

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Book of Government</u> > <u>Chapter Three: Administrative Policies</u> > 3.15 Mingling Strictness with Softness

Chapter Three: Administrative Policies

3.1 Honesty in Policy

75. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Alas! If it were not for piety, I would have been the shrewdest Arab."1

76. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "O People! If perjury were not repulsive, I would be the shrewdest person. Let it be known that there is an offence in any [type of] perjury and in any offence there is disbelief. Let it be known that perjury, offence and disbelief are in fire [of Hell]."2

77. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "I swear by Allah that Mu'awiya is not cleverer than me, but he practices deception [perjury] and commits debauchery; and if it were not for the hideousness of deception, I would have been the shrewdest of all people, but any kind of deception is sinful, and any sin is disobedience of Allah, and for any deceiver there would be a banner raised on the Resurrection Day by which he will be recognized. By Allah, I can not be made forgetful by artifice, nor I can be overpowered by hardship."3

78. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "If you bind an agreement between yourself and your enemy or clothe him in protective covenant (dhimma), guard your agreement in good faith and tend your covenant with fidelity. Make of yourself a shield before what you have granted, for men do not unite more firmly in any of the obligations (imposed upon them) by Allah than in attaching importance to fidelity in agreement, despite the division among their sects and the diversity of their opinions. The idolaters had already adhered to that (honoring agreement) among themselves before Muslims, by reason of evil consequences of treachery that they had seen. So never betray your protective covenant, never break your agreement and never deceive your enemy.4

3.2 Truth-Oriented

79. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Certainly the best man before Allah is he who loves most to act according to right, even though it causes him hardship and grief, rather than according to wrong, even though it gives him benefit and increase."5

- 80. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Fulfillment of someone's rights should not prevent you from establishing rights against him."6
- 81. Al-Irshad: When Amir al-Mu'minin set out for Basra, he stopped at a village called 'Rabadha' where the remainder of the Hajj pilgrims gathered around him in his tent to listen to his speech.

Ibn 'Abbas said, "I went to Ali (a.s.) and saw him stitching his shoes. I told him, 'Our need for you to fix our affairs is greater than what you are doing.' He did not say anything until he finished stitching his shoe and placed it next to the other one."

"Then he said, 'What is the price of these.'

I said, 'They have no value now.'

He said, 'Whatever value they have!'

I said, 'Half a dirham.'

He said, 'By Allah, it should have been more valuable to me than ruling over you except for the fact that I may establish rights and ward off wrongs'."8

- 82. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) in the battle of Siffin: "By Allah, I did not put off war even for a day except in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me than to kill them in the state of their misguidance although they would be bearing their own sins."9
- 83. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) complaining about his companions who were inclined towards Mu'awiya: "Woe on them! Who are they inclined towards and call me along too? By Allah, I did not want them except for establishing rights, and the others do not want them except for [promoting] wrongs." 10
- 84. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) To the people of Egypt when he appointed (Malik) al-Ashtar as their Governor: "Now I have sent to you a man from among the servant of Allah who allows himself no sleep in days of danger, nor does he shrink from the enemy at critical moments. He is severer on the wicked than a blazing fire. He is Malik b. Ashtar, our brother from (the tribe of) Madhhij. Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that accord with right. 11
- 85. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "allow rights to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. Be patient in this and look to your (ultimate) account (muhtasib), however this may effect your relatives and favorites. Desire the ultimate end in that of it (imposing the right) which weighs heavily against you, for its outcome will be praiseworthy."12
- 86. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Truth-orientedness brings along mightiness." 13
- 87. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "The one who is committed to truth, people would be inclined toward him." 14

3.3 Adherence to Law

89. Al-Imam al-Baqir: "He [Ali (a.s.)] arrested a man from the Bani Asad tribe to execute punishment. His near of kin gathered to mediate for him and asked al-Hasan (a.s.) to go along with them."

"He (Al-Hasan – a.s.) said, 'Go to him (Ali – a.s.). He is better aware of your affairs.'

They went to him and brought up their issue.

He said, 'You ask me for anything at my disposal, and I will grant it to you.'

They left him, thinking they have succeeded.

Al-Hasan (a.s.) asked them [what happened?].

They said they got the best result, and told him the story.

He said, 'Do whatever you wish to do for your friend as per his being punished.'

Ali (a.s.) took him out and executed punishment on him. Then he said, 'By Allah this [execution of punishment] is an issue out of my power [rather, it is Allah's command]'."16

90. Al-Gharat – in a report about Najashi: "In the battle of Siffin, Najashi was Ali (a.s.)'s poet. He drank wine in Kufa and Ali (a.s.) gave him the penalty. He got infuriated, joined Mu'awiya and dispraised Ali (a.s.)."

"When Ali (a.s.) punished Najashi, his companions from Yamani tribe got angry and the closest of them to Ali (a.s.), Tariq b. 'Abd Allah Nahdi, went to him and said, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! I did not imagine that the sinners and the obedient, the separatists and allies are equal before the leaders of justice and the fountainheads of virtue, until I saw your treatment of my brother Aarith [Najashi]. You pained our hearts, dispersed our affairs, and brought us along a road about which we previously thought the wayfarer on it would be led to the fire."

