Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Sermon 168: O my brothers! I am not ignorant of what you know....

After swearing of allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin, some people from among the companions of the Prophet said to him, "You should punish the people who assaulted ‘Uthman," whereupon he said:

(ومن كلام له (عليه السلام

بعد ما بويع بالخلافة

وقد قال له قوم من الصحابة: لو عاقبت قوماً ممن أجلب على عثمان؟ فقال:

O my brothers! I am not ignorant of what you know, but how do I have the power for it while those who assaulted him are in the height of their power. They have superiority over us, not we over them. They are now in the position that even your slaves have risen with them and Bedouin Arabs too have joined them. They are now among you and are harming you as they like. Do you see any way to be able to do what you aim at?

يَا إِخْوَتَاهُ! إِنِّي لَسْتُ أَجْهَلُ مَا تَعْلَمُونَ، وَلكِنْ كَيْفَ لي بِقُوَّة وَالْقَوْمُ الْمُجْلبُونَ عَلَى حَدِّ شَوْكَتِهِمْ، يَمْلِكُونَنَا وَلاَ نَمْلِكُهُمْ! وهَاهُمْ هؤُلاَءِ قَدْ ثَارَتْ مَعَهُمْ عِبْدَانِكُمْ، وَالْتَفَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْرَابُكُمْ، وَهُمْ خِلاَلَكُمْ يَسُومُونَكُمْ مَا شَاؤُوا; وَهَلْ تَرَوْنَ مَوْضِعاً لِقُدْرَة عَلَى شَيء، تُرِيدُونَهُ؟!

This demand is certainly that of the pre-Islamic (*al-jahiliyyah*) period and these people have support behind them. When the matter is taken up, people will have different views about it. One group will think as you do, but another will not think as you think, and there will be still another group who will be neither

this way nor that way. Be patient till people quieten down and hearts settle in their places so that rights can be achieved for people easily.

Rest assured from me, and see what is given to you by me. Do not do anything which shatters your power, weakens your strength and engenders feebleness and disgrace. I shall control this affair as far as possible, but if I find it necessary the last treatment will, of course, be branding with a hot iron (through fighting).

إنَّ هذَا الاْمْرَ أَمْرُ جَاهِلِيَّة، وَإِنَّ لِهؤُلاَءِ الْقَوْمِ مَادَّةً. إنَّ النَّاسَ مِنْ هذَا الاْمْرِ ـ إذَا حُرِّكَ ـ عَلَى أُمُور: فِرْقَةٌ تَرَى مَا تَرَوْنَ، وَفِرقْةٌ تَرَى مَا لاَ تَرَوْنَ، وَفِرْقَةٌ لاَ تَرَى لا هذَا وَلاَ هذَا، فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّى يَهْدَأَ النَّاسُ، وَتَقَعَ الْقُلُوبُ مَوَاقِعَهَا، وَتُؤْخَذَ الْحُقُوقُ مُسْمَحَةً; فَاهْدَأُوا عَنِّي، وَانْظُرُوا مَاذَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَمْرِي، وَلاَ تَفْعَلُوا فَعْلَةً تُضَعْضِعُ قُوَّةً، وَتُسْقِطُ مُنَّةً، وَتُورِثُ وَهْناً وَذِلَّةً. وَسَأُمْسِكُ الاْمْرَ مَا اسْتَمْسَكَ، وَإِذَا لَمْ أَجِدْ بُدّاً فَآخِرُ الدَّواءِ الْكَيُّ

Alternative Sources for Sermon 168

(1) Al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh,* V, 158, events of 35 H.;

(2) Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajarib,* I, 510.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-168-o-my-brothers-i-am-not-ignorant-what-you-know#comment-0