

## Letter 53: An order to Malik al-Ashtar

*Written<sup>1</sup> for (Malik) al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, when the position of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr had become precarious, and Amir al-mu'minin had appointed al-Ashtar as the Governor of Egypt and the surrounding areas; it is the longest document and contains the greatest number of beautiful sayings.*

ومن عهد له (عليه السلام

كتبه للاشتر النخعي رحمه الله

لما ولاه على مصر وأعمالها حين اضطرب أمر محمد بن أبي بكر رحمه الله،  
وهو أطول عهد كتبه وأجمعه للمحاسن

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

This is what Allah's servant `Ali, Amir al-mu'minin, has ordered Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar in his instrument (of appointment) for him when he made him Governor of Egypt for the collection of its revenues, fighting against its enemies, seeking the good of its people and making its cities prosperous.

هَذَا مَا أَمَرَ بِهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ عَلِيٌّ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، مَالِكُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ الْأَشْتَرِ فِي عَهْدِهِ  
إِلَيْهِ، حِينَ وَلَّاهُ مِصْرَ: جَبُوءَ خَرَاஜِهَا، وَجِهَادَ عَدُوِّهَا، وَاسْتِصْلَاحَ أَهْلِهَا، وَعِمَارَةَ  
بِلَادِهَا.

He has ordered him to fear Allah, to prefer obedience to Him, and to follow what He has commanded in His Book (Qur'an) out of His obligatory and elective commands, without following which one cannot achieve virtue, nor (can one) be evil save by opposing them and ignoring them, and to help Allah the Glorified, with his heart, hand and tongue, because Allah whose name is Sublime takes the responsibility for helping him who helps Him, and for protecting him who gives Him support. He also orders him to break his heart off from passions, and to restrain it at the time of their increase, because the heart leads towards evil unless Allah has mercy.

أَمْرُهُ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، وَإِثَارَ طَاعَتِهِ، وَاتِّبَاعَ مَا أَمَرَ بِهِ فِي كِتَابِهِ: مِنْ فَرَائِضِهِ وَسُنَنِهِ،  
الَّتِي لَا يَسْعُدُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا بِاتِّبَاعِهَا، وَلَا يَشْقَى إِلَّا مَعَ جُحُودِهَا وَإِضَاعَتِهَا، وَأَنْ يَنْصُرَ  
اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ بِيَدِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنَّهُ، جَلَّ اسْمُهُ، قَدْ تَكْفَّلَ بِنَصْرِ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ،  
وَإِعْزَازِ مَنْ أَعَزَّهُ. وَأَمْرُهُ أَنْ يَكْسِرَ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الشَّهَوَاتِ، وَيَزْعَهَا عِنْدَ الْجَمَحَاتِ،  
فَإِنَّ النَّفْسَ أَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ، إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ اللَّهُ.

## The qualifications of a governor and his responsibilities

Then, know, O Malik, that I have sent you to an area where there have been governments before you, both just as well as oppressive. People will now watch your dealings as you used to watch the dealings of the rulers before you, and they (people) will criticise you as you criticised them (rulers). Surely, the virtuous are known by the reputation that Allah circulates for them through the tongues of His creatures. Therefore, the best collection with you should be the collection of good deeds. So, control your passions and check your heart from doing what is not lawful for you, because checking the heart means detaining it just half way between what it likes and dislikes.

ثُمَّ اْعْلَمْ يَا مَالِكُ، أَنِّي قَدْ وَجَّهْتُكَ إِلَى بِلَادٍ قَدْ جَرَتْ عَلَيْهَا دُولٌ قَبْلَكَ، مِنْ عَدْلِ  
وَجَوْرِ، وَأَنَّ النَّاسَ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ أُمُورِكَ فِي مِثْلِ مَا كُنْتَ تَنْظُرُ فِيهِ مِنْ أُمُورِ الْوُلَاةِ  
قَبْلَكَ، وَيَقُولُونَ فِيكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَقُولُ فِيهِمْ، إِنَّمَا يُسْتَدَلُّ عَلَى الصَّالِحِينَ بِمَا يُجْرِي  
اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَلَى أَلْسُنِ عِبَادِهِ. فَلْيَكُنْ أَحَبَّ الذَّخَائِرِ إِلَيْكَ ذَخِيرَةُ الْعَمَلِ الصَّالِحِ،

فَأَمْلِكْ هَوَاكَ، وَشُحَّ بِنَفْسِكَ عَمَّا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ، فَإِنَّ الشُّحَّ بِالنَّفْسِ الْأَنْصَافُ مِنْهَا  
فَيَمَا أَحْبَبْتَ وَكَرِهْتَ.

Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them, since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation. They will commit slips and encounter mistakes. They may act wrongly, wilfully or by neglect. So, extend to them your forgiveness and pardon, in the same way as you would like Allah to extend His forgiveness and pardon to you, because you are over them and your responsible Commander (Imam) is over you while Allah is over him who has appointed you. He (Allah) has sought you to manage their affairs and has tried you through them.

وَأَشْعِرْ قَلْبَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ لِلرَّعِيَّةِ، وَالْمَحَبَّةَ لَهُمْ، وَاللُّطْفَ بِهِمْ، وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ سُبْعًا  
ضَارِيًا تَغْتَنِمُ أَكْلَهُمْ، فَإِنَّهُمْ صِنْفَانِ: إِمَّا أَخٌ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ، وَإِمَّا نَظِيرٌ لَكَ فِي  
الْخَلْقِ، يَفْرُطُ مِنْهُمْ الزَّلُّ، وَتَعْرِضُ لَهُمُ الْعِلَلُ، يُؤْتِي عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ فِي الْعَمَدِ وَالْخَطَا،  
فَأَعْطِهِمْ مِنْ عَفْوِكَ وَصَفْحِكَ مِثْلَ الَّذِي تُحِبُّ أَنْ يُعْطِيَكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ عَفْوِهِ وَصَفْحِهِ،  
فَإِنَّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ، وَوَالِي الْأَمْرِ عَلَيْكَ فَوْقَكَ، وَاللَّهُ فَوْقَ مَنْ وَلَاكَ! وَقَدْ اسْتَكْفَاكَ  
أَمْرُهُمْ، وَابْتَلَاكَ بِهِمْ.

Do not set yourself to fight Allah because you have no power before His power and you cannot do without His pardon and mercy. Do not repent of forgiving or be merciful in punishing. Do not act hastily during anger if you can find way out of it. Do not say: "I have been given authority, I should be obeyed when I order," because it engenders confusion in the heart, weakens the religion and takes one near ruin. If the authority in which you are placed produces pride or vanity in you then look at the greatness of the realm of Allah over you and His might the like of which might you do not even possess over yourself. This will curb your haughtiness, cure you of your high temper and bring back to you your wisdom which had gone away from you.

وَلَا تَنْصِبَنَّ نَفْسَكَ لِحَرْبِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّهُ لِأَيْدِي لَكَ بِنِقْمَتِهِ، وَلَا غِنَى بِكَ عَنْ عَفْوِهِ  
وَرَحْمَتِهِ. وَلَا تَنْدَمَنَّ عَلَى عَفْوٍ، وَلَا تَبْجَحَنَّ بِعُقُوبَةٍ، وَلَا تُسْرِعَنَّ إِلَى بَادِرَةٍ وَجَدْتَ  
مِنْهَا مَنُودِحَةً، وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ: إِنِّي مُؤَمَّرٌ أَمْرٌ فَأُطَاعُ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ إِدْغَالٌ فِي الْقَلْبِ،  
وَمَنْهَكَةٌ لِلدِّينِ، وَتَقَرُّبٌ مِنَ الْغَيْرِ. وَإِذَا أَحْدَثَ لَكَ مَا أَنْتَ فِيهِ مِنْ سُلْطَانِكَ أَيْهَةً  
أَوْ مَخِيلَةً، فَانظُرْ إِلَى عِظَمِ مُلْكِ اللَّهِ فَوْقَكَ، وَقُدْرَتِهِ مِنْكَ عَلَى مَا لَا تَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ

نَفْسِكَ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يُطَامِنُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ طِمَاحِكَ، وَيَكْفُ عَنْكَ مِنْ غَرَبِكَ، يَفِيءُ إِلَيْكَ بِمَا  
عَزَبَ عَنْكَ مِنْ عَقْلِكَ!

Beware of comparing yourself to Allah in His greatness or likening yourself to Him in His power, for Allah humiliates every claimant of power and disgraces every one who is haughty.

إِيَّاكَ وَمُسَامَاةَ اللَّهِ فِي عَظَمَتِهِ، وَالتَّشْبَهَ بِهِ فِي جَبَرُوتِهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُذِلُّ كُلَّ جَبَّارٍ،  
وَيُهِينُ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ.

Do justice for Allah and do justice towards the people, as against yourself, your near ones and those of your subjects for whom you have a liking because if you do not do so you will be oppressive, and when a person oppresses the creatures of Allah then, instead of His creatures, Allah becomes his opponent, and when Allah is the opponent of a person He tramples his plea; and he will remain in the position of being at war with Allah until he gives it up and repents. Nothing is more inducive of the reversal of Allah's bounty or for the hastening of His retribution than continuance in oppression, because Allah hears the prayer of the oppressed and is on the look out for the oppressors.

أَنْصِفِ اللَّهَ وَأَنْصِفِ النَّاسَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ، وَمِنْ خَاصَّةِ أَهْلِكَ، وَمَنْ لَكَ فِيهِ هَوًى مِنْ  
رَعِيَّتِكَ، فَإِنَّكَ إِلَّا تَفْعَلْ تَظْلِمُ، وَمَنْ ظَلَمَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ خَصْمَهُ دُونَ عِبَادِهِ،  
وَمَنْ خَاصَمَهُ اللَّهُ أَدْحَضَ حُجَّتَهُ، وَكَانَ لِلَّهِ حَرْبًا حَتَّى يَنْزِعَ وَيَتُوبَ.

وَأَيْسَ شَيْءٍ أَدْعَى إِلَى تَغْيِيرِ نِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَتَعْجِيلِ نِقْمَتِهِ مِنْ إِقَامَةِ عَلَى ظُلْمٍ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
سَمِيعٌ دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِينَ، وَهُوَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بِالْمِرْصَادِ.

## Ruling should be in favour of the people as a whole

The way most coveted by you should be that which is the most equitable for the right, the most universal by way of justice, and the most comprehensive with regard to the agreement among those under you, because the disagreement of the common people sweeps away the arguments of the chiefs while the disagreement of the chiefs can be disregarded when compared with the agreement of the common people.

No one among those under you is more burdensome to the ruler in times of ease, less helpful in distress, more disliking of equitable treatment, more importunate in asking favours, less thankful when given (anything), less appreciative of reasons at the time of refusal, and weaker in endurance at the time of the discomforts of life than the chiefs. It is the common people of the community who are the pillars of the religion, the power of the Muslims and the defence against the enemies. Your leanings should therefore be towards them and your inclination with them.

