The Sermon sans Aleph

Al-Khutba al-Muniqa: the sermon of Imam Ali (a.s.) composed entirely without the letter aleph — delivered when the Arabs marvelled that no speech could do without it. A hymn of God's unity and a meditation on death and the Hereafter, recited in remembrance of his martyrdom.

224 lines · 48–50 min · alzair.app/sermons/sermon-sans-aleph

1

حمدت من عظمت منته،

I praise Him like one recognizing His Godhead,

2

و سبغت نعمته،

whose blessing overwhelms,

3

و سبقت غضبه رحمته،

whose mercy is faster than His anger,

4

و تمت كلمته،

the One whose word is perfect,

5

و نفذت مشيته،

whose will is affected,

6

و بلغت حجته (قضيته)،

whose argument is wise,

7

و عدلت قضيته.

whose case is just.

8

حمدته حمد مقر بربوبيته،

I praise the One Whose boon is great,

9

متخضع لعبوديته،

submissive while adoring Him,

10

متنصل من خطيئته،

dissociating himself from his sin,

11

معترف بتوحيده،

recognizing His Unity,

12

مستعيذ من وعيده،

seeking refuge with Him against His warning,

13

مؤمل من ربه رحمة (مغفرة) تنجيه،

hopeful for the mercy (forgiveness) of his Lord that saves him [from the Fire]

14

يوم يشغل كل عن فصيلته و بنيه،

on a Day when everyone will be distracted even from his offspring and tribe.

15

و نستعينه و نسترشده و نستهديه،

We seek His help, guidance and directions.

16

و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه.

We believe in Him and depend on Him.

17

و شهدت له تشهد عبد مخلص موقن،

I have testified to Him as a sincere and convinced servant/slave;

18

و فردته تفريد مؤمن متق

I recognize His Uniqueness as a pious believer,

19

و وحدته توحيد عبد مذعن،

and I have recognized His Unity like a submissive servant/slave.

20

ليس له شريك في ملكه

He has no partner in His domain;

21

و لم يكن له ولي في صنعه؛

He relies on none in doing whatever He does.

22

جل عن مشير و وزير،

He is exalted above having an adviser or a vizier.

23

و تنزه عن مثل وعون و معين و نظير،

He is above using a model or an assistant or a helper or a peer.

24

علم فستر

He knows, so He covers;

25

و بطن فخبر،

He is acquainted with the innermost, so He is most familiar [with our intentions].

26

و نظر فجبر،

He cast a look, so He assisted;

27

و ملك فقهر؛

He owns everything, so He subdues.

28

و عصي فغفر،

He is disobeyed, yet He forgives;

29

و عبد فشكر،

He is adored, so He thanks.

30

و حكم فعدل،

He rules, so He affects justice,

31

و تكرم و تفضل.

and He is generous and grants favors.

32

لن يزول و لم يزل،

He shall never come to an end, and He has always been as He is;

33

ليس كمثله شيء،

there is nothing like Him.

34

و هو قبل كل شيء و بعد كل شيء

He, first and foremost,

35

رب متفرد بعزته،

is a unique Lord in His exaltation,

36

متمكن بقوته،

able through His might,

37

متقدس بعلوه،

holy through His sublimity,

38

متكبر بسموه،

proud of His Majesty;

39

ليس يدركه بصر

no (mental) vision can realize Him,

40

و لم يحط به نظر،

nor can anyone ever see Him.

41

قوي منيع،

He is strong, invincible,

42

بصير سميع،

seeing, hearing,

43

حليم حكيم، رؤوف رحيم،

clement, wise, affectionate and kind.

44

عجز عن وصفه من وصفه،

One who attempts to describe Him can never do so;

45

و ظل نعته من نعته،

one who attempts to describe His attributes can never do so [either].

46

وصل به من نعمته من يعرفه

His blessing reaches those who get to know Him:

47

، قرب فبعد،

He is near, yet He is far [above mental or physical vision];

48

و بعد فقرب،

He is far yet He is near [closer to us than anything else].

49

يجيب دعوة من يدعوه،

He responds to the call of those who call on Him;

50

و يرزق عبده و يحبوه،

He sustains His servant and surrounds him with His love;

51

ذو لطف خفي،

His niceties are hidden [from our comprehension];

52

و بطش قوي،

His power is mighty;

53

و رحمة موسعة،

His mercy is wide;

54

و عقوبة موجعة،

His penalty is painful;

55

و رحمته جنة عريضة مونقة،

His mercy is a broad and a Garden of grandeur (Paradise);

56

و عقوبته جحيم موصدة موبقة (موثقة).

His punishment is Hell filled with horrors and chains.

