

Risalatul Huquq

TREATISE OF RIGHTS RISALATUL HUQUUQ

THE RIGHTS OF THE SELF

TO HONOUR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

RIGHTS OF ALLAH AGAINST ONESELF

RIGHTS OF ACTS

RIGHTS OF LEADERS

RIGHTS OF SUBJECTS

RIGHTS OF WOMB RELETIVES

RIGHTS OF OTHERS

*Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen
(pbuh)*



RISALATUL HUQUUQ - TREATISE OF RIGHTS

The West mistakenly ascribes the Magna Carta as the 'first' charter of rights. It was in 1215 CE that English Landlords forced King John to put his signature on it - 600 years after Islam had established rights. Then came the American Constitution with the Bill of Rights which gave no rights to the black people in the U. S. A.

Today the politicians of the World claim to adopt the Charter of Human Rights adopted by the U.N.O. in 1948 but it is a well known fact that when the rights are not to their advantage, the very charter becomes a Charter of Human Injustice. It shows the ineffectiveness of man made laws as compared to those which are set by Allah.

The 'Treatise of Rights' has been narrated in *Al-Khisal*, *Al-Amili*, & *Man La Yahdhuruhu Al-Faqih*, all by Shaykh Al-Suduq (died 381 AH/ 991CE). The first narrator of it is Abu Hamza Thimali, a trustworthy and respected companion of Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh).

Imam Zaynul Abideen's 'Treatise on Rights' is the only work attributed to him other than supplications or relatively short sayings and letters. The 'Treatise on Rights' seems to have been written at the request of a disciple, since, in one of its two versions, it is prefaced by the words: 'This is the treatise of Ali ibn al-Husayn to one of his companions.'

Although the word *haqq* translates best as 'rights', it has a number of other closely related meanings such as justice, truth, obligation, duty, responsibility.

On reading the 'Treatise of rights' one immediately realises that the word 'rights' is much better translated as duties, obligations or responsibilities.

The body organs have 'rights' because they share in the destiny of a person for the body will be resurrected.



THE RIGHTS OF THE SELF

Imam Ali Zaynul Abideen (pbuh)
Risalatul Huquuq
Charter of Rights

Imam lists 50 rights

A. THE RIGHT OF ALLAH

1. THE RIGHT OF ALLAH

It is the right of Almighty Allah that you should worship Him without associating any partner to him. And if you fulfil this duty with sincerity, Allah has undertaken to suffice you in the matter of this world and the hereafter, and to preserve for you whatever you like of it.



B. THE RIGHTS OF THE SELF AND BODY

It is the right of your person upon you that you should use your body fully in obedience to Allah, by giving to your **tongue** it's right, to your **hearing** it's right, to your **sight** it's right, to your **hand** it's right, to your **leg** it's right, to your **stomach** it's right, to your private parts it's right, seeking the help of Allah in this task.

2. THE RIGHTS OF THE TONGUE

It is the right of the tongue that you should consider it too respectable to utter obscene language; and you should accustom it to good (speech), and discipline it with good manners, and keep it silent except in time of necessity and for spiritual and material benefit, and keep it away from useless talk which may cause much harm with little benefit; and you should be kind to people and say good things about them.

3. THE RIGHTS OF THE EARS

It is the right of your hearing to keep it pure from listening to gheeba (backbiting) and listening to that which is unlawful to listen to. You should not turn it into a way to your heart except for noble talk which may create some good in your heart, or which may earn you a noble character, because it is a door which allows a talk to get to the heart, carrying to it different types of ideas, whether good or evil.

4. THE RIGHTS OF THE EYES

It is the right of your eyesight to lower it before that which you are not allowed to see; and not use it except in a place which gives you a lesson by which you may increase your knowledge, because sight is the door of contemplation.



5. THE RIGHTS OF THE HANDS

It is the right of your hand that you should not stretch it to what is forbidden to you; otherwise you will earn punishment from Allah in the life hereafter, and condemnation from people in this life. And you should not hold it from that (actions) which Allah has made wajib on you.

And you should increase the honour of your hand by withholding it from unlawful things and by extending it for good deeds which are not even wajib, because if the actions of your hands are based on wisdom and nobility, surely you will get a good reward in the hereafter.

