

Imam Ali Zain-ul-Abidin (AS)

A Divine Perspective on Rights (Risalat al-Huquq)



xkp

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Chapter 1

DEDICATION

We dedicate this work to both of our parents to whom we are greatly indebted - our fathers: the late Mr. Mohammad Mehdi Peiravi, and Mr. Charles Henry Morgan, and our mothers who are alive and to whom we and our children love and are still under their spiritual protection and loving support: Mrs. Talat Sheikh Peiravi and Mrs. Betty June Morgan.

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Chapter 2

TRANSLATORS' FOREWORD

We thank God the Almighty for the opportunity granted to us to undertake the preparation of DIVINE PERSPECTIVE ON RIGHTS after the successful completion of THE COMPLETE EDITION OF THE TREATISE ON RIGHTS by the fourth religious leader in the line of the Prophet of God (MGB)[1], Ali ibn al-Hussein known as Imam Sajjid (MGB) for his extended prostrations to God. DIVINE PERSPECTIVE ON RIGHTS that is authored by Mr. Ghodratullah Mashyekhi is a commentary on Imam Sajjid's "THE TREATISE ON RIGHTS." We translated this commentary into English for the interested readers. Regarding the references to verses of the Holy Quran, we have exactly cited for coherency using an available translation of the Quran into English by Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (May God Reward Him). The Translation of the Holy Quran that we used is the following:

- THE HOLY QURAN
- Text, Translation, Commentary and Notes Large Size (1 Volume)
- Abdullah Yusuf Ali (English & Arabic).

We have rewritten parts of the book to make it up-to-date. To include the state of the art knowledge we have added many footnotes, references to and verses from the Bible where appropriate.

We are partly indebted to our son Mehdi Peiravi for his assistance in the typing and layout of the book, our daughter Maryam Peiravi for her assistance in the translation of The Treatise On Rights from Arabic, and her sister Talat June Peiravi for her poetic contribution to this book. We are also indebted to the Ansarian Publications for supporting this work and completing the typesetting of the book, their staff and their respectable translators who have spent time to read the initial manuscript and made many useful suggestions to enrich the work. May God grant them their reward. We warmly welcome any suggestions made by the readers that might help us learn about our mistakes and shortcomings, and help us improve our future works.

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[1] Stands for May God Bless.

Chapter 3

RESPECT EVERYONE'S RIGHTS

You should respect everyone's right
Be they old, young or full of might,
Be they for you an adversary
Or if they ever made you happy.
The greatest right is that of God's.
You should obey him and no other gods.
Our body parts too have certain rights
Such as not viewing forbidden sights.
Our relatives have many rights
Be it our parents, brothers or our wives.
There are also rights for our deeds
Be it charity, supplications or holy feeds.
All people have certain rights
Be they our teachers, or citizens nation-wide.

Talat June and Ali Peira

Chapter 4

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Although this book is written by Ghodrattullah Mashayekhi and is a commentary on The Treatise on Rights, it is actually considered to be authored by the fourth Imam - Ali ibn al-Hussein (MGB) - since he is the author of The Treatise On Rights. The commentator has just given more details about what the Immaculate Imam (MGB) has said. Imam Sajjid (MGB) is the son of Imam Hussein (MGB) and Shah Banu. According to some narrations, he was born on Sha'ban 5, 660 A.D.[1] and became martyred on Muharram 12, 717 A.D.[2] by Walid Ibn-e Abdol Malik. When he was born, his grandfather Imam Ali (MGB) was controlling the affairs of the government. He experienced three years of the Alavi Caliphate[3] and a short period of Imam Hassan's government, which lasted for only several months.

He witnessed the saga of Karbala that took place in 683 A.D.[4] and survived the day of Ashura. In accordance with the Divine decree, Imam Hussein (MGB) appointed him as the people's next leader after Imam Hussein's (MGB) martyrdom at Karbala. Imam Sajjid (MGB) who was also present there, was ill and unable to join the fight against the forces of Yazid. Thus, he was not martyred. During his journey from Karbala, he delivered speeches in the towns of Kufa and Damascus, and he informed the people of his father's holy intentions. In this way, he disgraced Yazid.

