

A Sermon of Imam 'Ali without the letter Alif

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Imam Ali

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Article

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A sermon by the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) that does not contain any Arabic letter Alif.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

في أحد الأيام دار بين العرب و المسلمين نقاش كبير، فقبل ليس من حرف المعجم حرف أكثر دوراناً في الكلام من "الأليف"، فأيد ذلك جميع الجالسين ... تبع ذلك أن نهض نبراس اللغة الأنيق و بحرهما العميق و فيلسوفها الدقيق الامام علي بن أبي طالب (عليه السلام) و خطب خطبة طويلة تشتمل على الثناء على الله تعالى و الصلاة و السلام على نبيه محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب (صلى الله عليه و على آله و سلم) و هي خالية من بدايتها الى نهايتها - من ذكر حرف "الأليف" (الممدودة) و هي كما يلي

One day, a heated discussion went on among the Arabs and Muslims during which it was said that there is no alphabet that recurs in speech more often than the "aleef" ("A"). All attendants agreed. It was then that the magnificent lantern of language, its deep ocean and precise philosopher, namely Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), stood up and delivered a lengthy sermon which included praise of Allah Almighty, prayers and salutations unto His Prophet, Muhammed ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib (peace and blessings of Allah be with him and his progeny). The statements of the entire sermon, from beginning to end, did not contain a single word having the "aleef" (*mamdooda*, elongated alpha) the humble translation (by Yasin T. al-Jibouri) of it is as follows:

حمدت من عظمت منته، و سبغت نعمته، و سبقت غضبه رحمته، و تمت كلمته، و نفذت مشيته، و بلغت حجته (قضيته)، و عدلت قضيته. حمدته حمد مقرر بربوبيته، متخضع لعبوديته، متنصل من خطيئته، معترف بتوحيده، مستعيز من وعيده، مؤمل من ربه رحمة (مغفرة) تنجيته، يوم يشغل كل عن فصيلته و بنيته، و نستعينه و نسترشده و نستهديه، و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه. و شهدت له تشهد عبد مخلص موقن، و فردته تفريد مؤمن متق و وحدته توحيد عبد مدعن، ليس له شريك في ملكه و لم يكن له ولي في صنعه؛ جل عن مشير و وزير، و تنزه عن مثل و عون و معين و نظير، علم فستر و بطن فخير، و نظر فجبر، و ملك فقهر؛ و عصي فغفر، و عبد فشكر، و حكم فعدل، و تكرم و تفضل.. لن يزول و لم يزل، ليس كمثله شيء، و هو قبل كل شيء و بعد كل شيء رب متفرد بعزته، متمكن بقوته، متقدس بعلوه، متكبر بسموه، ليس يدركه بصر و لم يحط به نظر، قوي منيع، بصير سميع، حليم حكيم، رؤوف رحيم، عجز عن وصفه من وصفه، و ظل نعته من نعته، و صل به من نعمته من يعرفه، قرب فبعد، و بعد فقرب، يجيب دعوة من يدعوه، و يرزق عبده و يحبوه، ذو لطف خفي، و بطش قوي، و رحمة موسعة، و عقوبة

(موجعة، و رحمته جنة عريضة موقنة، و عقوبته جحيم موصدة موقنة (موقنة

I praise the One Whose boon is great, whose blessing overwhelms, whose mercy is faster than His anger, the One whose word is perfect, whose will is affected, whose argument (issue) is wise, whose case is just. I praise Him like one recognizing His Godhead, submissive while adoring Him, dissociating himself from his sin, recognizing His Unity, seeking refuge with Him against His warning, hopeful for the mercy (forgiveness) of his Lord that saves him [from the Fire] on a Day when everyone will be distracted even from his offspring and tribe. We seek His help, guidance and directions. We believe in Him and depend on Him. I have testified to Him as a sincere and convinced servant/slave; I recognize His Uniqueness as a pious believer, and I have recognized His Unity like a submissive servant/slave.

He has no partner in His domain; He relies on none in doing whatever He does. He is exalted above having an adviser or a vizier. He is above using a model or an assistant or a helper or a peer. He knows, so He covers; He is acquainted with the innermost, so He is most familiar [with our intentions]. He cast a look, so He assisted; He owns everything, so He subdues. He is disobeyed, yet He forgives; He is adored, so He thanks. He rules, so He affects justice, and He is generous and grants favors.

