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Sermon 174: As for me, I would never be frightened of fighting....

About Talhah ibn `Ubaydillah. Delivered when he received the news that Talhah and az-Zubayr had already left for Basrah to fight against him.

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام)

في معنى طلحة بن عبيدالله [وقد قاله حين بلغه خروج طلحة والزبير إلى
البصرة لقتاله]

As for me, I would never be frightened of fighting or be made to fear striking because I am satisfied with Allah's promise of support to me. By Allah, Talhah has hastened with drawn sword to avenge `Uthman's blood for fear lest the demand for `Uthman's blood be made against himself, because the people's idea in this matter is about him, and, in fact, he was the most anxious among them for his killing. Therefore, he has tried to create misunderstanding by collecting forces in order to confuse the matter and to create doubt.

قَدْ كُنْتُ وَمَا أُهَدِّدُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَلَا أُرْهَبُ بِالضَّرْبِ، وَأَنَا عَلَى مَا قَدْ وَعَدَنِي رَبِّي مِنَ
النَّصْرِ. وَاللَّهِ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُ مُتَجَرِّدًا لِلطَّلَبِ بِدَمِ عُثْمَانَ إِلَّا خَوْفًا مِنْ أَنْ يُطَالَبَ
بِدَمِهِ، لِأَنَّهُ مَظْنُونُهُ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِي الْقَوْمِ أَحْرَصُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهُ، فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يُغَالِطَ بِمَا
أَجْلَبَ فِيهِ لِيَلْتَبَسَ الْأَمْرُ وَيَقَعَ الشُّكُّ.

By Allah, he did not act in either of three ways about `Uthman. If the son of `Affan (`Uthman) was in the wrong, as Talhah believed, it is necessary for him to support those who killed him or to keep away from his supporters. If `Uthman was the victim of oppression, then Talhah should have been among those who were keeping (the assaulters) away from him or were advancing pleas on his behalf. If he was in doubt about these two alternatives, then it was incumbent upon him to leave him (`Uthman) and retire aside and leave the men with him (to deal with him as they wished). But he adopted none of these three ways, and came out with a thing in which there is no good, and his excuses are not acceptable.

وَوَاللَّهِ مَا صَنَعَ فِي أَمْرِ عُثْمَانَ وَاحِدَةً مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: لَئِنْ كَانَ ابْنُ عَفَّانٍ ظَالِمًا - كَمَا كَانَ يَزْعُمُ - لَقَدْ كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يُوَازَرَ قَاتِلِيهِ وَأَنْ يُنَابِذَ نَاصِرِيهِ، وَلَئِنْ كَانَ مَظْلُومًا لَقَدْ كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنْهَنِينَ عَنْهُ وَالْمُعْذِرِينَ فِيهِ، وَلَئِنْ كَانَ فِي شَكٍّ مِنَ الْخَصَلَتَيْنِ، لَقَدْ كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يَعْتَزِلَهُ وَيَرْكُدَ جَانِبًا وَيَدْعَ النَّاسَ مَعَهُ، فَمَا فَعَلَ وَاحِدَةً مِنَ الثَّلَاثِ، وَجَاءَ بِأَمْرٍ لَمْ يُعْرِفْ بِأَبِيهِ، وَلَمْ تَسْلَمْ مَعَاذِيرُهُ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 174

- (1) Al-Tusi, *al-'Amali*, I, 172;
- (2) al-Khwarazmi, *al-Manaqib*, 117;
- (3) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah*, I, 171, 282, II, 167, V, 66, 240;
- (4) al-Thaqafi, *al-Gharat*;
- (5) al-Tabari, *al-Mustarshid*, 95;
- (6) Ibn Tawus, *Kashf*, 173;
- (7) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imamah*, I, 154.

1. It means that if Talhah considered `Uthman an oppressor, then after his assassination, instead of getting ready to avenge his blood, he should have supported his killers and justified their action. It is not the intention that in the case of `Uthman being in the wrong Talhah should have supported the attackers because he was already supporting and encouraging them.

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