كُنْ أَحَبَّ الْأُمُورِ إِلَيْكَ أَوْسَطُهَا فِي الْحَقِّ، وَأَعْمَهَا فِي الْعَدْلِ، وَأَجْمَعُهَا لِرِضَى الرَّعِيَّةِ، فَإِنَّ سُخْطَ الْعَامَّةِ يُجْحِفُ بِرِضَى الْخَاصَّةِ، وَإِنَّ سُخْطَ الْخَاصَّةِ يُغْتَفَرُ مَعَ رِضَى الْعَامَّةِ. وَلَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الرَّعِيَّةِ، أَثْقَلَ عَلَى الْوَالِيِّ مَوْؤَنَةً فِي الرَّخَاءِ، وَأَقْلَّ مَعُونَةً لَهُ فِي الْبَلَاءِ، وَأَكْرَهَ لِلْأَنْصَافِ، وَأَسْأَلَ بِالْأَلْحَافِ، وَأَقْلَّ شُكْرًا عِنْدَ الْأَعْطَاءِ، وَأَبْطَأَ عُذْرًا عِنْدَ الْمَنْعِ، وَأَضْعَفَ صَبْرًا عِنْدَ مُلِمَّاتِ الدَّهْرِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْخَاصَّةِ، وَإِنَّمَا عَمُودُ الدِّينِ، وَجِمَاعُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَالْعُدَّةُ لِلْأَعْدَاءِ، الْعَامَّةُ مِنَ الْأُمَّةِ، فَلْيَكُنْ صِغُوكَ لَهُمْ، وَمَيْلُكَ مَعَهُمْ.

The one among the people under you who is furthest from you and the worst of them in your view should be he who is the most inquisitive of the shortcomings of the people, because people do have shortcomings and the ruler is the most appropriate person to cover them. Do not disclose whatever of it is hidden from you because your obligation is to correct what is manifest to you, while Allah will deal with whatever is hidden from you. Therefore, cover shortcomings so far as you can; Allah would cover those of your shortcomings which you would like to remain under cover from your subjects. Unfasten every knot of hatred in the people and cut away from yourself the cause of every enmity. Feign ignorance from what is not clear to you. Do not hasten to second a backbiter, because a backbiter is a cheat although he looks like those who wish well.

وَلْيَكُنْ أَبْعَدَ رَعِيَّتِكَ مِنْكَ، وَأَشْنَأَهُمْ عِنْدَكَ، أَطْلُبُهُمْ لِمَعَائِبِ النَّاسِ، فَإِنَّ فِي النَّاسِ عِيُوبًا، الْوَالِيُّ أَحَقُّ مَنْ سَتَرَهَا، فَلَا تَكْشِفَنَّ عَمَّا غَابَ عَنْكَ مِنْهَا، فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ تَطْهِيرُ مَا ظَهَرَ لَكَ، وَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ عَلَى مَا غَابَ عَنْكَ، فَاسْتُرِ الْعَوْرَةَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ يَسْتُرِ اللَّهُ مِنْكَ مَا تُحِبُّ سِتْرَهُ مِنْ رَعِيَّتِكَ. أَطْلِقْ عَنِ النَّاسِ عُقْدَةَ كُلِّ حَقْدٍ، واقْطَعْ عَنْكَ سَبَبَ كُلِّ وَتْرٍ، وَتَغَابَ عَنْ كُلِّ مَا لَا يَضِحُ لَكَ، وَلَا تَعْجَلَنَّ إِلَى تَصَدِيقِ سَاعٍ، فَإِنَّ السَّاعِيَ غَاشٌّ، وَإِنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِالنَّاصِحِينَ.

## About counsellors

Do not include among those you consult a miser who would keep you back from being generous and caution you against destitution, nor a coward who would make you feel too weak for your affairs, nor a greedy person who would make beautiful to you the collection of wealth by evil ways. This is because miserliness, cowardice and greed are different qualities that an unfavourable opinion of Allah brings together.

وَلَا تُدْخِلَنَّ فِي مَشُورَتِكَ بَخِيلًا يَعْدُلُ بِكَ عَنِ الْفَضْلِ، وَيَعِدُّكَ الْفَقْرَ، وَلَا جَبَانًا  
يُضَعِّفُكَ عَنِ الْأُمُورِ، وَلَا حَرِيصًا يُزِينُ لَكَ الشَّرَّهَ بِالْجَوْرِ، فَإِنَّ الْبُخْلَ وَالْجُبْنَ  
وَالْحِرْصَ غَرَائِزُ شَتَّى يَجْمَعُهَا سُوءُ الظَّنِّ بِاللَّهِ.

The worst minister for you is he who has been a minister for mischievous persons before you, and who joined them in sins. Therefore, he should not be your chief man, because they are abettors of sinners and brothers of the oppressors. You can find good substitutes for them who will be like them in their views and influence, while not being like them in sins and vices. They have never assisted an oppressor in his oppression or a sinner in his sin. They will give you the least trouble and the best support. They will be most considerate towards you and the least inclined towards others. Therefore, make them your chief companions in privacy as well as in public.

شَرُّ وُزَرَائِكَ مَنْ كَانَ لِلْأَشْرَارِ قَبْلَكَ وَزِيْرًا، وَمَنْ شَرِكُهُمْ فِي الْإِثَامِ، فَلَا يَكُونَنَّ لَكَ  
بَطَانَةً، فَإِنَّهُمْ أَعْوَانُ الْإِثْمَةِ، وَإِخْوَانُ الظُّلْمَةِ، وَأَنْتَ وَاجِدٌ مِنْهُمْ خَيْرَ الْخَلْفِ مِمَّنْ  
لَهُ مِثْلُ آرَائِهِمْ وَنَفَادِهِمْ، وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلُ آصَارِهِمْ وَأَوْزَارِهِمْ وَآثَامِهِمْ، مِمَّنْ لَمْ  
يُعَاوَنْ ظَالِمًا عَلَى ظُلْمِهِ، وَلَا آثِمًا عَلَى إِثْمِهِ، أَوْلِيكَ أَخْفُ عَلَيْكَ مَوْوَنَةً، وَأَحْسَنُ  
لَكَ مَعُونَةً، وَأَحْنَى عَلَيْكَ عَطْفًا، وَأَقْلُّ لِعَيْرِكَ إِفَاءً، فَاتَّخِذْ أَوْلِيكَ خَاصَّةً لِخَلَوَاتِكَ  
وَحَفَلَاتِكَ،

Then, more preferable among them for you should be those who openly speak better truths before you and who support you least in those of your actions which Allah does not approve in His friends, even though they may be according to your wishes. Associate yourself with God-fearing and truthful people; then educate them, so that they should not praise you or please you by reason of an action you did not perform, because an excess of praise produces pride and drives you near haughtiness.

ثُمَّ لِيَكُنْ آثَرُهُمْ عِنْدَكَ أَقْوَلَهُمْ بِمُرِّ الْحَقِّ لَكَ، وَأَقْلَهُمْ مُسَاعَدَةً فِيمَا يَكُونُ مِنْكَ مِمَّا كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِأَوْلِيَائِهِ، وَأَقْعًا ذَلِكَ مِنْ هَوَاكَ حَيْثُ وَقَعَ. وَالصَّقُّ بِأَهْلِ الْوَرَعِ وَالصِّدْقِ، ثُمَّ رُضْنُهُمْ عَلَى الْأَطْرَافِ وَلَا يُبَجِّحُوكَ بِبَاطِلٍ لَمْ تَفْعَلْهُ، فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الْأَطْرَافِ تُحَدِّثُ الزُّهْمَ، وَتُدْنِي مِنَ الْعِزَّةِ.

The virtuous and the vicious should not be in equal position before you because this means dissuasion of the virtuous from virtue and persuasion of the vicious to vice. Keep everyone in the position which is his. You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behaviour towards them, lighten their hardships, and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles.

You should therefore, in this way follow a course by which you will leave a good impression with your subjects, because such good ideas will relieve you of great worries. Certainly, the one most entitled to have a favourable impression of you is he whom whom you have treated well, and the one most entitled to have a bad opinion of you is he whom you have treated badly.

وَلَا يَكُونَنَّ الْمُحْسِنُ وَالْمُسِيءُ عِنْدَكَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ سَوَاءٍ، فَإِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ تَزْهِيدًا لِأَهْلِ الْأَحْسَانِ فِي الْأَحْسَانِ، تَدْرِيْبًا لِأَهْلِ الْأَسَاءَةِ عَلَى الْأَسَاءَةِ، وَالزِّمُّ كَلًّا مِنْهُمْ مَا أَلْزَمَ نَفْسَهُ. وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ بِأَدْعَى إِلَى حُسْنِ ظَنِّ وَالِ بَرَعِيَّتِهِ مِنْ إِحْسَانِهِ إِلَيْهِمْ، وَتَخْفِيفِهِ الْمُؤُونَاتِ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَتَرْكِ اسْتِكْرَاهِهِ إِيَّاهُمْ عَلَى مَا لَيْسَ لَهُ قَبْلَهُمْ، فَلْيَكُنْ مِنْكَ فِي ذَلِكَ أَمْرٌ يَجْتَمِعُ لَكَ بِهِ حُسْنُ الظَّنِّ بِرَعِيَّتِكَ، فَإِنَّ حُسْنَ الظَّنِّ يَقْطَعُ عَنكَ نَصَبًا طَوِيلًا، وَإِنَّ أَحَقَّ مَنْ حَسُنَ ظَنُّكَ بِهِ لَمَنْ حَسُنَ بِلَاؤُكَ عِنْدَهُ، وَإِنَّ أَحَقَّ مَنْ سَاءَ ظَنُّكَ بِهِ لَمَنْ سَاءَ بِلَاؤُكَ عِنْدَهُ.

Do not discontinue the good practices which the earlier people of this community had acted upon, by virtue of which there was general unity and through which the subjects prospered. Do not innovate any line of action which injures these earlier practices because (in that case) the reward for those who had established those practices will continue, but the burden for discontinuing them will be on you. Keep on increasing your conversations with the scholars and discussions with the wise to stabilize the prosperity of the areas under you, and to continue with that in which your predecessors had established.

وَلَا تَنْقُضْ سُنَّةَ صَالِحَةٍ عَمِلَ بِهَا صُدُورُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ، وَاجْتَمَعَتْ بِهَا الْأَلْفَةُ، وَصَالِحَتْ عَلَيْهَا الرَّعِيَّةُ، لَا تُحَدِّثَنَّ سُنَّةً تَضُرُّ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ مَاضِيِ تِلْكَ السُّنَنِ، فَيَكُونَنَّ

الْأَجْرُ بِمَنْ سَنَّهَا، وَالْوَزْرُ عَلَيْكَ بِمَا نَقَضْتَ مِنْهَا. وَأَكْثَرُ مُدَارَسَةِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، وَمُنَافَقَتَهُ  
الْحُكَمَاءِ، فِي تَثْبِيتِ مَا صَلَحَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُ بِلَادِكَ، وَإِقَامَةِ مَا اسْتَقَامَ بِهِ النَّاسُ قَبْلَكَ.

## The different classes of people

Know that the people consist of classes who prosper only with the help of one another, and they are not independent of one another. Among them are the army of Allah, then the secretarial workers of the common people and the chiefs, then the dispensers of justice, then those engaged in law and order, then the payers of head tax (jizyah) and land tax (kharaj) from the protected unbelievers and the common Muslims, then there are the traders and the men of industry and then the lowest class of the needy and the destitute. Allah has fixed the share of every one of them and laid down His precepts about the limits of each in His Book (Qur'an) and the sunnah of His Prophet by way of of a settlement which is preserved with us.

