

ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى بعض عماله

To one of his officers.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ دِهَاقِينَ أَهْلَ بَلَدِكَ شَكَّوْا مِنْكَ غَلْظَةً وَقَسْوَةً، وَاحْتِقَارًا وَجَفْوَةً، وَنَظَرْتَ فَلِمَ أَرْهَمَ أَهْلًا لَأَنْ يُدْنُوا لِشُرِكِهِمْ، وَلَا أَنْ يَقْضُوا وَيَجْفُوا لِعَهْدِهِمْ، فَالْبَيْسَ لَهُمْ جَلْبَابًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ تَشْوِيهِ بِطَرْفِ مِنَ الشَّدَةِ، وَدَاوِلَ لَهُمْ بَيْنَ الْقَسْوَةِ وَالرَّأْفَةِ، وَامزج لهم بين التَّقْرِيبِ وَالْإِدْنَاءِ، وَالْإِبْعَادِ وَالْإِقْصَاءِ، إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ.

Now, the cultivators [1] (dahāqīn, plural of dīhqān) 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 or remoteness and aloofness with nearness and closeness if Allāh so wills.

Footnote :

[1] The following is a letter to one of his governors. It speaks volumes about the ways of Divine Rule. It shows how Imam Ali (a) was training the Muslims to behave tolerantly towards other religions, how minority was to be treated and what should those who hold a different creed, expect of a Muslim ruler.

[2] These people were Magians (majūs). That is why the treatment of Amīr al-mu'minīn's officer with them was not the same as with Muslims. Disgusted with this they wrote a letter of complaint to Amīr al-mu'minīn and spoke of the Officer's harshness. In reply, Amīr al-mu'minīn wrote to his officer that he should meet out treatment to them in which there should be neither harshness nor such leniency which they may exploit to create mischief because if they are let loose they get involved in machinations against the government and disturb the country's administration by creating one mischief or the other, while a wholly repressive policy cannot be justified because they are counted among the subjects and their rights as such cannot be ignored.