word *"aslu'l-`Arab"* (the root chief) of Arabia has not been used by Amir al-mu'minin as his own but he has taken it from the Persians. Obviously in his capacity as the head of the State, Caliph `Umar was, in their

view, the chief of Arabia. Besides, the reference is to the country, not to Islam or Muslims, so that there is no suggestion of any importance for him from the Islamic point of view.

When Amir al-mu'minin pointed out to Caliph `Umar that on his reaching there the Persians would aim at him, and that if he fell into their hands they would not spare him without killing, although such words would have touched the brave to the quick and would have heightened their spirits, `Umar liked the advice to stay back and thought it better to keep himself away from the flames of battle. If this advice had not been in accord with his personal inclination he would not have received it so heartily and would have tried to argue that the administration of the country could be maintained by leaving a deputy. Again when other people had already advised him to go out, what was the need for consulting Amir al-mu'minin except to get an excuse to stay back.

Chapter 154

SERMON 146

The purpose of the deputation of the Holy Prophet and the condition of the time when people would go against the Qur'an

Allah deputed Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) with Truth so that he may take out His people from the worship of idols towards His worship and from obeying Satan towards obeying Him and sent him with the Qur'an which He explained and made strong, in order that the people may know their sustainer (Allah) since they were ignorant of Him, may acknowledge Him since they were denying Him, and accept Him since they were refusing (to believe in) Him. Because He, the Glorified, revealed Himself to them through His Book without their having seen Him, by means of what He showed them out of His might and made them fear His sway. How He destroyed those whom He wished to destroy through His chastisement and ruined those whom He wished to ruin through His retribution!

On the future

Certainly, a time will come upon you after me when nothing will be more concealed than rightfulness, nothing more apparent than wrongfulness and nothing more current than untruth against Allah and His Prophet. For the people of this period nothing will be more valueless than the Qur'an being recited as it ought to be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Qur'an being misplaced from its position. And in the towns nothing will be more hated than virtue, nor anything more acceptable than vice.

The holders of the book will throw it away and its memorisers would forget it. In these days the Qur'an and its people will be exiled and expelled. They will be companions keeping together on one path, but no one will offer them asylum. Consequently at this time the Qur'an and its people will be among the people but not among them, will be with them but not with them, because misguidance cannot accord with guidance

even though they may be together. The people will have united on division and will therefore have cut away from the community, as though they were the leaders of the Qur'an and not the Qur'an their leader. Nothing of it will be left with them except its name, and they will know nothing save its writing and its words. Before that, they will inflict hardships on the virtuous, naming the latter's truthful views about Allah false allegations, and enforcing for virtues the punishment of the vice.

Those before you passed away because of the lengthening of their desires and the forgetting of their death, till that promised event befell them about which excuses are turned down, repentance is denied and punishment and retribution is inflicted.

About Ahlu'l-bayt

O' people, he who seeks counsel from Allah secures guidance and he who adopts His word as guide is led towards what is more straight, because Allah's lover feels secure and His opponent feels afraid. It does not behove one who knows His greatness to assume greatness, but the greatness of those who know His greatness is that they should know before Him, and the safety for those who know what His power is lies in submitting to Him. Do not be scared away from the truth like the scaring of the healthy from the scabbed person, or the sound person from the sick.

You should know that you will never know guidance unless you know who has abandoned it, you will never abide by the pledges of the Qur'an unless you know who has broken them, and will never cling to it unless you know who has forsaken it. Seek these things from those who own them because they are the life spring of knowledge and death of ignorance. They are the people whose commands will disclose to you their (extent of) knowledge, their silence will disclose their (capacity of) speaking and their outer appearance will disclose their inner self. They do not go against religion, and do not differ from one other about it, while it is among them a truthful witness and a silent speaker.

Chapter 155

SERMON 147

About Talhah and az-Zubayr and the people of Basrah

Both of these two (Talhah and az-Zubayr) wishes the Caliphate for himself, and is drawing towards himself as against the other fellow. They do not employ any connection for getting access to Allah nor proceed towards Him through any means. Both of them bear malice against the other. Shortly his veil over it will be uncovered. By Allah, if they achieve what they aim at, one of them will kill the other, and one will finish the other. The rebellious party has stood up. Where are the seekers of virtue; for the paths have already been determined and they have been given the news. For every misguidance there is a cause and for every break of pledge there is a misrepresentation. By Allah, I shall not be like him who listens to the voice of mourning, hears the man who brings news of death and also visits the mourner yet does not take lesson.

Chapter 156

SERMON 148

Before his passing away (last will)

O' people. Every one has to meet what he wishes to avoid by running away. (1) Death is the place to which life is driving. To run away from it means to catch it. How many days did I spend in searching for the secret of this matter, but Allah did not allow save its concealment. Alas! It is a treasured knowledge. As for my last will, it is that concerning Allah, do not believe in a partner for Him, and concerning Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.), do not disregard his Sunnah. Keep these two pillars and burn these two lamps. Till you are not divided, no evil will come to you. (2) Every one of you has to bear his own burden. It has been kept light for the ignorant. Allah is Merciful. Faith is straight. The leader (Prophet) is the holder of knowledge. Yesterday I was with you; today I have become the object of a lesson for you, and tomorrow I shall leave you. Allah may forgive me and you.

If the foot remains firm in this slippery place, well and good. But if the foot slips, this is because we are under the shade of branches, the passing of the winds and the canopy of the clouds whose layers are dispersed in the sky, and whose traces disappeared (3) in the earth. I was your neighbour. My body kept you company for some days and shortly you will find just an empty body of mine which would be stationary after (all its) movement and silent after speech so that my calmness, the closing of my eyes, and the stillness of my limbs may provide you counsel, because it is more of a counsel for those who take a lesson (from it) than eloquent speech and a ready word. I am departing from you like one who is eager to meet (someone). Tomorrow you will look at my days, then my inner side will be disclosed to you and you will understand me after the vacation of my place and its occupation by someone else.

(1). This means that during all the time spent in the attempts that a man makes to avoid death and in the means he adopts for it, it is only

the span of life that is shortened. As the time passes the objective of death approaches near, so much so that in one's attempt to seek life one meets death.

(2). *"wa khalakum dhammun"* (No evil will come to you). This sentence is used as a proverb. It was first employed by Qasir, slave of Jadhimah ibn Malik al-Abrash.

(3). The intention is that when all these things die, how can those who inhabit them remain safe? Certainly they too, like every thing else, have to pass away some day or other. Then why should there be any wonder at my life coming to an end?

Chapter 157

SERMON 149

About future events and some activities of the hypocrites

They took to the right and the left piercing through to the ways of evil and leaving the paths of guidance. Do not make haste for a matter which is to happen and is awaited, and do not wish for delay in what the morrow is to bring for you. For, how many people make haste for a matter, but when they get it they begin to wish they had not got it. How near is today to the dawning of tomorrow. O' my people, this is the time for the occurrence of every promised event and the approach of things which you do not know. Whoever from among us will be during these days will move through them with a burning lamp and will tread on the footsteps of the virtuous, in order to unfasten knots, to free slaves, to divide the united and to unite the divided. He will be in concealment from people. The stalker will not find his footprints even though he pursues with his eye. Then a group of people will be sharpened like the sharpening of swords by the blacksmith. Their sight will be brightened by revelation, the (delicacies of) commentary will be put in their ears and they will be given drinks of wisdom, morning and evening.

A part of the same sermon

Their period became long in order that they might complete (their position of) disgrace and deserve vicissitudes, till the end of the period was reached, and a group of people turned towards mischief and picked up their arms for fighting. The virtuous did not show any obligation to Allah but calmly endured, and did not feel elated for having engaged themselves in truthfulness. Eventually the period of trial came to an end according to what was ordained. Then they propagated their good views among others and sought nearness to Allah according to the command of their leader.

When Allah took the Prophet (to himself) a group of men went back on their tracks. The ways (of misguidance) ruined them and they placed

trust in deceitful intriguers, showed consideration to other than kinsmen, abandoned the kin whom they had been ordered to love, and shifted the building from its strong foundation and built it in other than its (proper) place. They are the source of every shortcoming and the door of gropers in the dark. They were moving to and fro in amazement and lay intoxicated in the way of the people of the Pharaohs. They were either bent on this world and taking support on it or away from the faith and removed from it.

Chapter 158

SERMON 150

The condition of the people during disorder, and advice against oppression and unlawful earning

I praise Allah and seek His help from (what led to the) punishment of Satan and his deceitful acts, and (l seek His) protection from Satan's traps and waylayings. I stand witness that there is no god but Allah and I stand witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and his chosen and his selected one. Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) distinction cannot be paralleled nor can his loss be made good. Populated places were brightened through him when previously there was dark misguidance, overpowering ignorance and rude habits, and people regarded unlawful as lawful, humiliated the man of wisdom, passed lives when there were no prophets and died as unbelievers.

You, O' people of Arabia, will be victims of calamities which have come near. You should avoid the intoxication of wealth, fear the disasters of chastisement, keep steadfast in the darkness and crookedness of mischief when its hidden nature discloses itself, its secrets become manifest and its axis and the pivot of its rotation gain strength. It begins in imperceptible stages but develops into great hideousness. Its youth is like the youth of an adolescent and its marks are like the marks of beating by stone.

Oppressors inherit it by (mutual) agreement. The first of them serves as a leader for the latter one and the latter one follows the first one. They vie with each other in (the matter of) this lowly world, and leap over this stinking carcass. Shortly the follower will denounce his connection with the leader, and the leader with the follower. They will disunite on account of mutual and curse one another when they meet. Then after this there will appear another arouser of mischief who will destroy ruined things. The heart will become wavering after being normal, men will be

misled after safety, desires will multiply and become diversified and views will become confused.

Whoever proceeds towards this mischief will be ruined and whoever strives for it will be annihilated. They will be biting each other during it as the wild asses bite each other in the herd. The coils of the rope will be disturbed and the face of affairs will be blinded. During it sagacity will be on the ebb, and the oppressors will (get the opportunity to) speak. This mischief will smash the Bedouins with its hammers and crush them with its chest. In its dust the single marchers will be lost, and in its way the horsemen will be destroyed. It will approach with the bitterness of destiny and will give pure blood (instead of milk). It will breach the minarets of faith and shatter the ties of firm belief. The wise will run away from it while the wicked will foster it. It will thunder and flash (like lightning). It will create a severe disaster. In it kinship will be forsaken and Islam will be abandoned. He who declaims it will also be affected by it, and he who flees from it will (be forced to) stay in it.

A part of the same sermon

Among them some will be unavenged martyrs and some will be stricken with fear and seek protection. They will be deceived by pledges and fraudulent belief. You should not become landmarks of mischiefs and signs of innovations but should adhere to that on which the rope of the community has been wound and on which the pillars of obedience have been founded. Proceed towards Allah as oppressed and do not proceed to Him as oppressors. Avoid the paths of Satan and the places of revolt. Do not put in your bellies unlawful morsels because you are facing Him Who has made disobedience unlawful for you, and made the path of obedience easy for you.

Chapter 159

SERMON 151

***About the greatness and the attributes of Allah** (1)*

Praise be to Allah who is proof of His existence through His creation, of His being external through the newness of His creation, and through their mutual similarities of the fact that nothing is similar to Him. Senses cannot touch Him and curtains cannot veil Him, because of the difference between the Maker and the made, the Limiter and the limited and the Sustainer and the sustained.

He is One but not by the first in counting, is Creator but not through activity or labour, is Hearer but not by means of any physical organ, is Looker but not by a stretching of eyelids, is Witness but not by nearness, is Distinct but not by measurement of distance, is Manifest but not by seeing and is Hidden but not by subtlety (of body). He is Distinct from things because He overpowers them and exercises might over them, while things are distinct from Him because of their subjugation to Him and their turning towards Him.

He who describes Him limits Him. He who limits Him numbers Him. He who numbers Him rejects His eternity. He who said "how" sought a description for Him. He who said "where" bounded him. He is the Knower even though there be nothing to be known. He is the Sustainer even though there be nothing to be sustained. He is the Powerful even though there be nothing to be overpowered.

A part of the same sermon about the Divine leaders (Imams)

The riser has risen, the sparkler has sparkled, the appearer has appeared and the curved has been straightened. Allah has replaced one people with another and one day with another. We awaited these changes as the famine-stricken await the rain. Certainly the Imams are the vicegerents of Allah over His creatures and they make the creatures know Allah. No one will enter Paradise except he who knows them and

knows Him, and no one will enter Hell except he who denies them and denies Him.

Allah the Glorified, has distinguished you with Islam and has chosen you for it. This is because it is the name of safety and the collection of honour. Allah the Glorified, chose its way and disclosed its pleas through open knowledge and secret maxims. Its (Qur'an)wonders are not exhausted and its delicacies do not end. It contains blossoming bounties and lamps of darkness. (The doors of) virtues cannot be opened save with its keys, nor can gloom be dispelled save with its lamps. Allah has protected its inaccessible points (from enemies) and allowed grazing (to its followers) in its pastures. It contains cover (from the ailment of misguidance) for the seeker of cure and full support for the seeker of support.

(1). The first part of this sermon consists of important issues concerning the science of knowledge about Allah, wherein Amir al-mu'minin has thrown light on the matter that Allah is from ever and His attributes are the same as He Himself. When we cast a glance at creation, we see that for every movement there is a mover, from which every man of ordinary wisdom is compelled to conclude that no effect can appear without a cause, so much so, that even an infant a few days old, when his body is touched, feels in the depth of his consciousness that someone has touched him. He indicates it by opening his eyes or turning and looking. How then can the creation of the world and the system of all creation be arranged without a Creator or Organiser?

Once it is necessary to believe in a Creator, then He should exist by Himself, because everything which has a beginning must have a centre of existence from which it should terminate. If that too needed a creator, there would be the question of whether this creator is also the creation of some other creator or exists by itself. Thus unless a Self-created Creator is believed in, who should be the cause of all causes, the mind will remain groping in the unending labyrinth of cause and effect, and never attain the idea of the last extremity of the series of creation. It would fall into the fallacy of circular arguing and would not reach any end.

If the creator were taken to have created himself, then there would be (one of the two positions, namely) either he should be non-existent or existent. If he were not existent, then it would not be possible for something non-existent to create any existent being. If he were existent before creating himself, there would be no sense in coming into being again. Therefore it is necessary to believe that the Creator should be a

Being not dependent on any other creator for His own existence, and everything else should be dependent on Him. This dependence of the entire creation is a proof that the existence of the Source of all creation is from ever and eternal. And since all beings other than He are subject to change, are dependent on position and place and are similar to one another in qualities and properties, and since similarity leads to plurality whereas unity has no like save itself, therefore nothing can be like Him.

Even things called one cannot be reckoned after His Unity because He is One and Singular in every respect. He is free and pure from all those attributes which are found in body or matter because He is neither body, nor colour, nor shape, nor does He lie in any direction, nor is He bounded within some place or locality. Therefore, man cannot see or understand Him through his senses or feelings, because senses can know only those things which accord with the limitations of time, place and matter. To believe that He can be seen is to believe that He has body, but since He is not a body, and He does not exist through a body, and He does not lie in any direction or place, there is no question of His being seen. But His being unseen is not like that of subtle material bodies, due to whose delicacy the eye pierces through them and eyes remain unable to see them; as for example the wind in the vast firmament. But He is unseen by His very existence. Nevertheless, nothing is unseen for Him. He sees as well as hears, but is not dependent on instruments of seeing or hearing, because if He were in need of organs of the body for hearing and seeing He would be in need of external things for His perfection and would not be a perfect Being, whereas He should be perfect in all respects and no attribute of perfection should be apart from His Self.

To believe in attributes separately from His Self would mean that there would be a self and a few attributes and the compound of the self and the attributes would be Allah. But a thing which is compounded is dependent on its parts and these parts must exist before their composition into the whole. When the parts exist from before, how can the whole be from ever and eternal because its existence is later than that of its parts. But Allah had the attributes of knowledge, power and sustaining even when nothing was existent, because none of His attributes were created in Him from outside, but His attributes are His Self and His Self is His attributes. Consequently, His knowledge does not depend on the object of knowledge existing first and then His knowledge, because His Self is prior to things coming into existence. Nor is it necessary for His power that there should first exist the object to be over-powered and then alone He would be called Powerful, because Powerful is that who has power

equally for doing or abandoning and as such the existence of the object to be over-powered is not necessary.

Similarly Sustainer means master. Just as He is the Master of the non-existent after its coming into existence, in the same way He has power to bring it into existence from non-existence, namely if He so wills He may bestow existence upon it.

Chapter 160

SERMON 152

About negligent persons and the characteristics of beasts, carnivores and women

He has been allowed time by Allah. He is falling into error along with negligent persons and goes early in the morning with sinners, without any road to lead or any Imam to guide.

A part of the same sermon

At last when Allah will make clear to them the reward for their sins, and take them out from the veils of their neglectfulness they will proceed to what they were running away from, and run away from what they were proceeding to. They will not benefit from the wants they will satisfy or the desires they would fulfil.

I warn you and myself from this position. A man should derive benefit from his own self. Certainly, prudent is he who hears and ponders over it, who sees and observes and who benefits from instructive material and then treads on clear paths wherein he avoids falling into hollows and straying into pitfalls, and does not assist those who misguide him by turning away from truthfulness, changing his words, or fearing truth.

O' my listener! Be cured from your intoxication, wake up from your slumber, decrease your hasty activity and ponder over what has come to you through the Holy Prophet, the *Ummi* (1) which is inevitable and inescapable. You should turn away from him who opposes him and leave him and leave whatever he has adopted for himself. Put off your vanity, drop your haughtiness and recall your grave because your way passes over it. You will be dealt with as you deal with others, you will reap what you sow, and what you send today will meet you tomorrow. So provide for your future and send (some good acts) for your day (of reckoning). Fear, fear, O' listener! Act, act, O' careless! No one will warn you like him who knows.

One of the firm decisions of Allah in the Wise Reminder (Qur'an) upon which He bestows reward or gives punishment, and through which He likes or dislikes is that it will not benefit a man, even though he exerts himself and acts sincerely if he leaves this world to meet Allah with one of these acts without repenting, namely that he believed in a partner with Allah during his obligatory worship, or appeased his own anger by killing an individual, or spoke about acts committed by others, or sought fulfilment of his needs from people by introducing an innovation in his religion, or met people with a double face, or moved among them with a double tongue. Understand this because an illustration is a guide for its like.

Beasts are concerned with their bellies. Carnivores are concerned with assaulting others. Women are concerned with the adornments of this ignoble life and the creation of mischief herein (2). (On the other hand) believers are humble, believers are admonishers and believers are afraid (of Allah).

(1). The word "ummi" has been used in the Holy Qur'an with reference to the Holy Prophet in chapter 7:157-158. For better understanding of the word refer to the books of commentary on the Holy Qur'an.

(2). The intention is to say that the cause of all mischief and evil is the passion to satisfy bodily needs and the passion to subdue. If a human being is subjugated by the passion to satisfy bodily needs and considers filling the stomach as his aim there will be no difference between him and a beast, because a beast too has no aim except to fill its belly. But if he is over-powered by the passion to subdue others and takes to killing and devastation there will be no difference between him and a carnivorous beast, because the latter's aim is also tearing and devouring. If both the passions are at work in him then he is like a woman, because in a woman both these passions act side by side and because of this she is extremely eager of adornment and is active in fanning mischief and disturbance. However, a true believer will never agree to adopt these habits as his mode of behaviour, rather he keeps his passions suppressed so that he neither allows pride and vanity to approach near him nor does he fan mischief or disturbance for fear of Allah.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written that Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon at the time of marching towards Basrah, and since the trouble of Basrah was the result of a woman's instigation, Amir al-mu'minin has, after mentioning beasts and carnivore, held a woman also to possess

such qualities. Thus the battle of Basrah was the result of these qualities, whereby thousands of persons were involved in death and destruction.

Chapter 161

SERMON 153

About the Ahlu'l-bayt (of the Holy Prophet) and their opposers

He who has an intelligent mind looks to his goal. He knows his low road as well as his high road. The caller has called. The shepherd has tended (his flocks). So respond to the caller and follow the shepherd.

They (the opposers) have entered the oceans of disturbance and have taken to innovations instead of the *Sunnah* (the Prophet's holy deeds, utterances and his unspoken approvals), while the believers have sunk down, and the misguided and the liars are speaking. We are the near ones, companions, treasure holders and doors (to the *Sunnah*). Houses are not entered save through their doors. Whoever enters them from other than the door is called a thief.

A part of the same sermon

The delicacies of the Qur'an are about them (Ahlu'l-bayt, the descendants of the Prophet) and they are the treasurers of Allah. When they speak they speak the truth, but when they keep quiet no one can speak unless they speak. The forerunner should report correctly to his people, should retain his wits and should be one of the children (a man) of the next world, because he has come from there and would return to it.

The beginning of the action of one who sees with heart and acts with eyes it is to assess whether the action will go against him or for him. If it is for him he indulges in it, but if it is against him he keeps away from it. For, he who acts without knowledge is like one who treads without a path. Then his deviation from the path keeps him at a distance from his aim. And he who acts according to knowledge is like he who treads the clear path. Therefore, he who can see should see whether he should proceed or return.

You should also know that the outside (of every thing) has a similar inside. Of whatever the outside is good, its inside too is good, and whatever the outside is bad, its inside too is bad. The truthful Prophet

(peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has said that: "Allah may love a man but hate his action, and may love the action but hate the man." You should also know that every action is like a vegetation, and a vegetation cannot do without water while waters are different. So where the water is good the plant is good and its fruits are sweet, whereas where the water is bad. the plant will also be bad and its fruits will be bitter.

Chapter 162

SERMON 154

About the wonderful creation of the bat

Praise be to Allah who is such that it is not possible to describe the reality of knowledge about Him, since His greatness has restrained the intellects, and therefore they cannot find the way to approach the extremity of His realm. He is Allah, the True, the Manifester of Truth. He is more True and more Manifest than eyes can see. Intellects cannot comprehend Him by fixing limits for Him since in that case to Him would be attributed shape. Imagination cannot catch Him by fixing quantities for Him for in that case to Him would be attributed body. He created creatures without any example, and without the advice of a counsel, or the assistance of a helper. His creation was completed by His command, and bowed to His obedience. It responded (to Him) and did not defy (Him). It obeyed and did not resist.

An example of His delicate production, wonderful creation and deep sagacity which He has shown us is found in these bats which keep hidden in the daylight although daylight reveals everything else, and are mobile in the night although the night shuts up every other living being; and how their eyes get dazzled and cannot make use of the light of the sun so as to be guided in their movements and so as to reach their known places through the direction provided by the sun.

Allah has prevented them from moving in the brightness of the sun and confined them to their places of hiding instead of going out at the time of its shining. Consequently they keep their eyelids down in the day and treat night as a lamp and go with its help in search of their livelihood. The darkness of night does not obstruct their sight nor does the gloom of darkness prevent them from movement. As soon as the sun removes its veil and the light of morning appears, and the rays of its light enter upon the lizards in their holes, the bats pull down their eyelids on their eyes and live on what they had collected in the darkness of the

night. Glorified is He who has made the night as day for them to seek livelihood and made the day for rest and stay.

He has given them wings of flesh with which, at the time of need they rise upwards for flying. They look like the ends of ears without feathers or bones. Of course, you can see the veins quite distinctly. They have two wings which are neither too thin so that they get turned in flying, nor too thick so that they prove heavy. When they fly, their young ones hold on to them and seek refuge with them, getting down when they get down and rising up when they rise. The young does not leave them till its limbs become strong, its wings can support it for rising up, and it begins to recognise its places of living and its interest. Glorified is He who creates everything without any previous sample by someone else.

Chapter 163

SERMON 155

About the malice borne by `A'ishah; and warning the people of Basrah about what was to occur

Whoever can at this time keep himself clinging to Allah should do so. If you follow me I shall certainly carry you, if Allah so wills, on the path of Paradise, even though it may be full of severe hardship and of bitter taste.

As regards a certain woman (1), she is in the grip of womanly views, and malice is boiling in her bosom like the furnace of the blacksmith. If she were called upon to deal with others as she is dealing with me she would not have done it. (As for me), even hereafter she will be allowed her original respect, while the reckoning (of her misdeeds) is an obligation on Allah.

A part of the same sermon

This path is the lightest course and the brightest lamp. Guidance towards virtuous actions is sought through faith while guidance towards faith is achieved through virtuous actions. Knowledge is made to prosper through faith, and death is feared because of knowledge. This world come to an end with death, while the next world is secured (by virtuous actions) in this world. For people there is no escape from resurrection. They are heading for this last end in its appointed course.

A part of the same sermon

They have got up from the resting places in their graves and have set off for the final objectives. Every house has its own people. They are not changed nor shifted from there. Commanding for good and refraining from evil are two characteristics of Allah, the Glorified. They can neither bring death near nor lessen sustenance.

You should adhere to the Book of Allah because it is the strong rope, a clear light, a benefiting cure, a quenching for thirst, protection for the

adherent and deliverance for the attached. It does not curve so as to need straightening and does not deflect so as to be corrected. Frequency of its repetition and its falling on ears does not make it old. Whoever speaks according to it, speaks truth and whoever acts by it is forward (in action).

A man stood up and said:

O' Amir al-mu'minin, tell us about this disturbance and whether you enquired about it from the Holy Prophet.

Thereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:

When Allah, the Glorified sent down the verse:

Alif lam mim. What! Do people imagine that they will be let off on (their) saying: "We believe!" and they will not be tried ? (Qur'an, 29:1-2)

I came to know that the disturbance would not befall us so long as the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is among us. So I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, what is this disturbance of which Allah, the Sublime, has informed you?" and he replied, "O' `Ali, my people will create trouble after me." I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, on the day of Uhud, when people had fallen martyrs and I was not among them, and this had been very annoying to me, did you not say to me, 'cheer up, as martyrdom is for you hereafter?' " The Prophet replied, "Yes it is so, but what about your enduring at present?" I said, "O ' Prophet of Allah, this is not an occasion for endurance, but rather an occasion for cheering up and gratefulness." Then he said: "O' `Ali, people will fall into mischief through their wealth, will show obligation to Allah on account of their faith, will expect His mercy, will feel safe from His anger and regard His unlawful matters as lawful by raising false doubts and by their misguiding desires. They will then hold lawful (the use of) wine by calling it barley water, a bribe by calling it a gift, and taking of usurious interest by calling it sale." I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, how should I deal with them at the time, whether to hold them to have gone back in heresy or just in revolt." He said, "in revolt."

(1). There is no denying the fact that `A'ishah's behaviour towards Amir al-mu'minin was throughout inimical, and very often her heart's turbidity expressed itself on her face, and her hatred and dislike became quite apparent, so much so that if in connection with some affair Amir al-mu'minin's name came up a frown appeared on her forehead and she did not relish pronouncing it with her tongue. For example, when `Ubaydullah ibn `Abdillah ibn `Utbah mentioned to `Abdullah ibn `Abbas the

narration by `A'ishah namely that "in his death-illness the Prophet, taking support on al-Fadl ibn `Abbas and another person, came to her (`A'ishah's) house," `Abdullah ibn `Abbas said: "Do you know who this 'other man' was?" He said, "No." Then he said, ' "`Ali ibn Abi Talib, but she is averse to name him in a good context." (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 6, pp. 34, 228; Ibn Sa`d, *at-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 29; at-Tabari, *at-Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 1800-1801; al-Baladhuri, Ansab al-ashraf, vol. 1, pp. 544-545; al-Bayhaqi, *as-Sunan al-kubra*, vol. 3, p. 396).

One cause for this hatred and malice was the presence of Hadrat Fatimah (p.b.u.h.) whose wholesome dignity and esteem pricked her heart like a thorn. Her jealousy towards the other wives (of the Prophet) did not allow her to let the Prophet love the daughter of his other wife to such a degree that he should stand on her approach, seat her in his own place, declare her most honourable of all the women of the world and bear such love towards her children as to call them his own sons.

All these things pained her much and naturally her feelings on such an occasion were that if she had borne children they would have been the Prophet's sons and they would have been the pivot of the Prophet's affection instead of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. But she was not gifted with any issue and she gratified her own desire to be a mother by adopting the surname Umm `Abdillah (mother of the slave of Allah) after her sister's son. In short all these things created the passion of hatred in her heart, as a result of which she off and on complained to the Prophet against Hadrat Fatimah but could not succeed in diverting the Prophet's attention from her.

News about this mortification and estrangement also reached the ears of Abu Bakr. That would only perturb him as he too could do nothing, except that his verbal sympathies were with his daughter. At last the Prophet left this world and the reins of Government fell into his hands. Now was the opportunity for him to avenge as best as he could and to perpetrate whatever violence he had in mind. Consequently the first step he took was that, in order to deprive Hadrat Fatimah of inheritance, he denied the principle of inheritance in the case of the prophets and held that neither do the prophets inherit nor are they inherited from, but the property left by them escheats to the state. Fatimah was so much affected that she gave up speaking to him and passed away from this world with these very feelings. `A'ishah did not even take the trouble to express any sorrow at her tragic death. Thus Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written:

When Fatimah expired, all the wives of the Prophet came to Bani Hashim in condolence except `A'ishah. She did not come and showed

herself sick and words from her reached `Ali which displayed her joy. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 9, p. 198).

As long as she bore so much malice against Hadrat Fatimah, how could Fatimah's spouse be spared similar enmity and malice. Particularly when such events also occurred which worked like a fan and roused her feeling of hatred, such as the incident of "Ifk" when Amir al-mu'minin said to the Prophet: "She is no better than the buckles of your shoe, leave her and divorce her away." On hearing this `A'ishah must have felt miserable in her bed, and must have developed the severest feeling of hatred against him. There were also moments when distinction was conferred on Amir al-mu'minin in preference to Abu Bakr. For instance, in connection with the dispatch of the Qur'anic verses on *Bara'ah* (innocence), the Prophet removed Abu Bakr from the job, recalled him and assigned it to Amir al-mu'minin saying that he had been commanded by Allah to take it himself or send it through a member of his family. Similarly the Prophet closed all the doors opening into the mosque including that of Abu Bakr but allowed the door of Amir al-mu'minin's house to continue to open thereinto.

`A'ishah could not relish Amir al-mu'minin's distinction over her father, and whenever there was any occasion for such distinction she did her best to undo it. When in his last days the Prophet ordered the contingent under Usamah ibn Zayd to march, and ordered Abu Bakr and `Umar also to go under his command, they received a message from the wives of the Prophet that his condition was serious and therefore the contingent should come back instead of proceeding further. This was because their far-reaching sight had realised that the only purpose in getting Medina vacated by the *muhajirun* and the *ansar* could be that after the death of the Prophet no one should stand in Amir al-mu'minin's way and that he should get the caliphate without any trouble. On receipt of this message the contingent under Usamah came back. When the Prophet learnt this he again ordered Usamah to march with the contingent and even said, "Allah may curse him who keeps away from the contingent," whereupon they again set off, but they were again called back till the Prophet's illness assumed serious proportions, but Usamah's contingent did not go out as it did not want to. After this Abu Bakr was sent word through Bilal that he should deputise the Prophet in leading the prayers in order to pave the way for his Caliphateship. Accordingly, keeping this in view he was first shown as the Prophet's caliph (deputy) in prayers and eventually was accepted as his caliph for all purposes. Thereafter matters were so contrived that Amir al-mu'minin could not get the

Caliphate. However, after the reign of the third caliph circumstances took such a turn that people were obliged to swear allegiance at Amir al-mu'minin's hand. On this occasion `A'ishah was present in Mecca. When she learnt about Amir al-mu'minin's caliphate her eyes began emitting flames, and rage and anger perturbed her mind, and her hatred for Amir al-mu'minin assumed such seriousness that she rose against him on the excuse of avenging blood of the same man (`Uthman) whom she had herself proclaimed fit to be killed, and openly declared war as a result of which so much bloodshed occurred that the whole land of Basrah was smeared with the blood of those killed, and the door of disunity was opened for good. (*Sharh,* Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 9, pp. 190-200).

Chapter 164

SERMON 156

Urging people towards Piety (taqwa)

Praise be to Allah who made praise the Key for His remembrance, a means for increase of His bounty and a guide for His Attributes and Dignity.

O' creatures of Allah! Time will deal with the survivors just as it dealt with those gone by. The time that has passed will not return and whatever there is in it will not stay for ever. Its later deeds are the same as the former ones. Its trouble try to excel one another. Its banners follow each other. It is as though you are attached to the last day which is driving you as rapidly as are driven the she camels which are dry for seven months. He who busies himself with things other than improvement of his own self becomes perplexed in darkness and entangled in ruination. His evil spirits immerse him deep in vices and make his bad actions appear handsome. Paradise is the end of those who are forward (in good acts) and Hell is the end of those who commit excesses.

Know O' creatures of Allah! that piety is a strong house of protection while impiety is a weak house which does not protect its people, and does not give security to him who takes refuge therein. Know that the sting of sins is cut by piety and the final aim is achieved by conviction of belief.

O' creatures of Allah! (fear) Allah, (fear) Allah, in the matter of your own selves, which are the most beloved and dear to you, because Allah has clarified to you the way of truthfulness and lighted its paths. So (you may choose) either ever-present misfortune or eternal happiness. You should therefore provide in these mortal days for the eternal days. You have been informed of the provision, ordered to march and told to make haste in setting off. You are like staying riders who do not know when they would be ordered to march on. Beware, what will he, who has been created for the next world, do with this world? What will a person do

with wealth which he would shortly be deprived of while only its ill effects and reckoning would be left behind for him?

O' creatures of Allah! the good which Allah has promised should not be abandoned and the evil from which He has refrained should not be coveted. O' creatures of Allah! fear the day when actions will be reckoned; there will be much quaking and even children will get old.

Know, O' creatures of Allah! that your own self is a guard over you; limbs are watchmen and truthful vigil-keepers who preserve (the record of) your actions and the numbers of your breaths. The gloom of the dark night cannot conceal you from them, nor can closed doors hide you from them. Surely tomorrow is close to today.

Today will depart with all that it has and tomorrow will come in its wake. It is as though every one of you has reached that place on earth where he would be alone, namely the location of his grave. So, what to say of the lonely house, the solitary place of staying and the solitary exile. It is as though the cry (of the Horn) has reached you, the Hour has overtaken you and you have come out (of your graves) for the passing of judgement. (The curtains of) falsehood have been removed from you and your excuses have become weak. The truth about you has been proved. All your matters have proceeded to their consequences. Therefore. you should (now) take counsel from examples, learn lessons from vicissitudes and take advantage of the warners.

Chapter 165

SERMON 157

About the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur'an

Allah deputed the Prophet at a time when there had been no prophets for some time. People had been in slumber for a long time and the twist of the rope had loosened. The Prophet came with (a Book containing) testification to what (books) were already there and also with a light to be followed. It is the Qur'an. If you ask it to speak it won't do so; but I will tell you about it. Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you.

A part of the same sermon

About the autocracy of the Umayyads

At that time there will remain no house or tent but oppressors would inflict it with grief and inject sickness in it. On that day no one in the sky will listen to their excuse and no one on the earth will come to their help. You selected for the governance (caliphate) one who is not fit for it, and you raised him to a position which was not meant for him. Shortly Allah will take revenge from every one who has oppressed, food for food and drink for drink, namely (they will be given) colocynth for eating, myrrh and aloes for drinking, and fear for an inner and the sword for an outer covering.

They are nothing but carrier-beasts laden with sins and camels laden with evil deeds. I swear and again swear that the Umayyads will have to spit out the caliphate as phlegm is spat and thereafter they will never taste it nor relish its flavour so long as day and night rotate.

Chapter 166

SERMON 158

Good behaviour with people and ignoring their faults

I lived as a good neighbour to you and tried my best to look after you, and I freed you from the snare of humbleness and the fetters of oppression through my gratefulness for the little good (from your side) and closed my eyes to your many misdeeds which my eyes had observed and my body had witnessed.

Chapter 167

SERMON 159

Praise of Allah

Allah's verdict is judicious and full of wisdom. His pleasure implies protection and mercy. He decides with knowledge and forgives with forbearance.

O' my Allah! Praise be to Thee for what Thou takest and givest and for that from which Thou curest or with which Thou afflictest; praise which is the most acceptable to Thee, the most like by Thee and the most dignified before Thee; praise which fills all Thy creation and reaches where Thou desirest; praise which is not veiled from Thee and does not end, and whose continuity does not cease.

Greatness of Allah

We do not know the reality of Thy greatness except that we know that thou art Ever-living and Self-subsisting by Whom all things subsist. Drowsiness or sleep do not overtake Thee, vision does not reach Thee and sight does not grasp Thee. Thou seest the eyes and countest the ages. Thou holdest (people as slaves) by foreheads and feet. We see Thy creation and wonder over it because of Thy might, and describe it as (a result of) Thy great authority; whereas what is hidden from us, of which our sight has fallen short, which our intelligence has not attained, and between which and ourselves curtains of the unknown have been cast, is far greater.

He who frees his heart (from all other engagements) and exerts his thinking in order to know how Thou established Thy throne, how Thou created Thy creatures, how Thou suspended the air in Thy skies and how Thou spread Thy earth on the waves of water, his eyes would return tired, his intelligence defeated, his ears eager and his thinking awander.

A part of the same sermon about hope and fear in Allah.

He claims according to his own thinking that he hopes from Allah. By Allah, the Great, he speaks a lie. The position is that his hope (in Allah) does not appear through his action although the hope of every one who hopes is known through his action. Every hope is so, except the hope in Allah, the Sublime, if it is impure; and every fear is established except the fear for Allah if it is unreal.

He hopes big things from Allah and small things from men but he gives to man (such consideration as) he does not give to Allah. What is the matter with Allah, glorified be His praise? He is accorded less (consideration) than what is given to His creatures. Do you ever fear to be false in your hope in Allah? Or do you not regard Him the centre of your hope? Similarly, if a man fears man he gives him (such consideration) out of his fear which he does not give to Allah. Thus, he has made his fear for men ready currency while his fear from the Creator is mere deferment or promise. This is the case of every one in whose eye this world appears big (and important) and in whose heart its position is great. He prefers it over Allah, so he inclines towards it, and becomes its devotee.