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الرَّعِيَّةَ طَبَقَاتٌ لَا يَصْلُحُ بَعْضُهَا إِلَّا بِبَعْضٍ، وَلَا غِنَى بِبَعْضِهَا عَنْ  
بَعْضٍ: فَمِنْهَا جُنُودُ اللَّهِ، مِنْهَا كُتَّابُ الْعَامَّةِ وَالْخَاصَّةِ، وَمِنْهَا قُضَاةُ الْعَدْلِ، وَمِنْهَا  
عُمَّالُ الْأَنْصَافِ وَالرِّفْقِ، وَمِنْهَا أَهْلُ الْجَزْيَةِ وَالْخَرَاجِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ وَمُسْلِمَةِ  
النَّاسِ، وَمِنْهَا التُّجَّارُ وَأَهْلُ الصِّنَاعَاتِ، وَمِنْهَا الطَّبَقَةُ السُّفْلَى مِنْ ذَوِي الْحَاجَةِ  
وَالْمَسْكِنَةِ، وَكُلُّ قَدْ سَمَى اللَّهُ سَهْمَهُ، وَوَضَعَ عَلَى حَدِّهِ وَفَرِيضَتِهِ فِي كِتَابِهِ أَوْ  
سُنَّةِ نَبِيِّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) عَهْدًا مِنْهُ عِنْدَنَا مَحْفُوظًا.

Now the army is, by the will of Allah, the fortress of the subjects, the ornament of the ruler, the strength of the religion and the means of peace. The subjects cannot exist without them while the army can be maintained only by the funds fixed by Allah in the revenues, through which they acquire the strength to fight the enemies, on which they depend for their prosperity, and with which they meet their needs. These two classes cannot exist without the third class namely the judges, the executives and the secretaries who pass judgements about contracts, collect revenues and are depended upon in special and general matters.

فَالْجُنُودُ، بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ، حُصُونُ الرَّعِيَّةِ، وَزَيْنُ الْوُلَاةِ، وَعِزُّ الدِّينِ، وَسَبِيلُ الْأَمْنِ،  
وَلَيْسَ تَقْوَمُ الرَّعِيَّةُ إِلَّا بِهِمْ. ثُمَّ لَا قَوَامَ لِلْجُنُودِ إِلَّا بِمَا يُخْرِجُ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مِنَ الْخَرَاجِ  
الَّذِي يَقْوُونَ بِهِ فِي جِهَادِ عَدُوِّهِمْ، وَيَعْتَمِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِيمَا أَصْلَحَهُمْ، وَيَكُونُ مِنْ وَرَاءِ

حَاجَتِهِمْ. ثُمَّ لَا قَوَامَ لِهَذَيْنِ الصِّنْفَيْنِ إِلَّا بِالصِّنْفِ الثَّلَاثِ مِنَ الْقُضَاةِ وَالْعُمَّالِ  
وَالْكَتَّابِ، لِمَا يُحْكُمُونَ مِنَ الْمَعَاقِدِ، وَيَجْمَعُونَ مِنَ الْمَنَافِعِ، وَيُؤْتَمِنُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ  
خَوَاصِّ الْأُمُورِ وَعَوَامِهَا.

And these classes cannot exist except with the traders and men of industry, who provide necessities for them, establish markets and make it possible for others not to do all this with their own hands. Then is the lowest class of the needy and the destitute support of and help for whom is an obligation, and everyone of them has (a share in) livelihood in the name of Allah. Everyone of them has a right on the ruler according to what is needed for his prosperity. The ruler cannot acquit himself of the obligations laid on him by Allah in this matter except by striving and seeking help from Allah and by training himself to adhere to the right and by enduring on that account all that is light or hard.

وَلَا قَوَامَ لَهُمْ جَمِيعاً إِلَّا بِالتُّجَّارِ وَذَوِي الصِّنَاعَاتِ، فِيمَا يَجْتَمِعُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ  
مَرَافِقِهِمْ، وَيُقِيمُونَهُ مِنْ أَسْوَاقِهِمْ، وَيَكْفُونَهُمْ مِنَ التَّرَفُّقِ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ مِمَّا لَا يَبْلُغُهُ رِفْقُ  
غَيْرِهِمْ. ثُمَّ الطَّبَقَةُ السُّفْلَى مِنْ أَهْلِ الْحَاجَةِ وَالْمَسْكِنَةِ الَّذِينَ يَحِقُّ رِفْدُهُمْ  
وَمَعُونَتُهُمْ. وَفِي اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ سَعَةٍ، وَلِكُلِّ عَلَى الْوَالِي حَقٌّ بِقَدْرِ مَا يُصْلِحُهُ. وَلَيْسَ  
يَخْرُجُ الْوَالِي مِنْ حَقِيقَةٍ مَا أَلْزَمَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْأَهْتِمَامِ وَالِاسْتِعَانَةِ بِاللَّهِ،  
وَتَوَطُّيْنِ نَفْسِهِ عَلَى لُزُومِ الْحَقِّ، وَالصَّبْرِ عَلَيْهِ فِيمَا خَفَّ عَلَيْهِ أَوْ ثَقُلَ.

## 1. The Army

Put in command of your forces the man who in your view is the best well – wisher of Allah, His Prophet and your Imam. The chastest of them in heart and the highest of them in endurance is he who is slow in getting enraged, accepts excuses, is kind to the weak and is strict with the strong; violence should not raise his temper and weakness should not keep him sitting.

فَوَلِّ مِنْ جُنُودِكَ أَنْصَحَهُمْ فِي نَفْسِكَ لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِإِمَامِكَ، وَأَنْقَاهُمْ جَبِيئاً،  
وَأَفْضَلَهُمْ حَلِماً مِمَّنْ يُبْطِئُ عَنِ الْغَضَبِ، وَيَسْتَرِيحُ إِلَى الْعُذْرِ، وَيَرَأْفُ  
بِالضُّعْفَاءِ، وَيَنْبُو عَلَى الْأَقْوِيَاءِ، وَمِمَّنْ لَا يُثِيرُهُ الْعُنْفُ، وَلَا يَقْعُدُ بِهِ الضُّعْفُ.

Also associate with considerate people from high families, virtuous houses and decent traditions, then people of courage, valour, generosity and benevolence, because they are repositories of honour and

springs of virtues. Strive for their matters as the parents strive for their child. Do not regard anything that you do to strengthen them as big nor consider anything that you have agreed to do for them as little (so as to give it up), even though it may be small, because this will make them your well-wishers and create a good impression of you. Do not neglect to attend to their small matters, confining yourself to their important matters, because your small favours will also be of benefit to them while the important ones are such that they cannot ignore them.

ثُمَّ الصَّقُ بَدْوِي الْمُرُوءَاتِ وَالْأَحْسَابِ، وَأَهْلَ الْبُيُوتَاتِ الصَّالِحَةِ، وَالسَّوَابِقِ  
الْحَسَنَةِ، ثُمَّ أَهْلَ النَّجْدَةِ وَالشَّجَاعَةِ، وَالسَّخَاءِ وَالسَّمَّاحَةِ، فَإِنَّهُمْ جَمَاعٌ مِنَ الْكَرَمِ،  
وَشُعْبٌ مِنَ الْعُرْفِ. ثُمَّ تَفَقَّدَ مِنْ أُمُورِهِمْ مَا يَتَفَقَّدُهُ الْوَالِدَانُ مِنْ وَلَدِهِمَا، وَلَا  
يَتَفَاقَمَنَّ فِي نَفْسِكَ شَيْءٌ قَوَّيْتَهُمْ بِهِ، وَلَا تَحْقَرَنَّ لَطْفًا تَعَاهَدْتَهُمْ بِهِ وَإِنْ قَلَّ، فَإِنَّهُ  
دَاعِيَةٌ لَهُمْ إِلَى بَدْلِ النَّصِيحَةِ لَكَ، وَحُسْنِ الظَّنِّ بِكَ. وَلَا تَدْعُ تَفَقُّدَ لَطِيفِ أُمُورِهِمْ  
اتِّكَالًا عَلَى جَسِيمِهَا، فَإِنَّ لِلْيَسِيرِ مِنْ لُطْفِكَ مَوْضِعًا يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهِ، وَاللِّجْسِيمِ مَوْقِعًا  
لَا يَسْتَغْنُونَ عَنْهُ.

That commander of the army should have such a position before you that he 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. Your kindness to them will turn their hearts to you. The most pleasant thing for the rulers is the establishment of justice in their areas and the manifestation of the love of their subjects, but the subjects' love manifests itself only when their hearts are clean. Their good wishes prove correct only when they surround their commanders (to protect them). Do not regard their positions to be a burden over them and do not keep watching for the end of their tenure. Therefore, be broad-minded in regard to their desires, continue praising them and recounting the good deeds of those who have shown such deeds, because the mention of good actions shakes the brave and rouses the weak, if Allah so wills.

وَلْيَكُنْ أَثَرُ رُؤُوسِ جُنْدِكَ عِنْدَكَ مَنْ وَاسَاهُمْ فِي مَعُونَتِهِ، وَأَفْضَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ جَدَّتِهِ  
بِمَا يَسْعُهُمْ يَسْعٌ مِنْ وَرَاءِهِمْ مِنْ خُلُوفِ أَهْلِيهِمْ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هَمُّهُمْ هَمًّا وَاحِدًا فِي  
جِهَادِ الْعَدُوِّ، فَإِنَّ عَطْفَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ يَعْطِفُ قُلُوبَهُمْ عَلَيْكَ. وَإِنَّ أَفْضَلَ قُرَّةِ عَيْنِ الْوَلَاةِ  
اسْتِقَامَةُ الْعَدْلِ فِي الْبِلَادِ، وَظُهُورُ مَوَدَّةِ الرَّعِيَّةِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا تَظْهَرُ مَوَدَّتُهُمْ إِلَّا بِسَلَامَةِ  
صُدُورِهِمْ، وَلَا تَصِحُّ نَصِيحَتُهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَيْطَتِهِمْ عَلَى وِلَاةِ أُمُورِهِمْ، وَقِلَّةِ اسْتِنْقَالِ  
دَوْلِهِمْ، وَتَرْكِ اسْتِبْطَاءِ انْقِطَاعِ مَدَّتِهِمْ. فَافْسَحْ فِي أَمَالِهِمْ، وَوَاصِلْ فِي حُسْنِ الثَّنَاءِ  
عَلَيْهِمْ، وَتَعْدِيدِ مَا أَبْلَى ذُؤُوبَ الْبَلَاءِ مِنْهُمْ، فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الذِّكْرِ لِحُسْنِ أفعالِهِمْ تَهْزُ

## الشُّجَاعُ، وَتُحَرِّضُ النَّاَكِلَ، إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ.

Appreciate the performance of every one of them, do not attribute the performance of one to the other, and do not minimize the reward below the level of the performance. The high position of a man should not lead you to regard his small deeds as big, nor should the low position of a man make you regard his big deeds as small.

ثُمَّ اعْرِفْ لِكُلِّ امْرِيءٍ مِنْهُمْ مَا أَبْلَى، وَلَا تَضْمَنَّ بِلَاءَ امْرِيءٍ إِلَى غَيْرِهِ، وَلَا تُقَصِّرَنَّ بِهِ دُونَ غَايَةِ بِلَائِهِ، وَلَا يَدْعُونَكَ شَرَفُ امْرِيءٍ إِلَى أَنْ تُعْظِمَ مِنْ بِلَائِهِ مَا كَانَ صَغِيرًا، وَلَا ضَعْفُ امْرِيءٍ إِلَى أَنْ تَسْتَصْغِرَ مِنْ بِلَائِهِ مَا كَانَ عَظِيمًا.

Refer to Allah and His Prophet the affairs which worry you and matters which appear confusing to you, because, addressing the people whom Allah the Sublime, wishes to guide, He said:

***O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Prophet and those vested with authority from among you: and then if you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Prophet if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day (of Judgement). . . (Qur'an, 4:59)***

Referring to Allah means to act according to what is clear in His Book and referring to the Prophet means to follow his unanimously agreed Sunnah in regard to which there are no differences.

وَأَرَدُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا يُضْلِعُكَ مِنَ الْخُطُوبِ، وَيَشْتَبُهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ، فَقَدْ قَالَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ لِقَوْمٍ أَحَبَّ إِرْشَادَهُمْ: (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ)، فَالرُّدُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ: الْأَخْذُ بِمُحْكَمِ كِتَابِهِ، وَالرُّدُّ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ: الْأَخْذُ بِسُنَّتِهِ الْجَامِعَةِ غَيْرِ الْمُفْرَقَةِ.

## 2. The Chief Judge

For the settlement of disputes among people select him who is the most distinguished of your subjects in your view. The cases (coming before him) should not vex him, disputation should not enrage him, he should not insist on any wrong point, and should not grudge accepting the truth when he perceives it; he should not lean towards greed and should not content himself with a cursory understanding (of a matter) without going thoroughly into it.

He should be most ready to stop (to ponder) on doubtful points, most regardful of arguments, least disgusted at the quarrel of litigants, most patient at probing into matters and most fearless at the time of passing judgement. Praise should not make him vain and elation should not make him lean (to any side). Such people are very few.

ثُمَّ اخْتَرِ لِلْحُكْمِ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَفْضَلَ رَعِيَّتِكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ، مِمَّنْ لَا تَضِيقُ بِهِ الْأُمُورُ، وَلَا تُمَحِّكُهُ الْخُصُومُ، وَلَا يَتِمَادَى فِي الزَّلَّةِ، وَلَا يَحْصِرُ مِنَ الْفَيْءِ إِلَى الْحَقِّ إِذَا عَرَفَهُ، وَلَا تُشْرِفُ نَفْسُهُ عَلَى طَمَعٍ، وَلَا يَكْتَفِي بِأَدْنَى فَهْمٍ دُونَ أَقْصَاهُ، أَوْ قَفَهُمْ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ، وَأَخَذَهُمْ بِالْحُجَجِ، وَأَقْلَهُمْ تَبَرُّمًا بِمِرَاجِعَةِ الْخَصْمِ، وَأَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى تَكْشُفِ الْأُمُورِ، وَأَصْرَمَهُمْ عِنْدَ اتِّضَاحِ الْحُكْمِ، مِمَّنْ لَا يَزِدُّهُ إِطْرَاءٌ، وَلَا يَسْتَمِيلُهُ إِغْرَاءٌ، أَوْلِيكَ قَلِيلٌ.

Then, very often check his decisions and allow him so much money (as remuneration) that he has no excuse worth hearing (for not being honest) and there remains no occasion for him to go to others for his needs. Give him that rank in your audience for which no one else among your chiefs aspires, so that he remains safe from the harm of those around you. You should have a piercing eye in this matter because this religion has formerly been a prisoner in the hands of vicious persons when action was taken according to passion, and worldly wealth was sought.

ثُمَّ أَكْثَرَ تَعَاهُدَ قَضَائِهِ، وَأَفْسَحَ لَهُ فِي الْبَدْلِ مَا يُزِيلُ عِلَّتَهُ، وَتَقَلُّ مَعَهُ حَاجَتُهُ إِلَى النَّاسِ، وَأَعْطَاهُ مِنَ الْمَنْزِلَةِ لَدَيْكَ مَا لَا يَطْمَعُ فِيهِ غَيْرُهُ مِنْ خَاصَّتِكَ، لِيَأْمَنَ بِذَلِكَ اغْتِيَالَ الرَّجَالِ لَهُ عِنْدَكَ. فَانظُرْ فِي ذَلِكَ نَظْرًا بَلِيغًا، فَإِنَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ قَدْ كَانَ أُسِيرًا فِي أَيْدِي الْأَشْرَارِ، يُعْمَلُ فِيهِ بِالْهَوَى، وَتُطَلَّبُ بِهِ الدُّنْيَا.

### 3. Executive Officers

Thereafter, look into the affairs of your executives. Give them appointment after tests and do not appoint them according to partiality or favouritism, because these two things constitute sources of injustice and unfairness. Select from among them those who are people of experience and modesty, hailing from virtuous houses, having been previously in Islam, because such persons possess high manners and untarnished honour. They are the least inclined towards greed and always have their eyes on the ends of matters.

ثُمَّ انظُرْ فِي أُمُورِ عُمَّالِكَ، فَاسْتَعْمِلْهُمْ اخْتِبَارًا، وَلَا تُوَلِّهِمْ مُحَابَاةً وَأَثَرَةً، فَإِنَّهُمَا جَمَاعٌ مِنْ شُعْبِ الْجَوْرِ وَالْخِيَانَةِ. وَتَوَخَّ مِنْهُمْ أَهْلَ التَّجْرِبَةِ وَالْحَيَاءِ، مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتَاتِ الصَّالِحَةِ، وَالْقَدَمِ فِي الْأَسْلَامِ الْمُتَقَدِّمَةِ، فَإِنَّهُمْ أَكْرَمُ أَخْلَاقًا، وَأَصَحُّ أَعْرَاضًا، وَأَقْلُّ فِي الْمَطَامِعِ إِشْرَافًا، وَأَبْلَغُ فِي عَوَاقِبِ الْأُمُورِ نَظْرًا.

Give them an abundant livelihood (by way of salary) because this gives them the strength to maintain themselves in order and not to have an eye upon the funds in their custody, and it would be an argument against them if they disobeyed your orders or misappropriated your trust. You should also check their activities and have people who report on them who should be truthful and faithful, because your watching their actions secretly will urge them to preserve trust with and to be kind to the people. Be careful of assistants. If any one of them extends his hands towards misappropriation and the reports of your reporters reaching you confirm it, that should be regarded enough evidence. You should then inflict corporal punishment on him and recover what he has misappropriated. You should put him in a place of disgrace, blacklist him with (the charge of) misappropriation and make him wear the necklace of shame for his offence.

ثُمَّ أَسْبِغْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْزَاقَ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ قُوَّةٌ لَهُمْ عَلَى اسْتِصْلَاحِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ، وَغِنَى لَهُمْ عَنْ تَنَاوُلِ مَا تَحْتَ أَيْدِيهِمْ، وَحُجَّةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنْ خَالَفُوا أَمْرَكَ أَوْ تَلَمَّوْا أَمَانَتَكَ. ثُمَّ تَفَقَّدْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ، وَابْعَثِ الْعُيُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الصِّدْقِ وَالْوَفَاءِ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَإِنَّ تَعَاهُدَكَ فِي السِّرِّ لِأُمُورِهِمْ حَدُودٌ لَهُمْ عَلَى اسْتِعْمَالِ الْأَمَانَةِ، وَالرِّفْقِ بِالرَّعِيَّةِ. وَتَحَفُّظِ مِنَ الْأَعْوَانِ، فَإِنَّ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ بَسَطَ يَدَهُ إِلَى خِيَانَةِ اجْتَمَعَتْ بِهَا عَلَيْهِ عِنْدَكَ أَخْبَارُ عُيُونِكَ، اكَتَفَيْتَ بِذَلِكَ شَاهِدًا، فَبَسَطْتَ عَلَيْهِ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي بَدَنِهِ، وَأَخَذْتَهُ بِمَا أَصَابَ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ، ثُمَّ نَصَبْتَهُ بِمَقَامِ الْمَذَلَّةِ، وَوَسَمْتَهُ بِالْخِيَانَةِ، وَقَلَّدْتَهُ عَارَ التُّهْمَةِ.

#### 4. The Administration of Revenues

Look after the revenue (kharaj or land tax) affairs in such a way that those engaged in it remain prosperous because in their prosperity lies the prosperity of all others. The others cannot prosper without them, because all people are dependent on revenue and its payers. You should also keep an eye on the cultivation of the land more than on the collection of revenue because revenue cannot be had without cultivation and whoever asks for revenue without cultivation, ruins the area and brings death to the people. His rule will not last only a moment.

وَتَفَقَّدَ أَمْرَ الْخَرَاجِ بِمَا يُصْلِحُ أَهْلَهُ، فَإِنَّ فِي صَلَاحِهِ وَصَلَاحِهِمْ صَلَاحًا لِمَنْ سِوَاهُمْ، وَلَا صَلَاحَ لِمَنْ سِوَاهُمْ إِلَّا بِهِمْ، لِأَنَّ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمْ عِيَالٌ عَلَى الْخَرَاجِ وَأَهْلِهِ. وَلِيَكُنْ نَظْرُكَ فِي عِمَارَةِ الْأَرْضِ أَبْلَغَ مِنْ نَظْرِكَ فِي اسْتِجْلَابِ الْخَرَاجِ، لِإِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَا يُدْرِكُ إِلَّا بِالْعِمَارَةِ، وَمَنْ طَلَبَ الْخَرَاجَ بِغَيْرِ عِمَارَةٍ أَخْرَبَ الْبِلَادَ، وَأَهْلَكَ الْعِبَادَ، وَلَمْ يَسْتَقِمْ أَمْرُهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا.

If they complain of the heaviness (of the revenue) or of diseases, or dearth of water, or excess of water or of a change in the condition of the land either due to flood or to drought, you should remit the revenue to the extent that you hope will improve their position. The remission granted by you for the removal of distress from them should not be grudged by you, because it is an investment which they will return to you in the shape of the prosperity of your country and the progress of your domain in addition to earning their praise and happiness for meeting out justice to them.

You can depend upon their strength because of the investment made by you in them through catering to their convenience, and can have confidence in them because of the justice extended to them by being kind to them. After that, circumstances may so turn that you may have to ask for their assistance, when they will bear it happily, for prosperity is capable of hearing whatever you load on it. The ruin of the land is caused by the poverty of the cultivators, while the cultivators become poor when the officers concentrate on the collection (of money), having little hope for continuance (in their posts) and deriving no benefit from objects of warning.

