

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام) لبعض أصحابه وقد سأله: كيف دفعكم قومكم عن هذا المقام وأنتم أحق به؟ فقال

One of Amīr al-mu'minīn's companions (from Banū Asad) asked him: "How was it that your tribe (Quraysh) deprived you of this position (Caliphate) although you deserved it most." Then in reply he said:

يَا أَخَا بَنِي أُسَيْدٍ، إِنَّكَ لَقَلِقُ الْوَضِيعِينَ، تُرْسِلُ فِيَّ غَيْرَ سَدِيدٍ، وَلَكَ بَعْدُ ذِمَامَةُ الصَّهْرِ، وَحَقُّ الْمَسْأَلَةِ، وَقَدْ اسْتَعْلَمْتَ فَأَعْلَمَ: أَمَّا
الْإِسْتِبْدَادُ عَلَيْنَا بِهَذَا الْمَقَامِ وَنَجْنُ الْإِعْلُونَ نَسْبًا، وَالْإِشْدُونُ بِالرِّسُولِ نَوْطًا، فَإِنَّهَا كَانَتْ أَثْرَةً شَحَتْ عَلَيْهَا نَفُوسُ قَوْمٍ، وَسَخَتْ
عَنْهَا نَفُوسُ آخِرِينَ، وَالْحَكْمُ اللَّهُ، وَالْمَعُودُ إِلَيْهِ الْقِيَامَةُ.

O brother of Banū Asad! Your girth is loose and you have put it on the wrong way. Nevertheless you enjoy in-law kinship and also the right to ask, and since you have asked, listen. As regards the oppression against us in this matter although we were the highest as regards descent and the strongest in relationship with the Messenger of Allāh. It was a selfish act over which the hearts of people became greedy, although some people did not care for it. The Arbiter is Allāh and to Him is the return on the Day of Judgement.

وَدَعُ عَنْكَ نَهْبًا صَبِيحَ فِي حَجْرَاتِهِ * وَلَكِنْ حَدِيثًا مَا حَدِيثُ الرَّوَاحِلِ

"Now leave this story of devastation about which there is hue and cry all round." [1]

وَهَلِمَ الْخُطْبُ فِي ابْنِ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، فَلَقَدْ أَضْحَكَنِي الدَّهْرُ بَعْدَ إِكْبَانِهِ، وَلَا غُرُوبَ وَاللَّهِ، فَيَا لَهُ خَطْبًا يَسْتَفْرِغُ الْعَجَبَ، وَيَكْتُرُ الْإِوْدَ، حَاوِلُ
الْقَوْمِ إِطْفَاءَ نَوْرِ اللَّهِ مِنْ مِصْبَاحِهِ، وَسِدِّ فَوَارِهِ مِنْ يَنْبُوعِهِ، وَجِدْجُوا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ شَرِبًا وَبَيْثًا، فَإِنْ تَرْتَفِعَ عِنْدًا وَعِنَهُمْ مَحْنُ الْبَلْوَى،
أَحْمَلُهُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ عَلَى مَحْضِهِ، وَإِنْ تَكُنِ الْآخِرَى، ﴿فَلَا تَذْهَبُ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ إِنْ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾.

Come and look at the son of Abū Sufyān (Mu'āwiyah). Time has made me laugh after weeping. No wonder, by Allāh; what is this affair which surpasses all wonder and which has increased wrongfulness. These people have tried to put out the flame of Allāh's light from His lamp and to close His fountain from its source. They mixed epidemicproducing water between me and themselves. If the trying hardships were removed from among us, I would take them on the course of truthfulness other wise: "... So let not thy self go (in vain) in grief for them; verily Allāh knoweth all that they do." (Qur'ān, 35:8)

Footnote :

[1] This is a hemistich from the couplet of the famous Arab poet Imriū'l-Qays al-Kindī. The second hemistich is: And let me know the story of what happened to the

riding camels.

The incident behind this couplet is that when the father of Imriu'l-Qays namely Hujr ibn al-Hārith was killed, he roamed about the various Arab tribes to avenge his father's life with their help. In this connection he stayed with a man of Jadīlah (tribe) but finding himself unsafe left that place, and stayed with Khālid ibn Sadūs an-Nabhānī. In the meantime a man of Jadīlah named Bā'ith ibn Hūwayṣ drove away some of his camels. Imriu'l-Qays complained of this matter to his host and he asked him to send with him his she-camels then he would get back his camels.

Consequently Khālid went to those people and asked them to return the camels of his guest which they had robbed. They said that he was neither a guest nor under his protection. Thereupon Khālid swore that he was really his guest and showed them his she-camels that he had with him. They then agreed to return the camels. But actually instead of returning the camels they drove away the she-camels as well. One version is that they did return the camels to Khālid but instead of handing them over to Imriu'l-Qays he kept them for himself. When Imriu'l-Qays came to know this he composed a few couplets out of which this is one. It means 'now you leave the story of these camels which were robbed but now let me know about the she-camels snatched from my hands.'

Amīr al-mu'minīn's intention in quoting this verse as an illustration is that "Now that Mu'āwiyah is at war, we should talk about it and should leave the discussion about the devastation engendered by those who had usurped my rights. That time has gone away. Now is the time for grappling with the mischiefs of the hour. So discuss the event of the moment and do not start untimely strain." Amīr al-mu'minīn said this because the man had put the question to him at the time of the battle of Ṣiffīn, when the battle was raging and bloodshed was in full swing.