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The Ideal Islamic Government

Author(s):

Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi



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Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

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The Ideal Islamic Government

BOOK ID

Author(s): Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

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point

The Ideal Islamic Government as Expounded by the Leader of the Faithful Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) This text presents the ideal Islamic government in the eyes of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) through his letter to Malik Al Ashtar

Preface

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The letter of the Leader of the faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) to the Egypt's governor-designate, Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar, written in ۳۸ A.H., should rightfully be called the first Constitution which is wholly based on justice, common welfare and public weal.

Hammurabi's Code is probably the oldest surviving "document" on state-craft. Hammurabi ruled over Babylonia in circa ۱۷۵۰ B.C. He got his decisions and judgments carved in stone, which was discovered in Susa, and is now placed in Louvre in Paris

But it is not so much a constitution, as of civil and penal code, dealing with family affairs, contracts and trade, slavery and debts, crimes and punishments, and so on. Even then it did not promulgate impartial justice, as penalties and punishments varied according to the status of offenders

Plato (circa 428 B.C. -347 B.C.) was Socrates' friend and disciple. He said that there were standards, which he called "ideas" or forms. Those ideas were the real things. A phenomenon is good when it corresponds with its idea

or reality. A judge is just if his decision conforms with the "idea" of justice. The present connotation of the word "ideal" is derived from that concept. In his best-known work, *The Republic*, he says that the best kind of state would be that where the rulers would
be philosophers

In spite of the great influence of Plato's philosophy, his ideal republic has remained
just that-- an ideal, which has never been put into practice

Five centuries after this letter of 'Ali (a.s.), came Magna Carta (the Great Charter) which was drawn up in England in 1215 C.E. It is considered the basis on which later charters have been drawn up. But the fact remains that its main thrust and purpose was to safeguard the rights of the English barons against their King, John-- although
in so doing it gave some personal liberty to every English citizen

The importance of 'Ali (a.s.)'s document rests on the fact that it lays stress on welfare
of every stratum of society

It begins and ends with reminding the Governor to remember, fear and obey Allah. It explains the qualifications and responsibilities of a governor, and stresses that the rule should be in favor of the people as a whole, and goes on to guide him about the qualities of his counselors. It gives guidance about army, judiciary, tax-collectors and
secretaries

Then it describes various strata of the people and the government's obligation
towards them. As the Translator has rightly remarked

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 for their utmost benefit and try to change every law which is against that aim or is injurious to their objective. But every article of this constitution serves as a custodian of common interests and protector of collective organization

Its enforcement has not touch of selfishness or any iota of self-interest. It contains such basic principles of the fulfillment 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 succor 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

But the real beauty of this "Constitution" is that it did not remain a theory; it was implemented and enforced throughout the realm of Islam, during the reign of 'Ali (a.s

(At this point it is necessary to mention that 'Ali (a.s

used to write such instructions for all his governors, although it is only this letter that
.has survived

History mentions another detailed letter written by 'Ali (o.s.) for Shanshab, the ruler of
Kabul and Ghor (in present day Afghanistan). He was a Buddhist ruler who willingly
accepted Islam on the hands of 'Ali (a.s.). 'Ali (a.s.) confirmed him as the ruler of his
.Kingdom, writing for him detailed guidance for governing

From then on, the "Testament" (as it was called) served as the Constitution of the
realm, and the successors of Shanshab had to declare on oath, at the time of
accession to the throne, that they would uphold the Testament and act according to
.its articles

Incidentally, Ghor and Bahrain were the only two provinces where the Umrnayyads
could not enforce their heinous custom of cursing 'Ali (a";.) and other members of the
.Prophet's family in the sermons of Fridays

This version has been taken from the English translation of Nahj al-Balaghah,
translated by Mr. Syed Ali Raza, and published by the World Organization of Islamic
.Services (WOFIS), Tehran; in ۱۳۹۹/۱۹۷۹. It appears in Part Three, pp. ۶۰۲-۶۱۹

The original work was compiled by ash-Sharif as-Sayyid ar-Radi (died ۴۰۶ A.H.). It also
:appears in several works preceding as-Sayyid ar-Radi

(I. Da'a'imul Islam -by Nu'man ibn Muhammad ibn Mansur of Egypt (died ۳۶۳ A.H

(.Tuhaful 'Uqul -by Ibn Shu'bah al-Harrani (died circa ۳۸۱ A.H .۲

(.As-Sa'adah wal Is'ad -by Yusuf al-'Amiri of Nishapur (died ۳۸۱ A.H .۳

(.Dasturul 'Alam -by Qazi al-Quza'i (died ۴۰۴ A.H .۴

"After this "Preface

we have included two Notes by the Translator: First is about the Author of the Letter, Leader of the faithful, 'Ali (a.s.); and the second about the addressee, Malik al-Ashtar. The former has been taken from the beginning of his book (Part One, pp. ۸-۱۲), while (the latter appears at the end of the letter (Part Three, pp. ۶۱۹-۶۲۱).

