

ومن كلام له عليه السلام في صفة رجل مذموم ثم في فضله هو عليه السلام

Amīr al-mu'minīn said to his companions about Mu'āwiyah

أَمَّا إِنَّهُ سَيُظْهِرُ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْدِي رَجُلٌ رَحْبُ الْبُطْنِ، مُنْذِحُ الْبُلْعُومِ، يَأْكُلُ مَا يَجِدُ، وَيَطْلُبُ مَا لَا يَجِدُ، فَاقْتُلُوهُ، وَلَنْ تَقْتُلُوهُ! أَلَا وَإِنَّهُ سَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِسَبِّي وَالْبَرَاءَةِ مِنِّي؛ فَأَمَّا السَّبُّ فَسَبُّوْنِي، فَإِنَّهُ لِي زَكَاةٌ، وَلَكُمْ نَجَاةٌ؛ وَأَمَّا الْبَرَاءَةُ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنِّي، فَإِنِّي وَلِدْتُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، وَسَبَقْتُ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَالْهَجْرَةِ.

Soon after me there would be put on you a man with a broad mouth and a big belly. He would swallow whatever he gets and would crave for what he does not get. You should kill him but (I know) you would not kill him. He would command you to abuse me and to renounce me. As for abusing, you do abuse me because that would mean purification for me and salvation for you. As regards renunciation, you should not renounce me because I have been born on the natural religion (Islam) and was foremost in (accepting) it as well as in Hijrah (migrating from Mecca to Medina). [1]

Footnote :

[1] About the person to whom Amīr al-mu'minīn has alluded in this sermon some people hold that he is Ziyād ibn Abīh ; some hold that he is al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi and some hold that he is Mughirah ibn Shu'bah. But most of the commentators have held him to mean Mu'āwiyah and this is correct because the qualities that Amīr al-mu'minīn has described prove true fully on him alone. Thus, Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd has written about the gluttonous quality of Mu'āwiyah that once the Prophet sent for him and he was informed that Mu'āwiyah was busy eating. Then the second and the third time a man was sent to call him but he brought the same news. Thereupon the Prophet- said, "May Allāh never satisfy his belly." The effect of this curse was that when he felt tired of eating he would say "Take away, for, by Allāh I am not satiated but I am tired and disgusted." Similarly, his abusing Amīr al-mu'minīn and ordering his officers for it are such accepted facts of history about which there is no scope of denying. In this connection such words were used on the pulpit that even Allāh and the Prophet were hit by them. Thus, Umm al-mu'minīn, Umm Salamah wrote to Mu'āwiyah, "Certainly you people abuse Allāh and the Prophet, and this is like this that you hurl abuses on 'Ali and those who love him, while I do stand witness that Allāh and Prophet did love him." (al-'Iqd al farīd, vol. 3, p. 131) Thanks to 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz who put a stop to it, and introduced the following verse in place of the abuse in the sermons :

Verily Allāh enjoineeth justice and benevolence (to others) and giving unto the kindred, and forbidden lewdness, and evil, and rebellion; He exhorteth you that ye

may take heed. (Qur'ān, 16:90)

In this sermon Amīr al-mu'minīn has ordered his killing on the basis of the Prophet's order that "When you (O Muslims) see Mu'āwiyah on my pulpit kill him." (Kitāb Şiffīn, pp. 243,248; Sharḥ of Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, vol. I, p. 348; Tārīkh Baghdād, vol. 12, p. 181; Mizān al-i'tidāl, vol. 2, p. 128; Tahdhīb at-tahdhīb, vol.2, p.428; vol. 5, p. 110; vol. 7, p. 324)