

## Sermon 27: Indeed, surely jihad is one of the doors of Paradise ...

*Exhorting people for jihad*

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

وقد قالها يستنهض بها الناس حين ورد خبر غزوات انبار بجيش معاوية فلم ينهضوا، وفيها يذكر فضل الجهاد، ويستنهض الناس، ويذكر علمه بالحرب، ويلقي عليهم التبعة لعدم طاعته

Indeed, 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.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ الْجِهَادَ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ لِخَاصَّةِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ، وَهُوَ لِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى، وَدِرْعُ اللَّهِ الْحَصِينَةِ، وَجَنَّةُ الْوَثِيقَةِ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهُ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ أَلْبَسَهُ اللَّهُ ثَوْبَ الذُّلِّ، وَشَمَلَهُ الْبَلَاءُ، وَدَيْتَ بِالصَّغَارِ وَالْقَمَاءِ وَضُرِبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ بِالْأَسْهَابِ وَأَدِيلَ الْحَقِّ مِنْهُ بِتَضْيِيعِ الْجِهَادِ، وَسِيمَ الْخُسْفِ، وَمُنِعَ النَّصْفَ

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<sup>1</sup> have reached al-Anbar and killed Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison.

أَلَا وَإِنِّي قَدْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ إِلَى قِتَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا، وَسِرًّا وَإِعْلَانًا، وَقُلْتُ لَكُمْ: اعْزُوهُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَعْزُوكُمْ، فَوَاللَّهِ مَا عَزَى قَوْمٌ قَطُّ فِي عَقْرِ دَارِهِمْ إِلَّا نَلُّوا، فَتَوَاكَلْتُمْ وَتَخَاذَلْتُمْ حَتَّى شَنَنْتَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْعَارَاتُ وَمَلِكْتَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَوْطَانَ. وَهَذَا أَخُو غَامِدٍ قَدْ وَرَدَتْ خَيْلُهُ الْأَنْبَارَ وَقَدْ قَتَلَ حَسَّانَ بْنَ حَسَّانَ الْبُكْرِيَّ، وَأَزَالَ خَيْلَكُمْ عَنْ مَسَالِحِهَا

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.” (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.

وَلَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْهُمْ كَانَ يَدْخُلُ عَلَى الْمَرْأَةِ الْمُسْلِمَةِ، وَالْآخَرَى الْمُعَاهِدَةَ فَيَنْتَزِعُ حِجْلَهَا وَقَلْبَهَا وَقَلَائِدَهَا، وَرِعَائَتَهَا مَا تَمْتَنِعُ مِنْهُ إِلَّا بِالِاسْتِرْجَاعِ وَالِاسْتِرْحَامِ ثُمَّ أَنْصَرَفُوا وَافْرِينَ مَا نَالَ رَجُلًا مِنْهُمْ كَلْمٌ وَلَا أُرِيقَ لَهُمْ دَمٌ، فَلَوْ أَنَّ امْرَأً مُسْلِمًا مَاتَ مِنْ بَعْدِ هَذَا أَسْفًا مَا كَانَ بِهِ مَلُومًا، بَلْ كَانَ بِهِ عِنْدِي جَدِيرًا

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).

فَيَا عَجَبًا! عَجَبًا. وَاللَّهِ - يُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ وَيَجْلِبُ الْهَمَّ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ عَلَى بَاطِلِهِمْ، وَتَفَرُّقِكُمْ عَنْ حَقِّكُمْ! فَقُبْحًا لَكُمْ وَتَرَحًّا حِينَ صِرْتُمْ غَرَضًا يُرْمَى يَغَارُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا تُغَيِّرُونَ، وَتُعْزُونَ وَلَا تَعْرُونَ، وَيَعْصَى اللَّهُ وَتَرْضُونَ! فَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِالسَّيْرِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي أَيَّامِ الْحَرِّ قُلْتُمْ: هَذِهِ حَمَارَةٌ الْقَيْظِ أَمْهَلْنَا يُسْبِخُ عَنَّا الْحَرُّ وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِالسَّيْرِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي الشِّتَاءِ قُلْتُمْ: هَذِهِ صَبَارَةٌ الْفَرِّ، أَمْهَلْنَا يَنْسَلِخُ عَنَّا الْبَرْدُ، كُلُّ هَذَا فِرَارًا مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَالْفَرِّ؛ فَإِذَا كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَالْفَرِّ تَفِرُونَ فَأَنْتُمْ وَاللَّهِ! مِنَ السَّيْفِ أَفْرًا

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 fiercer in war and 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.

يَا أَشْبَاهَ الرَّجَالِ وَلَا رِجَالَ! حُلُومُ الْأَطْفَالِ، وَعُقُولُ رَبَّاتِ الْحِجَالِ لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي لَمْ أُرَكُمْ وَلَمْ أَعْرِفْكُمْ مَعْرِفَةً - وَاللَّهِ -  
 جَرَّتْ نَدْمًا، وَأَعْقَبَتْ سَدْمًا قَاتَلَكُمْ اللَّهُ! لَقَدْ مَلَأْتُمْ قَلْبِي فَيْحًا وَشَحْنْتُمْ صَدْرِي غَيْظًا، وَجَرَعْتُمُونِي نَعَبَ التَّهْمَامِ أَنْفَاسًا  
 وَأَفْسَدْتُمْ عَلَيَّ رَأْيِي بِالْعِصْيَانِ وَالْخِذْلَانِ، حَتَّى قَالَتْ قُرَيْشٌ: إِنَّ ابْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَجُلٌ شَجَاعٌ، وَلَكِنْ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ.  
 لِلَّهِ أَبُوهُمْ! وَهَلْ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ أَشَدُّ لَهَا مِرَاسًا وَأَقْدَمُ فِيهَا مَقَامًا مِنِّي؟! لَقَدْ نَهَضْتُ فِيهَا وَمَا بَلَغْتُ الْعِشْرِينَ، وَهَا أَنَا ذَا قَدْ  
 ذَرَفْتُ عَلَى السِّتِينَ! وَلَكِنْ لَا رَأْيَ لِمَنْ لَا يُطَاعُ

## Alternative Sources for Sermon 27

- (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.

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.

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