

Sermon 22: Beware! Satan has certainly started....

When he received reports about those who had broken their oath of allegiance to him

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام)

حين بلغه خبر الناكثين ببيعته

[وفيها يذم عملهم ويلزمهم دم عثمان ويتهددهم بالحرب]

Beware! Satan has certainly started instigating his forces and has collected his army in order that oppression may reach its extreme ends and wrong may come back to its position. By Allah they have not put a correct blame on me, nor have they done justice between me and themselves.

أَلَا وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ ذَمَّرَ حِزْبَهُ وَاسْتَجَلَبَ جَلْبَهُ لِيَعُودَ الْجَوْرُ إِلَى أَوْطَانِهِ، وَيَرْجِعَ
الْبَاطِلُ إِلَى نِصَابِهِ وَاللَّهِ مَا أَنْكُرُوا عَلَيَّ مُنْكَرًا، وَلَا جَعَلُوا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ نَصِيفًا

Criticism of their actions

يذم عملهم

They are demanding of me a right which they have abandoned, and a blood that they have themselves shed. 1 If I were a partner with them in it then they too have their share of it. But if they did it without me they alone have to face the consequences. Their biggest argument (against me) is (really) against themselves.

They are suckling from a mother who is already dry, and bringing into life innovation that is already dead. How disappointing is this challenger (to battle)? Who is this challenger and for what is he being responded to? I am happy that the reasoning of Allah has been exhausted before them and He knows (all) about them.

وَأَنَّهُمْ لِيَطْلُبُونَ حَقًّا هُمْ تَرَكَوهُ، وَدَمًا هُمْ سَفَكُوهُ، فَلَئِن كُنْتُ شَرِيكُهُمْ فِيهِ فَاِنَّ لَهُمْ لَنَصِيبَهُمْ مِنْهُ، وَلَئِن كَانُوا وَلَوْهُ دُونِي، فَمَا التَّبِعَةُ إِلَّا عِنْدَهُمْ، وَإِنَّ أَكْبَرَ حُجَّتِهِمْ لَعَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ، يَرْتَضِعُونَ أُمَّاً قَدْ فَطَمَتْ وَيُحْيُونَ بَدْعَةً قَدَامَيْتَتْ. يَا خَيْبَةَ الدَّاعِي! مَنْ دَعَا! وَالْأَمُّ أَجِيبًا! وَإِنِّي لَرَاضٍ بِحُجَّةِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَعَلِمِهِ فِيهِمْ.

The threat to wage war against them

التهديد بالحرب

If they refuse (to obey) I will offer them the edge of the sword which is enough a curer of wrong and supporter of Right.

It is strange they send me word to proceed to them for spear-fighting and to keep ready for fighting with swords. May the mourning women mourn over them. I have ever been so that I was never frightened by fighting nor threatened by clashing. I enjoy full certainty of belief from My God and have no doubt in my faith.

فَاِنَّ أَبَوًا أُعْطِيَتْهُمْ حَدَّ السَّيْفِ، وَكَفَى بِهِ شَافِيًا مِنَ الْبَاطِلِ، وَنَاصِرًا لِلْحَقِّ! وَمِنْ الْعَجَبِ بَعَثْتُهُمْ إِلَيَّ أَنْ أُبْرِزَ لِلطَّعَانِ! وَأَنْ أُصْبَرَ لِلجَلَادِ! هَبَلَتْهُمْ الْهَبُولُ! لَقَدْ كُنْتُ وَمَا أَهْدَدُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَلَا أُرْهَبُ بِالضَّرْبِ! وَإِنِّي لَعَلَى يَقِينٍ مِنْ رَبِّي، وَغَيْرِ شُبْهَةٍ

Alternative Sources for Sermon 22

- (1) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-ʿImamah*, I, 154;
- (2) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 35;
- (3) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid*, 95;
- (4) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf*, 173;
- (5) al-Tusi, *al-ʿAmali*, I, 172;
- (6) al-Khwarazmi, *al-Manaqib*; 117;
- (7) Ibn al-ʿAthir, *al-Nihayah*, I, 171, II, 167;
- (8) al-Mufid, *al-Jamal*, * 129; see Sermon:26 and Sermon:171 below.

1. When Amir al-mu'minin was accused of ʿUthman's assassination he delivered this sermon to refute that allegation, wherein he says about those who blamed him that: "These seekers of vengeance cannot say that I alone am the assassin and that no one else took part in it. Nor can they falsify witnessed events by saying that they were unconcerned with it. Why then have they put me foremost for this avenging? With me they should include themselves also. If I am free of this blame they cannot establish their freedom from it. How can they detach themselves from this punishment? The truth of the matter is that by accusing me of this charge their aim is that I should behave with them in the same manner to which they are accustomed. But they should not expect from me that I would revive the innovations of the previous regimes. As for fighting, neither was I ever afraid of it nor am I so now. Allah knows my intention and He also knows that those standing on the excuse of taking revenge are themselves his assassins." Thus, history corroborates that the people who managed his (ʿUthman's) assassination by agitation and had even prevented his burial in Muslims' graveyard by hurling stones at his coffin were the same who rose for avenging his blood. In this connection, the names of Talhah ibn ʿUbaydillah, az-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwam and ʿAʿishah are at the top of the list since on both occasions their efforts come to sight with conspicuousness. Thus Ibn Abi'l-Hadid writes that:

Those who have written the account of assassination of ʿUthman state that on the day of his killing Talhah's condition was that in order to obscure himself from the eyes of the people he had a veil on his face and was shooting arrows at ʿUthman's house.

And in this connection, about az-Zubayr's ideas he writes:

Historians have also state that az-Zubayr used to say "Kill ʿUthman. He has altered your faith." People said, "Your son is standing at his door and guarding him," and he replied, "Even my son may be lost, but ʿUthman must be killed. ʿUthman will be lying like a carcass on Sirat tomorrow." (Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, vol.9, pp. 35-36)

About ʿAʿishah, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih writes:

al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah came to ʿAʿishah when she said, "O' Abu ʿAbdillah, I wish you had been with me on the day of Jamal; how arrows were piercing through my hawdaj (camel litter) till some of them stuck my body." al- Mughirah said, "I wish one of them should have killed you." She said, "Allah may have pity you; why so?" He replied, "So that it would have

been some atonement for what you had done against `Uthman." (al-`Iqd al-farid, vol. 4, p. 294)

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