

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

About those who found pretexts at the time of jihad

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

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[وفيها يستنهض أصحابه لما حدث في الاطراف]

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 cannot 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?

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، الْمَجْتَمِعَةُ أَبْدَانُهُمْ، الْمُخْتَلِفَةُ أَهْوَاؤُهُمْ، كَلَامُكُمْ يُوهِي الصَّمَّ الصَّلَابَ، وَفِعْلُكُمْ يُطْمِعُ فِيكُمْ الْأَعْدَاءَ! تَقُولُونَ فِي الْمَجَالِسِ: كَيْتَ وَكَيْتَ، فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْقِتَالُ قُلْتُمْ: حَيْدِي حَيَادٍ! مَا عَزَّتْ دَعْوَةُ مَنْ دَعَاكُمْ، وَلَا اسْتَرَاخَ قَلْبُ مَنْ قَاسَاكُمْ، أَعَالِيلُ بِأَضَالِيلَ، دِفَاعَ ذِي الدَّيْنِ الْمَطُولِ، لَا يَمْنَعُ الضَّيِّمَ الدَّلِيلُ! وَلَا يَدْرِكُ الْحَقُّ إِلَّا بِالْجِدِّ! أَيُّ دَارٍ بَعْدَ دَارِكُمْ تَمْنَعُونَ، وَمَعَ أَيِّ إِمَامٍ بَعْدِي تُقَاتِلُونَ؟

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

المَغْرُورُ وَاللَّهِ مَنْ غَرَّرْتُموهُ، وَمَنْ فَازَكُمْ فَازَ بِالسَّهْمِ الْأَخْيَبِ، وَمَنْ رَمَى بِكُمْ فَقَدْ رَمَى بِأَفْوَقٍ نَاصِلٍ. أَصَبَحْتُ وَاللَّهِ لَا أَصَدِّقُ قَوْلَكُمْ، وَلَا أَطْمَعُ فِي نَصْرِكُمْ، وَلَا أُوعِدُ الْعَدُوَّ بِكُمْ. مَا بَالُكُمْ؟ مَا دَوَاؤُكُمْ؟ مَا طِبُّكُمْ؟ الْقَوْمُ رَجَالٌ أَمَنَّاكُمْ، أَقُولُا بَغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ! وَغَفْلَةٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ وَرَعٍ! وَطَمَعًا فِي غَيْرِ حَقٍّ؟

Alternative Sources for Sermon 29

- (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*.

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.

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