

وَمِنْ خُطْبَةٍ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

From one of his sermons

وَقَدْ قَالَهَا يَسِّرْتَنَّهُمْ بِهَا النَّاسَ حِينَ وَرَدَ خَبْرَ غَزْوِ الْأَنْبَارِ بِجَيْشٍ مُعَاوِيَةَ فَلَمْ يَنْهَضُوا. وَفِيهَا يَذْكَرُ فَضْلَ الْجِهَادِ، وَيَسِّرْتَنَّهُمْ هِضُ النَّاسِ، وَيَذْكَرُ عِلْمَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَيَذْكَرُ عَلَيْهِمُ التَّبِعَةَ لِعَدَمِ طَاعَتِهِ

Exhorting people for jihād

[فضل الجهاد:] أَمَا بَعْدُ! فَإِنَّ الْجِهَادَ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ لِحَاصَّةِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ، وَهُوَ لِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى، وَدِرْعُ اللَّهِ الْحَصِينَةِ، وَجَنَّتَهُ اللُّوثِيْقَةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهُ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ أَلْبَسَهُ اللَّهُ ثَوْبَ الذُّلِّ، وَشَمَلَهُ اللَّبْلَاءُ، وَدَيْثَ الصَّغَارِ وَالْقِمَاءِ [فِي بَعْضِ النسخ: وَالْقِمَاءَةُ]، وَضَرَبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ بِالْإِسْلَامِ هَابًا، وَأَدْبِلَ الْحَقَّ مِنْهُ بِتَضَلُّعِ الْجِهَادِ، وَسِيمَ الْخَسْفِ، وَمَنَعَ النِّصْفِ.

Now then, surely jihād is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allāh has opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armour of Allāh and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it Allāh 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 jihād. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him.

[استنهاض الناس:] أَلَا وَإِنِّي قَدْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ إِلَى قِتَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوَمِ لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا، وَسِرًّا وَعِجْلَانًا، وَقُلْتُ لَكُمْ: اغْلُزُوهُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَغْلُزُوكُمْ، فَوَاللَّهِ! مَا غَزَى قَوْمٌ قَطُّ فِي عَقْلِ دَارِهِمْ إِلَّا ذَلُّوا، فَتَوَاكَلْتُمْ، وَتَخَذَلْتُمْ حَتَّى شَنَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ اللَّغَارَاتِ، وَمَلَكَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَوْطَانَ.

Beware! I called you (insistingly) to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you, because by Allāh, 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.

وَهَذَا أَخُو غَامِدٍ قَدْ [فِي بَعْضِ النسخ: وَقَدْ] وَرَدَتْ خَيْلُهُ الْأَنْبَارَ وَقَدْ قَتَلَ حَسَّانَ بِلْنِ حَسَّانِ الْبَكْرِيِّ، وَأَزَالَ خَيْلَكُمْ عَنْ مَسَاحِجِهَا وَلَقَدْ بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْهُمْ كَانَ يَدُخُلُ عَلَيَّ الْمَرْأَةَ الْمَسْلُومَةَ، وَالْأَخْرَى الْمَعَاهِدَةَ، فَيَنْتَزِعُ حِجْلَهَا وَقَلْبَهَا [وَقَلْبِهَا] وَقَلْبَيْهَا، وَرِعَاثَهَا [فِي بَعْضِ النسخ: وَرِعَاثَهَا]، مَا تَمْتَنِعُ مِنْهُ إِلَّا بِالْإِسْلَامِ جَاعًا وَالْإِسْلَامَ حَامًا،

The horsemen of Banū Ghāmid [1] have reached al-Anbār and killed Ḥassān ibn Ḥassān al-Bakrī. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison. I have come to know that every one of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under protection of Islām 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 Allāh and to Him we shall return.” (Qur’ān, 2:156)

ثُمَّ انْصَرَفُوا وَأَفْرِينِ مَا نَالَ رَجُلًا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا كَلِمَةً وَلَا أُرِيقَ لَهُمْ دَمٌ، فَلَوْ أَنَّ امْرَأً مُسْلِمًا مَاتَ مِنْ بَعْدِ هَذَا أَسْفًا مَا كَانَ بِهِ مَلُومًا، بَلْ كَانَ بِهِ عِنْدِي جَدِيرًا.

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.

فِيَا عَجِبًا! عَجِبًا وَاللَّهِ! يُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ وَيَجْلِبُ الْإِلْهَمَ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوَمِ عَلَيَّ بَاطِلِهِمْ، وَتَفَرُّقِكُمْ عَنِّي حَقِّكُمْ! فِقَبْلِحَا لَكُمْ وَتَرَاحَا حِينَ صَرْتُمْ غَرَضًا يَرْمِي: يَغَارُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا تَغَيِّرُونَ، وَتَغْلِزُونَ وَلَا تَغْلِزُونَ، وَيَعْلِصِي إِلَيْهِ وَتَرْتَضُونَ!

How strange! How strange! By Allāh, 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. Allāh is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it.

