ومن كتاب له (عليه السلام) إلى أهل مصر لما ولي عليهم الأشتر رحمه الله

To the people of Egypt when he appointed (Mālik) al-Ashtar as their Governor.

مِنْ عَبْدِ اللهِ عَلِيٍّ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ غَضِبُوا لِلَّهِ حِينَ عُصِيَ فِي أَرْضِهِ، وَذُهِبَ بِحَقِّهِ، فَضَرَبَ الْجَوْرُ سُرَادِقَهُ عَلَى الْبَرِّ وَالْفَاجِرِ، وَالْمُقِيمِ وَالظَّاعِنِ، فَلا مَعْرُوفٌ يُسْتَرَاحُ إِلَيْهِ، وَلا مُنْكَرٌ يُتَنَاهَى عَنْهُ.

From the slave of Allāh, ‘Alī, Amīr al-mu’minīn to the people who became wrathful for the sake of Allāh when He was disobeyed on His earth and His rights were ignored and oppression had spread its coverings over the virtuous as well as the vicious, on the local as well as the foreigner. Consequently, no good was acted upon nor any evil was avoided.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ عَبْداً مِنْ عِبَادِ اللهِ، لا يَنَامُ أَيَّامَ الْخَوْفِ، وَلا يَنْكُلُ عَنِ الأَعْدَاءِ سَاعَاتِ الرَّوْعِ، أَشَدَّ عَلَى الْفُجَّارِ مِنْ حَرِيقِ النَّارِ، وَهُوَ مَالِكُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ أَخُو مَذْحِجٍ،

Now, I have sent to you a man from among the servants of Allāh 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 Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith, our brother from (the tribe of) Madhḥij.

فَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرَهُ فِيمَا طَابَقَ الْحَقَّ، فَإِنَّهُ سَيْفٌ مِنْ سُيُوفِ اللهِ، لا كَلِيلُ الظُّبَةِ، وَلا نَابِي الضَّرِيبَةِ، فَإِنْ أَمَرَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْفِرُوا فَانْفِرُوا، وَإِنْ أَمَرَكُمْ أَنْ تُقِيمُوا فَأَقِيمُوا، فَإِنَّهُ لا يُقْدِمُ وَلا يُحْجِمُ، وَلا يُؤَخِّرُ وَلا يُقَدِّمُ إِلَّا عَنْ أَمْرِي، وَقَدْ آثَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِي لِنَصِيحَتِهِ لَكُمْ، وَشِدَّةِ شَكِيمَتِهِ عَلَى عَدُوِّكُمْ.

Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that accord with right, because he is a sword among the swords of Allāh, whose edge is not dull and which does not miss its victim. If he orders you to advance, advance, and if he orders you to stay, stay, because he surely neither advances or attacks nor puts anyone backward or forward save with my command. I have preferred him for you rather than for myself because of his being your well-wisher and (because of) the severity of his harshness over your enemies.