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Letter 67: To Qutham ibn al-'Abbas, his Governor of Mecca

ومن كتاب كتبه (عليه السلام)

إلى قُتَمِ بْنِ الْعَبَّاسِ (رحمه الله) وهو عامله على مكة

Now, make arrangements for Hajj by the people, remind them of the days (to be devoted to) Allah. Sit for giving them audience morning and evening. Explain the law to the seeker, teach the ignorant and discuss with the learned. There should be no intermediary between you and the people except your tongue, and no guard save your own face. Do not prevent any needy person from meeting you, because if the needy is returned unsatisfied from your door in the first instance then even doing it thereafter will not bring you praise.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَأَقِمِ لِلنَّاسِ الْحَجَّ، وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ اللَّهِ، وَاجْلِسْ لَهُمُ الْعَصْرَيْنِ، فَأَفْتِ
الْمُسْتَفْتِيَّ، وَعَلِّمِ الْجَاهِلَ، وَذَاكِرِ الْعَالِمَ، وَلَا يَكُنْ لَكَ إِلَى النَّاسِ سَفِيرٌ إِلَّا لِسَانُكَ،
وَلَا حَاجِبٌ إِلَّا وَجْهُكَ، وَلَا تَحْجُبَنَّ ذَا حَاجَةٍ عَنْ لِقَائِكَ بِهَا، فَإِنَّهَا إِنْ زِيدَتْ عَنْ
أَبْوَابِكَ فِي أَوَّلِ وَرْدِهَا لَمْ تُحْمَدْ فِيمَا بَعْدُ عَلَى قَضَائِهَا.

See what has been collected with you of the funds of Allah (in the public treasury) and spend it over the persons with families, the distressed, the starving and the naked, at your end. Then, send the remaining to us for distribution to those who are on this side.

وَأَنْظُرْ إِلَى مَا اجْتَمَعَ عِنْدَكَ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ فَاصْرِفْهُ إِلَى مَنْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ ذَوِي الْعِيَالِ
وَالْمَجَاعَةِ، مُصِيباً بِهِ مَوَاضِعَ الْمَفَاقِرِ وَالْخَلَائِ، وَمَا فَضَّلَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ فَاحْمِلْهُ
إِلَيْنَا لِنَقْسِمَهُ فِيمَنْ قَبْلَنَا.

Ask the people of Mecca not to charge rent from lodgers, because Allah, the Glorified, says that:

"alike; for the dweller therein as well as the stranger" (Qur'an, 22:25).

"al-`akif" (the dweller) here means he who is living there while "al-badi" (the stranger) means he who is not among the people of Mecca, comes for Hajj from outside. May Allah grant us and you promptitude for seeking His love (by doing good acts); and that is an end to the matter.

وَمُرْ أَهْلَ مَكَّةَ أَلَّا يَأْخُذُوا مِنْ سَاكِنٍ أَجْراً، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ يَقُولُ: (سَوَاءٌ الْعَاكِفُ
فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ) فَالْعَاكِفُ: الْمُقِيمُ بِهِ، وَالْبَادِي: الَّذِي يَحُجُّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ. وَفَقَّنَا اللَّهُ
وَأَيَّاكُمْ لِمَحَابَّتِهِ، وَالسَّلَامُ.

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