The example of the Holy Prophet

Certainly, in the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was sufficient example for you and a proof concerning the vices of the world, its defects, the multitude of its disgraces and its evils, because its sides had been constrained for him, while its flanks had been spread for others; he was deprived of its milk and turned away from its adornments.

The example of Musa (Moses)

If you want, I will, as a second example, relate to you concerning Musa, the Interlocutor of Allah (p.b.u.h.) when he said: *O' Allah! I need whatever good Thou mayest grant me* (Qur'an, 28:24). By Allah, he asked Him only for bread to eat because he was used to eating the herbs of the earth, and the greenness of the herbs could be seen from the delicate skin of his belly due to his thinness and paucity of his flesh.

The example of Dawud (David)

If you desire I can give you a third example of Dawud (p.b.u.h.). He is the holder of the Psalms and the reciter among the people of Paradise. He used to prepare baskets of date palm leaves with his own hands and

would say to his companions: "Which of you will help me by purchasing it?" He used to eat barley bread (bought) out of its price.

The example of `Isa (Jesus)

If you desire I will tell you about `Isa (p.b.u.h.) son of Maryam (Mary). He used a stone for his pillow, put on coarse clothes and ate rough food. His condiment was hunger. His lamp at night was the moon. His shade during the winter was just the expanse of earth eastward and westward. His fruits and flowers were only what grows from the earth for the cattle. He had no wife to allure him, nor any son to give grief, nor wealth to deviate (his attention), nor greed to disgrace him. His two feet were his conveyance and his two hands his servant.

Following the example of the Holy Prophet

You should follow your Prophet, the pure, the chaste, may Allah bless him and his descendants. In him is the example for the follower, and the consolation for the seeker of consolation. The most beloved person before Allah is he who follows His Prophet and who treads in his footsteps. He took the least (share) from this world and did not take a full glance at it. Of all the people of the world he was the least satiated and the most empty of stomach. The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. When he knew that Allah, the Glorified, hated a thing, he too hated it; that Allah held a thing low, he too held it low; that Allah held a thing small, he too held it small. If we love what Allah and His Prophet hate and hold great what Allah and His prophet hold small that would be enough isolation from Allah and transgression of His commands.

The Prophet used to eat on the ground, and sat like a slave. He repaired his shoe with his hand, and patched his clothes with his hand. He would ride an unsaddled ass and would seat someone behind him. If there was a curtain on his door with pictures on it he would say to one of his wives. "O' such-and-such, take it away out of my sight because if I look at it I recall the world and its allurements." Thus, he removed his heart from this world and destroyed its remembrance from his mind. He loved that its allurements should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not secure good dress from it, should not regard it a place of stay and should not hope to live in it. Consequently, he removed it from his mind, let it go away from his heart and kept it hidden from his eyes. In the same way he who hates a thing should hate to look at it or to hear about it.

Certainly there was in the Prophet of Allah all that would apprise you of the evils of this world and its defects, namely that he remained hungry along with his chief companions, and despite his great nearness the allurements of the world remained remote from him. Now, one should see with one's intelligence whether Allah honoured Muhammad (the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his descendants) as a result of this or disgraced him. If he says that Allah disgraced him, he certainly lies and perpetrates a great untruth. If he says Allah honoured him, he should know that Allah dishonoured the others when He extended the (benefits of the) world for him but held them away from him who was the nearest to Him of all men.

Therefore, one should follow His Prophet, tread in his footsteps and enter through his entrance. Otherwise he will not be safe from ruin. Certainly, Allah made Muhammad (the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants) a sign for the Day of Judgement. a conveyor of tidings for Paradise and a warner of retribution. He left this world hungry but entered upon the next world safe. He did not lay one stone upon another (to make a house) till he departed and responded to the call of Allah. How great is Allah's blessing in that He blessed us with the Prophet as a predecessor whom we follow and a leader behind whom we tread.

The example of himself

By Allah, I have been putting patches in my shirts so much that now I feel shy of the patcher. Someone asked me whether I would not put it off, but I said, "Get away from me." Only in the morning do people (realised the advantage of and) speak highly of the night journey.

Chapter 168

SERMON 160

Deputation of the Holy Prophet

Allah deputed the Prophet with a sparkling light, a clear argument, an open path and a guiding book. His tribe is the best tribe and his lineal tree the best lineal tree whose branches are in good proportion and fruits hanging (in plenty). His birth-place was Mecca, and the place of his immigration Taybah (Medina), from where his name rose high and his voice spread far and wide.

Allah sent him with a sufficing plea, a convincing discourse and a rectifying announcement. Through him Allah disclosed the ways that had been forsaken, and destroyed the innovations that had been introduced. Through him He explained the detailed commands. Now, whoever adopts a religion other than Islam, his misery is definite, his stick (of support) will be cracked, his fate will be serious, his end will be long grief and distressing punishment.

Drawing lessons from this world

I trust in Allah, the trust of bending towards Him, and I seek His guidance for the way that leads to His Paradise and takes to the place of His pleasure. I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, to exercise fear of Allah and to obey Him because it is salvation tomorrow and deliverance for ever. He warned (you of chastisement) and did so thoroughly. He persuaded (you towards virtues) and did so fully. He described this world, its cutting away from you, its decay and its shifting. Therefore, keep aloof from its attractions, because very little of it will accompany you. This house is the closest to the displeasure of Allah and the remotest from the pleasure of Allah.

So close your eyes, O' creatures of Allah, from its worries and engagements, because you are sure about its separation and its changing conditions. Fear it like a sincere fearer and one who struggles hard, and take a lesson from what you have seen about the falling places of those before

you, namely that their joints were made to vanish, their eyes and ears were destroyed, their honour and prestige disappeared and their pleasure and wealth came to an end. The nearness of their children changed into remoteness. The company of their spouses changed into separation with them. They do not boast over each other, nor do they beget children nor meet each other nor live as neighbours. Therefore, fear O' creature of Allah, like the fear of one who has control over himself, who can check his passions and perceive with his wisdom. Surely, the matter is quite clear, the banner is standing, the course is level and the way is straight.

Chapter 169

SERMON 161

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:

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 oppression against us in this matter although we were the highest as regards descent and the strongest in relationship with the Messenger of Allah. It was a selfish act over which the hearts of people became greedy, although some people did not care for it. 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." (1)

Come and look at the son of Abu Sufyan (Mu`awiyah). Time has made me laugh after weeping. 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)

(1). This is a hemistich from the couplet of the famous Arab poet Imriu'l-Qays al-Kindi. The second hemistich is:

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

The incident behind this couplet is that when the father of Imriu'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. Imriu'l-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 Imriu'l-Qays he kept them for himself. When Imriu'l-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 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.

Chapter 170

SERMON 162

Attributes of Allah

Praise be to Allah, Creator of people; He has spread the earth. He makes streams to flow and vegetation to grow on high lands. His primality has no beginning, nor has His eternity any end. He is the First and from ever. He is the everlasting without limit. Foreheads bow before Him and lips declare His oneness. He determined the limits of things at the time of His creating them, keeping Himself away from any likeness.

Imagination cannot surmise Him within the limits of movements limbs or senses. It cannot be said about Him: "whence"; and no time limit can be attributed to Him by saying "till". He is apparent, but it cannot be said "from what". He is hidden, but it cannot be said "in what". He is not a body which can die, nor is He veiled so as to be enclosed therein. He is not near to things by way of touch, nor is He remote from them by way of separation.

The gazing of people's eyes is not hidden from Him, nor the repetition of words, nor the glimpse of hillocks, nor the tread of a footstep in the dark night or in the deep gloom, where the shining moon casts its light and the effulgent sun comes in its wake, through its setting and appearing again and again with the rotation of time and periods, by the approach of the advancing night or the passing away of the running day.

He precedes every extremity and limit, and every counting and numbering. He is far above what those whose regard is limited attribute to Him, such as the qualities of measure, having extremities, living in house and dwelling in abodes, because limits are meant for creation and are attributable only to other than Allah.

Allah, the Originator from naught

He did not create things from eternal matter nor after ever-existing examples, but He created whatever He created and then He fixed limits thereto, and He shaped whatever He shaped and gave the best shape

thereto. Nothing can disobey Him, but the obedience of something is of no benefit to Him. His knowledge about those who died in the past is the same as His knowledge about the remaining survivors, and His knowledge about whatever there is in the high skies is like His knowledge of whatever there is in the low earth.

A part of the same sermon

About man's creation, and pointing towards the requirements of life.

O' creature who has been equitably created and who has been nurtured and looked after in the darkness of wombs with multiple curtains. You were originated *from the essence of clay* (Qur'an, 23:12) and placed *in a still place for a known length* (Qur'an, 77:21-22) and an ordained time. You used to move in the womb of your mother as an embryo, neither responding to a call nor hearing any voice.

Then you were taken out from your place of stay to a place you had not seen, and you were not acquainted with the means of awaiting its benefits, or with who guided you to eke out your sustenance from the udder of your mother, and, when your were in need, appraised you of the location of what you required or aimed at. Alas! Certainly he who is unable to understand the qualities of a being with shape and limbs is the more unable to understand the qualities of the Creator and the more remote from appreciating Him through the limitations of creatures.

Chapter 171

SERMON 163

When people went to Amir al-mu'minin in a deputation and complained to him through what they had to say against `Uthman, and requested him to speak to him on their behalf and to admonish him for their sake, he went to see him and said: *(1)*

The people are behind me and they have made me an ambassador between you and themselves; but by Allah, I do not know what to say to you. I know nothing (in this matter) which you do not know, nor can I lead you to any matter of which you are not aware. You certainly know what we know, we have not come to know anything before you which we could tell you; nor did we learn anything in secret which we should convey to you. You have seen as we have seen and you have heard as we have heard. You sat in the company of the Prophet of Allah as we did. (Abu Bakr) Ibn Abi Quhafah and (`Umar) ibn al-Khattab were no more responsible for acting righteously than you, since you are nearer than both of them to the Prophet of Allah through kinship, and you also hold relationship to him by marriage which they do not hold.

Then (fear) Allah, in your own self; for, by Allah, you are not being shown anything as if you are blind or being apprised of anything as if you are ignorant. The ways are clear while the banners of faith are fixed. You should know that among the creatures of Allah, the most distinguished person before Allah is the just Imam who has been guided (by Allah) and guides others. So, he stands by the recognised ways of the Prophet's behaviour and destroys unrecognised innovations. The (Prophet's) ways are clear and they have signs, while innovations are also clear and they too have signs. Certainly, the worst man before Allah is the oppressive Imam who has gone astray and through whom others go astray. He destroys the the accepted *sunnah* and revives abandoned innovations. I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "On the Day of Judgement the oppressive Imam will be brought without anyone to support him or anyone to advance excuses on his behalf, and then he will be

thrown into Hell where he will rotate as the hand-mill rotates, then (eventually) he will be confined to its hollow."

I swear to you by Allah that you should not be that Imam of the people who will be killed because it has been said that, "An Imam of this people will be killed after which killing and fighting will be made open for them till the Day of Judgement, and he will confuse their matters and spread troubles over them. As a result, they will not discern truth from wrong. They will oscillate like waves and would be utterly misled." You should not behave as the carrying beast for Marwan so that he may drag you wherever he likes, despite (your) seniority of age and length of life.

Then `Uthman said to Amir al-mu'minin: "Speak to the people to give me time until I redress their grievances." Amir al-mu'minin then said: "So far as Medina is concerned here is no question of time. As for remoter areas you can have the time needed for your order to reach there."

(1). During the Caliphate of `Uthman when the Muslims were weary of the oppression of the Government and its officials collected in Medina to complain to the senior companions of the Prophet, they came to Amir al-mu'minin in a peaceful manner and requested him to see `Uthman and advise him not to trample on the Muslims' rights and to put an end to the troubles which were proving the cause of the people's ruin, whereupon Amir al-mu'minin went to him and uttered these words.

In order to make the bitterness of the admonition palatable Amir al-mu'minin adopted that way of speech in the beginning which would create a sense of responsibility in the addressee and direct him towards his obligations. Thus, by mentioning his companionship of the Prophet, his personal position, and his kinship to the Prophet as against the two previous Caliphs, his intention was to make him realise his duties; in any case, this was obviously not an occasion for eulogising him, so that its later portion can be disregarded and the whole speech be regarded as an eulogy of his attainments, because from its very beginning it is evident that whatever `Uthman did, he did it wilfully, that nothing was done without his knowledge or his being informed, and that he could not be held unaccountable for it because of his being unaware of it. If the adoption of a line of action which made the whole Islamic world raise hue and cry in spite of his having being a companion of the Prophet, having heard his instructions, having seen his behaviour and having been acquainted with the commandments of Islam can be regarded as a distinction, then this taunt may also be regarded as praise. If that is not a distinction then this too cannot be called and eulogy. In fact, the words

about which it is argued that they are in praise are enough to prove the seriousness of his crime, because a crime in ignorance and unawareness is not so serious as the weight given to the seriousness of the commission of a crime despite knowledge and awareness. Consequently a person who is unaware of the rise and fall of a road and stumbles in the dark night is excusable but a person who is aware of the rise and fall of the road and stumbled in broad day light is liable to be blamed. If on this occasion he is told that he has eyes and is also aware of the rise and fall of the way, it would not mean that his vastness of knowledge or the brightness of his eye-sight is being praised, but the intention would be that he did not notice the pitfalls despite his eyes, and did not walk properly, and that therefore for him, having or not having eyes is the same, and knowing or not knowing is equal.

In this connection great stress in laid on his being a son-in-law, namely that the Prophet married his two daughters Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum to him one after the other. Before taking this to be a distinction, the real nature of `Uthman's son-in-lawship should be seen. History shows that in this matter `Uthman did not enjoy the distinction of being the first, but before him Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum had been married to two sons of Abu Lahab namely `Utbah and `Utaybah, but despite their being sons-in-law, they have not been included among people of position of pre-prophethood period. How then can this be regarded as a source of position without any personal merit, when there is no authority about the importance of this relationship, nor was any importance attached to this matter in such a way that there might have been some competition between `Uthman and some other important personality in this regard and that his selection for it might have given him prominence, or that these two girls might have been shown to possess an important position in history, tradition or biography as a result of which this relationship could be given special importance and regarded as a distinction for him? If the marriage of these two daughters with `Utbah and `Utaybah in the pre-prophethood period is held as lawful on the ground that marriage with unbelievers had not till then been made unlawful, then in `Uthman's case also the condition for lawfulness was his acceptance of Islam, there is no doubt that he had pronounced the *kalimah ash-shahadatayn* (there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger) and had accepted Islam outwardly. As such this marriage can be held a proof of his outward Islam, but no other honour can be proved through it. Again, it is also not agreed that these two were the real daughters of the Messenger of Allah, because there is one group

which denies them to be his real daughters, and regards them as being the daughters of Khadijah's sister Halah, or the daughters of her own previous husband. Thus, Abu'l-Qasim al-Kufi (d. 352 A.H.) writes:

"When the Messenger of Allah married Khadijah, then some time thereafter Halah died leaving two daughters, one named Zaynab and the other named Ruqayyah and both of them were brought up by the Prophet and Khadijah and they maintained them, and it was the custom before Islam that a child was assigned to whoever brought him up." (*al-lstighathah*, p. 69)

Ibn Hisham has written about the issues of Hadrat Khadijah as follows:

"Before marriage with the Prophet she was married to Abi Halah ibn Malik. She delivered for him Hind ibn Abi Halah and Zaynab bint Abi Halah. Before marriage with Abi Halah she was married to `Utayyiq ibn `Abid ibn `Abdillah ibn `Amr ibn Makhzum and she delivered for him `Abdullah and a daughter." (*as-Sirah an-nabawiyyah*, vol. 4, p. 293)

This shows that of Hadrat Khadijah had two daughters before being married to the Prophet and according to all appearance they would be called his daughters and those to whom they were married would be called his sons-in-law, but the position of this relationship would be the same as if those girls were his daughters. Therefore, before putting it forth as a matter for pride the real status of the daughters should be noted and a glance should be cast at `Uthman's conduct. In this connection, al-Bukhari and other narrators (of traditions) and historians record this tradition as follows:

Anas ibn Malik relates that: "We were present on the occasion of the burial of the Prophet's daughter Umm Kulthum, while the Prophet was sitting beside her grave. I saw his eyes shedding tears. Then he said, 'Is there any one among you who has not committed a sin last night?' Abu Talhah (Zayd ibn Sahl al-Ansari) said, 'I', then the Prophet said, 'Then you get into the grave,' consequently he got down into the grave."

The commentators said about 'committed sin' that the Holy Prophet meant to say 'one who had not had sexual intercourse.' On this occasion the Holy Prophet unveiled the private life of `Uthman and prevented him from getting down into the grave, although it was a prominent merit of the Prophet's character that he did not disgrace or belittle any one by making public his private life, and despite of knowledge of others' shortcomings, ignored them; but in this case the filth was such that it was deemed necessary to disgrace him before the whole crowd.

Since `Uthman did not show any regard for the demise of his wife (Umm Kulthum) nor was he moved or felt sorry (for this event), and paid no heed to the cutting off his relationship with the Holy Prophet (for being his son-in-law), he (`Uthman) had sexual intercourse on the same night, therefore the Holy Prophet deprived him of this right and honour. (al-Bukhari, *as-Sahih*, vol. 2, pp. 100-101, 114; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 126, 228, 229, 270; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 4, p. 47; al-Bayhaqi, *as-Sunan al-kubra*, vol. 4, p. 53; Ibn Sa`d, *at-Tabaqat al-kabir*, vol. 8, p. 26; as-Suhayli, *ar-Rawd al-unuf*, vol. 2, p. 107; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, vol. 4, p. 489; *Fath al-bari*, vol. 3, p. 122; al-`Ayni, *`Umdah al-qari*, vol. 4,p. 85; Ibn al-Athir, *an-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 276; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-`Arab*, vol. 9, pp. 280-281; az-Zabidi, *Taj al-`arus*, vol. 6, p. 220).

Chapter 172

SERMON 164

Describing the wonderful creation of the peacock

About the wonderful creation of birds

Allah has provided wonderful creations including the living, the lifeless, the stationary, and the moving. He has established such clear proofs for His delicate creative power and great might that minds bend down to Him in acknowledgement thereof and in submission to Him, and arguments about His Oneness strike our ears. He has created birds of various shapes which live in the burrows of the earth, in the openings of high passes and on the peaks of mountains.

They have different kinds of wings, and various characteristics. They are controlled by the rein of (Allah's) authority. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the vast firmament and the open atmosphere. He brought them into existence from non-existence in strange external shapes, and composed them with joints and bones covered with flesh. He prevented some of them from flying easily in the sky because of their heavy bodies and allowed them to use their wings only close to the ground. He has set them in different colours by his delicate might and exquisite creative power.

Among them are those which are tinted with one hue and there is no other hue except the one in which they have been dyed. There are others which are tinted with one colour, and they have a neck ring of a different colour than that with which they are tinted.

About the Peacock

The most amazing among them in its creation is the peacock, which Allah has created in the most symmetrical dimensions, and arranged its hues in the best arrangement with wings whose ends are inter-leaved together and whose tail is long. When it moves to its female it spreads out its folded tail and raises it up so as to cast a shade over its head, as if it

were the sail of a boat being pulled by the sailor. It feels proud of its colours and swaggers with its movements. It copulates like the cocks. It leaps (on the female) for fecundation like lustful energetic men at the time of fighting.

I am telling you all this from observation, unlike he who narrates on the basis of weak authority, as for example, the belief of some people that it fecundates the female by a tear which flows from its eyes and when it stops on the edges of the eyelids the female swallows it and lays its eggs thereby and not through fecundation by a male other than by means of this flowing tear. Even if they say this, it would be no amazing than (what they say about) the mutual feeding of the crows (for fecundation). You would imagine its feathers to be sticks made of silvers and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing thereon to be of pure gold and pieces of green emerald. If you likened them to anything growing on land, you would say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected during every spring. If you likened them to cloths, they would be like printed apparels or amazing variegated cloths of Yemen. If you likened them to ornaments then they would be like gems of different colour with studded silver.

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, and throws open its tail and wings and laughs admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace of gems. But when it casts its glance at its legs it cries loudly with a voice which indicates its call for help and displays its true grief, because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks. At the end of its shin there is a thin thorn and on the crown of its head there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and its stretch up to its belly is like the hair-dye of Yemen in colour or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror which looks as if it has been covered with a black veil, except that on account of its excessive lustre and extreme brightness it appears that a lush green colour has been mixed with it. Along the openings of its ears there is a line of shining bright daisy colour like the thin end of a pen. Whiteness shines on the black background. There is hardly a hue from which it has not taken a bit and improved it further by regular polish, lustre, silken brightness and brilliance. It is therefore like scattered blossoms which have not been seasoned by the rains of spring or the sun of the summer.

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its dress. They all fall away and grow again. They fall way from the feather stems like the falling of leaves from twigs, and then they begin to join together and grow till they return to the state that existed before their falling away. The new hues do

not change from the previous ones, nor does any colour occur in other than its own place. If you carefully look at one hair from the hairs of its feather stems it would look like red rose, then emerald green and then golden yellow.

How can sharpness of intellect describe such a creation, or faculty of mind, or the utterances of describers manage to tell of it. Even its smallest parts have made it impossible for the imagination to pick them out or for tongues to describe them. Glorified is Allah who has disabled intellects from describing the creation which He placed openly before the eyes and which they see bounded, shaped, arranged and coloured. He also disabled tongues from briefly describing its qualities and also from expanding in its praise.

The magnificence of the Creator in great and small creation

Glorified is Allah who has assigned feet to small ants and gnats and also to those above them, the serpents and the elephants. He has made it obligatory upon Himself that no skeleton in which He infuses the spirit would move, but that death is its promised place and destruction its final end.

A part of the same sermon

Describing Paradise

If you cast your mind's eye at what is described to you about Paradise, your heart would begin to hate the delicacies of this world that have been displayed here, namely its desires and its pleasures, and the beauties of its scenes, and you would be lost in the rustling of the trees whose roots lie hidden in the mounds of musk on the banks of the rivers in Paradise and in the attraction of the bunches of fresh pearls in the twigs and branches of those trees, and in the appearance of different fruits from under the cover of their leaves. These fruits can be picked without difficulty as they come down at the desire of their pickers. Pure honey and fermented wine will be handed round to those who settle down in the courtyards of its palaces.

They are a people whom honour has always followed till they were made to settle in the house of eternal abode, and they obtained rest from the movement of journeying. O' listener! If you busy yourself in advancing towards these wonderful scenes which will rush towards you, then your heart will certainly die due to eagerness for them, and you will be prepared to seek the company of those in the graves straight away from

my audience here and hasten towards them. Allah may, by His mercy, include us and you too among those who strive with their hearts for the abodes of the virtuous.

Note explaining some of the wonderful and obscure portions of this sermon

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: In Amir al-mu'minin's words "*ya'urru bim-alaqihihi*", "*al-arr*" implies "copulation", e.g. when it is said "*arra'r-rajulu al-mar'ata ya'urruha*", it means "He copulated with the woman."

In his *words "ka'annahu qal`u dariyyin `anajahu nutiyyuhu", "al-qal`"* means the sail of a boat. *"dari"* means belonging to Darin which is a small town on the coast from where scents are bought. And *"`anajahu"*means "turned it". It is *said "`anajtun'n-naqata* - like *nasartu - a`najuha `anjan"*. "When you turn the she-camel." And *"an-nuti"* means sailor. His *words "daffatay jufunihi"* means edges of the eye-lids, since *"ad-daffatan"* means the two edges. His words *"wa filadhu'z-za-barjadi": "al-filadh"* is the plural of *"al-fildhah"* it means piece. His words *"ka ba'isi'l-lu'lu'i'r-ratibi"*. *"al-kibasah"* means bunch of dates. *"al-`asalij"*means twigs. Its singular is *"`usluj"*.

Chapter 173

SERMON 165

Advice for observing courtesy and kindness

and keeping in and out of the same

The young among you should follow the elders while the elders should be kind to the young. Do not be like those rude people of the pre-lslamic (*al-jahiliyyah*) period who did not exert themselves in religion nor use their intellects in the matter of Allah. They (1)are like the breaking of eggs in the nest of a dangerous bird, because their breaking looks bad, but keeping them intact would mean the production of dangerous young ones.

A part of the same sermon

About the autocracy and oppression of the Umayyads and their fate

They will divide after their unity and scatter away from their centre. Some of them will stick to the branches, and bending down as the branches bend, until Allah, the Sublime, will collect them together for the day that will be worst for the Umayyads just as the scattered bits of clouds collect together in the autumn. Allah will create affection among them. Then He will make them into a strong mass like the mass of clouds. Then he will open doors for them to flow out from their starting place like the flood of the two gardens (of Saba') from which neither high rocks remained safe nor small hillocks, and its flow could be repulsed neither by strong mountains nor by high lands. Allah will scatter them in the low lands of valleys and then He will make them flow like streams throughout the earth, and through them He will arrange the taking of rights of one people by another people and make one people to stay in the houses of another people. By Allah, all their position and esteem will dissolve as fat dissolves on the fire.

The cause of tyranny

O' people! If you had not evaded support of the truth and had not felt weakness from crushing wrong then he who was not your match would not have aimed at you and he who overpowered you would not have overpowered you. But you roamed about the deserts (of disobedience) like Banu Isra'il (Children of Israel). I swear by my life that after me your tribulations will increase several times, because you will have abandoned the truth behind your backs, severed your connection with your near ones and established relations with remote ones. Know that if you had followed him who was calling you (to guidance) he would have made you tread the ways of the Prophet, then you would have been spared the difficulties of misguidance, and you would have thrown away the crushing burden from your necks.

(1). The implication is that the outer Islam of these people required that they should not be molested, but the consequence of sparing them in this way was that they would create mischief and rebellion.

Chapter 174

SERMON 166

At the beginning of his Caliphate.

Fulfilment of rights and obligations, and advice to fear Allah in all matters.

Allah, the Glorified, has sent down a guiding Book wherein He has explained virtue and vice. You should adopt the course of virtue whereby you will have guidance, and keep aloof from the direction of vice so that you remain on the right way. (Mind) the obligations (mind) the obligations. Fulfil them for Allah and they will take you to Paradise. Surely, Allah has made unlawful the things which are not unknown and made lawful the things which are without defect. He has declared paying regard to Muslims as the highest of all regards. He has placed the rights of Muslims in the same grade (of importance) as devotion (to Himself and His oneness). Therefore, a Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand every (other) Muslim is safe save in the matter of truth. It is not, therefore, lawful to molest a Muslim except when it is obligatory.

Hasten towards the most common matter which is peculiar to every one; and that is death. Certainly, people (who have already gone) are ahead of you while the hour (Day of Judgement) is driving you from behind. Remain light, in order that you may overtake them. Your backs are being awaited for the sake of the fronts. Fear Allah in the matter of His creatures and His cities because you will be questioned even about lands and beasts. Obey Allah and do not disobey Him. When you see virtue adopt it, and when you see vice avoid it.

Chapter 175

SERMON 167

After swearing of allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin, some people from among the companions of the Prophet said to him, "You should punish the people who assaulted `Uthman," whereupon he said:

O' my brothers! I am not ignorant of what you know, but how do I have the power for it while those who assaulted him are in the height of their power. They have superiority over us, not we over them. They are now in the position that even your slaves have risen with them and Bedouin Arabs too have joined them. They are now among you and are harming you as they like. Do you see any way to be able to do what you aim at?

This demand is certainly that of the pre-Islamic (*al-jahiliyyah*) period and these people have support behind them. When the matter is taken up, people will have different views about it. One group will think as you do, but another will not think as you think, and there will be still another group who will be neither this way nor that way. Be patient till people quieten down and hearts settle in their places so that rights can be achieved for people easily. Rest assured from me, and see what is given to you by me. Do not do anything which shatters your power, weakens your strength and engenders feebleness and disgrace. I shall control this affair as far as possible, but if I find it necessary the last treatment will, of course, be branding with a hot iron (through fighting).

Chapter 176

SERMON 168

When the people of Jamal set off for

Basrah Amir al-mu'minin said:

There is no doubt that Allah sent down the Prophet as a guide with an eloquent Book and a standing command. No one will be ruined by it except one who ruins himself. Certainly, only doubtful innovations cause ruin except those from which Allah may protect. In Allah's authority lies the safety of your affairs. Therefore, render Him such obedience as is neither blameworthy nor insincere. By Allah, you must do so, otherwise Allah will take away from you the power of Islam, and will never thereafter return it to you till it reverts to others.

Certainly, these people are in agreement in disliking my authority. I will carry on till I perceive disunity among you; because if, in spite of the unsoundness of their view, they succeed, the whole organisation of the Muslims will be shattered. They are hankering after this world out of jealousy against him on whom Allah has bestowed it. So they intend reverting the matters on their backs (pre-Islamic period), while on us it is obligatory, for your sake, to abide by the Book of Allah (Qur'an), the Sublime, and the conduct of the Prophet of Allah, to stand by His rights and the revival of his *sunnah*.

Chapter 177

SERMON 169

When Amir al-mu'minin approached Basrah an Arab met him and spoke to him, as he had been sent to him by a group of people of Basrah to enquire from him on their behalf position vis-à-vis the people of Jamal. Amir al-mu'minin explained to him his position with respect to them, from which he was convinced that Amir al-mu'minin was in the right. Then Amir al-mu'minin asked him to swear allegiance, but he replied "I am just a message carrier of a people and shall not do anything until I get back to them." Upon this Amir al-mu'minin said to him:

If those at your back send you as a forerunner to search out a rain-fed area for them, and you return to them and apprise them of greenery and water but they disagree with you and go towards dry and barren land, what would you do then? He said: I would leave them and go towards greenery and water. Amir al-mu'minin then said: So then extend your hand.

This man related that: By Allah, by such a clear argument I could not refrain from swearing allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin.

This man was know as Kulayb al-Jarmi.

Chapter 178

SERMON 170

When Amir al-mu'minin decided to fight the enemy face to face at Siffin he said:

O' my Allah! Sustainer of the high sky and the suspended firmament which Thou hast made a shelter for the night and the day, an orbit for the sun and the moon and a path for the rotating stars, and for populating it Thou hast created a group of Thy angels who do not get weary of worshipping Thee. O' Sustainer of this earth which Thou hast made an abode for people and a place for the movement of insects and beasts and countless other creatures seen and unseen. O' Sustainer of strong mountains which Thou hast made as pegs for the earth and (a means of) support for people. If Thou givest us victory over our enemy, save us from excesses and keep us on the straight path of truth. But if Thou givest them victory over us, then grant us martyrdom and save us from mischief.

Where are those who protect honour, and those self-respecting persons who defend respectable persons in the time of hardship? Shame is behind you while Paradise is in front of you.

Chapter 179

SERMON 171

About the Consultative Committee and the Battle of Jamal

Praise be to Allah from whose view one sky does not conceal another sky nor one earth another earth.

A part of the same sermon

About the Consultative Committee after the death of `Umar ibn al-Khattab

Someone (1) said to me, "O' son of Abi Talib, you are eager for the caliphate." Then I told him:

"Rather, you are, by Allah, more greedy, although more remote, while I am more suited as well as nearer. I have demanded it as my right, while you are intervening between me and it, and you are turning my face from it." When I knocked at his ears with arguments among the crowd of those present he was startled as if he was stunned not knowing what reply to give me about it.

O' my Allah! I seek Thy succour against the Quraysh and those who are assisting them, because they are denying me (the rights of) kinship, have lowered my high position, and are united in opposing me in the matter (of the caliphate) which is my right, and then they said, "Know that the rightful thing is that you have it and also that you may leave it." (2)

A part of the same sermon

Describing the people of Jamal

They (Talhah, az-Zubayr and their supporters) came out dragging the wife of the Messenger of Allah (the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants) just as a maidslave is dragged for sale. They took her to Basrah where those two (Talhah and az-Zubayr) put their

own women in their houses but exposed the wife of the Messenger of Allah to themselves and to others in the army in which there was not a single individual who had not offered me his obedience and sworn to me allegiance quite obediently, without any compulsion.

Here in Basrah they approached my governor and treasurers of the public treasury and its other inhabitants. They killed some of them in captivity and others by treachery. By Allah, even if they had wilfully killed only one individual from among the Muslims without any fault, it would have been lawful for me to kill the whole of this army because they were present in it but did not disagree with it nor prevented it by tongue or hand, not to say that they killed from among the Muslims a number equal to that with which they had marched on them.

(1). On the occasion of the Consultative Committee Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas repeated to Amir al-mu'minin what Caliph `Umar had said in his last hours namely that "O' `Ali, you are very greedy for the position of caliphate," and `Ali replied that, "He who demands his own right cannot be called greedy; rather greedy is he who prevents the securing of the right and tries to grab it despite being unfit for it."

There is no doubt that Amir al-mu'minin considered the Caliphate to be his right, and demanded his right. The demand for a right does not dispel a right so that it may be put forth as an excuse for not assigning him the caliphate, and the demand may be held as a mark of greed. Even if it was greed, who was not involved in this greed? Was not the pull between the *muhajirun* and the *ansar* the mutual struggle between the members of the Consultative Committee and the mischief mongering of Talhah and az-Zubayr the product of this very greed. If Amir al-mu'minin had been greedy for this position, he would have stood for it, closing his eyes to the consequences and results, when `Abbas (uncle of the Prophet) and Abu Sufyan pressed him for (accepting) allegiance, and when, after the third Caliph people thronged to him for (swearing) allegiance, he should have accepted their offer without paying any attention to the deteriorated conditions. But at no time did Amir al-mu'minin take any step which could prove that he wanted the Caliphate for the sake of caliphate, but rather his demand for the caliphate was only with the object that its features should not be altered and the religion should not become the victim of others' desires, not that he should enjoy the pleasures of life which could be attributed to greed.

(2). Explaining the meaning, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes that Amir al-mu'minin's intention was to say:

They (the Quraysh and those who are assisting them) were not only content to keep me away from my right over the caliphate which they have usurped (from me), but rather claimed that it was their right whether to give it to me or prevent me from the same; and that I have no right to argue with them.

Furthermore, the intention (of Amir al-mu'minin) is that:

If they had not said that it is right to keep away from the caliphate, it would have been easy to endure it because this would have, at least, showed their admitting my right although they were not prepared to concede it. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 9, p. 306)

Chapter 180

SERMON 172

On eligibility for the Caliphate

The Prophet is the trustee of Allah's revelation, the Last of His Prophets. the giver of tidings of His mercy and the warner for His chastisement.

O' people. the most rightful of all persons for this matter (namely the caliphate) is he who is most competent among them to maintain it, and he who knows best Allah's commands about it. If any mischief is created by a mischief-monger, he will be called upon to repent. If he refuses. he will be fought. By my life, (1) if the question of Imamah was not to be decided unless all the people were present, then there would be no such case. But those who agreed about it imposed the decision on those who were absent, so much so that he who was present could not dissent and the one who was absent could not choose (any one else). Know that I shall fight two persons - one who claims what is not his and the other who ignores what is obligatory upon him.

The need for sagacity in fighting against Muslims

O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to have fear of Allah because it is the best advice to be mutually given by persons, and the best of all things before Allah. The door of war has been opened between you and the other Muslims. And this banner will be borne only by him who is a man of sight, of endurance and of knowledge of the position of rightfulness. Therefore, you should go ahead with what you are ordered and desist from what you are refrained. Do not make haste in any matter till you have clarified it. For in the case of every matter which you dislike we have a right to change it.

The behaviour of this world with its adherents

Know that this world which you have started to covet and in which you are interested, and which sometimes enrages you and sometimes

pleases you is not your (permanent) abode, nor the place of your stay for which you might have been created, nor one to which you have been invited. Know that it will not last for you nor will you live along with it. If anything out of this world deceives you (into attraction), its evils warn you too. You should give up (the objects of) its deceits in favour of (the objects of) its warning and (the objects of) its attractions in favour of (the objects of) its terrors. And while here in it, advance towards that house to which you have been called, and turn away your hearts from the world. None of you should cry like a maid slave over anything which she has been deprived of. Seek the perfection of Allah's bounty over you by endurance in obedience to Allah and in guarding what He has asked you to guard, namely His Book.

Know that the loss of anything of this world will not harm you, if you have guarded the principles of your religion. Know also that after the loss of your religion nothing of this world for which you have cared will benefit you. May Allah carry our hearts and your hearts towards the right and may He grant us and you endurance.

(1). When the people collected in the Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah in connection with the election, even those who were not present there were made to follow the decision taken there, and the principle was adopted that those present at the election had no right to reconsider the matter or to break the allegiance and those not present could do nothing but acquiesce in the agreed decision. But when the people of Medina swore allegiance at the hands of Amir al-mu'minin, the Governor of Syria (Mu`awiyah) refused to follow suit on the ground that since he was not present on the occasion he was not bound to abide by it, whereupon Amir al-mu'minin gave a reply in this sermon on the basis of these accepted and agreed principles and conditions which had been established among these people and had become incontrovertible namely that: "When the people of Medina and the *ansar* and the *muhajirun* have sworn allegiance on my hand, Mu`awiyah had no right to keep aloof from it on the ground that he was not present on the occasions nor were Talhah and az-Zubayr entitled to break the pledge after swearing allegiance."

On this occasion, Amir al-mu'minin did not argue on the strength of any saying of the Prophet which would serve as his final say about the caliphate, because the grounds for refusal in his case was in respect of the *modus operandi* of the principle of election. Therefore, in keeping with the requirements of the situation a reply based on the agreed principles of the adversary could alone quieten him. Even if he had argued on the

strength of the Prophet's command it would have been subjected to various interpretations and the matter would have been prolonged instead of being settled. Again Amir al-mu'minin had seen that soon after the death of the Prophet all his sayings and commands had been set aside. Therefore, how after the lapse of a long time, could one be expected to accept it when habit had been established to follow one's free will against the Prophet's sayings.

Chapter 181

SERMON 173

About Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah

Delivered when he received the news that Talhah and az-Zubayr had already left for Basrah to fight against him.

