

Sermon 48: Praise belongs to God when night ...

Delivered at the time of marching towards Syria.

(ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام

عند المسير إلى الشام

قيل: إنه خطب بها وهو بالنخيلة خارجاً من الكوفة إلى صفين

Praise is due to Allah when night spreads and darkens, and praise be to Allah whenever the star shines and sets. And praise be to Allah whose bounty never misses and whose favours cannot be repaid.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كُلَّمَا وَقَبَ لَيْلٌ وَغَسَقَ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كُلَّمَا لَاحَ نَجْمٌ وَخَفَقَ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مَفْقُودِ الْإِنْعَامِ، وَلَا مُكَافَأِ الْإِفْضَالِ.

Well, I have sent forward my vanguard¹ and have ordered them to remain in camp on this bank of the River till my order reaches them. My intention is that I should cross this water over to the small habitation of people residing on the sides of the Tigris and rouse them to march with you towards the enemy and keep them as auxiliary force for you.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ مُقَدِّمَتِي، وَأَمَرْتُهُمْ بِلُزُومِ هَذَا الْمِلْطَاطِ، حَتَّى يَأْتِيَهُمْ أَمْرِي، وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ أَنْ أَقْطَعَ هَذِهِ النُّطْفَةَ إِلَى شَرْذِمَةِ مِنْكُمْ، مُوْطِنِينَ أَكْنَافَ دَجَلَةَ، فَأَنْهَضَهُمْ مَعَكُمْ إِلَى عَدُوِّكُمْ، وَأَجْعَلَهُمْ مِنْ أُمْدَادِ الْقُوَّةِ لَكُمْ.

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Here by "miltat" Amir al-mu'minin has meant the direction where he had ordered the men to camp and that was the bank of the Euphrates, and "miltat" is used for the bank of a

river although its literal meaning is level ground whereas by "*nutfah*" he means the water of the Euphrates, and these are amazing expressions.

قال السيد الشريف: أقول: يعني عليه السلام بالملطاط ها هنا: السَّمْت الذي أمرهم بلزومه، وهو شاطئ الفرات، ويقال ذلك أيضاً لشاطئ البحر، وأصله ما استوى من الأرض. ويعني بالنطفة: ماء الفرات، وهو من غريب العبارات وعجيبها.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 48

(1) Nasr, *Siffin*, 131, 132;

(2) mentioned by a group of biographers, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, I, 287.

¹. Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon when he camped at the Valley of an-Nukhaylah on Wednesday the 5th Shawwal 37 A.H. on his way to Siffin. The Vanguard mentioned herein means the twelve thousand persons whom he had sent towards Siffin under the command of Ziyad ibn an-Nadr and Shurayh ibn Hani, while the small force of al-Mada'in mentioned by him was a contingent of twelve hundred men who had come up in response to Amir al-mu'minin's call.

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