

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام) وقد استبطأ أصحابه إذنه لهم في القتال بصفين

When Amīr al-mu'minīn's men showed impatience on his delay in giving them permission to fight in Şiffīn, he said:

أَمَّا قَوْلُكُمْ: أَكَلْتُ ذَلِكَ كِرَاهِيَةَ الْمَوْتِ؟ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا أَبَالِي دَخَلْتُ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ أَوْ خَرَجَ الْمَوْتُ إِلَيَّ. وَأَمَّا قَوْلُكُمْ: شَكَا فِي أَهْلِ الشَّامِ! فَوَاللَّهِ مَا دَفَعْتُ الْحَرْبَ يَوْمًا إِلَّا وَأَنَا أَطْمَعُ أَنْ تَلْحَقَ بِي طَائِفَةٌ فَتَهْتَدِيَ بِي، وَتَعُشُوا إِلَى ضَوْئِي، فَهُوَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَقْتُلَهَا عَلَى ضَلَالِهَا، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ تَبُوءُ بِأَثَامِهَا.

Well, as for your idea whether this (delay) is due to my unwillingness for death, then by Allāh I do not care whether I proceed towards death or death advances towards me. As for your impression that it may be due to my misgivings about the people of Syria (ash-Shām), well, by Allāh, I did not put off war even for a day except in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me and see my light with their weak eyes. This is dearer to me than to kill them in the state of their misguidance although they would be bearing their own sins.