

Imam Ali Zain-ul-Abidin (AS)

The Charter of Rights (Risalat al-Huquq)



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Chapter 1

The Charter of Rights (Risalat al-Huquq)

Among the most important works in the world of Islam is the 'Treatise on Rights' by the greatest Ima`m, Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him. In it the Imam has mentioned all the methods necessary for man's conduct, developing his life, and building his civilization on foundations which lead to tranquillity and protection from anxiety, disorder, and the like.

The wise Imam carefully and inclusively considered man, studied all the dimensions of his life, his relationships with his Creator, his soul, his family, his society, his government, his teacher, and so on. He wrote for man these rights and duties and made it incumbent on him to conform to them. Hence man is able to establish an Islamic society which believes in social justice

and has strong ties such as mutual confidence, love, and other means necessary for social development and progress.

I (the author) think that the great Ima`m legislated man's rights, his social links, his moral origins, and his educational foundations in a manner which is different from that of politicians and social scientists.

Any how, the Ima`m, peace be on him, wrote this brilliant treatise and presented it to some of his companions. Then it was narrated by the great religious scholar, the trustworthy Muslim, Tha`bit b. Abi Saffiya, better known as Abu Hamza al-Thuma`li, the student of the Ima`m, peace be on him. Then it was reported on his authority by the very truthful traditionalist, Hujjat al-Isla`m, Mohammed b. Ya'qu`b al-Kulayni, and al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Shu'ba al-Harra`ni in (his book) 'Tuhaf al-'Uqu`l'. I (the author) have narrated it on his (al-Hasan's) authority as follows:

Chapter 2

A Brief Introduction to Rights

Before the Ima`m, peace be on him, explained the rights, he wrote a brief introduction to them, saying:

"Know (may Allah have mercy upon You) that Allah has rights against you and that these encompass you in every movement through which you move, every rest through which you rest, every way station in which you reside, every limb which you employ, and every instrument which you put to work. Some of these rights are greater and some less.

"The greatest of Allah's rights against you is the right which He has made incumbent upon you for Himself and which is the root of all rights, then those which He has made incumbent upon you in yourself, from your crown to your feet, in keeping with the diversity of your organs. He has given your tongue a right against you, your hearing a right against you, your sight a right against you, your hand a right against you, your leg a right against you, your stomach a right against you, and your private part a right against you. These are the seven organs through which acts (af'a`l) take place.

"Then He gave your acts rights against you: He gave your ritual prayer a right against you, fasting a right against you, your charity a right against you, your offering a right against you, and your acts a right against you.

"Then these rights extend out from you to others who have rights against you. The most incumbent of them against you are the rights toward your Ima`ms, then the rights toward your subjects (ra'iyya), then the rights toward your womb [relatives] (rahim).

"From these rights branch out other rights. The rights of your Ima`ms are three: The most incumbent upon you is the right of him who trains you through authority, then of him who trains you through knowledge, then of him who trains through property.

"The rights of your subjects are three: The most incumbent upon you is the right of those who are your subjects through authority, then the right of those who are your subjects through knowledge (for the man of

ignorance is the subject of man of knowledge(then the right of those who are subjects through property, such as wives and what is owned by your right hand.

"The rights of your womb relatives are many; they are connected to you in the measure of the connection of the womb relations. The most incumbent upon you is the right of your mother, then the right of your father, then the right of your child, then the right of your brother, then the next nearest, then the next nearest(the most worth, then the next most worthy.

"Then there is the right of your master who favors you (by freeing you from slavery), then the right of the slave whose favors reach you (by the fact that your free him), then the right of him who does a kindly act toward you, then the right of the mu'azzin who calls you to the ritual prayer, then the right of the Ima`m who leads the prayer, then the right of your sitting companion,

then the right of your neighbor, then the right of your companion, then the right of your partner, then the right of your property, then the right of him who has a debt he must pay back to you, then the right of him to whom you owe a debt, then the right of your associate, then the right of your adversary who has a claim against you, then the right of your adversary against whom you have a claim, then the right of him who asks you for advice, then the right of him who asks your counsel, then the right of him who counsels you,

then the right of him who is older than you, then the right of him who is younger than you, then the right of him who asks from you, then the right of him from whom you ask, then the right of him who does something evil to you through word or deed, or him who makes you happy through word or deed, intentionally or unintentionally, then the right of the people of your creed, then the right of the people under your protection, than all the rights in the measure of the causes of the states and the occurrence of events.

"Therefore happy is he whom Allah aids in the rights which He has made incumbent upon him and whom He gives success therein and points in the proper direction!"

These brilliant paragraphs of the Ima`m's words contain a brief display of the original rights which he, peace be on him, legislated for the Muslims.

Part 1
The Rights in Detail

Let us listen to Ima`m Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, to tell us in detail about these wonderful rights:

Chapter 3

1. Rights of Allah

"The greatest right of Allah against you is that you worship Him without associating anything with Him. When you do that with sincerity (ikhla`s), He has made it bidding upon Himself to give you sufficiency in the affair of this world and the next, and to preserve for you what you love of them."

The greatest right of Allah against His servants is that they should worship Him sincerely and should not associate anyone in worshipping Him, for this will purify their hearts from deviation and free their intellects from enslavement and dependence on other than Him. As for worshipping other than Allah, such as idols, is abasement and enslavement, destroys man's dignity and honor, and throws him into low places, while Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed those who worship Him sincerely through making it bidding upon Himself to give them sufficiency in the affair of this world and the next.

