

The Emperor of China and Islam

Explained by

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When the Muslim army (of Umar ibn al-Khattāb) entered Iraq chasing Rostam (the leader of the Persian Army) from city to city; Rostam sent a letter from Yazdegerd III (the last king of the Sasanian Empire) to the Emperor of China.

He wrote: "Indeed a small band from the Arab land has invaded our land and confiscated our wealth. Thus we appeal for your help before this danger reaches you".

He sent the letter to the Emperor of China along with a messenger. When the emperor read the letter he was frightened so he called for the messenger.

The emperor said to the messenger: "Tell me about this small band from the Arab land that has invaded the Persian land whose empire has existed for more than four hundred years!"

The messenger said: "O emperor, what specifically are you asking about?"

The emperor said: "What are they saying to you?"

The messenger said: "They say to us 'worship Allah alone without partners' and they forbid us from idol worship.

The emperor said: "What do they command you with?"

The messenger said: "They command us with chastity and keeping the ties of kinship."

The emperor said: "What does their worship consists of".

The messenger said: "It is five prayers during the day and the night. When it is prayer time they stand and perform it in uniform rows behind their Imam. It is more beloved to them than their own lives, their wives and their children.

The emperor said: "Are they treacherous when they give a pledge?"

The messenger said: "No."

The emperor said: "Do they fulfill their oaths if they promise?"

The messenger said: "Yes."

The emperor said: "If you comply; what do they request?"

The messenger said: "They go away and leave us alone."

The emperor said: "Return to Rostam and tell him we will make a peace treaty with those people. For indeed by Allah, neither we nor you have the power to stand up to them. By Allah, if they made war against the mountains they would move them from their places as long as they remain upon their current condition".

This is the religion. Whoever adheres to this religion will prevail and whoever abandons it will be lost. This affair is known to whoever studies history.

Translation based on words of Shaykh Abdullah and narration collected by ibn Jarir in the history of Tabari.

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee