LIBRARY OF ANCIENT WRITINGS

Letter to ʿUthmān al-Battī

رسالة أبي حنيفة إلى عثمان البتّي

Abū Ḥanīfa · Faith, deeds and disagreements among the early Muslims



Al-Wāsiṭī · Maqāmāt · BnF, Arabe 5847, f. 5v

English · Arabic text · Notes and sources

VOLUME VIII

Reading guide

The English text, commentary and sources are brought together in the first part. Documentary reproductions appear at the end of the volume. Historical illustrations accompany the text.

Part One · English 3

Part Two · Arabic text 16

Appendix · Facsimiles 25

Arabic quotations needed for the commentary remain beside their explanations. The continuous Arabic transcription follows in a separate part.

References to editions and manuscripts have been retained. Contents-page references and internal links point to the new pagination.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

About the work

Dating

The letter is attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa, who died in 767, and addressed to ʿUthmān al-Battī, who died in 760 or 761. One Cairo copy is dated in the catalogue to 664 AH, or 1265-1266 CE.

Origin and preservation

Addressed to a Basran scholar, the letter survives in Cairo at Dār al-Kutub, Ṭalʿat collection, miscellany 695, and at al-Azhar, Kalām 3922.

Summary

Can someone who commits a sin or neglects a prescribed duty still be called a ‘believer’? Answering an accusation from Basra, the author examines what it means to enter the faith and what the word ‘astray’ encompasses. Wars between believers lead him to question the judgement anyone can pass on others.

Detailed account and sources · p. 14

CONTENTS OF THE VOLUME

Reading guide

A doctrinal letter transmitted under the name of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150 AH / 767 CE), addressed to the Basran scholar ʿUthmān al-Battī (d. 143 AH / 760-761 CE). It answers a specific question: can someone who errs or neglects a prescribed duty be called a ‘believer’? The complete letter and its preceding chain of transmission are presented here.

Passage	Arabic	English	Meaning
The chain of transmission	16	5	11
An accusation from Basra	17	5	11
Entering the faith and acting	18	6	11
What does ‘astray’ mean?	19	7	12
The test of wars between believers	20	7	12
Deeds, sin and judgement	22	8	12
The party's name and closing words	23	9	13

Introduction and sources 14

PART ONE

English translation

الترجمة الإنجليزية

01 · The chain of transmission

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds. Blessings and peace upon our master Muḥammad, his family and all his companions. Imam Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Sighnāqī transmits from Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Bukhārī, on the authority of Shams al-A'imma Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Kardarī, Burhān al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Marghīnānī, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Nāṣir al-Yarsūkhī, ʿAlā' al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Samarqandī, Abū l-Muʿīn Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Makḥūlī al-Nasafī, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Muṭarrif al-Balkhī, Abū Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Samarqandī, Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Bustī, Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Fārisī, the jurist Naṣīr b. Yaḥyā, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Samāʿa al-Tamīmī and Imam Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, these words of Imam Abū Ḥanīfa, may God be pleased with him and with them all.

02 · An accusation from Basra

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Merciful. From Abū Ḥanīfa to ʿUthmān al-Battī. Peace be upon you. In addressing you, I praise God, besides whom there is no god. I urge you to fear and obey Him. God suffices to call to account and requite. Your letter reached me, and I understood the advice you gave me in it. You write that a desire for good and a wish to advise me prompted you to write. That is indeed how we received your approach. You say you have heard that I am among those called the murji'a and that I speak of a 'believer astray'. This grieves you. By my life, nothing that leads away from God can excuse those who indulge in it. What people have invented and introduced provides no guiding rule. The rule is what was brought by the

Quran, what Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, called people to, and what his companions held to before people became divided. All else is innovation and novelty. Understand my letter well. Beware lest your own opinion turn against you, and fear lest Satan find a way to reach you. May God preserve both you and us through the obedience we owe Him. By His mercy, we ask Him to help both you and us.

