

ومن كلامه (عليه السلام) لما غلب أصحاب معاوية أصحابه عليه السلام على شريعة الفرات بصفين ومنعواهم الماء

When in Şifḥīn the men of Mu‘āwiyah overpowered the men of Amīr al-mu‘minīn and occupied the bank of River Euphrates and prevented them from taking its water, Amīr al-mu‘minīn said :

قَدْ اسْتَطَعَمُوكُمُ الْقِتَالَ، فَأَقْرِؤْوا عَلَيَّ مَذَلَّةً، وَتَأْخِيرَ مَحَلَّةٍ، أَوْ رَوْؤِ السُّيُوفِ مِنَ الدِّمَاءِ تَرَوْوُا مِنَ الْمَاءِ، فَالْمَوْتُ فِي حَيَاتِكُمْ مَقْهُورِينَ، وَالْحَيَاةُ فِي مَوْتِكُمْ قَاهِرِينَ. أَلَا وَإِنْ مَعَاوِيَةَ قَادَ لَمَّةً مِنَ الْغَوَاةِ وَعَمَسَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَرَ، حَتَّى جَعَلُوا نَحْوَهُمْ أَغْرَاضَ الْمَنِيَةِ.

They [1] are asking you morsels of battle. So either you remain in ignominy and the lowest position or drench your swords with blood and quench your thirst with water. Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying as subjugators. Beware, Mu‘āwiyah is leading a small group of insurgents and has kept them in dark about the true facts with the result that they have made their bosoms the targets of death.

Footnote :

[1] Amīr al-mu‘minīn had not reached Şifḥīn when Mu‘āwiyah posted forty thousand men on the bank of the River to close the way to the watering place, so that none except the Syrians could take the water. When Amīr al-mu‘minīn’s force alighted there they found that there was no watering place except this one for them to take water. If there was one it was difficult to reach there by crossing high hillocks. Amīr al-mu‘minīn sent Şa‘şa‘ah ibn Şuḥān al-‘Abdī to Mu‘āwiyah with the request to raise the control over water. Mu‘āwiyah refused. On this side Amīr al-mu‘minīn’s army was much troubled by thirst. When Amīr al-mu‘minīn noticed this position he said, “Get up and secure water by dint of sword.” Consequently, these thirsty persons drew their swords out of sheaths, put arrows in their bows and dispersing Mu‘āwiyah’s men went down right into the River and then hit these guards away and occupied the watering place themselves.

Now, Amīr al-mu‘minīn’s men also desired that just as Mu‘āwiyah had put restriction on water by occupation of the watering place, the same treatment should be accorded to him and his men and no Syrian should be allowed water and everyone of them should be made to die of thirst. But Amīr al-mu‘minīn said, “Do you want to take the same brutal step which these Syrians had taken? Never prevent anyone from water. Whoever wants to drink, may drink and whoever wants to take away may take away.” Consequently, despite occupation of the River by Amīr al-mu‘minīn’s army no one was prevented from the water and everyone was

given full liberty to take water.