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## Letter 58: Written to the people of various localities describing what took place between him and the people of Siffin

ومن كتاب كتبه (عليه السلام)

إلى أهل الامصار يقتصّ فيه ما جرى بينه وبين أهل صفين

The whole thing began thus that we and the Syrians met in an encounter although we believe in one and the same Allah and the same Prophet, and our message in Islam is the same. We did not want them to add anything in the belief in Allah or in acknowledging His Messenger (Allah bless him and his descendants) nor did they want us to add any such thing. In fact, there was complete unity except that we differed on the question of `Uthman's blood while we were free of responsibility for it. We suggested to them to appease the situation by calming the temporary irritation and pacifying the people till matters settled down and stabilized when we would gain strength to put matters right.

وَكَانَ بَدْءُ أَمْرِنَا أَنَّا التَّقِينَا وَالْقَوْمُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ، وَالظَّاهِرُ أَنَّ رَبَّنَا وَاحِدٌ، وَنَبِيِّنَا  
وَاحِدٌ، وَدَعْوَتَنَا فِي الْأَسْلَامِ وَاحِدَةٌ، لَا نَسْتَزِيدُهُمْ فِي الْإِيمَانِ بِاللَّهِ وَالتَّصَدِيقِ  
بِرَسُولِهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله)، وَلَا يَسْتَزِيدُونَنَا، الْأَمْرُ وَاحِدٌ، إِلَّا مَا اخْتَلَفْنَا فِيهِ  
مِنْ دَمِ عُثْمَانَ، وَنَحْنُ مِنْهُ بَرَاءٌ! فَقُلْنَا: تَعَالَوْا نُدَاوِ مَا لَا يُدْرِكُ الْيَوْمَ بِإِطْفَاءِ

النَّائِرَةَ، وَتَسْكِينِ الْعَامَّةِ، حَتَّى يَشْتَدَّ الْأَمْرُ وَيَسْتَجْمِعَ، فَنَقُوى عَلَى وَضْعِ الْحَقِّ  
مَوَاضِعُهُ.

They however said that they would settle it by war. Thus, they refused our offer and consequently war spread its wings and came to stay. Its flames rose and became strong. When the war had bitten us as well as them and pierced its talons into us as well as them, they accepted what we had proposed to them.

So, we agreed to what they suggested and hastened to meet their request. In this way, the plea became clear to them and no excuse was left to them. Now, whoever among them adheres to this will be saved by Allah from ruin, and whoever shows obstinacy and insistence (on wrong) is the reverser whose heart has been blinded by Allah and evils will encircle his head.

فَقَالُوا: بَلْ نُدَاوِيهِ بِالْمُكَابَرَةِ! فَأَبَوْا حَتَّى جَنَحَتِ الْحَرْبُ وَرَكَدَتْ، وَوَقَدَتْ نِيرَانُهَا  
وَحَمِشَتْ. فَلَمَّا ضَرَّسْتَنَا وَإِيَّاهُمْ، وَوَضَعْتَ مَخَالِبَهَا فِينَا وَفِيهِمْ، أَجَابُوا عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ  
إِلَى الَّذِي دَعَوْنَاهُمْ إِلَيْهِ، فَأَجَبْنَاهُمْ إِلَى مَا دَعَوْا، وَسَارَعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى مَا طَلَبُوا، حَتَّى  
اسْتَبَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْحُجَّةُ، وَانْقَطَعَتْ مِنْهُمْ الْمَعْذِرَةُ. فَمَنْ تَمَّ عَلَى ذَلِكَ مِنْهُمْ فَهُوَ  
الَّذِي أَنْقَذَهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْهَلَكَةِ، وَمَنْ لَجَّ وَتَمَادَى فَهُوَ الرَّأكِسُ الَّذِي رَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى  
قَلْبِهِ، وَصَارَتْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ.

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