

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى بعض أمراء جيشه

To one of the officers of his army.

فَإِنْ عَادُوا إِلَى ظِلِّ الطَّاعَةِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي نَحِبُ، وَإِنْ تَوَافَتِ الْأُمُورُ بِالْقَوْمِ إِلَى الشَّقَاقِ وَالْعَصِيَانِ فَانْهَدِ بِمَنْ أَطَاعَكَ إِلَى مَنْ عَصَاكَ،  
وَاسْتَغْنِ بِمَنْ انْقَادَ مَعَكَ عَمَّنْ تَقَاعَسَ عَنْكَ، فَإِنَّ الْمَتَكَارَةَ مَغْيِبُهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مَشْهَدِهِ، وَقَعُودُهُ أَغْنَى مِنْ نَهْوِضِهِ.

If they [1] return to the umbrella of obedience then this is all that we want. But if the condition of these people points out towards disruption and disobedience then, taking with you those who obey you, rush upon those who disobey you, and while you have those with you who follow you do not worry about those who hold back from you, because the absence of a half-hearted man is better than his presence, and his sitting down is better than his rising up.

Footnotes :

[1] When 'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf, the Governor of Baṣrah informed Amīr al-mu'minīn of the arrival of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr in Baṣrah and of their intentions, Amīr al-mu'minīn wrote this letter to him, wherein he has instructed him that in case the enemy was bent on fighting, when facing him he should not enlist on his side those who on the one hand showed consideration for the personalities of 'Ā'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr and who on the other hand had agreed to fight against them merely by persuasion, because such people could not be expected to fight steadfastly nor could they be depended upon. Rather, such people would try to dishearten others too. Therefore, it was only good to leave aside such people.