فَإِنْ شَكَوْا ثِقَلًا أَوْ عِلَّةً، أَوْ انْقِطَاعَ شَرْبٍ أَوْ بَالَّةً، أَوْ إِحَالَةَ أَرْضٍ اغْتَمَرَهَا غَرَقٌ، أَوْ أَجْحَفَ بِهَا عَطَشٌ، خَفَّفْتَ عَنْهُمْ بِمَا تَرْجُو أَنْ يَصْلِحَ بِهِ أَمْرُهُمْ، وَلَا يَتَّقُلَنَّ عَلَيْكَ شَيْءٌ خَفَّفْتَ بِهِ الْمَوْؤُونََةَ عَنْهُمْ، فَإِنَّهُ ذُخْرٌ يَعُودُونَ بِهِ عَلَيْكَ فِي عِمَارَةِ بِلَادِكَ، وَتَزْيِينِ وَلَايَتِكَ، مَعَ اسْتِجْلَابِكَ حُسْنِ ثَنَائِهِمْ، وَتَبَجُّحِكَ بِاسْتِفَاضَةِ الْعَدْلِ فِيهِمْ، مُعْتَمِدًا فَضْلَ قُوَّتِهِمْ، بِمَا ذَخَرْتَ عِنْدَهُمْ مِنْ إِجْمَامِكَ لَهُمْ، وَالثِّقَّةَ مِنْهُمْ بِمَا عَوَّدْتَهُمْ مِنْ عَدْلِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ فِي رَفْقِكَ بِهِمْ، فَرُبَّمَا حَدَثَ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ مَا إِذَا عَوَّلْتَ فِيهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ احْتِمَالُوهُ طَيِّبَةً أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِهِ، فَإِنَّ الْعُمُرَانَ مُحْتَمِلٌ مَا حَمَلْتَهُ، وَإِنَّمَا يُؤْتِي خَرَابُ الْأَرْضِ مِنْ إِعْوَاذِ أَهْلِهَا، إِنَّمَا يُعَوِّزُ أَهْلَهَا لِإِشْرَافِ أَنْفُسِ الْوُلَاةِ عَلَى الْجَمْعِ، وَسُوءِ ظَنِّهِمْ بِالْبَقَاءِ، وَقَلَّةِ انْتِفَاعِهِمْ بِالْعِبَرِ.

## 5. The Clerical Establishment

Then you should take care of your secretarial workers. Put the best of them in charge of your affairs. Entrust those of your letters which contain your policies and secrets to him who possesses the best character, who is not elated by honours, lest he dares speak against you in common audiences. He should also not be negligent in presenting the communications of your officers before you and issuing correct replies to them on your behalf and in matters of your receipts and payments. He should not make any damaging agreement on your behalf and should not fail in repudiating an agreement against you. He should not be ignorant of the extent of his own position in matters because he who is ignorant of his own position is (even) more ignorant of the position of others.

ثُمَّ انظُرْ فِي حَالِ كُتَّابِكَ، فَوَلِّ عَلَى أُمُورِكَ خَيْرَهُمْ، وَأَخْصِمْ رَسَائِلِكَ الَّتِي  
تُدْخِلُ فِيهَا مَكَائِدَكَ وَأَسْرَارَكَ بِأَجْمَعِهِمْ لَوْجُودِ صَالِحِ الْأَخْلَاقِ مِمَّنْ لَا تُبْطِرُهُ  
الْكَرَامَةُ، فَيَجْتَرِيءَ بِهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي خِلَافِ لَكَ بِحَضْرَةِ مَلَأَ وَلَا تُقْصِرُ بِهِ الْعَفْلَةُ عَنْ  
إِيرَادِ مُكَاتَبَاتِ عُمَّالِكَ عَلَيْكَ، وَإِصْدَارِ جَوَابَاتِهَا عَلَى الصَّوَابِ عَنْكَ، وَفِيمَا يَأْخُذُ  
لَكَ وَيُعْطِي مِنْكَ، وَلَا يُضْعِفُ عَقْدًا أَعْتَقَدَهُ لَكَ، وَلَا يَعْجِزُ عَنْ إِطْلَاقِ مَا عُقِدَ  
عَلَيْكَ، وَلَا يَجْهَلُ مَبْلَغَ قَدْرِ نَفْسِهِ فِي الْأُمُورِ، فَإِنَّ الْجَاهِلَ بِقَدْرِ نَفْسِهِ يَكُونُ بِقَدْرِ  
غَيْرِهِ أَجْهَلَ.

Your selection of these people should not be on the basis of your understanding (of them), confidence and your good impression, because people catch the ideas of the officers through affectation and personal service and there is nothing in it which is like well-wishing or trustfulness. You should rather test them by what they did under the virtuous people before you. Take a decision in favour of one who has a good name among the common people and is the most renowned in trustworthiness, because this will be a proof of your regard for Allah and for him on whose behalf you have been appointed to this position (namely your Imam). Establish one chief for every department of work. He should not be incapable of big matters, and a rush of work should not perplex him. Whenever there is a defect in your secretaries which you overlook, then you will be held responsible for it.

ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ اخْتِيَارُكَ إِيَّاهُمْ عَلَى فِرَاسَتِكَ وَاسْتِنَامَتِكَ وَحُسْنِ الظَّنِّ مِنْكَ، فَإِنَّ  
الرِّجَالَ يَتَعَرَّفُونَ لِفِرَاسَاتِ الْوُلَاةِ بِتَصْنُعِهِمْ وَحُسْنِ خِدْمَتِهِمْ، لَيْسَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مِنَ  
النَّصِيحَةِ وَالْأَمَانَةِ شَيْءٌ، وَلَكِنْ اخْتَبَرَهُمْ بِمَا وَلُوا لِلصَّالِحِينَ قَبْلَكَ، فَاعْمِدْ  
لِحُسْنِهِمْ كَانِ فِي الْعَامَّةِ أَثْرًا، وَأَعْرِفَهُمْ بِالْأَمَانَةِ وَجْهًا، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ دَلِيلٌ عَلَى

نَصِيحَتِكَ لِلَّهِ وَلِمَنْ وَلِيَتْ أَمْرُهُ.

وَأَجْعَلْ لِرَأْسِ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ مِنْ أُمُورِكَ رَأْسًا مِنْهُمْ، لَا يَقْهَرُهُ كَبِيرُهَا، وَلَا يَتَشَتُّ عَلَيْهِ كَثِيرُهَا، وَمَهْمَا كَانَ فِي كُتَابِكَ مِنْ عَيْبٍ فَتَغَابَيْتَ عَنْهُ أَلْزَمْتَهُ.

## 6. Traders and Industrialists

Now take some advice about traders and industrialists. Give them good counsel whether they be settled (shop-keepers) or traders or physical labourers because they are sources of profit and the means of the provision of useful articles. They bring them from distant and far-flung areas throughout the land and sea, plains or mountains, from where people cannot come and to where they do not dare to go, for they are peaceful and there is no fear of revolt from them, and they are quite without fear of treason.

ثُمَّ اسْتَوْصِ بِالتُّجَّارِ وَذَوِي الصِّنَاعَاتِ، وَأَوْصِ بِهِمْ خَيْرًا: الْمُقِيمِ مِنْهُمْ، وَالْمُضْطَرِّبِ بِمَالِهِ، وَالْمُتَرَفِّقِ بِيَدِنِهِ، فَإِنَّهُمْ مَوَادُّ الْمَنَافِعِ، وَأَسْبَابُ الْمَرَافِقِ، وَجَلَابِهَا مِنَ الْمَبَاعِدِ وَالْمَطَارِحِ، فِي بَرِّكَ وَبَحْرِكَ، وَسَهْلِكَ وَجَبَلِكَ، وَحَيْثُ لَا يَلْتَمُّ النَّاسُ لِمَوَاضِعِهَا، وَلَا يَجْتَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهَا، فَإِنَّهُمْ سَلِمٌ لَا تُخَافُ بِأَيْقَتِهِ، وَصُلِحٌ لَا تُخْشَى غَائِلَتُهُ،

Look after their affairs before yourself or wherever they may be in your area. Know, along with this, that most of them are very narrow-minded, and awfully avaricious. They hoard goods for profiteering and fix high prices for goods. This is a source of harm to the people and a blot on the officers in charge. Stop people from hoarding, because the Messenger of Allah (S) has prohibited it. The sale should be smooth, with correct weights and prices, not harmful to either party, the seller or the purchaser; whoever commits hoarding after you prohibit it, give him exemplary but not excessive punishment.

وَتَفَقَّدُ أُمُورَهُمْ بِحَضْرَتِكَ وَفِي حَوَاشِي بِلَادِكَ. وَاعْلَمْ - مَعَ ذَلِكَ - أَنَّ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْهُمْ ضَيْقًا فَاحِشًا، وَشَحًّا قَبِيحًا، وَاحْتِكَارًا لِلْمَنَافِعِ، وَتَحَكُّمًا فِي الْبِيَاعَاتِ، وَذَلِكَ بَابٌ مَضْرَّةٌ لِلْعَامَّةِ، وَعَيْبٌ عَلَى الْوَلَاةِ، فَامْنَعْ مِنَ الْاِحْتِكَارِ، فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) مَنَعَ مِنْهُ. وَلِيَكُنَّ الْبَيْعُ بَيْنًا سَمَحًا: بِمَوَازِينِ عَدْلٍ، وَأَسْعَارٍ لَا تُجْحِفُ بِالْفَرِيقَيْنِ مِنَ الْبَائِعِ وَالْمُبْتَاعِ، فَمَنْ قَارَفَ حُكْرَةً بَعْدَ نَهْيِكَ إِيَّاهُ

## فَنَكِلْ وَعَاقِبْ فِي غَيْرِ إِسْرَافٍ.

### 7. The Lowest Class

(Fear) Allah and keep Allah in view in respect of the lowest class, consisting of those who have few means: the poor, the destitute, the penniless and the disabled; because in this class are both the self-contained needy and those who beg. Take care for the sake of Allah of His obligations towards them for which He has made you responsible. Fix for them a share from the public funds and a share from the crops of lands taken over as booty for Islam in every area, because in it the remote ones have the same shares as the near ones. All these people are those whose rights have been placed in your charge. Therefore, a luxurious life should not keep you away from them You cannot be excused for ignoring small matters because you were deciding big problems. Consequently, do not be unmindful of them, nor turn your face from them out of vanity.

ثُمَّ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي الطَّبَقَةِ السُّفْلَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا حِيلَةَ لَهُمْ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْمُحْتَاجِينَ  
وَأَهْلِ الْبُؤْسَى وَالزَّمْنَى، فَإِنَّ فِي هَذِهِ الطَّبَقَةِ قَانِعًا وَمُعْتَرًّا، وَاحْفَظْ لِلَّهِ مَا  
اسْتَحْفَظَكَ مِنْ حَقِّهِ فِيهِمْ، وَاجْعَلْ لَهُمْ قِسْمًا مِنْ بَيْتِ مَالِكَ، وَقِسْمًا مِنْ غَلَّاتِ  
صَوَافِي الْأَسْلَامِ فِي كُلِّ بَلَدٍ، فَإِنَّ لِلْأَقْصَى مِنْهُمْ مِثْلَ الَّذِي لِلْأَدْنَى، وَكُلُّ قَدْ  
اسْتُرِعِيَتْ حَقُّهُ، فَلَا يَشْغَلَنَّكَ عَنْهُمْ بَطْرٌ، فَإِنَّكَ لَا تُعْذَرُ بِتَضْيِيعِ التَّافِهِ لِأَحْكَامِكَ  
الْكَثِيرِ الْمُهْمِّ. فَلَا تُشْخِصْ هَمَّكَ عَنْهُمْ، وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لَهُمْ

Take care of the affairs of those of them who do not approach you among those who are looked at with contempt and whom people regard as low. Appoint for them some trusted people who are God-fearing and humble. They should inform you of these people's conditions. Then deal with them with a sense of responsibility to Allah on the day you will meet Him, because of all the subjects these people are the most deserving of equitable treatment, while for others also you should fulfil their rights so as to render account to Allah.