03 · Entering the faith and acting

Let me explain this to you. Before God sent Muḥammad, people associated others with God. He sent Muḥammad to preach Islam to them. Muḥammad called them to testify that there is no god but God alone, without associate, and to acknowledge what he brought from Him. Whoever entered Islam was a believer, free of associating others with God. His property and his blood were inviolable. He had the rights and protection of Muslims. Whoever refused after being called was an unbeliever, outside the faith. His property could lawfully be taken and his blood shed. Nothing was accepted from him but entry into Islam; otherwise he was put to death, except where God, glorified and exalted, prescribed payment of the jizya for the People of the Book. Only afterwards were the obligations revealed to those who had already given their assent.

Observing them was therefore an act added to faith. That is why God says, ‘Those who have believed and done good deeds’ (2:25) and ‘Whoever believes in God and acts well’ (64:9), among similar passages in the Quran. Someone who neglected the act did not thereby neglect his assent. He could have given his assent before performing any deed. If neglecting the deed meant neglecting assent, failure to perform the deed alone would strip him of the name of believer and its attendant inviolability, just as abandoning assent would strip him of the name of faith, its protection and the rights it confers, returning people to their earlier state of associating others with God.

Here is another way to recognise the difference between the two. People do not differ in giving their assent. In this respect, one does not surpass another. Yet they may surpass one another in their deeds, and their

obligations may differ. The religion of the beings of heaven and that of the Messenger are one. Thus God says, ‘He has prescribed for you, in religion, what He enjoined upon Noah, what We have revealed to you, and what We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Uphold the religion and do not divide over it’ (42:13).

04 · What does ‘astray’ mean?

Know that the right guidance of believing in God and His Messenger differs from right guidance in performing prescribed acts. How could this be unclear to you? You yourself call this man a believer because of his assent, as God calls him in His Book, and ignorant of the prescriptions he does not know. Yet it is precisely what he does not know that he learns. Is the straying of someone who knows neither God nor His Messenger identical to that of someone ignorant of something people learn when they are already believers? In teaching the obligations, God says, ‘God makes things clear to you so that you do not go astray. God knows all things’ (4:176). He says, ‘If one of the two errs, let the other remind her’ (2:282), and ‘I did it when I was among those astray’ (26:20), meaning here ‘among the ignorant’. The proofs given by God's Book and the Tradition are too clear for a man such as you to misunderstand. Do you not yourself say ‘unjust believer’, ‘sinful believer’, ‘believer in error’, ‘disobedient believer’, ‘iniquitous believer’? In the wrong or error he has committed, is he rightly guided as he is in his faith, or has he strayed from the truth he missed? When Jacob's sons, peace be upon our prophet and upon them, say to their father, ‘You are indeed in your old error’ [12:95], do you think they mean ‘in your old unbelief’? God forbid that you should understand it so, knowing the Quran as you do.

05 · The test of wars between believers

Consider what would follow if, as you write to us, people had given their assent before the obligations, but subsequently deserved to be called

people who give their assent only through their deeds, once the obligations were imposed. You have not explained what they were before, what their religion was, or what their fate was in your view, if that name belonged to them only through the deed that had become obligatory. If you say they were believers and enjoyed the legal status and protection of Muslims, you speak truly, confirming what I write to you. If you call them unbelievers, you innovate and contradict the Prophet and the Quran. If, following punctilious adherents of innovations, you say such a man is neither an unbeliever nor a believer, that too is innovation and contradicts the Prophet and his companions. ʿAlī was called Commander of the Believers, as was ʿUmar. Did this mean ʿcommander of those who obey every prescription'? In the arbitration document, ʿAlī called his opponents from al-Shām 'believers'. Were they then rightly guided while he fought them? The Messenger's companions killed one another, and the two parties were not both following the right path. What do you call the faction that committed aggression? By God, I know no sin among the people of the qibla graver than killing, especially shedding the blood of Muḥammad's companions. What do you call the two parties, since they cannot both have followed the right path? To assert that both were rightly guided would be innovation. To assert that both were astray would also be innovation. If you consider one rightly guided, what of the other? If you answer, 'God knows best', you answer correctly. Reflect on what I have just written to you.