Imam Sajjid (MGB) liked the orphans, the poor, and the handicapped to come to his house and be his guests. He used to give food and clothing to many families who were poor and needy. Imam Sajjid (MGB) was so earnest in worshipping God that he was called 'Zayn al-Abidin', which means 'the adornment of the worshippers', while his title 'al-Sajjid' means 'one who prostrates long and often'. He lived for fifty-seven years, and devoted most of his efforts to reviving the spiritual aspects of the society. Hence, Imam Sajjid's life and statements were entirely devoted to asceticism and religious teachings. His religious teachings are in the form of invocations and supplications. Having witnessed the unpleasant social situation of that era during which religious values were deviated and changed, Imam Sajjid (MGB) attempted to establish a divine relationship between the people and God. Consequently, he was able to touch the hearts of the people and the people were deeply influenced by his words and his life style. His famous supplications are well-known as "al-'a'fah al-Sajjidiyyah". About three decades of the Imam's life were devoted to the revival of spiritualism in the society. This book is one of his most outstanding teachings. It is a master document on Islamic human rights, which not only covers human rights, but also includes the rights of God, our body parts, and our deeds. To any intelligent reader who ponders deeply about the contents of this valuable document on rights, it immediately becomes clear that Islam has already established the first document on rights nearly fourteen centuries ago. However, unfortunately in our modern world, there are those who claim to respect human rights, but they do so only superficially.

[1] The year 38 A.H. according to the Iranian calendar.

[2] The year 95 A.H. according to the Iranian calendar.

[3] The period of the Caliphate of Imam Ali (MGB).

[4] The year 61 A.H. according to the Iranian calendar.

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Chapter

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of God, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ اللَّهُ أَنْ لِي عَلَيْكَ حُقُوقًا مُحِيطَةً بِكَ فِي كُلِّ حَرَكَةٍ تَحْرُكُهَا، أَوْ سَكَنَةٍ سَكَنَتْهَا، أَوْ مَنَزَلَةٍ لَتَيْهَا، أَوْ جَارِحَةٍ قَلَبْتَهَا وَالْآلَةَ تَصَرَّفْتِ بِهَا، بَعْضُهَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ بَعْضٍ. وَأَكْبَرُ حُقُوقِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ مَا أُوجِبَهُ لِنَفْسِهِ رَبِّكَ وَتَعَالَى مِنْ حَقِّهِ الَّذِي هُوَ أَصْلُ الْحُقُوقِ وَمِنْهُ تَفَرَّعَ. ثُمَّ أُوجِبُهُ عَلَيْكَ لِتَفْسِيكَ مِنْ قَرْنِكَ إِلَى قَدَمِكَ عَلَيَّ إِخْتِلَافِ جَوَارِحِكَ.

Know God have mercy upon you that God has rights incumbent upon you and that the encompass you in every motion through which you move, every rest which you take, every way static in which you reside, every limb which you employ, and every instrument which you use. Some of these rights are greater than others. And the greatest of God's rights incumbent upon you is what He has made incumbent upon you for Himself the Blessed and the Exalted from His rights: that which is the root of all rights from which others branch out. Then there are those that He has made incumbent upon you in yourself, from your crown to your foot, according to the diversity of your organs.

جَعَلْتُ لِبَصِيرِكَ حَقًّا وَلِسَمْعِكَ حَقًّا وَلِلْسَانِكَ حَقًّا وَلِيَدِكَ حَقًّا وَلِرِجْلِكَ حَقًّا حَقًّا بِنَبْطِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَلِقَرْحِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، فَهَذِهِ الْجَوَارِحُ السَّبْعُ الَّتِي بِهَا تَكُونُ الْأَفْعَالُ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْتُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِعَالِكَ عَلَيْكَ حُقُوقًا فَجَعَلْتُ لَصِلَاتِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَلِصُومِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَلِصِدْقِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَلِهَيْدِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا. وَلَا أَفْعَالِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا. ثُمَّ تَخْرُجُ الْحُقُوقُ مِنْكَ إِلَى غَيْرِكَ مِنْ دَوَى الْحُقُوقِ الْوَاجِبَةِ عَلَيْكَ.

