

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام) بعد ما بويع بالخلافة وقد قال له قوم من الصحابة: لو عاقبت قوماً ممن أجلب على عثمان؟ فقال:

After swearing of allegiance to Amīr al-mu'minīn, some people from among the companions of the Prophet said to him. "You should punish the people who assaulted 'Uthmān," whereupon he said:

يَا إِخْوَتَاهُ! إِنِّي لَسَبْتُ أَجْهَلَ مَا تَعْلَمُونَ، وَلَكِنْ كَيْفَ لِي بِقُوَّةِ الْقَوْمِ الْمَجْلِبِينَ عَلَيَّ حِدِّ شَوْكَتِهِمْ، يَمْلِكُونَنَا وَلَا نَمْلِكُهُمْ! وَهَاهُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَدْ ثَارَتْ مَعَهُمْ عِبْدَانِكُمْ، وَالتَفَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْرَابِكُمْ، وَهُمْ خِلَالَكُمْ يَسُومُونَكُمْ مَا شَاءُوا؛ وَهَل تَرُونَ مَوْضِعًا لِقُدْرَةِ عَلِيِّ شَيْءٍ، تَرِيدُونَهُ؟!  
 يا إخوتاه! إنني لسبت أجهل ما تعلمون، ولكن كيف لي بقوة القوم المجلبين عليّ حدّ شوكتهم، يملكوننا ولا نملكهم! وهاهم هؤلاء قد ثارت معهم عبداؤكم، والتفت إليهم أعرابكم، وهم خلالكم يسومونكم ما شاءوا؛ وهل ترون موضعاً لقدرة عليّ شيء، تريدونه؟!

O my brothers! I am not ignorant of what you know, but how do I have the power for it while those who assaulted him are in the height of their power. They have superiority over us, not we over them. They are now in the position that even your slaves have risen with them and Bedouin Arabs too have joined them. They are now among you and are harming you as they like. Do you see any way to be able to do what you aim at.

إِنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ أَمْرٌ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ، وَإِنَّ لِهَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ مَادَّةً. إِنَّ النَّاسَ مِنْ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ - إِذَا حَرَكَ - عَلَيَّ أُمُورٌ: فَرِيقَةٌ تَرِي مَا تَرُونَ، وَفَرِيقَةٌ تَرِي مَا لَا تَرُونَ، وَفَرِيقَةٌ لَا تَرِي لَاحِظًا وَلَا هَذَا، فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّى يَهْدِيَ النَّاسَ، وَتَقَعِ الْقُلُوبُ مَوَاقِعَهَا، وَتَخُذَ الْحَقُوقُ مَسْمُوحَةً؛ فَاهْدَأُوا عَنِّي، وَانظُرُوا مَاذَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَمْرِي، وَلَا تَفْعَلُوا فَعْلَةً تَضْعَعُ قُوَّةً، وَتَسْقِطُ مَنَّةً، وَتَوْرِثُ وَهْنًا وَذِلَّةً. وَسَامَسِكِ الْأَمْرَ مَا اسْتَمْسَكَ، وَإِذَا لَمْ أَجِدْ بَدَأَ فَأَخِرِ الدَّوَاءَ الْكَيَّ

This demand is certainly that of the pre-Islamic (al jāhiliyyah) period and these people have support behind them. When the matter is taken up, people will have different views about it. One group will think as you do, but another will not think as you think, and there will be still another group who will be neither this way nor that way. Be patient till people quieten down and hearts settle in their places so that rights can be achieved for people easily. Rest assured from me, and see what is given to you by me. Do not do anything which shatters your power, weakens your strength and engenders feebleness and disgrace. I shall control this affair as far as possible, but if I find it necessary the last treatment will, of course, be branding with a hot iron (through fighting).