

To **Basir Abiyah**
Chief Record-Keeper of Petra and Guardian of the Southern Trade Routes
GAZA

14th of Sha'ban, Anno Hegirae 251
In the 1st year of Al-Mutawakkil's Caliphate

Basir,

You who know how to bind memory in stone—I ask you to bind this.

On the morning after the quake, while men still dug for their sons and the smoke still licked the arches, I looked up and saw it: a star, burning in daylight. Not blinking. Not trailing like a comet. It was fixed. Like an eye. Like a lamp hung too low in the vault of the gods.

It has not moved since.

The traders from the north say it is a sign from Constantine's god. The priests of Dushara say it is a herald of the final king. But I—who have seen a hundred skies from Damascus to Memphis—I tell you: this is not a god. It is not a gift.

It is a removal.

When the quake came, the tombs cracked. The Treasury split at its base. The pipes beneath the red cliffs burst and sang like flutes of mourning. And that star appeared—not before, not after, but with.

I have watched the stars my entire life. For navigation. For timing. For trade. I have charted their risings like the legs of a camel caravan. And this one? This one does not follow. It does not rise. It remains.

Something has changed. The gods do not answer. The incense does not rise. The water no longer tastes of stone—it tastes of ending.

Petra lived because the stars told us when to move. But now, we are still, and the sky has claimed stillness as its law.

Let it be known:

In the reign of the last Nabataean kings, when a fixed star of fire hung above Raqmu, Zayd ibn Abisha, trader of the southern road, sealed his vision into stone that the silence of the desert not consume all memory.

You are receiving this because you remember the old calendars. You remember when Venus meant trade, and Mars meant war. Seal this letter beneath the western vault. Let it rest with the broken ledgers.

Let it say: *when the city shook, and the heavens opened, one man saw a star that never moved—and he knew, not what it was, but that the world had changed.*

In dust and longing,

Zayd ibn Abisha

Caravan Master of the Southern Spine

RAQMU