

Letter 33: To Qutham ibn al-'Abbas, his Governor of Mecca

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام)

إلى قُثَمَ بن العَبَّاسِ، وَهُوَ عَامِلُهُ عَلَى مَكَّةَ

My spy in the West has written 1 to me telling me that some people of Syria have been sent for hajj who are blind of heart, deaf of ears and devoid of eyesight. They confound the truth with vanity, obey men in disobeying Allah, claim the milk of the world in the name of religion, and trade in the pleasures of this world by forsaking the rewards of the virtuous and the God-fearing. No one achieves good except he who acts for it, and no one is awarded the recompense of evil except he who commits it. Therefore, behave yourself in your duties like an intelligent, experienced, well-wishing and wise man who follows his superior and is obedient to his Imam. You should avoid what you may have to explain. Do not be exultant and assume superiority in riches nor lose courage in distress; and that is an end to the matter.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ عَيْنِي - بِالْمَغْرِبِ - كَتَبَ إِلَيَّ يُعْلَمُنِي أَنَّهُ وُجَّهَ إِلَى الْمَوْسِمِ أُنَاسٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ، الْعُمَّيِ الْقُلُوبُ، الصُّمُ الْأَسْمَاعُ، الْكُمْهُ الْأَبْصَارُ، الَّذِينَ يَلْتَمِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ، وَيُطِيعُونَ الْمَخْلُوقَ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ، وَيَحْتَلِبُونَ الدُّنْيَا دَرَّهَا بِالدِّينِ، وَيَشْتَرُونَ عَاجِلًا بِآجِلِ الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَّقِينَ، وَلَنْ يَفْوَزَ بِالْخَيْرِ إِلَّا عَامِلُهُ، وَلَا يُجْزِي جَزَاءَ الشَّرِّ إِلَّا فَاعِلُهُ. فَأَقِمْ عَلَى مَا فِي يَدِيكَ قِيَامَ الْحَازِمِ الصَّالِبِ، وَالنَّاصِحِ الْلَّبِيبِ، التَّابِعِ لِسُلْطَانِهِ، الْمُطِيعِ لِإِمَامِهِ. وَإِيَّاكَ وَمَا يُعْتَذِرُ مِنْهُ، وَلَا تَكُنْ

عِنْدَ النَّعْمَاءِ بَطِرًا، وَلَا عِنْدَ الْبَأْسَاءِ فَشِلًا، وَالسَّلَامُ.

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1. Mu'awiyah sent some men in the garb of pilgrims to Mecca in order to create sensation in the peaceful atmosphere of the place, by taking common men into their confidence, by a show of piety and God-fearing and then convincing them that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib has instigated the people against 'Uthman and in the end succeeded in getting him killed. In this way, they were to hold him responsible for the killing of 'Uthman and to turn the people against him, and also to incline the people towards him (Mu'a- wiyah) by mentioning the greatness of his character, the sublimity of his manners and stories of his generosity. But when the men whom Amir al-mu'- minin had put on the job gave him the information, he wrote this letter to Qutham ibn al-'Abbas to keep an eye on their movements and to put a stop to their mischief – mongerings.
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