6. THE RIGHTS OF THE FEET

It is the right of your two feet that you should not use them to go to that which is forbidden to you. You should not make them your mount to pass through a disreputable road; because your feet are your transportation and are to take you on the path of religion and advancement.

Remember you have to stand on the bridge (sirat) over Jahannam, so make sure that your feet do not slip and cause you to fall into the fire.

7. THE RIGHTS OF THE STOMACH

It is the right of your stomach that you should not turn it into a container for that which is haram, whether it be a little or a lot; and that you should not overeat because that will turn eating into gluttony and shamelessness instead of giving you strength; and you should keep it under control when hungry or thirsty because overeating (which sometimes ends even in dysentery) causes laziness, hinders from work and cuts a man away from every goodness and nobility; and over drinking (which ends sometimes in intoxication) makes a man look idiotic, ignorant and disgraced.



8. THE RIGHT OF THE PRIVATE PARTS

It is the right of your private parts to protect them from what is unlawful to you; and to help yourself in this task by casting your eyes down (and, indeed, this is the best helper) and by often remembering death and warning yourself of (the wrath of) Allah and His punishment. And from Allah is the protection and the help.



C. THE RIGHTS OF ACTS

9. THE RIGHTS OF PRAYER

It is the right of the prayer (*salaa*) that you must think of it as an audience with Allah, and that during *salaa* you are standing before Allah and that you are praying with your heart and pray it according to its rules. If you realise this you will stand in such a way that you will be lowly, trembling, fearful, hopeful, and you will magnify His greatness through through your stillness and dignity.

10. THE RIGHTS OF PILGRIMAGE¹

The right of the *hajj* is that you recognise that it is an arrival before Allah and a place where your sins will be removed if your repentance is genuine. Also you perform an act made wajib by Allah.

11. THE RIGHTS OF THE FAST

The right of *fasting* is that you put veil over your tongue, ears, eyes, stomach to protect you from the fire. It has been mentioned in *hadith* (of the Prophet) that “Fast is a shield against the fire.” Therefore, if you keep your organs calm and quiet inside this veil, you may expect them to remain shielded; and if you allow them to remain disturbed behind the veil trying to raise the corners of this cover, so they may perceive what is not lawful to them with a glance which cases a desire and a power which is beyond the limits of fear of God – then you cannot be sure that it will not tear the veil and go out.

¹ The other version has not mentioned the Rights of Pilgrimage.



12. THE RIGHTS OF THE ALMS

The right of Sadaqa is that you know it is a saving with your Lord and a deposit for which there is no need of witnesses... You should know that it repels afflictions and illnesses in the world and repels the fire in the next.

When you come to know (the alms) as such, you will have more confidence in that saving which is deposited secretly rather than that which is given openly,² and it behoves you to keep secret with Allah whatever you may otherwise desire to disclose; and the secret should always remain between you and Him; and you should not try to make witnesses see or hear about this trust (i.e. charity). Otherwise, it will be an indication that you have more confidence in the witness than in your Lord, concerning the return of this trust to you.

Moreover, you should not make anyone feel obliged to you (because you have given him alms) as this alms is for your benefit. So if you make him feel obliged, then you how can you be sure that you yourself will not be in his position in the future. Your behaviour will show that you have not deposited that alms for your own benefit, for if you had that intention, you would not have demanded obligation from others.

13. THE RIGHTS OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL

It is the rights of the sacrificial animal that it should be sacrificed with pure intention for your Lord, seeking only His mercy and acceptance, and not for the eyes of the onlookers. When you do according to this standard, you will not be as a showy and exhibiting person, but will only be seeking the pleasure of Allah. You should know that Allah is sought through what is convenient [to you], not through what is difficult; as He has intended making His commands easy for His creatures, and does not intend to put them in hardship. Also, humbleness is better than

² Saduq's version says after it: "and you should know that it averts from you calamities and sicknesses in this world, and wards off the fire from you in the hereafter."



ostentatiousness for you; because pomposity and extravagance is the share of self-important person. And as for humbleness and modesty, there is no pretention and waste in them because they are natural, and are present in the [uncorrupted] human character. And there is no power but with Allah.³

³ Saduq's version: And it is the right of the sacrificial animal that you should do it for Allah, the Mighty, the Great, and not for (showing) the people; you intention should be only to get the mercy of your Lord, and deliverance of your soul on the day you meet Him.



