

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى أميرين من أمراء جيشه

To two of the officers in his army

وَقَدْ أَمَرْتُ عَلَيْكُمَا وَعَلَيَّ مِنْ فِي حَيْزِكُمَا مَالِكُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ الْأَشْثَرِ، فَاسْمِعَا لَهُ وَأَطِيعَا، وَاجْعَلَاهُ دِرْعًا وَمِجَنًّا، فَإِنَّهُ مِمَّنْ لَا يُخَافُ وَهَنَهُ، وَلَا سَقَطَتَهُ، وَلَا بَطْؤَهُ عَمَّا الْإِسْرَاعُ إِلَيْهِ أَحْزَمُ، وَلَا إِسْرَاعُهُ إِلَى مَا الْبُطْءُ عَنْهُ أَمْثَلُ.

I have placed Mālik [1] ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar in command over you and over all those under you. Therefore, follow his commands and take him as the armour and shield for yourselves, because he is one of those from whom I have no fear of weakness nor any mistake, nor laziness where haste is more appropriate, nor haste where slackness is expected of him.

Footnote :

[1] When Amīr al-mu'minīn sent a vanguard contingent twelve thousand strong under Ziyād ibn an-Naḍr al-Ḥārithī and Shurayḥ ibn Hānī al-Ḥārithī to Syria, on the way, near Sūr ar-Rūm, they encountered with Abu'l-A'war ('Amr ibn Sulaymān) as-Sulamī who was camping there with a contingent of the Syrians. Both of them informed Amīr al-mu'minīn of this through al-Ḥārith ibn Jumhān al-Ju'fī, whereupon he sent Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar as the Officer-in-command and wrote this letter to inform them. The brief but comprehensive words in which Amīr al-mu'minīn has mentioned Mālik al-Ashtar in this letter gives an indication of his intelligence, sagacity, courage, daring, expanse and versatility in the art of war and his personal greatness and importance.