وَتَفَقَّدَ أُمُورَ مَنْ لَا يَصِلُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْهُمْ مِمَّنْ تَقْتَحِمُهُ الْعَيُونُ، وَتَحْقِرُهُ الرِّجَالُ، فَفَرِّغْ  
لِأَوْلِيكَ ثِقَتَكَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْخَشْيَةِ وَالتَّوَاضُعِ، فَلْيُرْفَعْ إِلَيْكَ أُمُورَهُمْ، ثُمَّ أَعْمَلْ فِيهِمْ  
بِالْأَعْذَارِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى يَوْمَ تَلْقَاهُ، فَإِنَّ هُوَ لَأَمْوَالٍ مِنْ بَيْنِ الرَّعِيَّةِ أَحْوَجُ إِلَى الْأَنْصَافِ  
مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ، وَكُلُّ فَاغْذَرِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي تَأْدِيَةِ حَقِّهِ إِلَيْهِ.

Take care of the orphans and the aged who have no means (for livelihood) nor are they ready for begging. This is heavy on the officers; in fact, every right is heavy. Allah lightens it for those who seek the next world and so they endure (hardships) upon themselves and trust on the truthfulness of Allah's promise to them. And fix a time for complainants wherein you make yourself free for them, and sit for them in common audience and feel humble therein for the sake of Allah who created you. (On that occasion) you should keep away your army and your assistants such as the guards and the police so that anyone who like to speak may speak to you without fear, because I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say in more than one place, "The people among whom the right of the weak is not secured from the strong without fear will never achieve purity." Tolerate their awkwardness and inability to speak. Keep away from you narrowness and haughtiness; Allah would, on this account, spread over you the skirts of His mercy and assign the reward of His obedience for you. Whatever you give, give it joyfully, but when you refuse, do it handsomely and with excuses.

وَتَعَهَّدْ أَهْلَ الْيَتَمِ وَذَوِي الرَّقَّةِ فِي السِّنِّ مِمَّنْ لَا حِيلَةَ لَهُ، وَلَا يَنْصِبُ لِلْمَسْأَلَةِ نَفْسَهُ، وَذَلِكَ عَلَى الْوُلَاةِ ثَقِيلٌ، وَالْحَقُّ كُلُّهُ ثَقِيلٌ، وَقَدْ يُخَفِّفُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى أَقْوَامٍ طَلَبُوا الْعَاقِبَةَ فَصَبَرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ، وَوَثِقُوا بِصِدْقِ مَوْعُودِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ. وَاجْعَلْ لِذَوِي الْحَاجَاتِ مِنْكَ قِسْمًا تُفَرِّغُ لَهُمْ فِيهِ شَخْصِكَ، وَتَجْلِسُ لَهُمْ مَجْلِسًا عَامًّا، فَتَتَوَاضَعُ فِيهِ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ، وَتَقْعُدُ عَنْهُمْ جُنْدَكَ وَأَعْوَانِكَ مِنْ أِحْرَاسِكَ وَشُرْطِكَ، حَتَّى يُكَلِّمَكَ مُتَكَلِّمُهُمْ غَيْرَ مُتَعَتِعٍ، فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) يَقُولُ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْطِنٍ: "لَنْ تَقْدَسَ أُمَّةٌ لَا يُؤْخَذُ لِلضَّعِيفِ فِيهَا حَقُّهُ مِنَ الْقَوِيِّ غَيْرَ مُتَعَتِعٍ." ثُمَّ احْتَمَلَ الْخُرْقَ مِنْهُمْ وَالْعِيَّ، وَنَحَّ عَنْكَ الضِّيْقَ وَالْأَنْفَ، يَبْسُطِ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ بِذَلِكَ أَكْنَافَ رَحْمَتِهِ، وَيُوجِبُ لَكَ ثَوَابَ طَاعَتِهِ، وَأَعْطِ مَا أُعْطِيتَ هَنِئًا، وَامْنَعْ فِي إِجْمَالٍ وَإِعْذَارٍ .

Then there are certain matters which you cannot avoid performing yourself. For example, replying to your officers when your secretaries are unable to do so, or disposing of the complaints of the people when your assistants shirk them. Finish every day the work meant for it, because every day has its own work. Keep for yourself the better and greater portion of these periods for the worship of Allah, although all these items are for Allah provided the intention is pure and the subjects prosper thereby.

ثُمَّ أُمُورٌ مِنْ أُمُورِكَ لَا بُدَّ لَكَ مِنْ مُبَاشَرَتِهَا: مِنْهَا إِجَابَةُ عُمَّالِكَ بِمَا يَعْيَا عَنْهُ كُتَّابُكَ، وَمِنْهَا إِصْدَارُ حَاجَاتِ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ وَرُودِهَا عَلَيْكَ مِمَّا تَخْرُجُ بِهِ صُدُورُ أَعْوَانِكَ. وَأَمْضِ لِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ عَمَلَهُ، فَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ مَا فِيهِ، وَاجْعَلْ لِنَفْسِكَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ

وَيَبِينُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَفْضَلَ تِلْكَ الْمَوَاقِيتِ، وَأَجْزَلَ تِلْكَ الْأَقْسَامِ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ كُلُّهَا لِلَّهِ  
إِذَا صَلَّحْتَ فِيهَا النِّيَّةَ، وَسَلَّمْتَ مِنْهَا الرَّعِيَّةَ.

## Communion with Allah

The particular thing by which you should purify your religion for Allah should be the fulfilment of those obligations which are especially for Him. Therefore, devote to Allah some of your physical activity during the night and the day, and whatever (worship) you perform for seeking nearness to Allah should be complete, without defect or deficiency, whatsoever physical exertion it may involve. When you lead the prayers for the people, then do not scare them away from it (by prolonging it) nor waste it (by making it too short), because among the people there are the sick as well as those who have needs of their own. When the Messenger of Allah (S) sent me to Yemen I enquired how I should offer prayers with them and he replied, "Say the prayers as the weakest of them would say, and be compassionate to the believers."

وَلْيَكُنْ فِي خَاصَّةٍ مَا تُخْلِصُ لِلَّهِ بِهِ دِينَكَ: إِقَامَةُ فَرَائِضِهِ الَّتِي هِيَ لَهُ خَاصَّةٌ،  
فَأَعْطِ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَدَنِكَ فِي لَيْلِكَ وَنَهَارِكَ، وَوَفِّ مَا تَقَرَّبْتَ بِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ كَامِلًا  
غَيْرَ مَثْلُومٍ وَلَا مَنقُوصٍ، بِالْغَا مِنْ بَدَنِكَ مَا بَلَغَ.

وَإِذَا قُمْتَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ لِلنَّاسِ، فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مُنْفَرًا وَلَا مُضَيِّعًا، فَإِنَّ فِي النَّاسِ مَنْ بِهِ  
الْعِلَّةُ وَلَهُ الْحَاجَةُ. وَقَدْ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) حِينَ وَجَّهَنِي إِلَى  
الْيَمَنِ كَيْفَ أُصَلِّي بِهِمْ؟ فَقَالَ: "صَلِّ بِهِمْ كَصَلَاةِ أضعفهم، وَكُنْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
رَحِيمًا".

## On the behaviour and action of a Ruler

Then, do not keep yourself secluded from the people for a long time, because the seclusion of those in authority from the subjects is a kind of narrow-sightedness and causes ignorance about their affairs. Seclusion from them also prevents them from the knowledge of those things which they do not know and as a result they begin to regard big matters as small and small matters as big, good matters as bad and bad matters as good, while the truth becomes confused with falsehood. After all, a governor is a human being and cannot have knowledge of things which people keep hidden from him.

وَأَمَّا بَعْدَ هَذَا، فَلَا تُطَوِّلَنَّ احْتِجَابَكَ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِكَ، فَإِنَّ احْتِجَابَ الْوَلَاةِ عَنِ الرَّعِيَّةِ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الضِّيْقِ، وَقَلَّةٌ عِلْمٌ بِالْأُمُورِ، وَالْاِحْتِجَابُ مِنْهُمْ يَقْطَعُ عَنْهُمْ عِلْمَ مَا احْتَجَبُوا دُونَهُ فَيَصْغُرُ عِنْدَهُمُ الْكَبِيرُ، وَيَعْظُمُ الصَّغِيرُ، وَيَقْبَحُ الْحَسَنُ، وَيَحْسَنُ الْقَبِيحُ، وَيُشَابُّ الْحَقُّ بِالْبَاطِلِ، وَإِنَّمَا الْوَالِي بِشَرِّ مَا لَا يَعْرِفُ مَا تَوَارَى عَنْهُ النَّاسُ بِهِ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ،

There are no marks on the face of truth to differentiate its various expressions from falsehood. Then you can be one of two kinds of men. Either you may be generous in granting rights – and then why this hiding in spite of (your) discharging the obligations and good acts that you perform? Or you are a victim of stinginess; in that case people will soon give up asking you since they will lose hope of generous treatment from you. In spite of that there are many needs of the people towards you which do not involve any hardship on you, such as the complaint against oppression or the request for justice in a matter.

وَلَيْسَتْ عَلَى الْحَقِّ سِمَاتٌ تُعْرَفُ بِهَا ضُرُوبُ الصِّدْقِ مِنَ الْكُذْبِ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنْتَ أَحَدُ رَجُلَيْنِ: إِمَّا امْرُؤٌ سَخَتْ نَفْسُكَ بِالْبَدْلِ فِي الْحَقِّ، فَفِيمَ احْتِجَابُكَ مِنْ وَاجِبِ حَقِّ تَعْطِيهِ، أَوْ فِعْلٌ كَرِيمٌ تُسَدِّيهِ، أَوْ مُبْتَلَى بِالْمَنْعِ، فَمَا أَسْرَعَ كَفَّ النَّاسِ عَنْ مَسْأَلَتِكَ إِذَا أَيْسُوا مِنْ بَدْلِكَ! مَعَ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَ حَاجَاتِ النَّاسِ إِلَيْكَ [م] مَا لَا مَوْوَنَةَ فِيهِ عَلَيْكَ، مِنْ شِكَاةٍ مَظْلَمَةٍ، أَوْ طَلَبِ إِنْصَافٍ فِي مُعَامَلَةٍ.

Further, a governor has favourites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things, are high-handed and do not observe justice in matters. You should destroy the root of evil in the people by cutting away the causes of these defects. Do not make any land grants to your hangers on or supporters. They should not expect from you the possession of land which may cause harm to adjoining people over the question of irrigation or common services whose burden the grantees place on others. In this way, the benefit will be rather theirs than yours, and the blame will lie on you in this world and the next.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ لِلْوَالِي خَاصَّةً وَبِطَانَةً، فِيهِمْ اسْتِنَارٌ وَتَطَاوُلٌ، وَقَلَّةٌ إِنْصَافٍ فِي مُعَامَلَةٍ، فَاحْسِمْ مَادَّةَ أَوْلِيكَ بِقَطْعِ أَسْبَابِ تِلْكَ الْأَحْوَالِ، وَلَا تُقْطِعَنَّ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ حَاشِيَتِكَ وَحَامَّتِكَ قَطِيعَةً، وَلَا يَطْمَعَنَّ مِنْكَ فِي اعْتِقَادِ عُقْدَةٍ، تَضُرُّ بِمَنْ يَلِيهَا مِنَ النَّاسِ، فِي شَرْبِ أَوْ عَمَلِ مُشْتَرَكٍ، يَحْمِلُونَ مَوْوَنَتَهُ عَلَى غَيْرِهِمْ، فَيَكُونُ مَهْنًا ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ دُونَكَ، وَعَيْبُهُ عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

Allow rights to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. In this matter, you should be enduring and watchful even though it may involve your relations and favourites, and keep in view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you because its reward is handsome.