"Ali (a.s.) said, (:...and it is indeed hard except for the humble.) 17 O Brother from the Bani Nahd! Was he not a Muslim man who violated one of Allah's sanctities and we executed against him the penalty which was his expiation? Allah Almighty says,(...and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair. Be fair; that is nearer to Godwariness 18)'." 19 See, 7/10: "Execution of Legal Punishment Equally on Near of Kin and Strangers"

3.4 Uncompromisingness

- 91. The Messenger of Allah (S): "Keep your tongues from [criticizing] Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). He is certainly strict in regard to [the execution of the rules of] Allah the Almighty and uncompromising in his Faith."20
- 92. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "No one can establish the rule of Allah the Glorified except he who shows no relenting (in the matter of right), who does not behave like wrong doers and who does not run after objects of greed."21
- 93. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) when people decided to swear allegiance to him: "You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse."22
- 94. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "By my life, there will be no regard for anyone nor slackening from me in fighting against one who opposes right or gropes in misguidance. O Creatures of Allah, fear Allah and flee unto Allah from his wrath (seek protection in his Mercy).23
- 95. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "I would not compromise in my Faith, nor would be villainous in my concerns."24
- 96. Hiliya al-Awliya related by 'Abd al-Wahid Damishqi: "Khawshab al-Khayri called out to Ali (a.s.) in the battle of Siffin and said, 'O Son of Abi Talib! Forsake us! We want you to seek Allah in our blood and yours. We leave you with the land of Iraq, and you leave us with the land of Saham, and preserve the blood of the Muslims."
- "Ali (a.s.) said, 'Far from it! O Son of Umm Zalim! By Allah, if I sought a way to compromise in the Religion of Allah I would act accordingly and it would be easier for me. But Allah does not like it that the followers of the Qur'an compromise and keep silent while He is being disobeyed." 25. See 3/11, "Decisiveness Toward Administrators" See 2/2, "Dismissing 'Uthman's Administrators"

3.5 Planning and Organizing

- 97. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "...Each day perform the work of that day, for to each belongs what is proper to it...Beware of hurrying to (accomplish) affairs before their (proper) time, of neglecting them when they are possible, of stubborn persistence in them when they are impossible and of weakness in them when they have become clear. So put everything in its place and perform every action in its time."26
- 98. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) in his letter to the chiefs [collectors] of land tax: "Beware of postponing works and pushing away goodness, for there is repentance in it."27
- 99. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another's field." 28

100. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "To make haste before the proper time or to delay after a proper opportunity, in either case is folly."29

101. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – describing the Qur'an: "Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you."30

102. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his advice to al-Hasan and al-Husayn (a.s.): "I advise you (both) and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches to fear Allah and to keep your affairs in order.31

3.6 Selection of Competent Administrators

103. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Each (of the classes) has a claim upon the ruler to the extent that will set it right. But the ruler will not truly accomplish what Allah has enjoined upon him in this respect except by resolutely striving, by recourse to Allah's help, by reconciling himself to what the truth requires and by being patient in the face of it in what is easy for him or burdensome.

I Appoint as commander from among your troops that person who is in your sight the most sincere in the way of Allah and His Prophet (S) and of your Imam, who is purest of heart and most outstanding in intelligence, who is slow to anger, relieved to pardon, gentle to the weak and harsh with the strong, and who is not stirred to action by severity nor held back by incapacity.

Then hold fast to men of noble descent and those of righteous families and good precedents, then to men of bravery, courage, generosity and magnanimity, for they are encompassed by nobility and embraced by honor. Then inspect the affairs of the soldiers as parents inspect their own child...

Then look into the affairs of your administrators. Employ them (only after) having tested (them) and appoint them not with favoritism or arbitrariness, for these two (attributes) embrace different kinds of oppression and treachery. Among them look for people of experience and modesty from righteous families foremost in Islam, for they are nobler in moral qualities, more genuine in dignity and less concerned with ambitious designs, and they perceive more penetratingly the consequences of affairs...

Let not your choosing of them be in accordance with your own discernment, confidence and good opinion, for men make themselves known to the discernment of rulers by dissimulating and serving them well, even though beyond this there may be nothing of sincere counsel and loyalty. Rather examine them in that with which they were entrusted by the righteous before you. Depend upon him who has left the fairest impression upon the common people and whose countenance is best known for trustworthiness.

This will be proof of your sincerity toward Allah and toward him whose affair has been entrusted to you. Appoint to the head of each of your concerns a chief from among these men, (a person) who is neither overpowered when these concerns are great nor disturbed when they are many. Whatever fault of your

secretaries you overlook will come to be attached to you.32

104. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Appoint the pious, the knowledgeable and men of policy for taking charge of the works." 33 See 2/2, "Dismissing 'Uthman's Administrators"

3.7 Not Employing the Treacherous and the Feeble

105. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Mughayra b. Shu'ba suggested to me that I should appoint Mu'awiya as the governor of Sham and I myself stay in Madina; but I rejected that, and never may Allah see me take those who mislead assistants."34

106. Al–Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al–Ashtar when he appointed him as governor of Egypt: "Truly the worst of your viziers are those who were the viziers of the evil (rulers) before you and shared with them in their sins. Let them not be among your retinue, for they are aides of the sinners and brothers of wrongdoers. You will find the best of substitutes for them from among those who possess the like of their ideas and effectiveness but are not encumbered by the like of their sins and crimes; who have not aided a wrongdoer in his wrongs nor a sinner in his sins. These will be a lighter burden upon you, a better aid more inclined toward you in sympathy and less intimate with people other than you. So choose these men as your special companions in privacy and at assemblies."35

107. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Rifa'a, his judge in Ahwaz: "Know, O Rifa'a, that this governance is a trusted position. Whoever betrays in it, may curse of Allah be on him until the Day of Judgment; and whoever employs a traitor, truly Muhammad (S) will despise him both in this world and the world to come."36

108. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – describing a true leader: "You certainly know that he who is in charge of honor, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commandments and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth, nor be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor be of rude behavior who would estrange them with his rudeness, nor should deal unjustly with wealth thus preferring one group over another, nor should he accept a bribe while taking decisions, as he would forfeit (others') rights and hold them up without finality, nor should he ignore sunna as he would ruin the people."37

109. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): "The person whose retinues are corrupt is like the one whose throat is congested with water [and there is no solution to it], since whatever that is stuck in the throat would be removed [washed down] with water."38

- 110. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "The evil of the works is the incapacity of the administrators." 39
- 111. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Do not rely in your affairs on the lazy."40
- 112. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "The person whose vizier betrays him, his administration will be spoiled."41

113. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "The lying of the ambassador produces corruption, ruins the intention, invalidates the prudence and breaks the resolution."42

3.8 Generosity in Providing Administrators with Daily Sustenance

115. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Then bestow provisions upon them liberally, for that will empower them to set themselves aright and to dispense with consuming what is under their authority; and it is an argument against them if they should disobey your command or sully your trust."43 See chapter Seven, "Judicial Policies"

3.9 Choosing Secret Agents to Keep a Check on the Administrators

115. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ka'b b. Malik44: "And now, put someone in your place and with a group of your companions leave the town to reach the villages of Sawad45. There, see into the affairs of my administrators in the region of Tigris and 'Udhayb46 and check on their conducts. Then return to al-Bihqubadhat47 and take charge of the affairs there; and follow Allah in what He has assigned to you. Know that all the actions of the sons of Adam are recorded and preserved and will be rewarded by them. May Allah make you and us successful in goodness! Let me know of your honesty in what you do. Wassalam!48

116. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Then look into the affairs of your administrators. Employ them (only after) having tested (them)...Then investigate their actions. Dispatch truthful and loyal observers (to watch) over them, for your investigation of their affairs in secret will incite them to carry out their trust faithfully and to act kindly toward the subjects. Be heedful of aides. If one of them should extend his hand in a treacherous act, concerning which the intelligence received against him from your observed concurs, and if you are satisfied with that as witness, subject him to corporeal punishment and seize him for what befell from his action. Then install him in a position of degradation, brand him with treachery and gird him with the shame of accusation."49

117. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar (on watching over the troops): "Then, do not fail to choose intelligence agents trustworthy and truthful with people to write down the bravery [good services] of every brave one, so that they make sure that you are aware of their good services.50

3.10 Rewarding and Punishment

118. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar when he appointed him as governor of Egypt: "Never let the good-doer and the evil-doer possess an equal station before you, for that would

cause the good-doer to abstain from his good-doing and habituate the evil-doer to his evil-doing. Impose upon each of them what he has imposed upon himself."51

119. Al–Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al–Ashtar: "The best of your commander of the troops should have such a position before you that renders help to them equitably and spends from his money on them and on those of their families who remain behind so that all their worries converge on the one worry for fighting the enemy. Then send a message to them encouraging their self–sacrifice and nobility. Tend to the extension of their livelihood. And prove these by good behavior, attentiveness and kindness. Your kindness to them will turn their hearts to you." 52 See Encyclopedia of Amir al–Mu'minin: XII, 154, hadiths 6529 & 6530.

3.11 Decisiveness toward Administrators

a) Ash'ath b. Qayth

120. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ash'ath b. Qayth, his governor in Azerbayjan: "Certainly, your assignment is not a morsel for you but it is a trust around your neck and you have been charged with protection (of people) on behalf of your superiors. It is not for you to be oppressive towards the ruled, nor to risk yourself save on strong grounds. You have in your hands the funds, which is the property of Allah to whom belongs might and majesty and you hold its charge till you pass it on to me. Perhaps I will not be one of the bad rulers for you. Wassalam!53

121. Nathr al-Durr: [Imam Ali (a.s.) said] to Ash'ath b. Qayth, "Pay back what has been entrusted to you, or I will strike you by the sword."

And he paid what he was due to pay.

Then he told him, "Who would have protected you if I had struck you by the sword?"

Ash'ath replied, "You are one of those who do what they say." 54 See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 60, (Ash'ath b. Qayth).

b) Ziyad b. Abih

122. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ziyad b. Abih: "I truthfully swear by Allah that if I come to know that you have misappropriated the funds of the Muslims, small or big, I shall inflict upon you such punishment which will leave you empty handed, heavy backed and humiliated. Wassalam!55

123. Ansab al-Ashraf: Ali (a.s.) dispatched an envoy to Ziyad to take back whatever of the taxes that had been collected by him. Ziyad sent what was with him along with the envoy and said, "The Kurds have ruined the taxes and I put up with them. But do not tell this to Amir al-Mu'minin so that he would imagine that it was the result of my negligence.

The envoy returned and reported what Ziyad told him. Ali (a.s.) wrote to Ziyad, "My envoy reported what you told him about the Kurds and that you concealed it from me. You well know that you hid it from me only with the intention to let me know about it. And I truthfully swear by Allah that if I come to know that you have misappropriated the funds of the Muslims, small or big, I shall inflict upon you such punishment which will leave you empty handed, heavy backed and humiliated. Wassalam!56

124. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ziyad, his governor in Fars: "And now, my envoy has indeed brought me surprising news about the Kurds. He alleged that what you said to him would be kept between you and him, – that the Kurds had rebelled against you and ruined much of the taxes – and you have told him not to report this to Amir al-Mu'minin."

"O Ziyad! I swear by Allah that you are a liar, and if you do not discharge the taxes, I shall inflict upon you such punishment which will leave you empty handed, heavy backed and humiliated, unless you take upon yourself whatever of the taxes that has been ruined." 57 See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 124 (Ziyad b. Abih).

c) Shurayh al-Qadi

125. Nahj al-Balagha: It is related that shurayh b. Harith who was Amir al-Mu'minin's judge (qadi) at Kufa during his tenure, purchased a house for eighty dinars. When it became known to Amir al-Mu'minin, he sent for him and said to him, "I have come to know that you have purchased a house for eighty dinars, and that you have written a document for it and put witnessing on it."

Shurayh replied, "Yes, Amir al-Mu'minin, it is so."

Amir al-Mu'minin cast an angry look at him and said to him, "O' Shurayh, beware, shortly one body (the angel of death) will come to you who will not look at the document, nor question you about your evidence but will take you out of it [the house] open-eyed, and deposit you in your grave empty-handed. Look! O' Shurayh, if you have purchased this house from money other than yours or paid the price from unlawful source, you have incurred loss of this world as well as of the next. If you had come to me at the time of purchase I would have written for you a document on this paper and then you would not have liked to purchase the house even for one Dirham, not to speak of more. That document is this:

This is about a purchase made by a humble slave (of Allah) from another slave ready to depart (for the next world). He has purchased a house out of houses of deceit in the area of mortals and place of those liable to perish. This house has four boundaries as follows:

The first boundary is contiguous to sources of calamities, the second boundary adjoins the sources of distress, the third boundary adjoins devastating desire; and the fourth boundary adjoins deceitful Satan and towards this opens the door of this house.

This house has been purchased by one who has been waylaid by desires from one who is being driven

by death at the price of leaving the honor of contentment and entering into the humility of want and submissiveness.

If the purchaser encounters some (evil) consequences of this transaction then it is for Him who dismantles the bodies of monarchs, snatches the lives of despots, destroys the domain of Pharaohs like Cyrus, Caesar, Tubba' and Himyar and all those who amass wealth upon wealth and go on increasing it, build high houses and decorate them and collect treasures and preserve them as they claimed according to their own thinking for children, to take them to the place of accounting and judgment and the position of reward and punishment, when the verdict will be passed ...and it is thence that the falsifiers become losers. 58 This document is witnessed by intelligence when it is free from the shackles of desires and away from the adornments of this world. "59

d) 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas

126. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from a letter he wrote to 'Abd Allah b.'Abbas, his administrator in Basra: "O' Abu al-Abbas, may Allah have mercy on you, keep yourself restrained in whatever you say or do, good or bad [about your people], as we are both partners in this (responsibility). Prove yourself according to my good impressions about you and do not prove my opinion (about you) wrong. Wassalam!"60

127. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Ibn 'Abbas: "Now, I have come to know such a thing about you that if you have done so then you have displeased your Lord, undermined your trust and disobeyed your Imam and betrayed the Muslims. I have come to know that you have razed the lands and taken away whatever was under your feet. Send me your account and know that the accounting to Allah will be severer than that to the people. Wassalam!"61 See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 204 ('Abd Allah b. 'Abbas).

e) 'Uthman b. Hunayf

128. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to 'Uthman b. Hanif Ansari who was his administrator in Basra, when he came to know that the people of the place had invited 'Uthman to a banquet and he had attended: "And now, O' Ibn Hunayf, I have come to know that a young man of Basra invited you to a feast and you leapt towards it. Foods of different colors were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought that you would accept the feast of a people who turn out the beggars and invite the rich.

Look at the morsels you take, leave out that about which you are in doubt and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully. Remember that every follower has a leader whom he follows and from the effulgence of whose knowledge he takes light. Realize that your Imam has contented himself with two shabby pieces of clothes out of the (comforts of the) world and two loaves for his meal. Certainly, you cannot do so but at least support me in piety, exertion, chastity and uprightness."

"By Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor added any

clothes to my two shabby pieces of clothes. I have not taken from its land [even as little as] a span of the hand, nor have I taken more than a meager meal sufficient to feed a wretched animal, whereas even that is more unworthy and insignificant than the gall oak fruit."

"Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt greedy for it and the other party withheld themselves from it. Allah is, after all, the best arbiter."

"What shall I do with Fadak or with no Fadak, while tomorrow this body is to go into the grave in whose darkness its traces will be destroyed and (even) news of it will disappear? It is a pit that even if its width is widened or the hands of the digger make it broad and open, the stones and clods of clay will narrow it and the falling earth will close its aperture."

"I try to keep myself engaged in piety so that on the day of great fear it will be peaceful and steady in slippery places. If I wished I could have taken the way leading towards (worldly pleasures like) pure honey, fine wheat and silk clothes; but it cannot be that my passions lead me and greed takes me to choosing good meals while in Hijaz or in Yamama there may be people who have no hope of getting bread or who do not have a full meal. Shall I lie with a satiated belly while around me there may be hungry bellies and thirsty livers? Or shall I be as the poet has said:

It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full,

While around you people may be badly yearning [of hunger] for dried leather?"

"Shall I be content with being called 'Amir al-Mu'minin' (The commander of the Faithful), although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world or shall not be an example for them in the distresses of life? I have not been created to keep myself busy in eating good foods like the tied animal whose only worry is its fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to fill its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely, or draw the rope of misquidance or roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment?"