As for me, I would never be frightened of fighting or be made to fear striking because I am satisfied with Allah's promise of support to me. By Allah, Talhah has hastened with drawn sword to avenge `Uthman's blood for fear lest the demand for `Uthman's blood be made against himself, because the people's idea in this matter is about him, and, in fact, he was the most anxious among them for his killing. Therefore, he has tried to create misunderstanding by collecting forces in order to confuse the matter and to create doubt.

By Allah. he did not act in either of three ways about `Uthman. If the son of `Affan (`Uthman) was in the wrong, as Talhah believed, it is necessary for him to support those who killed (1)him or to keep away from his supporters. If `Uthman was the victim of oppression. then Talhah should have been among those who were keeping (the assaulters) away from him or were advancing pleas on his behalf. If he was in doubt about these two alternatives, then it was incumbent upon him to leave him (`Uthman) and retire aside and leave the men with him (to deal with him as they wished). But he adopted none of these three ways, and came out with a thing in which there is no good, and his excuses are not acceptable.

(1) It means that if Talhah considered `Uthman an oppressor, then after his assassination, instead of getting ready to avenge his blood, he should have supported his killers and justified their action. It is not the intention that in the case of `Uthman being in the wrong Talhah should have supported the attackers because he was already supporting and encouraging them.

Chapter 182

SERMON 174

Warning to neglectful people, and about the vastness of his own knowledge

O' people who are (negligent of Allah but) not neglected (by Allah), and those who miss (doing good acts) but are to be caught. How is it that I see you becoming removed from Allah and becoming interested in others? You are like the camel whom the grazer drives to a disease-stricken pasture and a disastrous watering place. They are like beasts who are fed in order to be slaughtered, but they do not know what is intended for them. When they are treated well they think that day to be their whole life, and eating their full to be their aim.

By Allah, if I wish, I can tell every one of you from where he has come, where he has to go and all his affairs, but I fear lest you abandon the Messenger of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny - in my favour. I shall certainly convey these things to the selected ones who will remain safe from that fear. By Allah, Who deputed the Prophet with Right and distinguished him over creation. I do not speak save the truth. He (the Prophet) informed me of all this and also about the death of every one who dies, the salvation of every one who is granted salvation, and the consequences of this matter (the caliphate). He left nothing (that could) pass into my head without putting it in my ear and telling me about it. (1)

O' people ! By Allah, I do not impel you to any obedience unless I practise it before you and do not restrain you from any disobedience unless I desist from it before you.

(1). Those who drink from the springs of revelation and divine inspiration see things hidden behind the curtains of the unknown and the events which will occur in the future in the same way as objects can be seen with the eyes, and this does not conflict with the saying of Allah that:

Say: "None (either) in the heavens or in the earth knoweth the unseen save Allah… " (Qur'an, 27:65)

because this verse contains the negation of personal knowledge of the unknown, but not the negation of knowledge which is required by the prophets and holy persons through divine inspiration, by virtue of which they make prophesies about the future and unveil many events and happenings. Several verses of the Qur'an support this view such as:

When the Prophet confided unto one of his wives a matter, but when she divulged it (unto others) and Allah apprised him thereof, he made known a part of it and avoided a part; so when he informed her of it, said she: "Who informed thee of this?" He said: "Informed me, the All-knowing, the All-aware." (Qur'an, 66:3)

These are of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal unto thee (O' Our Prophet Muhammad)… (Qur'an, 11:49)

Therefore, it is incorrect to argue in support of the view that if it is said that the prophets and holy persons possess knowledge of the unknown it would imply duality in the divine attributes. It would have implied duality if it were said that someone other than Allah has personal knowledge of the unknown. When it is not so and the knowledge possessed by the Prophets and Imams is that given by Allah it has no connection with duality. If duality should mean what is alleged, what would be the position of `Isa's (Jesus's) assertion related in the Qur'an namely:

… Out of clay will I make for you like the figure of a bird, and I will breathe into it, and it shall become a flying bird by Allah's permission; and I shall heal the blind and the leper and will rise the dead to life by Allah 's permission; and I will declare to you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses… (Qur'an, 3 :49)

If it is believed that `Isa (Jesus) could create and bestow life with Allah's permission does it mean that he was Allah's partner in the attributes of creation and revival? If this is not so then how can it be held that if Allah gives someone the knowledge of the unknown it implies that he has been taken to be His partner in His attributes, and how can one extol one's belief in the oneness of Allah by holding that the knowledge of the unknown implies duality.

No one can deny the fact that some people either see in dreams certain things which have yet to occur in the future, or that things can be read through interpretation of the dream, while during a dream neither do the senses function nor do the powers of understanding and comprehension co-operate. Therefore, if some events become known to some people in wakefulness why should there be amazement over it and

what are the grounds for rejecting it, when it stands to reason that things possible in dreams are also possible in wakefulness. Thus, Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani has written that it is possible to achieve all this, because in a dream the spirit becomes free from looking after the body and is removed from bodily connections; as a result of this it perceives such hidden realities which could not be seen because of the obstruction of the body. In the same way those perfect beings who pay no heed to bodily matters, and turn with all the attention of spirit and heart towards the centre of knowledge can see those realities and secrets which the ordinary eyes are unable to discern. Therefore, keeping in view the spiritual greatness of Ahlu'l-bayt (members of the Prophet's family) it should not appear strange that they were aware of events which were going to occur in future. Ibn Khaldun has written:

"When thaumaturgic feats are performed by others what do you think about those who were distinguished in knowledge and honesty and were a mirror of the Prophet's traits, while the consideration Allah had for their noble root (namely the Prophet) is a proof of the high performances of his chaste off-shoots (Ahlu'l-bayt). Consequently many events about knowledge of the unknown are related about Ahlu'l-bayt which are not related about others.." (*al-Muqaddamah*, p. 23).

In this way there is no cause for wonder over Amir al-mu'minin's claim since he was brought up by the Prophet and was a pupil of Allah's school. Of course, those whose knowledge does not extend beyond the limits of physical objectivity and whose means of learning are confined to the bodily senses refuse to believe in the knowledge about the paths of divine cognisance and reality. If this kind of claim were unique and were heard only from over Amir al-mu'minin then minds could have wavered and temperaments could have hesitated in accepting it, but if the Qur'an records even such a claim of `Isa (Jesus) that - "I can tell you what you eat or drink or store in your houses," then why should there be hesitation over Amir al-mu'minin's claim, when it is agreed that Amir al-mu'minin had succeeded to all the attainments and distinctions of the Prophet and it cannot be contended that the Prophet did not know what `Isa (Jesus) knew. Thus, if the successor of the Prophet advances such a claim, why should it be rejected, particularly as this vastness of knowledge of Amir al-mu'minin is the best evidence and proof for the Prophet's knowledge and perfection and a living miracle of his truthfulness.

In this connection, it is amazing that even having knowledge of events Amir al-mu'minin did not, through any of his words or deeds, indicate

that he knew them. Thus, commenting of the extraordinary importance of this claim, as-Sayyid Ibn Tawus writes:

"An amazing aspect of this claim is that despite the fact that Amir al-mu'minin was aware of conditions and events, yet he observed such conduct by way of his words and deeds that one who saw him could not believe that he knew the secrets and unknown acts of others, because the wise agree that if a person knows what event is likely to take place or what step his comrade is going to take, or if the hidden secrets of people are known to him, then the effects of such knowledge would appear through his movements and the expressions of his face. But the man who, in spite of knowing everything, behaves in a way as though he is unaware and knows nothing, then his personality is a miracle and a combination of contradictions."

At this stage, the question arises as to why Amir al-mu'minin did not act upon the dictates of his secret knowledge. The reply to this is that the commands of the *shari`ah* are based on apparent conditions. Otherwise secret knowledge is a kind of miracle and power which Allah grants to His prophets and Imams. Although the prophets and Imams possess this power always, they cannot make use of it at any time unless and until by the permission of Allah and on the proper occasion. For example, the verse quoted above about `Isa (Jesus) which tells that he had the power to give life, to heal the blind and declare what one ate and stored in his house, etc., he (Jesus) did not used to practise this power on every thing or every corpse or everyone who met him. He used to practise this power only by the permission of Allah and on the proper occasion.

If prophets and other divines acted on the basis of their secret knowledge it would have meant serious dislocation and disturbance in the affairs of the people. For example, if a prophet or divine, on the basis of his secret knowledge, punishes a condemnable man by killing him, there would be great commotion and agitation among those who see it on the ground that he killed an innocent man. That is why Allah has not permitted the basing of conclusions on secret knowledge save in a few special cases, and has enjoined the following of observable factors. Thus, despite his being aware of the hypocrisy of some of the hypocrites, the Prophet extended to them the treatment that should be extended to a Muslim.

Now, there can be no scope for the objection that if Amir al-mu'minin knew secret matters then why did he not act according to them because it has been shown that he was not obliged to act according to the requirements of his secret knowledge. Of course, where conditions so required

he did disclose some matters for the purposes of preaching, admonishing, giving good tidings (of reward) or warning (against punishment), so that future events could be fore-closed. For example, Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) informed Yahya ibn Zayd that if he went out he would be killed. Ibn Khaldun writes in this connection:

"It has been authentically related from Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq that he used to apprise some of his relations of the events to befall them. For example, he warned his cousin Yahya ibn Zayd of being killed but he disobeyed him and went out and was killed in Juzajan." (*al-Muqaddamah*, p. 233).

Nevertheless, where there was apprehension that minds would get worried it was not at all disclosed. That is why in this sermon Amir al-mu'minin avoided more details, in view of the fear that people would begin to regard him higher than the Prophet. Despite all this people did go astray about `Isa (Jesus), and in the same way about Amir al-mu'minin also they began to say all sorts of things and were misled into resorting to exaggeration.

Chapter 183

SERMON 175

Preaching

(O ' creatures!) Seek benefit from the sayings of Allah, be admonished of Allah and accept the advice of Allah because Allah has left no excuse for you by providing clear guidance, has put before you the plea and clarified for you what acts He likes and what acts He hates, so that you may follow the one and avoid the other. The Prophet of Allah used to say. "Paradise is surrounded by unpleasant things while Hell is surrounded by desires."

You should know that every obedience to Allah is unpleasant in appearance while every disobedience to Allah has the appearance of enjoyment. Allah may have mercy on the person who kept aloof from his desire and uprooted the appetite of his heart, because this heart has far-reaching aims and it goes on pursuing disobedience through desires.

You should know, O' creatures of Allah, that a believer should be distrustful of his heart every morning and evening. He should always blame it (for shortcomings) and ask it to add to (its good acts). You should behave like those who have gone before you and the precedents in front of you. They left this world like a traveller and covered it as distance is covered.

The greatness of the Holy Qur'an

And know that this Qur'an is an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Qur'an but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution - addition in his guidance or elimination in his (spiritual) blindness. You should also know that no one will need anything after (guidance from) the Qur'an and no one will be free from want before (guidance from) the Qur'an. Therefore, seek cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt and

misguidance. Pray to Allah through it and turn to Allah with its love. Do not ask the people through it. There is nothing like it through which the people should turn to Allah, the Sublime.

Know that it is an interceder and its intercession will be accepted. It is a speaker who is testified. For whoever the Qur'an intercedes on the Day of Judgement, its intercession for him would be accepted. He about whom the Qur'an speaks ill on the Day of Judgement shall testify to it. On the Day of Judgement an announcer will announce, "Beware. every sower of a crop is in distress except the sowers of the Qur'an." Therefore, you should be among the sowers of the Qur'an and its followers. Make it your guide towards Allah. Seek its advice for yourselves, do not trust your views against it. and regard your desires in the matter of the Qur'an as deceitful.

About the believers and their good deeds; and the hypocrites and their bad deeds

Action! action! Then (look at) the end; the end, and (remain) steadfast; steadfast. Thereafter (exercise) endurance, endurance, and piety, piety. You have an objective. Proceed towards your objective. You have a sign. Take guidance from your sign. Islam has an objective. Proceed towards its objective. Proceed towards Allah's by fulfilling His rights which He has enjoined upon you. He has clearly stated His demands for you. I am a witness for you and shall plead excuses on your behalf on the Day of Judgement.

Beware! what had been ordained has occurred and that which had been destined has come into play. I am speaking to you with the promise and pleas of Allah.

Allah the Sublime, has said:

Verily, those who say: Our Lord is Allah! and persevere aright, the angels descend upon them (saying): *"Fear Ye not, nor be grieved, and receive the glad tidings of the Garden which Ye were promised."*(Qur'an, 41:30)

You have said. "Our Lord is Allah." Then keep steadfast to His Book, to the way of His command and to the virtuous course of His worship. Thereafter do not go out of it, do not introduce innovations in it, and do not turn away from it, because those who go away from this course will be cut off from (the mercy of) Allah on the Day of Judgement.

Beware from destroying your manners and changing them, maintaining one tongue. A man should control his tongue because the tongue is obstinate with its master. By Allah, I do not find that fear of Allah benefits a man who practises it unless he controls his tongue. Certainly the

tongue of a believer is at the back of his heart while the heart of a hypocrite is at the back of his tongue; because, when a believer intends to say anything, he thinks it over in his mind. If it is good he discloses it, but if it is bad he lets it remain concealed. While a hypocrite speaks whatever comes to his tongue, without knowing what is in his favour and what goes against him.

The Prophet of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - said: "The belief of a person cannot be firm unless his heart is firm, and his heart cannot be firm unless his tongue is firm." So whoever of you can manage to meet Allah, the Sublime, in such a position that his hands are unsmeared with the blood of Muslims and their property and his tongue is safe from exposing them, he should do so.

Following the sunnah and refraining from innovation

Know, O' creatures of Allah, that a believer should regard lawful this year what he regarded lawful in the previous year, and should consider unlawful this year what he considered unlawful in the previous year. Certainly people's innovation cannot make lawful for you what has been declared unlawful; rather, lawful is that which Allah has made lawful and unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful. You have already tested the matters and tried them; you have been preached by those before you. Illustrations have been drawn for you and you have been called to clear fact. Only a deaf man can remain deaf to all this, and only a blind man can remain blind to all this.

He whom Allah does not allow benefit from trials and experience cannot benefit from preaching. He will be faced with losses from in front, so that he will approve what is bad and disapprove what is good. People are of two categories - the follower of the *shari`ah* (religious laws), and the follower of the innovations to whom Allah has not given any testimony by way of *sunnah* or the light of any plea.

Guidance from the Holy Qur'an

Allah the Glorified, has not counselled anyone on the lines of this Qur'an, for it is the strong rope of Allah and His trustworthy means. It contains the blossoming of the heart and springs of knowledge. For the heart there is no other gloss than the Qur'an although those who remembered it have passed away while those who forgot or pretended to have forgotten it have remained. If you see any good give your support to it, but if you see evil evade it, because the Messenger of Allah used to

say: "O' son of Adam, do good and evade evil; by doing so you will be treading correctly."

Categories of oppression

Know that injustice is of three kinds - one, the injustice that will not be forgiven, another, that will not be left unquestioned, and another that will be forgiven without being questioned. The injustice that will not be forgiven is duality of Allah. Allah has said: *Verily Allah forgiveth not that* (anything) *be associated with Him …* (Qur'an, 4:48,116). The injustice that will be forgiven is the injustice a man does to himself by committing small sins; and the injustice that will not be left unquestioned is the injustice of men against other men. The retribution in such a case is severe. It is not wounding with knives, nor striking with whips, but it is so severe that all these things are small against it. You should therefore avoid change in the matter of Allah's religion for your unity in respect of a right which you dislike is better than your scattering away in respect of a wrong that you like. Certainly, Allah the Glorified has not given any person, whether among the dead or among those who survive, any good from separation.

O' people, blessed is the man whose own shortcomings keep him away from (looking into) the shortcomings of others, and also blessed is the man who is confined to his house, eats his meal, buries himself in obeying his Allah. and weeps over his sins, so that he is engaged in himself and people are in safety from him.

Chapter 184

SERMON 176

About the two arbiters (after the battle of Siffin)

Your party had decided to select two persons, and so we took their pledge that they would act according to the Qur'an and would not commit excess, that their tongues should be with it and that their hearts should follow it. But they deviated from it, abandoned what was right although they had it before their eyes. Wrong-doing was their desire, and going astray was their behaviour. Although we had settled with them to decide with justice. to act according to the light and without the interference of their evil views and wrong judgement. Now that they have abandoned the course of right and have come out with just the opposite of what was settled, we have strong ground (to reject their verdict).

Chapter 185

SERMON 177

Praise of Allah, transience of this world, and causes of the decline of Allah's blessings. (Delivered at the beginning of his caliphate after the killing of `Uthman)

One condition does not prevent Him from (getting into) another condition, time does not change Him, place does not locate him and the tongue does not describe Him. The number of drops of water, of stars in the sky, or of currents of winds in the air are not unknown to Him, nor the movements of ants on rocks, or the resting place of grubs in the dark night. He knows the places where leaves fall, and the secret movements of the pupils of the eyes.

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah, Who has no parallel, Who is not doubted, Whose religion is not denied and Whose creativeness is not questioned. My witnessing is like that of a man whose intention is free, whose conscience is clear, whose belief is pure and whose loads (of good actions) are heavy. I also stand witness that Muhammad - the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny - is His slave and His Messenger, chosen from His creations, selected for detailing His realities, picked for His selected honours and chosen for His esteemed messages. Through him the signs of guidance have been lighted and the gloom of blindness (misguidance) has been dispelled.

O' people, surely this world deceives him who longs for it and who is attracted towards it. It does not behave niggardly with him who aspires for it and overpowers him who overpowers it. By Allah, no people are deprived of the lively pleasures of life after enjoying them, except as a result of sins committed by them, because certainly Allah is not unjust to His creatures. Even then, when calamities descend upon people and pleasures depart from them, they turn towards Allah with true intention and the feeling in their hearts that He will return them everything that has fled from them and cure all their ills.

I fear about you lest you fall into ignorance (that prevailed before the appearance of the Prophet). In the past there were certain matters in which you were deflected, and in my view you were not worthy of admiration; but if your previous position could be returned to you then you would become virtuous. I can only strive; but if I were to speak I would (only) say may Allah forgive your past actions.

Chapter 186

SERMON 178

Dhi`lib al-Yamani asked Amir al-mu'minin whether he had seen Allah, when he replied, "Do I worship one whom I have not seen?" Then he enquired, "How have you seen Him?" Then Amir al-mu'minin replied:

Eyes do not see Him face to face, but hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief. He is near to things but not (physically) contiguous. He is far from them but not (physically) separate. He is a speaker, but not with reflection. He intends, but not with preparation. He moulds, but not with (the assistance of) limbs. He is subtle but cannot be attributed with being concealed. He is great but cannot be attributed with haughtiness. He sees but cannot be attributed with the sense (of sight). He is Merciful but cannot be attributed with weakness of heart. Faces feel low before His greatness and hearts tremble out of fear of Him.

Chapter 187

SERMON 179

Condemning his disobedient men

I praise Allah for whatever matter He ordained and whatever action He destines and for my trial with you, O' group of people who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call you. If you are at ease you engage in (conceited) conversation, but if you are faced with battle you show weakness. If people agree on one Imam you taunt each other. If you are faced with an arduous matter you turn away from it. May others have no father (woe to your enemy!) what are you waiting for in the matter of your assistance and for fighting for your rights? For you there is either death or disgrace. By Allah, if my day (of death) comes. and it is sure to come, it will cause separation between me and you although I am sick of your company and feel lonely with you.

May Allah deal with you! Is there no religion which may unite you nor sense of shamefulness that may sharpen you? Is it not strange that Mu`awiyah calls out to some rude low people and they follow him without any support or grant, but when I call you, although you are the successors of Islam and the (worthy) survivors of the people, with support and distributed grants you scatter away from me and oppose me? Truly, there is nothing between me to you which I like and you also like it, or with which I am angry and you may also unite against it. What I love most is death. I have taught you the Qur'an, clarified to you arguments, apprised you of what you were ignorant and made you swallow what you were spitting out. Even a blind man would have been able to see, and he who was sleeping would have been awakened. How ignorant of Allah is their leader Mu`awiyah and their instructor Ibn an-Nabighah. (1)

(1). "an-Nabighah" is the surname of Layla bint Harmalah al-`Anaziyyah, mother of `Amr ibn al-`As. The reason for attributing him to his mother is her common reputation in the matter. When Arwa bint al-

Harith ibn `Abd al-Muttalib went to Mu`awiyah, during the conversation, when `Amr ibn al-`As intervened, she said to him: "O' son of an-Nabighah, you too dare speak, although your mother was known publicly and was a singer of Mecca. That is why five persons claimed you (as a son), and when she was asked she admitted that five people had visited her and that you should be regarded as the son of him you resembled most. You must have resembled al-`As ibn Wa'il and therefore you came to be known as his son."

These five persons were (1) al-`As ibn Wa'il, (2) Abu Lahab, (3) Umayyah ibn Khalaf, (4) Hisham ibn al-Mughirah, and (5) Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. (Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`lqd al-farid*, vol. 2, p. 120; Ibn Tayfur, *Balaghat an-nisa'*, p. 27; Ibn Hijjah, *Thamarat al-awraq*, vol. 1, p. 132; Safwat, *Jamharat khutab al-`Arab*, vol. 2, p.363; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 6, pp. 283-285, 291; al-Halabi, *as-Sirah* vol. 1, p. 46).

Chapter 188

SERMON 180

Amir al-mu'minin sent one of his men to bring him news about a group of the army of Kufah who had decided to join the Kharijites but were afraid of him. (1) When the man came back Amir al-mu'minin said to him: "Are they satisfied and staying or feeling weak and going astray?" The man replied, "They have gone away, O' Amir al-mu'minin." Then Amir al-mu'minin said:

May Allah's mercy remain away from them as in the case of Thamud. Know that when the spears are hurled towards them and the swords are struck at their heads they will repent of their doings. Surely today Satan has scattered them and tomorrow he will disclaim any connection with them, and will leave them. Their departing from guidance, returning to misguidance and blindness, turning away from truth and falling into wrong is enough (for their chastisement).

(1). A man of the tribe Banu Najiyah named al-Khirrit ibn Rashid an-Naji was on Amir al-mu'minin's side in the battle of Siffin, but after Arbitration he became rebellious, and, coming to Amir al-mu'minin with thirty persons, said: "By Allah, I Will no more obey your command, nor offer prayers behind you, and shall leave you tomorrow." Whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said: "You should first take into account the grounds underlying this Arbitration and discuss it with me. If you are satisfied, you do as you will." He said he would come the next day to discuss the matter. Amir al-mu'minin then cautioned him, "Look, on going from here do not get mislead by others and do not adopt any other course. If you have the will to understand, I will get you out of this wrong path and put you on the course of guidance." After this conversation he went away, but his countenance indicated he was bent on revolt, and would not see reason by any means. And so it happened. He stuck to his point and on reaching his place he said to his tribesmen, "When we are determined to abandon Amir al-mu'minin there is no use going to him. We

should do what we have decided to do." On this occasion `Abdullah ibn Qu`ayn al Azdi also went to them to enquire, but when he came to know the position he asked Mudrik ibn ar-Rayyan an-Naji to speak to him and to apprise him of the ruinous consequence of this rebellion, whereupon Mudrik assured him that this man would not be allowed to take any step. Consequently, `Abdullah came back satisfied and related the whole matter before Amir al-mu'minin on returning the next day. Amir al-mu'minin said, "Let us see what happens when he comes. " But when the appointed hour passed and he did not turn up Amir al-mu'minin asked `Abdullah to go and see what the matter was and what was the cause for the delay. On reaching there `Abdullah found that all of them had left. When he returned to Amir al-mu'minin he spoke as in this sermon.

The fate that befell al-Khirrit ibn Rashid an-Naji has been stated under Sermon 44.

Chapter 189

SERMON 181

It has been related by Nawf al-Bikali that Amir al-mu'minin `Ali (p.b.u.h.) delivered this sermon at Kufah standing on a stone which Ja`dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi had placed for him. Amir al-mu'minin had a woollen apparel on his body, the belt of his sword was made of leaves, and the sandals on his feet too were of palm leaves. His forehead had a hardened spot like that a camel (on its knee, due to many and long prostrations).

About Allah's attributes, His creatures and His being above physical limitations

Praise be to Allah to Whom is the return of all creation and the end of all matters. We render Him praise for the greatness of His generosity, the charity of His proofs, the increase of His bounty and His favours, - praise which may fulfil His right, repay His thanks, take (us) near His reward and be productive of increase in His kindness. We seek His help like one who is hopeful of His bounty, desirous of His benefit, and confident of His warding off (calamities), who acknowledges His gifts and is obedient to Him in word and deed. We believe in Him like him who reposes hope in Him with conviction, inclines to Him as a believer, humbles himself before Him obediently, believes in His oneness exclusively, regards Him great, acknowledging His dignity, and seeks refuge with Him with inclination and exertion.

Allah the Glorified has not been born so that someone could be (His) partner in glory. Nor has He begotten anyone so as to be inherited from after dying. Time and period have not preceded Him. Increase and decrease do not occur to Him. But He has manifested Himself to our understanding through our having observed His strong control and firm decree. Among the proofs of His creation is the creation of the skies which are fastened without pillars and stand without support. He called them and they responded obediently and humbly without being lazy or

loathsome. If they had not acknowledged His Godhead and obeyed Him He would not have made them the place for His throne, the abode of His angels and the destination for the rising up of the pure utterances and the righteous deeds of the creatures.

He has made the stars in the skies by way of signs by which travellers wandering the various routes of the earth may be guided. The gloom of the dark curtains of the night does not prevent the flame of their light, nor do the veils of blackish nights have the power to turn back the light of the moon when it spreads in the skies. Glory be to Allah from Whom neither the blackness of dark dusk or of gloomy night (falling) in the low parts of the earth or on high dim mountains is hidden, nor the thundering of clouds on the horizons of the skies, nor the sparking of lightning in the clouds, nor the falling of leaves blown away from their falling places by the winds of hurricanes or by downpour from the sky. He knows where the drops fall and where they stay, where the grubs leave their trails or where they drag themselves, what livelihood would suffice the mosquitoes and what a female bears in its womb.

Praise be to Allah Who exists from before the coming into existence of the seat, the throne, the sky, the earth, the jinn or human being. He cannot be perceived by imagination nor measured by understanding. He who begs from Him does not divert Him (from others), nor does giving away cause Him diminution. He does not see by means of an eye, nor can He be confined to a place. He cannot be said to have companions. He does not create with (the help of) limbs. He cannot be perceived by senses. He cannot be thought of after the people.

It is He who spoke to Musa clearly and showed him His great signs without the use of bodily parts, the organ of speech or the uvula. O' you who exert yourself in describing Allah if you are serious then (first try to) describe Gabriel, Michael or the host of angels who are close (to Allah) in the receptacles of sublimity; but their heads are bent downwards and their wits are perplexed as to how to assign limits (of definition) to the Highest Creator. This is because those things can only be perceived through qualities which have shape and parts and which succumb to death after reaching the end of their times. There is no god but He. He has lighted every darkness with His effulgence and has darkened every light with the darkness (of death).

An account of past peoples and about learning from them

I advise you, creatures of Allah, to practise fear of Allah Who gave you good clothing and bestowed an abundance of sustenance on you. If there

was anyone who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death it was Sulayman ibn Dawud (p. b. u. h.) who was given control over the domain of the jinn and men along with prophethood and great position (before Allah), but when he finished what was his due in food (of this world) and exhausted his (fixed) time the bow of destruction shot him with arrow of death. His houses became vacant and his habitations became empty. Another group of people inherited them. Certainly, the by-gone centuries have a lesson for you.

Where are the Amalekites (1) and the sons of Amalekites? Where are the Pharaohs? (2) Where are the people of the cities of ar-Rass (3) who killed the prophets, destroyed the traditions of the divine messengers and revived the traditions of the despots? Where are those who advanced with armies, defeated thousands, mobilised forces and populated cities?

A part of the same sermon about the Imam al-Mahdi

He will be wearing the armour of wisdom, which he will have secured with all its conditions, such as full attention towards it, its (complete) knowledge and exclusive devotion to it. For him it is like a thing which he had lost and which he was then seeking, or a need which he was trying to fulfil. If Islam is in trouble he will feel forlorn like a traveller and like a (tired) camel beating the end of its tail and with its neck flattened on the ground. He is the last of Allah's proofs and one of the vicegerents of His prophets.

Then Amir al-mu'minin continued:

On the method of his ruling, and grief over the martyrdom of his companions

O' people! I have divulged to you advice which the prophets used to preach before their peoples, and I have conveyed to you what the vicegerents (of the prophets) conveyed to those coming after them. I tried to train you with my whip but you could not be straightened. I drove you with admonition but you did not acquire proper behaviour. May Allah deal with you! Do you want an Imam other than me to take you on the (right) path, and show you the correct way?

Beware, the things in this world which were forward have become things of the past, and those of which were behind are going ahead. The virtuous people of Allah have made up their minds to leave and they have purchased, with a little perishable (pleasure) of this world, a lot of

such (reward) in the next world that will remain. What loss did our brothers whose blood was shed in Siffin suffer by not being alive today? Only that they are not suffering choking on swallowings and not drinking turbid water. By Allah, surely they have met Allah and He has bestowed upon them their rewards and He has lodged them in safe houses after their (having suffered) fear.

Where are my brethren who took the (right) path and trod in rightness. Where is `Ammar? (4) Where is Ibn at-Tayyihan? (5) Where is Dhu'sh-Shahadatayn? (6) And where are others like them (7) from among their comrades who had pledged themselves to death and whose (severed) heads were taken to the wicked enemy.

Then Amir al-mu'minin wiped his hand over his auspicious, honoured beard and wept for a long time, then he continued:

Oh! my brothers. who recited the Qur'an and strengthened it, thought over their obligation and fulfilled it, revived the *sunnah* and destroyed innovation. When they were called to *jihad* they responded and trusted in their leader then followed him.

Then Amir al-mu'minin shouted at the top of his voice:

al-jihad, al-jihad (fighting, fighting), O' creatures of Allah! By Allah, I am mobilising the army today. He who desires to proceed towards Allah should come forward.

Nawf says: Then Amir al-mu'minin put Husayn (p.b.u.h.) over (a force of) ten thousand, Qays ibn Sa`d (mercy of Allah be upon him) over ten thousand, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari over ten thousand, and others over different numbers, intending to return to Siffin, but Friday did not appear again and the accursed Ibn Muljam (may Allah curse him) killed him. Consequently, the armies came back and were left like sheep who had lost their shepherd while wolves were snatching them away from all sides.

(1). History shows that very often the ruin and destruction of peoples has been due to their oppression and open wickedness and profligacy. Consequently, communities which had extended their sway over all the corners of the populated world and had flown their flags in the East and West of the globe disappeared from the surface of the earth like a wrong word, on disclosure of their vicious actions and evil doings.

Amalekites: ancient nomadic tribe, or collection of tribes, described in the Old Testament as relentless enemies of Israel, even though they were closely related to Ephraim, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Their name derives from Amalek, who is celebrated in Arabian tradition but cannot

be identified. The district over which they ranged was south of Judah and probably extended into northern Arabia. The Amalekites harassed the Hebrews during their exodus out of Egypt and attacked them at Rephidim (near Mt. Sinai), where they were defeated by Joshua. They also filled out the ranks of the nomadic raiders defeated by Gideon and were condemned to annihilation by Samuel. The Amelekites, whose final defeat occurred in the time of Hezekiah, were the object of a perpetual curse. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* [Micropaedia], vol. 1, p. 288, ed. 1973-1974; also see [for further reference] *The Encyclopaedia Americana,* [International Edition] vol. 1, p. 651, ed. 1975).

(2).**Pharaoh:** Hebrew form of the Egyptian *per-'o* ("the great house"), signifying the royal palace, an epithet applied in the New Kingdom and after, as a title of respect, to the Egyptian king himself. In the 22nd dynasty the title was added to the king's personal name. In official documents the full titulary of the Egyptian king contained five names. The first and oldest identified him as the incarnation of the falcon god, Horus; it was often written inside a square called *serekh*, depicting the facade of the archaic palace. The second name, "two ladies", placed him under the protection of Nekhbet and Buto, the vulture and uraeus (snake) goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt; the third, "golden Horus", signified perhaps originally "Horus victorious over his enemies." The last two names, written within a ring or cartouche, are generally referred to as the praenomen and nomen, and were the ones most commonly used; the praenomen and nomen, and were the ones most commonly used; the praenomen, preceded by the hieroglyph meaning "King of Upper and Lower Egypt," usually contained a reference to the king's Unique relationship with the sun god, Re, while the fifth, or nomen, was preceded by the hieroglyph for "Son of Re," or by that for "Lord of the two lands." The last name was given him at birth, the rest at his coronation. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* [Micropaedia], vol. Vll, p. 927, ed. 1973-1974; also see [for further reference] *The Encyclopaedia Americana,* [International Edition], vol. 21, p. 707, ed. 1975).

Among the Pharaohs was the Pharaoh of the days of Prophet Musa. His pride, egotism, insolence and haughtiness were such that by making the claim "I am your sublime God" he deemed himself to be holding sway over all other powers of the world, and was under the misunderstanding that no power could wrest the realm and government from his hands. The Qur'an has narrated his claim of "I and no one else" in the following words:

And proclaimed Pharaoh unto his people, "O' my people! is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers flow below me; What! behold ye not? (43:51)

But when his empire came near the end it was destroyed in a few moments. Neither his position and servants could come in the way of its destruction nor could the vastness of his realm prevent it. Rather, the waves of the very streams which he was extremely proud to possess, wrapped him in and dispatched his spirit to Hell throwing the body on the bank to serve as a lesson for the whole of creation.

(3). **The people of the cities of ar-Rass:** In the same way the people of ar-Rass were killed and destroyed for disregarding the preaching and call of a prophet, and for revolt and disobedience. About them the Qur'an says:

And the (tribes of) *`Ad and Thamud and the inhabitants of ar-Rass, and generations between them, in great number. And unto each of them We did give examples and every one* (of them) *We did destroy with utter extermination.*(25:38,39)

Belied (also) *those before them the people of Noah and the dwellers of ar-Rass and Thamud; And `Ad and Pharaoh, and the brethren of Lot; And the dwellers of the Wood and the people of Tubba`; all belied the apostles, so was proved true My promise* (of the doom) (50:12-14)

(4). `Ammar ibn Yasir ibn `Amir al-`Ansi al-Madhhiji al Makhzumi (a confederate of Banu Makhzum) was one of the earliest converts to Islam, and the first Muslim to build a mosque in his own house in which he used to worship Allah (*at-Tabaqat*, vol. 3, Part 1, p. 178; *Usd al-ghabah*, vol. 4, p. 46; Ibn Kathir, *at-Tarikh,* vol. 7, p. 311).

`Ammar accepted Islam along with his father Yasir and his mother Sumayyah. They suffered great tortures by the Quraysh, due to their conversion to Islam, to such an extent that `Ammar lost his parents; and they were the first martyrs man and woman in Islam.

`Ammar was among those who immigrated to Abyssinia, and the earliest immigrants (muhajirun) to Medina. He was present in the battle of Badr and all other battles as well as places of assembly by the Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet; and he showed his might and favour in all Islamic struggles in the best way.

Many traditions are narrated from the Holy Prophet about `Ammar regarding his virtues, outstanding traits and his glorious deeds, such as the

tradition which `A'ishah and other have narrated that the Holy Prophet himself had said that `Ammar was filled with faith from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. (Ibn Majah, *as-Sunan*, vol. 1, p. 65; Abu Nu`aym, *Hilyah al-Awliya'*, vol. 1, p. 139; al-Haytami, *Majma` az-zawa'id*, vol. 9, p. 295*; al-Isti`ab*, vol. 3, p. 1137; *al-Isabah,* vol. 2, p. 512)

In another tradition the Holy Prophet said about `Ammar:

> `Ammar is with the truth and the truth is with `Ammar. He turns wherever the truth turns. `Ammar is as near to me as an eye is near to the nose. Alas! a rebellious group will kill him. (*at-Tabaqat,* vol. 3, part 1, p. 187; *al-Mustadrak,* vol. 3, p. 392; Ibn Hisham, *as-Sirah,* vol. 2, p. 143; Ibn Kathir, *at-Tarikh,* vol. 7, pp. 268-270)

Also in the decisive and widely known tradition which al-Bukhari (in *Sahih,* vol. 8, pp. 185-186), at-Tirmidhi (*in al-Jami` as-Sahih,* vol. 5, p. 669); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (in *al-Musnad,* vol. 2, pp. 161,164,206; vol. 3, pp.5, 22, 28, 91; vol. 4, pp.197, 199, vol. 5 pp.215, 306, 307; vol. 6, pp.289, 300, 311, 315), and all the narrators of Islamic traditions and historians transmitted through twenty-five Companions that the Holy Prophet said about `Ammar:

> Alas! a rebellious group which swerves from the truth will murder `Ammar. `Ammar will be calling them towards Paradise and they will be calling him towards Hell. His killer and those who strip him of arms and clothing will be in Hell.

Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani (in *Tahdhib at-tahdhib,* vol. 7, p. 409; *al-lsabah,* vol. 2, p.512) and as-Suyuti (*in al-Khasa'is al-kubra,* vol. 2, p. 140) say: "The narration of this (above mentioned) tradition is *mutawatir* (i.e. narrated successively by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about its authenticity)."

Ibn `Abd al-Barr (in *al-Isti`ab,* vol. 3, p. 1140) says:

> The narration followed uninterrupted succession from the Holy Prophet, that he said: "A rebellious group will murder `Ammar," and this is a prophecy of the Prophet's secret knowledge and the sign of his prophethood. This tradition is among the most authentic and the most rightly ascribed traditions.