فَإِذَا أَمَرَ تَكُمُ بِالسَّيْرِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي أَيَّامِ الْحَرِّ قُلْتُمْ: هَذِهِ حَمَارَةُ الْقَيْظِ ظُمَّمُهَا نَا يُسْبِخُ عِنَّا الْحَرُّ، وَإِذَا أَمَرَ تَكُمُ بِالسَّيْرِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي الشِّتَاءِ قُلْتُمْ: هَذِهِ صِبَارَةُ الْقَطْرِ، أُمَّهَلْنَا يَنْسَلِخُ عِنَّا الْبَرْدُ، كُلُّ هَذَا فِرَارًا مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَالْقَطْرِ، فَإِذَا كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَالْقَطْرِ تَفِرُونَ فَأَنْتُمْ وَاللَّهِ! مِنَ السَّيْفِ أَفْر!

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 or cold. Because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by Allāh, running away (in a greater degree) from sword (war).

[البرم بالناس:] يَا أَشْلِبَاهُ الرِّجَالِ وَلَا رِجَالٍ! حُلُومِ الْأَطْلِفَالِ، وَعُقُولُ رِبَاتِ الْحِجَالِ، لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي لَمْ أُرْكُمْ وَلَمْ أَعْرِفْكُمْ مَعْرِفَةً وَاللَّهِ! جَرْتُمْ نَدْمًا، وَأَعْلَقْتُمْ سَدْمًا.

O you semblances 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 Allāh, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance.

قَاتَلَكُمُ اللَّهُ! لَقَدْ مَلَأْتُمْ قُلُوبِي قَيْحًا، وَشَحَنْتُمْ صُدُورِي غَيْلًا، وَجَرَعْتُمْ نُغْبَ التَّهْمَامِ أَنْفَا سَاءً، وَأَفْسَدْتُمْ قَاتَلَكُمُ اللَّهُ!

عَلِيَّ رَأَيْي بِالْعَصَبِ يَانَ وَالْخَذْلَى لَانَ، حَتَّى قَالَتْ [فِي بَعْضِ النسخ: حَتَّى لَقَدْتُ قَالَتْ] قُرَيْشٌ: إِنَّ ابْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَجُلٌ شَجَاعٌ، وَلَكِنْ [وَلَكِنْ] لَا عِدْلَمَ لَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ.

May Allāh fight you! you have filled my heart with puss 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 Abī Ṭālib is brave but does not know (tactics of) war.

لِللَّهِ أَبُوهُمْ! وَهَلْ [أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ] أَشَدُّ لَهَا مِرَاسًا، وَأَقْدَمُ فِيهَا مِقَامًا مِنِّي؟! لَقَدْتُ نَهَضْتُ فِيهَا وَمَا بَلَغْتُ الْعِشْرِينَ، وَهَذَا أَنَا ذَا قَدِّ ذَرَفْتُ عَلَى السِّتِينَ! وَلَكِنْ [لَا رَأْيَ لِمَنْ] [لِمَنْ] لَا يَطَاعُ!

Allāh bless them! Is any one of them more fierce in war and more 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.

Notes:

[1] After the battle of Şiffin, Mu‘āwiyah had spread killing and bloodshed all round, and started encroachments on cities within Amīr al-Mu‘minīn’s domain. In this connection, he despatched Sufyān ibn ‘Awf al-Ghāmīdī with a force of six thousand to attack Ḥīt, al-Anbār, and al-Madā’in. First he reached al-Madā’in, but finding it deserted, proceeded to al-Anbār. Here a contingent of five hundred soldiers was posted as guard from Amīr al-Mu‘minīn’s side, but it could not resist the fierce army of Mu‘āwiyah. Only a hundred men stuck to their position, and they did face them stoutly as far as they could; but the enemy forces, acting jointly, made such a severe attack that they too could no longer resist, and the chief of the contingent Ḥassān ibn Ḥassān al-Bakrī was killed along with thirty others. When the battlefield was cleared, the enemy ransacked al-Anbār with full freedom and left the city completely destroyed.

When Amīr al-Mu‘minīn received the news of this attack, he ascended the pulpit and exhorted the people for crushing the enemy and called them to jihād, 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. Amīr al-Mu‘minīn 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, Amīr al-Mu‘minīn consented to return, and Sa‘īd ibn Qays al-Hamdānī proceeded forward

with a force of eight thousand. But Sufyān ibn 'Awf al-Ghāmidī already departed, so Sa'īd returned without any encounter.

When Sa'īd reached Kūfah, then - according to the version of Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd - Amīr al-Mu'minīn was so deeply grieved and indisposed during those days that he did not even wish to enter the mosque, but instead sat at Bāb al-Suddah (the corridor of his residence adjoining the mosque entrance) and wrote this sermon, and gave it to his slave Sa'd to read it to the people. However, al-Mubarrad (al-Kāmil, vol. I, pp. 104-107) has related from 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Ḥafṣ al-Taymī, from Ibn 'Ā'ishah, that Amīr al-Mu'minīn delivered this sermon on a raised place at an-Nukhaylah. Ibn Maytham has held this view preferable.