"Get away from me, O' world! Your rein is on your own shoulders as I have released myself from your clutches, removed myself of your snares and avoided walking into your slippery places. Where are those whom you have deceived by your jesting? Where are those communities whom you have enticed with your embellishments? They are all now confined to graves and hidden in burial places."

"By Allah, if you [O world!] had been a visible person and a body capable of feeling, I would have inflicted on you the punishment fixed by Allah because of the people whom you received through desires and the communities whom you threw into destruction and the rulers whom you consigned to ruin and drove to places of distress after which there is neither going nor returning."

"Far from it! Whoever stepped on your slippery place slipped; whoever rode your waves was drowned; and whoever evaded your snares received inward support. He who keeps himself safe from you does

not worry even though his affairs may be straitened and the world to him is like a day, which is near expiring. Get away from me! For, by Allah, I do not bow before you so that you may humiliate me, nor do I let loose the reins for you so that you may drive me away. I swear by Allah an oath wherein I, except the will of Allah, shall so train my self that it will feel joyful if it gets one loaf for eating, and be content with only salt to season it. I shall let my eyes empty themselves of tears like the stream whose water has flown away. Should Ali eat whatever he has and fall asleep like the cattle that fill their stomach from the pastureland and lie down, or as the grazing goats, eat the green and go into their pen? His eyes may die if he, after long years, follows loose cattle and pasturing animals."

"Blessed is he who discharges his obligations towards Allah and endures his hardships, allows himself no sleep in the night but when sleep overpowers him lies down on the ground using his hand as pillow, along with those who keep their eyes wakeful in fear of the Day of Judgment, whose bodies are ever away from beds, whose lips are humming in remembrance of Allah and whose sins have been erased through their prolonged beseeching for forgiveness. (*They are Allah's confederates. Look! The confederates of Allah are indeed felicitous!*)62"

"Therefore, O' Ibn Hunayf, fear Allah and be content with your own loaves so that you may escape Hell."63

f) Qudama b. 'Ajlan

129. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Qudama b. 'Ajlan, his administrator in Kaskar<u>64</u>: "Now then, send back to me what is in your possession from the public property as it belongs to the Muslims and your share of it is no more that the share of one of them. O son of Qudama! Do not suppose that the riches of Kaskar are permissible to you, like what you have inherited from your parents. So, hasten to return the property and be quick yourself to come back to me as well. Allah willing!"<u>65</u> See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 271 (Qudama b. 'Ajlan).

g) Masqala b. Hubayra

130. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Masqala b. Hubayra: "I have come to know concerning you a matter which if you have done it you have done something horrible. I have been informed that you have distributed the property of Muslims among some of the Bedouins of Bakr b. Wa'il Tribe who have asked you for favor and benevolence. By Allah who germinated the seed and created the living beings, and comprehends all things in knowledge if this is true, you will be humbled in my view. Therefore, do not treat lightly the obligations of your Lord and do not reform your world by ruining your religion, since then you will be among (the biggest losers in regard to works; those whose endeavor goes awry in life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good66)."67

131. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Masqala: "Now then, the greatest treachery is the treachery against the Muslim community and the greatest deceit against the people of a city is the deceit of their

leader, there is five hundred thousand [coins] of the Muslim property with you. Send it to me when my envoy comes to you, otherwise come to me yourself when my letter reaches you; as I have told my envoy not to let you go unless you return the property. Wassalamu Alayk!68

132. Al-Gharat – related by Dhahl b. Harith: "Masqala invited me to his residence, prepared dinner and we had dinner together. Then he said, "By Allah, Amir al-Mu'minin asks me to return this property and I am not able to do that."

[Dhahl goes on to say:] I told him, "If you wish he would give you one week of respite so that you can collect the property."

He said, "By Allah, I do not want to impose it on my folk or ask anyone for it."

Then he said, "By Allah, if the son of Hind or the son of 'Affan had demanded that property, they would have left it to me. Did you not see how 'Uthman [in his rule] granted a hundred thousand dirhams of the tax for Azerbayjan each year to Ash'ath b. Qayth?"

Dhahl said, "I said this man (Ali b. Abi Talib - a.s.) does not believe in (accept) his idea and would not grant you anything."

He kept silent for a while and so did I. No longer than one night after the talk we had together, he joined Mu'awiya. The news reached Ali (a.s.). He said, "What has happened to him? May Allah kill him! He acted like the masters and ran away like the slaves, and became treacherous like the vicious people. Let it be known that if he had stood up to collect the property and failed, I would not have added to his jailing. If we had found something with him we would have confiscated it; and if we had not found any property with him, we would have released him."

Then he went to the house of Masqala and destroyed it. 69 See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 328 (Masqala b. Hubayra).

h) Al-Mundhir b. Jarud

133. Ansab al-Ashraf – in a letter to al-Mundhir ibn Jarud, his governor in Istakhr70, who had misappropriated certain property in his charge and granted lavishly to whoever he wished: "Now then, the good behavior of your father deceived me about you and I thought that you would follow his way and tread in his path. But according to what has reached me about you, you are not giving up following your passions however detrimental it is to your religion; and you do not listen to [the words of] the benevolent however sincere they are in their well-wishing. I have been informed that you give up many tasks and go out for recreation, diversion and hunting; that you are lavishly generous to your Bedouin tribesmen with public property, as if it is your parents' bequest."

"I swear by Allah, if this is true, the camel of your family and your shoelace are better than yourself.