57

و شهدت ببعث محمد (ص)

I have testified that He sent Muhammed (ص)

58

عبده و رسوله،

as His servant and messenger,

59

و نبيه و صفيه

prophet, chosen one,

60

و حبيبه و خليله،

loved one, friend,

61

صلة تحظيه،

a link [with the Almighty] that grants him fortune,

62

و تزلفه و تعليه،

bringing him closer to Him, elevating him,

63

و تقربه و تدنيه،

granting him nearness and closeness [to the Almighty].

64

بعثه في خير عصر

He sent him during a good (opportune) period of time,

65

و حين فترة كفر،

when there was disbelief,

66

رحمة لعبيده و منة لمزيده،

as mercy for His servants and a boon for more.

67

ختم به نبوته،

Through him He sealed His prophetic messages,

68

و قوى (وضح) به حجته،

strengthened (explained) His argument.

69

فوعظ و نصح

So he admonished, advised,

70

و بلغ و كدح،

conveyed the message and worked hard [for people.

71

رؤوف بكل مؤمن

He was, affectionate towards every believer,

72

رحيم، رضي

merciful, easy to please,

73

ولي سخي زكي،

the friend of anyone who is generous and pure:

74

عليه رحمة و تسليم و بركة و تكريم،

mercy, salutation, blessing and honor be with him

75

من رب غفور رؤوف رحيم،

from a forgiving, affectionate, kind,

76

قريب مجيب حكيم.

near, responsive and wise Lord.

77

وصيتكم معشر من حضرني

I have admonished you, O folks who are present here with me,

78

بتقوى (بوصية) ربكم،

to be pious (as your Lord has admonished) towards your Lord,

79

و ذكرتكم بسنة نبيكم،

and I have reminded you of the Sunna of your Prophet;

80

فعليكم برهبة تسكن قلوبكم،

so, take to awe that calms your hearts,

81

و خشية تذرف دموعكم،

fear that draws your tears,

82

و تقية تنجيكم يوم يذهلكم و يبليكم،

piety that saves you on a Day which will puzzle your minds and put you to the test,

83

يوم يفوز فيه من ثقل وزن حسنته،

a day in which one shall win if the weight of his good deeds is heavy

84

و خف وزن سيئته.

while that of his sins is light.

85

لتكن مسألتكم مسألة (سؤل) ذل و خضوع

Let your plea be in humility and surrender,

86

و شكر و خشوع،

appreciation and submission,

87

و توبة و نزوع،

repentance and dissociation [from sin],

88

و ندم و رجوع،

regret and return [to righteousness].

89

و ليغتنم كل مغتنم

Let everyone of you seize the opportunity

90

منكم صحته قبل سقمه،

when he is healthy before the time when he is sick,

91

و شبيبته قبل هرمه فكبره و مرضه،

when he is young before he is aged, old and sick,

92

و سعته قبل فقره

[the opportunity] of his ease before he is poor,

93

و خلوته (فرغته) قبل شغله،

of having free time before he is busy,

94

و ثروته قبل فقره،

of being wealthy before being impoverished,

95

و حضره قبل سفره،

of being present at home before he is away traveling,

96

و حيته قبل موته،

of being alive before his death.

97

ثم يكبر و يهن

He shall grow old, become weak,

98

و يهرم و يمرض

aged, sick, ailing,

99

و يسقم و يمل طبيبه

so much so that even his doctor is fed-up with him,

100

و يعرض عنه حبيبه،

even those who love him turn away from him.

101

و ينقطع عمره

His lifespan will have come to an end.

102

و يتغير لونه،

His color of complexion is changed.

103

و يقل عقله،

His mental power is decreased,

104

ثم قيل: هو موعوك و جسمه منهوك،

so it is said: he is ailing and his body is failing.

105

قد جد في نزع شديد،

He is having a hard time as he finds himself suffering from the throes of death:

106

و حضره قريب و بعيد،

He is attended by those who are close and who are distant.

107

فشخص ببصره و طمح بنظره

He gazes his looks, yearns as he turns his eyes,

108

و رشح جبينه و خطف عرنينه

his forehead sweating, his [physical] senses being snatched away from him [one by one].

109

و سكن حنينه و جنبت نفسه

His sighs are now silent, his soul has departed,

110

و بكته عرسه

so he is mourned by his wife.

111

و حفر رمسه

His grave is dug,

112

و يتم منه ولده

his children are now orphans,

113

و تفرق عنه عدده (عدوه و صديقه)،

those who were around him (his friends or foes) are now dispersed from around him.

114

و قسم جمعه

What he had accumulated (legacy) has now been divided [among heirs].