After the death of the Holy Prophet, `Ammar was one of the closest adherents and best supporters of Amir al-mu'minin during the reign of the first three Caliphs. During the caliphate of `Uthman when the Muslim protested (to `Uthman) against his policy on the distribution of the Public Treasury *(Baytu'l-mal)* `Uthman said in a public assembly that, 'the money which as in the treasury was sacred and belonged to Allah, and that he (as being the successor of the Prophet) had the right to dispose of them as he thought fit. 'He (`Uthman) threatened and cursed all who presumed to censure or murmur at what he said. Upon this, `Ammar ibn Yasir boldly declared his disapprobation and began to charge him with his inveterate propensity to ignore the interests of the general public; accused him with reviving the heathenish customs abolished by the Prophet. Whereupon `Uthman commanded him to be beaten and immediately some of the Umayyads, the kindred of the Caliph fell upon the venerable `Ammar, and the Caliph himself kicking him with his shoes (on his feet) on `Ammar's testicles, and afflicted him with hernia. `Ammar became unconscious for three days, and he was taken care of by Umm al-mu'minin Umm Salamah in her own house. (al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-ashraf,* vol. 5, pp. 48,54,88; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 3, pp. 47-52; *al-lmamah wa's-siyasah,* vol. 1, pp. 35-36; *al-`Iqd al-farid,* vol. 4, p. 307; *at-Tabaqat,* vol. 3, Part 1, p. 185; *Tarikh al-khamis,* vol. 2, p. 271)

When Amir al-mu'minin became Caliph, `Ammar was one of his most sincere supporters. He participated fully in all social, political and military activities during this period, especially in the first battle (the battle of Jamal) and the second one (the battle of Siffin).

However, `Ammar was martyred on 9th Safar 37 A.H. in the battle of Siffin when a he was over ninety years of age. On the day `Ammar ibn Yasir achieved martyrdom, he turned his face to the sky and said:

> O' my Allah! surely Thou art aware that if I know that Thy wish is that I should plunge myself into this River (the Euphrates) and be drowned, I will do it. O' my Allah! surely Thou knowest that if I knew that Thou would be pleased if I put my scimitar on my chest (to hit my heart) and pressed it so hard that it came out of my back, I would do it. O' my Allah! I do not think there is anything more pleasant to Thee than fighting with this sinful group, and if knew that any action were more pleasant to Thee I would do it.

Abu `Abd ar-Rahman as-Sulami narrates:

"We were present with Amir al-mu'minin at Siffin where I saw `Ammar ibn Yasir was not turning his face towards any side, nor valleys (wadis [of the land] ) of Siffin but the companions of the Holy Prophet were following him as if he was a sign for them. Then I heard `Ammar say to Hashim ibn 'Utbah (al-Mirqal): 'O' Hashim! rush into enemy's ranks, paradise is under sword!

Today I meet beloved one, Muhammad and his party'.

"Then he said: 'By Allah, if they put us to flight (and pursue us) to the date-palms of Hajar (a town in Bahrain, Persian Gulf [i.e., if they pursue us along all the Arabian desert] nevertheless) we know surely that we are right and they are wrong.'

"Then he (Ammar) continued (addressing the enemies):

We struck you to (believe in) *its* (Holy Qur'an) *revelation; And today we strike you to* (believe in) *its interpretation; Such strike as to remove heads from their resting places; And to make the friend forget his sincere friend; Until the truth returns to its* (right) *path.'"*

The narrator says: "I did not see the Holy Prophet's companions killed at any time as many as they were killed on this day."

Then `Ammar spurred his horse, entered the battlefield and began fighting. He persistently chased the enemy, made attack after attack, and raised challenging slogans till at last a group of mean-spirited Syrians surrounded him on all sides, and a man named Abu al-Ghadiyah al-Juhari (al-Fazari) inflicted such a wound upon him that he could not bear it, and returned to his camp. He asked for water. A tumbler of milk was brought to him. When `Ammar looked at the tumbler he said: "The Messenger of Allah had said the right thing." People asked him what he meant by these words. He said "The Messenger of Allah informed me that the last sustenance for me in this world would be milk." Then he took that tumbler of milk in his hands, drank the milk and surrendered his life to Allah, the Almighty. When Amir al-mu'minin came to know of his death, he came to `Ammar's side, put his (`Ammar's) head on his own lap, and recited the following elegy to mourn his death:

Surely any Muslim who is not distressed at the murder of the son of Yasir, and is not be afflicted by this grievous misfortune does not have true faith.

> May Allah show His mercy to `Ammar the day he embraced Islam, may Allah show His mercy to `Ammar the day he was killed, and may Allah show His mercy to `Ammar the day he is raised to life.
>
> Certainly, I found `Ammar (on such level) that three companions of the Holy Prophet could not be named unless he was the fourth, and four of them could not be mentioned unless he was the fifth.
>
> There was none among the Holy Prophet's companions who doubted that not only was Paradise once or twice compulsorily bestowed upon `Ammar, but that he gained his claim to it (a number of times). May Paradise give enjoyment to `Ammar.
>
> Certainly, it was said (by the Holy Prophet) "Surely, `Ammar is with the truth and the truth is with `Ammar. He turns wherever the truth turns. His killer will be in hell."

Then Amir al-mu'minin stepped forward and offered funeral prayers for him, and then with his own hands, he buried him with his clothes.

`Ammar's death caused a good deal of commotion in the ranks of Mu`awiyah too, because there were a large number of prominent people fighting from his side under the impression created in their minds that he was fighting Amir al-mu'minin for a right cause. These people were aware of the saying of the Holy Prophet that `Ammar would be killed by a group who would be on the wrong side. When they observed that `Ammar had been killed by Mu`awiyah's army, they became convinced that they were on the wrong side and that Amir al-mu'minin was definitely on the right. This agitation thus caused among the leaders as well as the rank and file of Mu`awiyah's army, was quelled by him with the argument that it was Amir al-mu'minin who brought `Ammar to the battlefield and therefore it was he who was responsible for his death. When Mu`awiyah's argument was mentioned before Amir al-mu'minin he said it was as though the Prophet was responsible for killing Hamzah as he brought him to the battle of Uhud. (at-Tabari, *at-Tarikh,* vol. 1, pp. 3316-3322; vol. 3, pp. 2314-2319; Ibn Sa`d, *at-Tabaqat,* vol. 3, Part 1, pp. 176-189; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil,* vol. 3, pp. 308-312; Ibn Kathir, *at-Tarikh,* vol. 7, pp, 267-272; al-Minqari, *Siffin,* pp. 320-345; Ibn `Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab,* vol . 3, pp. 1135- 1140; vol. 4, p. 1725; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghabah,* vol. 4, pp. 43-47; vol. 5, p. 267; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah,* vol. 5, pp. 252-258; vol. 8, pp. 10-28; vol. 10, pp. 102-107, al-

Hakim, *al-Mustadrak,* vol. 3, pp. 384-394; Ibn `Abd Rabbih, *al-`Iqd al-farid,* vol. 4, pp. 340-343; al-Mas`udi, *Muruj adh-dhahab,* vol. 2, pp. 381-382, al-Haytami, *Majma` az-zawa'id,* vol. 7, pp. 238-244; vol. 9, pp. 291-298; al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-ashraf* (Biography of Amir al-mu'minin), pp. 310-319.

(5). Abu'l-Haytham (Malik) ibn at-Tayyihan al-Ansari was one of the twelve chiefs (naqib [of ansar]) who attended the fair and met at al-`Aqabah — in the first `Aqabah and among those who attended in the second `Aqabah — where he gave the Holy Prophet the 'pledge of Islam'. He was present in the battle of Badr and all other battles as well as places of assembly by the Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. He was also among the sincere supporters of Amir al-mu'minin and he attended the battle of Jamal as well as Siffin where he was martyred. (*al-Isti`ab,* vol. 4, p. 1773; *Siffin,* p. 365; *Usd al-ghabah,* vol. 4, p. 274; vol. 5, p. 318; *al-Isabah,* vol. 3, p. 341; vol. 4, pp. 312-313*; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid,* vol. 10, pp. 107-108; *Ansab al-ashraf,* p. 319).

(6). Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari. He is known as Dhu'sh-Shahadatayn because the Holy Prophet considered his evidence equivalent to the evidence of two witnesses He was present in the battle of Badr, and other battles as well as in the places of assembly of the Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. He is counted among the earliest of those who showed their adherence to Amir al-mu'minin and he was also present in the battle of Jamal and Siffin. `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Layla narrated that he saw a man in the battle of Siffin fighting the enemy valiantly and when he protested against his action, the man said:

> I am Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari, I have heard the Holy Prophet saying "Fight, fight, by the side of `Ali." (al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Muwaddih awham al-jam` wa't-tafriq,* vol. 1, p. 277).

Khuzaymah was martyred in the battle of Siffin soon after the martyrdom of `Ammar ibn Yasir.

Sayf ibn `Umar al-Usayydi (the well known liar) has fabricated another Khuzaymah, and claimed that the one who was martyred in the battle of Siffin was this one and not the one with the surname of 'Dhu'sh-Shahadatayn'. at-Tabari has quoted this fabricated story from Sayf either intentionally or otherwise, and through him this story has affected some other historians who quoted from at-Tabari or relied on him. (For further reference, see al-`Askari, *Khamsun wa miah sahabi mukhtalaq* [one hundred and fifty fabricated companions], vol. 2, pp. 175-189).

After having denied this story Ibn Abi'l-Hadid adds (in *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah,* vol. 10, pp. 109-110) that:

> Furthermore, what is the need for those who to defend Amir al-mu'minin to make a boast of abundance with Khuzaymah, Abu'l-Haytham, `Ammar and others. If people treat this man (Amir al-mu'minin) with justice and look at him with healthy eyes they will certainly realise that should he be alone (on one side) and the people all together (on the other side) fighting him, he will be in the truth and all the rest will be in the wrong. (*at-Tabaqat,* vol. 3, Part 1, pp. 185,188; *al-Mustadrak,* vol. 3, pp. 385, 397; *Usd al-ghabah,* vol. 2, p. 114; vol. 4, p. 47; *al-lsti`ab,* vol. 2, p. 448; *at-Tabari,* vol. 3, pp.2316, 2319, 2401; *al-Kamil,* vol. 3, p. 325; *Siffin,* pp. 363, 398; *Ansab al-ashraf,* pp. 313-314).

(7). Among the people who were present in the battle of Jamal on the side of Amir al-muminin there were one hundred and thirty Badries (those who participated in the battle of Badr with the Holy Prophet) and seven hundred of those who were present in the 'pledge of ar-Ridwan' (*Bay`atu'r-Ridwan*) which took place under a tree. (adh-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-lslam*, vol. 2, p. 171; Khalifah ibn Khayyat, *at-Tarikh* vol. 1, p. 164). Those who were killed in the battle of Jamal from the side of Amir al-muminin numbered some five hundred (some said that the number of martyrs were more than that). But on the side of the people of Jamal twenty thousand were killed. (*al-`lqd al-farid*, vol. 4, p. 326).

Among those who were present in the battle of Siffin on the side of Amir al-mu'minin, there were eighty Badries and eight hundred of those who gave the Holy Prophet the 'pledge of ar-Ridwan.' (*al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3, p. 104 *al-Isti`a'b*, vol. 3, p. 1138;*al-Isabah*, vol. 2, p. 389; *at-Tarikh*, al-Ya`qubi, vol. 2, p. 188).

On the side of Mu`awiyah forty-five thousand were killed, and on the side of Amir al-muminin twenty-five thousand. Among these martyrs (of Amir al-mu'minin) there were twenty-five or twenty-six Badries and sixty-three or three hundred and three of the people of the 'pledge of ar-Ridwan'. (Siffin, p. 558; *al-Isti`ab*, vol. 2, p. 389, *Ansab al-ashraf*, p. 322; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 10, p. 104; Abu'l-Fida' vol. 1, p. 175, Ibn al-Wardi, *at-Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 240; Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 275; *Tarikh al-khamis*, vol. 2, p. 277)

Besides the distinguished and eminent companions of Amir al-mu'minin like `Ammar, Dhu'sh-Shahadatayn and Ibn al-Tayyihan, who lay martyred in Siffin were:—

i. Hashim ibn `Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas al-Mirqal was killed on the same day when `Ammar was martyred. He was the bearer of the standard of Amir al-mu'minin's army on that day.

ii. Abdullah ibn Budayl ibn al-Warqa' al-Khuza`i was sometimes the right wing Commander of Amir al-muminin's army and sometimes the infantry Commander.

Chapter 190

SERMON 182

Praise of Allah for His bounties

Praise be to Allah Who is recognised without being seen and Who creates without trouble. He created the creation with His Might, and receives the devotion of rulers by virtue of His dignity. He exercises superiority over great men through His generosity. It is He who made His creation to populate the world and sent towards the jinn and human beings His messengers to unveil it for them, to warn them of its harm, to present to them its examples, to show them its defects and to place before them a whole collection of matters containing lessons about the changings of health and sickness in this world, its lawful things and unlawful things and all that Allah has ordained for the obedient and the disobedient, namely, Paradise and Hell and honour and disgrace. I extend my praise to His Being as He desires His creation to praise Him. He has fixed for everything a measure, for every measure a time limit, and for every time limit a document.

A part of the same sermon

About the greatness and importance of the Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an orders as well as refrains, remains silent and also speaks. It is the proof of Allah before His creation. He has taken from them a pledge (to act) upon it. He has perfected its effulgence, and completed through it His religion. He let the Prophet leave this world when he had conveyed to the people all His commands of guidance through the Qur'an. You should therefore regard Allah great as he has held Himself great, because He has not concealed anything of His religion from you, nor has He left out anything which He likes or which He dislikes, but He made for it a clear emblem (of guidance) and a definite sign which either refrains from it or calls towards it. His pleasure is the same for all time to come.

You should know that He will not be pleased with you for anything for which He was displeased with those before you, and He will not be displeased with you for anything for which He was pleased with those before you. You are treading on a clear path, and are speaking the same as the people before you had spoken. Allah is enough for your needs in this world. He has persuaded you to remain thankful, and has made it obligatory on you to mention Him with your tongues.

Warning against punishment on the Day of Judgement

He has advised you to exercise fear and has made it the highest point of His pleasure and all that He requires from His creatures. You should therefore fear Allah, who is such that you are as though just in front of Him, and your forelocks are in His grip, and your change of position is in His control. If you conceal a matter, He will know of it. If you disclose a matter, He will record it. For this He has appointed honoured guards (angels) who do not omit any rightful matter nor include anything incorrect. You should know that whoever fears Allah, He would make for him a way to get out of troubles and (grant him) a light (to help him) out of darkness. He will ever keep him in whatever condition) he wishes, and will make him stay in a position of honour near Himself, in the house which He has made for Himself. The shade of this house is His house is His throne, its light is His effulgence, its visitors are His angels and its companions are His prophets.

Therefore, hasten towards the place of return and go ahead of (your) deaths (by collecting provision for the next world). Shortly, the expectations of the people will be cut short and death will overtake them while the door of repentance will be closed for them. You are still in a place to which those who were before you have been wishing to return. In this world, which is not your house, you are just a traveller in motion. You have been given the call to leave from here, and you have been ordered to collect provision while you are here. You should know that this thin skin cannot tolerate the Fire (of Hell). So, have pity on yourselves because you have already tried it in the tribulations of the world.

Have you ever seen the crying of a person who has been pricked with a thorn or who bleeds due to stumbling or whom hot sand has burnt? How would he feel when he is between two frying pans of Hell with stones all round with Satan as his companion? Do you know that when Malik (the guard-in-charge of Hell) is angry with the fire, its parts begin to clash with each other (in rage), and, when he scolds it, it leaps between the doors of Hell crying on account of his scolding.

O' you old and big whom old age has made hoary, how will you feel when rings of fire will touch the bones of your neck, and handcuffs hold so hard that they eat away the flesh of the forearms? (Fear) Allah ! Allah! O' crowd of men, while you are in good health before sickness (grips you) and you are in ease before straitness (overtakes you). You should try for the release of your necks before their mortgage is foreclosed, your eyes, thin down bellies, use your feet, spend your money, take your bodies and spend them over yourselves, and do not be niggardly about them, because Allah the Glorified, has said:

> *… if you help (in the way) of Allah, He will*(also) *help you, and will set firm your feet.* (Qur'an, 47:7)

and He, the Sublime. has said:

> *Who is he who would loan unto Allah a goodly loan? so that He may double it for him, and for him shall be a noble recompense.* (Qur'an, 57:11)

He does not seek your support because of any weakness, nor does He demand a loan from you because of shortage. He seeks your help, although He possesses all the armies of the skies and the earth and He is strong and wise. He seeks a loan from you, although He owns the treasures of the skies and the earth and He is rich and praiseworthy. (Rather) He intends to try you as to which of you performs good acts. You should therefore be quick in performance of (good) acts so that your way be with His neighbours in His abode; He made His Prophet's companions of these neighbours and made the angels to visit them. He has honoured their ears so that the sound of Hell fire may never reach them, and He has afforded protection to their bodies from weariness and fatigue.

> *… that is the grace of Allah, He bestoweth it upon whomsoever He willeth; and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace.* (Qur'an, 57:21)

I say you are hearing. I seek Allah's help for myself and yourselves. He is enough for me and He is the best dispenser.

Chapter 191

SERMON 183

One of the Kharijites al-Burj ibn Mus'hir at-Ta'i raised the slogan, "Command behoves only Allah" in such a way that Amir al-mu'minin heard it. On hearing it he said:

Keep quite, may Allah make you ugly, O' you with broken tooth. Certainly, by Allah, when truth became manifest even then your personality was weak and your voice was lose. But when wrong began to shout loudly you again sprouted up like the horns of a kid.

Chapter 192

SERMON 184

Praise of Allah and His wonderful creatures

Praise be to Allah. He is such that senses cannot perceive Him, place cannot contain Him, eyes cannot see Him and veils cannot cover Him. He proves His eternity by the coming into existence of His creation, and (also) by originating His creation (He proves) His existence, and by their (mutual) similarity He proves that there is nothing similar to Him. He is true in His promise. He is too high to be unjust to His creatures. He stands by equity among His creation and practices justice over them in His commands. He provides evidence through the creation of things of His being from ever, through their marks of incapability of His power, and through their powerlessness against death of His eternity.

He is One, but not by counting. He is everlasting without, any limit. He is existent without any support. Minds admit of Him without (any activity of the) senses. Things which can be seen stand witness to Him without confronting Him. Imagination cannot encompass Him. He manifests Himself to the imagination with his help for the imagination, and refuses to be imagined by the imagination. He has made imagination the arbiter (in this matter). He is not big in the sense that volume is vast and so His body is also big. Nor is He great in the sense that His limits should extend to the utmost and so His frame be extensive. But He is big in position and great in authority.

About the Holy Prophet

I stand witness that Muhammad is His slave, His chosen Prophet and His responsible trustee — may Allah bless him and his descendants. Allah sent him with undeniable proofs, a clear success and open paths. So he conveyed the message declaring the truth with it. He led the people on the (correct) highway, established signs of guidance and minarets of light, and made Islam's ropes strong and its knots firm.

A part of the same sermon

About the creation of animal species

Had they pondered over the greatness of His power and the vastness of His bounty they would have returned to the right path and feared the punishment of the Fire; but hearts are sick and eyes are impure. Do they not see the small things He has created, how He strengthened their system and opened for them hearing and sight and made for them bones and skins? Look at the ant with its small body and delicate form. It can hardly be seen in the corner of the eye, nor by the perception of the imagination - how it moves on the earth and leaps at its livelihood. It carries the grain to its hole and deposits it in its place of stay. It collects during the summer for its winter, and during strength for the period of its weakness. Its livelihood is guaranteed, and it is fed according to fitness. Allah, the Kind, does not forget it and (Allah the Giver) does not deprive it, even though it may be in dry stone or fixed rocks.

If you have thought about its digestive tracts in its high and low parts, the carapace of its belly, and its eyes and its ears in its head you would be amazed at its creation and you would feel difficulty in describing it. Exalted is He who made it stand on its legs and erected it on its pillars (of limbs). No other originator took part with Him in its origination and no one having power assisted Him in its creation. If you tread on the paths of your imagination and reach its extremity it will not lead you anywhere except that the Originator of the ant is the same as He who is the Originator of the date-palm, because everything has (the same) delicacy and detail, and every living being has little difference.

The Creation of the Universe

In His creation, the big, the delicate, the heavy, the light, the strong, the weak are all equal.(1) So is the sky, the air, the winds and the water. Therefore, you look at the sun, moon, vegetation, plants, water, stone, the difference of this night and day, the springing of the streams, the large number of the mountains, the height of their peaks, the diversity of languages and the variety of tongues. Then woe be to him who disbelieves in the Ordainer and denies the Ruler. They believe that they are like grass for which there is no cultivator nor any maker for their diverse shapes. They have not relied on any argument for what they assert, nor on any research for what they have heard. Can there be any construction without a Constructor, or any offence without an offender.

The wonderful creation of the locust

If you wish you can tell about the locust (as well). Allah gave it two red eves, lighted for them two moon — like pupils, made for it small ears, opened for it a suitable mouth and gave it keen sense, gave it two teeth to cut with and two sickle-like feet to grip with. The farmers are afraid of it in the matter of crops since they cannot drive it away even though they may join together. The locust attacks the fields and satisfies its desires (of hunger) from them although its body is not equal to a thin finger.

About the Glory of Allah

Glorified is Allah before Whom every one in the skies or the earth bows in prostration willingly or unwillingly, submits to Him by placing his cheeks and face (in the dust), drops before Him (in obedience) peacefully and humbly, and hands over to Him full control in fear and apprehension.

The birds are bound by His commands. He knows the number of their feathers and their breaths. He has made their feet to stand on water and on land. He has ordained their livelihoods. He knows their species: this is the crow, this is the eagle, this is the pigeon and this is the ostrich. He called out every bird with its name (while creating it) and provided it with its livelihood. He created heavy clouds and produced from them heavy rain and spread it on various lands. He drenched the earth after its dryness and grew vegetation from it after its barrenness.

(1). The meaning is that if the smallest thing in creation is examined it will be found to contain all that which is found in the biggest creatures, and each will exhibit the same reflection of natures, workmanship and performance, and the ratio of each to Allah's might and power will be the same, whether it be as small as an ant or as big as a date palm. Is it not that making a small thing is easy for Him while the making of a big thing is difficult for Him, because the diversity of colour, volume and quantity is just based on the dictates of His sagacity and expediency, but as regards creation itself there is no difference among them. Therefore, this uniformity of creation is a proof of the oneness and unity of the Creator.

Chapter 193

SERMON 185

About the Oneness of Allah. This sermon contains principles of knowledge which no other sermon contains

He who assigns to Him (different) conditions does not believe in His oneness, nor does he who likens Him grasp His reality. He who illustrates Him does not signify Him. He who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him. Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect (of a cause). He works but not with the help of instruments. He fixes measures but not with the activity of thinking. He is rich but not by acquisition.

Times do not keep company with Him, and implements do not help Him. His Being precedes times. His Existence precedes non-existence and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the senses it is known that He has no senses. By the contraries in various matters it is known that He has no contrary, and by the similarity between things it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture and heat that of cold. He produces affection among inimical things.

He fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things and separates things which are joined together. He is not confined by limits, nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves. The word(1) *"mundhu"* (i.e. since) disproves their eternity, the word *"qad"* (that denotes nearness of time of occurrence), disproves their being from ever and the word *"lawla"* (if it were not) keep them remote from perfection.

Through them the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence, and through them He is guarded from the sight of the eyes.

Stillness and motion do not occur in Him, and how can that thing occur in Him which He has Himself made to occur, and how can a thing revert to Him which He first created, and how can a thing appear in Him

which He first brought to appearance. If it had not been so, His Self would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible (into parts), and His reality would have been prevented from being deemed Eternal. If there was a front to Him there would have been a rear also for Him . He would need completing only if shortage befell Him. In that case signs of the created would appear in Him, and He would become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of signs leading to Him. Through the might of His abstention (from affectedness) He is far above being affected by things which effect others.

He is that which does not change or vanish. The process of setting does not behove Him. He has not begotten any one lest He be regarded as having been born. He has not been begotten otherwise He would be contained within limits. He is too High to have sons. He is too purified to contact women. Imagination cannot reach Him so as to assign Him quantity. Understanding cannot think of Him so as to give him shape. Senses do not perceive Him so as to feel Him. Hands cannot touch Him so as to rub against Him. He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one state to another. Nights and days do not turn Him old. Light and darkness do not alter Him.

It cannot be said that He has a limit or extremity, or end or termination; nor do things control Him so as to raise Him or lower Him, nor does anything carry Him so as to bend Him or keep Him erect. He is not inside things nor outside them. He conveys news, but not with the tongue or voice. He listens, but not with the holes of the ears or the organs of hearing. He says, but does not utter words. He remembers, but does not memorise. He determines, but not by exercising His mind. He loves and approves without any sentimentality (of heart). He hates and feels angry without any painstaking. When He intends to create someone He says "Be" and there he is, but not through a voice that strikes (the ears) is that call heard. His speech is an act of His creation. His like never existed before this. If had been eternal it would have been the second god.

It cannot be said that He came into being after He had not been in existence because in that case the attributes of the created things would be assigned to Him and there would remain no difference between them and Him, and He would have no distinction over them. Thus, the Creator and the created would become equal and the initiator and the initiated would be on the same level. He created (the whole of) creation without any example made by someone else, and He did not secure the assistance of any one out of His creation for creating it.

He created the earth and suspended it without being busy, retained it without support, made it stand without legs, raised it without pillars, protected it against bendings and curvings and defended it against crumbling and splitting (into parts). He fixed mountains on it like stumps, solidified its rocks, caused its streams to flow and opened wide its valleys. Whatever He made did not suffer from any flow, and whatever He strengthened did not show any weakness.

He manifests Himself over the earth with His authority and greatness. He is aware of its inside through his knowledge and understanding. He has power over every thing in the earth by virtue of His sublimity and dignity. Nothing from the earth that he may ask for defies Him, nor does it oppose Him so as to overpower Him. No swift-footed creature can run away from Him so as to surpass Him. He is not needy towards any possessing person so that he should feed Him. All things bow to Him and are humble before His greatness. They cannot flee away from His authority to someone else in order to escape His benefit or His harm. There is no parallel for Him who may match Him and no one like Him so as to equal Him.

He will destroy the earth after its existence, till all that exists on it will become non-existent. But the extinction of the world after its creation is no stranger than its first formation and invention. How could it be? Even if all the animals of the earth, whether birds or beasts, stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men — all jointly try to create (even) a mosquito they are not able to bring it into being and do not understand what is the way to its creation. Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short and fail, and return disappointed and tired, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also realising that they are too weak (even) to destroy it.

Surely, after the extinction of the world, Allah the Glorified will remain alone with nothing else beside Him. He will be, after its extinction, as He was before its production: without time or place or moment or period. At this moment, period and time will not exist, and years and hours will disappear. There will be nothing except Allah, the One, the All-powerful. To Him is the return of all matters. Its initial creation was not in its power; and the prevention of its extinction was (also) not in its power. If it had the power to prevent it, it would have existed for ever. When He made anything of the world, the making of it did not cause Him any difficulty, and the creation of anything which He created and formed did not fatigue Him. He did not create it to heighten His

authority nor for fear of loss or harm, nor to seek its help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any avenging opponent with its help, nor for the extension of His domain by its help, nor for boasting (over largeness of His possession) against a partner, nor because He felt lonely and desired to seek its company.

Then after its creation He will destroy it, but not because any worry has overcome Him in its upkeep and administration, nor for any pleasure that will accrue to Him, nor for the cumbrousness of anything over Him. The length of its life does not weary Him so as to induce Him to its quick destruction. But Allah, the Glorified, has maintained it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command and perfected it with His power. Then after its destruction, He will resuscitate it, but not for any need of His own towards it, nor to seek the assistance of any of its things against it, nor to change over from the condition of loneliness to that of company, nor from the condition of ignorance and blindness to that of knowledge and search, nor from paucity and need towards needlessness and plenty, nor from disgrace and lowliness towards honour and prestige.

(1). The meaning is that the sense for which the words *"mundhu"* , *"qad"* and *"lawla"* have been formed is opposed to the attributes of "Ever", "Eternal" and "Perfect". Therefore, their application to anything would prove that they have come into existence from non-existence and are imperfect. For example, *"mundhu"* is used to denote time as is *"qad wujida mundu kadha"* (this thing is found since so-and-so). Here a time limit has been stated, and anything for which a limit of time can be described cannot exist from ever or for ever. The word *"qad"* shows (indicating the present perfect tense) the immediate past. This sense also can apply to a thing which is limited in time. The word *"lawla"* is used to denote the negation of something in another thing, as *"ma ahsanahu wa akmalahu lawla annahu kadha"* (how handsome and perfect it would be if it were so-and-so). Therefore, the thing for which this word is used would be in need of others in handsomeness and perfection, and would remain deficient by itself.

Chapter 194

SERMON 186

Regarding the vicissitudes of time

(The mischiefs that are to occur and the absence of lawful ways of livelihood)

May my father and my mother be sacrificed for those few whose names are well-known in the sky and not known on the earth. Beware, you should expect what is to befall you such as adversity in your affairs, severance of relations and the rising up of inferior people. This will happen when the blow of a sword will be easier for a believer than to secure one Dirham lawfully. This will happen (1) when the reward of the beggar is more than that of the giver. This will be when you are intoxicated, not by drinking, but with wealth and plenty, you are swearing without compulsion and are speaking lies without compulsion. This will be when troubles hurt you as the saddle hurts the hump of the camel. How long will these tribulations be and how distant the hope (for deliverance from them)?

O' people, throw away the reins of the horses who carry on their backs the weight of your hands (i.e. sins), do not cut away from your chief (Imam) otherwise you will blame yourself for your own doings. Do not jump in the fire which is in flames in front of you; keep away from its courses and leave the middle way for it. Because, by my life, the believer will die in its flames, and others will remain safe in it.

I am among you like a lamp in the darkness. Whoever enters by it will be lit from it. So listen O' men, preserve it and remain attentive with the ears of your hearts so that you may understand.

(1). In that period the reward of the beggar who takes will be higher than that of the giver because the ways of earning livelihood of the rich will be unlawful, and whatever he will donate of it, its purpose will be showing himself, hypocrisy and seeking fame, for which he will not be entitled to any reward, while the poor who take it by force of their

poverty and helplessness, and to spend it in the right manner, will deserve more reward and recompense.

The commentator, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written another meaning of it also, namely if the beggar does not take the wealth from the rich and it remains with him he will spend it on unlawful matters and enjoyments, and since his taking it from him prevents him from using it in unlawful manner; therefore, for this prevention of evil, the beggar will deserve more reward and recompense. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 13, p. 97)

Chapter 195

SERMON 187

Allah's favours

I advise you, O' people, to fear Allah and to praise Him profusely for His favours to you and His reward for you and His obligations on you. See how He chose you for favours and dealt with you with mercy. You sinned openly; He kept you covered. You behaved in a way to incur His punishment, but He gave you more time.

Condition of persons facing death

I also advise you to remember death and to lessen your heedlessness towards it. Why should you be heedless of Him Who is not heedless of you? Why expect from him (i.e., the angel of death) who will not give you time? The dead whom you have been watching suffice as preachers. They were carried to their graves, not riding themselves, and were placed in them but not of their own accord. It seems as if they never lived in this world and as if the next world had always been their abode. They have made lonely the place where they were living, and are now living where they used to feel lonely. They remained busy about what they had to leave, and did not care for where they were to go. Now they cannot remove themselves from? evil, nor add to their virtues They were attached to the world and it deceived them. They trusted it and it overturned them.

Transience of this world

May Allah have pity on you. You should therefore hasten towards (the preparation of) houses which you have been commanded to populate, and towards which you have been called and invited. Seek the completion of Allah's favours on you by exercising endurance in His obedience and abstention from His disobedience, because tomorrow is close to today. How fast are the hours of the day, how fast are the days in the

month, how fast are the months in the years and how fast the years in a life.

Chapter 196

SERMON 188

Steadfast and transient belief

One belief is that which is firm and steadfast in hearts, and one is that which remains temporarily in the heart and the breast up to a certain time. If you were to acquit (yourself) before any person, you should wait till death approaches him, for that is the time limit for being acquitted.

And immigration stands as its original position. Allah has no need towards him who secretly accepts belief or him who openly does so. Immigration will not apply to any one unless he recognises the proof (of Allah) on the earth. Whoever recognises him and acknowledges him would be a *muhajir* (immigrant). *Istid`af* (i.e. freedom from the obligation of immigration) does not apply to him whom the proof (of Allah) reaches and he hears it and his heart preserves it.(1)

The challenge "Ask me before you miss me" and prophecy about the Umayyads

Certainly, our case is difficult and complicated. No one can bear it except a believer whose heart Allah has tried with belief. Our traditions will not be preserved except by trustworthy hearts and (men of) solid understanding. O' people! ask me before you miss me, because certainly I am acquainted with the passages of the sky more than the passages of the earth,(2) and before that mischief springs upon its feet which would trample even the nosestring and destroy the wits of the people.

(1). This is the interpretation of the word *"muhajir"* and *"mustad`af"* as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

> *Verily those whom the angels take away* (at death) *while they are unjust to their* (own) *selves* (in sin), *they* (the angels) *shall ask* (the sinning souls): *"In what state were ye?" They shall reply,*
> *"Weakened* (mustad`af - and oppressed)*were we in the land;"*
> *They* (angels) *will say "Was not the land of Allah vast* (enough) *for*

> *you to immigrate therein?" So these* (are those) *whose refuge shall be Hell; and what a bad resort it is. Except the* (really) *weakened ones from among the men and the women and the children, who have not in their power the means* (to escape from the unbelievers) *and nor do they find the* (right) *way. So these, may be, Allah will pardon them; and Allah is the Clement, the Oft-forgiving.* (4:97-99)

The meaning of Amir al-mu'minin here is that *hijrah* (immigration) was not only obligatory during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, but it is a permanent obligation. This immigration is even now obligatory for attaining the proof of Allah and the true religion. Therefore, if one has attained the proof of Allah and believed? in it, even if he is in midst of the unbelievers of his locality, he is not duty bound to immigrate.

The *"mustad`af"* (weakened) is one who is living among the unbelievers and is far from being informed of the proofs of Allah, and at the same time he is unable to immigrate in order to attain the proofs of Allah.

(2).Some people have explained this saying of Amir al-mu'minin to mean that by the passages of the earth he means matters of the world and by passages of the sky matters of religious law and that Amir al-mu'minin intends to say that he knows the matters of religious law and commandments more than the worldly matters. Thus, Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani writes (in *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 4, pp. 200-201):

> It is related from al-`Allamah al-Wabari, that he said that Amir al-mu'minin's intention is to say that the scope of his religious knowledge is larger than his knowledge about matters of the world.

But taking the context into account, this explanation cannot be held to be correct because this sentence (which is the subject of explanation) has been used as the cause of the sentence "Ask me before you miss me", and after it, is the prophesy about revolt. In between these two the occurrence of the sentence that "I know religious matters more than worldly matters", makes the whole utterance quite uncounted, because Amir al-mu'minin's challenge to ask whatever one likes is not confined to matters of religious law only so this sentence could be held as its cause. Then, after that, the prophesy of the rising up of the revolt has nothing to do with matters of religious law, so that it could be put forth as a proof of more knowledge of religious matters. To ignore the clear import of the words and to interpret them in a way which does not suit the occasion, does not exhibit a correct spirit, when from the context also the same

meaning accrues which the words openly convey. Thus, it is to give a warning about the Umayyad's mischief that Amir al-mu'minin uttered the words: "'Ask me whatever you like'; because I know the paths and courses of divine destiny more than the passages of the earth. So, even if you ask me about matters which are recorded in the 'preserved tablet' and concern divine destiny I can tell you, and a serious mischief is to rise against me in those matters in which you should have doubt, because my eyes are more acquainted with those ethereal lines which concern the occurrence of events and mischiefs than, with what I know about live appearing on the earth. The occurrence of this mischief is as certain as an object seen with eyes. You should therefore ask me its details and the way to keep safe from it, so that you may be able to manage your defence when the times comes." This meaning is supported by the successive sayings of Amir al-mu'minin which he uttered in connection with the unknown, and to which the future testified. Thus, Ibn Abi'l Hadid comments on this claim of Amir al-mu'minin as follows:

> Amir al-mu'minin's claim is also supported by his sayings about future events which he uttered not once or a hundred times but continuously and successively, from which there remains no doubt that whatever he spoke was on the basis of knowledge and certainly and not in the way of chance. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 13, p. 106)

In connection with this saying of Amir al-mu'minin it has already been shown and explained (in Sermon 92, Foot-note No. 2) that no one else dared advance such a claim, and those who made such a claim had to face only disgrace and humility. About the prophecies made by Amir al-mu'minin see Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 7, pp. 47-51; al-Qadi Nuru'l-Lah al-Mar`ashi, *Ihqaq al-haqq* (New ed.), vol. 8, pp. 87-182.

Chapter 197

SERMON 189

Importance of fear of Allah, desolateless of the grave, and about the death of the lover of Ahlu'l-bayt being like that of a martyr

I praise Him out of gratefulness for His reward, and I seek His assistance in fulfilling His rights. He has a strong army. His dignity is grand. I stand witness that Muhammad - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny - is His slave and His Prophet. He called (people) to His obedience and overpowered His enemies by fighting for the sake of His religion. People's joining together to falsify him and their attempt to extinguish His light did not prevent him from it.

You should therefore exercise fear of Allah because it has a rope whose twist is strong and its pinnacle is lofty and invulnerable. Hasten toward death in its pangs (by doing good acts) and be prepared for it before its approach, because the ultimate end is the Day of Judgement. This is enough preaching for one who understands and enough of a lesson for one who does not know. What idea do you have, before reaching that end, of the narrowness of grave, the hardship of loneliness, fear of the passage towards the next world, the pangs of fear, the shifting of ribs here and there (due to narrowing of the grave), the deafness of ears, the darkness of the grave, fear of the promised punishment, the closing of the receptacle of the grave and the laying of stones?