06 · Deeds, sin and judgement

This is my position. The people of the qibla are believers. Neglecting an obligation does not lead me to exclude them from the faith. Whoever believes and obeys God in every prescription is, in our view, among the people of Paradise. Whoever abandons faith and deeds is an unbeliever and among the people of the Fire. Whoever believes and neglects one obligation is a sinful believer. The decision belongs to God. If He wills, He punishes him; if He wills, He forgives him. If He punishes him for his failure, it is a sin He punishes. If He forgives, it is a sin He forgives.

As for the former disputes among the Messenger's companions, I say, ‘God knows best’. I do not think your judgement of the people of the qibla differs from this. Such was the practice of the Messenger's companions and those who transmit the Tradition and legal learning. When we explained this to your brother ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ, he declared that it was the practice of the Messenger's companions. Your brother Nāfiʿ said so too, affirming that Ibn ʿUmar still held to it when he left him. Sālim reports from Saʿīd b. Jubayr that this was the way of Muḥammad's companions. Your brother Nāfiʿ affirms it of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, and ʿAbd al-Karīm, on the authority of Ṭāwūs, likewise affirms it of Ibn ʿAbbās. May God be pleased with them.

I have heard that, when he drew up the agreement, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib described both parties as believers. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz also spoke this way, according to an account given to me by one of your brothers whom I met, concerning what I had heard from you. Then he said, ‘Set this out for me in writing’, and began teaching it to his children, instructing them to teach it in turn. Those who sat with you knew this, may God have mercy on you. It had a place among Muslims. Know that the best of what you have learnt and what you teach is the Tradition. It is for you to recognise those to whom it should be taught.

07 · The party's name and closing words

As for the name murjiʾa that you mention, what wrong does a group of men commit by speaking justly, if adherents of innovations call them this? They are men of justice and tradition. Hostile people gave them this name. By my life, the justice to which you might call men, if they agreed with you, would not be dishonoured by your calling them hostile people [the positioning of the pronouns makes the sentence difficult]. If this were done, the innovation would lie in the naming. Would that diminish what you hold from just men?

Were I not reluctant to lengthen my letter and multiply explanations, I would expand on the answers I have given you. If a difficulty remains, or if adherents

of innovations plant an objection in your mind, let me know. I shall answer you, God willing. I shall spare no effort for your good or mine. It is God whose help is sought. Keep writing to me, even if only to greet me and tell me your needs. May God grant us a noble return and a good life. May God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds. God's blessings upon our master Muḥammad, his family and all his companions.

NOTES AND SOURCES

Translation nuances

وجوه المعنى

01 · The chain of transmission

رَوَى، عن

The chain before the letter names the sources from whom its transmitters claim to have received it, framing its manuscript transmission.

Arabic text · Translation

02 · An accusation from Basra

المُرْجِئَة

A group name derived from irjāʾ, the deferral or withholding of judgement. The letter first challenges the term's polemical use.

Arabic text · Translation

03 · Entering the faith and acting

التَّصْدِيق

Here, ‘assent’ to an acknowledged truth, especially the divine message. The author distinguishes this assent from fulfilling a prescription.

حُرْمَة

Protection or inviolability, especially of blood and property. Legal consequences are central to this passage.

Arabic text · Translation

04 · What does ‘astray’ mean?

ضَلَال

In the argument, the term may mean error, ignorance or losing one's way. Its automatic identification with unbelief is precisely what the letter challenges.

Arabic text · Translation

05 · The test of wars between believers

أَهْلُ القِبْلَة

The ‘people of the qibla’ are those who face the same direction in prayer.

القَضِيَّة

An agreement or settlement of a dispute. Here it is the document cited concerning ʿAlī and his opponents from al-Shām.

Arabic text · Translation

06 · Deeds, sin and judgement

المَشِيئَة

Will or sovereign decision. The author reserves to God the decision to punish or forgive.

زَعَمَ

A reporting verb that may signal distance or introduce a reported assertion. Here the speakers are cited in support of the argument.

