

## Letter 38: To the people of Egypt when he appointed (Malik) al-Ashtar as their Governor

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام)

إلى أهل مصر، لما ولى عليهم الاشتهر رحمه الله

From the slave of Allah, 'Ali, Amir al-mu'minin to the people who became wrathful for the sake of Allah when He was disobeyed on His earth and His rights were ignored and oppression had spread its coverings over the virtuous as well as the vicious, on the local as well as the foreigner. Consequently, no good was acted upon nor any evil was avoided.

مِنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلِيِّ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ غَضِبُوا لِلَّهِ حِينَ عَصِيَ فِي  
أَرْضِهِ، وَذُهِبَ بِحَقِّهِ، فَضْرَبَ الْجَوْرُ سُرَادِقَهُ عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالْفَاجِرِ، وَالْمُقِيمِ  
وَالظَّاعِنِ، فَلَا مَعْرُوفٌ يُسْتَرَاخُ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَا مُنْكَرٌ يُتَنَاهَى عَنْهُ.

Now, I have sent to you a man from among the servants of Allah who allows himself no sleep in days of danger, nor does he shrink from the enemy at critical moments. He is severer on the wicked than a blazing fire. He is Malik ibn al-Harith, our brother from (the tribe of) Madhhij.

Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that accord with right, because he is a sword among the swords of Allah, whose edge is not dull and which does not miss its victim. If he orders you to advance,

advance, and if he orders you to stay, stay, because he surely neither advances or attacks nor puts anyone backward or forward save with my command. I have preferred him for you rather than for myself because of his being your well-wisher and (because of) the severity of his harshness over your enemies.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ، لَيِّنًا أَيَّامَ الْخَوْفِ، وَلَا يَنْكُلُ  
عَنِ الْأَعْدَاءِ سَاعَاتِ الرَّوْعِ، أَشَدَّ عَلَى الْفُجَّارِ مِنْ حَرِيقِ النَّارِ، وَهُوَ مَالِكُ بْنِ  
الْحَارِثِ أَخُو مَذْحِجٍ، فَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ أَطِيعُوا أَمْرَهُ فِيمَا طَابَقَ الْحَقَّ، فَإِنَّهُ سَيْفٌ مِنْ  
سُيُوفِ اللَّهِ، لَا كَلِيلُ الظُّبَةِ، وَلَا نَابِي الضَّرِيْبَةِ، فَإِنْ أَمَرَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْفِرُوا فَانْفِرُوا، وَإِنْ  
أَمَرَكُمْ أَنْ تُقِيمُوا فَأَقِيمُوا، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُقَدِّمُ وَلَا يُخَجِّمُ، وَلَا يُؤَخِّرُ وَلَا يُقَدِّمُ إِلَّا عَنِ  
أَمْرِي، وَقَدْ أَثَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِي لِنَصِيحَتِهِ لَكُمْ، وَشِدَّةِ شَكِيمَتِهِ عَلَى عَدُوِّكُمْ.

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