Chapter 4

2. Rights of Self

"The right of your (nafs) against you is that you employ it in obeying Allah; then you deliver to your tongue its right, to your hearing its right, to your sight its right, to your hand its right, to your leg its right, to your stomach its right, to your private part its right, and you seek help from Allah in all that."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, has mentioned the rights of self against man. The self has right against man. The most important of them is that he should employ it in obeying Allah and works which please Him, and should not make it walk on the path of Satan. With this man can rescue his soul from dangers and destruction, and save it from great evil. The Ima`m has mentioned that each limb has a right against man, so let's listen to his detailed speech about these rights.

3. Rights of Tongue

"The right of the tongue is that you consider it too noble for obscenity, accustom it to good, force it to politeness, silence it except for the situation of an argument and interest of the religion and the world, refrain from any meddling in which there is nothing to be gained, express kindness to the people, and speak well concerning them. There is no strength save in Allah, the Most High, the Almighty"

The tongue is the most important limb in man's body and is the most dangerous of them in his life. Man should confess men's rights and possessions, hence the jurists said: "Man's confessing against himself is permissible." Man is honored or abused through his words. People respect him when he does good and look down upon him when he does evil, hence the Ima`m, peace be on him, summoned him to:

A. Consider his tongue too noble for obscenity, lest he should be low and insulted.

C. Accustom it to good words and what profits people and does not harm them.

D. Force it to speak politely and say good words which are raised to Allah.

E. Silence it except for accomplishing a need of the religious and worldly affairs.

G. Prevent it from any meddling in which there is nothing to be gained.

These are some affairs to which the Muslim person should accustom his tongue. It is certain that they raise his importance and strengthen his position.

Chapter 6

4. Rights of Hearing

"The right of hearing is to keep it pure from listening to backbiting (ghiba) and listening to that to which it is unlawful to listen. There is no strength save in Allah."

The ear plays an important role in forming man's character and conduct, for it carries various words to his mind, hence he should use it as means to carry noble moral traits and good qualities.

5. Rights of Sight

"The right of sight is that you lower it before everything which is unlawful to you and that you take heed whenever you look at anything." The eye has rights against man. Among them is that he should prevent it from looking at what Allah has prohibited as well as he should use it in useful things such as knowledge, that he may with it educate himself and profit his society.

6. Rights of the two Legs

"The right of your two legs is that you walk not with them toward that which is unlawful to you. You have no escape from standing upon the narrow bridge (al-sira`t [over hell]), so you should see to it that your legs do not slip and cause you to fall into the Fire. There is no strength save in Allah." Allah has created for man the two legs to walk with them toward the places of provision, hence their right against him is that he should walk with them toward the path of good and righteousness; he has no right to walk with them toward the unlawful things such as betraying man and stealing his possessions.

Chapter 9

7. Rights of Hand

"The right of your hand is that you stretch it not toward that which is unlawful to you." The Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned the right of hand against man; its right is that he should not stretch it toward what Allah has made unlawful such as stealing men's possessions, aggression against them, and helping a wrong-doer, hence he is worthy of punishment in the next world and men's blame in this world.

Chapter 10

8. Rights of Stomach

"The right of your stomach is that you make it into a container for that which is unlawful to you and you eat no more than your fill." The Imā`m, peace be on him, expressed the rights of stomach against man, of which are the following:

- A. He should not eat unlawful food, for it results in bad qualities such as the cruelty of the heart and negligence which deviates him from the straight path.
- B. He should be moderate in having lawful foods and drinks.
- C. He should not eat more than his fill, lest he should be afflicted by indigestion which causes laziness, turning away from kindness and generosity and noble moral traits. Besides it stops all the mental abilities and leads to bodily diseases such as diabetes, blood pressure, and plumpness.

9. Rights of Private Part

"The right of your private part is that you protect it from that which is unlawful to you and seek help against it through lowering your sight, for it is the most useful helper, remembering death very much, threatening yourself with Allah, and frighten it with Him. Protection and support (come) through Allah, there is neither force nor strength save in Him."

The sexual life in Islam depends on chastity, virtue, and refraining from committing fornication. As for the protective ways which prevent man from committing this crime, they are as the Ima`m mentioned:

- A. Prevent your eye from looking at the unlawful, for sight plays an important role in falling into the unlawful; in some traditions it has been mentioned: "The fornication of the eye."
- B. Increase remembering death, for it puts an end to the agitation of sexual desire.
- C. Threaten your soul with Allah, the Almighty, and frighten it with His punishment, for this plays an important role in destroying the crime of fornication.

Chapter 12

Rights of Ritual Prayer

"The right of your ritual prayer (sala`t) is that you know that it is an arrival before Allah and that through it you are standing before Him. When you know that, then you will stand in the station of him who is lowly, vile, beseeching, trembling, hopeful, fearful, and abased, and you will magnify Him who is before you through stillness and dignity. You will approach the prayer with your heart and you will perform it according to its bounds and rights. There is no strength save in Allah."

As for the prayer, it is the greatest of all the religious rites, and the most important of them in Islam. It is the sacrifice of those who have reverential fear, as it has been mentioned in the tradition, and is an arrival before Allah.

Its right against the Muslim is that he knows that he is standing before the Almighty King, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and Giver of life. He should turn all his feelings and sentiments toward Allah.