Certainly Allah does not like play and diversion; betraying the Muslims and ruining their works enrages Him, and the person who acts this way is not fitting for safeguarding the borders, securing public property and being trusted with the Muslims' belongings. [Therefore,] proceed to me as soon as this letter of mine reaches you."

Mundhir went to the Imam, while some people had complained of him that he had taken thirty thousand [coins] from the public property. The Imam asked him about the matter and he denied. He got him to swear, but he refused. Then, he put him in jail. 71 See Encyclopedia of Amir al–Mu'minin: XII, 340 (al–Mundhir ibn Jarud).

3.12 Dismissing Treacherous Administrators

134. Al-Isti'ab: Ali (a.s.) would appoint the faithful and the trustworthy people in the cities and if any one of them was reported to him to have committed treachery, he would write to him, "There has certainly come to you admonition from your Lord. Observe fully the measure and balance, and do not cheat the people of their goods, and do not cause corruption on the earth. What remains of Allah's provision is better for you, should you be faithful, and I am not a keeper over you. 72 When my letter reaches you, settle what you are in charge of until I send someone to take it over from you." Then he would turn his face toward the sky and say, "O Allah! Certainly You know that I neither ordered them to tyrannize Your creatures nor to give up Your rights."

His speeches, sermons and recommendations to his administrators when he would send them on their missions are plenty; I decided not to mention them here to avoid lengthening the book, although they are all beautiful.73

135. Da'a'im al-Islam: Ali (a.s.) summoned Ash'ath b. Qayth, who was appointed by 'Uthman as the governor of Azerbayjan and received a hundred thousand dirhams. Some said 'Uthman had granted that money to him; others believed he had gained it through his work.

Ali (a.s.) commanded him to present that money, but he refused and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! I have not obtained this money in your hukuma."

The Imam said, "By Allah, if you do not present it to the public treasury, I will strike you with my strike in such a way that it will get back from you what it will."

Thereupon, Ash'ath brought back the property and the Imam placed it in the treasury. He followed up this [inquiry] in relation to 'Uthmin's administrators, taking back whatever of the property left in their hands, and fining them for what they had wasted.74

136. Al-Fusul al-Muhimma – related by Suda daughter of 'Amarat al-Hamdaniya who went to Mu'awiya after the demise of Ali (a.s.): Mu'awiya started to reproach her for her sarcastic remarks to him during the battle of Siffin. Then he asked him, "What do you need?"

Suda replied, "Allah will certainly inquire you into our affairs and what is in your charge. There is always someone coming to us from you who towers up your position, spreads your dominion, reaps us like the ears of wheat, beats us up like seeds of wild rue, debases us and makes us taste the death. That was Busr b. Artah who came to us, killed our men and took away our property. If there were no obedience, there would prevail glory and dignity among us. So, if you dismiss him, we will be grateful of you; otherwise we will complain to Allah."

Mu'awiya said, "Are you referring to me and threatening me? I have decided to mount you on an unruly camel and turn you back to Busr to carry out his judgment about you.

Suda kept silent and then recited the following couplets:

May Allah's blessing be upon the body whom the grave embraced,

And buried justice in itself.

He took an oath together with the truth and would not substitute it with anything,

He was a companion to faith and truth.

Mu'awiya said, "Who is this person, O Suda?"

Suda said, "By Allah, this is Amir al-Mu'minin Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). (Once) I went to him to talk about a man whom he had appointed as the head of [levying] taxes and he had done injustice to us. I found him standing up ready to start saying prayer. When he saw me, he stopped and came toward me with a bright face, affectionately and leniently and said, 'Do you have any need?'

I said, "Yes, and I told him the story."

He wept and said, "O Allah! You witness that I did not command them to do injustice to people and to abandon Your rights." Then he took a piece of leather out of his pocket and wrote on it as follows:

(In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. There has certainly come to you a manifest proof from your Lord. Observe fully the measurement and the balance, and do not cheat the people of their good, and do not cause corruption on the earth after its restoration. That is better for you, if you are faithful.)75

"When you read my letter, settle what you are in charge of until I send someone to take it over from you. Wassalam!"

"Then he gave me this letter. I took it to his governor and gave it to him, and he was dismissed."

Mu'awiya said, "Write for her whatever she wishes. Return her to her town so as she does not have any complaints." 76

3.13 Punishing Treacherous Administrators

137. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – when he found out about Ibn Harma, who was in charge of Ahwaz market, he wrote to Rafa'a: "When you read my letter, dismiss Ibn Harma from the market, cut him off from people, put him in jail and call it out to the public. And write to your administrators and let them know about my opinion. Do not be negligent in relation to Ibn Harma or you will be perished near Allah and I will dismiss you in the worst of ways; [so] seek Allah's protection from this."

"On the coming Friday, take him out of the jail, give him thirty five lashes and turn him around the markets. If someone brings a complaint against him and produces witnesses, swear him and then pay him from the assets of Ibn Harma. Order him to be taken to jail degradingly, shamefully and by shouting at him; tie his feet with a rope and bring him out at prayer time. If anyone brought him food, drink, clothes or a mattress, do not obstruct him. Do not let anyone approach him to suggest him a solution or make him hopeful of being freed. If you make sure that someone inculcated something to him that would do harm to the Muslims, punish him with a lash and put him in jail until he would repent."

