

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى الأشعث بن قيس (عامل أذربيجان)

To al-Ash'ath ibn Qays (al-Kindī), the Governor of Āzarbāyjān

وإنَّ عَمَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَكَ بِطُعْمَةٍ، وَلَكِنَّهُ فِي عُنُقِكَ أَمَانَةٌ. وَأَنْتَ مُسْتَرْعِيٌّ لِمَنْ فَوْقَكَ، لَيْسَ لَكَ أَنْ تَفْتَتِ فِي رِعِيَّةٍ، وَلَا تُخَاطِرَ إِلَّا بِوَثِيقَةٍ، وَفِي يَدَيْكَ مَالٌ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَأَنْتَ مِنْ خَزَائِنِهِ حَتَّى تَسْلِمَهُ إِلَيَّ، وَلَعَلِّي أَلَا أَكُونُ شَرَّ وَلَاتِكَ لَكَ، وَالسَّلَامُ.

Certainly, your assignment [1] is not a morsel for you, but it is a trust round your neck, and you have been charged with the protection (of the people) on behalf of your superiors. It is not for you to be oppressive towards the ruled, nor to risk yourself save on strong grounds. You have in your hands the funds which are the property of Allāh, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, and you hold its charge till you pass it on to me. Probably, I will not be one of the bad rulers for you, and that is an end to the matter.

Footnote :

[1] When Amīr al-mu'minīn was free from the battle of Jamal he wrote to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays (al-Kindī) who had been the Governor of Āzarbāyjān from the days of 'Uthmān, to send the revenue and levies of his province. But since he had fears about the future of his position and assignment, he intended to swallow all this money like other officers of 'Uthmān. Therefore, when this letter reached him he sent for his chief associates and after mentioning this letter to them said: "I fear that this money will be taken away from me; I therefore intend to join Mu'āwiyah."

Whereupon those people said that it was a matter of shame to leave kith and kin and seek refuge with Mu'āwiyah. Consequently, on the advice of these people he postponed his idea to run away but did not agree to part with the money. On getting this information Amīr al-mu'minīn sent Ḥūjr ibn 'Adī al-Kindī to bring him to Kūfah. He persuaded him and brought him to Kūfah. On reaching there his kit was found to contain four hundred thousand Dirhams out of which Amīr al-mu'minīn left thirty thousand for him and deposited the rest in the public treasury.