

[The second thing] to give up is: That you are on your guard against becoming a preacher or admonisher for it involves much harm, unless you first 'practice what you preach', then preach it to people. Think of what was said to Jesus (upon him be peace), 'O Son of Mary! Preach to your soul, and if it learns its lesson, preach to people—otherwise show humility before your Lord.'⁴⁸

If you are put to the test with this occupation, be careful of two traits: First is pretentiousness in talking, by way of idioms, allusions, outbursts, verses and poems—for God the Exalted detests the pretentious. The pretentious and excessive man exhibits inward decadence and the indifference of his heart. The idea of admonition is for the worshipper to recollect the fire of the hereafter and his own remissness in the service of the Creator, to consider his past life which he has spent in what did not concern him, and consider what difficulties lie before him such as the absence of firmness of faith in his life's final moments, the nature of his state in the clasps of the Angel of Death, and whether he will be capable of answering Munkar and Nakir,⁴⁹ that he worry about his state during the Resurrection and its episodes, and whether he will cross the Bridge safely or tumble into the abyss.⁵⁰ The recollection of these things should remain in his heart and upset his apathy. To foment these fires and lament these calamities is termed 'admonition'.

وَالثَّانِي | بِمَا تَدْعُ هُوَ أَنْ تَحْذَرُ مِنْ أَنْ تَكُونَ وَاعِظًا
وَمُذَكِّرًا لِأَنَّ فِيهِ آفَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ، إِلَّا أَنْ تَعْمَلَ بِمَا تَقُولُ أَوَّلًا ثُمَّ تَعِظَ
بِهِ النَّاسَ. فَتَفَكَّرَ فِيمَا قِيلَ لِعِيسَى، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: يَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ عِظْ
نَفْسَكَ فَإِنْ اتَّعَمَلْتَ فَمِطِ النَّاسَ وَإِلَّا فَاسْتَحِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ.

وَإِنْ أَتَيْتَ بِهَذَا الْعَمَلِ فَاخْتَرِ عَنْ خَصْلَتَيْنِ: الْأُولَى عَنِ
التَّكَلُّفِ فِي الْكَلَامِ بِالْعِبَارَاتِ وَالْإِشَارَاتِ وَالطَّلَامَاتِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاتِ
وَالْأَشْعَارِ، لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُبْغِضُ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ، وَالتَّكَلُّفُ الْمُتَجَاوِزُ
عَنِ الْحَدِّ يَدُلُّ عَلَى خَرَابِ الْبَاطِنِ وَغَفْلَةِ الْقَلْبِ. وَمَعْنَى التَّذْكِيرِ
أَنْ يَذْكُرَ الْعَبْدُ نَارَ الْآخِرَةِ وَتَقْصِيرَ نَفْسِهِ فِي خِدْمَةِ الْخَالِقِ،
وَيَتَفَكَّرَ فِي عُمْرِهِ الْمَاضِي الَّذِي أَفْنَاهُ فِيمَا لَا يُعِينُهُ، وَيَتَفَكَّرَ
فِيمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْعَقَبَاتِ مِنْ غَدَمِ سَلَامَةِ الْإِيمَانِ فِي الْحَالِمَةِ،
وَكَيْفِيَّةِ حَالِهِ فِي قَبْضِ مَلِكِ الْمَوْتِ وَهَلْ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى جَوَابِ مُنْكَرٍ
وَنَكِيرٍ، وَيَهْتَمُّ بِحَالِهِ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَوَاقِفِهَا، وَهَلْ يَغْبُرُ عَنِ الصَّرَاطِ
سَالِمًا أَمْ يَقَعُ فِي الْهَوَايَةِ؟ وَيَسْتَمِرُّ ذِكْرُ هَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاءِ فِي قَلْبِهِ
فَيُزَجِّعُهُ عَنْ قَرَارِهِ. فَغَلَيَانُ هَذِهِ النِّيرَانِ وَنَوْحُهُ هَذِهِ الصَّائِبِ
يُسَمَّى تَذْكِيرًا.