D. THE RIGHTS OF THE SUPERIORS

14. THE RIGHTS OF THE RULER

It is the right of your ruler that you should know that you are a test for him and he is on trial because of the power which he has upon you; you should be sincere to him and should not revolt against him because his hands are strongly upon you and (by revolting) you would cause of your own destruction as well as his destruction (because by suppressing or killing you he would be condemned by Allah).

And beseech with humbleness and courtesy his pleasure as far as is useful in averting harm from you and does not interfere with your religion; and ask the help of Allah in this task.

And do not indulge in opposition to or hatred of him, because if you do so, you will be ungrateful to him (because if, as a result of this hatred, he did injustice to you, he would be disgraced before Allah) and ungrateful to yourself (because you made yourself a target for his tyranny) and thus you would be counted as his helper against yourself and his partner in whatever he would do against you.

15. THE RIGHTS OF THE TEACHER

It is the right of your teacher to respect him/her, listen to him/her and attend with devotion. You should not raise your voice towards him/her.. You should not speak whilst she/he is speaking nor speak ill of him/her... If anyone speaks ill of him/her you should defend him/her... You should not show any enmity or show hostility in friendship. If this is done then Allah's angels will give witness that the knowledge learnt from him/her was for Allah and not for the sake of the people...



You should respect the dignity of his audience, and to listen to him intently facing towards him,⁴ presence of mind and purity of heart and clarity of vision, by abstaining from enjoyments and by having few desires.

And you should know that you are his messenger in whatever he teaches you to those people in ignorance who may come to you. So, it is necessary for you to deliver his message (to impart the knowledge) to them beautifully, and not to commit a breach of trust while conveying his message, and to fulfil your duty on his behalf when you have undertaken it.

16. THE RIGHTS OF YOUR MASTER

The right of your master is like that of your ruler, except that the ruler has more power upon you than the master has. You should obey him in all big and small matters except when this obedience tends to go against obedience to Allah and hinders you from fulfilling your duties toward Allah and his creatures. (In that case you should not obey him but should perform the latter duties.) But after fulfilling those duties you should perform your duties towards your master and be busy with it. And there is no power but by Allah.⁵

⁴ Saduq's version adds the following after it: "You should not raise your voice over him; nor should you reply anyone who asks him about anything – so that it is he who replies him. Do not talk with anyone in his gathering, nor backbite anybody in his presence. You must defend him if someone speaks evil about him. You should hide his shortcomings and announce his virtues. Do not sit with an enemy of his nor show enmity to a friend of his. When you comply with this, the angels of Allah will bear witness that you had gone to him and learned his knowledge purely for the sake of Allah, not for the people."

⁵ Saduq's version: It is the right of your master that you should obey him, and should not disobey him – except in that (order) which might displease Allah, the Mighty, the Great, because there is no obedience for any creature in disobedience of the Creator.



E. THE RIGHTS OF THE DEPENDENTS

17. THE RIGHTS OF THE RULED

It is the right of those you rule that you should remember that you have subjugated them as a result of your power, and they are your subjects because of their weakness and humility. So, how deserving of mercy, protection and forbearance is the person whose weakness and servility did work for you in making him your subject and enforcing your command upon him, so much so that he is now helpless and powerless against you and cannot find any helper (if you put him in trouble) except God. And how deserving are you to thank Allah when you appreciate His grace in bestowing this power and strength upon you. And one who is thankful to Allah, Allah increases His bounties for him. And there is no power but with Allah.

18. THE RIGHTS OF THE PUPIL

It is the right of your dependants in knowledge that you should know that Allah has made you their master by bestowing upon you knowledge and entrusting you with the reassurance of wisdom. Therefore, if you are generous in this commission given you by Him, and if you act as a benevolent trustee who wishes his master well in looking after his servant, (and who is) patient and observant enough to bring out the wealth (of knowledge) of his hand whenever he sees a needy person, you will be a virtuous man and you will have hope and true faith. Otherwise you will be guilty of embezzlement (of the knowledge given to you by God), and of tyranny against his creatures, and will be liable to be deprived of this knowledge and honour by God.