He established for your sight a right incumbent upon you, and your hearing a right incumbent upon you, and your tongue a right incumbent upon you, and your hand a right incumbent upon you, and your legs a right incumbent upon you, and your stomach a right incumbent upon you, and your private part a right incumbent upon you. These are the seven organs through which deeds take place. Then the Mighty and the High established for your deeds rights incumbent upon you. Then He established for your ritual prayer a right incumbent upon you, and your fasting a right incumbent upon you, and your charity a right incumbent upon you, and your offering a right incumbent upon you, and your deeds a right incumbent upon you. Then the rights extend out from you to others who have rights incumbent upon you.

وَأُوجِبُهَا عَلَيْكَ حُقُوقٌ أَيْمَتِكَ ثُمَّ حُقُوقٌ رَعِيَّتِكَ ثُمَّ حُقُوقٌ رَحِمِكَ. فَهَذِهِ حُقُوقٌ يَتَشَدَّبُ مِنْهَا حُقُوقٌ: فَحُقُوقٌ مِمَّا عَلَيْكَ ثَلَاثَةٌ أُوجِبُهَا عَلَيْكَ حَقٌّ سَائِسِيكَ بِالسُّلْطَانِ ثُمَّ سَائِسِيكَ بِالْعِلْمِ، ثُمَّ حَقٌّ سَائِسِيكَ بِالْمُلْكِ، وَكُلُّ سَائِسٍ يَأْمُرُ. وَحُقُوقٌ رَعِيَّتِكَ ثَلَاثَةٌ أُوجِبُهَا عَلَيْكَ حَقٌّ رَعِيَّتِكَ بِالسُّلْطَانِ، ثُمَّ حَقٌّ رَعِيَّتِكَ بِالْعِلْمِ، فَإِنَّ الْجَاهِلَ رَعِيَّةٌ الْعَالِمِ، وَحَقٌّ رَعِيَّتِكَ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنَ الْأَزْوَاجِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ.

And the most incumbent of them incumbent upon you are the rights toward your leaders, then the rights toward your subjects, and then the rights toward your relations of kin. And from these rights other rights branch out. The rights of your leaders are three-fold: The one most incumbent upon you is the right of him who trains you through authority, then the right of him who trains you through knowledge, then the right of him who trains you through property. And each trainer is a leader. And the rights of your subjects are three-fold: The one 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 the man of knowledge. And then the right of those who are your subjects through property, such as wives and those owned by the right hand[1].

حُفُوقِ رَحِمِكَ كَثِيرَةً مُتَّصِلَةً بِقَدْرِ اتِّصَالِ الرَّحِمِ فِي الْقَرَابَةِ فَأَوْجِبُهَا عَلَيْكَ حَقَّ أُمَّكَ ثُمَّ حَقَّ أَبِيكَ ثُمَّ حَقَّ
 بِرِكَ ثُمَّ حَقَّ أَخِيكَ ثُمَّ الْأَقْرَبُ وَالْأَقْرَبُ وَالْأَقْرَبُ ثُمَّ حَقَّ مَوْلَاكَ الْمُتَّعِمِّ عَلَيْكَ، ثُمَّ حَقَّ مَوْلَاكَ الْجَارِيَةَ
 مَمْلُوكَتِكَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ ذِي الْمَعْرُوفِ لَدَيْكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ مُؤَدِّتِكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ إِمَامِكَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ
 لَيْسِيكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ جَارِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ صَاحِبِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ شَدْرِيكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ مَالِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ عَرِيْمِكَ الَّذِي تَطَالَبُهُ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ
 بِمِكَ الَّذِي يُطَالِبُكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ خَلِيْبَتِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ خَصْمِكَ الْمُدَّعِي عَلَيْكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ خَصْمِكَ الَّذِي تَدَّعِي عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ
 فِي مُسْتَشِيرِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ الْمُسْتَشِيرِ عَلَيْكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ مُسْتَصِحِّكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ النَّاصِحِ لَكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ مَنْ هُوَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْكَ، ثُمَّ
 حَقُّ مَنْ هُوَ أَصْغَرُ مِنْكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ سَائِلِكَ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ مَنْ سَأَلْتَهُ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ مَنْ جَرَى لَكَ عَلَيَّ يَدِيهِ مَسَاءَةً بِقَوْلٍ أَوْ
 كَيْلٍ أَوْ مَسِيرَةٍ بِذَلِكَ بِقَوْلٍ أَوْ فِعْلٍ عَنِ تَعَمُّدٍ مِنْهُ أَوْ غَيْرِ تَعَمُّدٍ مِنْهُ، ثُمَّ حَقُّ أَهْلِ مِلَّتِكَ عَامَّةً ثُمَّ حَقُّ أَهْلِ
 دِينِهِ، ثُمَّ الْحُقُوقُ الْجَارِيَةُ بِقَدْرِ عِلْمِ الْأَحْوَالِ وَتَصَرُّفِ الْأَسْبَابِ. فَطُوبَى لِمَنْ أَعَانَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قَضَاءِ مَا
 أُوجِبَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ حُقُوقِهِ وَوَقَّفَهُ وَوَقَّعَهُ وَسَدَّدَهُ.