Therefore, (fear) Allah, (fear) Allah, O' creatures of Allah, because the world is behaving with you in the usual way and you and the Day of Judgement are in the same rope (close to each other). As though it has come with its signs, has approached with its pleas and has made you stand in its way; and as though it has come forward with all its quakings and has settled down with its chest on the ground while the world has parted from its people and has turned them out of its lap. It was like a day that has passed or a month that has gone by. Its new things have become old and the fat ones have become thin.

They are in a narrow place, in very complicated affairs and in a fire whose pain is sharp, cries are loud, flames are rising, sound is trembling, burning is severe, abatement is remote; its fuel is burning, its threats are fearful, its hollows are hidden, its sides are dark, its vessels are aflame, and everything about it is abominable.

> *And shall be conveyed those who feared* (the wrath of) *their Lord, in companies unto the garden…* (Qur'an. 39:73)

They are safe from chastisement, away from punishment, and kept aloof from fire. Their abode will be peaceful and they will be pleased with their longing and their place of stay. These are the people whose acts in this world were chaste, their eyes were tearful, their nights in this world were like days because of fearing and seeking forgiveness, and their days were like nights because of feeling of loneliness and separation. Therefore, Allah made Paradise the place of their (eventual) return and a reward in recompense… . *They were most eligible and suitable for it;…* (Qur'an, 48:26) in the eternal domain and everlasting favours.

Therefore, O' creatures of Allah, pay regard to all that by being regardful of which one will succeed and by ignoring which one will incur loss, and hasten towards your death by means of your (good) acts, because you are bound by what you have done in the past and you have to your credit only what (good acts) you have sent forward. (Behave in such a way) as though the feared event (death) has come upon you, so that you cannot return (to do good acts) nor can you be cleared of evil acts. Allah may prompt us and you for His obedience and obedience of His Prophet, and forgive us and you by His great mercy.

Stick to the earth, keep patient in trials, do not move your hands and swords after the liking of your tongues, and do not make haste in matters in which Allah has not asked for haste because any one of you who dies in his bed while he had knowledge of the rights of Allah and the rights of His Prophet and members of the Prophet's house, will die as martyr. His reward is incumbent on Allah. He is also eligible to the recompense of what good acts he has intended to do, since his intention takes the place of drawing his sword. Certainly, for every thing there is a time and a limit.

Chapter 198

SERMON 190

Praise of Allah

Praise be to Allah Whose praise is wide-spread, Whose army is overpowering and Whose dignity is grand. I praise Him for His successive favours and His great gifts. His forbearance is high so that He forgives and is just in whatever He decides. He knows what is going on and what has already passed. He crafted all creation by His knowledge and produced it by His intelligence without limitation, without learning, without following the example of any intelligent producer, without committing any mistake and without the availability of any group (for help); I stand witness that Muhammad - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - is His slave and His messenger whom He deputed (at a time) when people were collecting in the abyss and moving in bewilderment. The reins of destruction were dragging them, and the locks of malice lay fixed on their hearts.

Advice about fear of Allah and an account of this world and its people

I advise you, O' creature of Allah, that you should have fear of Allah because it is a right of Allah over you and it creates your right over Allah, and that you should seek Allah's help in it, and its help in (meeting) Allah. Certainly, for today fear of Allah is a protection and a shield, and for tomorrow (the Day of Judgement) it is the road to Paradise. Its way is clear and he who treads it is the gainer. Whoever holds it, guards it. It has presented itself to the people who have already passed and to those coming from behind, because they will need it tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) when Allah will revive His creation again, take back what He has given and take account of what He has bestowed. How few will be those who accept it and practise it as it ought to be practised. They will be very few in number, and they are the people who correspond to the description given by Allah, the Glorified, when He says:

… And very few of My creatures are grateful! (Qur'an. 34:13)

Therefore, hasten with your ears towards it and intensify your efforts for it. Make it a substitute for all your past (short-comings) to take their place as a successor, and make it your supporter against every opponent. Turn your sleep into wakefulness by its help, and pass your days with it. Make it the equipment of your hearts, wash your sins with it, treat your ailments with it and hasten towards your death with it. Take a lesson from him who neglects it, so that others who follow it should not take a lesson from you (i.e., from your neglecting it). Beware, therefore; you should take care of it and should take care of yourselves through it.

Keep away from this world and proceed towards the next world infatuatedly. Do not regard humble he whom fear Allah has given a high position, and do not accord a high position to him whom this world has given a high position. Do not keep your eyes on the shining clouds of the world, do not listen to him who speaks of it, do not respond to him who calls towards it, do not seek light from its glare, and do not die in its precious things, because its brightness is deceitful, its words are false, its wealth is liable to be looted, and its precious thing are to be taken away.

Beware, this world attracts and then turns away. It is stubborn, refusing to go ahead. It speaks lies and misappropriates. It disowns and is ungrateful. It is malicious and abandons (its lovers). It attracts but causes trouble. Its condition is changing, its step shaking, its honour disgrace, its seriousness jest, and its height lowliness. It is a place of plunder and pillage, and ruin and destruction. Its people are ready with their feet to drive, to overtake and to depart. Its routes are bewildering, its exits are baffling, and its schemes end in disappointment. Consequently, strongholds betray them, houses throw them out and cunning fails them.

Some of them are like hocked camel, some like butchered meat, some like severed limbs, some like spilt blood, some are biting their hands (in pain) some are rubbing their palms (in remorse), some are holding their cheeks on their hands (in anxiety), some are cursing their own views and some are retreating from their determination. But the time for action has gone away and the hour of calamity has approached, *while* (there was no longer) *the time to escape* (Qur'an, 38:3). Alas! Alas! what has been lost is lost! what has gone is gone! The world has passed in its usual manner.

> *So wept not on them the heavens and the earth nor were they respited.* (Qur'an, 44:29)

Chapter 199

SERMON 191

Known as "al-Khutbah al-Qasi`ah"

(Sermon of Disparagement)

(It comprises disparagement of Satan [Iblis] for his vanity and his refusing to prostrate before Adam [pbuh], and his being the first to display bigotry and to act through vanity; it comprises a warning to people treading in Satan's path)

Praise be to Allah who wears the apparel of Honour and Dignity and has chosen them for Himself instead of for His creation. He has made them inaccessible and unlawful for others. He has selected them for His own great self, and has hurled a curse on him who contests with Him concerning them.

Allah's trial and the vanity of Iblis

Then He put His angels on trial concerning these attributes in order to distinguish those who are modest from those who are vain. Therefore, Allah, who is aware of whatever is hidden in the hearts and whatever lies behind the unseen said:

> *… "Verily I am about to create man from clay," And when I have completed and have breathed into him of My spirit, then fall ye prostrating in obeisance unto him. And did fall prostrating in obeisance the angels all together, Save lblis;…* (Qur'an. 38:71-74)

His vanity stood in his way. Consequently, he felt proud over Adam by virtue of his creation and boasted over him on account of his origin. Thus, this enemy of Allah is the leader of those who boast, and the forerunner of the vain. It is he who laid the foundation of factionalism, quarreled with Allah about the robe of greatness, put on the dress of haughtiness and took off the covering of humility. Do you not see how

Allah made him low on account of his vanity and humiliated him for his feigning to be high? He discarded him in this world and provided for him burning fire in the next world.

If Allah had wanted to create Adam from a light whose glare would have dazzled the eyes, whose handsomeness would have amazed the wits and whose smell would have caught the breath, He could have done so; and if He had done so, people would have bowed to him in humility and the trial of the angels through him would have become easier. But Allah, the Glorified, tries His creatures by means of those things whose real nature they do not know in order to distinguish (good and bad) for them through the trial, and to remove vanity from them and keep them and keep them aloof from pride and self-admiration.

You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him license for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.

Warning against Satan

Therefore, you should fear lest Satan infects you with his disease, or leads you astray through his call, or marches on you with his horsemen and footmen, because, by my life, he has put the arrow in the bow for you, has stretched the bow strongly, and has aimed at you from a nearby position, and:

> *He (Satan) said: "My Lord! because Thou hast left me to stray, certainly will I adorn unto them the path of error, and certainly will I cause them all to go astray."* (Qur'an, 15:39)

Although he (Satan) had said so only by guessing about the unknown future and by wrong conjecturing, yet the sons of vanity, the brothers of haughtiness and the horsemen of pride and intolerance proved him to be true, so much so that when disobedient persons from among you bowed before him, and his greed about you gained strength; and what was a

hidden secret turned into a clear fact, he spread his full control over you and marched with his forces towards you.

Then they pushed you into the hollows of disgrace, threw you into the whirlpools of slaughter, and trampled you, wounding you by striking your eyes with spears, cutting your throats, tearing your nostrils, breaking your limbs and taking you in ropes of control towards the fire already prepared. In this way he became more harmful to your religion and a greater kindler of flames (of mischief) about your worldly matters than the enemies against whom you showed open opposition and against whom you marched your forces.

You should therefore spend all your force against him, and all your efforts against him, because, by Allah, he boasted over your (i.e., Adam's) origin, questioned your position and spoke lightly of your lineage. He advanced on you with his army, and brought his footmen towards your path. They are chasing you from every place, and they are hitting you at every finger joint. You are not able to defend by any means, nor can you repulse them by any determination. You are in the thick of disgrace, the ring of straitness, the field of death and the way of distress.

You should therefore put out the fires of haughtiness and the flames of intolerance that are hidden in your hearts. This vanity can exist in a Muslim only by the machinations of Satan, his haughtiness, mischief and whisperings. Make up your mind to have humility over your heads, to trample self-pride under your feet and to cast off vanity from your necks. Adopt humility as the weapon between you and your enemy, Satan and his forces. He certainly has, from every people, fighters, helpers, footmen and horsemen. Do not be like him who feigned superiority over the son of his own mother without any distinction given to him by Allah except the feeling of envy which his feeling of greatness created in him and the fire of anger that vanity kindled in his heart. Satan blew into his nose his own vanity, after which Allah gave him remorse and made him responsible for the sins of all killers up to the Day of Judgement.

Caution against vanity and boasting about ignorance

Beware! you strove hard in revolting and created mischief on the earth in open opposition to Allah and in challenging the believers over fighting. (You should fear) Allah! Allah! in feeling proud of your vanity and boasting over ignorance, because this is the root of enmity and the design of Satan wherewith he has been deceiving past people and bygone ages, with the result that they fell into the gloom of his ignorance and the hollows of his misguidance, submitting to his driving and

accepting his leadership. In this matter the hearts of all the people were similar, and centuries passed by, one after the other, in just the same way, and there was vanity with which chests were tightened.

Caution against obeying haughty leaders and elders

Beware! beware of obeying your leaders and elders who felt proud of their achievements and boasted about their lineage. They hurled the (liability for) things on Allah and quarrelled with Allah in what He did with them, contesting His decree and disputing His favours. Certainly, they are the main foundation of obstinacy, the chief pillars of mischief and the swords of pre-Islamic boasting over forefathers. Therefore, fear Allah, do not become antagonistic to His favours on you, nor jealous of His bounty over you (1)and do not obey the claimants (of Islam) whose dirty water you drink along with your clean one, whose ailments you mix with your healthiness and whose wrongs you allow to enter into your rightful matters.

They are the foundation of vice and the linings of disobedience. Satan has made them carriers of misguidance and the soldiers with whom he attacks men. They are interpreters through whom he speaks in order to steal away your wits, enter into your eyes and blow into your ears. In this way he makes you the victim of his arrows, the treading ground of his footsteps and source of strength for his hands. Take instruction from how he brought Allah's wrath, violence, chastisement and punishment on those who were vain among the past people. Take admonition from their lying on their cheeks and falling on their sides, and seek Allah's protection from the dangers of vanity, as you seek His protection from calamities.

The humbleness of the Holy Prophet

Certainly. if Allah were to allow anyone to indulge in pride He would have allowed it to his selected prophets and vicegerents. But Allah, the Sublime, disliked vanity for them and liked humbleness for them. Therefore, they laid their cheeks on the ground, smeared their faces with dust, bent themselves down for the believers and remained humble people. Allah tried them with hunger, afflicted them with difficulty, tested them with fear, and upset them with troubles. Therefore, do not regard wealth and progeny the criterion for Allah's pleasure and displeasure, as you are not aware of the chances of mischief and trials during richness and power as Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, has said:

What! Think they that what We aid them with of wealth and children, We are hastening unto them the good things? Nay! they (only) perceive not. (Qur'an, 23:55-56)

Certainly, Allah the Glorified, tries His creatures who are vain about themselves through His beloved persons who are humble in their eyes.

When Musa son of `Imran went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun (Aaron) wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honour if he submitted; but he said: "Do you not wonder at these two men guaranteeing me the continuity of my honour and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangles on their wrists?" He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and considering wool and its cloth as nothing.

When Allah, the Glorified, deputed His prophets, if He had wished to open for them treasures and mines of gold and (surround them with) planted gardens and to collect around them birds of the skies and beasts of the earth, He could have done so. If He had done so then there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the affairs of the next world). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense falling due after trial and the believers could not deserve the reward for good acts, and all these words (2)would not have retained their meanings. But Allah, the Glorified, makes His Prophets firm in their determination and gives them weakness of appearance as seen from the eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care-freeness, and with want that pains the eyes and ears.

If the prophets possessed authority that could not be assaulted, or honour that could not be damaged or domain towards which the necks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it would have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vanity. They would have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them, and the intention of them all would have been the same, although their actions would have been different. Therefore, Allah, the Glorified decided that people should follow His prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His face, obey His command and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else; and as the trial and tribulation would be stiffer the reward and recompense too should be larger.

The Holy Ka`bah

Do you not see that Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, upto the last ones in this world with stones which yield neither benefit nor harm, which neither see nor hear. He made those stones into His sacred house which He made a standby for the people. He placed it in the most rugged stony part of the earth and on a highland with least soil thereon, among the most narrow valleys between rough mountains. soft sandy plains, springs of scanty water and scattered habitants, where neither camels nor horses nor cows and sheep can prosper.

Then He commanded Adam and his sons to turn their attention towards it. In this way it became the centre of their journey in seeking pastures and the rendezvous for meeting of their carrier-beasts, so that human spirits hasten towards it from distant waterless deserts, deep and low lying valleys and scattered islands in the seas. They shake their shoulders in humbleness, recite the slogan of having reached His audience, march with swift feet, and have dishevelled hair and dusted faces. They throw their pieces of cloth on their backs, they have marred the beauty of their faces by leaving the hair uncut as a matter of great test, severe tribulation, open trial, and extreme refining. Allah has made it a means to His mercy and an approach to His Paradise.

If Allah, the Glorified, had placed His sacred House and His great signs among plantations, streams, soft and level plains, plenty of trees, an abundance of fruits, a thick population, close habitats, golden wheat, lush gardens, green land, watered plains, thriving orchards and crowded streets, the amount of recompense would have decreased because of the lightness of the trial. If the foundation on which the House is borne and the stones with which it has been raised had been of green emerald and red rubies, and there had been brightness and effulgence, then this would have lessened the action of doubts in the breasts, would have dismissed the effect of Satan's activity from the hearts, and would have stopped the surging of misgivings in people. But Allah tries His creatures by means of different troubles, wants them to render worship through hardships and involves them in distresses, all in order to extract out vanity from their hearts, to settle down humbleness in their spirits and to make all this an open door for His favours and an easy means for His forgiveness (for their sins).

Caution against rebellion and oppressiveness

(Fear) Allah! Allah! from the immediate consequence of rebellion (to accrue in this world), and the eventual consequence of weighty oppressiveness (to accrue in the next world), and from the evil result of vanity, because it is the great trap of Satan and his big deceit which enters the hearts of the people like a fatal poison. It never goes waste, nor misses anyone - neither the learned because of his knowledge, nor the destitute (3) in his rags. This is the thing against which Allah has protected His creatures who are believers by means of prayers, and alms-giving, and suffering the hardship of fasting in the days in which it has been made obligatory, in order to give their limbs peacefulness, to cast fear in their eyes, to make their spirits humble, to give their hearts humility and to remove haughtiness from them. All this is achieved through the covering of their delicate cheeks with dust in humility, prostrating their main limbs on the ground in humbleness, and retracting of their bellies so as to reach to their backs due to fasting by way of lowliness (before Allah), besides giving all sorts of products of the earth to the needy and the destitute by way of alms.

Look what there is in these acts by way of curbing the appearance of pride and suppressing the traces of vanity. I cast my glance and noticed that no one in the world, except you, feels vanity for anything without a cause which may appeal to the ignorant, or a reason which may cling to the minds of the foolish, because you feel vanity for something for which no reason is discernible, nor any ground.

As for Satan, he felt proud over Adam because of his origin and taunted at him about his creation, since he said "I am of fire while you are of clay." In the same way the rich among the prosperous communities have been feeling vanity because of their riches, as (Allah) said:

> *And said they: "We are more (than you) in wealth and in children, and we shall not be chastised."* (Qur'an, 34:35)

Enthusiasm for attractive manners, respectable position, and taking lessons from the past

In case you cannot avoid vanity, your vanity should be for good qualities, praiseworthy acts, and admirable matters with which the dignified and noble chiefs of the Arab families distinguished themselves, as attractive manners, high thinking, respectable position and good performances. You too should show vanity in praiseworthy habits like the protection of the neighbour, the fulfilment of agreements, obedience to the

virtuous, opposition to the haughty, extending generosity to others, abstention from rebellion, keeping aloof from blood-shed, doing justice to people, suppressing anger and avoiding trouble on the earth. You should also fear what calamities befell peoples before you on account of their evil deeds and detestable actions. Remember, during good or bad circumstances, what happened to them, and be cautious that you do not become like them.

After you have thought over both the conditions of these people, attach yourself to everything with which their position became honourable, on account of which enemies remained away from them through which safety spread over them, by reason of which riches bowed before them and as a result of which distinction connected itself with their rope. These things were abstention from division, sticking to unity, calling each other to it and advising each other about it. You avoid everything which broke their backbone and weakened their power, such as malice in the heart, hatred in the chest, turning away (from each other's help) and withholding the hand from one another's assistance.

Think about the condition of people from among the believers who passed before you. What distresses and trials they were in! Were they not the most over-burdened among all the people and in the most straitened circumstances in the whole world? The Pharaohs took them as slaves. They inflicted on them the worst punishments and bitter sufferings. They continuously remained in this state of ruinous disgrace and severe subjugation. They found no method for escape and no way for protection. Till when Allah, the Glorified, noticed that they were enduring troubles in His love and bearing distresses out of fear for Him, He provided escape from the distress of trials. So, He changed their disgrace into honour and fear into safety. Consequently, they became ruling kings and conspicuous leaders. and Allah's favours over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached.

Look, how they were when their groups were united, their views were unanimous, their hearts were moderate, their hands used to help one another, their swords were intended for assisting one another, their eyes were sharp and their aims were the same. Did they not become masters of the corners of the earth and rulers over the neck of all the worlds? Thereafter, also see what happened to them towards the end when division overtook them, unity became fractured, and differences arose between their words and their hearts. They divided into various groups and were scattered fighting among themselves. Then Allah took away from them the apparel of His honour and deprived them of the

prosperity produced by His favours. Only their stories have remained among you for the guidance of those who may learn the lesson from them.

You should take a lesson from the fate of the progeny of Ismael, the children of Isaac and the children of Israel. How similar are their affairs and how akin are their examples. In connection with the details of their division and disunity, think of the days when Kisras of Persia and the Caesars of Rome had become their masters(4). They turned them out from the pastures of their lands the rivers of Iraq and the fertility of the world, towards thorny forests, the passages of (hot) winds and hardships in livelihood. In this way they turned them into just herders of camels. Their houses were the worst in the world and their places of stay were the most drought-stricken. There was not one voice towards which they could turn for protection, nor any shade of affection on whose strength they could repose trust.

Their condition was full of distress. Their hands were scattered. Their majority was divided. They were in great anguish and under layers of ignorance. They buried their daughters alive, worshipped idols, disregarded kinship and practised robbery.

Now, look at the various favours of Allah upon them, that He deputed towards them a prophet who got them to pledge their obedience to him and made them unite at his call. (Look) how (Allah's) bounty spread the wings of its favours over them and flowed for them streams of its blessing, and the whole community became wrapped in blissful prosperity. Consequently, they were submerged under its bounty and enjoyed its lush life. Their affairs were settled under the protection of a powerful ruler, and circumstances offered them overpowering honour, and all things became easy for them under the auspices of a strong country. They became rulers over the world and kings in the (various) parts of the earth. They became masters of those who were formerly their masters, and began issuing commands over those who used to command them. They were so strong that neither did their spears need testing nor did their weapons have any flaw.

Condemning his people

Beware! You have shaken your hands loose from the rope of obedience, and broken the divine fort around you by (resorting to) pre-Islamic rules. Certainly, it is a great blessing of Allah, the Glorified, that He has engendered among them unity through the cord of affection in whose shade they walk and take shelter. This is a blessing whose value no one

in the whole world realises, because it is more valuable than any price and higher than any wealth.

You should know that you have again reverted to the position of the Bedouin Arabs after immigration (to Islam), and have become different parties after having been once united. You do not possess anything of Islam except its name, and know nothing of belief save its show. You say, "The Fire yes. but no shameful position," as if you would throw down Islam on its face in order to defame its honour and break its pledge (for brotherhood) which Allah gave you as a sacred trust on His earth and (a source of) peace among the people. Be sure that if you incline towards anything other than Islam. the unbelievers will fight you. Then there will be neither Gabriel nor Michael, neither*muhajirun* nor *ansar* to help you, but only the clashing of swords, till Allah settles the matter for you.

Certainly, there are examples before you of Allah's wrath, punishment, days of tribulations and happenings. Therefore, do not disregard His promises, ignoring His punishment, making light His wrath and not expecting His violence, because Allah, the Glorified, did not curse the past ages except because they had left off asking others to do good acts and refraining them from bad acts. In fact Allah cursed the foolish for committing sins and the wise because they gave up refraining others from evils. Beware! You have broken the shackles of Islam, have transgressed its limits, and have destroyed its commands.

Amir al-mu'minin's high position and wonderful deeds in Islam

Beware! surely Allah has commanded me to fight those who revolt, or who break the pledge, or create trouble on the earth. As regards pledge-breakers, I have fought them, as regards deviators from truth, I have waged holy war against them, and as regards those who have gone out of the faith, I have put them in (serious) disgrace (5). As for Satan of the pit, (6) he too has been dealt with by me through the loud cry with which the scream of his heart and shaking of his chest was also heard. Only a small portion of the rebels has remained. If Allah allows me one more chance over them I will annihilate them except a few remnants that may remain scattered in the suburb of the cities.

Even in my boyhood I had lowered the chest of (the famous men) of Arabia, and broken the horn points (i.e., defeated the chiefs) of the tribes of Rabi`ah and Mudar. Certainly, you know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Prophet of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants. When I was only a child he took

charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and lay me beside him in his bed, bring his body close to mine and make me smell his smell. He used to chew something and then feed me with it. He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in any act.

From the time of his weaning, Allah had put a mighty angel with him to take him along the path of high character and good behaviour through day and night, while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it. Every year he used to go in seclusion to the hill of Hira', where I saw him but no one else saw him. In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - and Khadijah, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and breathed the scent of Prophethood.

When the revelation descended on the Prophet of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - I heard the moan of Satan. I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, what is this moan?" and he replied, "This is Satan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O' `Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a Prophet, but you are a vicegerent and you are surely on (the path of) virtue."

I was with him when a party of the Quraysh came to him and said to him, "O' Muhammad, you have made a big claim which none of your fore-fathers or those of your family have made. We ask you one thing; if you give us an answer to it and show it to us, we will believe that you are a prophet and a messenger, but if you cannot do it, we will know that you are a sorcerer and a liar."

The Messenger of Allah said: "What do you ask for?" They said: "Ask this tree to move for us, even with its roots, and stop before you." The Prophet said, "Verily, Allah has power over everything. If Allah does it for you, will you then believe and stand witness to the truth?" They said "Yes". Then he said, "I shall show you whatever you want, but I know that you won't bend towards virtue, and there are among you those who will be thrown into the pit, and those who will form parties (against me)." Then the Holy Prophet said: "O' tree, if you do believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement, and know that I am the Prophet of Allah, come up with your roots and stand before me with the permission of Allah." By Him who deputed the Prophet with truth, the tree did remove itself with its root and came with a great humming sound and a flapping like the flapping of the wings of birds, till it stopped before the Messenger of

Allah while some of its twigs came down onto my shoulders, and I was on the right side of the Holy Prophet.

When the people saw this they said by way of pride and vanity. "Now you order half of it to come to you and the other half of it remain (in its place)." The Holy Prophet ordered the tree to do the same. Then half of the tree advanced towards him in an amazing manner and with greater humming. It was about to touch the Prophet of Allah. Then they said, disbelieving and revolting, "Ask this half to get back to its other half and be as it was." The Prophet ordered it and it returned. Then I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, I am the first to believe in you and to acknowledge that the tree did what it did just now with the command of Allah, the Sublime, in testimony to your Prophethood and to heighten your word. Upon this all the people shouted, "Rather a sorcerer, a liar; it is wonderful sorcery, he is very adept in it. Only a man like this (pointing to me) can stand testimony to you in your affairs."

Certainly, I belong to the group of people who care not for the reproach of anybody in matters concerning Allah. Their countenance is the countenance of the truthful and their speech is the speech of the virtuous. They are wakeful during the nights (in devotion to Allah), and over beacons (of guidance) in the day. They hold fast to the rope of the Qur'an. revive the traditions of Allah and of His Prophet. They do not boast nor indulge in self conceit, nor misappropriate, nor create mischief. Their hearts are in Paradise while their bodies are busy in (good) acts.

(1). The intention is that "you should not create conditions by which you may be deprived of Allah's favours, like the jealous who aims at harming him of whom he is jealous."

(2). The intention is to say that if belief is accepted under force of awe and fear and worship is offered under the influence of power and authority then neither will it be belief in the true sense nor worship in real spirit. This is because belief is the name of inner testimony and heart-felt conviction. The conviction produced by force and compulsion can be only verbal but not heart-felt. Similarly, worship is the name of open acknowledgement of one's position of servitude. Worship which is devoid of the feeling of servitude or the sense of devotion and which is performed only in view of authority or fear cannot be real worship. Therefore, such belief and such worship would not present their correct connotation.

(3). The reason for specifying the learned and the poor is that the learned has the light of learning to lead him, which the destitution of the

poor may deny to him. In spite of this, both the learned and the poor fall into his deceit.

Then how can the ignorant save himself from his clutches, and how can the rich who has all the means to get into wrong ways, defend himself against him.

Nay! Verily man is wont to rebel!

As the deemeth himself needless!

(4).If a glance is cast at the rise and fall and events and happenings of the past people this fact will shine like daylight that the rise and fall of communities is not the result of luck or change, but that, to a great extent, it is affected by their acts and deeds. And of whatever type those deeds are, their results and consequences are in accord with them. Consequently, the stories and events of past people openly reflect that the result of oppression and evil deeds has always been ruin and destruction, while the consequence of virtuous action and peaceful living was always good luck and success. Since time and people make no difference, if the same conditions appear again and the same actions are repeated the same results must accrue which had appeared in the earlier set of circumstances, because the accrual of the results of good or bad actions is sure and certain like the properties and effects of everything. It this were not so it would not be possible to kindle hope in the minds of the oppressed and the afflicted by presenting to them past events and their effects, nor could the oppressors and tyrants be warned of the ill-effects of their deeds, on the ground that it was not necessary that the same would accrue now as had accrued earlier. But it is the universality of causality which makes past events the object of a lesson for posterity. Consequently, it was for this purpose that Amir al-mu'minin provoked thinking and consideration and mentioned the various events of Banu Isma`il, Banu Ishaq and Banu Isra'il and their affliction at the hands of the kings of Persia and Rome.

The progeny of Ismael, the elder son of Ibrahim (Abraham), is called Banu Isma`il while the progeny of his younger son Issac is called Banu Ishaq which later continued to divide into various off-shoots and acquired different names. Their original abode was at Canaan in Palestine, where Ibrahim had settled after the immigration from the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris. His son Isma`il had settled in the Hijaz, where Ibrahim had left him and his mother Hajar (Hagar). Isma`il married as-Sayyidah bint Mudad a woman of the tribe of Jurhum which also

inhabited this very area. His progeny sprang from her and spread throughout the world. The other son of Ibrahim namely Ishaq remained in Canaan. His son was Ya`qub (Jacob/lsrael) who married Liya the daughter of his mother's brother and after her death married his other daughter.

Both of them bore him progeny which is known as Banu Isra'il. One of his sons was Yusuf (Joseph), who reached the neighbouring country, Egypt, through an accident, and, after suffering slavery and imprisonment, eventually became the ruler and occupier of the throne.

After this change, he sent for all his relations and kith and kin and in this way Egypt became the abode of Banu Isra'il. For some time they lived there in peace and safety, and led a life of respect and esteem, but by and by the locals began to view them with disdain and hatred and made them the target of all sorts of tyrannies, so much so that they used to kill their children and retained their women as slave-maids, as a result of which their determination and courage was trampled and their spirit of freedom was completely subdued. At last, conditions changed and the period of their troubles came to an end, after four hundred years of the shackles of slavery; when Allah sent Musa to deliver them from the oppression of the Pharaoh. Musa set off with them to leave Egypt, but in order to destroy the Pharaoh, Allah turned them towards the Nile where there was all flood in front, and on the rear the huge forces of the Pharaoh. This bewildered them much, but Allah commanded Musa to enter the river without fear. Thus, when he went forward, there appeared in the river not only one but several courses to pass through and Musa crossed to the other side of the river along with Banu Isra'il. Pharaoh was closely following. When he saw them passing he too advanced with his arm but when they reached the middle of the stream the still water began moving and, engulfing Pharaoh and his army in its waves, finished them. About them the Qur'an says:

> *And* (remember ye) *when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaying your sons and by letting your women alive, and in that was a great trial from your Lord.* (2:49)

However, when, after leaving the boundaries of Egypt, they entered their motherland Palestine, they established their own state and began to live in freedom, and Allah changed their lowliness and disgrace into the

greatness and sublimity of rule and power. In this connection, Allah says:

> *And made We inheritors the people who were deemed weak* (to inherit) *the eastern parts of the earth and the western parts of it, which we had blessed therein* (with fertility) *and the good word of thy Lord was fulfilled in the children of Israel for what they did endure; and destroyed We, what Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and what shade they did make.* (Qur'an, 7:137)

On occupying the throne of rule and regaining prosperity and peacefulness, Banu Isra'il forgot all the ignominies and disgraces of the period of slavery, and instead of being thankful to Allah for the favours granted by Him they took to rebellion and revolt. Consequently, they shamelessly indulged in vices and misconduct and partook in mischiefs and evil deeds to the maximum, made lawful things unlawful and unlawful things lawful by false excuses and disobeyed the prophets who tried to preach and correct them under the command of Allah, and even killed them. The natural consequence of their vicious activities was that they were caught in punishment for their deeds. Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar, who was ruling in Babylon (Iraq) in 600 B.C., rose to march against Syria and Palestine and killed seventy thousand Banu Isra'il with his blood-thirsty swords, devastated their towns, drove away the survivors with him like sheep and goats and threw them in the abyss of ignominy by turning them into slaves.

Although after this ruination there seemed no way for them to regain position and power, yet nature gave them still another chance to recover. When Nebuchadnezzar died and power came in the hands of Belshazzar he started all sorts of oppression on the people. Being disgusted with this, they sent word to the ruler of Persia that they were tired of enduring the oppression of their ruler and that he should rescue them from him, and free them from the oppression of Belshazzar. Cyrus the Great, who was a just and upright ruler, rose up in response to this request and, with the co-operation of the local population, overturned the government, as a consequence of which the yoke of slavery on Banu Isra'il's necks was also removed, and they were allowed to return to Palestine.

Thus, after seventy years of subjugation they again set foot in their homeland and took over the reins of government. If they had taken their lesson from the past events they would not have committed the same evils as a consequence of which they had to suffer slavery; but the

mental constitution of this community was such that whenever they achieved prosperity and freedom from care they lost themselves in the intoxication of riches and in the enjoyment of pleasure, mocked the laws of religion, derided the prophets and even killing them did not mean anything serious to them. Thus, when their ruler Herod at the request of his sweetheart, beheaded the Prophet Yahya (John) and presented his head to her, none of them raised any voice against this brutality or was affected by it in any manner. This was the state of their unruliness and fierceness when `Isa made his appearance. He stopped them from evil deeds and exhorted them to adopt good habits, but they opposed him too and gave him troubles of various sorts, so much so that they tried to end his life. However, Allah foiled all their devices and made `Isa safe against their approach.

When their disobedience reached this stage and their capacity to accept guidance was completely wiped out, fate decided to ruin them and made full arrangements for their annihilation and destruction. The ruler of Roma (Byzantia) Vespasianus sent his son Titus to attack Syria, he laid siege round Jerusalem, demolished the houses and broke down the walls of the Synagogue as a result of which thousand of Banu Isra'il left their houses and became scattered abroad, while thousands died of hunger; and those who remained were put to sword. Most of them settled in Hijaz, but because of their rejecting Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) their unity was so disturbed that they could never again converge on any one centre of honour and could never regain a life of prestige and dignity in place of disgrace and ignominy.

In the same way the ruler of Persia made serious attacks on Arabia and subjugated the inhabitants of those places. Thus, Shapur ibn Hurmuz, at the age of sixteen, took with him four thousand combatants and attacked Arabs who resided within the boundaries of Persia and then advanced towards Bahrayn, Qatif and Hajar and ruined Banu Tamim, Banu Bakr ibn Wa'il and Banu `Abd al-Qays and cut through the shoulders of seventy thousand Arabs, after which his nickname became "Dhu'l-Aktaf" (the shoulderer). He forced the Arabs that they should live in tents built of hair, should grow long hair on their heads, should not wear white clothes and should ride unsaddled horses. Then he settled twelve thousand people of Isfahan and other cities of Persia in the area between Iraq and Syria.

In this way he drove the inhabitants of those places from fertile lands to waterless forests which had neither any of the conveniences of life nor means of livelihood, and for long these people remained the victims of

other's oppression due to their own disunity and division. At last, Allah deputed the Prophet and raised them out of disgrace to the highest pinnacle of progress and sublimity.

(5). Amir al-mu'minin, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Jabir ibn `Abdullah al-Ansari, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, `Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu Sa`id al-Khudri and `Abdullah ibn `Abbas narrated that the Holy Prophet commanded `Ali ibn Abi Talib to fight those who are pledge-breakers (*nakithin*), deviators from truth (*qasitin*) and those who have left the faith (mariqin). (*al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3, p. 139; *al-Isti`ab*, vol. 3, p. 1117; *Usd al-ghabah*, vol. 3, pp. 32-33; *ad-Durr al-manthur*, vol. 6, p. 18; *al-Khasa'is al-kubra*, vol. 2, p. 138; *Majma` az-zawa'id*, vol. 5, p. 186; vol. 6, p. 235; vol. 7, p. 238; *Kanz al-`ummal*, vol. 6, pp. 72, 82, 88, 155, 215, 319, 391, 392; *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol. 8, p. 340; vol. 13, pp. 186-187; *al-Tarikh*, Ibn `Asakir, vol. 5, p. 41; *at-Tarikh*, Ibn Kathir, vol. 7 pp. 304-306; *ar-Riyad an-nadarah*, vol. 2, p. 240; *Sharh al-mawahib al-ladunniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 316-317; *Muwaddah al-awham*, vol. 1, p. 386).

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid says: "It has been proved (by right ascription) from the Holy Prophet that he said to `Ali (p.b.u.h.):

> You will fight after me those who are pledge-breakers, deviators from truth and those who have gone out of the faith.

"The pledge-breakers were the people of Jamal, because they broke their allegiance with him. The deviators from truth were the people of Syria (ash-Sham) at Siffin. Those who have gone out of the faith were the Kharijites at an-Nahrawan. Regarding these three groups, Allah says (about the first one):

> *Verily, those who swear their fealty unto thee do but swear fealty unto Allah; the hand of Allah is above their hands; so whosoever violateth his oath, doth violate it only to the hurt of his* (own) *self;…* (Qur'an, 48:10)

(About the second group) Allah says:

> *And as for the deviators, they shall be for the hell, a fuel.* (Qur'an, 72:15)"

Concerning the third group, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has referred to the following tradition (*hadith*) that al-Bukhari (in *as-Sahih,* vol. 4, pp. 166-167, 243), Muslim (*in as-Sahih,* vol. 3, pp. 109-117), at-Tirmidhi (*in al-Jami` as-*

Sahih, vol. 4, p. 481), Ibn Majah (in *as-Sunan*, vol. I, pp. 59-62), an-Nasa'i (in *as-Sunan*, vol. 3, pp. 65-66), Malik ibn Anas (in *al-Muwatta'*, pp. 204-205), ad-Dar'qutni (in *as-Sunan*, vol. 3, pp.131-132), ad-Darimi (in *as-Suman*, vol. 2, p. 133), Abu Dawud (in *as-Sunan*, vol. 4, pp. 241-246), al-Hakim (in *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, pp. 145-154; vol. 4, p. 531), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (in *al-Musnad*, vol. 1, pp. 88, 140, 147; vol. 3, pp. 56, 65) and al-Bayhaqi (*in as-Sunan al-kubra'*, vol. 8, pp. 170-171) have narrated through a group of the companions of the Holy Prophet that he said about Dhu'l-Khuwaysirah (the surname for Dhu'th-Thudayyah Hurqus ibn Zuhayr at-Tamimi, the chief of the Kharijites):

> From this very person's posterity there will arise people who will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go beyond their throat, they will kill their followers of Islam and will spare the idol-worshippers. They will glance through the teaching of Islam as hurriedly as the arrow passes through its prey. If I were to ever find them I would kill them like `Ad.