19. THE RIGHTS OF THE WIFE

It is the right of your wife that you should know that Allah has made her for you a tranquillity and comfort (in worry), and a friend and shield (against sins).

And likewise, it is incumbent upon both of you to thank Allah for your partner and to know that (the spouse) is a grace of Allah upon you. And it is obligatory to have good fellowship with this grace of Allah (i.e. wife), and to respect her and be kind to her, although your rights upon her are greater and her obedience to you final in all your likes and dislikes so long as it is not a sin. So she has the right of love and fellowship, and a place of repose (i.e. house) so that natural desires may be fulfilled, and this in itself is a great duty.

20. THE RIGHTS OF THE SLAVE

It is the right of your dependent by service to realise that he is the creature of your Lord, and that he is your own flesh and blood.

Although you are his master, but neither you have created him nor made his ears or eyes nor have you given him his sustenance. It is Allah who did all this for him and then made him your dependent and gave him as a trust to you,⁶ so that you may keep a watch on the trust of God on His behalf and deal with him as God deals with His creatures (i.e. with love and care). So you should feed him what you eat; and clothe him with what you wear, and not demand from him what he cannot do. And if you do not like him, then relieve yourself of the responsibility (put upon you by God) by changing him, but do not inflict punishment upon the creation of Allah. And there is no power but with Allah.

⁶ Saduq's version goes from here as follows: "so that He may have in safe-keeping whatever good you do to him. Therefore, do good to him as Allah has done good to you. If you do dislike him, then change him, but do not inflict punishment on Allah's creation. And there is no power but with Allah."



F. THE RIGHTS OF RELATIVES

21. THE RIGHTS OF THE MOTHER

Coming to the rights of relatives, it is the right of your mother that you should appreciate that she carried you (in her womb) as nobody carries anybody, and fed you the fruits of her heart which nobody feeds anybody, and protected you (during pregnancy) with her ears, eyes, hands, legs, hair, limbs, (in short) with her whole being, gladly, cheerfully and carefully; suffering patiently all the worries, pains, difficulties and sorrows (of pregnancy), till the hand of God removed you from her and brought you into this world. Then she was most happy feeding you forgetting her own hunger; clothing you, even if she herself had no clothes; giving you milk and water, not caring for her own thirst; keeping you in the shade, even if she had to suffer from the heat of the sun; giving you every comfort with her own hardships; lulling you to sleep while keeping herself awake.

And (remember that) her womb was your abode, and her lap your refuge, and her breast your feeder, and her whole existence your protection; it was she, not you, who was braving the heat and cold of this world for your safety.

Therefore, you must remain thankful to her accordingly, and you cannot do so except by the help and assistance from Allah.

22. THE RIGHTS OF THE FATHER

It is the right of your father to realise that he is your root and you are his branch; and that without him you would have been non-existent. Therefore, whenever you find in yourself anything likeable, remember that your father is the basic means of that gift (of Allah) to you. And be thankful to Allah and grateful to your father accordingly.



23. THE RIGHTS OF A CHILD

It is the right of your child to know that he is from you and, with all his virtue and vice, is connected to you in this world, and that you are responsible for instructing him in good manners, guiding him towards his Lord, helping him to follow His commands which concern you or him; and you will be rewarded or punished (according to your success or failure in this guidance).

Therefore, you should endeavour in his training like the person who is going to be adorned by his good influence (upon his child) in this world, (and who wants to be) vindicated in the presence of his Lord concerning his responsibility about the child by his good guardianship and by taking Allah's dues from that child.

24. THE RIGHTS OF A BROTHER

It is the right of your brother to appreciate that he is your hand which you extend, and your back (i.e. support) which you recline upon, and your strength which you rely on, and your power by which you attack (your enemies). Therefore, make him not a tool to commit sin against Allah nor a means to violate His rights; and do not shirk from assisting him against his own self (i.e. from warning him to desist from evils) and helping him against his enemy and shielding him from his Satans, and giving him sincere advice, and going forward to him for the sake of Allah. Then if he obeys his Lord and properly answers His call (it is good for all); otherwise Allah, rather than your brother, should be your choice and the object of your reverence. (That is, if your brother goes against the *shari'ah* and does not listen to your exhortations and warnings, you should have no connections with him.)