He should stand before Him in the station of him who is lowly, vile, beseeching that which is with Allah, fearful of His punishment, hopeful for His forgiveness and good pleasure. He should perform the prayers with stillness, dignity, humble limbs, and good whispered prayers. He should not occupy his mind with any of the world's affairs. He should ask Allah to forgive him his sins and offenses, and to release his neck from the Fire.

11. Rights of Fasting

"The right of fasting is that you know it is a veil which Allah has set up over your tongue, your hearing, your sight, your stomach, and your private part to protect you from the Fire. If you abandon the fast, you will have torn Allah's protective covering away from yourself. There is no strength save in Allah."

As for fasting, it is among the most important beliefs in Islam. It has been mentioned in the tradition that it is protection from the Fire. Many psychological, moral, economic, social, and health profits result from it. Among them is that it strengthens the activity of will through which man achieves his important objectives in life. The Muslim researchers have mentioned the profits which result from fasting and written books about them.

Any how, in his words, the Ima`m has mentioned what the fasting should do during their fast. He has mentioned that they should not confine their fasting to refraining from food and drink; rather they should withhold their tongues from telling lies and falsehood, their ears from backbiting, their private parts from the unlawful, and their stomachs from the forbidden, that they may save themselves from Allah's chastisement and punishment.

12. Rights of Sadaqa

"The right of alms (sadaqa) is that you know it is a storing away with your Lord and a deposit for which you will have no need for witness. If you deposit it in secret, you will be more confident of it than if you deposit it in public. You should know that it repels afflictions and illnesses from you in this world and it will repel the Fire from you in the next world.

There is no strength save in Allah." The Ima`m, peace be on him, underlined the importance of alms and regarded it as a storing away for the alms-giver with Allah. One gives alms for himself, for he will find it present with Allah on the day when neither property nor children profit him. Also the Ima`m, peace be on him, stressed the importance of giving alms in secret, and that it should be free from reminding someone of it, for it is, in fact, belongs to him, so how does he remind the others of it? As secret alms was important, the Ima`m maintained a hundred families in Medina (Yathrib), while they did not recognize him who maintained them. We mentioned this in the previous chapters.

Chapter 15

13. Rights of Hady

"The right of animals for immolation (hady) is that through it you desire Allah and you not desire His creation; through it you desire only the exposure of your soul to Allah's mercy and the deliverance of your spirit on the day you encounter Him. There is no strength save in Allah."

In this paragraph, the Ima`m, peace be on him, has mentioned the rights of al-hady or the animals which the pilgrims to the Sacred House of Allah sacrifice at Mina`, in Mecca. The Ima`m highlighted that one should desire Allah through al-hady; he should not mix it with any corrupt intention such as dissimulation and seeking reputation, for Allah, the Exalted, does not accept such a sacrifice. Then the Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned that one could approach Allah through doing easy works, not difficult ones, for He did not legislate any difficult obligation.

14. Rights of Ima`ms

"The right of the possessor of authority (sulta`n) is that you know that you have been made as a trial for him. Allah is testing him through the authority He has given him over you. You should give him a sincere counsel, and should not quarrel with him. You should not expose yourself to his displeasure, for thereby you cast yourself by your hands into destruction and become his partner in his sin when he brings evil down upon you. And there is no strength save in Allah"

In these words the Ima`m, peace be on him, had highlighted the political affairs before he spoke about the rights. He mentioned the rights of the Ima`ms and rulers against subjects. He thought that kings, rulers, and governors were tried through their subjects. This is because of authority, which is among the most important factors of trial and seduction. As for the rights of kings and rulers against their subjects, they are:

A. They should be loyal to the legal authority and give it more counsel, that it may offer them more services such as construction, spreading security and welfare, and developing the country in all fields. It is natural that when the authority leads a life full of anxieties, disorders, and discords, it will be unable to carry out its duties.

B. They should not quarrel with the authority, for such quarrel brings about an inclusive destruction.

C. They should be mild toward the authority and respect it in a manner which does not oppose the religion.

D. They should not oppose and disobey the authority, for such an opposition and disobedience bring about serious damages for government and people.

These are some rights of the authority against its subjects, which are necessary for the unity between people and their government.

15. Rights of Teacher

"The right of the one who trains you (sa`is) through knowledge is magnifying him, respecting his sessions, listening well to him, and attending to him with devotion. You should not rise your voice toward him. You should never answer anyone who asks him about something, in order that he may be the one who answers. You should not speak to anyone in his session nor speak ill of anyone with him. If anyone ever speaks ill of him in your presence, you should defend him. You should conceal his faults and manifest his virtues.

You should not sit with him in enmity or show hostility toward him in friendship. If you do all of this, Allah's angels will give witness for you that you went straight to him and learned his knowledge for Allah's sake, not for the sake of the people. And there is neither force nor strength save in Allah."

Surely, the teacher is the maker of thought and civilization and does favor for all mankind, and especially as it concerns the learner, hence the Ima`m, peace be on him, praised his position and asked the learner to:

A. Magnify and honor him with all kinds of magnification and honoring, for he does him great favor.

B. Respect his sessions and to be polite during them.

C. Listen carefully to his lectures, and attend to them with devotion.

D. Empty his intellect to understand his lessons. It is natural that the student who does not devote himself to his teacher does not make of his attending his teacher's sessions.

E. Leave pleasures and desires, for they are two basic conditions for learning sciences, especially the religious sciences, for he who devotes himself to pleasures learns nothing of sciences.