Arabic text · Translation

07 · The party's name and closing words

شَنَآن

Enduring hostility, aversion. The term recurs in the criticism of labels imposed by opponents.

Arabic text · Translation

DOCUMENTATION

Introduction and sources

The editor al-Kawtharī describes the transmission of the Dār al-Kutub copy in Cairo. Karabulut's catalogue lists, among others, Dār al-Kutub, Ṭalʿat collection, miscellany 695, catalogued as 664 AH / 1265-1266 CE, and al-Azhar in Cairo, Kalām 3922, folios 34-43. This dating concerns a medieval copy. The correspondence is associated with two eighth-century scholars.

The translation follows the recension edited by Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī. In the digitised volume from the Maṭbaʿat al-Anwār in Cairo (1368 AH), the title appears in image 37 and the chain and letter in images 38-42. These show the printed edition. The image opening or accompanying the volume is identified in its caption. Verse references and thematic divisions are reading aids.

Textual sources

Cairo edition, 1368 AH. Digital reproduction; the letter begins in image 38.

Digitised collection and record. NYU, Arabic Collections Online.

Chain of transmission of the Dār al-Kutub copy, described by al-Kawtharī.

Karabulut's manuscript catalogue, entry 10549, work 7.

Arabic text of the recension in the al-ʿAqīda wa-ʿilm al-kalām collection, pp. 629-632.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina catalogue. Cairo edition.

Image provenance

Cairo edition, 1368 AH. New York University, Arabic Collections Online, image 38.

Return to the first passage

PART TWO

Original Arabic text
النص العربي

01 · The chain of transmission

بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين ، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه أجمعين ، روى الإمام حسام الدين الحسين بن علي بن الحجاج السغناقي ، عن حافظ الدين محمد بن محمد بن نصر البخاري ، عن شمس الأئمة محمد بن عبد الستار الكردري ، عن برهان الدين أبي الحسن علي بن أبي بكر بن عبد الجليل المرغيناني عن ضياء الدين محمد بن الحسين بن ناصر اليرسوخي ، عن علاء الدين أبي بكر محمد بن أحمد السمرقندي ، عن أبي المعين ميمون بن محمد المكحولي النسفي ، عن أبي زكريا يحيى بن مطرف البلخي ، عن أبي صالح محمد بن الحسين السمرقندي عن أبي سعيد محمد بن أبي بكر البستي ، عن أبي الحسن علي بن أحمد الفارسي عن نصير بن يحيى الفقيه ، عن أبي عبد الله محمد بن سماعة التميمي ، عن الإمام أبي يوسف يعقوب بن إبراهيم الأنصاري ، عن الإمام الأعظم أبي حنيفة رضي الله عنه وعنهم أنه قال :

02 · An accusation from Basra

بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم من أبي حنيفة إلى عثمان البتي : سلام عليك ، فإني أحمد إليك الله الذي لا إله إلا هو ، أما بعد فإني أوصيك بتقوى الله وطاعته وكفى بالله حسيبا وجازيا بلغني كتابك ، وفهمت الذي فيه من نصيحتك ، وقد كتب أنه دعاك إلى الكتاب بما كتبت حرصك على الخير والنصيحة ، وعلى ذلك كان موضعه عندنا ، كتبت تذكر أنه بلغك أني من المرجئة وأني أقول : مؤمن ضال. وأن ذلك يشق عليك ولعمري ما في شيء

باعد عن الله تعالى عذر لأهله ، ولا فيما أحدث الناس وابتدعوا أمر يهتدى به ، ولا الأمر إلا ما جاء به القرآن ودعا إليه محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم وكان عليه أصحابه حتى تفرّق الناس ، وأما ما سوى ذلك فمبتدع ومحدث ، فافهم كتابي إليك ، فاحذر رأيك على نفسك ، وتخوّف أن يدخل الشيطان عليك عصمنا الله وإياك بطاعته ، ونسأله التوفيق لنا ولك برحمته ،