He shall never come to an end, and He has always been as He is; there is nothing like Him. He, first and foremost, is a unique Lord in His exaltation, able through His might, holy through His sublimity, proud of His Majesty; no (mental) vision can realize Him, nor can anyone ever see Him. He is strong, invincible, seeing, hearing, clement, wise, affectionate and kind. One who attempts to describe Him can never do so; one who attempts to describe His attributes can never do so [either]. His blessing reaches those who get to know Him: He is near, so He is far [above mental or physical vision]; He is far yet He is near [closer to us than anything else].

He responds to the call of those who call on Him; He sustains His servant and surrounds him with His love; His niceties are hidden [from our comprehension]; His power is mighty; His mercy is wide; His penalty is painful; His mercy is a broad and a Garden of grandeur (Paradise); His punishment is Hell filled with horrors and chains.

و شهدت ببعث محمد (ص) عبده و رسوله، و نبيه و صفيه و حبيبه و خليله، صلة تحظيه، و تزلفه و تعليه، و تقربه و تدنيه، بعثه في خير عصر و حين فترة كفر، رحمة لعبيده و منة لمزيدة، ختم به نبوته، و قوى (وضح) به حجته، فوعظ و نصح و بلغ و كدح، رؤوف بكل مؤمن رحيم، رضي ولي سخي زكي، عليه رحمة و تسليم و بركة و تكريم، من رب غفور رؤوف رحيم، قريب مجيب حكيم.

I have testified that He sent Muhammed (ص) as His servant and messenger, prophet, chosen one, loved one, friend, a link [with the Almighty] that grants him [Muhammed] fortune, bringing him closer to Him, elevating him, granting him nearness and closeness [to the Almighty]. He sent him during a good (opportune) period of time, when there was disbelief, as mercy for His servants and a boon for more.

Through him He sealed His prophetic messages, strengthened (explained) His argument. So he admonished, advised, conveyed the message and worked hard [for people. He was, affectionate towards every believer, merciful, easy to please, the friend of anyone who is generous and pure: mercy, salutation, blessing and honor be with him from a forgiving, affectionate, kind, near, responsive and wise Lord.

وصيتكم معشر من حضرني بتقوى (بوصية) ربكم، و ذكرتكم بسنة نبيكم، فعليكم برهبة تسكن قلوبكم، و خشية تذرف دموعكم، و تقية تنجيكم يوم يذهلكم و يبليكم، يوم يفوز فيه من ثقل وزن حسنته، و خف وزن سيئته. لتكن مسألتكم مسألة (سؤل) ذل و خضوع و شكر و خشوع، و توبة و نزوع، و ندم و رجوع، و ليغتنم كل مغتنم منكم صحته قبل سقمه، و شببته قبل هرمه فكبره و مرضه، و سعته قبل فقره و خلوته (فرغته) قبل شغله، و ثروته قبل فقره، و حضره قبل سفره، و حيته قبل موته، ثم يكبر و يهن و يهرم و يمرض و يسقم و يمل طبيبه و يعرض عنه حبيبه، و ينقطع عمره و يتغير لونه، و يقل عقله، ثم قيل: هو موعوك و جسمه منهوك، قد جد في نزع شديد، و حضره قريب و بعيد، فشخص ببصره و طمح بنظره و رشح جبينه و خطف عرنيته و سكن حنينه و جنبت نفسه و بكته عرسه و حفر رمسه و يتم منه ولده و تفرق عنه عدده (عدوه و صديقه)، و قسم جمعه و ذهب بصره و سمعه، و لقن و مدد، و وجه و جرد، و غسل و عري و نشف و سجي، و بسط له و هيئ

I have admonished you, O folks who are present here with me, to be pious (as your Lord has admonished) towards your Lord, and I have reminded you of the Sunna of your Prophet; so, take to awe that calms your hearts, fear that draws your tears, piety that saves you on a Day which will puzzle your minds and put you to the test, a day in which one shall win if the weight of his good deeds is heavy while that of his sins is light. Let your plea be in humility and surrender, appreciation and submission, repentance and dissociation [from sin], regret and return [to righteousness].

Let everyone of you seize the opportunity when he is healthy before the time when he is sick, when he is young before he is aged, old and sick, [the opportunity] of his ease before he is poor, of having free time before he is busy, of being wealthy before being impoverished, of being present at home before he is away traveling, of being alive before his death. He shall grow old, become weak, aged, sick, ailing, so much so that even his doctor is fed-up with him, even those who love him turn away from him. His lifespan will have come to an end. His color of complexion is changed. His mental power is decreased, so it is said that he is ailing and his body is failing. He is having a hard time as he finds himself suffering from the throes of death: He is attended by those who are close and who are distant.