In the end, we thank Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala that he made us among the adherents to the Wilayah -Love and Obedience -of the Leader of the faithful and the Imams, Peace be on them all

Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

,Dar es Salaam

۲۵th Dhul-hijja, ۱۴۱۰

۲۰th July, ۱۹۹۰

Translator's Notes

About the Author of the Letter

In the World such persons are rarely found in whom besides one or two virtuous qualities other qualities might also attain prominence, much less the convergence of all contradictory qualities, because every temperament is not suited for the development of every quality, each quality has a peculiar tempo and each virtue needs a particular climate, and they are appropriate only for such qualities or virtues with which they accord, but where there is contradiction instead of harmony the natural tendencies act as obstacles and do not allow any other quality to grow

For example, generosity and bountifulness demand that a person should possess the feeling of pity and God-fearing so that on seeing anyone in poverty or want his heart would rend, and his feelings would be disturbed at others' tribulations while the dictates of bravery and fighting require that instead of pity and compassion there

should be the passion of blood-shed and killing, prompting the person at every moment to enter into scuffle, ready to kill or be killed

These two qualities differ so widely that it is not possible to fuse the delicacies of generosity into the stiff manifestations of bravery just as bravery cannot be expected from Hatim nor generosity from Rostam. But the personality of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.b.) showed full accord with every greatness and complete harmony with every accomplishment, and there was no good attribute or accomplishment which he lacked, nor any robe of greatness or beauty which did not fit his body

Thus the contradictory qualities of generosity and bravery were found in him side by side. If he rained like the cloud in generosity, he also fought bravely standing firm as a mountain

Thus his generosity and liberty of nature was of a degree that even during, days of want and starvation whatever he earned as the wage of his day's toil its major part was distributed among the poor and the starving, and he would never allow a beggar to return disappointed from his door, so much so that even when in the battle field the enemy asked him his sword he threw it before him being confident of the prowess of his naked arm

:An Urdu couplet says

.The unbeliever depends on his sword but the believer fights even without it

And his bravery and courage was such that the onslaught of armies could not shake the firmness of his

foot with the result that he achieved success in every encounter and even the bravest fighter could not save his life in an encounter with him. Thus Ibn Qutaybah writes in ".al-Ma'arif, "Whomever he encountered was prostrated

The heartless nature of the brave is not wont to thinking or pondering nor do they have anything to do with foresight or fore-judging but 'Ali (p.b.u.b.) had the quality of :thinking of the highest degree. Thus, ash-Shafi'i said as follows

What can I say about a man in whom three qualities existed with three other qualities that were never found together in any other man-- Generosity with want, Bravery .with sagacity and Knowledge with practical achievements

It was the result of this proper thinking and correct judgment that when after the death of the Prophet some people advised him to fight and promised to enlist warriors for him he rejected this advice, although on such occasions even a slight support is enough to encourage the heartless brave, yet 'Ali (a.s.) far-sighted mind at once foresaw that if battle was raged at that moment the voice of Islam would be .submerged under the clutter of swords

And then even if success was achieved it would be said that the position was gained by dint of sword and that there was no right for it. Thus, by withholding his sword on the one hand he provided protection to Islam and on the other saved his own fight .from the imputation of bloodshed

When the veins are full

of daring blood and the bosom full of flames of anger and wrath it is extremely difficult to curb the passion of vengeance by adopting the course of forgiving and, despite authority and power, to pardon and overlook. But 'Ali's (a.s.) metal used to shine on such occasions when his forgiving nature would accommodate even his .bloodthirsty foes

Thus, at the end of the Battle of Jamal he made a general proclamation that no one who flees away from the field or seeks our protection would be molested and he let go without any punishment even such enemies as Marwan ibn Hakam and 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr. And the treatment that he meted out to 'A'ishah matchless manifestation of his nobility and high character --is that in spite of her open enmity and rebellion he .sent with her women in men's garb to escort her to Medina

