

وَمِنْ خُطْبَةٍ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

From one of his sermons

حِينَ بَلَغَهُ خَبْرُ النَّاكِثِينَ بَيْعَتِهِ وَفِيهَا يَذْمُ عَمَلَهُمْ وَيَذَمُّ زَمَهُمْ وَدَمَ عَثْمَانَ وَيَتَهَدَّدُهُمْ بِالْحَرْبِ

When he received reports about those who had broken their oath of allegiance to him; and about those who accused him of 'Uthmān's killing

[ذَمُّ النَّاكِثِينَ:] أَلَا وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدِمَ ذَمَّرَ حَزْبَهُ، وَأَسَلَتْ جَلْبَ جَلْبِهِ، لِيَعُودَ الْجَوَارُ إِلَى أَوْطَانِهِ، وَيَرْجِعَ الْبَاطِلُ إِلَى نَصَابِهِ. وَاللَّهِ مَا أَنْكَرُوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ كَرَامٍ، وَلَا جَعَلُوا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ نَصِيفًا.

Beware! Satan has certainly started instigating his forces and has collected his army in order that oppression may reach its extreme ends and wrong may come back to its position. By Allāh they have not put a correct blame on me, nor have they done justice between me and themselves.

[ذَمُّ عَثْمَانَ:] وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَطْلُبُونَ حَقًّا هُمْ تَرَكُوهُ، وَدِمًّا هُمْ سَفَكُوهُ، فَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ شَرِيكَهُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنَّ لَهُمْ لَنْصِيْبَهُمْ مِنْهُ، وَلَيْتَنِي كَانُوا وَلَوْهُ دُونِي، فَمَا التَّبِعَةُ إِلَّا عَنْهُمْ، وَإِنْ أَعْلَظَمَ حُجَّتَهُمْ لَعَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ، يَرْتَضِعُونَ أَمَا قَدْ فُطِمَتْ وَيَحْمِيُونَ بِدَعَاةٍ قَدْ أُمِيتَتْ. يَا خَيْلَةَ الدَّاعِي! مَنْ دَعَا! وَإِلَامَ أُجِيبُ! وَإِنِّي لِرَاضٍ بِحُجَّةِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَعِلْمِهِ فِيهِمْ.

They are demanding of me a right which they have abandoned, and a blood that they have themselves shed. [1] If I were a partner with them in it then they too have their share of it. But if they did it without me they alone have to face the consequences. Their biggest argument (against me) is (really) against themselves. They are suckling from a mother who is already dry, and bringing into life innovation that is already dead. How disappointing is this challenger (to battle)? Who is this challenger and for what is he being responded to? I am happy that the reasoning of Allāh has been exhausted before them and He knows (all) about them.

[التَّهْدِيدُ بِالْحَرْبِ:] فَإِنَّ أَبَا أَعْلَظِيَّتِهِمْ حَدَّ السِّيفِ، وَكَفَى بِهِ شَافِيًا مِنَ الْبَاطِلِ، وَنَا صِرًا لِلْحَقِّ، وَمِنْ الْعَجَبِ بَعْلَتُهُمْ إِلَيَّ أَنْ أَبْلُرُ لِلطَّعَانِ! وَأَنْ أَصْبِرُ لِلْجَلَادِ! هَيْلَتُهُمْ الْهَيْبُولُ، لَقَدْ كُنْتُ وَمَا أَهْدُدُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَلَا أَزْهَبُ [أَرْهَبُ] بِالضَّرْبِ! وَإِنِّي لَعَلَى يَقِينٍ مِنْ رَبِّي، وَغَيْرِ شِبْهِهِ مِنْ دِينِي.

If they refuse (to obey) I will offer them the edge of the sword which is enough a curer of wrong and supporter of Right. It is strange they send me word to proceed to them for spear-fighting and to keep ready for fighting with swords. May the mourning women mourn over them. I have ever been so that I was never frightened by fighting nor threatened by clashing. I enjoy full certainty of belief from my Allāh

and have no doubt in my faith.

Notes:

[1] When Amīr al-Mu'minīn was accused of 'Uthmān's assassination, he delivered this sermon to refute this false allegation. Regarding those who laid this charge against him, he says: "These seekers of vengeance cannot say that I alone am the assassin and that no one else took part in it. Nor can they falsify witnessed events by saying that they were unconcerned with it. Why then have they put me foremost for this avenging? With me they should include themselves also. If I am free of this blame they cannot establish their innocence from it. How can they detach themselves from this punishment? The truth of the matter is that by accusing me of this charge their aim is that I should behave with them in the same manner to which they are accustomed. But they should not expect from me that I would revive the innovations of the previous regimes. As for fighting, neither was I ever afraid of it nor am I so now. Allāh knows my intention and He also knows that those standing on the excuse of taking revenge are themselves his assassins."

Thus, history corroborates that the people who managed his ('Uthmān's) assassination by agitation and had even prevented his burial in Muslims' graveyard by hurling stones at his coffin, were the same who rose for avenging his blood. In this connection, the names of Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, and 'Ā'ishah are at the top of the list, and on both occasions their efforts come to sight with conspicuousness.

Thus Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd writes that: Those who have written accounts of the incident of the house narrate that on the day of his killing Ṭalḥah's condition was that in order to obscure himself from the eyes of the people he had a veil on his face and was shooting arrows at 'Uthmān's house.

And in this connection, about az-Zubayr's ideas he writes: Historians have also state that az-Zubayr used to say: "Kill him, for he has altered your faith." People said: "Your son is standing at his door and guarding him," and he replied: "Even my son may be lost, but 'Uthmān must be killed. 'Uthmān will be lying like a carcass on Sirāt tomorrow." (Sharḥ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, vol. 2, p. 404)

About 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih writes: al-Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah came to 'Ā'ishah when she said, "O Abū 'Abd Allāh! I wish you had been with me on the day of Jamal; how arrows were piercing through my howdah till some of them stuck my

body.” al-Mughīrah said, “By Allāh, I wish one of them should have killed you.” She said, “May Allāh have mercy on you! Why would you say this?” He replied, “So that it would have been some atonement for what you had done against ‘Uthmān.” (al-‘Iqd al-Farīd, vol. 3, p. 87)