Then Ibn Abi'l-Hadid continues:

> This is the sign for his (Holy Prophet's) prophethood and his prophecy of the secret knowledge. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 13, p.183)

(6). By "Satan of the pit" the reference is to Dhu'th-Thudayyah (whose full name already mentioned in footnote no. 5) who was killed in Nahrawan by the stroke of lightning from the sky, and there was no need to kill him by sword. The Holy Prophet had foretold his death. Therefore, after the annihilation of the Kharijites at Nahrawan, Amir al-mu'minin came out in search, but could not find his body anywhere. In the meantime, ar-Rayyan ibn Sabirah saw forty to fifty bodies in a pit on the bank of the canal. When they were taken out the body of Dhu'th-Thudayyah was also found among them. He was called Dhu'th-Thudayyah because of a mass of flesh on his shoulder. When Amir al-mu'minin saw his body he said, "Allah is Great, neither I spoke lie nor was I told wrong." (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 13, pp. 183-184; at-Tabari, vol 1, pp. 3383-3384; Ibn al-Athir vol. 3, p. 348)

Chapter 200

SERMON 192

It is related that a companion of Amir al-mu'minin called Hammam(1) 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:

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.

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.

Their hearts are grieved, they are protected against 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.

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.

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."

The peculiarity of anyone of them is that you will see that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in 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.

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.

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.

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 others is by way of asceticism and purification, and his nearness to those to whom he is near 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.

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 advices produce 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.

(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.

Chapter 201

SERMON 193

In description of hypocrites

We praise Allah for the succour He has given us in carrying out His obedience and in preventing us from disobedience, and we ask Him to complete His favours (to us) and to make us hold on to His rope. We stand witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger. He entered every hardship in search of Allah's pleasure and endured for its sake every grief. His near relations changed themselves for him and those who were remote from him (in relationship) united against him. The Arabs let loose the reins (of their horses to quicken their march) against him, and struck the bellies of their carriers to (rouse them) in fighting against him, so much so that enemies came to his threshold from the remotest places and most distant areas.

I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, to fear Allah and I warn you of the hypocrites, because they are themselves misguided and misguide others, and they have slipped and make others slip too. They change into many colours, and adopt various ways. They support you with all sorts of supports, and lay in waiting for you at every lookout. Their hearts are diseased while their faces are clean. They walk stealthily and tread like the approach of sickness (over the body). Their words speak of cure, but their acts are like incurable diseases. They are jealous of ease, intensify distress, and destroy hopes. Their victims are found lying down on every path, while they have means to approach every heart and they have (false) tears for every grief.

They eulogise each other and expect reward from each other. When they ask something they insist on it, if they reprove (any one) they disgrace (him), and if they pass verdict they commit excess. They have adopted for every truth a wrong way, for every erect thing a bender, for every living being a killer, for every (closed) door a key and for every night a lamp. They covet, but with despair, in order to maintain with it their markets, and to popularise their handsome merchandise. When

they speak they create doubts. When they describe they exaggerate. First they offer easy paths but (afterwards) they make them narrow. In short, they are the party of Satan and the stings of fire.

> *Satan hath gained hold on them, so he maketh them forget the remembrance of Allah; they are Satan's Party; Beware! verily, the party of Satan are the losers.* (Qur'an, 58:19)

Chapter 202

SERMON 194

Allah's praise, advice about fear of Allah and details about the Day of Judgement

Praise be to Allah who has displayed such effects of His authority and the glory of His sublimity through the wonders of His might that they dazzle the pupils of the eyes and prevent the minds from appreciating the reality of His attributes. I stand witness that there is no god but Allah by virtue of belief, certainty, sincerity and conviction. I also stand witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet whom He deputed when the signs of guidance were obliterated and the ways of religion were desolate. So, he threw open the truth, gave advice to the people, guided them towards righteousness and ordered them to be moderate. May Allah bless him and his descendants.

Know, O' creatures of Allah, that He has not created you for nought and has not left you free. He knows the extent of His favours over you and the quantity of His bounty towards you. Therefore, ask Him for success and for the attainment of aims. Beg before Him and seek His generosity. No curtain hides you from Him, nor is any door closed before you against Him. He is at every place, in every moment and every instance. He is with every man and *jinn*. Giving does not create any breach in Him. Gifting does not cause Him diminution. A beggar cannot exhaust Him and paying (to others) cannot take Him to the end.

One person cannot turn His attention from another, one voice does not detract Him from another voice, and one grant of favour does not prevent Him from refusing another favour. Anger does not prevent Him from mercy, mercy does not prevent Him from punishing; His concealment does not hide His manifestness and His manifestness does not prevent Him from concealment. He is near and at the same time distant. He is high and at the same time low. He is manifest and also concealed. He is concealed yet well-known. He lends but is not lent anything. He has

not created (the things of) creation after devising, nor did He take their assistance on account of fatigue.

I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, to have fear of Allah, for it is the rein and the mainstay (of religion). Hold fast to its salient points, keep hold of its realities. It will take you to abodes of easiness, places of comfort, fortresses of safety and houses of honour on *the Day* (of Judgement) *when eyes will be wide open*, (Qur'an, 14:42), when there will be darkness all round, when small groups of camels pregnant for ten months will be allowed free grazing, and when the Horn will be blown, then every living being will die, every voice will become dumb the high mountains and hard rocks will crumble (to pieces) so that their hard stones will turn into moving sand and their bases will become level. (On that day) there will be no interceder to intercede and no relation to ward off (trouble), and no excuse will be of avail.

Chapter 203

SERMON 195

The condition of the world at the time of the proclamation of prophethood, the transience of this world and the state of its inhabitants.

Allah deputed the Prophet when no sign of guidance existed, no beacon was giving light and no passage was clear.

I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, to have fear of Allah, and I warn you of this world which is a house from which departure is inevitable and a place of discomfort. He who lives in it has to depart, and he who stays here has to leave it. It is drifting with its people like a boat whom severe winds dash (here and there) in the deep sea. Some of them get drowned and die, while some of them escape on the surface of the waves, where winds push them with their currents and carry them towards their dangers. So, whatever is drowned cannot be restored, and whatever escapes is on the way to destruction.

O' creatures of Allah, you should know now that you have to perform (good) acts, because (at present) your tongues are free, your bodies are healthy, your limbs have movement, the area of your coming and going is vast and the course of your running is wide; before the loss of opportunity or the approach of death. Take death's approach as an accomplished fact and do not think it will come (hereafter).

Chapter 204

SERMON 196

Amir al-mu'minin's attachment to the Holy Prophet. The performance of his funeral rites.

Those companions of Muhammad - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - who were the custodians (of divine messages) know that I never disobeyed Allah or His Messenger (1) - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - at all, and by virtue of the courage (2) with which Allah honoured me I supported him with my life on occasions when even the brave turned away and feet remained behind (instead of proceeding forward).

When the Prophet - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - died his head was on my chest, and his (last) breath blew over my palms and I passed it over my face. I performed his (funeral) ablution, may Allah bless him and his descendants, and the angels helped me. The house and the courtyard were full of them. One party of them was descending and the other was ascending. My ears continually caught their humming voice, as they invoked Allah's blessing on him, till we buried him in his grave. Thus, who can have greater rights with him than I during his life or after his death? Therefore depend on your intelligence and make your intentions pure in fighting your enemy, because I swear by Him who is such that there is no god but He, that I am on the path of truth and that they (the enemy) are on the misleading path of wrong. You hear what I say; and I seek Allah's forgiveness for myself and for you.

(1). Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written (*in Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 10, pp. 180-183) that Amir al-mu'minin's saying that he never disobeyed the commands of the Prophet is a sort of taunt to those who felt no hesitation in rejecting the Prophet's commands and sometimes even checked him. For example, when, at the time of the peace of al-Hudaybiyah, the Prophet was agreeable to negotiate peace with the unbelievers among

the Quraysh, one of the companions became so enraged that he expressed doubts about the prophethood of the Prophet whereupon Abu Bakr had to say:

> Woe be to you! Keep clinging to him. He is certainly Allah's Messenger and He will not ruin him.

The introduction to the oath, '*inna*', and the word of emphasis '*lam*' which are used here to create conviction about the prophethood shows that the addressee had gone farther than mere doubt, because these words of emphasis are employed only when the stage of denial has been reached. However, if belief required absence of doubt, the presence of doubt must imply defect in the belief, as Allah says:

> *The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, they doubt not thereafter,…* (Qur'an, 49:15)

Similarly, when the Prophet intended to say the funeral prayers of Ubayy ibn Salul the same companion said to him, "How do you intend to seek forgiveness for this Chief of hypocrites?" And he even drew away the Prophet by catching the skirt (of his shirt). Then the Prophet had to say, "No act of mine is beside the command of Allah". In the same way the Prophet's command to accompany the force of Usamah ibn Zayd was ignored. The greatest of all these insolences was displayed in connection with the Prophet's intention to write down his advice as to when such a blame was laid against the Prophet which proves an absence of belief in the commands of the *shari`ah*, and creates a doubt about each command as to whether it is based on divine revelation or (Allah may forbid) just the result of mental disorder.

(2). Who can deny that the ever-successful lion of Allah, `Ali ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.) shielded the Prophet on every critical occasion and performed the duty of protecting him by dint of the courage and valour gifted to him by Allah. The first occasion of risking his life was when the unbelievers from the Quraysh decided finally to kill the Prophet and `Ali slept on his bed surrounded by enemies and under the direct peril of swords, whereby the enemies were not able to succeed in their aims. Then, in those battles where the enemies used to attack the Prophet together and where the feet of even the reputed heroes could not stand firm, Amir al-mu'minin remained steadfast with the banner (of Islam) in his hand. `Abd al-Barr and al-Hakim writes about it:

> Ibn `Abbas says that `Ali had four qualities which no one else possessed. Firstly, he was the first among Arabs and non-Arabs to have said prayers with the Messenger of Allah. Secondly, he always had the banner of Islam in his hand in every battle. Thirdly, when people ran away from the Prophet, `Ali remained with him; and fourthly it was he who gave the Prophet his funeral ablution and laid him in his grave. (*al-Isti`ab*, vol. 3, p. 1090; *al-Mustadrak `ala as-sahihayn* vol. 3, p. 111)

A study of the holy wars of Islam fought in the Prophet's days leaves no doubt that, except for the battle of Tabuk in which Amir al-mu'minin did not partake, all other battles bear testimony to his fine performance and all the successes are due to his valour. Thus, in the battle of Badr seventy unbelievers were killed, half of whom were killed by `Ali's sword. In the battle of Uhud, when victory changed into defeat as a result of the Muslims engaging themselves in the collection of booty, and they fled away under the sudden attack of the enemy, Amir al-mu'minin remained steadfast, taking jihad to be a religious obligation, and displayed such conspicuous performance in support and defence of the Prophet that the Prophet too acknowledged it and also the Angel. Again, in the battle of the Trench (al-Khandaq), the Prophet was accompanied by three thousand combatants, but none dared face `Amr ibn `Abdawadd. At last, Amir al-mu'minin killed him and saved the Muslims from ignominy. In the battle of Hunayn, the Muslims were proud of their number because they were ten thousand while the unbelievers were only four thousand, but here too they leapt onto the booty, as a consequence of which the unbelievers gained the opportunity, and pounced upon them. Bewildered with this sudden attack the Muslims fled away as the Holy Qur'an says:

> *Most certainly did Allah help you in many* (battle) *fields, and on the day of Hunayn, when made you vain your great number, but they availed you nothing, and was straitened the earth against you with all its extensiveness, then ye turned back in retreat.* (9:25)

On this occasion also, Amir al-mu'minin was steady like a rock, and eventually, with Allah's support, victory was achieved.

Chapter 205

SERMON 197

Allah's attribute of Omniscience

Allah knows the cries of the beasts in the forest, the sins of the people in seclusion, the movements of the fishes in the deep seas and the rising of the water by tempestuous winds. I stand witness that Muhammad is the choice of Allah, the conveyor of His revelation and the messenger of His mercy.

Advantages of fear of Allah

Now then, I advise you to fear Allah, Who created you for the first time; towards Him is your return, with Him lies the success of your aims, at Him terminate (all) your desires, towards Him runs your path of right and He is the aim of your fears (for seeking protection). Certainly, fear of Allah is the medicine for your hearts, sight for the blindness of your spirits, the cure for the ailments of your bodies, the rectifier of the evils of your breasts, the purifier of the pollution of your minds, the light of the darkness of your eyes, the consolation for the fear of your heart and the brightness for the gloom of your ignorance.

Therefore, make obedience to Allah the way of your life and not only your outside covering, make it your inner habit instead of only outer routine, subtle enough to enter through your ribs (up to the heart), the guide for all your affairs, the watering place for your getting down (on the Day of Judgement), the interceder for the achievement of your aims, asylum for the day of your fear, the lamp of the interior of your graves, company for your long loneliness, and deliverance from the troubles of your abodes. Certainly, obedience to Allah is a protection against encircling calamities. expected dangers and the flames of burning fires.

Therefore, whoever entertains fear of Allah, troubles remain away from him after having been near, affairs become sweet after their bitterness, waves (of troubles) recede from him after having crowded over him, difficulties become easy for him after occurring, generosity rains

fast over him after there had been famine, mercy bends over him after it had been loath, the favours (of Allah) spring forth on him after they had been dried, and blessing descends over him in showers after being scanty. So, fear Allah Who benefits you with His good advice, preaches to you through His Messenger, and obliges you with His favours. Devote yourselves to His worship, and acquit yourselves of the obligation of obeying Him.

About Islam

This Islam is the religion which Allah has chosen for Himself, developed it before His eyes, preferred it as the best among His creations, established its pillars on His love. He has disgraced other religions by giving honour to it. He has humiliated all communities before its sublimity; He has humbled its enemies with His kindness and made its opponents lonely by according it His support. He has smashed the pillars of misguidance with its columns. He has quenched the thirst of the thirsty from its cisterns, and filled the cisterns through those who draw its water.

He made Islam such that its constituent parts cannot break, its links cannot separate, its construction cannot fall, its columns cannot decay, its plant cannot be uprooted, its time does not end, its laws do not expire, its twigs cannot be cut, its parts do not become narrow, its ease does not change into difficulty, its clarity is not affected by gloom, its straightness does not acquire curvature, its wood has no crookedness, its vast paths have no narrowness, its lamp knows no putting off and its sweetness has no bitterness.

It consists of columns whose bases Allah has fixed in truthfulness and whose foundation He has strengthened, and of sources whose streams are ever full of water and of lamps, whose flames are full of light, and of beacons with whose help travellers get guidance, and of signs through which a way is found to its highways and of watering places which provide water to those who come to them. Allah has placed in Islam the height of His pleasure, the pinnacle of His pillars and the prominence of His obedience. Before Allah, therefore, its columns are strong, its construction is lofty, its proofs are bright, its fires are aflame, its authority is strong, its beacons are high and its destruction is difficult. You should therefore honour it, follow it, fulfil its obligations and accord the position due to it.

About the Holy Prophet

Then, Allah, the Glorified, deputed Muhammad - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - with truth at a time when the destruction of the world was near and the next life was at hand, when its brightness was turning into gloom after shining, it had become troublesome for its inhabitants, its surface had become rough, and its decay had approached near. This was during the exhaustion of its life at the approach of signs (of its decay), the ruin of its inhabitants, the breaking of its links, the dispersal of its affairs, the decay of its signs, the divulging of its secret matters and the shortening of its length. Allah made him responsible for conveying His message and (a means of) honour for his people, a period of bloom for the men of his days, a source of dignity for the supporters and an honour for his helpers.

About the Holy Qur'an

Then, Allah sent to him the Book as a light whose flames cannot be extinguished, a lamp whose gleam does not die, a sea whose depth cannot be sounded, a way whose direction does not mislead, a ray whose light does not darken, a separator (of good from evil) whose arguments do not weaken, a clarifier whose foundations cannot be dismantled, a cure which leaves no apprehension for disease, an honour whose supporters are not defeated, and a truth whose helpers are not abandoned. Therefore, it is the mine of belief and its centre, the source of knowledge and its oceans, the plantation of justice and its pools, the foundation stone of Islam and its construction, the valleys of truth and its plains, an ocean which those who draw water cannot empty, springs which those who draw water cannot dry up, a watering place which those who come to take water cannot exhaust, a staging place in moving towards which travellers do not get lost, signs which no treader fails to see and a highland which those who approach it cannot surpass it.

Allah has made it a quencher of the thirst of the learned, a bloom for the hearts of religious jurists, a highway for the ways of the righteous, a cure after which there is no ailment, an effulgence with which there is no darkness, a rope whose grip is strong, a stronghold whose top is invulnerable, an honour for him who loves it, a peace for him who enters it, a guidance for him who follows it, an excuse for him who adopts it, an argument for him who argues with it, a witness for him who quarrels with it, a success for him who argues with it, a carrier of burden for him who seeks the way, a shield for him who arms himself (against misguidance), a knowledge for him who listens carefully, worthy story for him who relates it and a final verdict of him who passes judgements.

Chapter 206

SERMON 198

Containing advice given by Amir al-mu'minin to his companions

About Prayer

Pledge yourself with prayer and remain steady on it; offer prayer as much as possible and seek nearness (of Allah) through it, because it is, (imposed*) upon the believers as* (a) *timed ordinance* (Qur'an 4:103). Have you not heard the reply of the people of Hell when they were asked: *What hath brought you into the hell? They shall say: We were not of those who offered the regular prayers* (to Allah)*!* (Qur'an, 74:42-43). Certainly, prayer drops out sins like the dropping of leaves (of trees), and removes them as ropes are removed from the necks of cattle. The Messenger of Allah - the peace and blessing of Allah he upon him and his descendants - likened it to a hot bath situated at the door of a person who bathes in it five times a day. Will then any dirt remain on him?

Its obligation is recognised by those believers whom neither the adornment of property nor the coolness of the eyes produced by children can turn away from it. Allah, the Glorified, says:

> *Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverteth from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate; …*
> (Qur'an. 24:37)

Even after receiving assurance of Paradise, the Messenger of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - used to exert himself for prayers because of Allah, the Glorified's command.

> *And enjoin prayer on thy followers, and adhere thou steadily unto it, …*
> (Qur'an, 20:132).

Then the Holy Prophet used to enjoin his followers to prayer and exert himself for it.

About the Islamic Tax (zakat)

Then, Islamic tax has been laid down along with prayer as a sacrifice (to be offered) by the people of Islam. Whoever pays it by way of purifying his spirit, it serves as a purifier for him and a protection and shield against fire (of Hell). No one therefore (who pays it) should feel attached to it afterwards, nor should feel grieved over it. Whoever pays it without the intention of purifying his heart expects through it more than its due. He is certainly ignorant of the *sunnah*, he is allowed no reward for it, his action goes to waste and his repentance is excessive.

Fulfilment of Trust

Then, as regards fulfilment of trust, whoever does not pay attention to it will be disappointed. It was placed before the strong skies, vast earths and high mountains but none of them was found to be stronger. vaster, or higher than it. If anything could be unapproachable because of height, vastness, power or strength they would have been unapproachable, but they felt afraid of the evil consequences (of failure in fulfilling a trust) and noticed what a weaker being did not realise it, and this was man.

… *Verily he was* (proved) *unjust, ignorant.* (Qur'an, 33:72)

Surely, Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, nothing is hidden from Him of whatever people do in their nights or days. He knows all the details, and His knowledge covers them. Your limbs are a witness, the organs of your body constitute an army (against yourself), your inner self serves Him as eyes (to watch your sins), and your loneliness is open to Him.

Chapter 207

SERMON 199

Treason and treachery of Mu`awiyah and the fate of those guilty of treason

By Allah,(1) Mu`awiyah is not more cunning than I am, but he deceives and commits evil deeds. Had I not been hateful of deceit I would have been the most cunning of all men. But (the fact is that) every deceit is a sin and every sin is disobedience (of Allah), and every deceitful person will have a banner by which he will be recognised on the Day of Judgement. By Allah, I cannot be made forgetful by strategy, nor can I be overpowered by hardships.

(1). People who are ignorant of religion and ethics free from the shackles of religious law and unaware of the conception of punishment and reward find no paucity of excuses and means for the achievement of their objects. They can find ways of success at every stage; but when the dictates of humanity, or Islam, or the limitations imposed by ethics and religious law act as impediments, the chances of devising and finding means become narrow, and the possibility of action becomes restricted. Mu`awiyah's influence and control was the result of these devices and ways in following which he knew no impediment nor any obstacle of what is lawful or unlawful, nor did fear of the Day of Judgement prevent him from acting fearlessly. As al-`Allamah ar-Raghib al-Isfahani while taking account of his characters writes:

"His aim always was to achieve his object whether lawful or unlawful. He did not care for religion nor did he ever think of divine chastisement. Thus, in order to maintain his power he resorted to mis-statements and concoctions, practised all sorts of deceits and contrivances. When he saw that success was not possible without entangling Amir al-mu'minin in war he roused Talhah and az-Zubayr against him. When success could not be achieved by this means he instigated the Syrians and brought about the civil war of Siffin. And when his rebellious position had

become known by the killing of `Ammar, he at once duped the people by saying that `Ali was responsible for killing him as he had brought him into the battlefield; and on another occasion he interpreted the words 'rebellious party' occurring in the saying of the Prophet to mean 'avenging party' intending to prove that `Ammar would be killed by the group that would seek revenge of `Uthman's blood, although the next portion of this saying namely 'he will call them towards Paradise while they will call him to Hell,' does not leave any scope for interpretation. When there was no hope of victory even by these cunning means, he contrived to raise the Qur'an on spears, although in his view neither the Qur'an nor its commandments carried any weight. If he had really aimed at a decision by the Qur'an, he should have put this demand before the commencement of the battle, and when it became known to him that the decision had been secured by `Amr ibn al-`As by deceiving Abu Musa al-Ash`ari, and that it did not have even a remote connection with the Qur'an, he should not have accepted it and should have punished `Amr ibn al-`As for this cunning, or at least should have warned and rebuked him. But on the contrary, his performance was much appreciated and in reward he was made the Governor of Egypt."

In contrast to this Amir al-mu'minin's conduct was a high specimen of religious law and ethics. He kept in view the requirements of truth and righteousness even in adverse circumstances and did not allow his chaste life to be tarnished by the views of deceit and contrivance. If he wished he could face cunning by cunning, and Mu`awiyah's shameful activities could have been answered by similar activities. For example, when he put a guard on the Euphrates and stopped the supply of its water (to Amir al-mu'minin's men), then the supply of water could have been cut from them also on the grounds that since they had occupied the Euphrates it was lawful to retaliate, and in this way they could be overpowered by weakening their fighting power. But Amir al-mu'minin could never tarnish his hands with such an inhuman act which was not permitted by any law or code of ethics, although common people regard such acts against the enemy as lawful and call this duplicity of character for achievement of success, a stroke of policy and administrative ability. But Amir al-mu'minin could never think of strengthening his power by fraud or duplicity of behaviour on any occasion. Thus when people advised him to retain the officers of the days of `Uthman in their position and to befriend Talhah and az-Zubayr by assigning them governorship of Kufah and Basrah, and make use of Mu`awiyah's ability in administration by giving him the government of Syria, Amir al-mu'minin

rejected the advice and preferred the commandments of religious law over worldly expediency, and openly declared about Mu`awiyah as follows:

If I allow Mu`awiyah to retain what he already has I would be *one "who taketh those who lead* (people) *astray, as helpers"* (Qur'an, 18:51). Those who look at apparent successes do not care to find out by what means the success has been achieved. They support anyone whom they see succeeding by means of cunning ways and deceitful means and begin to regard him an administrator, intelligent, a politician, intellectually brilliant and so on, while he who does not deploy cunning and fraudulent methods owing to his adherence to Islamic commandments and divine instructions and prefers failure to success secured through wrong methods is regarded as ignorant of politics and weak in foresight. They do not feel it necessary to think what difficulties and impediments exist in the way of a person who adheres to principles and laws which prevent him from proceeding forward even after approaching near success."

Chapter 208

SERMON 200

One should not be afraid of the scarcity of those who tread on the right path

O' people, do not wonder at the small number of those who follow the right path, because people throng only round the table (of this world) whose edibles are few but whose hunger is insatiable.

O' people, certainly, what gathers people together (in categories) is (their) agreement (to good or bad) and (their) disagreement, for only one individual killed the camel of Thamud (1) but Allah held all of them in punishment because all of them joined him by their acquiescing in their consenting to it. Thus, Allah, the Glorified. has said:

> *Then they hamstrung her, and turned* (themselves) *regretful.* (Qur'an, 26:157).

Then their land declined by sinking (into the earth) as the spike of a plough pierces unploughed weak land. O' people, he who treads the clear path (of guidance) reaches the spring of water, and whoever abandons it strays into waterless desert.

(1). Thamud, in ancient Arabia, a tribe or group of tribes, seems to have been prominent from about the 4th Century B.C. to the first half of the 7th Century A.D. Their place of stay and homeland was at a place lying on the way between the Hijaz and Syria called the Valley of al-Qura and bore this name because it consisted of several townships. Allah deputed for their guidance and directions the Prophet Salih who preached to them as Allah relates in his story:

> *And unto* (the people of) *Thamud* (We did send) *their brother Salih, he said: "O' my people! worship ye Allah* (alone). *Ye have no god other than Him; indeed came unto you a clear proof from your Lord; this is the She-camel of Allah*(which) *unto you is a sign, so leave it* (free) *to*

pasture in Allah's earth and touch her not with any harm, or ye shall be seized with a painful chastisement. And remember when He made you successors after the (people) *`Ad and settled you in the earth, ye build mansions on its plain and hew the mountains into dwellings. So remember ye the bounties of Allah, and see ye not evil in the earth, making mischief." Said the chiefs of those who were puffed up with pride among his people to those who were reckoned weak, to those who believed from among them; "Know ye that Salih is sent by his Lord?" Said they: "Verily, in what he hath been sent with, we are believers." Said those who were puffed up with pride; "Verily we, in that which ye believe are disbelievers." They hamstrung the She-camel and rebelled against the command of their Lord, and they said: "O' Salih! bring us what thou didst, threaten us with, if thou art of the apostles." Then seized them* (unawares) *the earthquake, so became they in their dwellings, motionless* (dead). *Then he turned away from them and said: "O' my people! Indeed I did deliver unto you the message of my Lord, and did admonish you, but ye love not the admonishers."* (Qur'an, 7:73-79).

(The people of) *Thamud belied the warners, and said they: "What! a single man, from among us! and we to follow him? Verily then we shall be astray and in distress. It is that* (the duty of) r*eminding hath been bestowed on him* (alone), *of all the* (people) *among us? Nay! he is a great liar, an insolent one!" "Soon they shall know on the morrow,* (as to) *who is the liar, the insolent one!* (O' Our Apostle Salih!) *verily We are going to send the She-camel as a trial for them; so watch them and be patient. And* (thou O' Salih!) *make them aware* (beforehand) *that the water is* (to be) *divided between them; and every drinking share shall be witnessed* (on it)*." But they called their companions, then he pursued*(her) *and hamstrung* (her). *How* (great) *was My chastisement and My warning? Verily sent We upon them a single* (violent) *blast, and they were* (all) *like the dry stubble used by a fencer in a fence.* (Qur'an, 54:23-31).

Chapter 209

SERMON 201

What Amir al-mu'minin said on the occasion of the burial of Sayyidatu'n-nisa' (Supreme lady) Fatimah (p.b.u.h.) while addressing the Holy Prophet at his grave.

O' Prophet of Allah, peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. O' Prophet of Allah, my patience about your chosen (daughter) has been exhausted, and my power of endurance has weakened, except that I have ground for consolation in having endured the great hardship and heart-rending event of your separation. I laid you down in your grave when your last breath had passed (when your head was) between my neck and chest.

> … *Verily we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return.* (Qur'an 2:156)

Now. the trust has been returned and what had been given has been taken back. As to my grief, it knows no bounds, and as to my nights. they will remain sleepless till Allah chooses for me the house in which you are now residing.

Certainly, your daughter would apprise you of the joining together of your (1) *ummah* (people) for oppressing her. You ask her in detail and get all the news about the position. This has happened when a long time had not elapsed and your remembrance had not disappeared. My *salam* (salutation) be on you both, the *salam* of a grief stricken not a disgusted or hateful person; for if I go away it is not because I am weary (of you), and if I stay it is not due to lack of belief in what Allah has promised the endurers.

(1). The treatment meted out to the daughter of the Prophet after his death was extremely painful and sad. Although Sayyidatu'n-nisa' Fatimah (p.b.u.h.) did not live in this world more than a few months

after the death of the Prophet yet even this short period has a long tale of grief and woe (about her). In this connection, the first scene that strikes the eyes is that arrangements for the funeral rites of the Prophet had not yet been made when the contest for power started in the Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah. Naturally, their leaving the body of the Prophet (without burial) must have injured Sayyidatu'n-nisa' Fatimah's grief-stricken heart when she saw that those who had claimed love and attachment (with the Prophet) during his life became so engrossed in their machinations for power that instead of consoling his only daughter they did not even know when the Prophet was given a funeral ablution and when he was buried, and the way they condoled her was that they crowded at her house with material to set fire to it and tried to secure allegiance by force with all the display of oppression, compulsion and violence. All these excesses were with a view to so obliterate the prestigious position of this house that it might not regain its lost prestige on any occasion. With this aim in view, in order to crush her economic position, her claim for (the estate of) Fadak was turned down by dubbing it as false, the effect of which was that Sayyidatu'n-nisa' Fatimah (p.b.u.h.) made the dying will that none of them should attend her funeral.

Chapter 210

SERMON 202

Transience of this world, and importance of collecting provisions for the next life.

O' people, certainly this world is a passage while the next world is a place of permanent abode. So, take from the passage (all that you can) for the permanent abode. Do not tear away your curtain before Him Who is aware of your secrets. Take away from this world your hearts before your bodies go out of it, because herein you have been put on trial, and you have been created for the other world. When a man dies people ask what (property) he has left while the angels ask what (good actions) he has sent forward. May Allah bless you; send forward something, it will be a loan for you, and do not leave everything behind, for that would be a burden on you.

Chapter 211

SERMON 203

What Amir al-mu'minin said generally to his companions warning them about the dangers of the Day of Judgement.

May Allah have mercy on you! Provide yourselves for the journey because the call for departure has been announced. Regard your stay in the world as very short, and return (to Allah) with the best provision that is with you, because surely, in front of you lies a valley, difficult to climb, and places of stay full of fear and dangers. You have to reach there and stay in them. And know that the eyes of death are approaching towards you. It is as though you are (already) in its talons and it has struck itself against you. Difficult affairs and distressing dangers have crushed you into it. You should therefore cut away all the attachments of this world and assist yourselves with the provision of Allah's fear.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: A part of this saying has been quoted before through another narration.

Chapter 212

SERMON 204

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:

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?

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.

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.

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.

Chapter 213

SERMON 205

During the battle of Siffin Amir al-mu'minin heard some of his men abusing the Syrians, then he said:

I dislike you starting to abuse them, but if you describe their deeds and recount their situations that would be a better mode of speaking and a more convincing way of arguing. Instead of abusing them you should say, "O' Allah! save our blood and their blood, produce reconciliation between us and them, and lead them out of their misguidance so that he who is ignorant of the truth may know it, and he who inclines towards rebellion and revolt may turn away from it."

Chapter 214

SERMON 206

In the battle of Siffin Amir al-mu'minin saw Imam al-Hasan proceeding rapidly to fight, then he said:

Hold back this young man on my behalf, lest he causes my ruin, because I am loath to send these two (meaning al-Hasan and al-Husayn) towards death, lest the descending line of the Prophet - may Allah bless him and his descendants - is cut away by their death.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Amir al-mu'minin's words "*amliku `anni hadha'l- ghulam*" (i.e. "Hold back this young man on my behalf") represents the highest and the most eloquent form of expression.

Chapter 215

SERMON 207

When Amir al-mu'minin's companions expressed displeasure about his attitude concerning Arbitration, (1) he said:

O' people, matters between me and you went as I wished till war exhausted you. By Allah, it has overtaken some of you and left others, and has completely weakened your enemy. Till yesterday I was giving orders but today I am being given orders, and till yesterday I was dissuading people (from wrong acts) but today I am being dissuaded. You have now shown liking to live in this world, and it is not for me to bring you to what you dislike.

(1). When the surviving forces of the Syrians lost ground and were ready to run away from the field Mu`awiyah changed the whole phase of the battle by using the Qur'an as his instrument of strategy, and succeeded in creating such a division among the Iraqis that, despite Amir al-mu'minin's efforts at counselling, they were not prepared to take any forward step, but insisted on stopping the war, whereupon Amir al-mu'minin too had to agree to arbitration. Among these people some had actually been duped and believed that they were being asked to abide by the Qur'an but there were others who had become weary of the long period of war and had lost courage. Then people got a good opportunity to stop the war, and so they cried hoarse for its postponement. There were others who had accompanied Amir al-mu'minin because of his temporal authority but did not support him by heart, nor did they aim at victory for him. There were some people who had expectations with Mu`awiyah, and had started attaching hopes to him for this, while there were some who were, from the very beginning, in league with him. In these circumstances and with this type of the army it was really due to Amir al-mu'minin's political ability and competence of military control and administration that he carried the war up to this stage, and if Mu`awiyah had not adopted this trick there could have been no doubt in

Amir al-mu'minin's victory because the military power of the Syrian forces had been exhausted and defeat was hovering over its head. In this connection, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes:

> Malik al-Ashtar had reached Mu`awiyah and grabbed him by the neck. The entire might of the Syrians had been smashed. Only so much movement was discernible in them as remains in the tail of a lizard which is killed, but the tail continues hopping right and left. (*Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 11, pp.30-31)

Chapter 216

SERMON 208

Amir al-mu'minin went to enquire about the health of his companion al-`Ala' ibn Ziyad al-Harithi and when he noticed the vastness of his house he said:

What will you do with this vast house in this world, although you need this house more in the next world. If you want to take it to the next world you could entertain in it guests and be regardful of kinship and discharge all (your) obligations according to their accrual. In this way you will be able to take it to the next world.

**Then al-`Ala' said to him:** O' Amir al-mu'minin, I want to complain to you about my brother `Asim ibn Ziyad.

Amir al-mu'minin enquired: What is the matter with him?

al-`Ala' said: He has put on a woollen coat and cut himself away from the world.

Amir al-mu'minin said: Present him to me.

When he came Amir al-mu'minin said: O' enemy of yourself. Certainly, the evil (Satan) has misguided you. Do you feel no pity for your wife and your children? Do you believe that if you use those things which Allah has made lawful for you, He will dislike you? You are too unimportant for Allah to do so.

He said: O' Amir al-mu'minin, you also put on coarse dress and eat rough food.

Then he replied: Woe be to you, I am not like you. Certainly, Allah, the Sublime, has made it obligatory on true leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty. (1)

(1)From ancient days asceticism and the abandonment of worldly attachments has been regarded as a means of purification of the spirit and important for the character. Consequently, those who wished to lead a life of abstemiousness and meditation used to go out of the cities and

towns to stay in forests and caves in the mountains and stay there concentrating on Allah according to their own conception. They would eat only if a casual traveller or the inhabitant of nearby dwellings gave them anything to eat, otherwise they remained contented with the fruits of wild trees and the water of the streams, and thus they passed their life. This way of worship commenced in a way that was forced by the oppression and hardships of rulers. Certain people left their houses and, in order to avoid their grip, hid themselves in some wilderness or cave in a mountain, engaging themselves in worship of and devotion to Allah. Later on, this forced asceticism acquired a voluntary form and people began to retire to caves and hollows of their own volition. Thus it became an accepted way that whoever aimed at spiritual development retired to some corner after severing himself from all worldly ties. This method remained in vogue for centuries and even now some traces of this way of worship are found among the Buddhists and the Christians.

The moderate views of Islam do not, however, accord with the monastic life, because for attaining spiritual development it does not advocate the abandonment of worldly enjoyments and successes, nor does it view with approbation that a Muslim should leave his house and fellow men and busy himself in formal worship, hiding in some corner. The conception of worship in Islam is not confined to a few particular rites, but it regards the earning of one's livelihood through lawful means, mutual sympathy and good behaviour, and co-operation and assistance also to be important constituents of worship. If an individual ignores worldly rights and obligations and does not fulfil his responsibility towards his wife and children, nor occupies himself in efforts to earn a livelihood, but all the time stays in meditation, he ruins his life and does not fulfil the purpose of living. If this were Allah's aim, what would have the need for creating and populating the world when there was already a category of creatures who were all the time engaged in worshipping and adoration.

Nature has made man to stand on the cross-roads at which the midway is the centre of guidance. If he deviates from this point of moderateness even a bit, this way or that way, there is shear misguidance for him. That midway is that he should neither bend towards this world to such an extent as to ignore the next life, devoting himself entirely to this one, nor should he abstain from this world so as not to have any connection with anything of it, confining himself to some corner leaving everything else. Since Allah has created man in this world he should follow the code of life for living in this world, and should partake of the comforts and

pleasures bestowed by Allah within moderate limits. The eating and using of things made lawful by Allah is not against Allah's worship, but rather Allah has created these things for the very purpose that they should be taken advantage of. That is why those who were the chosen of Allah lived in this world with others and ate and drank like others. They did not feel the need to turn their faces away from the people of the world, and to adopt the wilderness or the caves of mountains as their abodes, or to live in distant spots. On the other hand they remembered Allah, remained disentangled from worldly affairs, and did not forget death despite the pleasures and comforts of life.

The life of asceticism sometimes produces such evils as ruin the next life also as well as this one, and such an individual proves to be the true picture of "the looser in this life as well as the next." When natural impulses are not satisfied in the lawful and legal way the mind turns into a centre of evil-ideas and becomes incapable of performing worship with peace and concentration; and sometimes passions so overcome the ascetic that breaking all moral fetters, he devotes himself completely to their satisfaction and consequently falls in an abyss of ruin for which it is impossible to extract himself. That is why religious law accords a greater position to the worship performed by a family man than that by a non-family man, because the former can exercise mental peace and concentration in the worship and rituals.