By giving his own personal malice the garb of fundamental differences man not only deceives others hut also tries to keep himself under deception, and in these conditions such a delicate situation arises that a man fails to distinguish and separate his personal malice from a fundamental difference but easily mixing them together considers that he has followed the Command of Allah, and in this way he satisfies his passion for vengeance as well. But Amir al-mu'minin's discerning eyes never got .deceived nor did they willingly deceive themselves

Thus, on an occasion when after prostrating the opponent he placed himself on his bosom the vanquished

opponent spat on his face. As man his rage should have risen and his hand should have moved quicker but instead of being enraged he got off from the man's bosom lest his action would be tarnished by personal feeling, and slayed him only after the .anger had subsided

There is nothing in common between combat and encounter and reclusion and God-fearing because one shows valor and courage while the other supplication and submission. But Amir aI-mu'minin was a unique combination of both these qualities as his hands that were bound in devotion were equally active in the battle-field, and side by side with relaxing in seclusion for devotion he was a common visitor of the field of .action

The scene of the Night of Harir puts human wit in astonishment and wonder when closing his eyes to the bloody action around the spread his prayer cloth and engaged himself in prayer with full peace of mind and heart while arrows were darting off sometimes over his head and sometimes from his right or left. But he remained .engaged in Allah's remembrance without any fear or apprehension

After finishing he again cast his hand on the sword's handle and the fierce battle that then followed is unparalleled in history. The position was that on all sides there was such hue and cry and fleeing activity that even voices falling en the ears could not be discerned. Of course, after every moment or so his own call of Allahu Akbar rose in

.tho atmosphere and resounded in the ears, and every such call meant death of a foe

Those who counted these calls of takbir recorded their number as five hundred and
.twenty three

The taste for learning and God-knowing does not combine with material activity but
Amir al-mu'minin adorned the meetings of learning and scholarship along with war-
like pursuits, and he watered the field of Islam with springs of learning and truth along
(with shedding streams of blood in battles

Where there is perfection of learning, then, even if there is no complete absence of
action, there must no doubt exist shortness of action, but Amir al-mu'minin treated
the field of knowledge and action equally, as has been already shown in ash-Shafi'i's
.verse

Examples of harmony in utterance and action are quite rare but Amir al-mu'minin's
:action preceded his utterance, as he himself says

O' people I do not exhort you to any action but that I myself first proceeded towards it
.before you and do not desist you from any matter but that I first desist from it myself

As soon as we think of a recluse and a pious man we visualize a face full of frowns
because for piety severity of temper and hardness of face are inseparable so much so
that the thought of a smile on the lips of a pious man is regarded as a sin. But despite
extreme piety and self denial Amir al-mu'minin always had such appearance that his
light temper and brightness of face was apparent from

.his looks and his lips always bore a playful smile

He never showed frowns on his fore-head like the dry recluse, so much so that when people could not find any defect in him this very lightness of temper was taken to be .his fault, while hard temper and bitter face was held to be a virtue

If a man possesses a cheerful heart and joyous temper he cannot command authority over others; but Arnir al-mu'minin's cheerful face was so full of awe and dignity that no eye could face it. Once Mu'awiyah tauntingly said "May Allah bless 'Ali. He was a .man of cheerful taste:" then Qays ibn Sa'd retorted

By Allah despite cheerful disposition and entertaining countenance he was more" awe-inspiring than a hungry lion and this awe was due to his piety not like your awe ".over the non-descripts of Syria

Where there is rule and authority there is also a crowd of servants and workers, checks of grandeur and eminence with equipment of pageantry but Arnir al-rnu'minin's period of rule was an example of the highest simplicity. In him people saw only a tattered turban in place of a Royal Crown, patched apparel in place of the regal .robes and the floor of earth in place of the ruler's throne

He never liked grandeur and pageantry nor allowed show of external grandiosity. Once he was passing on a horse back when Harb ibn Shurahbil started walking with him and began talking. Then Arnir al-mu'minin said to him, "Get

back because walking on foot with me by one like you is mischievous for the ruler (me)
".(and an insult to the believer (you

In short he was such a versatile personality in whom numerous contradictory qualities had joined together and all the good attributes were centered in their full brightness as though his oneself was a collection of several selves and each self was an astounding portrait of achievement which showed forth the delineation of distinction .in its untainted form, and on whose accomplishment one wonders with bewilderment

About the Addressee, Malik Al-Ashtar

Amir al-mu'minin wrote this instrument for Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar, when he was appointed the Governor of Egypt in ۳۸ AH. 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 molding 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. ۱۵, p. ۹۸; al-A'lam, vol. ۶, p. ۱۳۱

Malik al-Ashtar too, actuated by selfless 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 behavior, 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' 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 (aI-'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 Ami al-mu'minin. On receipt of this order Malik al-Ashtar appointed Shabib ibn 'Amir al-Azid 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 'Amir ibn al-'As that he would give him the governorship of Egypt in reward of his services and he had hoped that 'Amir ibn al-'As would easily defeat Muharnmad 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 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 Ahi 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, and 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 'I-Fida', vol. I, p. 179).