He gazes his looks, yearns as he turns his eyes, his forehead sweating, his [physical] senses being snatched away from him [one by one]. His sighs are now silent, his soul has departed, so he is mourned by his wife. His grave is dug, his children are now orphans, those who were around him (his friends or foes) are now dispersed from around him. What he had accumulated (legacy) has now been divided [among heirs]. Gone now are his faculty of seeing and hearing; so he receives Talqeen; he is stretched [on the ground] and directed [towards the Qibla]. He is stripped of his clothes, bathed, in the nude, dried then directed [towards the Qibla].

و نشر عليه كفته، و شدد منه ذقنه، و قبض و ودع ، و قمص و عمام و لف و سلم و حمل فوق سرير و صلي عليه بتكبير بغير سجود و تعفير و نقل من دور مزخرفة و قصور مشيدة و حجر منضدة، فجعل في ضريح ملحد، ضيق مرصود، بلبن منضود، مسقف بجلمود، و هيل عليه عفره و حتي عليه مدره، فتحقق حذره، و تخفق صدره، و نسي خبره، و رجع عنه وليه و صفيه و نديمه و نسيبه و حميمه، و تبدل به قرينه و حبيب، فهو حشوق قبر و رهين قفر، يسعي في جسمه دود قبره، و يسيل صديده في منخره على صدره و نحره، تسحق تربته لحمه و ينشف دمه و يرق عظمه و يقم في قبره حتى يوم حشره و نشره، فينشر من قبره و ينفخ في صوره و يدعى لحشره و نشوره، فثم بعثت قبور و حصلت سريرة في صدور و جئ بكل نبي و صديق و شهيد و ناطق، و وقف لفصل حكمه عند رب قدير بعبده خبير بصير، فكم من زفرة تضيفه و حسرة تنضيه (تقصيه)، في موقف مهول و مشهد جليل، بين يدي ملك عظيم،

Something has been spread on the floor for him as his shrouds are being prepared. His chin has been tied, his soul has already departed from his body and he has been bidden farewell by all. He is now shrouded, his head wrapped, so is his body, and he has been handed over [for burial]. He is carried in a wooden box (coffin); his funeral prayers have been performed with Takbir but without prostration or the rubbing of the forehead. He is taken away from a decorated abode [this life], from well-built mansions and chambers topping each other, so he is now in an enclosure of a grave which is very narrow and separated from others; it is built with baked clay on top of each other and is sealed with a rock.

Dust has been healed on him, so he now is sure about that of which he was warned; his chest is now heavy; he is now a thing of the past. His friends, chosen ones, companions, in-laws and close friends have all left him behind. His company and loved ones are now changed, for he is now nothing but the filling of a grave and the pawn of a waste: Worms crawl all over his body, his pus drips from his nostrils on his neck and chest. Soil crushes his flesh as his blood dries and bone decays. He remains in his grave till the Day when he is herded with others and is given a new life; so, he is taken out of his grave. His trumpet is blown, he is called on to gather with others and stand trial. Graves are scattered around, the innermost in the hearts are recorded and calculated.

Every prophet, Siddiq, martyr, anyone who speaks is brought and made to stand for the final judgment of an Able God Who is fully knowledgeable of His servants, seeing [all what they do]. Countless exhalations engulf him, sighs fade him (distance him), in a horrific position and an awesome scene before a Great King,

بكل صغيرة و كبيرة عليهم، يلجمه عرقه و يجفوه قلقه، فعبرته غير مرحومة و صرخته (حجته) غير مقبولة، و برزت صحيفته و تبينت جريرته، و نطق كل عضو منه بسوء عمله، فشهدت عينه بنظره و يده ببطشه و رجله بخطوه و جلده بلمسه و فرجه بمسه، و يهدده منكر و تكير، و كشف له حيث يسير، فسلسل جيده و غلت يده و سيق يسحب وحده، فورد جهنم بكرب و شده، فظل يعذب في جحيم، و يسقى من حميم، يشوي وجهه و يسلخ جلده، يضربه زبانيته بمقمع من حديد، و يعود جلده بعد نضجه كجلد جديد، يستغيث فتعرض عنه خزنة جهنم، و يستصرخ، فيلبث حقة بندم، فلم يجده ندمه، و لم ينفعه حينئذ ندمه. نعوذ برب قدير من شر كل مصير

Who knows about everything small and big. He is reined by his sweat, his worry crushing him, yet his tear has none to feel sorry for, his scream (defense) is not accepted. His record of deeds is brought, his innermost becomes visible, and every part of his body now speaks of his wrongdoings:

His eyes testify about what he had seen, his hands about whom he beat, his legs about where he had gone, his skin about what he had contacted, his private parts about with whom he had had intercourse. He is threatened by Munkir and Nakir; and it is unveiled for him where he is heading; so his neck now is tied with chains and his hands are cuffed. He is taken alone, dragged and brought to Hell as he is in a great distress and hardship. He remains in the torment of hell given to drink of very hot pus that grills his face and separates his skin from his body. He is beaten by the torture angels of hell with iron clubs. His skin returns again and again anew after having been baked. He cries for help, yet even the angels in Hell turn away from him. He pleads for mercy, so he stays for a while regretful, yet he finds none to care about his regret. His regret will then be in vain.