F. To immortalize his teacher's message through spreading his knowledge.

Chapter 18

16. Rights of Owner

"The right of him who trains you through property is that you should obey him and not disobey him, unless disobeying him would displease Allah, for there can be no obedience to a creature when it is disobedience to Allah. And there is no strength save in Allah."

It is certain that if the Ima`ms from among the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt) , peace be on them, had undertaken the leadership of the community after the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, they would have abolish slavery, and there would have been no trace of it in the world of existence. In the previous chapters, we mentioned that Ima`m Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, always released slaves to abolish slavery and to rescue man from bondage. Also the Ima`ms, peace be on them, treated their slaves with kindness, mercy, and affection.

Any how, the Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned the owner's rights against his slaves; he made it incumbent on them to obey him, , unless obeying him would displease Allah.

Chapter 19

17. Rights of Subjects

"The right of your subjects through authority is that you should know that they have been made subjects through their weakness and your strength. Hence it is incumbent on you to act with justice toward them and to be like a compassionate father toward them. You should forgive them their ignorance and not hurry them to punishment and you should thank Allah for the power over them which He has given to you. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, carefully considered the governments standing in his time and found them standing on force and oppression. The people did not elect them, hence they yielded to oppression and abasement, and hence the Ima`m advised those rulers to act with justice toward them and to be like a compassionate father toward them. Besides he advised them to thank Allah for His favors.

Chapter 20

18. Rights of Learners

"The right of your subjects through knowledge is that you should know that Allah made you a caretaker over them only through knowledge He has given you and His storehouses which He has opened up to you. If you do well in teaching the people, not treating them roughly or annoying them, then Allah will increase His bounty toward you. But if you withhold your knowledge from them or treat them roughly when they seek knowledge from you, then it will be Allah's right to deprive you of knowledge and its splendor and to make fall from your place in people's hearts."

The great Ima`m, peace be on him, urged the religious scholars to spread knowledge among learners and to make it a right against them. Allah, the Exalted, has provided the religious scholars with knowledge and wisdom, namely, He has made them caretakers over knowledge. If they spread it among the learners, they will carry out their duties and deliver their message; otherwise they will be traitors and oppressors, and they will expose themselves to Allah's vengeance and wrath.

Chapter 21

19. Rights of Wife (Mamlu`ka)

"The right of your wife (mamlu`ka) is that you know that Allah has made her a repose and a comfort for you; you should know that she is Allah's favor toward you, so you should honor her and treat her gently. Though her right toward you is more incumbent, you must treat her with compassion, since she is your prisoner (asir) whom you feed and clothe. If she is ignorant, you should pardon her. And there is no strength save in Allah." The Ima`m, peace be on him, advised the husband to honor his wife and treat her gently.

Chapter 22

20. Rights of Slave (Mamlu`k)

"The right of your slave (mamlu`k) is that you should know that he is the creature of your Lord, the son of your father and mother, and your flesh and blood. You own him, but you did not make him; Allah made him. You did not create any of his limbs, nor did you supply him with his sustenance; on the contrary, Allah gives you the sufficiency for that. Then He subjugated him to you, entrusted him to you, and deposited him with you so that you may be safeguarded by the good you give to him. So act well toward him, just as Allah has acted well toward you. If you dislike him, replace him, but do not torment a creature of Allah. And there is no strength save in Allah."

Depending on Islam, the great Ima`m, peace be on him, regarded the slave as a free man, for Allah created him, created for him hearing and sight, provided him with provision, just as He did toward the free man, hence the owner has no right to show haughtiness toward him or to tire him. Rather it is incumbent on the owner to treat his slave kindly; he should feed him from what he eats, clothe him from what he wears, and regards him as one of the members of his family. With this Islam could maintain slaves' rights and repelled from them any defect or enmity.

Part 2
Rights of Blood Relatives

Chapter 23

Rights of Mother

"The right of your mother is that you know she carried you where no one carries anyone, she gave to you of the fruit of her heart that which no one gives to anyone, and she protected you with her organs. She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate, if she was thirsty as long as you drank, if she was naked as long as you were clothed, if she was in the sun as long as you were in the shade. She gave you sleep for your sake, she protected you from heat and cold, all in order that you might belong to her. You are not able to show her gratitude, unless through Allah's help and giving success."

What great mother's rights are! How numerous her favors toward her child are! It is she who makes her child's life. Had it not for her pity and affection, he would not have lived. She takes care of him with her own soul when he is formed, bears the burdens of pregnancy, and the dangers of giving birth. After giving birth to him, she melts herself for him, spares no effort to safeguard him, passes the night awake for him, continues serving him sincerely, and looks after him with love and affection until he grows up and makes his way in life. When he separates or goes away from her, she feels that life separates from her. Mohammed b. al-Walid composed the following concerning the parents' feelings toward their child:

The mother becomes excited and perplexed out of love for him, and the tears flow from his father's eyes.

They suffer the distresses of death out of his separation and disclose their hidden yearning for him.

If the child knew the distress his parents face when he separates from them, he will lament for the mother from whose womb he is drawn, weep for the old man who wanders in his horizons, change his disdainful manner into his affection, and repay them through his agreeable manners.

Chapter 24

22. Rights of Father

"The right of your father is that you know that he is your root. Without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself which pleases you, know that your father is the root of its blessing upon you. So praise Allah and thank him in that measure. And there is no strength save in Allah."

As for the father's right against his child, it is very great, for he is his origin. Were it not for the father, the child would not have come to the world, hence the child should take care of his father's rights and undertake his affairs, especially during his old age.

