

وَمِنْ خُطْبَةٍ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

From one of his sermons

بَعْدَ غَارَةِ الضُّحَاكِ بَلَنَ قَيْلَسٍ صَاحِبِ مُعَاوِيَةَ عَلَى الْحَاجِّ بَعْدَ قِصَّةِ الْحَكَمِيِّينَ. وَفِيهَا يَسْتَنْتَهِيهِمْ أَصْلَحَابُهُ لِمَا حَدَّثَ فِي الْأَطْرَافِ

About those who found pretexts at the time of jihād

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! اللَّهُمَّ تَمَعَةُ أَبْلاَدَانِهِمْ، الْمُخَلَّفَةُ أَهْلُ وَاؤُهُمْ. كَلَامُكُمْ يُوْهِي الصَّمَّ الصَّلَابَ، وَفِعْلُكُمْ يَطْمَعُ فِيكُمْ الْأَعْلَاءُ! تَقُولُونَ فِي الْمَجَالِسِ: كَيْلَتِ وَكَيْلَتِ، فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْقِتَالُ قَدَلْتُمْ: حَيْدِي حَيَاد! مَا عَزَّتْ دَعْوَةٌ مِنْ دَعَاكُمْ، وَلَا اسْتَرَاخَ قَلْبٌ مِنْ قَاسَاكُمْ، أَعَالِيلُ بِأَضَالِيلِ [فِي بَعْضِ النِّسْخِ: بِأَضَالِيلِ، وَسَأَلْتُمُونِي التَّطَوُّلَ وَيْلَ]، دِفَاعُ ذِي الدِّيلِ الْمَطْوُولِ، لَا يَمْنَعُ الضَّيْمُ الدِّيلَ! وَلَا يَدْرِكُ الْحَقُّ إِلَّا بِالْجِدِّ!

O people, your bodies are together but your desires are divergent. Your talk softens the hard stones and your action attracts your enemy towards you. You claim in your sittings that you would do this and that, but when fighting approaches, you say (to war), 'turn thou away' (i.e. flee away). If one calls you (for help) the call receives no heed. And he who deals hardly with you his heart has no solace. The excuses are amiss like that of debtor unwilling to pay. The ignoble cannot ward off oppression. Right cannot be achieved without effort.

أَيُّ دَارٍ بَعْدَ دَارِكُمْ تَمْنَعُونَ، وَمَعَ أَيِّ إِمَامٍ بَعْدِي تُقَاتِلُونَ! اللَّهُمَّ رُورُ وَاللَّهِ مِنْ غَرَرٍ تُؤْمَهُ، وَمَنْ فَازَ بِكُمْ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَاللَّهِ بِالسَّهْمِ [فِي بَعْضِ النِّسْخِ: وَمَنْ فَازَ بِكُمْ فَازَ بِالسَّهْمِ] الْأَخْيَبِ، وَمَنْ رَمَى بِكُمْ فَقَدْ رَمَى بِأَفْلَاقِ نَا صِلِ.

Which is the house besides this one to protect? And with which leader (Imām) would you go for fighting after me? By Allāh! Deceived is one whom you have deceived while, by Allāh! he who is successful with you receives only useless arrows. You are like broken arrows thrown over the enemy.

أَصْلَحَاتِ وَاللَّهِ! لَا أُصَدِّقُ قَوْلَكُمْ، وَلَا أَطْمَعُ فِي نَصْرِكُمْ، وَلَا أُوْعِدُ الْعَدُوَّ بِكُمْ. مَا بِالْكُمْ؟ مَا دَوَاؤُكُمْ؟ مَا طِبُّكُمْ؟ الْقَوْلُ مِنْ رِجَالِ أُمَّتِكُمْ، أَقْوَمُ لَا بَغْيَ رِعْلَكُمْ! وَغَفْلَةٌ مِنْ غَيْرِ رِعْ! وَطَمَعٌ فِي غَيْرِ حَقِّ!

By Allāh! I am now in the position that I neither confirm your views nor hope for your support, nor challenge the enemy through you. What is the matter with you? What is your ailment? What is your cure? The other party is also men of your shape (but they are so different in character). Will there be talk without action, carelessness without piety, and greed in things not right?! [1]

Notes:

[1] After the battle of Nahrawān, Mu'āwiyah sent aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays al-Fihri with a force of four thousand towards Kūfah with the purpose that he should create disorder and unrest in those areas, kill whomever he finds, and keep busy in bloodshed and destructing, so that Amīr al-Mu'minīn should find no rest or peace of mind. He set off for the achievement of this aim, and shedding innocent blood and spreading destruction all round, reached upto the place of ath-Tha'labiyyah. Here he attacked a caravan of pilgrims (to Mecca) and looted all their wealth and belongings. Then at al-Qutqūṭānah, where he killed 'Amr ibn 'Umays, the nephew of 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet's companion, together with his companions. In this manner he created havoc and bloodshed all round.

When Amīr al-Mu'minīn came to know of this wreck and ruin, he called his men to battle in order to put a stop to this vandalism, but people seemed inclined to avoid war. Being disgusted with their lethargy and lack of enthusiasm, he ascended the pulpit and delivered this sermon, wherein he has roused the men to feel shame, and not to try to avoid war, but to rise for the protection of their country like brave men, without employing wrong and lame excuses. At last Ḥujr ibn 'Adī al-Kindī rose with a force of four thousand for crushing the enemy and overtook him at Tadmur. Only a small encounter has taken place between the parties when night came on, and aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk fled away, with only nineteen killed on his side. From Amīr al-Mu'minīn's army, two persons fell as martyrs.