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- Persian Letters - Letters -

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<a href="#">Letter 118</a>	<a href="#">Letter 120</a>
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*Usbek to the mullah Muhammed Ali, guardian of the three Tombs at Com* [1]

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What good do the fastings of the Immaums and the mullahs' hair-shirts do us ? [2] The hand of God has twice grown heavy on the children of the Law : the sun becomes dark and seems to shine only on their defeats ; their armies assembled, and were scattered like dust.

The Osmanli empire is shaken by the two greatest failures it has ever undergone [3] ; a Christian mufti can barely sustain it [4] ; the great vizier of Germany [5] is the scourge of God, [6] sent to chastise the followers of Omar [7] ; everywhere he spreads the wrath of heaven angered by their rebellion and their betrayal. [8]

Sacred spirit of the Immaums, you weep night and day over the children of the Prophet whom the detestable Omar has led astray ; your entrails are stirred at the sight of their calamities ; you desire their conversion and not their loss : you would see them reunited under the standard of Ali by the tears of the saints, and not dispersed into the mountains and deserts by terror of the infidels.

*Paris this 1st day of the moon of Chalval 1718*

<a href="#">Supplementary Letter VI from the 1758 edition would be placed here</a>
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[1] See letters 15 and 16.

[2] See letter 17 ; the vanity of fasting and hair-shirts was mentioned earlier in letter 90.

[3] On the weakness of the Turkish empire, see letter 18.

[4] Doubtless an allusion to Giulio Alberoni, who wanted to prolong the Oriental war in order to realize his own European projects.

[5] The emperor Charles VI. In the period dictionaries, *vizier* is given as a strictly Turkish term, with the meaning of minister of state.

[6] This expression was habitually applied to enemies of the Christian religion as well, as was the word *infidels* found below.

[7] See letters 18 and 58. The Sunni Turks are the disciples of Omar, successor of Abu Bakr, and are opponents of the Shiite Persians, disciples of Ali.

[8] An allusion to the victories of Petervarad (August 1716, followed by the taking of Temesvar in October) and of Belgrade (August 1717) over the Turks by Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736), general of the imperial army of Charles VI. The fall of Belgrade was largely symbolical, but it caused the death of ten thousand Turks.