23. Rights of Child

"The right of your child is that you should know that he is from you and will be ascribed to you, through both his good and his evil, in the immediate affairs of this world. You are responsible for what has been entrusted to you, such as educating him in good conduct, pointing him in the direction of his Lord, and helping him to obey Him. So act toward him with the action of one who knows that he will be rewarded for good doing toward him and punished for evildoing. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The child is a natural extension to his father's life and duration to his existence. He is part of his father; rather he is his whole. In his will to his son (the pure Ima`m, al-Hasan, peace be on him(Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "I have found you part of me; rather I have found you my whole to the extent that if anything befalls you, it befalls me; if death comes to you, it comes to me, hence your affairs concern me just as my affairs concern me."

Islamic education holds father responsible for educating his child and makes it incumbent on him to plant the highest moral traits in him, to accustom him to the most excellent habits, to turn him aside from vices, to establish for him proofs for the existence of the Great Creator, Who has power over all things. If the father does this, he fulfills his duties toward his child and society, for the righteous person is an adobe in building society. If he does not do this, Allah will question and punish him.

24. Rights of Brother

"The right of your brother is that you know that he is your hand, your might, and your strength. Take him not as a weapon with which to disobey Allah, nor as equipment with which to wrong Allah's creatures. Do not neglect to help him against his enemy or to give him good counsel. If he obeys Allah, well and good, but if not, you should honor Allah more than him."

As for the brother, he is his brother's hand, his might, and his strength. He is his support during afflictions and hardships. The Ima`m, peace be on him, has mentioned the rights of the brother as follows:

- A. You should not take you brother as a weapon with which you disobey Allah.
- B. You should not ask him for help to wrong the people and to aggress against them without any right.
- C. You should not neglect to help him against himself; you should guide him to the way of good and show him the path to guidance.
- D. You should help him against his enemy, Satan; you should warn your brother against him, frighten your brother with Allah's punishment, lest Satan should delude him and turn him away from the straight path.
- E. You should not neglect to give him good counsel concerning the affairs of this world and the next. If he obeys Allah, well and good, but if not, you should honor Allah more than him.

25. Rights of Master (Mawla`)

"The right of your master (mawla`) who has favored you (by freeing you from slavery) is that you know that he has spent his property for you and brought you out of the basement and estrangement of bondage to the exaltation and comfort of freedom. He has freed you from the captivity of possession and loosened the bonds of slavehood from you.

He has brought you out of the prison of subjugation, given you ownership of yourself, and given you leisure to worship your Lord. You should know that he is the closest of Allah's creatures to you in your life and your death and that aiding him with your life and what he needs from you is incumbent upon you." The master has great rights against his slave whom he releases from slavery, for he unties from him fetters, saves him from the abasement of bondage, makes him taste the exaltation and comfort of freedom; he does him favors. Hence the slave should thank his master for his favors through supporting and helping him.

Chapter 28

26. Rights of Slave (Mawla`)

"The right of the slave (mawla`) whom you have favored (by freeing him) is that you know that Allah has made you freeing him a means of access to Him and a veil against the Fire. Your immediate reward is to inherit from him (if he does not have any maternal relatives) as a compensation for the property you have spent for him, and your ultimate reward is the Garden. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, summons the master to take care of his slaves' rights, for Allah charges him with them and appoints him as a protector over them, hence it is incumbent on him to take care of their rights, and to treat them kindly. If he does this, Allah will repay him through protecting him from the Fire.

Chapter 29

27. Rights of Sa`hib al-Ma'ru`f

"The right of him who does a kindly act (sa`hib al-ma'ru`f) toward you is that you thank him and mention his kindness; you reward him with beautiful words and you supplicate for him sincerely in that which between you and Allah. If you do that, you have thanked him secretly and openly. Then, if you are able to repay him one day, you repay him." Islam has objectively adopted the summons to kindly acts. It urges men to thank the good-doer and to encourage him to continue this high quality which aims at spreading solidarity among the members of society. The Ima`m, peace be on him, urges the Muslims to thank the good-doer through proclaiming his kindly acts among men and supplicating Allah to repay him.

Chapter 30

28. Rights of Mu'azzin

"The right of the mu'azzin (the one who calls the people to prayers) is that you know he is reminding you of your Lord, calling you to your good fortune, and helping you to accomplish what Allah has made obligatory upon you. So thank him for that just as you thank one who does good to you. And there is no strength save in Allah."

As for the mu'azzin, he has rights against the Muslims, for he reminds them of the times of the ritual prayers, which are the most important obligations in Islam, hence they should show thanks and respect toward him.

29. Rights of Ima`m in Congregational Prayer

"The right of your Ima`m in your ritual prayer is that you know that he has taken on the role of mediator between you and your Lord. He speaks for you, but you do not speak for him; he supplicates for you, but you do not supplicate for him. He has spared you the terror of standing before Allah. If he performs the prayer imperfectly, that belongs to him and not to you; but if he performs it perfectly, you are his partner, and he has no excellence over you. He protects your soul through his soul and your prayer through his prayer, so thank him in that measure. And there is no force and no strength save in Allah."

As for the Ima`m in the congregational prayers, he has great rights against those who perform the ritual prayers behind him, for abundant repayment results from the congregational prayers. The traditions support each other about the certain permissible performing of the prayers. They state that the more the performers of the congregational prayers are, the more their repayment and wages are. It is well known that the performers of the congregational prayers obtain great wages because of the Ima`m who takes on the role of mediator between them and Allah, the Exalted, as well as he recites on their behalf al-Fa`tiha and another sura.

