

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى أبي موسى الأشعري جواباً في أمر الحكمين، ذكره سعيد بن يحيى الأموي في كتاب المغازي

To Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī in reply to his letter regarding the two arbitrators. Sa‘īd ibn Yaḥyā al-Umawī has mentioned this in his “Kitāb al-Maghāzī.”

فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ تَغَيَّرَ كَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ مِنْ حَظِّهِمْ، فَمَالُوا مَعَ الدُّنْيَا، وَنَطَقُوا بِالْهَوَى، وَإِنِّي نَزَلْتُ مِنْ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ مَنْزَلاً مُعْجَباً، اجْتَمَعَ بِهِ أَقْوَامٌ أَعْجَبْتَهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ، فَإِنِّي [وَأَنَا] أَدَاوِي مِنْهُمْ قَرَحاً أَخَافُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عُلْقاً.

Certainly, many people have turned away from many a (lasting) benefit (of the next life), for they bent towards the world and spoke with passions. I have been struck with wonder in this matter, upon which people who are self-conceited have agreed. I am providing a cure for their wound but I fear lest it develops into a clot of blood (and becomes incurable).

وَلَيْسَ رَجُلٌ - فَاعْلَمْ - أَحَرِصَ عَلَى جَمَاعَةِ أُمَّةٍ مُحَمَّدٍ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) وَأَلْفَتْهَا مِنِّي، ابْتَغِي بِذَلِكَ حُسْنَ الثَّوَابِ، وَكَرَمِ الْمَأْبِ، وَسَأْفِي بِالَّذِي وَأَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِي، وَإِنْ تَغَيَّرَتْ عَنْ صَالِحٍ مَا فَارَقْتَنِي عَلَيْهِ. فَإِنَّ الشَّقِيَّ مِنْ حَرَمِ نَفْعٍ مَا أُوتِيَ مِنَ الْعَقْلِ وَالتَّجَرِبَةِ.

Remember that no person is more covetous than I for the unity of the ummah of Muḥammad (may Allāh bless him and his descendants) and their solidarity. I seek through it good reward and an honourable place to return to. I shall fulfill what I have pledged upon myself even though you may go back from the sound position that existed when you left me last, because wretched is he who is denied the benefit of wisdom and experience.

وَإِنِّي لِأَعْبُدُ أَنْ يَقُولَ قَائِلٌ بِبَاطِلٍ، وَأَنْ أَفْسِدَ أَمْرًا قَدْ أَصْلَحَهُ اللَّهُ، فَدَعْ مَا لَا تَعْرِفُ، فَإِنَّ شِرَارَ النَّاسِ طَائِرُونَ إِلَيْكَ بِأَقْوِيلِ السُّوءِ، وَالسَّلَامِ.

I feel enraged if anyone speaks wrong, or if I should worsen a matter which Allāh has kept sound. Therefore, leave out what you do not understand, because wicked people will be conveying to you vicious things; and that is an end to the matter.