Individuals who put on the cloak of Sufism and make a loud show of their spiritual greatness are cut off from the path of Islam and are ignorant of its wide teachings. They have been misled by Satan and, relying on their self-formed conceptions, tread wrongful paths. Eventually their misguidance becomes so serious that they begin to regard their leaders as having attained such a level that their word is as the word of Allah and their act is as the act of Allah. Sometimes they regard themselves beyond all the bounds and limitations of religious law and consider every evil act to be lawful for them. This deviation from faith and irreligiousness is named Sufism (complete devotion to Allah). Its unlawful principles are called *"at-tariqah"* (ways of achieving communion with Allah) and the followers of this cult are known as Sufis. First of all Abu Hashim al-Kufi and Shami adopted this nickname. He was of Umayyad descent and a fatalist (believing that man is bound to act as pre-ordained by Allah). The reason for giving him this name was that, in order to make a show of his asceticism and fear for Allah, he put on a woollen cloak. Later on this nickname became common and various grounds were put forth as the basis of this name. For example, one ground is that

'Sufi' has three letters, *"sad"*, *"waw"* and *"fa'"*. *"sad"* stands for *"sabr"* (endurance), *"sidq"* (truthfulness) and *"safa"* (purity of heart); *"waw"* stands for *"wudd"* (love), *"wird"* (repeating Allah's name) and *"wafa'"*(faithfulness to Allah), and *"fa'"* stands for *"fard"* (unity), *"faqr"* (destitution) and *"fana'"* (death or absorption in Allah's Self). The second view is that it has been derived from *"as-Suffah"*, which was a platform near the Prophet's mosque which had a covering of date-palm leaves. Those who stayed there were called *Ashabu'Suffah* (people of the platform). The third view is that the name of the progenitor of an Arab tribe was Sufah, and this tribe performed the duties of serving the pilgrims and the Ka`bah, and it is with reference to their connection with this tribe that these people were called Sufis. This group is divided among various sects but the basic sects are seven only.

1) al-Wahdatiyyah (unitarian):

This sect believes in the oneness of all existence. Its belief is that everything of this world is Allah, so much so that they assign to even polluted things the same godly position. They liken Allah with the river and the waves rising in it, and argue that the waves which sometimes rise and sometimes fall have no separate existence other than the river, but their existence is exactly the existence of the river. Therefore, nothing can be separated from its own existence.

2) al-Ittihadiyyah (the unitists):

They believe that they have united with Allah and Allah has united with them. They liken Allah with fire and themselves with iron that lies in the fire and acquires its form and property.

3) al-Hululiyyah (the formists):

Their belief is that Allah takes the form of those who claim to know Him and the perfect ones, and their bodies are places of His stay. In this way, they are seemingly men but really Allah.

4) al-Wasiliyyah (the combiners):

This sect considers itself to have combined with Allah. Their belief is that the laws of the *shari`ah* are a means of development of human personality and character, and that when the human self combines with Allah it no more needs perfection or development. Consequently, for the *"wasilin"*, worship and ritual become useless, because they hold that when truth and reality is

achieved *shari`ah* remains of no avail. Therefore, they can do anything and they cannot be questioned.

5) az-Zarraqiyyah (the revellers):

This sect regards vocal and instrumental music as worship, and earns the pleasures of this world through a show of asceticism and begging from door to door. They are ever engaged in relating concocted stories of miraculous performances of their leaders to over-awe the common people.

6) al-`Ushshaqiyyah (the lovers):

The theory of this sect is that apparency is the means to reality, meaning that carnal love is the means to achieve love of Allah. That is, in order to reach the stage of Allah's love it is necessary to have love with some human beauty. But the love which they regard as love for Allah is just the product of mental disorder through which the lover inclines to one individual with all his attention and his final aim is to have access to the beloved. This love can lead to the way of evil and vice, but it has no connection with the love of Allah.

A Persian couplet says:

The truth of the fact is that carnal love is like a jinn and a jinn cannot give you guidance.

7) at-Talqiniyyah (the encounterers):

According to this sect, the reading of religious sciences and books of scholarship is thoroughly unlawful. Rather, the position that is achieved by an hour of spiritual effort of the Sufis cannot be achieved by seventy years of reading books.

According to Shi`ah `Ulama' all these sects are on the wrong path and out of the fold of Islam. In this connection, numerous sayings of the Imams are related. In this sermon also Amir al-mu'minin has regarded the severance of `Asim ibn Ziyad from this world as the mischief of Satan, and he forcefully dissuaded him from adopting that course. (For further study, see Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, al-Hajj Mirza Habibu'llah al-Khu'i, vol. 13, pp. 132-417; vol. 14, pp. 2-22).

Chapter 217

SERMON 209

Someone (1) asked Amir al-mu'minin about concocted traditions and contradictory sayings of the Prophet current among the people, whereupon he said:

Certainly what is current among the people is both right and wrong, true and false, repealing and repealed, general and particular, definite and indefinite, exact and surmised. Even during the Prophet's days false sayings had been attributed to him, so much so that he had to say during his sermon that, "Whoever attributes falsehoods to me makes his abode in Hell." Those who relate traditions are of four categories, (2) no more.

First: The lying hypocrites

The hypocrite is a person who makes a show of faith and adopts the appearance of a Muslim; he does not hesitate in sinning nor does he keep aloof from vice; he wilfully attributes false things against the Messenger of Allah - may Allah bless him and his descendants. If people knew that he was a hypocrite and a liar, they would not accept anything from him and would not confirm what he says.

Rather they say that he is the companion of the Prophet, has met him, heard (his sayings) from him and acquired (knowledge) from him. They therefore accept what he says. Allah too had warned you well about the hypocrites and described them fully to you. They have continued after the Holy Prophet. They gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell through falsehoods and slanderings. So, they put them in high posts and made them officers over the heads of the people, and amassed wealth through them. People are always with the rulers and after this world, except those to whom Allah affords protection. This is the first of the four categories.

Second: Those who are mistaken

Then there is the individual who heard (a saying) from the Holy Prophet but did not memorise it as it was, but surmised it. He does not lie wilfully. Now, he carries the saying with him and relates it, acts upon it and claims that: "I heard it from the Messenger of Allah." If the Muslims come to know that he has committed a mistake in it, they will not accept it from him, and if he himself knows that he is on the wrong he will give it up.

Third: Those who are ignorant

The third man is he who heard the Prophet ordering to do a thing and later the Prophet refrained the people from doing it, but this man did not know it, or he heard the Prophet refraining people from a thing and later he allowed it, but this man did not know it. In this way he retained in his mind what had been repealed, and did not retain the repealing tradition. If he knew that it had been repealed he would reject it, or if the Muslims knew, when they heard it from him, that it had been repealed they would reject it.

Fourth: Those who memorise truthfully

The last, namely the fourth man, is he who does not speak a lie against Allah or against His Prophet. He hates falsehood out of fear for Allah and respect for the Messenger of Allah, and does not commit mistakes, but retains (in his mind) exactly what he heard (from the Prophet), and he relates it as he heard it without adding anything or omitting anything. He heard the repealing tradition, he retained it and acted upon it, and he heard the repealed tradition and rejected it. He also understands the particular and the general, and he knows the definite and indefinite, and gives everything its due position.

The sayings of the Prophet used to be of two types. One was particular and the other common. Sometimes a man would hear him but he would not know what Allah, the Glorified, meant by it or what the Messenger of Allah meant by it. In this way the listener carries it and memorises it without knowing its meaning and its real intention, or what was its reason. Among the companions of the Messenger of Allah all were not in the habit of putting him questions and ask him the meanings, indeed they always wished that some Bedouin or stranger might come and ask him (peace be upon him) so that they would also listen. Whenever any such thing came before me, I asked him about its meaning and preserved it. These are the reasons and grounds of differences among the people in their traditions.

(1).This was Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilali who was one of the relaters of traditions through Amir al-mu'minin.

(2). In this sermon Amir al-mu'minin has divided the traditionists into four categories.

The first category is that of a man concocts a tradition and attributes it to the Prophet. Traditions were in fact falsified and attributed to him, and this process continued, with the result that numerous novel traditions came into being. This is a fact which cannot be denied but if anyone does deny it his basis would be not knowledge or sagacity by oratory or argumentative necessity. Thus, once, `Alamu'l-huda (Ensign of Guidance) as-Sayyid al-Murtada had a chance of meeting the Sunni `*ulama*' (scholars) in confrontation and on this occasion as-Sayyid al-Murtada proved by historical facts that the traditions related about the merits of the great companions are concocted and counterfeit. On this, the (Sunni) `*ulama*' argued that it was impossible that someone should dare speak a lie against the Prophet and prepare a tradition himself and attribute it to him. as-Sayyid al-Murtada said there is a tradition of the Prophet that:

> A lot of false things will be attributed to me after my death and whoever speaks a lie against me would be preparing his abode in Hell. (al-Bukhari, vol.1, p.38; vol.2, p.102; vol.4, p.207; vol.8, p.54; Muslim, vol.8, p.229; Abu Dawud, vol.3, pp.319-320; at-Tirmidhi, vol.4, p.524; vol.5, pp.35-36, 40, 199, 634; Ibn Majah, vol.1, pp.13-15)

If you regard this tradition as true then you should agree that false things have been attributed to the Prophet, but if you regard it false, this would prove our point. However, these were people whose hearts were full of hypocrisy and who used to prepare traditions of their own accord in order to create mischief and dispersion in religion and to misguide Muslims of weak convictions. They remained mixed with them as they used to do during the lifetime of the Prophet; and just as they remained busy in activities of mischief and destruction in those days, in the same way, even after the Prophet, they were not unmindful of deforming the teachings of Islam and metamorphosing its features. Rather, in the days of the Prophet they were always afraid lest he unveiled them and put them to shame, but after the Prophet their hypocritical activities increased and they attributed false things to the Prophet without demur

for their own personal ends, and those who heard them believed in them because of their status as companions of the Prophet, thinking that whatever they said was correct and whatever they gave out was true. Afterwards also, the belief that all the companions are correct put a stopper on their tongues, as a result of which they were taken to be above criticism, questioning, discussion and censure. Besides, their conspicuous performance had made them prominent in the eyes of the government, and also because of this it needed courage and daring to speak against them. This is proved by Amir al-mu'minin's words:

> These people gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell, through falsehood and slanderings. So, they put them in high posts and made them officers over the heads of the people.

Along with the destruction of Islam, the hypocrites also aimed at amassing wealth, and they were doing so freely by claiming to be Muslims, because of which they did not want to remove the veil of Islam (from their faces) and to come out openly, but they wanted to continue their Satanic activities under the garb of Islam and engaged themselves in its basic destruction and spreading of division and dispersal by concocting traditions. In this connection, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written:

> When they were left free they too left many things. When people observed silence about them they also observed silence about Islam, but they continued their underground activities such as the fabrication of falsehoods to which Amir al-mu'minin has alluded, because a lot of untrue matters had been mixed with the traditions by the group of people of wrong beliefs, while some of them also aimed at extolling some particular party with whom they had other worldly aims as well.

On the expiry of this period, when Mu`awiyah took over the leadership of religion and occupied the throne of temporal authority, he opened an official department for the fabrication of false traditions, and ordered his officers to fabricate and popularise traditions in disparagement of the *Ahlu'l-bayt* (the Household of the Holy Prophet) and in extolment of `Uthman and the Umayyads, and announced rewards and grants of land for this work. Consequently, a lot of traditions about self-made distinctions gained entry in the books of traditions. Thus, Abu'l-

Hasan al-Mada'ini has written in his book *Kitab al-ahdath* and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has quoted it, namely:

> Mu`awiyah wrote to his officers that they should take special care of those who were adherents of `Uthman, his well-wishers and lovers and to award high positions, precedence and honour to those who related traditions about his merits and distinctions, and to convey to him whatever is so related by any person, along with his name, the name of his father and the name of his tribe. They did accordingly and heaped up traditions about the merits and distinctions of `Uthman because Mu`awiyah used to award them rewards, clothes, grants and lands.

When the fabricated traditions about the merits of `Uthman had been spread throughout the realm, with the idea that the position of the earlier Caliphs should not remain low, Mu`awiyah wrote to his officers:

> As soon as you receive this order of mine you should call upon the people to prepare traditions about the distinctions of the companions and other caliphs also, and take care that if any Muslim relates any tradition about Abu Turab (`Ali) you should prepare a similar tradition about the companions to contradict it because this gives me great pleasure and cools my eyes, and it weakens the position of Abu Turab and his partymen. and is more severe to them than the merits and distinctions of `Uthman.

When his letters were read to the people, a large number of such traditions were related extolling the companions that are all fabricated with no truth at all. *(Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, vol. 11, pp. 43-47)*

In this connection Abu `Abdillah Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn `Arafah known as Niftawayh (244/858-323/935) who was one of the prominent scholars and traditionists has written, and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has quoted him, that:

> Most of the false traditions about the merits of the companions were fabricated during the days of Mu`awiyah in order to gain position in his audience because his view was that in this way he could disgrace Banu Hashim and render them low. *(ibid.)*

After that, fabrication of traditions became a habit, the world seekers made it a means of securing position with kings and nobles and to amass

wealth. For example, Ghiyath ibn Ibrahim an-Nakha`i (2nd cent. A.H.) fabricated a tradition about the flight of pigeons, in order to please al-Mahdi ibn al-Mansur (the `Abbasid Caliph) and to secure position near him. (*Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.12, pp.323-327; *Mizan al-i`tidal*, vol.3) pp.337-338; *Lisan al-mizan*, vol.4, p.422). Abu Sa`id al-Mada'ini and others made it a means of livelihood. The limit was reached when the al-Karramiyyah and some of the al-Mutasawwifah gave the ruling that the fabrication of traditions for the prevention of sin or for persuasion towards obedience was lawful. Consequently, in connection with persuading and dissuading, traditions were fabricated quite freely, and this was not regarded against the religious law or morality. Rather, this work was generally done by those who bore the appearance of asceticism or fear of Allah and who passed their nights in praying and days in filling their registers with false traditions. An idea about the number of these fabricated traditions can be had from the fact that out of six hundred thousand traditions al-Bukhari selected only two thousand seven hundred and sixty-one traditions, (*Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.2, p.8; *al-Irshad as-sari*, vol.1, p.28; *Sifatu's-safwah*, vol.4, p.143). Muslim thought fit for selection only four thousand out of three hundred thousand (*Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.13, p.101; *al-Muntazam*, vol.5, p.32; *Tabaqat al-huffaz*, vol.2, pp.151,157; *Wafayat al-a`yan*, vol.5, p.194). Abu Dawud took four thousand and eight hundred out of five hundred thousand (*Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.9, p.57; *Tabaqat al-huffaz*, vol.2, p.154; *al-Muntazam*, vol.5, p.97; *Wafayat al-a`yan*, vol.2, p.404), and Ahmad ibn Hanbal took thirty thousand out of nearly on million traditions (*Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.4, p.419-420; *Tabaqat al-huffaz*, vol.2, p.17; *Wafayat al-a`yan*, vol.1, p.64; *Tahdhib at-tahdhib*, vol.1, p. 74). But when this selection is studied some traditions which come across can, in no circumstances, be attributed to the Prophet. The result is that a group of considerable number has cropped up among Muslims who, in view of these (so-called) authoritative collections and true traditions, completely reject the evidentiary value of the traditions, (For further reference see *al-Ghadir*, vol.5, pp. 208-378).

The second category of relaters of traditions are those who, without appreciating the occasion or context, related whatever they could recollect, right or wrong. Thus, in al-Bukhari (vol.2, pp.100-102; vol.5, p.98); Muslim (vol.3, pp. 41-45); at-Tirmidhi (vol.3, pp. 327-329); an-Nasa'i (vol.4, p.18); Ibn Majah (vol.1, pp.508-509); Malik ibn Anas (*al-Muwatta'* vol.1, p.234); ash-Shafi`i (*Ikhtilaf'l-hadith*, on the side lines of "*al-Umm*", vol.7, p.266); Abu Dawud (vol.3, p.194); Ahmad ibn Hanbal

(vol.1, pp.41,42) and al-Bayhaqi (vol.4, pp.72-74) in the chapter entitled *'weeping over the dead'* it is stated that when Caliph `Umar was wounded Suhayb came weeping to him, then `Umar said:

> O' Suhayb, you weep over me, while the Prophet had said that the dead person is punished if his people weep over him.

When after the death of Caliph `Umar this was mentioned to `A'ishah, she said: "May Allah have mercy on `Umar. The Messenger of Allah did not say that weeping of relations causes punishment on the dead. but he said that the punishment of an unbeliever increases if his people weep over him." After this `A'ishah said that according to the Holy Qur'an no person has to bear the burden of another, so how could the burden of those who weep be put on the dead. After this the following verse was quoted by `A'ishah:

> *… And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another;* (Qur'an, 6:164; 17:15; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38).

The wife of the Holy Prophet `A'ishah relates that once the Prophet passed by a Jewish woman over whom her people were weeping. The Prophet then remarked, "Her people are weeping over her but she is undergoing punishment in the grave."

The third category of the relaters of traditions is of those who heard some repealed traditions from the Prophet but could not get any chance to hear the repealing traditions which he could relate to others. An example of a repealing tradition is the saying of the Prophet which also contains a reference to the repealed tradition, namely: "I had disallowed you to visit graves, but now you can visit them." (Muslim, vol.3, p.65; at-Tirmidhi, vol.3, p.370; Abu Dawud, vol.3, pp. 218, 332; an-Nasa'i, vol.4, p. 89; Ibn Majah, vol.1, pp. 500-501; Malik ibn Anas, vol.2, p. 485; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol.1, pp.145, 452; vol.3, pp.38, 63, 66, 237, 350; vol.5, pp. 350, 355, 356, 357, 359, 361; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, vol.1, pp. 374-376; and al-Bayhaqi, vol.4, pp. 76-77). Herein the permission to visit graves has repealed the previous restriction on it. Now, those who heard only the repealed tradition continued acting according to it.

The fourth category of relaters of traditions is of those who were fully aware of the principles of justice, possessed intelligence and sagacity, knew the occasion when a tradition was first uttered (by the Prophet) and were also acquainted with the repealing and the repealed traditions, the particular and the general, and the timely and the absolute. They

avoided falsehood and fabrication. Whatever they heard remained preserved in their memory, and they conveyed it with exactness to others. It is they whose traditions are the precious possession of Islam, free from fraud and counterfeit and worthy of being trusted and acted upon. That collection of traditions which has been conveyed through trustworthy bosoms like that of Amir al-mu'minin and has remained free from cutting, curtailing, alteration or change particularly present Islam in its true form. The position of Amir al-mu'minin in Islamic knowledge has been most certainly proved through the following traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet such as:

Amir al-mu'minin, Jabir ibn `Abdullah, Ibn `Abbas and `Abdullah ibn `Umar have narrated from the Holy Prophet that he said:

> I am the city of knowledge and `Ali is its door. He who wants to acquire (my) knowledge should come through its door. (*al-Mustadrak*, vol.3, pp. 126-127; *al-Isti`ab*, vol.3, p.1102; *Usd al-ghabah*, vol.4, p.22; *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.2, p.377; vol.4, p.348; vol.7, p.172; vol.11, pp. 48-50; *Tadhkirah al-huffaz*; vol.4, p.28; *Majma` az-zawa'id*, vol.9, p.114; *Tahdhib at-tahdhib*, vol.6, p.320; vol.7, p.337; *Lisan al-mizan*, vol.2, pp.122-123; *Tarikh al-khulafa'*, p.170; *Kanz al-`ummal*, vol.6, pp.152,156,401; *`Umdah al-qari*, vol.7, p.631; *Sharh al-mawahib al-ladunniyyah*, vol.3, p.143).

Amir al-mu'minin and Ibn `Abbas have also narrated from the Holy Prophet that:

> I am the store-house of wisdom and `Ali is its door. He who wants to acquire wisdom should come through its door. (*Hilyah al-awliya'*, vol.1, p.64; *Masabih as-sunnah*, vol.2, p.275; *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol.11, p.204; *Kanz al-`ummal*, vol.6, p.401; *ar-Riyad an-nadirah*, vol.2, p.193).

If only people could take the Prophet's blessings through these sources of knowledge. But it is a tragic chapter of history that although traditions are accepted through the Kharijites and enemies of the Prophet's family, whenever the series of relaters includes the name of any individual from among the Prophet's family there is hesitation in accepting the tradition.

Chapter 218

SERMON 210

The greatness of Allah and the creation of the Universe

It is through the strength of Allah's greatness and His subtle power of innovation that He made solid dry earth out of the water of the fathomless, compact and dashing ocean. Then He made from it layers and separated them into seven skies after they had been joined together. So, they became stationary at His command and stopped at the limit fixed by Him. He so made the earth that it is born by deep blue, surrounded and suspended water which is obedient to His command and has submitted to His awe while its flow has stopped due to fear of Him.

He also created high hills, rocks of stones and lofty mountains. He put them in their positions and made them remain stationary. Their peaks rose into the air while their roots remained in the water. In this way He raised the mountains above the plains and fixed their foundations in the vast expanse wherever they stood. He made their peaks high and made their bodies lofty. He made them like pillars for the earth and fixed them in it like pegs. Consequently, the earth became stationary; otherwise it might bend with its inhabitants or sink inwards with its burden, or shift from its positions.

Therefore, glorified is He who stopped it after the flowing of its waters and solidified it after the watery state of its sides. In this way He made it a cradle for His creatures and spread it for them in the form of a floor over the deep ocean which is stationary and does not move and is fixed and does not flow. Severe winds move it here and there and clouds draw up water from it.

> *Verily in this there is a lesson unto him who feareth (Allah)* (Qur'an, 79:26)

Chapter 219

SERMON 211

About those who give up supporting right

O' my Allah! whoever listens to our utterance which is just and which seeks the prosperity of religion and the worldly life and does not seek mischief, but rejects it after listening, then he certainly turns away from Thy support and desists from strengthening Thy religion. We make Thee a witness over him and Thou art the greatest of all witnesses, and we make all those who inhabit Thy earth and Thy skies witness over him. Thereafter, Thou alone can make us needless of his support and question him for his sin.

Chapter 220

SERMON 212

The Sublimity of Allah and a eulogy of the Prophet

Praise be to Allah who is above all similarity to the creatures, is above the words of describers, who displays the wonders of His management for the on-lookers, is hidden from the imagination of thinkers by virtue of the greatness of His glory, has knowledge without acquiring it, adding to it or drawing it (from someone), and Who is the ordainer of all matters without reflecting or thinking. He is such that gloom does not concern Him, nor does He seek light from brightness, night does not overtake Him nor does the day pass over Him (so as to affect Him in any manner). His comprehension (of things) is not through eyes and His knowledge is not dependent on being informed.

A part of the same sermon about the Prophet

Allah deputised the Prophet with light, and accorded him the highest precedence in selection. Through him Allah united those who were divided, overpowered the powerful, overcame difficulties and levelled rugged ground, and thus removed misguidance from right and left.

Chapter 221

SERMON 213

The Prophet's nobility of descent

I stand witness that He is just and does justice, He is the arbiter Who decides (between right and wrong). I also stand witness that Muhammad is His slave. His Messenger and the Chief of His creatures. Whenever Allah divided the line of descent, He put him in the better one, and therefore, no evil-doer ever shared with him nor was any vicious person his partner. Beware! surely Allah, the Glorified, has provided for virtue those who are suited to it, for truth pillars (that support it), and for obedience protection (against deviation). In every matter of obedience you will find Allah, the Glorified's succour that will speak through tongues and accord firmness to hearts. It has sufficiency for those who seek sufficiency, and a cure for those who seek cure.

The characteristics of the virtuous whose guidance must be followed

Know that, certainly, those creatures of Allah who preserve His knowledge offer protection to those things which He desires to be protected and make His springs flow (for the benefit of others). They contact each other with friendliness and meet each other with affection. They drink water from cups that quench the thirst and return from the watering places fully satiated. Misgiving does not affect them and backbiting does not gain ground with them. In this way Allah has tied their nature with good manners. Because of this they love each other and meet each other. They have become superior, like seeds which are selected by taking some and throwing away others. This selection has distinguished them and the process of choosing has purified them.

Therefore, man should secure honour by adopting these qualities. He should fear the day of Doom before it arrives, and he should appreciate the shortness of his life and the shortness of his sojourn in the place of stay which has only to last for his change over to the next place. He should therefore do something for his change over and for the known

stages of his departure. Blessed be he who possesses a virtuous heart, who obeys one who guides him, desists from him who takes to ruin, catches the path of safety with the help of him who provides him light (of guidance) and by obeying the leader who commands him, hastens towards guidance before its doors are closed, gets open the door of repentance and removes the (stain of) sins. He has certainly been put on the right path and guided towards the straight road.

Chapter 222

SERMON 214

A prayer which Amir al-mu'minin often recited

Praise be to Allah! Who made me such that I have not died nor am I sick, nor have my veins been infected with disease, nor have I been hauled up for my evil acts, nor am I without progeny, nor have I forsaken my religion, nor do I disbelieve in my Lord, nor do I feel strangeness with my faith, nor is my intelligence affected, nor have I been punished with the punishment of peoples before me. I am a slave in Thy possession, I have been guilty of excesses over myself. Thou hast exhausted Thy pleas over me and I have no plea (before Thee). I have no power to take except what Thou givest me, and I cannot evade except what Thou savest me from. O' my Allah! I seek Thy protection from becoming destitute despite Thy riches, from being misguided despite Thy guidance, from being molested in Thy realm and from being humiliated while authority rests with Thee. O' my Allah! let my spirit be the first of those good objects that Thou takest from me and the first trust out of Thy favours held in trust with me.

O' my Allah! we seek Thy protection from turning away from Thy command or revolting against Thy religion, or being led away by our desires instead of by guidance that comes from Thee.

Chapter 223

SERMON 215

Delivered at the battle of Siffin

Mutual rights of the ruler and the ruled

So now, Allah, the Glorified, has, by placing me over your affairs,created my right over you, and you too have a right over me like mineover you. A right is very vast in description but very narrow in equitability of action. It does not accrue to any person unless it accrues against him also, and right does not accrue against a person unless it also accrues in his favour. If there is any right which is only in favour of a person with no (corresponding) right accruing against him it is solely for Allah, the Glorified, and not for His creatures by virtue of His might over His creatures and by virtue of the justice permeating all His decrees. Of course, He the Glorified, has created His right over creatures that they should worship Him, and has laid upon Himself (the obligation of) their reward equal to several times the recompense as a mark of His bounty and the generosity that He is capable of.

Then, from His rights, He, the Glorified, created certain rights for certain people against others. He made them so as to equate with one another. Some of these rights produce other rights. Some rights are such that they do not accrue except with others. The greatest of these rights that Allah, the Glorified, has made obligatory is the right of the ruler over the ruled and the right of the ruled over the ruler. This is an obligation which Allah, the Glorified, has placed on each other. He has made it the basis of their (mutual) affection, and an honour for their religion. Consequently, the ruled cannot prosper unless the rulers are sound, while the rulers cannot be sound unless the ruled are steadfast. If the ruled fulfil the rights of the ruler and the ruler fulfils their rights, then right attains the position of honour among them, the ways of religion become established, signs of justice become fixed and the *sunnah* gains currency.

In this way time will improve, the continuance of government will be expected, and the aims of the enemies will be frustrated. But if the ruled gain sway over the ruler, or the ruler oppresses the ruled, then difference crops up in every word, signs of oppression appear, mischief enters religion and the ways of the *sunnah* are forsaken. Then desires are acted upon, the commands (of religion) are discarded, diseases of the spirit become numerous and there is no hesitation in disregarding even great rights, nor in committing big wrongs. In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honoured, and there are serious chastisements from Allah, the Glorified, onto the people.

You should therefore counsel each other (for the fulfilment of your obligations) and co-operate with each other. However extremely eager a person may be to secure the pleasure of Allah, and however fully he strives for it, he cannot discharge (his obligation for) obedience to Allah, the Glorified, as is really due to Him, and it is an obligatory right of Allah over the people that they should advise each other to the best of their ability and co-operate with each other for the establishment of truth among them. No person, however great his position in the matter of truth, and however advanced his distinction in religion may be, is above co-operation in connection with the obligations placed on him by Allah. Again, no man, however small he may be regarded by others, and however humble he may appear before eyes, is too low to co-operate or to be afforded co-operation in this matter.

One of Amir al-mu'minin's companions replied to him by a long speech wherein he praised him much and mentioned his own listening to him and obeying him, whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:

If a man in his mind regards Allah's glory as being high and believes in his heart that Allah's position is sublime, then it is his right that on account of the greatness of these things he should regard all other things small. Among such persons he on whom Allah's bounty is great and Allah's favours are kind has a greater obligation, because Allah's bounty over any person does not increase without an increase in Allah's right over him.

In the view of virtuous people, the worst position of rulers is that it may be thought about them that they love glory, and their affairs may be taken to be based on pride. I would really hate that it may occur to your mind that I love high praises or to hear eulogies. By the grace of Allah I am not like this. Even If I had loved to be mentioned like this, I would have given it up in submissiveness before Allah, the Glorified, rather than accept greatness and sublimity to which He is more entitled.

Generally, people feel pleased at praise after good performances; but do not mention for me handsome praise for the obligations I have discharged towards Allah and towards you, because of (my) fear about those obligations which I have not discharged and for issuing injunctions which could not be avoided, and do not address me in the manner despots are addressed. Do not evade me as the people of passion are (to be) evaded, do not meet me with flattery and do not think that I shall take it ill if a true thing is said to me, because the person who feels disgusted when truth is said to him or a just matter is placed before him would find it more difficult to act upon them. Therefore, do not abstain from saying a truth or pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself above erring (1). I do not escape erring in my actions but that Allah helps me (in avoiding errors) in matters in which He is more powerful than I. Certainly, I and you are slaves owned by Allah, other than Whom there is no Lord except Him. He owns our selves which we do not own. He took us from where we were towards what means prosperity to us. He altered our straying into guidance and gave us intelligence after blindness.

(1). That the innocence of angels is different from the innocence of manneeds no detailed discussion. The innocence of angels means that they do not possess the impulse to sin, but the innocence of man means that, although he has human frailties and passions, yet he possesses a peculiar power to resist them and he is not over-powered by them so as to commit sins. This very ability is called innocence and it prevents the rising up of personal passions and impulses. Amir al-mu'minin's saying that "I do not regard myself above erring" refers to those human dictates and passions, and his saying that "Allah helps me in avoiding 'errors'" refers to innocence. The same tone is found in the Qur'an in the words of Prophet Yusuf that:

> *I exculpate not myself, verily* (one's) *self is wont to bid* (him to) *evil, except such as my Lord hath had mercy on; verily my Lord is Oft- forgiving, All-merciful.* (12:53)

Just as in this verse, because of the existence of exception, its firstpart cannot be used to argue against his innocence, similarly, due to the existence of the exception "but that Allah helps me in avoiding errors" in Amir al-mu'minin's saying, its first part cannot be used to argue against his innocence, otherwise the Prophet's innocence too will have to be

rejected. In the same way, the last sentence of this sermon should not be taken to mean that before the proclamation of prophethood he had been under the influence of pre-Islamic beliefs, and that just as others had been unbelievers he too might have been in darkness and misguidance, because from his very birth Amir al-mu'minin was brought-up by the Prophet and the effect of his training and up-bringing permeated him. It cannot therefore be imagined that he who had from infancy trod in the foot-prints of the Prophet would deviate from guidance even for a moment. Thus, al-Mas`udi has written:

> Amir al-mu'minin never believed in any other god than Allah so that there could be the question of his accepting Islam. He rather followed the Prophet in all his actions and (virtually) initiated him, and in this very state he attained majority. (*Muruj adh-dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 3).

Here, by those whom Allah led from darkness into guidance, the reference is to the persons whom Amir al-muíminin was addressing. Ibn Abiíl-Hadid writes in this connection:

> The reference here is not to his own self because he had never been an unbeliever so as to have accepted Islam after that, but in these words he is referring to those group of people whom he was addressing. *(Sharh Nahj al-balaghah,*vol. 11, p. 108)

Chapter 224

SERMON 216

About the excesses of the Quraysh

O' my Allah! I beseech Thee to take revenge on the Quraysh and those who are assisting them, for they have cut asunder my kinship and overturned my cup and have joined together to contest a right to which I was entitled more than anyone else. They said to me: "If you get your right, that will be just, but if you are denied the right, that too will be just. Endure it with sadness or kill yourself in grief." I looked around but found no one to shield me, protect me or help me except the members of my family. I refrained from flinging them into death and therefore closed my eyes despite the dust, kept swallowing saliva despite (the suffocation of) grief and endured pangs of anger although it was more bitter than colocynth and more grievous than the bite of knives.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: This utterance of Amir al-mu'minin has already appeared in an earlier Sermon (171), but I have repeated it here because of the difference of versions.

A part of the same sermon about those whowent to Basrah to fight Amir al-mu'minin

They marched on my officers and the custodians of the public treasury which is still under my control and on the people of a metropolis, all of whom were obedient to me and were in allegiance to me. They created division among them, instigated their party against me and attacked my followers. They killed a group of them by treachery, while another group took up swords against them and fought with the swords till they met Allah as adherents to truth.

Chapter 225

SERMON 217

When Amir al-mu'minin passed by the corpses of Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah and `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Attab ibn Asid who were both killed in the battle of Jamal, he said:

Abu Muhammad (Talhah) lies here away from his own place. By Allah, I did not like that the Quraysh should lie killed under the stars. I have avenged myself with the descendants of `Abd Manaf, but the chief persons of Banu Jumah (1) have escaped me. They had stretched their necks towards a matter for which they were not suited, and therefore their necks were broken before they reached the goal.

(1). In the battle of Jamal a group of Banu Jumah was with `A'ishah, butthe chief men of this group fled away from the battle-field. Some of them were: `Abdullah at-Tawil ibn Safwan, Yahya ibn Hakim, `Amir ibn Mas`ud and Ayyub ibn Habib. From this group (Banu Jumah) only two persons were killed.

Chapter 226

SERMON 218

Qualities of the God-fearing and the pious

He (the believer) kept his mind alive and killed (the desires of) his-heart till his body became thin, his bulk turned light and an effulgenceof extreme brightness shone for him. It lighted the way for him andtook him on the (right) path. Different doors led him to the door ofsafety and the place of (his permanent) stay. His feet, balancing hisbody became fixed in the position of safety and comfort, because hekept his heart (in good acts) and pleased his Allah.

Chapter 227

SERMON 219

Amir al-mu'minin recited the verse

> *Engage* (your) *vying in exuberance, until ye come to the graves. (1)*(Qur'an, 102:1-2)

Then he said:

How distant (from achievement) is their aim, how neglectful are these visitors and how difficult is the affair. They have not taken lessons from things which are full of lessons, but they took them from far off places. Do they boast on the dead bodies of their fore-fathers, or do they regard the number of dead persons as a ground for feeling boastful of their number? They want to revive the bodies that have become spiritless and the movements that have ceased. They are more entitled to be a source of lesson than a source of pride. They are more suitable for being a source of humility than of honour.

They looked at them with weak-sighted eyes and descended into the hollow of ignorance. If they had asked about them from the dilapidated houses and empty courtyards, they would have said that they went into the earth in the state of misguidance and you too are heading ignorantly towards them. You trample their skulls, want to raise constructions on their corpses, you graze what they have left and live in houses which they have vacated. The days (that lie) between them and you are also bemoaning you and reciting elegies over you.

They are your fore-runners in reaching the goal and have arrived at the watering places before you. They had positions of honour and plenty of pride. They were rulers and holders of positions. Now they have gone into the interstice where earth covers them from above and is eating their flesh and drinking their blood. They lie in the hollows of their graves lifeless, no more growing, and hidden, not to be found. The approach of dangers does not frighten them, and the adversity of circumstances does not grieve them. They do not mind earthquakes, nor do they pay heed to

thunders. They are gone and not expected back. They are existent but unseen. They were united but are now dispersed. They were friendly and are now separated.

Their accounts are unknown and their houses are silent, not because of length of time or distance of place, but because they have been made to drink the cup (of death) which has changed their speech into dumbness, their hearing into deafness and their movements into stillness. It seems as though they are fallen in slumber. They are neighbours not feeling affection for each other, or friends who do not meet each other. The bonds of their knowing each other have been worn out and the connections of their friendship have been cut asunder. Everyone of them is therefore alone although they are a group, and they are strangers, even though friends. They are unaware of morning after a night and of evening after a day. The night or the day when they departed has become ever existent for them. (2) They found the dangers of their placed of stay more serious than they had apprehended, and they witnessed that its signs were greater than they had guessed. The two objectives (namely paradise and hell) have been stretched for them upto a point beyond the reach of fear or hope. Had they been able to speak they would have become dumb to describe what they witnessed or saw.

Even though their traces have been wiped out and their news has stopped (circulating), eyes are capable of drawing a lesson, as they looked at them, ears of intelligence heard them and they spoke without uttering words. So, they said that handsome faces have been destroyed and delicate bodies have been smeared with earth. We have put on a worn-out shroud. The narrowness of the grave has overwhelmed us and strangeness has spread among us. Our silent abodes have been ruined. The beauty of our bodies has disappeared. Our known features have become hateful. Our stay in the places of strangeness has become long. We do not get relief from pain, nor widening from narrowness.

Now. if you portray them in your mind, or if the curtains concealing them are removed from them for you, in this state when their ears have lost their power and turned deaf, their eyes have been filled with dust and sunk down, their tongues which were very active have been cut into pieces, their hearts which were ever wakeful have become motionless in their chests, in every limb of theirs a peculiar decay has occurred which has deformed it, and has paved the way for calamity towards it, all these lie powerless, with no hand to help them and no heart to grieve over them, (then) you would certainly notice the grief of (their) hearts and the dirt of (their) eyes.

Every trouble of theirs is such that its position does not change and the distress does not clear away. How many a prestigious body and amazing beauty the earth has swallowed, although when in the world he enjoyed abundant pleasures and was nurtured in honour. He clung to enjoyments (even) in the hour of grief. If distress befell him he sought refuge in consolation (derived) through the pleasures of life and playing and games. He was laughing at the world while the world was laughing at him because of his life full of forgetfulness. Then time trampled him like thorns, the days weakened his energy and death began to look at him from near. Then he was overtaken by a grief which he had never felt, and ailments appeared in place of the health he had previously possessed.