03 · Entering the faith and acting

ثم أخبرك أن الناس كانوا أهل شرك قبل أن يبعث الله تعالى محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم ، فبعث محمدا يدعوهم إلى الإسلام ، فدعاهم إلى أن يشهدوا أنه لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ، والإقرار بما جاء به من الله تعالى ، وكان الداخل في الإسلام مؤمنا بريئا من الشرك ، حراما ماله ودمه ، له حق المسلمين وحرمتهم ، وكان التارك لذلك حين دعا إليه كافرا بريئا من الإيمان ، حلالا ماله ودمه ، لا يقبل منه إلا الدخول في الإسلام أو القتل. إلا ما ذكر الله سبحانه وتعالى في أهل الكتاب من إعطاء الجزية ، ثم نزلت الفرائض بعد ذلك على أهل التصديق.

فكان الأخذ بها عملا مع الإيمان ولذلك يقول الله عزوجل : (الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحاتِ) [البقرة : ٢٥] وقال : (وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صالِحاً) [التّغابن : ٩] وأشباه ذلك من القرآن. فلم يكن المضيع للعمل مضيعا للتصديق ، وقد أصاب التصديق بغير عمل. ولو كان المضيع للعمل مضيعا للتصديق لانتقل من اسم الإيمان وحرمته بتضييعه العمل كما أن الناس لو ضيّعوا التصديق لانتقلوا بتضييعه من اسم الإيمان وحرمته وحقه ، ورجعوا إلى حالهم التي كانوا عليها من الشرك.

ومما يعرف به اختلافهما أن الناس لا يختلفون في التصديق. ولا يتفاضلون فيه. وقد يتفاضلون في العمل. وتختلف فرائضهم. ودين أهل السماء ودين الرسول واحد. فلذلك يقول الله تعالى : (شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ ما وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحاً وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنا إِلَيْكَ وَما وَصَّيْنا بِهِ إِبْراهِيمَ وَمُوسى وَعِيسى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ) [الشّورى : ١٣].

04 · What does ‘astray’ mean?

واعلم أن الهدي في التصديق بالله وبرسوله ليس كالهدي فيما افترض من الأعمال. ومن أين يشكل ذلك عليك؟ وأنت تسميه مؤمنا بتصديقه كما سماه الله تعالى في كتابه وتسميه جاهلا

بما لا يعلم من الفرائض. وهو إنما يتعلم ما يجهل. فهل يكون الضال عن معرفة الله تعالى ومعرفة رسوله. كالضال عن معرفة ما يتعلمه الناس وهم مؤمنون؟! وقد قال الله تعالى في تعليمه الفرائض : (يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا وَاللهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ) [النّساء : ١٧٦] وقال : (أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْداهُما فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْداهُمَا الْأُخْرى) [البقرة : ٢٨٢] ، وقال : (فَعَلْتُها إِذاً وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ) [الشّعراء : ٢٠] يعني من الجاهلين ، والحجة من كتاب الله تعالى والسنة على تصديق ذلك أبين وأوضح من أن تشكل على مثلك. أولست تقول : مؤمن ظالم ، ومؤمن مذنب ، ومؤمن مخطئ ومؤمن عاص ، ومؤمن جائر؟ هل يكون فيما ظلم وأخطأ مهتديا فيه مع هداه في الإيمان ، أو يكون ضالا عن الحق الذي أخطأه؟ وقول بني يعقوب على نبينا وعليهم السلام لأبيهم إنك لفي ضلالك القديم ، أتظن أنهم عنوا أنك لفي كفرك القديم؟ حاشا لله أن تفهم هذا ، وأنت بالقرآن عالم.