وَأَلْزِمِ الْحَقَّ مَنْ لَزِمَهُ مِنَ الْقَرِيبِ وَالْبَعِيدِ، وَكُنْ فِي ذَلِكَ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا، وَاقِعًا  
ذَلِكَ مِنْ قَرَابَتِكَ خَاصَّتِكَ حَيْثُ وَقَعَ، وَابْتَغِ عَاقِبَتَهُ بِمَا يَنْقُلُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهُ، فَإِنَّ مَغَبَّةَ  
ذَلِكَ مَحْمُودَةٌ.

If the subjects suspect you of high-handedness, explain to them your position openly and remove their suspicion with your explanation, because this would mean exercise for your soul and consideration to the subjects while this explanation will secure your aim of keeping them firm in truth.

وَإِنْ ظَنَّتِ الرَّعِيَّةُ بِكَ حَيْفًا، فَأَصْحِرْ لَهُمْ بِعُذْرِكَ، وَاعْدِلْ عَنْكَ ظُنُونَهُمْ  
بِإِصْحَارِكَ، فَإِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ رِيَاضَةً مِنْكَ لِنَفْسِكَ، وَرِفْقًا بِرَعِيَّتِكَ، وَإِعْذَارًا تَبْلُغُ فِيهِ  
حَاجَتَكَ مِنْ تَقْوِيمِهِمْ عَلَى الْحَقِّ.

Do not reject peace to which your enemy may call you and wherein there is the pleasure of Allah, because peace brings rest to your army and relief from your worries and safety for your country. But after peace there is great apprehension from the enemy because often the enemy offers peace to benefit by your negligence. Therefore, be cautious and do not act by wishfulness in this matter.

وَلَا تَدْفَعَنَّ صَلْحًا دَعَاكَ إِلَيْهِ عَدُوُّكَ لَلَّهِ فِيهِ رِضَى، فَإِنَّ فِي الصُّلْحِ دَعَاً لِجُنُودِكَ،  
وَرَاحَةً مِنْ هُمُومِكَ، وَأَمْنًا لِبِلَادِكَ، وَلَكِنَّ الْحَذَرَ كُلَّ الْحَذَرِ مِنْ عَدُوِّكَ بَعْدَ  
صُلْحِهِ، فَإِنَّ الْعَدُوَّ رُبَّمَا قَارَبَ لِيَتَغَفَّلَ، فَخُذْ بِالْحَزْمِ، وَاتَّهَمْ فِي ذَلِكَ حُسْنَ الظَّنِّ.

If you conclude an agreement between yourself and your enemy or enter into a pledge with him then fulfil your agreement and discharge your pledge faithfully. Place yourself as a shield against whatever you have pledged because among the obligations of Allah there is nothing on which people are more strongly united despite the difference of their ideas and variation of their views than respect for fulfilling pledges.

Besides Muslims, even unbelievers have abided by agreements because they realized the dangers which would come in the wake of violation (thereof). Therefore, do not deceive your enemy, because no

one can offend Allah save the ignorant and the wicked. Allah made His agreement and pledged the sign of security which He has spread over His creatures through His mercy and an asylum in which they stay in His protection and seek the benefit of nearness to Him. Therefore, there should be no deceit, cunning or duplicity in it.

وَإِنْ عَقَدْتَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ عَدُوِّكَ عُقْدَةً، أَوْ أَلْبَسْتَهُ مِنْكَ ذِمَّةً، فَحُطَّ عَهْدُكَ بِالْوَفَاءِ،  
 وَارْعَ ذِمَّتَكَ بِالْأَمَانَةِ، وَاجْعَلْ نَفْسَكَ جُنَّةً دُونَ مَا عَطَيْتَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ فَرَائِضِ  
 اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ شَيْءٌ النَّاسُ أَشَدُّ عَلَيْهِ اجْتِمَاعاً، مَعَ تَفْرِيقِ أَهْوَائِهِمْ، وَتَشْتِيتِ آرَائِهِمْ،  
 مِنْ تَعْظِيمِ الْوَفَاءِ بِالْعُهُودِ، وَقَدْ لَزِمَ ذَلِكَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ دُونَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ  
 لِمَا اسْتَوْبَلُوا مِنْ عَوَاقِبِ الْغَدْرِ، فَلَا تَغْدِرَنَّ بِذِمَّتِكَ، وَلَا تَخَيْسَنَّ بِعَهْدِكَ، وَلَا تَخْتَلَنَّ  
 عَدُوَّكَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَجْتَرِيءُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا جَاهِلٌ شَقِيٌّ. وَقَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ وَذِمَّتَهُ أَمْنًا  
 أَفْضَاهُ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ بِرَحْمَتِهِ، وَحَرِيماً يَسْكُنُونَ إِلَى مَنَعَتِهِ، يَسْتَفِيضُونَ إِلَى جِوَارِهِ،  
 فَلَا إِدْغَالَ وَلَا مُدَالَسَةَ، وَلَا خِدَاعَ فِيهِ،

Do not enter into an agreement which may admit of different interpretations and do not change the interpretation of vague words after the conclusion and confirmation (of the agreement). If an agreement of Allah involves you in hardship do not seek its repudiation without justification, because the bearing of hardships through which you expect relief and a handsome result is better than a violation whose consequence you fear, and that you fear that you will be called upon by Allah to account for it and you will not be able to seek forgiveness for it in this world or the next.

وَلَا تَعْقِدْ عُقْدًا تَجُوزُ فِيهِ الْعِلُّ، وَلَا تُعَوِّلَنَّ عَلَى لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ بَعْدَ التَّكْيِيدِ وَالتَّوْتِيقَةِ،  
 وَلَا يَدْعُوَنَّكَ ضَيْقُ أَمْرٍ لَزِمَكَ فِيهِ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ، إِلَى طَلَبِ أَنْفَسَاخِهِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ، فَإِنَّ  
 صَبْرَكَ عَلَى ضَيْقِ تَرْجُو أَنْفِرَاجَهُ وَفَضْلَ عَاقِبَتِهِ، خَيْرٌ مِنْ غَدْرِ تَخَافُ تَبِعَتَهُ، وَأَنْ  
 تُحِيطَ بِكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِيهِ طَلِبَةٌ، لِاتِّسْقِيلِ فِيهَا دُنْيَاكَ وَلَا آخِرَتَكَ.

You should avoid shedding blood without justification, because nothing is more inviting of Divine retribution, greater in (evil) consequence, and more effective in the decline of prosperity and cutting short of life than the shedding of blood without justification. On the Day of Judgement Allah the Glorified, would commence giving His judgement among the people with the cases of bloodshed committed by them.

Therefore, do not strengthen your authority by shedding prohibited blood because this will weaken and

lower the authority, moreover destroy it and shift it. You cannot offer any excuse before Allah or before me for wilful killing because there must be the question or revenge in it. If you are involved in it by error and you exceed in the use of your whip or sword or hand in inflicting punishment, as sometimes even a blow by the fist or a smaller stroke causes death, then the haughtiness of your authority should not prevent you from paying the blood price to the successors of the killed person.

إِيَّاكَ وَالِدَّمَاءَ وَسَفْكَهَا بِغَيْرِ حِلِّهَا، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَدْعَى لِنِقْمَةٍ، وَلَا أَعْظَمَ لِتَبَعَةٍ، وَلَا أُحْرَى بِزَوَالِ نِعْمَةٍ، وَأَنْقِطَاعِ مُدَّةٍ، مِنْ سَفْكِ الدَّمَاءِ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهَا، وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ مُبْتَدِئٌ بِالْحُكْمِ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ، فِيمَا تَسَافَكُوا مِنَ الدَّمَاءِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَلَا تُقَوِّينَ سُلْطَانَكَ بِسَفْكِ دَمٍ حَرَامٍ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا يُضْعِفُهُ وَيُوهِنُهُ، بَلْ يُزِيلُهُ وَيَنْقُلُهُ، وَلَا عُذْرَ لَكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَا عِنْدِي فِي قَتْلِ الْعَمَدِ، لَأَنَّ فِيهِ قَوْدَ الْبَدَنِ، وَإِنْ ابْتَلَيْتَ بِخَطِيئَةٍ وَأَفْرَطَ عَلَيْكَ سَوْطُكَ أَوْ سَيْفُكَ أَوْ يَدُكَ بِعُقُوبَةٍ، فَإِنَّ فِي الْوَكْزَةِ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا مَقْتَلَةً، فَلَا تَطْمَحَنَّ بِكَ نَخْوَةَ سُلْطَانِكَ عَنْ أَنْ تُؤَدِّيَ إِلَى أَوْلِيَاءِ الْمَقْتُولِ حَقَّهُمْ.

You should avoid self-admiration, having reliance in what appears good in yourself and love of exaggerated praise because this is one of the most reliable opportunities for Satan to obliterate the good deeds of the virtuous.

وَإِيَّاكَ وَالْأَعْجَابَ بِنَفْسِكَ، وَالثَّقَّةَ بِمَا يُعْجِبُكَ مِنْهَا، وَحُبَّ الْأَطْرَاءِ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَوْثَقِ فُرْصِ الشَّيْطَانِ فِي نَفْسِهِ، لِيَمْحَقَ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ إِحْسَانِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.

Avoid showing (the existence of) obligation on your subjects for having done good to them or praising your own actions or making promises and then breaking them, because showing (the existence of) obligation destroys good, self-praise takes away the light of truth, and breaking promises earns the hatred of Allah and of the people. Allah, the Glorified, says:

***Most hateful is it unto Allah that you say what you (yourselves) do (it) not. (Qur'an, 61:3)***

وَإِيَّاكَ وَالْمَنْ عَلَى رَعِيَّتِكَ بِإِحْسَانِكَ، أَوْ التَّزْيِيدِ فِيمَا كَانَ مِنْ فِعْلِكَ، أَوْ أَنْ تَعِدَهُمْ فَتُتْبِعَ مَوْعِدَكَ بِخُلْفِكَ، فَإِنَّ الْمَنْ يُبْطِلُ الْإِحْسَانَ، وَالتَّزْيِيدُ يَذْهَبُ بِنُورِ الْحَقِّ، وَالْخُلْفُ يُوجِبُ الْمَقْتَلَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالنَّاسِ، قَالَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ: (كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ).

Avoid haste in matters before their time, slowness at their proper time, insistence on them when the propriety of action is not known or weakens when it becomes clear. Assign every matter its proper place and do every job at the appropriate time.

وإِيَّاكَ وَالْعَجَلَةَ بِالْأُمُورِ قَبْلَ أَوَانِهَا، أَوْ التَّسَاقُطَ فِيهَا عِنْدَ إِمْكَانِهَا، أَوْ اللَّجَاجَةَ فِيهَا إِذَا تَنَكَّرْتَ، أَوْ الْوَهْنَ عَنْهَا إِذَا اسْتَوْضَحْتَ، فَضَعْ كُلَّ أَمْرٍ مَوْضِعَهُ، وَأَوْقِعْ كُلَّ عَمَلٍ مَوْقِعَهُ.