He then turned to that with which the physician had made him familiar, namely suppressing the hot (diseases) with cold (medicines) and curing the cold with hot doses, but the cold things did nothing save aggravate the hot ailments, while the hot ones did nothing except increasing the coldness, nor did he acquire temperateness in his constitution but rather every ailment of his increased till his physicians became helpless, his attendants grew loathsome and his own people felt disgusted from describing his disease, avoided answering those who enquired about him and quarrelled in front of him about the serious news which they were concealing from him. Thus, someone would say "his condition is what it is" and would console them with hopes of his recovery, while another one would advocate patience on missing him, recalling to them the calamities that had befallen the earlier generations. In this state when he was getting ready to depart from the world and leave his beloved ones, such a serious choking overtook him that his senses became bewildered and the dampness of his tongue dried up. Now, there was many an important question whose reply he knew about he could not utter it, and many a voice that was painful for his heart that he heard but remained (unmoved) as though he was deaf the voice of either and elder whom he used to respect or of a younger whom he used to caress. The pangs of death are too hideous to be covered by description or to be appreciated by the hearts of the people in this world.

(1). The genesis of the descending of this verse is that the tribes of Banu `Abd Manaf and Banu Sahm began to boast against each other over the abundance of their wealth and the number of their tribesmen, and in order to prove they had a greater number each one began to include their dead as well, whereupon this verse was revealed to the effect that abundance of riches and majority in numbers has made you so forgetful

that you count the dead also with the living. This verse is also taken to mean that abundance of riches and progeny has made you forgetful till you reached the graves, but the utterance of Amir al-mu'minin supports the first meaning.

(2). This means that for him he who dies in the day it is always day whereas for him who dies in the night the darkness of night never dispels, because they are at a place where there is no turning of the moon and the sun and no rotation of the nights and the days. The same meaning has been expressed by a poet like this:

There is sure to be a day without a night,

Or a night that would come without a day.

Chapter 228

SERMON 220

Delivered after reciting the verse:

> *… therein declare glory unto Him in the mornings and the evenings; Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverteth from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear the day when the hearts and eyes shall writhe of the anguish.* (Qur'an, 24:36-37)

Certainly, Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, has made His remembrance the light for hearts which hear with its help despite deafness, see with its help despite blindness and become submissive with its help despite unruliness.

In all the periods and times when there were no prophets, there have been persons with whom Allah, precious are His bounties, whispered through their wits and spoke through their minds. With the help of the bright awakening of their ears, eyes and hearts they keep reminding others of the remembrance of the days of Allah and making others feel fear for Him like guide-points in wildernesses. Whoever adopts the middle way, they praise his ways and give him the tidings of deliverance, but whoever goes right and left they vilify his ways and frighten him with ruin. In this way, they served as lamps in these darknesses and guides through these doubts.

There are some people devoted to the remembrance (of Allah) who have adopted it in place of worldly matters so that commerce or trade does not turn them away from it. They pass their life in it. They speak into the ears of neglectful persons warning against matters held unlawful by Allah, they order them to practise justice and themselves keep practising it, and they refrain them from the unlawful and themselves refrain from it. It is as though they have finished the journey of this world towards the next world and have beheld what lies beyond it. Consequently, they have become acquainted with all that befell them in the

interstice during their long stay therein, and the Day of Judgement fulfils its promises for them. Therefore, they removed the curtain from these things for the people of the world, till it was as though they were seeing what people did not see and were hearing what people did not hear.

If you picture them in your mind in their admirable positions and well-known sittings, when they have opened the records of their actions and are prepared to render an account of themselves in respect of the small as well as the big things they were ordered to do but they failed to do, or were ordered to refrain from but they indulged therein, and they realised the weight of their burden (of bad acts) on their backs, and they felt too weak to bear them, then they wept bitterly and spoke to each other wile still crying and bewailing to Allah in repentance and acknowledgement (of their shortcomings), you would find them to be emblems of guidance and lamps in darkness, angels would be surrounding them, peace would be descending upon them, the doors of the sky would be opened for them and positions of honour would be assigned to them in the place of which Allah had informed them. Therefore, He has appreciated their actions and praised their position.They call Him and breathe in the air of forgiveness, they are ever needy of His bounty and remain humble before His greatness, the length of their grief has pained their hearts, and the length of weeping their eves. They knock at every door of inclination towards Allah. They ask Him Whom generosity does not make destitute and from Whom those who approach Him do not get disappointed.

Therefore, take account of yourself for your own sake because the account of others will be taken by one other than you.

Chapter 229

SERMON 221

Amir al-mu'minin recited the verse:

> *O' thou man! what hath beguild thee from thy Lord, the Most Gracious One.* (Qur'an, 82:6)

Then he said:

The addressee (in this verse) is devoid of argument and his excuse is most deceptive. He is detaining himself in ignorance.

O' man! what has emboldened you to (commit) sins, what had deceived you about your Allah and what has made you satisfied with the destruction of yourself. Is there no cure for your ailment or no awakening from your sleep? Do you not have pity on yourself as you have on others? Generally, when you see anyone exposed to the heat of the sun you cover him with shade, or if you see anyone afflicted with grief that pains his body you weep out of pity for him. What has then made you patient over your own disease, what has made you firm in your own afflictions, and what has consoled you from weeping over yourself although your life is the most precious of all lives to you, and why does not the fear of an ailment that may befall you in the night keep you wakeful although you lie on the way to Allah's wrath due to your sins?

You should cure the disease of languor in your heart by determination, and the sleep of neglectfulness in your eyes by wakefulness. Be obedient to Allah, and love His remembrance, and picture to yourself that you are running away while He is approaching you. He is calling you to His forgiveness and concealing your faults with His kindness, while you are fleeing away from Him towards others. Certainly, Great is Allah the powerful, Who is so generous, and how humble and weak are you and still so bold to commit His disobedience although you live in His protection and undergo changes of life in the expanse of His kindness. He does not refuse you His kindness and does not remove His protection from

you. In fact, you have not been without His kindness even for a moment, whether it be a favour that He conferred upon you or a sin of yours that He has concealed or a calamity that He has warded off from you. What is your idea about Him if you had obeyed Him? By Allah, if this had been the case with two persons equal in power and matching in might (one being inattentive and the other showering favours upon you) then you would have been the first to adjudge yourself to be of bad behaviour and evil deeds.

I truthfully say that the world has not deceived you but you have had yourself deceived by it. The world had opened to you the curtains and divulged to you (everything) equally. And in all that it foretold you about the troubles befalling your bodies and the decay in your power, it has been too true and faithful in promise, and did not speak a lie to you or deceive you. There are many who advise you about it but they are blamed, and speak the truth about it but they are opposed. If you understand the world by means of dilapidated houses and forlorn abodes, then with your good understanding and far reaching power of drawing lessons you will find it like one who is kind over you and cautious about you. It is good abode for him who does not like it as an abode, and a good place of stay for him who does not regard it a permanent home for stay.

Only those who run away from this world today will be regarded virtuous tomorrow. When the earthquake occurs, the Day of Resurrection approaches with all its severities, the people of every worshipping place cling to it, all the devotees cling to the object of their devotion and all the followers cling to their leader. Then on that day even the opening of an eye in the air and the sound of a footstep on the ground will be assigned its due through His Justice and His Equity. On that day many an argument will prove void and a contention for excuses will stand rejected.

Therefore, you should now adopt for yourself the course with which your excuse may hold good and your plea may be proved. Take from the transient things of this world that which will stay for you (in the next world), provide for your journey, keep (your) gaze on the brightness of deliverance and keep ready the saddles (for setting off).

Chapter 230

SERMON 222

About keeping aloof from oppression and misappropriation.

`Aqil's condition of poverty and destitution

By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on the thorns of *as-sa`dan* (a plant having sharp prickles) or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Day of Judgement as an oppressor over any person or a usurper of anything out of worldly wealth. And how can I oppress any one for (the sake of a life) that is fast moving towards destruction and is to remain under the earth for a long time.

By Allah, I certainly saw (my brother) `Aqil fallen in destitution and he asked me a *sa`* (about three kilograms in weight) out of your (share of) wheat, and I also saw his children with dishevelled hair and a dusty countenance due to starvation, as though their faces had been blackened by indigo. He came to me several times and repeated his request to me again and again. I heard him, and he thought I would sell my faith to him and follow his tread leaving my own way. Then I (just) heated a piece of iron and took it near his body so that he might take a lesson from it, then he cried as a person in protracted illness cries with pain and he was about to get burnt with its branding. Then I said to him, "Moaning women may moan over you, O' `Aqil. Do you cry on account of this (heated) iron which has been made by a man for fun while you are driving me towards the fire which Allah, the Powerful, has prepared for (a manifestation of) His wrath? Should you cry from pain, but I should not cry from the flames?"

A stranger incident than this is that a man (1) came to us in the night;with a closed flask full of honey paste but I disliked it as though it was the saliva of a serpent or its vomit. I asked him whether it was a reward, or *zakat*(poor-tax) or charity, for these are forbidden to us members of the Prophet's family. He said it was neither this nor that but a

present. Then I said, "Childless women may weep over you. Have you come to deviate me from the religion of Allah, or are you mad, or have you been overpowered by some jinn, or are you speaking without senses? "

By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant I would not do it. For me your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has `Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last? We do seek protection of Allah from the slip of wisdom and the evils of mistakes, and from Him we seek succour.

(1). It was al-Ash`ath ibn Qays.

Chapter 231

SERMON 223

Supplication

O' my Allah! preserve (the grace of) my face with easiness of life and do not disgrace my countenance with destitution, lest I may have to beg a livelihood from those who beg from Thee, try to seek the favour of Thy evil creatures, engage myself in praising those who give to me, and be tempted in abusing those who do not give to me, although behind all these Thou art the master of giving and denying.

. . . Verily Thou over all things, art the All-powerful. (Qur'an, 66:8)

Chapter 232

SERMON 224

Transience of the world and the helplessness of those in graves

This is a house surrounded by calamities and well-known for deceitfulness. Its conditions do not last and those who inhabit it do not remain safe. Its conditions are variable and its ways changing. Life in it is blameworthy and safety in it is non-existent. Yet its people are targets; it strikes them with its arrows and destroys them through death.

Know, O' creatures of Allah, that, certainly, you and all the things of this world that you have are (treading) on the lines of those (who were) before you. They were of longer ages, had more populated houses and were of more lasting traces. Their voices have become silent, their movements have become stationary, their bodies have become rotten, their houses have become empty and their traces have been obliterated. Their magnificent places and spread-out carpets were changed to stones, laid-in-blocks and cave-like dug out graves whose very foundation is based on ruins and whose construction has been made with soil. Their positions are contiguous, but those settled in them are like far flung strangers. They are among the people of their area but feel lonely, and they are free from work but still engaged (in activity). They feel no attachment with homelands nor do they keep contact among themselves like neighbours despite nearness of neighbourhood and priority of abodes. And how can they meet each other when decay has ground them with its chest, and stones and earth have eaten them.

It is as though you too have gone where they have gone, the same sleeping place has caught you and the same place has detained you. What will then be your position when your affairs reach their end and graves are turned upside down (to throw out the dead)?

> *There shall every soul realise what it hath sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and what they did fabricate* (the false deities) *will vanish* (away) *from them*. (Qur'an, 10:30)

Chapter 233

SERMON 225

Supplication

O' my Allah! Thou art the most attached to Thy lovers and the most ready to assist those who trust in Thee. Thou seest them in their concealments, knowest whatever is in their consciences, and art aware of the extent of their intelligence. Consequently, their secrets are open to Thee and their hearts are eager from Thee. If loneliness bores them, Thy remembrance gives them solace. If distresses befall them, they beseech Thy protection, because they know that the reins of affairs are in Thy hands, and that their movements depend upon Thy commands .

O' my Allah! if I am unable to express my request or cannot see my needs, then guide me towards my betterment and take my betterment and take my heart towards the correct goal. This is not against (the mode of) Thy guidance nor anything new against Thy ways of support.

O' my Allah! deal with me through Thy forgiveness and do not deal with me according to Thy justice.

Chapter 234

SERMON 226

About a companion who passed away from this world before the occurrence of troubles.

May Allah reward such and such man (1) who straightened the curve, cured the disease, abandoned mischief and established the *sunnah*. He departed (from this world) with untarnished clothes and little shortcomings. He achieved good (of this world) and remained safe from its evils. He offered Allah's obedience and feared Him as He deserved. He went away and left the people in dividing ways wherein the misled cannot obtain guidance and the guided cannot attain certainty.

(1). Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written (in Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, vol. 14, pp. 3-4) that the reference here is to the second Caliph `Umar, and that these sentences have been uttered in his praise as indicated by the word '`Umar' written under the word 'such and such' in as-Sayyid ar-Radi's own hand in the manuscript of Nahj al-balaghah written by him. This is Ibn Abi'l-Hadid's statement, but it is to be seen that if as-Sayyid ar-Radi had written the word '`Umar' by way of explanation it should have existed, as other explanations by him have remained, in those versions which have been copied from his manuscript. Even now there exists in al-Musil (Iraq) university the oldest copy of Nahj al-balaghah written by the famous calligraphist Yaqut al-Musta`simi; but no one has afforded any clue to this explanation of as-Sayyid ar-Radi. Even if the view of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid is accepted it would be deemed to represent the personal opinion of as-Sayyid ar-Radi which may serve as a supplementary argument in support of an original argument but this personal view cannot be assigned any regular importance.

It is strange that two and a half centuries after as-Sayyid ar-Radi namely in the seventh century A.H., Ibn Abi'l Hadid makes the statement that the reference here is to Caliph `Umar and that as-Sayyid ar-Radi himself had so indicated, as a result of which some other annotators

also followed the same line, but the contemporaries of as-Sayyid ar-Radi who wrote about Nahj al-balaghah have given no such indication in their writings although as contemporaries they should have had better information about as-Sayyid Ar-Radi's writing. Thus, al-`Allamah `Ali ibn Nasir who was a contemporary of as-Sayyid ar-Radi and wrote an annotation of Nahj al-balaghah under the name of A`lam Nahj al-balaghah writes in connection with this sermon:

> Amir al-mu'minin has praised one of his own companions for his good conduct. He had died before the troubles that arose after the death of the Prophet of Allah.
>
> This is supported by the annotations of Nahj al-balaghah written by al-`Allamah Qutbu'd-Din ar-Rawandi (d. 573 A.H.). Ibn Abi'l-Hadid (vol. 14, p. 4) and Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani (in Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, vol. 4, p. 97) have quoted his following view.
>
> By this Amir al-mu'minin refers to one of his own companions who died before the mischief and disruption that occurred following the death of the Prophet of Allah.
>
> Al-`Allamah al-Hajj al-Mirza Habibu'llah al-Khu'i is of the opinion that the person is Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar on the ground that after the assassination of Malik the situation of the Muslim community was such as Amir al-mu'minin explains in this sermon.
>
> al-Khu'i adds that:
>
> Amir al-mu'minin has praised Malik repeatedly such as in his letter to the people of Egypt sent through Malik when he was made the governor of that place, and like his utterances when the news of Malik's assassination reached him, he said: "Malik! who is Malik? If Malik was a stone, he was hard and solid; if he was a rock, he was a great rock which had no parallel. Women have become barren to give birth to such as Malik." Amir al-mu'minin had even expressed in some of his utterances that, "Malik was to me as I was to the Holy Prophet." Therefore, one who possesses such a position certainly deserves such attributes and even beyond that. (Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, vol. 14, pp. 374-375)

If these words had been about Caliph `Umar and there was some trustworthiness about it Ibn Abi'l-Hadid would have recorded the authority or tradition and it would have existed in history and been known among the people. But here nothing is found to prove the statement except a few self-concocted events. Thus about the pronouns in the words "khayraha" and "sharraha" he takes them to refer to the caliphate and writes that these words can apply only to one who enjoys power and authority because without authority it is impossible to establish the sunnah or prevent innovation. This is the gist of the argument he has advanced on this occasion; although there is no proof to establish that the antecedent of this pronoun is the caliphate. It can rather refer to the world (when Amir al-mu'minin says, "He achieved good [of this world] and remained safe from its evils.") and that would be in accord with the context. Again, to regard authority as a condition for the safeguarding of people's interest and the propagation of the sunnah means to close the door to prompting others to good and dissuading them from evil, although Allah has assigned this duty to a group of the people without the condition of authority:

And that there should be among you a group who call (mankind) unto virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong; and these are they who shall be successful. (Qur'an, 3:104)

Similarly it is related from the Prophet:

So long as people go on prompting for good and dissuading from evil and assisting each other in virtue and piety they will remain in righteousness.

Again, Amir al-mu'minin, in the course of a will, says in general terms:

Establish the pillars of the Unity of Allah and the sunnah, and keep both these lamps aflame.

In these sayings there is no hint that this obligation cannot be discharged without authority. Facts also tell us that (despite army and force, and power and authority) the rulers and kings could not prevent evil or propagate virtue to the extent to which some

unknown godly persons were able to inculcate moral values by imprinting their morality on heart and minds, although they were not backed by any army or force and they didn't have any equipment save destitution. No doubt authority and control can bend heads down before it, but it is not necessary that it should also pave the way for virtue in hearts. History shows that most of the rulers destroyed the features of Islam. Islam's existence and progress has been possible by the efforts of those helpless persons who possessed nothing save poverty and discomfiture.

If it is insisted that the reference here should only be to a ruler, then why should it not be taken to mean a companion of Amir al-mu'minin who had been the head of a Province such as Salman al-Farisi for whose burial Amir al-mu'minin went to al-Mada'in; and it is not implausible that Amir al-mu'minin might have uttered these words after his burial by way of comments on his life and way of governance. However, to believe that they are about Caliph `Umar is without any proof. In the end, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has quoted the following statements of (the historian) at-Tabari in proof of his hypothesis:

"It is related from al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah that when Caliph `Umar died Ibnah Abi Hathmah said crying. "Oh `Umar, you were the man who straightened the curve, removed ills, destroyed mischief, revived the sunnah, remained chaste and departed without entangling in evils.' (According to at-Tabari) al-Mughirah related that "When `Umar was buried I came to `Ali and I wanted to hear something from him about `Umar. So, on my arrival Amir al-mu'minin came out in this state that was wrapped in one cloth after bathing and was jerking the hair of his head and beard and he had no doubt that the Caliphate would come to him. On this occasion he said, "May Allah have mercy on `Umar." Ibnah Abi Hathmah has correctly said that he enjoyed the good of the Caliphate and remained safe from its evils. By Allah, she did not say it herself but was made to say so." (at-Tabari, vol. 1, p. 2763; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 12, p. 5; Ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p. 140)

The relater of this event is al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah whose adultery with Umm Jamil, the Caliph `Umar's saving him from the penalty despite the evidence, and his openly abusing Amir al-mu'minin in Kufah under Mu`awiyah's behest are admitted facts

of history. On this ground what weight his statements can carry is quite clear. From the factual point of view also, this story cannot be accepted. Al-Mughirah's statement that Amir al-mu'minin had no doubt about his Caliphate is against the facts. What were the factors from which he made this guess when the actual facts were to the contrary. If the caliphate was certain for any one, it was `Uthman. Thus, at the Consultative Committee `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf said to Amir al-mu'minin: "O' `Ali! do not create a situation against yourself for I have observed and consulted the people and they all want `Uthman." (at-Tabari, vol. 1, p. 2786; Ibn al-Athir, vol. 3, p. 71; Abu'l-Fida', vol. 1, p. 166)

Consequently, Amir al-mu'minin was sure not to get the caliphate as has already been stated on the authority of at-Tabari's History, under the sermon of the Camel's Foam (ash-Shiqshiqiyyah), namely that on seeing the names of the members of the Consultative Committee, Amir al-mu'minin had said to al-`Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib that the caliphate could not be given to anyone except `Uthman since all the powers had been given to `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf and he was `Uthman's brother-in-law (sister's husband) and Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas was a relative and tribesman of `Abd ar-Rahman. These two would join in giving the caliphate to him.

At this stage, the question arises as to what the reason was that actuated al-Mughirah to prompt Amir al-mu'minin to say something about `Umar. If he knew that Amir al-mu'minin had good ideas about `Umar, he should have also known his impression; but if he thought that Amir al-mu'minin did not entertain good ideas about him then the purpose of his asking Amir al-mu'minin would be none other than that whatever he may say he would, by exposing it, create an atmosphere against him and make the members of the Consultative Committee suspicious of him. The views of the members of the Consultative Committee are well understood from the very fact that by putting the condition of following the conduct of the first two Caliphs in electing the caliph they had shown their adherence to them. In these circumstances when al-Mughirah tried to play this trick Amir al-mu'minin said just by way of relating a fact that `Umar achieved the good (of this world) and remained safe from its evil. This

sentence has no connection with praise or eulogy. `Umar did in his days enjoy all kinds of advantages while his period was free from the mischiefs that cropped up later. After recording this statement Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes:

From this event the belief gains strength that in this utterance the allusion is towards `Umar.

If the utterance means the word uttered by Ibnah Abi Hathmah about which Amir al-mu'minin has said that they are not her own heart's voice but she was made to utter them, then doubtlessly the reference is to `Umar, but the view that these words were uttered by Amir al-mu'minin in praise of `Umar is not at all established. Rather, from this tradition it is evidently shown that these words were uttered by Ibnah Abi Hathmah. Allah alone knows on what ground the words of Ibnah Abi Hathmah are quoted and then it is daringly argued that these words were uttered by Amir al-mu'minin about `Umar. It seems Amir al-mu'minin had uttered these words about someone on some occasion, then Ibnah Abi Hathmah used similar words on `Umar's death and then even Amir al-mu'minin's words were taken to be in praise of `Umar. Otherwise, no mind except a mad one can argue that the words uttered by Ibnah Abi Hathmah should be deemed a ground to hold that Amir al-mu'minin said these words in praise of `Umar. Can it be expected, after (a glance at) the sermon of the Camel's Foam, that Amir al-mu'minin might have uttered these words. Again, it is worth consideration that if these words had been uttered by Amir al-mu'minin on `Umar's death, then at the Consultative Committee when he refused to follow the conduct of the (first) two Caliphs it should have been said to him that only the other day he has said that `Umar had established the sunnah and banished innovations, so that when his conduct was in accord with the sunnah what was the sense in accepting the sunnah but refusing to follow his conduct .

Chapter 235

SERMON 227

(About allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin for the Caliphate.

A similar sermon in somewhat different version has already appeared earlier.)

You drew out my hand towards you for allegiance but I held it back and you stretched it but I contracted it. Then you crowed over me as the thirsty camels crowd on the watering cisterns on their being taken there, so much so that shoes were torn, shoulder-cloths fell away and the weak got trampled, and the happiness of people on their allegiance to me was so manifested that small children felt joyful, the old staggered (up to me) for it, the sick too reached for it helter skelter and young girls ran for it without veils.

Chapter 236

SERMON 228

Advice about fear of Allah, and an account of those who remain apprehensive of death and adopt abstemiousness

Certainly, fear of Allah is the key to guidance, provision for the next world, freedom from every slavery and deliverance from all ruin. With its help the seeker succeeds and he who makes for safety escapes and achieves his aims.

Perform (good) acts while such acts are being raised (in value), repentance can be of benefit, prayer can be heard, conditions are peaceful and the pens (of the two angels) are in motion (to record the actions). Hasten towards (virtuous) actions before the change of age (to oldness), lingering illness or snatching death (overtakes you). Certainly, death will end your enjoyments, mar your pleasures and remove your objectives. It is an unwanted visitor, an invincible adversary and an unaccounting killer. Its ropes have entrapped you, its evils have surrounded you, its arrowheads have aimed at you, its sway over you is great, its oppression on you is continuous and the chance of its missing you is remote.

Very soon you will be overwhelmed with the gloom of its shades, the severity of its illness, the darkness of its distresses, the nonsense utterances of its pangs, the grief of its destruction, the darkness of its encompassment and the unwholesomeness of its taste. It will seem as if it has come to you all of a sudden, silenced those who were whispering to you, separated your group, destroyed your doings, devastated your houses and altered your successors to distribute your estate among the chief relatives, who did not give you any benefit, or the grieved near ones who could not protect (you), or those rejoicers who did not lament (you).

Therefore, it is upon you to strive, make effort, equip yourself, get ready and provide yourself from the place of provision. And let not the life of this world deceive you as it deceived those before you among the past people and by-gone periods — those who extracted its milk, benefited from its neglectfulness, passed a long time and turned its new

things into old (by living long). Their abodes turned into graves and their wealth into inheritable estate. They do not know who came to them (at their graves); do not pay heed to those who weep over them, and do not respond to those who call them. Therefore, beware of this world as it is treacherous, deceitful and cheating, it gives and takes back, covers with clothes and uncovers. Its pleasure does not last, its hardship does not end and its calamity does not stop.

A part of the same sermon about ascetics

They are from among the people of this world but are not its people, because they remain in it as though they do not belong to it. They act herein on what they observe and hasten here in (to avoid) what they fear. Their bodies move among the people of the next world. They see that the people of this world attach importance to the death of their bodies but they themselves attach more importance to the death of the hearts of those who are living.

Chapter 237

SERMON 229

Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon at Dhiqar on his way to Basrah, and the historian al-Waqidi has mentioned it (in Kitab al-Jamal).

About the Holy Prophet

The Prophet manifested whatever he was commanded and conveyed the messages of his Lord. Consequently, Allah repaired through him the cracks, joined through him the slits and created (through him) affection among kin although they bore intense enmity in (their) chests and deep-seated rancour in (their) hearts.

Chapter 238

SERMON 230

`Abdullah ibn Zama`ah who was one of the followers of Amir al-mu'minin came to him during his Caliphate to ask for some money when Amir al-mu'minin said:

This money is not for me nor for you, but it is the collective property of the Muslims and the acquisition of their swords. If you had taken part with them in their fighting you would have a share equal to theirs, otherwise the earning of their hands cannot be for other than their mouths.

Chapter 239

SERMON 231

On Ja`dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi's (1) inability to deliver a sermon. About speaking the truth

Know that the tongue is a part of a man's body. If the man desists, speech will not co-operate with him and when he dilates, speech will not give him time to stop. Certainly, we are the masters of speaking. Its veins are fixed in us and its branches are hanging over us.

Know that - may Allah have mercy on you - you are living at a time when those who speak about right are few, when tongues are loath to utter the truth and those who stick to the right are humiliated. The people of this time are engaged in disobedience. Their youths are wicked, their old men are sinful, their learned men are hypocrites, and their speakers are sycophants. Their youngs do not respect their elders, and their rich men do not support the destitute.

(1). Once Amir al-mu'minin asked his nephew (sister's son) Ja`dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi to deliver a sermon, but when he rose for speaking his tongue faltered and he could utter nothing, whereupon Amir al-mu'minin ascended the pulpit to speak and delivered a long sermon out of which a few sentences have been recorded here by as-Sayyid ar-Radi.

Chapter 240

SERMON 232

Causes for difference in the features and traits of people

Dhi`lib al-Yamami has related from Ahmad ibn Qutaybah, and he from `Abdullah ibn Yazid and he from Malik ibn Dihyah who said, "We were with Amir al-mu'minin when discussion arose about the differences of men (in features and conduct) and then Amir al-mu'minin said":

They differ among themselves because of the sources (l) of their clay (from which they have been created). This is because they are either from saltish soil or sweet soil or from rugged earth or soft earth. They, resemble each other on the basis of the affinity of their soil and differ according to its difference. Therefore, sometimes a person of handsome features is weak in intelligence, a tall statured person is of low courage, a virtuous person is ugly in appearance, a short statured person is farsighted, a good-natured person has an evil trait, a person of perplexed heart has bewildering mind and a sharp-tongued person has a wakeful heart.

(l). Amir al-mu'minin has ascribed the differences in features and characters of people to the differences in the clay from which they are created and according to which their features are shaped and the skeletons of their characters are formed. Therefore, to the extent that their clay of origin is akin, their mental and imaginative tendencies too will be similar and to the extent by which they differ, there will be a difference in their inclinations and tendencies. By origins of a thing are meant those things on which its coming into existence depends, but they should not be its cause. The word *"tin"* is the plural of *"tinah"* which means origin or basis. Here *"tinah"* means semen which after passing through various stages of development emerges in the human shape. Its origin means those constituents from which those items are created which help in the formation of semen. Thus, by saltish, sweet, soft or hard soil the

reference is to these elementary constituents. Since those elementary constituents carry different properties the semen growing out of them will also bear different characteristics and propensities which will (eventually) show forth in the differences in features and conduct of those borne in it.

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid has written (in *Sharh Nahj al-balaghah*, vol. 13, p. 19) that "origins of *tinah*" implies those preservative factors which are different in their properties as Plato and other philosophers have held. The reason for calling them "origins of*tinah*" is that they serve as an asylum for the human body and prevent the elements from diffusion. Just as the existence of a thing hinges on its basis, in the same way the existence of this body which is made up of elements depends on preservative factors. So long as the preservative factor exists the body is also safe from disruption and disintegration and the elements too are immune to diffusion and dispersal. When it leaves the body the elements also get dispersed.

According to this explanation Amir al-mu'minin's words would mean that Allah has created different original factors among whom some are vicious and some are virtuous, some are weak and some are strong, and every person will act according to his original factor. If there is similarity in the inclinations of two persons it is because their original factor are similar, and if their tendencies differ it is because their original factors do not have any similarity. But this conclusion is not correct because Amir al-mu'minin's words do not only refer to differences in conduct and behaviour but also of features and shape and the differences of features and shape cannot be the result of differences in original factors.

In any case, whether the original factors are the cause of differences in features and conduct or the elementary constituents are the cause, these words appear to lead to the negation of volition and to prove the compulsion (of destiny) in human actions, because if man's capacity for thinking and acting is dependent on "*tinah*" then he would be compelled to behave himself in a fixed way on account of which he would neither deserve praise for good acts nor be held blame worthy for bad habits. But this hypothesis is incorrect because it is well established that just as Allah knows everything in creation after its coming into being, in the same way He knew it before its creation. Thus, He knew what actions man would perform of his free will and what he would leave. Therefore, Allah gave him capacity to act according to his free will, and created him from a suitable "*tinah*". This *tinah* is not the cause of his actions so as to snatch away from him his free will but the meaning of creating from

suitable *tinah*is that Allah does not by force stand in man's way but allows him to tread the path he wants to tread of his own free will.

Chapter 241

SERMON 233

Spoken when Amir al-mu'minin was busy in the funeral ablution (ghusl) of the Holy Prophet and shrouding him

May my father and my mother shed their lives for you. O' Messenger of Allah! With your death the process of prophethood, revelation and heavenly messages has stopped, which had not stopped at the death of others (prophets). Your position with us (members of your family) is so special that your grief has become a source of consolation (to us) as against the grief of all others; your grief is also common so that all Muslims share it equally. If you had not ordered endurance and prevented us from bewailing, we would have produced a store of tears and even then the pain would not have subsided, and this grief would not have ended, and they would have been too little of our grief for you. But this (death) is a matter that cannot be reversed nor is it possible to repulse it. May my father and my mother die for you; do remember us with Allah and take care of us.

Chapter 242

SERMON 234

In (1)this sermon Amir al-mu'minin has related his own condition after the Prophet's immigration till his meeting with him.

I began following the path adopted by the Prophet and treading on the lines of his remembrance till I reached al-`Arj.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Amir al-mu'minin's words *"faata'u dhikrahu"* constitute the highest forms of brevity and eloquence. He means to say that he was being given news about the Prophet from the commencement of his setting out till he reached this place, and he has expressed this sense in this wonderful expression.

(1). Since the commencement of prophethood, the Prophet remained in Mecca for thirteen years. For him, this period was of the severest oppression and destitution. The unbelievers of the Quraysh had closed all the doors of livelihood upon him, and had left no deficiency in inflicting hardships upon him, so much so that in order to take his life they began contriving how to do away with him. Forty of their nobles assembled in the hall of audience (*Dar an-Nadwah*) for consultation, and decided that one individual should be picked out from every tribe and they should jointly attack him. In this way, Banu Hashim would not dare to face all the tribes, and the matter would quieten down on the payment of blood price. To give a practical shape to this scheme, these people sat in ambush near the house of the Prophet on the night of the first of *Rabi` al-awwal*, so that when the prophet slept in his bed he would be attacked. On this side the preparation for killing him was complete, and on the other side Allah informed him of all the intrigues of the Quraysh unbelievers and commanded him to make `Ali (p.b.u.h.) sleep on his bed and himself to immigrate to Medina. The Prophet sent for `Ali (p.b.u.h.) and disclosing to him his plan, said: "Ali, you lie on my bed." Amir al-mu'minin enquired: "O' Messenger of Allah, will your life be saved by my sleeping here?" The Prophet said: "Yes." Hearing this Amir al-

mu'minin performed a prostration in thanks-giving and, exposing himself fully to the danger, lay on the Prophet's bed while the Prophet left from the rear door. The Quraysh unbelievers were peeping and getting ready for the attack but Abu Lahab said: "It is not proper to attack in the night because there are women and children also in the house. When morning dawns you attack him, but keep watch during night that he should not move anywhere." Consequently, they kept their eyes on the bed throughout the night and soon, on the appearance of the dawn, proceeded forward stealthily. Hearing the sound of their footsteps, Amir al-mu'minin removed the covering from his face and stood up. The Quraysh gazed at him with stretched eyes as to whether it was an illusion or fact. After making sure that it was `Ali they enquired, "Where is Muhammad?" and `Ali replied, "Did you entrust him to me, that now you are asking me?" They had no reply to this. Men ran to chase him but found footprints only up to the cave of Thawr. Beyond that there were neither footprints nor any sign of hiding in the cave. They came back bewildered while the Prophet after staying in the cave for three days left for Medina. Amir al-mu'minin passed these three days in Mecca, returned to the people their properties lying in trust with the Prophet and set off towards Medina to join the Prophet. Upto al-`Arj which is a place between Mecca and Medina, he kept getting news about the Prophet and he continued his anxious march in his search till he met the Prophet at Quba on the twelfth of *Rabi` al-awwal*, and entered Medina with him. (at-Tabari, *at-Tafsir*, vol. 9, pp. 148-151*; at-Tarikh*, vol. 1, pp. 1232-1234; Ibn Sa`d, *at-Tabaqat,* vol. 1, Part 1, pp. 153-154; Ibn Hisham, *as-Sirah,* vol. 2, pp. 124-128; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghabah,* vol. 4, p. 25; al-Kamil, vol. 2, pp. 101-104; Ibn Kathir,*at-Tafsir,* vol. 2, pp. 302-303; *at-Tarikh,* vol. 3, pp. 180-181; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 13, pp. 303-306; as-Suyuti, *ad-Durr al-manthur,* vol. 3, pp. 179-180; al-`Allamah al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar,* vol. 19, pp. 28-103).

Chapter 243

SERMON 235

About collecting provision for the next world while in this world and performing good acts before death

Perform (good) acts while you are still in the vastness of life, the books are open (for recording of actions), repentance is allowed, the runner away (from Allah) is being called and the sinner is being given hope (of forgiveness) before the (light of) action is put off, time expires, life ends, the door for repentance is closed and angels ascend to the sky.

Therefore a man should derive benefit from himself for himself, from the living for the dead, from the mortal, for the lasting and from the departer for the stayer. A man should fear Allah while he is given age to live upto his death, and is allowed time to act. A man should control his self by the rein and hold it with its bridle, thus by the rein he should prevent it from disobedience towards Allah, and by the bridle he should lead it towards obedience to Allah.

Chapter 244

SERMON 236

About the two arbitrators (Abu Musa al-Ash`ari and `Amr ibn al-`As) and disparagement of the people of Syria (ash-Sham).

Rude, low people and mean slaves. They have been collected from all sides and picked up from every pack. They need to be taught the tenets (of Islam), disciplined, instructed, trained, supervised and led by the hand. They are neither *muhajirun* (immigrants from Mecca), nor *ansar* (helpers of Medina) nor those who made their dwellings in the abode (in Medina) and in belief.

Look! They have chosen for themselves one who is nearest of all of them to what they desire, while you have chosen one who is nearest to what you dislike. You may certainly recall that the other day `Abdullah ibn Qays (Abu Musa) was saying: "It is a mischief, therefore, cut away your bow-string and sheathe your swords." If he was right (in what he said) then he was wrong in marching (with us) without being forced, but if he was lying then he should be viewed with suspicion. Therefore, send `Abdullah ibn al-`Abbas to face `Amr ibn al-`As. Make use of these days and surround the borders of Islam. Do you not see that your cities are being attacked and your prowess is being aimed at?

Chapter 245

SERMON 237

Amir al-mu'minin describes herein the members of the Prophet's family

They are life for knowledge and death for ignorance. Their forbearance tells you of their knowledge, and their silence of the wisdom of their speaking. They do not go against right nor do they differ (among themselves) about it. They are the pillars of Islam and the asylums of (its) protection. With them right has returned to its position and wrong has left its place and its tongue is severed from its root. They have understood the religion attentively and carefully, not by mere heresy or from relaters, because the relaters of knowledge are many but its understanders are few.

Chapter 246

SERMON 238

When `Uthman ibn `Affan was surrounded, `Abdullah ibn al-`Abbas brought a letter to Amir al-mu'minin from `Uthman in which he expressed the desire that Amir al-mu'minin should leave for his estate Yanbu` so that the proposal that was being mooted out for him to become caliph should subside. `Uthman had this request earlier also. Upon this Amir al-mu'minin said to Ibn al-`Abbas:

O' Ibn al-`Abbas! `Uthman just wants to treat me like the water-drawing camel so that I may go forward and backward with the bucket. Once he sent me word that I should go out then sent me word that I should come back. Now, again he sends me word that I should go out. By Allah, I continued protecting him till I feared lest I become a sinner.

Chapter 247

SERMON 239

Exhorting his men to jihad and asking them to refrain from seeking ease

Allah seeks you to thank Him and assigns to you His affairs. He has allowed time in the limited field (of life) so that you may vie with each other in seeking the reward (of Paradise). Therefore, tight up your girdles and wrap up the skirts. High courage and dinners do not go together. Sleep causes weakness in the big affairs of the day and (its) darkness obliterates the memories of courage.

Chapter 248

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