We seek refuge with an Able Lord from the evil of any final end such as this,

و نطلب منه عفو من رضى عنه، و مغفرة من قبل منه، فهو ولي سؤلي و منجح طلبتي، فمن زحزح عن تعذيب ربه سكن في جنته بقربه و خلد في قصور مشيده، و ملك حور عين و حفدة، و طيف عليه بكؤوس و سكن حضير فردوس، و تقلب في نعيم، و سقي من تسنيم و شرب من عين سلسيل ممزوجة بزنجبيل، مختومة بمسك و عبير، مستديم للسرور و مستشعر للحبور، يشرب من خمور، في روضة مغدق ليس يصدع من شربه و ليس ينزف، هذا منقلب من خشى ربه و حذر ذنبه و نفسه، و تلك عقوبة من عصى منشئه و سولت له نفسه معصية مبدئه، ذلك قول فصل، و حكمة حكم عدل، قص قصص، و وعظ نص، تنزيل من حكيم حميد، نزل به روح قدس مبين (متين) من عند رب كريم على نبي مهتد مهدي رشيد رحمة للمؤمنين، مبين من عند رب كريم، و سيد حلت عليه سفرة، مكرمون بررة.

and we plead for forgiveness similar to that of one with whom He is pleased and for an overlooking similar to that of one whose good deeds He has accepted; for He is my Master, ultimate pursuit and the one Who grants success to what I seek. Surely one who is pushed away from the torment of his Lord shall reside in Paradise near to Him and remain forever in well-built mansions, having huris with large lovely eyes and servants. He is given to drink of fresh cool water mixed with ginger and sealed with musk and fragrance that perpetuates happiness and provides the sense of pleasure.

He drinks of wines in an orchard filled with all types of pleasures, wine that does not cause any headache to one who drinks it, and it never runs out; such is the ultimate end of one who fears his Lord, who is on guard about his sin, about the insinuations of his nafs (self), and that was the penalty of one who opposes the [sinless] way [in which] he was created, the one whose evil self-decorates for him to do what is against his nature. Such is the final judgment and the ruling of One Who is just: He narrated parables, admonished through texts, revealed revelations from a Praiseworthy Wise One, revelations which He descended with a clear (able) Holy Spirit [arch-angel Gabriel] from a Glorious Lord unto a Prophet who is rightly guided and who guides others, one who shows others the right way, a mercy to

the believers, clearly from a Great Lord, a master frequented by messengers (angels) who are honored and obedient [of their Lord].

عذت بر ب عللم حكلم، قءلر رءلم، من شر عءو و لعلم رءلم، فللمضرع ملمضرعكم، و بللمل ململمكم، و لملمغر
رب كل مرلوب لم و لكم

I have sought refuge with a Lord Who is knowing, wise, able, merciful, from the evil of an enemy who is cursed and stoned; so, let everyone who pleads plead, and let everyone who seeks [favours of his Lord] seek and ask forgiveness of the Lord of lords for myself and for you all.

ثم قرأ بعءل قولل عللى: {لك الللر الللرل نعللل للللن لا لرلءون علو لل اللرض ولا فسلل و الللقبل لللمللن}
83:القصص).

Having finished his miraculous sermon, the Imam (ع) recited this following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"We shall grant that (eternal) abode of the hereafter to those who intend neither high-handedness nor mischief on earth, and such end is (the best reward) for the righteous" (Qur'an, 28:83).

Sources:

[1] بءلر اللنوار- العللمل المءلسل، ء74، ص342، روالل28، باب14 [1]

Bihaarul Anwaar – Allama Majlisi – Ch. 74. Part13, page 342. Hadeeth 28.

[2] مصباح الكفعمل- الشلخ قل الللن ابرللم العللم الكفعمل، ء2، ص849-852 [2]

Misbah al-Kaf'ami – Sheikh Taqi Ad-deen Ibrahim Al-Aamili al-Kaf'ami – Ch. 2. Verse 849-842

(الللال مصباح الكفعمل بلن قوسلن- اللقل شعلان الللرللال)

(Difference of Misbah Al-Kaf'ami between two brackets- verified by Sha'lan Al-Asterbadi)

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