Do not appropriate to yourself that in which the people have an equal share, nor be regardless of matters which have come to light with the excuse that you are accountable for others. Shortly, the curtains of all matters will be raised from your view and you will be required to render redress to the oppressed. Have control over (your) sense of prestige, any outburst of anger, the might of your arm and the sharpness of your tongue. Guard against all this by avoiding haste and by delaying severe action till your anger subsides and you regain your self-control. You cannot withhold yourself from this unless you bear in mind that you have to return to Allah.

وإِيَّاكَ وَالْأَسْتِنَارَ بِمَا النَّاسُ فِيهِ أُسْوَةٌ، وَالتَّغَابِيَ عَمَّا تُعْنَى بِهِ مِمَّا قَدْ وَضَحَ لِلْعُيُونِ، فَإِنَّهُ مَا خُوذَ مِنْكَ لِغَيْرِكَ، وَعَمَّا قَلِيلٍ تَنَكَّشَفُ عَنْكَ أَغْطِيَةُ الْأُمُورِ، وَيُنْتَصَفُ مِنْكَ لِلْمَظْلُومِ، أَمْلِكْ حَمِيَّةَ أَنْفِكَ، وَسُورَةَ حَدِّكَ، وَسَطْوَةَ يَدِكَ، وَغَرْبَ لِسَانِكَ، وَاحْتَرَسْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَلِكَ بِكَفِّ الْبَادِرَةِ، وَتَأْخِيرِ السَّطْوَةِ، حَتَّى يَسْكُنَ غَضَبُكَ فَتَمْلِكَ الْأَخْتِيَارَ، وَلَنْ تَحْكُمَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ حَتَّى تُكْثِرَ هُمُومَكَ بِذِكْرِ الْمَعَادِ إِلَى رَبِّكَ.

It is necessary for you to recall how matters went with those who preceded you, be it a government or a great tradition or a precedent of our Prophet (may Allah bless him and his descendants) or the obligatory commands contained in the Book of Allah. Then you should follow them as you have seen us acting upon them and should exert yourself in following that I have enjoined upon you in this document in which I have exhausted my pleas on you, so that if your heart advances towards its passions you may have no plea in its support.

None will protect from evil or grant success for good but Allah, the Exalted. Among the matters that Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, enjoined on me in his testament were the exhortation to prayer and zakat and (taking care of) the slaves. With that I end my document to you, and there is no strength or power but with Allah, the All-mighty.

وَالْوَاجِبُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تَتَذَكَّرَ مَا مَضَى لِمَنْ تَقَدَّمَكَ: مِنْ حُكُومَةِ عَادِلَةٍ، أَوْ سُنَّةٍ فَاضِلَةٍ، أَوْ أَثَرٍ عَنْ نَبِيِّنَا (صلى الله عليه وآله) أَوْ فَرِيضَةٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ، فَتَقْتَدِيَ بِمَا شَاهَدْتَ مِمَّا عَمَلْنَا بِهِ فِيهَا، وَتَجْتَهِدَ لِنَفْسِكَ فِي اتِّبَاعِ مَا عَاهَدْتَ إِلَيْكَ فِي عَهْدِي هَذَا، وَاسْتَوْثَقْتُ بِهِ مِنَ الْحُجَّةِ لِنَفْسِي عَلَيْكَ، لِكَيْلَا تَكُونَ لَكَ عَلَةٌ عِنْدَ تَسْرُعِ نَفْسِكَ إِلَى هَوَاهَا، فَلَنْ يَعْصِمَ مِنَ السُّوءِ وَلَا يُوفِّقَ لِلْخَيْرِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى. وَقَدْ كَانَ فِيمَا عَاهَدَ إِلَيَّ رَسُولُهُ (عليه السلام) فِي وَصَايَاهُ تَحْضِيضًا عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ، فَبِذَلِكَ أَخْتَمُ لَكَ مَا عَاهَدَ، وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ.

I ask Allah through the vastness of His mercy and the greatness of His power of giving a good inclination that He may prompt me and you to advance a clear plea before Him and His creatures in a manner that may attract His pleasure along with handsome praise among the people, good effect in the country, an increase in prosperity and a hightening of honour; and that He may allow me and you to die a death of virtue and martyrdom. Surely, we have to return to Him. Peace be on the Messenger of Allah – may Allah shower His blessings and plentiful salutations on him and his pure and chaste descendants; and that is an end to the matter.

وَأَنَا أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ بِسَعَةِ رَحْمَتِهِ، وَعَظِيمِ قُدْرَتِهِ عَلَى إِعْطَاءِ كُلِّ رَغْبَةٍ، أَنْ يُوفِّقَنِي وَإِيَّاكَ لِمَا فِيهِ رِضَاهُ مِنَ الْأَقَامَةِ عَلَى الْعُذْرِ الْوَاضِحِ إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَى خَلْقِهِ، مَعَ حُسْنِ الثَّنَاءِ فِي الْعِبَادِ، وَجَمِيلِ الْأَثَرِ فِي الْبِلَادِ، وَتَمَامِ النِّعْمَةِ، وَتَضْعِيفِ الْكِرَامَةِ، وَأَنْ يَخْتِمَ لِي وَلَكَ بِالسَّعَادَةِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ، إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاغِبُونَ، وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَ سَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا. وَالسَّلَامُ.

1. This document, which deserves to be called the constitution of Islamic polity, was prepared by the person who was the greatest scholar of Divine law and acted upon it more than anyone else. From the study of Amir al-mu'minin's way of governance in these pages it can be concluded that his aim was only the enforcement of Divine law and the improvement of social conditions, and not to disrupt public security or to fill treasures by plunder, or to strive to extend the country's boundaries by fair means or foul. Worldly governments generally adopt such constitutions which cater to their utmost benefit and try to change every law which is against that aim or is injurious for their objective. But every article of this constitution serves as a custodian of common interests and protector of collective organization. Its enforcement has no touch of selfishness or any iota of self-interest. It contains such basic principles of the fulfilment of Allah's obligations, the protection of human rights without distinction of religion or community, the care of the destitute and the poor and the provision of succour to the low and the down-trodden from which full guidance can be had for the propagation of right and justice, the establishment of peace and security, and the prosperity and well-being of the people.

Amir al-mu'minin wrote this instrument for Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar, when he was appointed the Governor of Egypt in

38 A. H. Malik al-Ashtar was one of the chief companions of Amir al-mu'minin. He had shown great endurance and steadfastness and perfect confidence and trust in Amir al-mu'minin. He had attained the utmost nearness and attachment to him by moulding his conduct and character after the conduct and character of Amir al-mu'minin. This can be gauged by Amir al-mu'minin's words: "Malik was to me as I was to the Messenger of Allah." (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol. 15, p.98; al-A'lam, vol.6, p. 131). Malik al-Ashtar too, actuated by self-less feelings of service, took a very active part in military encounters and proved himself to be Amir al-mu'minin's arm in all battles and encounters. He showed such feats of courage and daring that his bravery was acknowledged throughout Arabia. Along with this bravery he was also conspicuous in endurance and forbearing. In this connection, Warram ibn Abi Firas an-Nakha'i has written that once Malik was passing through the market of Kufah with the dress and turban made of gunny-cloth when a shopkeeper finding him in this condition and clothing, he threw some rotten leaves upon him, but he did not at all mind this dirty behaviour, nor did he even look at him. Rather, he quietly stepped forward. Then someone said to this shopkeeper, "Do you know to whom you have been so insolent?" He replied that he did not know who he was, whereupon he said that it was Malik al-Ashtar, the companion of Amir al-mu'minin. Hearing this, he lost his senses and at once ran behind him to seek pardon for this insolence and humiliating treatment. While in his search he reached a mosque where Malik was offering prayers. When he finished the prayers this man went forward and fell on his feet and begged pardon with great pertinacity and weeping. Malik raised the man's beard up and said, "By Allah, I have come to the mosque to pray to Allah to forgive you. I myself had pardoned you that very moment, and I hope Allah too will pardon you." (Tanbihu l-khawatir wa nuzhatu n-nawazir, vol. 1, p.2; al-Bihar, vol.42, p. 157). This is the forgiveness and tolerance of a warrior at whose name courage trembled, and whose swordsmanship was acknowledged by the brave men of Arabia. And this is the real sign of bravery that a man should exercise self-control during bitterness of anger and rage and endure hardships with patience and calmness. In this connection, Amir al-mu'minin's saying is that, "The bravest of men is he who over-powers his passions."

However, besides these characteristics and qualities, he had a perfect aptitude for organization and administration. Thus, when the Uthmani (al-Uthmaniyyah) party began to spread the germs of destruction in Egypt and tried to upset the law and order of the country by mischief and revolt then Amir al-mu'minin removed Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr from the governorship and decided to appoint Malik al-Ashtar in his place, although at that time he was posted as the Governor of Nasibin. However, Amir al-mu'minin sent him word that he should name someone as his deputy and come to Amir al-mu'minin. On receipt of this order Malik al-Ashtar appointed Shabib ibn Amir al-Azdi in his place and himself came to Amir al-mu'minin. Amir al-mu'minin gave him a warrant of appointment and sent him off to Egypt, and also sent a written order to Egyptians to obey him. When Mu'awiyah got the news of Malik al-Ashtar's appointment through his spies he was perplexed because he had promised Amr ibn al-As that he would give him the governorship of Egypt in reward of his services and he had hoped that Amr ibn al-As would easily defeat Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr and wrest the power from him, but could not imagine conquering Egypt by defeating Malik al-Ashtar. He therefore decided to do away with him before he took over the charge. For this he arranged with a landlord of the city of al-Arish (or al-Qulzum) that when Malik passed through al-Arish on his way to Egypt he should kill him by some device or other and in reward for this the revenue of his estate would be written off. So, when Malik al-Ashtar reached al-Arish with retinue and force the chief of al-Arish gave him a good ovation and insisted on having Malik as his guest. Malik agreed and stayed at his place. When he finished the meal the host gave him some syrup of honey to drink in which he had mixed with poison. Soon after drinking it the poison began to show its effect and before the eyes of everyone this great warrior known for his swordsmanship and for putting the rows of the enemy to flight calmly went into the embrace of death.

When Mu'awiyah got news of his success of this device he was overjoyed and shouted in merriment, "Oh, honey is also an army of Allah", and then said during a speech:

Ali ibn Abi Talib had two right hand men. One was chopped off on the day of Siffin and he was Ammar ibn Yasir, and the second has been severed now and he is Malik al-Ashtar.

But when the news of Malik's assassination reached Amir al-mu'minin, he was highly grieved and sorrowful, then he said: Malik! Who is Malik? If Malik was a stone, he was hard and solid; if he was a rock, he was a great rock which had no parallel. It seems his death has made me also lifeless. I swear by Allah that his death made the Syrians joyous and insulted the Iraqis.

Then he continued:

Women have become barren to give birth to such as Malik. (at-Tabari, vol. 1, pp.3392-3395; Ibn al-Athir, vol.3, pp.352-353; al-Ya`qubi, vol.2, p. 194; al-Isti`ab, vol.3, p. 1366; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, vol.6, pp. 74-77; Ibn Kathir, vol.7, pp.313-314; Abu'l-Fida', vol. 1, p. 179)

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