

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى طلحة والزبير (مع عمران بن الحصين الخزاعي)

To Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (through 'Imrān ibn al-Ḥuṣayn al-Khuzā'ī [1]).

ذكره أبو جعفر الإسكافي في كتاب المقامات في مناقب أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام

Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī has mentioned this in his "Kitāb al-maqāmāt" on the excellent qualities (manāqib) of Amīr al-mu'minīn (peace be upon him).

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمَا، وَإِنْ كَتَمْتُمَا، أَذِي لَمْ أُرِدِ النَّاسَ حَتَّى أُرَادُونِي، وَلَمْ أَبِيعَهُمْ حَتَّى بَايَعُونِي، وَإِنْ كُنْتُمَا بَايَعْتُمَانِي بِإِغْتِمَانِي، وَإِنْ كُنْتُمَا بَايَعْتُمَانِي كَارِهِينَ، فَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمَا لِي عَلَيْكُمَا السَّبِيلَ بِإِظْهَارِكُمَا الطَّاعَةَ، وَإِسْرَارِكُمَا الْمَعْصِيَةَ.

Now, both of you know, although you conceal it, that I did not approach the people till they approached me, and I did not ask them to swear allegiance to me till they themselves swore allegiance to me, and both of you were among those who approached me and swore me allegiance. Certainly, the common people did not swear me allegiance under any force put on them or for any money given to them. If you two swore allegiance to me obediently, come back and offer repentance to Allāh soon, but if you swore allegiance to me reluctantly, you have certainly given me cause for action, by showing your obedience and concealing your disobedience. [2]

وَلِعَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُمَا بِأَحَقَّ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ بِالْتَّقِيَّةِ وَالْإِكْتِمَانِ، وَإِنْ دَفَعْتُمَا هَذَا الْأَمْرَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَدْخُلَا فِيهِ، كَانَ أَوْسَعَ عَلَيْكُمَا مِنْ خُرُوجِكُمَا مِنْهُ، بَعْدَ إِقْرَارِكُمَا بِهِ، وَقَدْ زَعَمْتُمَا أَنِّي قَتَلْتُ عَثْمَانَ، فَبَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكُمَا مِنْ تَخْلَافِ عَذِي وَعَنْكُمَا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ، ثُمَّ يَلْزِمُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِقَدْرِ مَا احْتَمَلَ.

By my life, you were not more entitled than other muhājirūn to conceal and hide the matter. Your refusing allegiance before entering into it would have been easier than getting out of it after having accepted it. You have indicated that I killed 'Uthmān; then let someone from among the people of Medina who supported neither me nor you decide the matter between me and you. Then one of us shall face (the command of law) according to (their) involvement.

فَارْجِعَا أَيُّهَا الشَّيْخَانِ عَنْ رَأْيِكُمَا، فَإِنَّ الْأَنْ أَعْظَمَ أَمْرِكُمَا الْعَارُ، مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَجْتَمَعَ [يَتَجَمَعُ] الْعَارُ وَالذَّارُ، وَالسَّلَامُ.

You should give up your way now, when the great question before you is only one of shame, before you face the question of shame coupled with the Hellfire; and that is an end to the matter.

Footnote :

[1] 'Imrān ibn al-Ḥuṣayn al-Khuzā'ī was a high ranking companion distinguished in learning and achievements and very cautious in relating traditions. He accepted Islam in the year of Khaybar and participated in jihād with the Prophet. Was honoured with the judicial position at Kūfah and died at Baṣrah in 52 A.H. One of the genuine traditions related by 'Imrān ibn al-Ḥuṣayn about Amīr al-mu'minīn is: The Messenger of Allāh raised and sent an army under the command of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. From the khums (one-fifth) received by him 'Alī set aside a slave girl for himself. This was distasteful to some of his men and four of them decided to complain of this to the Prophet (S). On their return they approached the Prophet, and one of them stood up and said: "O' Messenger of Allāh! Do you not see that 'Alī did so and so?" The Prophet turned away his face from him. Another man stood up and made the same complaint and the Prophet turned away his face from him. Still another man stood up and repeated what his two colleagues had said and met the same reaction. Then the fourth man stood up and spoke like his predecessors. The Prophet (S) then turned to them with signs of anger on his face and said: "What do you want me to do to 'Alī? (repeating thrice). Surely, 'Alī is from me and I am from him, and after me he is the Master of all the believers." (al-Jāmi' aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ, at-Tirmidhī, vol. 5, p. 632; al-Musnad, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 4, pp. 437-438; al-Musnad, Abū Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭayālisī, p. 111; al-Mustadrak, al-Ḥākim, vol. 3, pp. 110-111; Ḥilyah al-awliyā', Abū Nu'aym, vol. 6, p. 294; Tārīkh al-Islām, adh-Dhahabī, vol. 2, p. 196; at-Tārīkh, Ibn Kathīr, vol. 7, p.345; Usd al-ghābah, Ibn al-Athīr, vol. 4, p. 27, al-Iṣābah, Ibn Ḥajar, vol. 2, p. 509)

[2] That is you are men of riches and means having a large tribe and community. What is the need to you to do for this double dealing of concealing the real feelings of the heart, showing obedience and swearing allegiance loathsomely and unwillingly. Of course, if someone else, who was weak and helpless, said that he was obliged to swear allegiance, his point could be accepted to some extent. But when no one else has expressed his helplessness in the matter, why did this helplessness befall you so that you now regard your swearing of allegiance to be the result of your helplessness.