05 · The test of wars between believers

واعلم أن الأمر لو كان كما كتبت به إلينا أن الناس كانوا أهل تصديق قبل الفرائض ثم جاءت الفرائض ، لكان ينبغي لأهل التصديق أن يستحقوا (اسم) التصديق بالعمل حين كلفوا به ،

ولم تفسر لي ما هم وما دينهم وما مستقرهم عندك (قبل ذلك)؟ إذا هم لم يستحقوا الاسم إلا بالعمل حين كلفوا فإن زعمت أنهم مؤمنون تجري عليهم أحكام المسلمين وحرمتهم صدقت. وكان صوابا. لما كتبت به إليك. وإن زعمت أنهم كفار فقد ابتدعت وخالفت النبي والقرآن. وإن قلت بقول من تعنت من أهل البدع وزعمت أنه ليس بكافر ولا مؤمن فاعلم أن هذا القول بدعة وخلاف للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأصحابه. وقد سمي علي رضي الله عنه أمير المؤمنين وعمر رضي الله عنه أمير المؤمنين. أو أمير المطيعين في الفرائض كلها يعنون؟ وقد سمي علي أهل حربه من أهل الشام مؤمنين في كتاب القضية. أو كانوا مهتدين وهو يقتلهم؟ وقد اقتتل أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، ولم تكن الفئتان مهتديتين جميعا ، فما اسم الباغية عندك؟ فو الله ما أعلم من ذنوب أهل القبلة ذنبا أعظم من القتل ثم دماء أصحاب محمد عليه الصلاة والسلام خاصة. فما اسم الفريقين عندك؟ وليسا مهتديين جميعا فإن زعمت أنهما مهتديان جميعا ابتدعت. وإن زعمت أنهما ضالان جميعا ابتدعت وإن قلت أن أحدهما مهتد فما الآخر؟ فإن قلت الله أعلم أصبت. تفهم هذا الذي كتبت به إليك.

06 · Deeds, sin and judgement

واعلم أني أقول : أهل القبلة مؤمنون لست أخرجهم من الإيمان بتضييع شيء من الفرائض. فمن أطاع الله تعالى في الفرائض كلها مع الإيمان كان من أهل الجنة عندنا ، ومن ترك الإيمان والعمل كان كافرا من أهل النار ، ومن أصاب الإيمان وضيّع شيئا من الفرائض كان مؤمنا مذنبا ، وكان لله تعالى فيه المشيئة إن شاء عذّبه وإن شاء غفر له ، فإن عذّبه على تضييعه شيئا فعلى ذنب يعذبه ، وإن غفر له فذنبا يغفر.

وإني أقول فيما مضى من اختلاف أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فيما كان بينهم ، الله أعلم. ولا أظن هذا إلا رأيك في أهل القبلة لأنه أمر أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأمر (حملة) السنة والفقه. زعم أخوك عطاء بن أبي رباح ونحن نصف له هذا : أن هذا أمر أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم. وزعم أخوك نافع هذا وأنه فارق (ابن عمر) على هذا. وزعم سالم عن سعيد بن جبير ، هذا أمر أصحاب محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم. وزعم أخوك نافع أن هذا أمر عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما وزعم ذلك أيضا عبد الكريم عن طاوس عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما : أن هذا أمره.

وقد بلغني عن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله تعالى عنه حين كتب القضية أنه يسمي الطائفتين مؤمنين جميعا. وزعم ذلك أيضا عمر بن عبد العزيز كما رواه من لقيني من إخوانك فيما بلغني عنك. ثم قال : ضعوا لي في هذا كتابا ثم أنشأ يعلمه ولده. ويأمرهم بتعليمه. علمه جلساؤك رحمك الله تعالى. فكان بمكان من المسلمين. واعلم أن أفضل ما علمتم وما تعلمون الناس السنة وأنت ينبغي لك أن تعرف أهلها الذين ينبغي أن يتعلموها.

