

## Sermon 71: O people of Iraq ...

*In condemnation of the people of Iraq*

(ومن كلام له (عليه السلام

في ذم أهل العراق

[وفيها يوبّخهم على ترك القتال، والنصر يكاد يتمّ، ثم تكذيبهم له]

Now then, O people<sup>1</sup> of Iraq! You are like the pregnant woman who, on completion of the period of pregnancy delivers a dead child and her husband is also dead and her period of widowhood is long while only remote relation inherits her. By Allah, I did not come to you of my own accord. I came to you by force of circumstances. I have come to know that you say ‘Ali speaks lie. May Allah fight you! Against whom do I speak lie?

Whether against Allah? But I am the first to have believed in him. Whether against His Prophet? But I am the first who testified to him. Certainly not. By Allah it was a way of expression which you failed to appreciate, and you were not capable of it. Woe to you. I am giving out these measures of nice expression free of any cost. I wish there were vessels good enough to hold them.

***Certainly, you will understand it after some time. (Qur'an, 38:88)***

أَمَّا بَعْدُ يَا أَهْلَ الْعِرَاقِ، فَإِنَّمَا أَنْتُمْ كَالْمَرْأَةِ الْحَامِلِ، حَمَلْتَ فَلَمَّا أَتَمَّتْ أَمْلَصَتْ، وَمَاتَ قَيْمُهَا، وَطَالَ تَأْيِمُهَا، وَوَرَثَهَا  
أَبْعَدُهَا.

أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ مَا أُتَيْتُكُمْ اخْتِيَارًا، وَلَكِنْ جِئْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ سَوْقًا، وَلَقَدْ بَلَّغْتَنِي أَنْكُمْ تَقُولُونَ: [عَلِيٌّ] يَكْذِبُ، قَاتِلُكُمْ اللَّهُ! فَعَلَى مَنْ

أَكْذِبُ؟ أَعَلَى اللَّهِ؟ فَأَنَا أَوْلُ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ! أُمَّ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ؟ فَأَنَا أَوْلُ مَنْ صَدَّقَهُ! كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ، وَلَكِنَّهَا لَهَجَةٌ غَبِثَةٌ عَنْهَا، وَلَمْ تَكُونُوا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا، وَيْلُ أُمَّهِ، كَيْبَلًا بَعِيرٍ تَمَنُّ! لَوْ كَانَ لَهُ وَعَاءٌ، ( وَلَتَعْلَمَنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ )

## Alternative Sources for Sermon 71

- (1) Ibn Da'b, *al-'Ikhtisas*, 155;
- (2) al-Mufid, *al-'Irshad*, 161;
- (3) al-Tabarsi, *al-'Ihtijaj*, I, 254;
- (4) al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, II, 236;
- (5) Ibn Qutaybah, *'Uyun*, II, 301;
- (6) al-Mufid, *al-Majalis*, 105;
- (7) Sibt, *Tadhkirah*, 137.

1. When after Arbitration the Iraqis displayed lethargy and heartlessness in retaliating the continuous attacks of Mu`awiyah, Amir al-mu'minin delivered this sermon abusing and admonishing them. Herein he has referred to their being deceived at Siffin and has likened them to a woman who has five qualities:

- i) Firstly, she is pregnant. This implies that these people had full capability to fight, and were not like a barren woman from whom nothing is expected
- ii) Secondly, she has completed the period of pregnancy. That is they had passed over all difficult stages and had approached near the final goal of victory.
- iii) Thirdly, she wilfully miscarries her child. That is after coming close to victory they came down to settlement and instead of achieving the coveted goal faced disappointment.
- iv) Fourthly, her period of widowhood is long. That is they fell in such a state as though they had no protector or patron and they were roaming about without any ruler.
- v) Fifthly, her successors would be distant persons. That is the people of Syria who had no relationship with them would occupy their properties.

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