25. THE RIGHTS OF THE EMANCIPATOR

It is the right of your ex-master who emancipated you to realise that he spent his wealth for you and then brought you out from the disrespect and desolation of slavery to the respect and happiness of freedom; and emancipated you from the bondage of servitude, and removed from you the fetters of slavery, and made the perfume of honour available to you and took you out of the prison of tyranny and kept the hardships away from you, and opened his tongue of justice for your benefit, and opened the whole world for you; and he made you your own master, and unlocked your fetters, and gave you the chance to worship and obey your Lord exclusively (without any need to spend some of your time in the service of your master; and by emancipating you he suffered a loss in his money.

Therefore, you should know that, after your relatives, he, more than anybody else, has rights upon you, in both your life and death; and he is the person most deserving of your help, assistance and aid for the sake of Allah. Therefore, if he needs something for you then give him preference over your own self.

26. THE RIGHTS OF THE EMANCIPATED

It is the right of your ex-slave whom you emancipated to realise that Allah has made you his protection, shield, help, and refuge; and made him a mediator between yourself and Himself.

Therefore, it is proper that He should protect you from the fire (i.e. by emancipating him, you secured a guarantee against the fire of the Hell).

So, this emancipation will bring a reward from Allah in the life hereafter; and in this world, Allah has given you his inheritance if he has no relatives at all. This relationship is in recognition of the wealth which you spent on him and in appreciation of your giving him his rights (of freedom) even by suffering material loss.

On the other hand, if you are not caring for him, it is feared that his inheritance will not prove agreeable to you. And there is no power but with Allah.



G. THE RIGHTS BASED ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

27. THE RIGHTS OF YOUR BENEFACTOR

It is the rights of your benefactor that you should thank him and remember his benefaction and spread good words for him and sincerely pray for him between you and Allah. Because if you do so you will have thanked him both secretly and openly. After that, if it is possible to repay him by your deeds do so, otherwise keep watching for such an opportunity setting your heart on it.

28. THE RIGHTS OF THE MU'ADDHIN

It is the right of the *mu'addhin* (the man who calls *adhan* to inform people of the time of prayer) to remember that he reminds you of your Lord and calls you to get your share in the grace of Allah and that he is your best helper in the performance of the duty laid down upon you by Allah. So, you should thank him for it as you thank one who has been kind to you; and even if, in your home, you are suspicious of him, do not degrade him in his work (which he is doing) for Allah;⁷ and know that he, without any doubt, is a grace of Allah for you. Therefore, you should deal with him kindly and with good manners, thanking Allah for his grace in all situations.

29. THE RIGHTS OF THE IMAM

It is the right of the leader of your (congregational) *salat* that you should know that he has taken the responsibility of being your ambassador before Allah and your delegate to your Lord; he spoke on your behalf but you did not speak on his behalf; he prayed for you but you did not pray for him; and he asked (from Allah) for you did not ask for him; he relieved you of the anxiety of standing before Allah and asking from Him for yourself but you did not relieve him of it. Then if there was any defect in any of the above

⁷ Saduq's version goes on saying: "And you should realise that he is undoubtedly a favour of Allah for you, so you should keep good company with Allah's favour by thanking, Allah for it in all conditions; and there is no power but with Allah."



actions, he and not you, would be held answerable for it; if he committed a mistake you are not going to share it with him (though you are not better than him). Thus, he protected your soul by his self and saved your prayer by his prayer; so you must be thankful to him for it.

30. THE RIGHTS OF A COMPANION

It is the right of your companion to be gentle and agreeable to him and to do him justice in conversation and, while looking at him, not to take away your eyes from him suddenly; and while talking, your aim should be to make him understand.

And if you have gone to sit with him you are at liberty to take your leave; but if he has come to sit with you, then he has the option and (in this case) you should not stand from that meeting without his permission.

31. THE RIGHTS OF THE NEIGHBOUR

It is the right of your neighbour to safeguard (his interest) in his absence, and respect him in his presence, and to help and assist him in both condition. Do not look for his concealed defects and do not dig into his affairs to find out his disgrace. And if you come to know it inadvertently without looking for it, become an impregnable castle to (hide) what you have learned and a thick cover for it, so much so that if spears penetrated into your heart to detect it, they could not touch it. Do not eavesdrop on him when he is not on guard. Do not leave him in hardship and do not envy him in his comfort. Forgive his faults and forgo his slips. And if he behaves with you disgracefully you should not forget your forbearance, but deal with him peacefully. Be his shield against the tongue of abuse and protect him from treachery of those who pose as sincere to him (but are not). And live with him a graceful life.