Informing mankind and apprising them of these things, warning them of their remissness and negligence, making them see the defects of their egos, so that the heat of these fires impinges on the congregation, and the calamities disturb them so that they make amends for their past lives as far as possible, and they are distressed by the days passed in disobedience to God the Exalted: all this in this way is termed 'preaching'.

It is as if you saw that a flood bore down on an individual's house with him and his family inside, and you said, 'Look out! Look out! Run from the flood!' In these circumstances does your heart long for you to give the owner of the house your message with pretentious expressions, anecdotes and allusions? It is completely repugnant to you! The situation of the preacher is like this and he should give them up.

The second trait is that your effort in your preaching should not be for the people in your congregation to roar or show hysteria and tear at their clothes, so that it is said, 'What a gathering that was!' For all this is worldliness, and that is produced by indifference. Rather your zealous intention must be to lead men from the world to the hereafter, from recalcitrance to obedience, from acquisitiveness to renunciation, from stinginess to generosity, from doubt to certainty, from indifference to vigilance, and from illusion to God-consciousness. You should evoke in them love of the afterlife and loathing for the world. You should teach them about worship and asceticism. Do not allow them to be complacent due to the kindness of God the

وَإِعْلَامُ الْخَلْقِ وَإِطْلَاعُهُمْ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَتَنْبِيهِهُمْ عَلَى تَقْصِيرِهِمْ وَتَفْرِيطِهِمْ وَتَنْصِيحُهُمْ بِمُيُوبِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لِمَمَسِّ حَرَارَةِ هَذِهِ النَّبَرَانِ أَهْلُ الْخَلِيسِ وَتُخْرِجُهُمْ تِلْكَ الْمَصَائِبُ لِيَتَذَارَكُوا الْعُمُرَ الْمَاضِي بِقَدْرِ الطَّاقَةِ وَيَتَحَسَّرُوا عَلَى الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ فِي غَيْرِ طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: هَذِهِ الْجُمْلَةُ عَلَى هَذَا الطَّرِيقِ تُسَمَّى وَغَطًّا.

كَمَا لَوْ رَأَيْتَ أَنَّ السَّيْلَ قَدْ هَجَمَ عَلَى دَارِ أَحَدٍ، وَكَانَ هُوَ وَأَهْلُهُ فِيهَا، فَتَقُولُ: اخْذِرْ اخْذِرْ، فِرُّوا مِنَ السَّيْلِ. وَهَلْ يَشْتَبِي قَلْبُكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَالَةِ أَنْ تُخْرِجَ صَاحِبَ الدَّارِ حَبْرَكَ بِتَكْلُفِ الْعِبَارَاتِ وَاللُّكَيْتِ وَالْإِشَارَاتِ؟ فَلَا تَشْتَبِي أَلْبَتَّةَ، فَكَذَلِكَ حَالُ الْوَاعِظِ، فَيَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَحْتَنِيهَا.

وَالْخُصْلَةُ الثَّانِيَّةُ أَلَّا تَكُونَ هَمَّتُكَ فِي وَغْطِكَ أَنْ يَنْغَرِ الْخَلْقُ فِي مَجْلِسِكَ أَوْ يُظْهِرُوا أَلَوْجَدَ وَيَشْقُوا أَلْتِيَابَ لِيُقَالَ: نِعَمَ الْخَلِيسِ هَذَا. لِأَنَّ كُلَّهُ مِثْلٌ لِلدُّنْيَا، وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنَ الْغَفْلَةِ. بَلْ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ عَزْمُكَ وَهَمَّتُكَ أَنْ تَدْعُو النَّاسَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَمِنْ الْمُنْصِيَةِ إِلَى الطَّاعَةِ وَمِنْ الْحُرْصِ إِلَى الزُّهْدِ وَمِنْ التَّجْلِ إِلَى السَّخَاءِ وَمِنْ الشَّكِّ إِلَى الْيَقِينِ وَمِنْ الْغَفْلَةِ إِلَى الْبِقَظَةِ وَمِنْ الْغُرُورِ إِلَى التَّقْوَى، وَتُحَبِّبَ إِلَيْهِمُ الْآخِرَةَ وَتُبْغِضَ إِلَيْهِمُ الدُّنْيَا، وَتُعَلِّمَهُمْ عِلْمَ الْعِبَادَةِ وَالزُّهْدِ، وَلَا تُغْرِهُمْ بِكَرَمِ اللَّهِ

Exalted (Glorious and Majestic!) and His mercy, since predominating in their natures is disinclination from the path of the Law, drive in what displeases God the Exalted, and getting tripped up by bad morals. Put fear into their hearts, alarm them and put them on their guard regarding the dangers they will face. Perhaps their inward qualities will be transformed, and their outward behaviour exchanged—'acquisitiveness' and an 'appetite' for obedience, and for repentance from disobedience, will appear.