30. Rights of Sitting Companion

"The right of your sitting companion (jalis) is that you treat him mildly, show fairness toward him while vying with him in discourse, and do not stand up from sitting with him without his permission. But it is permissible for him who sits with to leave without asking your permission. You should forget his slips and remember his good qualities, and you should tell nothing about him but good. And there is no strength save in Allah." How wonderful the Islamic social regime is! It takes care of social and individual affairs, brings nearer feelings and sentiments, and abolishes enmities that divide the Muslims. An example of what Islam has legislated in this respect is the sitting companion's rights, which are as follows:

- A. You should mildly treat your sitting companion through honoring and respecting him.
- B. You should show fairness toward him while vying with him in discourse; you should not show vainglory and haughtiness toward him.
- C. You should make him understand your words.
- D. You should not exaggerate his affairs.
- E. You should not stand up from sitting with him without his permission.

If the Muslims put these morals into effect in their life, love and affection will spread among them.

31. Rights of Neighbor

"The right of your neighbor (ja`r) is that you guard him when he is absent, honor him when he is present, and aid him when he is wronged. You do not pursue anything of his that is shameful; if you know any evil from him, you conceal it. If you know that he will accept your counsel, you counsel him in that which is between him and you. You do not forsake him in difficulty, you release him from his stumble, you forgive his sin, and you associate with him generously. And there is neither force nor strength save in Allah."

Islam takes great care of neighbor and urges the Muslims to take care of him. Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, advised us (to take care of neighbor) to the extent that we thought that he would appoint him as inheritor." Besides the authentic traditions of the Ima`ms of guidance, peace be on him, urge the Muslims to take care of the neighbor's affairs. Through this moral quality the Muslims can establish social solidarity and avoid differences and discords. Ima`m Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, has displayed the neighbor's rights as follows:

- A. You should guard your neighbor when he is absent; you should guard his property and family, and prevent the detested things from reaching him.
- B. You should honor him when he is present.
- C. You should support and help him when his absent and present.
- D. You should not pursue anything of him that is shameful.
- E. You should conceal his evil deeds and not spread them among the people.
- F. You should not abandon him when an affliction befalls him; rather you should help him in solving it.
- G. You should not envy him when Allah does him a favor.
- H. You should release his stumbles and pardon his slips.
- I. You should show forbearance toward him when he does an evil deed;

do not return like for like.

J. You should repel him who abuses him or remembers him with evil.

K. You should not believe him who informs against him, lest he should stir up enmity between him and you.

L. Associate with him in a noble manner.

These rights(which the Ima`m, peace be on him, declared(bring about the unity of the Muslims, spread love and affection among them.

Chapter 34

32. Rights of Companion

"The right of the companion (sa`hib) is that you act as his companion with bounty and in fairness. You honor him as he honors you and you do not let him be the first with generosity. If he is the first, you repay him. You wish for him as he wishes for you and you restrain him from any act of disobedience he might attempt. Be a mercy for him, not a chastisement. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, has showed the companion's rights as follows:

- A. Companionship should stand on bounty fairness.
- B. The companions should safeguard each other.
- C. Companionship should stand on affection, love, and brotherhood.
- D. The companions should counsel each other.
- E. They should help each other to obey Allah, the Exalted, and to refrain from disobeying Him.
- F. Companionship should stand on mercy and favor, not on torture and vengeance.

33. Rights of Partner

"The right of partner (sharik) is that if he should be absent, you suffice him in his affairs, and if he should be present, you show regard for him. You make no decision without his decision and you do nothing on the basis of your own opinion, but you exchange views with him. You guard his property for him, and you do not betray him in that of his affair which is difficult or of little importance, for Allah's hand is above the hands of two partners as long as they do not betray each other. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The financial association in Islam is based on developing property and spreading honesty between the two partners, who have no right to dispose of property unless they permit each other. They should exchange views with each other concerning the affairs of the mutual property, such as sale and transport. They both should preserve property and not betray or neglect it. If one of them neglects it, he should be punished and fined.

Chapter 36

34. Rights of Property

"The right of property (ma`l) is that you take it only from what is lawful and you spend it only in what is proper. Through it you should not prefer above yourself those who will praise you. You should act with it in obedience to your Lord and not be miserly with it, lest you fall back into regret and remorse while suffering the ill consequence. And there is no strength save in Allah."

As for the right of property (ma`l) in Islam, it is that the Muslim should take it only from lawful ways such as lawful earnings. If he takes it from unlawful ways such as usury, he commits sins as well as Allah will punish him.

Through these measures Islam has based its economy on the most modern methods which do not let a group of people heap up property and deprive the others of it. Hence, the Ima`m, peace be on him, summons the Muslims to spend their properties on lawful things such as hospitals, schools, and libraries. The Muslims sometimes do not spend their properties on such things and store them for their inheritors. They will commit sins when their inheritors spend their properties on things leading to disobeying Allah, for they help them commit such acts of disobedience. Besides they will gain nothing except remorse and loss when their inheritors spend their properties on acts of obedience to Allah.