32. THE RIGHTS OF A FRIEND

It is the right of (your) friend to deal with him with grace as much as possible, and, if it is not possible, then at least with justice; and that you should respect him as he respects you, and protect him as he protects you; and strive hard that he does not go ahead of you in any good deed between you and him; and if he surpasses you, you should repay it (with grace); and do not fall short in the love which he deserves. Make it a point to remain sincere to him, to protect him, to assist him in obedience to his Lord and to help him in his personal affairs which is not against his Lord. And, lastly, you should be a mercy for him and not a torment.



H. THE RIGHTS BASED ON FINANCIAL, JUDICIAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

33. THE RIGHTS OF THE PARTNER

It is the right of your partner that you should take his burden upon yourself if he is absent, and work equally with him when he is present. And do not decide anything without his consent and do not enforce your view without consulting his; and save his wealth for him; and refrain from embezzling him, be it a large or a small (amount), because this (*hadith*) has reached us (from our ancestors): “Verily, the hand of Allah (i.e. His blessing) remains upon partners as long as they do not swindle each other.” And there is no power but with Allah.

34. THE RIGHTS OF WEALTH

It is the right of wealth that you do not obtain it except by lawful means, and do not spend it but in lawful ways. Do not misplace it (i.e. do not use it in unlawful expenditures); and do not remove it away from truth (do not cheat and do not spend unlawfully). And, when the wealth is from Allah (as all wealth is), then do not use it but to reach Allah and to make it a way to Allah.

Do not let it influence you by saving it for a person who, probably, will not even thank you for it. Rather he may not be a good successor to your inheritance and may not be a good successor to your inheritance and may not spend it in obedience to your Lord. Thus, you will be his helper in those (sins and transgressions). And if, in spending the wealth which previously was yours, he looked after his own interest by obeying his Lord, then he will take all the (spiritual) benefits and you will carry the weight of sin, grief, and shame as well as its consequence (in the hereafter) because you hoarded it in contravention to the rules of the *shariah*.



35. THE RIGHTS OF YOUR CREDITOR

It is the right of your creditor who demands back the loan that, if you have sufficient money, you must fully repay him and give him his dues and make him independent of yourself; and do not make him run around and do not tarry (in repayment), because the Messenger of Allah has said: "Tarrying of the rich is injustice." And if you are facing hard times then you should please him by amiable talk and kindly request him to allow an extension of time so that he returns from you content; and do not make him suffer bad dealings in addition to the loss of money because that is meanness.

36. THE RIGHTS OF AN ASSOCIATE

You owe it to your associate not to cheat or deceive him; nor should you lie to him, make him neglectful, or defraud him. And do not behave, with the intention of breaking him down, like the enemy who gives no quarter. And, if he trusts you, try your utmost to justify his trust and know that breach of trust is usury.

37. THE RIGHTS OF THE CLAIMANT

It is the right of the claimant that if his claim against you is correct, then do not try to break his argument and do not labour to refute his claim. Instead, you should be your own adversary in his favour, and be the judge against yourself, and be his witness for his claim without any need of other witnesses, because it is the duty imposed upon you by Allah.

And if his claim is wrong, deal with him gently and put the fear [of Allah] in his heart and adjure him by his religion and dull his wrath against you by reminding him of Allah; and avoid superfluous and immaterial talk, because such talk cannot remove the enmity of your adversary, you will have committed a sin (of using unsavoury language); because of such talk, your adversary will sharpen the



sword of his enmity against you, as evil words create evil, and good (words) cut off evil.⁸

38. THE RIGHTS OF THE DEFENDANT

It is the right of the person against whom you have lodged a claim that if your claim is right, talk with him benevolently in describing that claim, because the sound of a claim itself is harsh enough (so do not add to it the rudeness of your language too); and explain your arguments gently; give him time, make your talk clear, and deal with him kindly.⁹

And do not side-step from your proofs by quarrelling with unnecessary talk, as you may lose the track of your argument without gaining any advantage.

