

وَمِنْ كَلَامٍ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

From one of his statements

فِي صِفَتِهِ وَصِفَةِ خُصُومِهِ، وَيُقَالُ: إِنَّهَا فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَمَلِ

Concerning himself and his adversaries; and it is said that it relates to the people of Jamal

وَقَدْ أَرَعَدُوا وَأَبْلَقُوا، وَمَعَ هَذَيْنِ الْأَمْرَيْنِ الْغَشْلُ، وَلَسْنَا نُرْعِدُ حَتَّى نُوقِعَ، وَلَا نُسِيلُ حَتَّى نَمْلِطَ.

They [1] thunder like clouds and shone like lightning but despite both these things they exhibited cowardice, while we do not thunder till we pounce upon the foe nor do we show flow (of words) until we have not virtually rained.

Notes:

[1] About the people of Jamal (i.e. the enemy in the battle of Jamal) Amīr al-Mu'minīn says that they rose thundering, shouting and stampeding; but when battle began, they were seen scattered like straw. At one time they made loud claims that they would do this and would do that, and now they showed such cowardice as to flee from the battlefield. About himself, Amīr al-Mu'minīn says: "We do not threaten the enemy before battle, nor utter boasts, nor terrorise the enemy by raising unnecessary cries, because it is not the way of the brave to use the tongue instead of the hand." That is why on this occasion he said to his comrades: "Beware of excessive talk as it is cowardice."