115

و ذهب بصره و سمعه،

Gone now are his faculty of seeing and hearing;

116

و لقن

so he receives Talqeen;

117

و مدد، و وجه و جرد،

he is stretched [on the ground] and directed [towards the Qibla].

118

و غسل و عري

He is stripped of his clothes, bathed, in the nude,

119

و نشف و سجي،

dried then directed [towards the Qibla].

120

و بسط له و هيئ،

Something has been spread on the floor for him

121

و نشر عليه كفنه،

as his shrouds are being prepared.

122

و شدد منه ذقنه،

His chin has been tied,

123

و قبض و ودع ،

his soul has already departed from his body and he has been bidden farewell by all.

124

و قمص و عمم و لف و سلم

He is now shrouded, his head wrapped, so is his body, and he has been handed over [for burial].

125

و حمل فوق سرير

He is carried in a wooden box (coffin);

126

و صلي عليه بتكبير

his funeral prayers have been performed with Takbir

127

بغير سجود

but without prostration or the rubbing of the forehead.

128

و تعفير و نقل من دور مزخرفة

He is taken away from a decorated abode [this life],

129

و قصور مشيدة و حجر منضدة،

from well built mansions and chambers topping each other,

130

فجعل في ضريح ملحود،

so he is now in an enclosure of a grave

131

ضيق مرصود،

which is very narrow

132

بلبن منضود،

and separated from others;

133

مسقف بجلمود،

it is built with baked clay on top of each other

134

و هيل عليه عفره

and is sealed with a rock

135

و حثي عليه مدره،

Dust has been healed on him,

136

فتحقق حذره،

so he now is sure about that of which he was warned;

137

و تخفق صدره،

his chest is now heavy;

138

و نسي خبره،

he is now a thing of the past.

139

و رجع عنه وليه و صفيه

His friends, chosen ones,

140

و نديمه و نسيبه و حميمه،

companions, in-laws and close friends have all left him behind.

141

و تبدل به قرينه و حبيبه،

His company and loved ones are now changed,

142

فهو حشو قبر و رهين قفر،

for he is now nothing but the filling of a grave and the pawn of a waste:

143

يسعى في جسمه دود قبره،

Worms crawl all over his body,

144

و يسيل صديده في منخره على صدره و نحره،

his pus drips from his nostrils on his neck and chest.

145

تسحق تربته لحمه و ينشف دمه

Soil crushes his flesh as his blood dries

146

و يرق عظمه

and his bones decay.

147

و يقم في قبره

He remains in his grave

148

حتى يوم حشره و نشره،

till the Day when he is herded with others and is given a new life;

149

فينشر من قبره

so, he is taken out of his grave.

150

و ينفخ في صوره

His trumpet is blown,

151

و يدعى لحشره و نشوره،

he is called on to gather with others and stand trial.

152

فثم بعثرت قبور

Graves are scattered around,

153

و حصلت سريرة في صدور

the innermost in the hearts are recorded and calculated.

154

و جئ بكل نبي و صديق و شهيد و نطيق،

Every prophet, Siddiq, martyr, anyone who speaks

155

و وقف لفصل حكمه عند رب قدير

is brought and made to stand for the final judgment of an Able God

156

بعبيده خبير بصير،

Who is fully knowledgeable of His servants, seeing [all what they do].

157

فكم من زفرة تضفيه

Countless exhalations engulf him,

158

و حسرة تنضيه (تقصيه)،

sighs fade him (distance him),

159

في موقف مهول و مشهد جليل،

in a horrific position and an awesome scene

160

بين يدي ملك عظيم،

before a Great King

161

بكل صغيرة و كبيرة عليم،

Who knows about everything small and big.

162

يلجمه عرقه و يجفوه قلقه،

He is reined by his sweat, his worry crushing him,

163

فعبرته غير مرحومة

yet nobody feels sorry for his tears,

164

و صرخته (حجته) غير مقبولة،

his screams (defense) are not accepted.

165

و برزت صحيفته و تبينت جريرته،

His record of deeds is brought, his innermost becomes visible,

166

و نطق كل عضو منه بسوء عمله،

and every part of his body now speaks of his wrongdoings:

167

فشهدت عينه بنظره

His eyes testify about what he had seen,

168

و يده ببطشه

his hands about whom he beat,

169

و رجله بخطوه

his legs about where he had gone,

170

و جلده بلمسه

his skin about what he had contacted,

171

و فرجه بمسه،

his private parts about with whom he had had intercourse.

172

و يهدده منكر و نكير،

He is threatened by Munkir and Nakir;

173

و كشف له حيث يسير،

and it is unveiled for him where he is heading;

174

فسلسل جيده و غلت يده

so his neck now is tied with chains and his hands are cuffed.