39. THE RIGHTS OF THE ONE WHO SEEKS YOUR COUNSEL

It is the right of the person seeking advice from you that, if you have an advice for him, be sincere to him and give him such advice which, had you been in his place, you would have followed yourself; and that (advice) should be rendered gracefully and gently, because gentleness turns strangers into friends, and rudeness estranges friends.

And if you can think of no advice for him but know someone whose judgement you trust, and whom you will gladly consult if it comes to your affairs, you should lead and guide the advice-seeker to him. Thus you will not be keeping your kindness away from him, or hiding your sympathy from him.

⁸ This paragraph appears as follows in another version: "If his claim is wrong, deal with him gently, and do not resort to anything other than gentleness; and do not displease your Lord in his affairs.

⁹ Saduq's version: If you are right in your claim, you should talk with him benevolently, and should not deny his right. But if you are wrong in your claim, you must fear Allah, the Mighty, the Great, and must repent to Him and withdraw your claim.



40. THE RIGHTS OF THE ADVISOR

It is the right of your advisor that, if his advice is not in line with your own views, you should not suspect his sincerity, because it is a matter of opinion and people differ in it one from the other. Therefore, if you disagree with him, you are at liberty to follow your opinion; but it is not proper for you to put him under suspicion when previously you thought him worthy of conclusion. And do not forget to thank him for his kindness in giving you his opinion and his best advice.

And if his advice conforms with your own opinion be thankful to Allah and accept it from your brother with gratitude.

And if he should sometimes need your advice, advise him sincerely as he has done to you.

41. THE RIGHTS OF THE ONE BEING PREACHED TO

It is the right of the person who asks your guidance that you should preach to him according to his need and ability in a way that is agreeable to the hearing (i.e. in sweet language). And talk with him according to his intellectual power, because every intellect recognises and accepts a speech which is on its own level, and your style should be merciful.

42. THE RIGHTS OF THE PREACHER

It is the right of the person who guides you that you remain humble to him, and put your heart into his talk and open your ears to his call, so that you may understand his talk.

Then examine it carefully. If he is right, be thankful to Allah, accept the preacher's advice, and respect him for it. And if you could not discern the truth, have mercy on him and do not blame him. You should appreciate that he did not withhold his advice from you though his ideas were mistaken. Of course, if you know that he is not sincere to you, then the matter is different. But in that case, you should not listen to him at all.



43. THE RIGHTS OF AN ELDER

It is the right of an elder that you must respect him because of his age, and honour him because of his Islam if he has any virtue from Islamic standard. (You do so) by always keeping him forward and not arguing with him in talk, and no overtaking him while walking, and not stepping ahead of him in the pathway; and do not be rude to him and bear with him if he is rude to you; and maintain his respect because his age is advanced in Islam (because the worth of his age is according to the worth of Islam).

44. THE RIGHT OF THE YOUNGER

It is the right of a younger person to love him by bringing him up and educating him properly; and to forgive him and cover his faults. Be kind to him and help him and cover up the mistake committed because of his young age, as this (love and sympathy) is a means of his repentance; and forbear with him and do not quarrel with him; because it is nearer to his guidance.



I. THE RIGHTS OF OTHER PEOPLE

45. THE RIGHTS OF THE MAN WHO ASKS

It is the right of the man who asks for help that, if you believe in his truth and have means to meet his needs, you should help him and pray that his hardships be over; and assist him as he has requested.

And if you doubt his truth and do not trust him because of previous dealings, but you are not sure that he is lying this time, then, be careful; perhaps this doubt of yours is a trap of Satan who wants to keep you away from your share (of reward) and likes to come between you and your honour before God. Still, if you decide not to help him, leave him alone (without putting him to shame) and turn him away gracefully.

And if you over-rule the doubts of your heart concerning him and give him whatever you think is fit for him, then surely it is true constancy.

46. THE RIGHTS OF THE PERSON WHO WAS ASKED

It is the right of the person whom you asked for help that, if he gives, then you accept his gift with thanks appreciating his benevolence. And, if he did not give, then accept his excuses of not giving and have good faith in him.