Chapter 37

35. Rights of al-Graham

"The right of him who to whom you owe a debt (al-gharim al-muta`kib laka) is that, if you have the means, you pay him back, and if you are in straitened circumstances, you satisfy him with good words and you send him away with gentleness."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, displayed the rights of the creditor against the debtor. It is incumbent on the debtor to pay back his debt when he is rich. He has no right to delay it, for such a delay is a kind of injustice and is forbidden in Islam. If the debtor is in straitened circumstances, he should satisfy the creditor with good words, apologize to him for the delay, and tell him about his incapability of paying him back. As for the treatment with obscene words, it locks the door to kind acts and is one of the ignoble qualities which Allah detests.

36. Rights of Associate

"The right of the associate (al-khlit) is that you neither mislead him, nor act dishonestly toward him, nor deceive him, and you fear Allah in his affair. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned the rights of (al-khlit), who is a partner in a mutual property, as follows:

- A. You should not mislead him when you sell the property to him.
- B. You should not cheat the property when you sell it to him.
- C. You should not accuse his claims of lying.
- D. You should not make him heedless in any of the affairs of the sold thing; rather you should give him knowledge of it.
- E. You should not deceive him in the dealings between him and you.
- F. You should do your best to be honest to him when he entrusts his affairs to you. If you cheat him, then such cheating is a kind of usury which Allah detests.

Chapter 39

37. Rights of Adversary

"The right of the adversary (khasm) who has a claim against you is that, if what he claims against you is true, you give witness to it against yourself. You do not wrong him and you give him his full due. If what he claims against you is false, you act with kindness toward him and you show nothing in his affair other than kindness; you do not displease your Lord in his Affair. And there is no strength save in Allah."

In this paragraph the Ima`m, peace be on him, speaks about the rights of the adversary who has a claim against you. If what he claims against you is true, you give witness to it against yourself. You should not wrong him, for Allah observes him and judges among His servants with the truth. If what he claims against you is false, you should act with kindness toward him, preach to him, and remind him of the hereafter. You should not treat him with rudeness, that he may refrain from his error and falsehood.

Chapter 40

38. The Rights of al-Mudda'a` 'alayh

"The right of the adversary against whom you have a claim is that, if your claim against him is true, you maintain polite moderation in speaking to him and you do not deny his right. If your claim is false, you fear Allah, repent to Him, and abandon your claim. And there is no strength save in Allah."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned the rights of the adversary against whom you have a claim (al-Mudda'a` 'alayh). If your claim against him is true, the Ima`m advises you to refrain from obscene words toward him, to treat him with good words, to prevent from gossip which is useless and does not help you take your right; rather it may take away your argument and loses your right.

Chapter 41

39. Rights of al-Mustashir

"The right of him who asks you for advice (al-Mustashir) is that if you consider that he has a correct opinion, advise him to follow it, and if you do not consider it so, you direct him to someone who does consider it so. And there is no force and no strength save in Allah." The right of him who asks you for advice (al-Mustashir) is that you should be sincere in advising him, and spare no effort to give him a correct opinion. You should advise with gentleness, not with rudeness which natures and hearts detest. If you have no correct opinion to profit him, you should direct him to someone who has such an opinion, with this you do him a kind act.

Chapter 42

40. Rights of al-Mushir

"The right of him whom you ask for advice (al-Mushir) is that you do not make accusations against him for an opinion which does not conform to your own opinion. If it conforms to it, you praise Allah. And there is no strength save in Allah."

As for the right of him whom you ask for advice (al-Mushir) , it is that you should not make accusations against his opinion and abstain from his advice. If you make accusations against his opinions, you are not forced to put them into practice. Any how, you should thank him for them.

Chapter 43

41. Rights of al-Mustansih

"The right of him who asks your counsel (al-Mustansih) is that you give him your counsel, but you conduct yourself toward him with compassion and kindness. And there is no strength save in Allah."

As for the right of him who asks your counsel (al-Mustansih), it is that you should guide him to correctness and lead him to the truth and guidance. You should counsel him with good words. You have not right to give a counsel which he does not understand, for your counsel will be in vain.

42. Rights of al-Na`sih

"The right of your counselor (al-Na`sih) is that you act gently toward him and give ear to him. If he presents you with the right course, you praise Allah, but if he does not agree with you, you show compassion toward him and make no accusations against him; you consider him to have made a mistake, and you do not take him to task for that, unless he should be deserving of accusation.

Then attach no more importance to his affair. And there is no strength save in Allah."

As for the right of your counselor (al-Na`sih), it is that you should act gently toward him, honor and magnify him, turn your ear and mind to him, that you may understand and consider carefully his counsel. If his counsel is right, you should thank Allah for it. If it is not right, you should not make accusation against it, for he does his best to counsel you, but he makes mistake, hence there is no harm in it.

43. Rights of al-Kabir

"The right of him who is older than you (al-Kabir) is that you show reverence toward him because of his age and you honor him because he entered Islam before you. You leave off confronting him in a dispute, you do not precede him in a path, you do not go ahead of him, and you do not consider him foolish. If he should act foolishly toward you, you put with him and you honor him because of the right of Islam and the respect due to it. And there is no strength save in Allah."

Islam has legislated social morals to build original society. Among them is that you should respect the old one when he has excellence and precedence in Islam. The Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned these social morals as follows:

- A. You should leave off confronting him in a dispute.
- B. When you walk along with him on a path, you should not go ahead of him.
- C. You should not precede him in a path.
- D. If the old one has no knowledge of a certain matter, you should show his ignorance of it.
- E. If he shows enmity toward you, you should show forbearance and honor toward him because of his old age and his precedence in Islam.

