

وَمِنْ خُطْبَةٍ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

From one of his sermons

وَفِيهَا يَصِفُ الْعَرَبَ قَبْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ ثُمَّ يَصِفُ حَالَهُ قَبْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ

[العرب قبل البعثة:] إِنَّ اللَّهَ [في بعض النسخ: اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ] بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ نَذِيرًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ، وَأَمِينًا عَلَى التَّنْزِيلِ، وَأَنْتُمْ مَعَلَّشَرِ الْعَرَبِ عَلَى شَرِّ دِينٍ، وَفِي شَرِّ دَارٍ، مَنِيخُونَ بِيَلْنِ حِجَارَةٍ خَشَلْنِ وَحِيَاتِ صَمٍ، تَشَلُّرِيُونَ الْكَدْرَ، وَتَأْكُلُونَ اللَّجْشِبَ، وَتَسْلِفُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ، وَتَقْلَطُونَ أَرْحَامَكُمْ، إِلَّا صَلَاتًا فِيكُمْ مِنْ صَوْبَةٍ، وَالْأَثَامُ بِكُمْ مَعْلُصُوبَةٌ.

[Arabia before proclamation of Prophethood:] Allāh sent Muḥammad (ﷺ) as a warner (against vice) for all the worlds and a trustee of His revelation, while you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided among rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty water and ate filthy food. You shed blood of each other and cared not for relationship. Idols are fixed among you and sins are clinging to you.

وَمِنْهَا [في بعض النسخ: مِنْهَا]: [صَفْتِهِ قَبْلَ الْبَيْعَةِ لَهُ:] فَنَظَرْتُ فَإِذَا لَيْسَ لِي مُعِينٌ إِلَّا أَهْلِي بِيَّتِي، فَضَنَنْتُ بِهِمْ عَنِ الْمَمُوتِ، وَأَغْلَضَيْتُ عَلَى اللَّقْذَى، وَشَرِبْتُ عَلَى الشَّجَا، وَصَبَرْتُ عَلَى أَخَذِ الْكُظْمِ، وَعَلَى أَمْرٍ مِنْ طَعْلَمِ الْعِلْقَمِ.

Part of the same sermon [on the attentiveness of the people after the death of the Holy Prophet]: I looked and found that there is no supporter for me except my family, so I refrained from thrusting them unto death. I kept my eyes closed despite motes in them. I drank despite choking of throat. I exercised patience despite trouble in breathing and despite having to take sour colocynth as food.

وَمِنْهَا: وَلَمْ يُبَايِعْ حَتَّى شَرَطَ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ عَلَى الْبَيْعَةِ ثَمْنًا، فَلَا ظَفِرَتْ يَدُ الْبَائِعِ [في بعض النسخ: الْمُبَايِعِ]، وَخَرِيَتْ أَمَانَةُ الْمُبَايَعِ! فَخَذُوا لِلْحَرْبِ أَهْلَ بَيْتِهَا، وَأَعَدُوا لَهَا عِدَّتَهَا، فَقَدِمَ شَبُّ لُظَاهَا، وَعَلَا سَنَاهَا، وَاسْتَشَلُّعُوا الصَّبْرَ، فَإِنَّهُ أَدْلَعَى إِلَى النَّصْرِ.

Part of the same sermon [on the settlement between Mu‘āwiyah and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ]: He did not swear allegiance till he got him agree that he would pay him its price. The hand of this purchaser (of allegiance) may not be successful and the contract of the seller may face disgrace. Now you should take up arms for war and arrange equipment for it. Its flames have grown high and its brightness has increased. Clothe yourself with patience for it is the best to victory. [1]

Notes:

[1] Amīr al-Mu'minīn had delivered a sermon before setting off for Nahrawān.

These are three parts from it. In the first part, he has described the condition of Arabia before Proclamation (of Prophethood); in the second, he has referred to circumstances which forced him to keep quiet; and in the third, he has described the conversation and settlement between Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ.

The position of this mutual settlement was that when Amīr al-Mu'minīn sent Jarīr ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Bajalī to Mu'āwiyah to secure his allegiance, he detained Jarīr under the excuse of giving a reply, and in the meantime he began exploring how far the people of Syria would support him. When he succeeded in making them his supporters by rousing them to avenge 'Uthmān's blood, he consulted his brother, 'Utbah ibn Abī Sufyān. He suggested: "If, in this matter, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ was associated, he would solve most of the difficulties through his sagacity. However, he would not be easily prepared to stabilise your authority unless he obtained the price he desired for it. If you are ready for this, he would prove the best counsellor and helper."

Mu'āwiyah liked this suggestion, sent for 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ and discussed the matter with him. Eventually, it was settled that he would avenge 'Uthmān's blood by holding Amīr al-Mu'minīn liable for it in exchange for the governorship of Egypt and, by whatever means possible, would not let Mu'āwiyah's authority in Syria suffer. Consequently, both of them fulfilled the agreement and kept their words fully.