O son, I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) say: The worst of shepherds is the harsh one, so beware of being one of them

‘Ā'idh ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) visited ‘Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād and said: "O son, I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) say: 'The worst of shepherds is the harsh one', so beware of being one of them." Thereupon, Ibn Ziyād said to him: "Sit down, for you are from the chaff of the Muhammad's Companions." ‘Ā'idh said: "Was there chaff among them? Chaff only appeared after them and in other than them."

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

‘Ā'idh ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) visited ‘Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād, who was the ruler of the Iraqis after his father, and said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) say: 'The worst of shepherds is the harsh one'", i.e. the one who is harsh in looking after camels while herding them, bringing them in and taking them out, shoving them into one another, and overburdening them. He was giving an example of the evil ruler, and the meaning intended here is the harsh ruler who oppresses people and is neither gentle nor merciful with them. The statement: "Beware of being one of them" is from the speech of ‘Ā'idh as an advice to Ibn Ziyād. Thereupon, Ibn Ziyād gave the following reply: "You are nothing but the chaff of them", i.e. you are not from the virtuous and knowledgeable Companions of the Prophet, or those with high status among them; rather, you are from the worthless among them. The word "chaff" here is a metaphor used to indicate meanness and worthlessness. So the noble Companion (may Allah be pleased with him) replied: "Was there worthless chaff among them? Such worthless chaff only appeared after them and among those other than them." This is the eloquence and veracity of speech that every Muslim believes in. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with him) were all the cream of the crop, the masters of the Muslim nation, and more virtuous than those who came after them. All of them were upright role models and there is no worthless chaff among them. The chaff only came from and among those after them.

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