

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى عبد الله بن عباس وهو عامله على البصرة

To 'Abdullāh ibn al-'Abbās, his Governor of Baṣrah

وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْبَصْرَةَ مَهَيْطُ إِبْلِيسَ، وَمَغْرَسُ الْفِتَنِ، فَحَادِثُ أَهْلِهَا بِالْإِحْسَانِ إِلَيْهِمْ، وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةَ الْخَوْفِ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ.

You should know that Baṣrah is the place where Satan descends and mischiefs happen. Keep the people of this place pleased with good treatment and remove the knots of fear from their hearts.

وَقَدْ بَلَّغْنِي تَنْمِركَ لِبَنِي تَمِيمٍ، وَغَلْظَتِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَإِنَّ بَنِي تَمِيمٍ لَمْ يَغِبْ لَهُمْ نَجْمٌ إِلَّا طَلَعَ لَهُمْ آخِرٌ، وَإِنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَسْبِقُوا بُوْغْمَ فِي جَاهِلِيَّةٍ وَلَا إِسْلَامٍ، وَإِنَّ لَهُمْ بِنَا رَحِمًا مَأْسَدَةً، وَقَرَابَةً خَاصَّةً، نَحْنُ مَأْجُورُونَ عَلَى صَلَّتِهَا، وَمَأْزُورُونَ عَلَى قَطِيعَتِهَا.

I have come to know of your strictness with Banū Tamīm [1] and your harshness over them. Banū Tamīm are those that if one star sets another one rises for them. They were never exceeded in (the art of) war in pre-Islamic times or after Islam. They have a special kinship with us and a particular relationship. We shall be rewarded if we pay heed to the kinship and be deemed sinful if we disregard it.

فَارْبِعُ أَبَا الْعَبَّاسِ، رَحِمَكَ اللَّهُ، فِيمَا جَرَى عَلَى لِسَانِكَ وَيَدِكَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ وَشَرٍّ! فَإِذَا شَرِيكَانِ فِي ذَلِكَ، وَكُنْ عِنْدَ صَالِحِ ظَنِّي بِكَ، وَلَا يَفِيلُنْ رَأْيِي فِيكَ، وَالسَّلَامُ.

O' Abu'l-'Abbās, may Allāh have mercy on you, keep yourself restrained in whatever you say or do, good or bad about your people, as we are both partners in this (responsibility). Prove yourself according to my good impressions about you, and do not prove my opinion (about you) wrong; and that is an end to the matter.

Footnote :

[1] When Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr reached Baṣrah it was Banū Tamīm who took active part in the movement to avenge 'Uthmān's blood and were foremost in fanning this mischief. Therefore, when 'Abdullāh ibn al-'Abbās took over as the Governor of Baṣrah, in view of their breach of faith and animosity, he thought they deserved harsh treatment and was to some extent severe with them. But in this tribe there were also a few sincere followers of Amīr al-mu'minīn. When they saw this behaviour of Ibn 'Abbās with their tribe they sent a letter to Amīr al-mu'minīn through Jāriyah ibn Qadāmah wherein they complained of Ibn 'Abbās's harsh treatment. Thereupon, Amīr al-mu'minīn wrote this letter to Ibn 'Abbās in which he instructed him to change his ways and to behave well with them, and has drawn his

attention to the kinship existing between Banū Hāshim and Banū Tamīm. That kinship was this that Banū Hāshim and Banū Tamīm join the lineal line at Ilyās ibn Muḍar because Hāshim is the descendant of Mudrikah ibn Ilyās, while Tamīm is the descendant of Ṭābikhah ibn Ilyās.