"During the night take the prisoners out into the courtyard for an airing, except for Ibn Harma, unless he is feared to die in which case let him out into the courtyard at nights, too. After thirty days, if you see in him capacity, give him thirty five lashes besides the previous thirty one lashes. Write to me about what you did in the market and that whom you have selected after that traitor. And cut off that traitor's stipend."77

138. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar on looking into the affairs of the administrators: "If one of them should extend his hand in a treacherous act, concerning which the intelligence received against him from your observers concurs, and if you are satisfied with that as a witness, subject him to corporal punishment and seize him for what befell from his action. Then install him in a position of degradation, brand him with treachery and gird him with the shame of accusation."78

3.14 Forbidding Administrators from Accepting Gifts

139. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "Any ruler who hides himself from people's needs, Allah will also hide Himself from him and his needs on the Judgment day; and if he accepts gifts, he would be a traitor; and if he accept bribes, he would be a polytheist."79

140. Akhbar al-Qudat – related by Ali (a.s.) b. Rabi'a: "Indeed Ali (a.s.) had employed a man from Bani Asad tribe called Aabi'at b. Zuhayr. When his employment concluded, he went to Ali (a.s.) along with a sack full of some property and said, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! people brought gifts to me which amounted to this. If they are lawful for me, I will use them, otherwise I am bringing them to you.'

Ali (a.s.) said, 'If you would have kept them, that had been treachery.'

Then he took the property and placed it in the public treasury."80

141. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his sermon, in which he states his encounter with 'Aqil when he asked for some property from the public treasury: "A stranger incident than this is that a man came to us in the night with a closed flask full of honey paste but I disliked it as though it was the salvia of a serpent or its vomit. I asked him whether it was a reward or zakat or charity, for these are forbidden to us members of the Prophet's family. He said it was neither this nor that but a present."

"Then I said, 'Childless women may weep over you. Have you come to deviate me from the religion of Allah, or are you mad, or have you been overpowered by some jinn, or are you speaking without senses?"

"By Allah, even if I am given the domain of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant I would not do it. For me your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last? We do seek protection of Allah from the slip of wisdom and the evils of mistakes, and from Him we seek succor."81

3.15 Mingling Strictness with Softness

142. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to one of his administrators: "Now, the farmers of your city have complained of your strictness, hard heartedness, humiliating treatment and harshness. I thought over it and found that since they are unbelievers they cannot be brought near nor kept away or treated severely because of the pledge with them. Behave with them in between strictness and softness and adopt for them a mingling of remoteness and aloofness with nearness and closeness if Allah so wills.82

143. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: Ali (a.s.) wrote to 'Amr b. Muslama al-Arhabi: "Now then, the farmers of your area have complained of your strictness and I looked into their affair and I did not see any good in it. Your position must be moderate, i.e., softness mingled with strictness, [of course] without injustice and diminution. Since they bring prosperity to us subordinately. Therefore, take what you demand from them in their subordination. Do not take any guardian besides Allah. Certainly, Allah the Great and Almighty says, (...do not take your confidants from other than yourselves; they will spare nothing to ruin you).83, and Allah the Great and Almighty says about the People of the Book, (...do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends),84, and He – the Great and Almighty – further says, (Any of you who takes them as friends is indeed one of them)85. Rebuke them by taking land tax, be prepared against them and beware of [shedding] their blood. Wassalam!86

144. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to one of his administrators: "Now, you are surely one of those whose help I take in establishing religion and with whose help I break the haughtiness of the sinful and guard critical boundaries. You should seek Allah's help in whatever causes you anxiety. Add a little harshness to the mixture of leniency and remain lenient where leniency is more appropriate. Adopt

harshness when you cannot do without harshness. Bend your wings (in humbleness) before the subjects. Meet them with your face broad and keep yourself lenient (in behavior) with them. Treat them equally in looking at them with half eyes or full eyes, in signaling and in greeting so that the great should no expect transgression on your part and the weak should not lose hope in your justice. Wassalam!87

- 1. Al-Kafi: 8/24/4, Ghurar al-Hikam: 10041, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 512/9322.
- 2. Al-Kafi: 2/338/6, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/454/671.
- 3. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 200, Yanabi' al-Mawadda: 1/454, Al-Mi'yar wa al- Mawazina: 166.
- 4. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Khasa's al-A'mma: 123, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 145.
- 5. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 125, Waq'atu Siffin: 542, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/69.
- 6. Ghurar al-Hikam: 10328, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 529/9620.
- 7. A village between Makka and Madina where Aba Dharr is buried.
- 8. Al-Irshad: 1/247, Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon33, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/113/90.
- 9. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 55, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/556/464.
- 10. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/184.
- 11. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 38, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/595/741.
- 12. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Khasa's al-A'mma: 123, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 145.
- 13. Ghurar al-Hikam: 4352, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 189/3897.
- 14. Ghurar al-Hikam: 8646, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 460/8362.
- 15. Ghurar al-Hikam: 8651, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 460/8362.
- 16. Managib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/147, Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/443/1547, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/9/1.
- 17. Al-Qur'an, 2: 45.
- 18. Al-Qur'an, 5: 8.
- 19. Al-Gharat: 2/533 & 539, Managib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/147.
- 20. Al-Irshad: 1/173, Kashf al-Ghumma: 1/236, Bihar al-Anwar: 21/385/10.
- 21. Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 110, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 541/10032, also cf., Nathr al-Durr: 1/292.
- 22. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 92, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/110, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/35/23.
- 23. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 24.
- 24. Al- Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/306, Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/364, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/439.
- 25. Hiliya al-Awliya: 1/85, Usd al-Ghaba: 2/92/1298, Al-Isti'ab: 1/457/599.
- 26. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 143 & 147, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/367.
- 27. Waq'atu Siffin: 108, Bihar al-Anwar: 75/355/70, Al-Mi'yar wa al- Mawazina: 123.
- 28. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 5, Kashf al-Yaqin: 216/218, Nuzha al-Nazir: 56/39.
- 29. Nahj al-Blalagha: Aphorism 363, Nuzha al-Nazir: 48/17, Bihar al-Anwar: 71/341/14.
- 30. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 158, Al-Rawashih al-Samawiya: 22, Bihar al-Anwar: 92/23/24.
- 31. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 47, Ra®za al-Wa'izin: 152, Yanabi' al-Mawadda: 2/30/2.
- 32. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 132 & 137 & 139, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/357/361.
- 33. Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- 34. Cf., Al-Qur'an, 18:51. Waq'atu Siffin: 52, Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa: 1/116, Tarikh Damishq: 59/131.
- 35. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa: 1/116, Tarikh Damishq: 59/131.
- 36. Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/153/1890, Nahj al-Sa'ada: 5/33.
- 37. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 131, also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/153/1886.
- 38. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/308/526.
- 39. Ghurar al-Hikam: 3958, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 181/3711.
- 40. Ghurar al-Hikam: 10205, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 518/9384.
- 41. Ghurar al-Hikam: 8054, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz:423/7430.
- 42. Ghurar al-Hikam: 7259, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 397/6724. It may sometimes come to one's mind that why did Imam Ali (a.s.), who emphasized on appointment of truthful administrators and warned against employment of the inefficient