The Letter

Preamble

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This is what Allah's servant 'Ali, Arnir 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

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

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 criticize you as you criticized 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

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, willfully 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

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

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 everyone who is haughty

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 inductive 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 lookout for the oppressors

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 among the common people sweeps away the arguments of the chiefs while the disagreement among 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 the comfort of life, less helpful in distress, more disliking of equitable treatment, more tricky in asking favors, less thankful at the time of giving, 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 defense against the enemies. Your leanings should therefore be towards them and your inclination with them

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

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 although miserliness, cowardice and greed are different qualities, yet they are common in having an incorrect idea about Allah

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

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

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 behavior 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 most appropriate for good impression

.of you is he to whom your behavior has not been good

Do not discontinue the good lives in which the earlier people of this community had been acting, 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 ways because (in that case) the rewards for those who had established those ways .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 the earlier people had remained steadfast

The different classes of people

point

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 bead 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 a settlement which is preserved with us

,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 judgments about contracts, collect revenues .and are depended upon in special and general matters

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 every one of them has (a share in) livelihood in the name of Allah. Every one 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

The Army .1

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 chestiest 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

Also associate with considerate people from high families, virtuous houses and decent traditions, then people of courage, valor, generosity and benevolence, because they are repositories of honor 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 favors will also be of benefit to them while the important ones are such that they cannot ignore them

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 kindnesses 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 dean. 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

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

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 Judgment) –(Qur'an, ٤:٥٩

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

The Chief Judge .۲

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 judgment. Praise should not make
.him vain and elation should not make him lean (to any side). Such people are very few

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

Executive Officers .۳

Thereafter, look into the affairs of your executives. Give them appointment after tests and do not appoint them according to partiality or favoritism, 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 honor. They are the least inclined towards greed and always base their eyes on the ends of matters

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 order 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

The Administration of Revenues .۴

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

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 meting out justice to them

You can depend upon their strength because of the investment made by you in them through catering for 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 hear it happily, for prosperity is capable of bearing what ever 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

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 honors, 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

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 favor 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

Traders and Industrialists .۶

Now take some advice about traders and industrialists. Give them good counsel whether they be settled (shopkeepers) or traders or physical laborers 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

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 (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) 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

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 discontented 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

Take care of the affairs of those of them who do not approach you because they are of unsightly appearance or those 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 fulfill their rights so
.as to render account to Allah

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 likes to speak may speak to you without fear, because I have heard the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) 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

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

Communion with Allah

The particular thing by which you should purify your religion for Allah should be the fulfillment 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 it should be neither (too long as to be) boring nor (too short as to be) wasteful, because among the people there are the sick as well as those who have needs of their own. When the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) 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 considerate to ".the believers

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 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

No writ is big 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

Further, a governor has favorites and people of easy access to .him. They misappropriate things, are highhanded and do not observe justice in matter. 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

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 favorites, and keep in view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you .because its reward is handsome

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

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

If you conclude an agreement between yourself and your enemy or enter into a pledge with him then fulfill 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

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 any 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

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 Judgment Allah the Glorified, would commence giving His judgment 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 willful killing because there must be the question or revenge in it

If you are involved in it be error and you exceed in the use of your whip or sword, or are hard 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

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

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,“
(٤١:٣)

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

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

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

I ask Allah through the extent 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 heightening of honor; 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 salutation on him and his pure and chaste .descendants; and that is an end to the matter

Conclusion

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 for their utmost benefit and try to change every law which is against that aim or is injurious to 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 fulfillment 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 succor 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

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلِيسْتَوِيَالَّذِيَتَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِيَتَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t- encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues- replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers- providing services for seminary and university researchers- spreading culture study in the public-

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:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses–

relationship with similar centers–

avoiding parallel working–

merely presenting scientific contents–

mentioning the sources–

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

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Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism–
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and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF,
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Also producing four markets named “Ghaemiyeh Book Market” with Android, IOS,–
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:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable
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:Address of the central office

Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad
HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor

Website: www.ghbook.ir

Email: Info@ghbook.ir

Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵

۰۲۱ - Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲

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