175

و سيق يسحب وحده،

He is taken alone, dragged

176

فورد جهنم بكرب و شده،

and brought to Hell as he is in a great distress and hardship.

177

فظل يعذب في جحيم،

He remains in the torment of hell

178

و يسقى من حميم،

given to drink of very hot pus

179

يشوي وجهه و يسلخ جلده،

that grills his face and separates his skin from his body.

180

يضربه زبانيته بمقمع من حديد،

He is beaten by the torture angels of hell with iron clubs.

181

و يعود جلده بعد نضجه كجلد جديد،

His skin returns again and again anew after having been baked.

182

يستغيث فتعرض عنه خزنة جهنم،

He cries for help, yet even the angels in Hell turn away from him.

183

و يستصرخ فيلبث حقبة بندم،

He pleads for mercy, so he stays for a while regretful,

184

فلم يجده ندمه،

yet he finds no one cares about his regret

185

و لم ينفعه حينئذ ندمه.

His regret will then be in vain.

186

نعوذ برب قدير من شر كل مصير،

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

187

و نطلب منه عفو من رضى عنه،

and we plead for forgiveness similar to that of one with whom He is pleased

188

و مغفرة من قبل منه،

and for an overlooking similar to that of one whose good deeds He has accepted;

189

فهو ولي سؤلي و منجح طلبتي،

for He is my Master, ultimate pursuit and the one Who grants success to what I seek.

190

فمن زحزح عن تعذيب ربه

Surely one who is pushed away from the torment of his Lord

191

سكن في جنته بقربه

shall reside in Paradise near to Him

192

و خلد في قصور مشيده،

and remain forever in well built mansions,

193

و ملك حور عين و حفدة،

having huris with large lovely eyes and servants.

194

و طيف عليه بكؤوس و سكن حضير فردوس،

....

195

و تقلب في نعيم،

....

196

و سقي من تسنيم

....

197

و شرب من عين سلسبيل ممزوجة بزنجبيل،

He is given to drink of fresh cool water mixed with ginger

198

مختومة بمسك و عبير،

and sealed with musk and fragrance

199

مستديم للسرور

that perpetuates happiness

200

و مستشعر للحبور،

and provides the sense of pleasure.

201

يشرب من خمور، في روضة مغدق

He drinks of wines in an orchard filled with all types of pleasures,

202

ليس يصدع من شربه و ليس ينزف،

wine that does not cause any headache to one who drinks it, and it never runs out;

203

هذا منقلب من خشى ربه

such is the ultimate end of one who fears his Lord,

204

و حذر ذنبه و نفسه،

who is on guard about his sin, about the insinuations of his nafs (self),

205

و تلك عقوبة من عصى منشئه

and that was the penalty of one who opposes the [sinless] way [in which] he was created,

206

و سولت له نفسه معصية مبدئه،

the one whose evil self decorates for him to do what is against his nature.

207

ذلك قول فصل،

Such is the final judgment

208

و حكمة حكم عدل،

and the ruling of One Who is just:

209

قص قصص، و وعظ نص،

He narrated parables, admonished through texts,

210

تنزيل من حكيم حميد،

revealed revelations from a Praiseworthy Wise One,

211

نزل به روح قدس مبين (متين)

revelations which He descended with a clear (able) Holy Spirit [arch-angel Gabriel]

212

من عند رب كريم على نبي مهتد

from a Glorious Lord unto a Prophet who is rightly guided

213

مهدي رشيد رحمة للمؤمنين،

and who guides others, one who shows others the right way, a mercy to the believers,

214

مبين من عند رب كريم،

Clearly from a Great Lord,

215

و سيد حلت عليه سفرة،

a master frequented by messengers (angels)

216

مكرمون بررة.

who are honored and obedient [of their Lord].

217

عذت برب عليم حكيم،

I have sought refuge with a Lord Who is knowing,wise,

218

قدير رحيم،

able, merciful,

219

من شر عدو و لعين رجيم،

from the evil of an enemy (satan) who is cursed and stoned;

220

فليتضرع متضرعكم،

so, let everyone who pleads plead,

221

و يبتهل مبتهلكم،

and let everyone who seeks [favors of his Lord]

222

و يستغفر رب كل مربوب لي و لكم.

seek and ask forgiveness of the Lord of lords for myself and for you all.

223

ثم قرأ بعدها قوله تعالى:

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

224

{تلك الدار الآخرة نجعلها للذين لا يريدون علوا في الأرض ولا فسادا والعاقبة للمتقين } (القصص: 83).

"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).