This then is the right way to preach and advise, and all preaching not thus is a curse upon both speaker and listener. Nay, it is said that [the former] is a ghou!l, a demon who sweeps men off the path and destroys them, and they must run from him, since this speaker will wreak havoc on their religion the like of which Satan himself cannot. It is incumbent on whoever has the wherewithal and capability, to get him down from pulpits and prevent him from sermonizing, for this is part of 'enjoining good and forbidding evil'.⁵¹

[The third thing] to give up is that you have nothing to do with princes and rulers, nor see them, because the spectacle of them, gatherings with them and socialising with them are a serious danger. If you are put to the test by this, avoid praising them and complimenting them, for God the Exalted is angered if a wrongdoer or tyrant is praised, and whoever prays for their long life wants God to be disobeyed on His earth.

تَعَالَى، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَرَحْمَتِهِ، لِأَنَّ الْغَالِبَ فِي طِبَاعِهِمُ الزَّيْغُ عَنْ مَنَهِجِ الشَّرْعِ وَالشَّغْيُ فِيْمَا لَا يَرْضَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ وَالْإِسْتِعْثَارُ بِالْأَخْلَاقِ الرَّدِيَّةِ. فَالْقَى فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ وَرَوَّغَهُمْ وَحَذَّرَهُمْ عَمَّا يَسْتَقْبِلُونَ مِنَ الْخَوَافِ، لَعَلَّ صِفَاتِ بَاطِنِهِمْ تَتَغَيَّرُ وَمُعَامَلَتُهُمْ ظَاهِرُهُمْ تَتَبَدَّلُ وَيُظْهَرُ الْحِرْصُ وَالرَّغْبَةُ فِي الطَّاعَةِ وَالرُّجُوعِ عَنِ الْخُصِيَّةِ.

وَهَذَا طَرِيقُ الْوَعِظِ وَالنَّصِيحَةِ، وَكُلُّ وَعِظٍ لَا يَكُونُ هَكَذَا فَهُوَ وَبَالَ عَلَى مَنْ قَالَ وَسَمِعَ. بَلْ قِيلَ: إِنَّهُ غَوْلٌ وَشَيْطَانٌ يَذْهَبُ بِالْخَلْقِ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ وَيُهْلِكُهُمْ، فَيَجِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ يَفِرُّوا مِنْهُ لِأَنَّ مَا يُفْسِدُ هَذَا الْقَائِلُ مِنْ دِينِهِمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ يَمْنَلُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ. وَمَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ يَدٌ وَقُدْرَةٌ يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَنْزِلَهُ عَنْ مَنَابِرِ الْمَوَاعِظِ وَيَتَمَنَعَهُ عَمَّا بَاطَرَ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ جُمْلَةِ الْأُمَرَاءِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ.

[وَالثَّالِثُ] مِمَّا تَدْعُ الْأُمَحَاظُ الْأُمَرَاءَ وَالسَّلَاطِينَ وَلَا تَرَاهُمْ، لِأَنَّ رُؤْيَاهُمْ وَمُحَاطَسَتَهُمْ وَمُحَاطَلَتَهُمْ أَقْوَى عَظِيمَةً. وَلَوْ أَبْتَلَيْتَ بِهِمَا، دَعَا عَنْكَ مَذْهَبُهُمْ وَتَنَاءَهُمْ لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَغْضَبُ إِذَا مَدَحَ الْفَاسِقَ وَالظَّالِمَ. وَمَنْ دَعَا لِظُلُولِ بَقَائِهِمْ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُغْضَى اللَّهُ فِي أَرْضِهِ.