Chapter 46

44. Rights of al-Saghir

"The right of him who is younger (al-Saghir) is that you show compassion toward him through teaching him, pardoning him, covering his faults, kindness toward him, and helping."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, declares the rights of him who is younger than you as follows:

A. You should show mercy and compassion toward him; you should not treat him with force and rudeness, for they deviate him from the right path and create psychological complexes in him.

B. You should educate and teach him and open for him doors to knowledge.

C. You should treat him gently to attract him.

D. You should help him with his needs.

E. You should cover his faults to help him give them up.

G. You should be kind to him and leave disputing with him, that you may guide him to the straight path.

These affairs, which the Ima`m has declared, set right youngsters and educate them.

45. Rights of al-Sa`il

"The right of him who asks (al-Sa`il) from you is that you give to him when you are ready, to accomplish his need when you are able, to supplicate for him concerning what has befallen him and to help him with his request. If you doubt his truthfulness, make accusations against him, and do not determine to give him, be sure that is of the trickery of Satan who wants to repel you from your share and to prevent you from nearness to your lord. Then leave him through covering him over and turn him away from you with good words. If

you overcome yourself concerning his affair and give to him in spite what has occurred in yourself in respect with him, surely these acts need determination.

The Ima`m urged the Muslims to be kind to the asker, to help him, and to accomplish his need, that they might achieve social solidarity in Islam and to send away poverty and famine from them. This is in the case when you are sure of the truthfulness of the asker. If you doubt the poor man and accuse him of lying in showing poverty, this accusation may be of the trickery of Satan who intends to deprive you of the immense repayment which Allah, the Exalted, has prepared for the alms-givers. If you oppose this imagination and give the poor man, surely these acts need determination.

Chapter 48

46. Rights of al-Mass'u`l

"The right of him from whom you ask (al-Mass'u`l) is that you accept from him with gratitude and recognition of his bounty if he gives, and you accept his excuse if he withholds, and have good opinion of him. Know that if he withholds, he withholds his property, and (you have no right) to blame him for his property. If he wrongs (you), surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful."

The Ima`m, peace be on him, presented the rights of him from whom you ask (al-Mass'u`l). The first of his rights is that you show gratitude toward him and supplicate for him when he honors and gives to you, that you have a good opinion of him when he withholds you. Besides he who withholds the asker, in case of being capable of giving to him, he deprives himself of his property, for Allah has prepared abundant repayment for those who give alms.

Chapter 49

47. Rights of al-Sa`r

"The right of him through whom Allah makes you happy (sarrak Alla`hu bihi) is that you first praise Allah, then you thank the person. And there is no strength save in Allah."

He who hastens to make you happy is among the good people, hence you should thank him for this, remember his favor and kindness to you, repay him for his kind act, that you may encourage him to do such a laudable deed.

Chapter 50

48. Rights of him who does Evil Judgments

"The right of him who intentionally does evil judgment to you through a word or an act is that you pardon him. However, if you know that your pardon will harm him, you defend yourself. Allah says: 'Whoever defends himself after he has been wronged (against them there is no way (42:41). And there is no strength save in Allah.'"

The Ima`m, peace be on him, mentioned judges. If they intentionally wrong you through a word or an act, you should forgive them according to the Islamic noble moral traits which urge you to pardon him who does evil to you. If they unintentionally do evil to you, you should not blame them for this.

49. Rights of the people of Creed

"The right of the people of creed (milla) is harboring safety for them, compassion toward them, kindness toward their evildoer, treating them with friendliness, seeking their well-being, thanking their good-doer, and keeping harm away from them. You should love for them what you love for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their old men stand in the place of your father, their youths in the place of your brothers, their old women in the place of your mother, and their youngsters in the place of your children."

Muslims have general rights, hence every Muslim should conform to them. They are as the Ima`m, peace be on him, has stated:

A. Every Muslim should show safety, affection, and brotherhood toward all the Muslims.

B. He should be merciful to them; he should not show haughtiness toward them.

C. He should be kind toward their evildoer; he should not show rudeness toward him, that he may set him right.

D. He should do his best to unify them.

E. He should thank their good-doer for his kind act and encourage him to do such acts which will profit society.

F. He should help them when an enemy attacks them.

G. He should stand their old men in the place of his father, their youths in the place of his brothers, and their youngsters in the place of his children. It is certain that if the Muslims put these rights into effect, they will be one hand, their words will not differ, their unity will not disperse, and the nations of the world will not colonize their homelands.

50. Rights of Ahl al-Dhimma

"The right of the people under the protection (of Islam) (Ahl al-Dhimma) is that you accept from them what Allah has accepted from them and you do no wrong to them as long as they fulfill Allah's covenant and the covenant of Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household. So fear Allah. There is no force and no strength save in Allah."

These are fifty rights encompassing you. You should not leave them. You should conform to them and put them into practice and ask Allah, Great be His Praise, to help you in this. There is no strength and no force save in Allah, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Islam takes great care of Ahl al-Dhimma, the Jews and the Christians, who are under the protection of Islam. It treats them as it treats other Muslims in giving them to enjoy freedom, welfare, security, and tranquillity. The Ima`m, peace be on him, stated their rights as follow:

- A. You should accept the laws Allah has legislated for them.
- B. You should fulfill the rights Allah has assigned for them.
- C. You should judge among them according to what Allah has revealed.
- E. It is unlawful for you to wrong them and aggress against them without any right.

With this we will end our speech about the Treatise on Rights, which is the richest Islamic book, and which, though brief, has shown important methods to make the Muslims happy and to set them right.

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*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)