And remember that if he withheld it, it was his property which he withheld and he cannot be blamed about his wealth. And if he withheld then wealth from you unjustly, then you know that, *“verily man is very unjust, very ungrateful.”*¹⁰

47. THE RIGHTS OF THE MAN WHO MADE YOU HAPPY

It is the right of the person through whom Allah made you happy that, if he did so knowingly, you should first of all thank Allah, then thank him for his favour; and try, when you get the chance, to recompense him for that favour, nay to do even more, as he had

¹⁰ The Qur'an 14.34



the grace of initiative. And look out for any chance to make him happy.

And if that person made you happy unintentionally and unknowingly, you should thank Allah and be grateful to Him and know that this favour is from Allah who had reserved it for you. Still you should love that person because he was the means of bringing the grace of Allah to you, and pray for his happiness ever after, because a source of the blessing of Allah is a grace in itself wherever it may be, even if it was done unintentionally.

48. THE RIGHTS OF THE PERSON WHO DID INJUSTICE

As for the person who was unjust to you in words or deeds, if he did so knowingly and intentionally (then forgiveness is more suitable to you, because it will weed out the enmity between you two. And further, there are many people like him in this world, and it is better to deal with them with good grace. And Allah says):¹¹

“And whosoever defends himself after his being oppressed, then there is no way to blame him. The way (to blame) is only against those who oppress men and transgress in the earth unjustly; these shall have a painful chastisement. And indeed whosoever remains patient and forgives then that most surely is (an act of) great resolution.”¹²

And again He, the Mighty, the Great, says:

“And if you punish, then punish as you were afflicted; and if you be patient, certainly it is best for the patient ones.”¹³ All this concerns a person who did that injustice to you intentionally. But if it was not intentional, then you should not afflict him by taking your revenge purposely; otherwise, it will mean that you avenged an unintentional mistake with an intentional punishment. Be patient

¹¹ The clauses between the brackets appear as follows in Saduq’s version: “then you should forgive him. But if you know that forgiveness will be harmful then you may avenge yourself. Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, says:...”

¹² The Qur’an 42:41-43

¹³ The Qur’an 16:126



with him and turn him away (from his mistake) in the most graceful manner.

49. THE RIGHTS OF FELLOW MUSLIMS

It is the right of your fellow Muslims in general to have peaceful feelings towards them and to spread the wings of mercy for them, to be gentle towards the wrong-doers among them and to reform them by earning their love; to be grateful to those who are virtuous in their character or are generous towards you – because their virtuosity of character, without any apparent benefit to you, is in itself a generosity towards you, as they have thus saved you from harm and spared you the effort of protecting yourself from them, and kept their troubles away from you. Therefore, pray for all of them.

And keep your help ready for all of them and treat all Muslims according to their proper position: keep the elder in the position of your father, the younger in the place of your child, and the contemporaries in the position of your brother.¹⁴

Thus, treat any of them who comes to you with grace and mercy; and convey to your brother whatever is incumbent on a brother for his brother.

50. THE RIGHTS OF THE NON-MUSLIMS (AHLU 'DH-DHIMMAH)

It is the right of non-Muslims living in a Muslim country (*Ahlu 'dh-dhimmah*) that you should accept what Allah has accepted from them and fulfil the responsibilities which Allah has accorded them; and refer to (the *shari'ah of*) Allah about the responsibility for them; and if there is any matter between them and you, then decide according to the commandment of Allah even if it is against your interest. And there must be a barrier keeping you from doing any injustice to them, from depriving them of the protection of

¹⁴ Saduq's version: You should have mercy on them, and avert harms from them. You should like for them what you like for yourself, and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their elders should be like your father, their youths like your brother, their ladies like your mother, and their young ones like your children.



Allah, and from flaunting the commitments of Allah and His Messenger concerning them. Because we have been told that the Holy Prophet said, “Whosoever does injustice to a protected non-Muslim, I will be his enemy (on day of judgement).” Therefore, have fear of Allah (and treat them justly).



CONCLUSION

So, these are the fifty rights surrounding you from which you can never escape in any condition; it is obligatory for you to abide by them and endeavour to discharge them and seek the help of Allah – exalted is His praise! – In all of this. And there is no power and strength but with Allah.

And all praise is for Allah, the Nourisher of the Universe.



NOTES



NOTES



