

كَانَ الْخَلِيفَةُ الْقَوِيُّ هَارُونُ
الرَّشِيدُ لَهُ مُسْتَشَارٌ يَكْرِمُهُ
بِحُكْمَتِهِ، وَذَلِكَ لِغَيْرَةِ بَعْضِ أَفْرَادِ
الْحَرَمِ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَغَارُونَ مِنْهُ

Kāna al-khalīfatu al-qawīyu Hārūnu ar-Rashīdu lahu mustashārun yakrimuhu bi-ḥikmatihī, wa dhālika li-ghayrat ba‘ḍi afrādi al-ḥurami alladhīna kānū yaghā-rūna minhu.

The mighty Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashid had a counsellor whose wisdom he greatly valued – a favor that aroused the envy of others at court.

وَيَوْمًا قَالَ الْخَلِيفَةُ لِلْحُكَمَاءِ
الْمُجْتَمِعِينَ: «يَا أَصْدِقَائِي، أَنَا أُذِنُ لَكُمْ
الْيَوْمَ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا كُلَّ مَا
تُحِبُّونَهُ مِنْ قَصْرِي». فَسَرَّعُوا جَمِيعًا
لِيَأْخُذُوا الْجَوَاهِرَ وَالذَّهَبَ وَ
الْمَفَاحِشَ الثَّمِينَةَ

Wa yawman qāla al-khalīfatu lil-ḥukamā‘i al-mujtami‘īn: «Yā aṣḍiqā’ī, anā udhinu lakum al-yawma an ta’khudhū kulla mā tuḥibbūnahu min qaṣrī». Fa sara‘ū jamī‘an li-ya’khudhū al-jawāhir wa al-dhahab wa al-mafākhir al-thamīnah.

One day the Caliph said to the assembled sages: “O my friends, today I grant you the freedom to take from my palace whatever you most desire.” At once, they rushed to gather jewels, gold, and precious treasures.

وَلَكِنَّ ذَلِكَ الْحَكِيمَ وَحْدَهُ
تَقَدَّمَ وَوَضَعَ يَدَهُ عَلَى
السُّلْطَانِ نَفْسِهِ. فَسَأَلَهُ الْخَلِيفَةُ
مُسْتَعْرَبًا: «لِمَاذَا لَمْ تَأْخُذْ
شَيْئًا؟» فَأَجَابَ: «يَا سَيِّدِي السُّلْطَانُ،
خِيَارِي هُوَ أَنْتَ». فَبَرَهَنَ
أَنَّهُ أَحْكَمُ جَمِيعِهِمْ

Wa lakinna dhālika al-ḥakīma waḥdahu taqaddama wa waḍa‘a yadahu ‘alā al-sultān nafsih. Fa sa‘alahu al-khalīfatu mustaghriban: «Limādhā lam ta’khudh shay’an?» Fa ajāba: «Yā sayyidī al-sultān, khiyārī huwa anta». Fa barhāna annahu aḥkamu jamī‘ihim.

But that wise man stepped forward and placed his hand upon the Sultan himself. “Why do you not take some-thing?” the Caliph asked in astonishment. “O my Lord,” he replied, “my choice is you!” Thus he proved himself the wisest of them all.

وَنَحْنُ أَيْضًا نَكُونُ جُهَالًا إِذَا
اخْتَرْنَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ أَوْ طَلَبْنَا
جَزَاءَهَا – بَدَلًا أَنْ نَخْتَارَ اللَّهَ
رَبَّنَا. قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «إِنِّي
أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ أُمَّتِي لَنْ تَعُودَ إِلَى
الْكُفْرِ، وَلَكِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ
يَخْتَارُوا الدُّنْيَا

Wa naḥnu aydan nakūnu juhhālan idhā ikhtarnā hādhihi al-ḥayāta aw ṭalabnā jazā’ahā – badala an nakhtāra Allāh rabbana. Qāla al-nabiyyu ﷺ: «Innī a‘lamu anna ummatī lan ta‘ūda ilā al-kufr, wa lakinnī akhāfu ‘alayhim an yakhtārū al-dunyā».

And are we not utterly foolish when we choose this fleeting life or long for its rewards instead of choosing Him, our Lord? For the Prophet ﷺ said: “I know that my community will not return to disbelief. But I fear that they may choose this world.”

قَلِيلُونَ هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَارُونَ
الرَّبَّ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ. اخْتَارُوا اللَّهَ
فَسَنُتَابِلُونَ كُلَّ فَرْحٍ وَخَيْرٍ
يَسْتَكُونُونَ مُنْتَصِرِينَ، لَا
يَضُرُّكُمْ شَيْءٌ، وَسَتَكُونُونَ
فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَبَدًا

Qalīlūna hum alladhīna yakhtārūna al-rabb jalla jalālahu. Ikhtārū Allāh, ajfasatanālū kulla farḥin wa khayrin kāmilin. Satakūnū muntasirīn, lā yaḍurrukum shay’, wa satakūnū fī al-jannah abadan.

Very few are those who choose the Lord jalla jalālahu. Choose Allah, and you will attain every joy and perfect goodness. You will be victorious, nothing will harm you, and you will abide forever in Paradise.