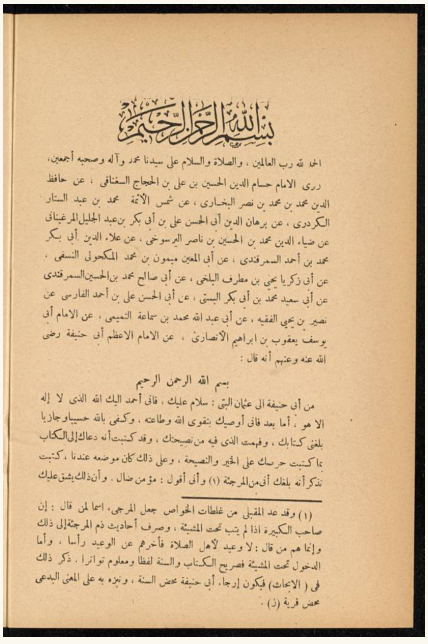
07 · The party's name and closing words

وأما ما ذكرت من اسم المرجئة فما ذنب قوم تكلموا بعدل وسماهم أهل البدع بهذا الاسم؟ ولكنهم أهل العدل وأهل السنة ، وإنما هذا اسم سماهم به أهل شنآن ، ولعمري ما يهجن عدلا لو دعوت إليه الناس فوافقوك عليه أن سميتهم أهل شنآن البتة ، فلو فعلوا ذلك كان هذا الاسم بدعة ، فهل يهجن ذلك ما أخذت به من أهل العدل ،

ثم إنه لو لا كراهية التطويل وأن يكثر التفسير لشرحت لك الأمور التي أجبتك بها فيما كتبت به ، ثم إن أشكل عليك شيء أو أدخل عليك أهل البدع شيئا فأعلمني أجبك فيه إن شاء الله

تعالى ، ثم لا آلوك ونفسي خيرا والله المستعان. لا تدع الكتاب إلا بسلامك وحاجتك ، رزقنا الله منقلبا كريما وحياة طيبة ، وسلام الله عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته والحمد لله رب العالمين وصلّى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.

Letter to ʿUthmān al-Battī



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين ، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه أجمعين،

روى الامام حسام الدين الحسين بن على بن الحجاج السغناقى ، عن حافظ الدين محمد بن محمد بن نصر البخارى ، عن شمس الأئمة محمد بن عبد الستار الكردرى ، عن برهان الدين أبى الحسن على بن أبى بكر بن عبد الجليل المرغينانى عن ضياء الدين محمد بن الحسين بن ناصر البرسوخى ، عن علاء الدين أبى بكر محمد بن أحمد السمرقندى ، عن أبى المعين ميمون بن محمد المكحولى النسفى ، عن أبى زكريا يحيى بن مطرف البلخى ، عن أبى صالح محمد بن الحسين السمرقندى عن أبى سعيد محمد بن أبى بكر البستى ، عن أبى الحسن على بن أحمد الفارسى عن نصير بن يحيى الفقيه ، عن أبى عبد الله محمد بن سماعة التميمى ، عن الامام أبى يوسف يعقوب بن ابراهيم الأنصارى ، عن الامام الاعظم أبى حنيفة رضى الله عنه وعنهم أنه قال :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

من أبى حنيفة الى عثمان البتى : سلام عليك ، فانى أحمد اليك الله الذى لا إله الا هو . أما بعد فانى أوصيك بتقوى الله وطاعته ، وكفى بالله حسيبا وجازيا بلغنى كتابك ، وفهمت الذى فيه من نصيحتك ، وقد كتبت أنه دعاك إلى الكتاب بما كتبت حرصك على الخير والنصيحة ، وعلى ذلك كان موضعه عندنا ، كتبت تذكر أنه بلغك أنى من المرجئة (١) وأنى أقول : مؤمن ضال . وأن ذلك يشق عليك

(١) وقد عد المقبلى من غلطات الخواص جعل المرجى اسما لمن قال : إن صاحب الكبيرة اذا لم يتب تحت المشيئة ، وصرف أحاديث ذم المرجئة إلى ذلك وإنما هم من قال : لا وعيد لأهل الصلاة فأخرهم عن الوعيد رأسا ، وأما المدخول تحت المشيئة فصريح الكتاب والسنة لفظا ومعلوم تواترا . ذكر ذلك فى (الابحاث) فيكون إرجاء أبى حنيفة بعض السنة ، وتبرؤه به على المعنى البدعى بعض قربة (ز) .

Opening of the letter in the Cairo edition, within a collection of treatises attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa. Cairo edition, 1368 AH. New York University, Arabic Collections Online, image 38.