

Sermon 39: I am faced with men who do not obey ...

In disparagement of those who shrink from fighting

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام)

[خطبها عند علمه بغزوة النعمان بن بشير صاحب معاوية لعين التمر]

[وفيها يبدي عذره، ويستنهض الناس لنصرته]

I am faced with men who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call them. May you have no father! (Woe to you!) What are you waiting for to rise for the cause of Allah? Does not faith join you together, or sense of shame rouse you? I stand among you shouting and I am calling you for help, but you do not listen to my word, and do not obey my orders, till circumstances show out their bad consequences.

No blood can be avenged through you and no purpose can be achieved with you. I called you for help of your brethren but made noises like the camel having pain in stomach, and became loose like the camel of thin back. Then a wavering weak contingent came to me from amongst you: “as if they are being led to death and they are only watching.”¹ (Qur’an, 8:6)

مُنِيْتُ بِمَنْ لَا يُطِيعُ إِذَا أَمَرْتُ وَلَا يُجِيبُ إِذَا دَعَوْتُ، لَا أَبَا لَكُمْ! مَا تَنْتَظِرُونَ

بَنَصْرِكُمْ رَبِّكُمْ؟ أَمَا دِينَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ، وَلَا حَمِيَّةَ تُحْمَشُكُمْ؟! أَقُومُ فِيكُمْ مُسْتَصْرِخًا،
وَأُنَادِيكُمْ مُتَغَوِّثًا، فَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ لِي قَوْلًا، وَلَا تُطِيعُونَ لِي أَمْرًا، حَتَّى تَكْشِفَ الْأُمُورُ
عَنْ عَوَاقِبِ الْمَسَاءَةِ، فَمَا يُدْرِكُ بِكُمْ تَارٌ، وَلَا يُبَلِّغُ بِكُمْ مَرَامٌ، دَعَوْتُكُمْ إِلَيَّ نَصْرًا
إِخْوَانِكُمْ فَجَرَجَرْتُمْ جَرَجْرَةَ الْجَمَلِ الْأَسْرَى، وَتَثَاقَلْتُمْ تَثَاقُلَ النَّضْوِ الْأَدْبَرِ، ثُمَّ خَرَجَ
إِلَيَّ مِنْكُمْ جُنَيْدٌ مُتَذَائِبٌ ضَعِيفٌ (كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ).

As-Sayyid ar-Radi says: Amir al-mu'minin's word "*mutadha'ib*" means "*mudtarib*" (i.e. moved or troubled), as they say "*tadha'abat ar-rih*" (i.e. the winds blow in troubled manner). Similarly the wolf is called "*dhi'b*" because of its troubled movement.

قال السيد الشريف: أقول: قوله (عليه السلام): «مُتَذَائِبٌ» أي: مضطرب، من قولهم: تذاعبت الريح أي: اضطرب هبوبها، ومنه سمي الذئب، لاضطراب مشيته.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 39

- (1) Al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*, I, 291, 297, II, 453-4;
- (2) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab*, II, 404;
- (3) al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, VI, 41, events of the year 39 H.

1. Mu'awiyah sent a contingent of two thousand soldiers under an-Nu'man ibn Bashir to assault `Aynu't-Tamr. This place was a defence base of Amir al-mu'minin near Kufah whose incharge was Malik ibn Ka'b al-Arhabi. Although there were a thousand combatants under him, but at the moment only hundred men were present there. When Malik noticed the offensive force advancing he wrote to Amir al-mu'minin for help. When Amir al-mu'minin received the message he asked the people for his help but only three hundred men got ready as a result of which Amir al-mu'minin was much disgusted and delivered this sermon in their admonition. When Amir al-mu'minin reached his house after delivering the sermon `Adi ibn Hatim at-Ta'i came and said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin a thousand men of Banu Tayyi' are under me. If you say I shall send them off." Amir al-mu'minin said, "It does not look nice that people of one tribe only should meet the enemy. You prepare your force in the Valley of an-Nukhaylah." Accordingly he went there and called people to jihad, when besides Banu Tayyi' one thousand other combatants also assembled. They were still preparing to set off when word reached from Malik ibn Ka'b that there was no need for help as he had repulsed the enemy.

The reason of this was that Malik had sent off `Abdullah ibn Hawalah al-Azdi hastily to Qarazah ibn Ka'b al-Ansari and Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym al-Azdi so that if there was delay in the arrival of support from Kufah he could get help from here in time. `Abdullah went to both, but got no help from Qarazah. However, Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym got ready fifty persons under `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mikhnaf and they reached there near evening. Upto that time the two thousand men (of the enemy)

had not been able to subdue the hundred men of Malik. When an-Nu`man saw these fifty men he thought that their forces had started coming in so he fled away from the battlefield. Even in their retreat Malik attacked them from rear and killed three of their men.

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