and traitors, employ incompetent administrators and governors and appoint such persons as Ziyad b. Abih, Mundhir b. Jarud, and Nu'man b. 'Ajlan etc., who were traitors; and 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas and Abu Ayyub and others who were incapable.

On the other hand, why did he dismiss a religious and competent person like Qays b. Sa'd and appoint Muhammad b. Abi Bakr in his place? The response to the first question is given in the introduction of section 16 and the second in the same section in relation to the sira of Qays b. Sa'd.

- 43. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Ugul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- <u>44.</u> Apparently Malik b. Ka'b is correct, since Imam Ali (a.s.) did not have an administrator by the name of Ka'b b. Malik, rather a person by this name refused to swear allegiance to the Imam. Malik b. Ka'b was indeed one of Imam's trusted administrators in the region of 'Ayn Tamr and the surrounding of Baghdad.
- <u>45.</u> Part of Iraqi lands and villages conquered in the time of 'Umar b. Khattab. It was called Sawad (blackness) as it was covered with palm groves, trees and crops.
- <u>46.</u> 'Udhayb is the Bani Tamim water reservoir and the first water that the travelers encounter while traveling from Kufa toward Makka.
- 47. The name of three hamlets near Baghdad located on the banks of Euphrates.
- 48. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/204.
- 49. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- 50. Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 133.
- 51. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 130, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/356.
- 52. Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 133.
- 53. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 5, Waq'atu Siffin: 20, Al-'Aqd al-Farid: 3/327.
- 54. Nathr al-Durr: 1/292.
- 55. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 20, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/489/695.
- 56. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/390.
- 57. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/204.
- 58. Al-Qur'an, 40: 78.
- 59. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 3, Rawsat al-Wa'izin: 489.
- 60. Nahi al-Balagha: Letter 18, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/493/699.
- 61. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/397, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 40.
- 62. Al-Qur'an, 58: 22.
- 63. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 45, Rabi' al-Abrar: 2/719. Also cf., Managib 'Al al-Abi Talib: 2/101.
- 64. A big city in Iraq located between Kufa and Basra close to 'Amara and Kut.
- 65. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/388.
- 66. Al-Qur'an, 18: 103- 104.
- 67. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/389. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 43.
- 68. Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/129, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 3/145, Al-Gharat: 1/364.
- 69. Al-Gharat: 1/365, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/129, Tarikh Damishq: 58/272/7450.
- 70. The Arabic spelling of (Persian) Istakhr, an ancient city in Persian Empire.
- 71. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/391, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 71, Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/203.
- 72. Adopted from Al-Qur'an, 7: 85, 11: 85 86.
- 73. Al-Isti'ab: 3/210, Ibid., 211/1875.
- 74. Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/396.
- 75. Al-Qur'an, 7:85.
- 76. Al-Fusul al-Muhimma: 127, Al-'Aqd al-Farid: 1/335, Balaghat al-Nisa: 47, Kashf al-Ghumma: 1/173
- 77. Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/532/1892.
- 78. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- 79. Thawab al-A'mal: 310/1. Bihar al-Anwar: 72/345/42.

- 80. Akhbar al-Qusat: 1/59.
- 81. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 224, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/162/57.
- 82. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 19, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/489/694, Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/390. It is stated in Ansab al-Ashraf that he wrote this letter to 'Amr b. Muslama al-Arhabi in which instead of "Behave with them in between strictness and softness", he wrote "No injustice should be done to them nor their pledge broken; however, they should pay land tax and in order to preserve them nothing beyond their capacity should be taken from them. I commanded you to this and Allah is (our) resort. Wassalam."
- 83. Al-Qur'an, 3: 118.
- 84. Al-Qur'an, 5: 51.
- 85. Al-Qur'an, 5: 51.
- 86. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/203.
- 87. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 46, Al-Mufid, Al-Amali: 80/4, in which it is stated that this letter had been written to Malik al-Ashtar after the murder of Muhammad b. Abi Bakr; but apparently it is not true, since Muhammad b. Abi Bakr was martyred after Malik al-Ashtar.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/imam-ali-ass-book-government-muhammadi-reyshahri/chapter-three-administrative-policies#comment-0