And the rights of your relations of kin are multi-fold: they hold according to the degree of closeness of the relationship. Then the most incumbent one 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, and then the next nearest, and the most worthy, and then the next most worthy. Then there is the right of your master who favors you[2], then the right of the slave, the servant whose favors reach you[3], then the right of him who treats you kindly, then the right of your caller to prayer, then the right of your prayer leader, 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 the debtor who must pay you back, then the right of your creditor who demands his debt to be paid back, 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 seeks your advice, then the right of him whose advice you seek, then the right of him who seeks your counsel, then the right of him whose counsel you seek, then the right of him who is older than you are, then the right of him who is younger than you are, then the right of him who begs from you, then the right of him from whom you beg, then the right of him who wrongs you either verbally or physically, then the right of him who does something to make you happy either verbally or physically whether intentionally or unintentionally, then the right of the people of your creed, then the right of those under the protection of Islam, then the rights which are incumbent upon you according to the vicissitudes of life and the availability of means. Therefore blessed be the one whom God helps fulfill the rights that He has made incumbent upon him and whom He grants success therein and guides him.

[1] slaves

[2] by freeing you from slavery

[3] by the fact that you free him

Part 1

ON THE GREATEST RIGHT OF GOD

حق الله الأكبر

مَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ الْأَكْبَرُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعْبُدُهُ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا، فَإِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ بِإِخْلَاصٍ جَعَلَ لَكَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَنْ يَكْفِيكَ
أَمْرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَحْفَظَ لَكَ مَا تُحِبُّ مِنْهُمَا.

Chapter 6

1 - RIGHTS OF GOD

Then the greatest right of God incumbent upon you is that you worship Him without associating anything with Him. When you do that with sincerity, He has made it binding upon Himself to give you sufficiency in the affairs of this world and the next and to keep for you whatever of them^[1] that you like.

[1] The pleasures of this world and the life to come

AIMS OF THE PROPHETS

Certainly one of the major aims of the Prophets was to invite mankind to worship God, and fight against paganism:

“For We assuredly sent amongst every People an apostle, (with the Command), "Serve God, and eschew Evil": of the People were some whom God guided, and some on whom error became inevitable (established). So travel through the earth, and see what the end of those who denied (the Truth) was.”[The Holy Quran Na'l 16:36]

The divine call to the Unity of God and the fight against paganism was the aim of all the Prophets. Thus, they did their best to guide man away from worshipping the moon, the sun, the idols, cows, and even other men. The Prophets directed man to worship God.

MAN'S INTRINSIC BELIEF IN UNITY

Worshipping God and being humble to Him is intrinsic in man's nature. This naturally exists in all men, and has been manifested throughout history. The Noble Prophet of Islam (MGB) said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ وَيَهُودَانِهِ وَيَمَجِّسَانِهِ.

“Each baby is born inherently innocent and God-worshipping. It is due to his parents that he becomes a Christian, a Jew or a Magian.”[1]

Psychologists have outlined this intrinsic tendency of mankind towards God-worshipping and have called it “inclination towards excellence.” They say that man has an inclination to find the truth that leads him to study philosophy and science. Thus, man is naturally inclined to seek the truth. This sense starts from childhood and extends throughout our lifetime. The child's sense of curiosity and the many questions he asks his parents is a sign of this. The child wants to discover the truth about the various causes of Creation and its underlying secrets. Man is inclined to moral ethics and noble characteristics. He enjoys honesty, and doing good deeds just as he loves the beauties such as lakes, rivers, and the woods. Man does not need any reasoning for these tendencies. Likewise, man is inherently inclined towards the absolute Perfection, Beauty and Knowledge - the One that is the source of all perfections. Regarding man's God-inclined nature the Holy Quran says:

“So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: (Establish) God's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by God: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not.”[The Holy Quran Rum 30:30]

In the above verse, man's nature has been referred to as “God's handiwork” or “pattern on which He has made mankind.” We can notice the following points in the above verse:

- 1 - The coordination between divine regulations and human nature
- 2 - The intrinsic inclination of man to submit to God, which is called Islam and the one who does so is called a Muslim

Regarding this intrinsic human inclination to God, Imam Ali (MGB) said:

فَبَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولَهُ وَوَاتَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ لِيَسْتَأْذِنَهُمْ مِيثَاقَ فِطْرَتِهِ.

“Then God appointed His Apostles among them and sent the Prophets one after another so that they ask the people to honor their natural divine inclinations.”[2]

In another sermon we read:

... وَكَلِمَةَ الْإِخْلَاصِ فَإِنَّهَا الْفِطْرَةُ...

“The statements of Unity and Purity of God are indeed in harmony with man's intrinsic nature.”[3]

[1] Manshoor-i-Javid, v.2, p.58.

[2] Nahjul Balaghah, Sobhi Salih, Sermon No. 1.

[3] Nahjul Balaghah, Sobhi Salih, Sermon No. 110.

TURNING TO GOD AT TIMES OF HARDSHIP

Man's turning to God during times of calamities is a sign of our inclinations to Godliness. Man gets involved with his position and status so much that he forgets about God. He gets fully entangled in his sins and disobedience. Once a calamity befalls upon man, he suddenly remembers God and turns to Him for help. Thus, we realize that this sense of Godliness is intrinsic in humans, but man's involvement in worldly affairs results in his forgetting God. There is a well-known tradition that states that a man went to see Imam Sadiq (MGB) and expressed his amazement about the recognition of God. He said: "I have discussed this issue with many knowledgeable people, but they have not been able to help me." Imam Sadiq (MGB) ended his amazement using his intrinsic human Godliness and asked him: "Have you ever been aboard a ship?" The man said: "Yes." Then Imam Sadiq (MGB) asked: "Have you ever been on a sinking ship, and reached out for a narrow piece of board to stay afloat?" The man said: "Yes. I have." Then Imam Sadiq (MGB) said: "Then while you could not see any dry land or anyone there to save you, were you not really attracted to some power to rescue you?" The man replied in the positive and was finally relieved of his amazement about God's recognition."^[1]

Now that we have recognized the intrinsic nature of man's inclination to God, and that the Prophets were appointed to invite man to honor this intrinsic Godliness, we will attend to the first and most important rights as described by Imam Sajjad (MGB) - that is worshipping God and abandoning paganism. First, we should see what is meant by worshipping and paganism, and what acts are considered worshipping or related to paganism.

[1] *Al-Shafi*, v.1, p.40.

THE MEANING OF WORSHIPPING

Worshipping is defined as expressing one's insignificance and being humble. This is not proper unless it is done for God who is the possessor of all nobility, blessings, beauties and grandeur. There are two forms of worshipping. One form of worshipping is what we see when one prostrates to God and is absolutely subjected to His will. The second form of worshipping is the voluntary verbal form which we are invited[1]. The difference between obedience and worshipping is that obedience is used for God and the people too, while worshipping is exclusively used for God. One can be obedient to his parents, spouse or God, but he can worship only God.

[1] *Al-Mofradat*, article on "Abd" or worshipping.

THE MEANING OF SERVANT IN THE QURAN

There are two meanings for the Arabic word 'abd' meaning servant as used in the Holy Quran. The Almighty God said:

"O' ye who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman." [The Holy Quran Baqarah 2:178]

In another verse the Almighty God said:

"God sets forth the Parable (of two men: one) a slave under the dominion of another; he has no power of any sort." [The Holy Quran Na'l 16:75]

We also note the following verse of the Holy Quran that says:

"Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to (God) Most Gracious as servant." [The Holy Quran Maryam 19:93]

Servant has been defined to mean man, whether free or a slave. [1] The second meaning of servant is a sincere worshipper of God, as we read in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

"O' ye that are sprung from those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah! Verily he was a devotee most grateful." [The Holy Quran Bani Israil 17:3]

"Glory to (God) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque." [2] [The Holy Quran Bani Israil 17:1]

"Commemorate Our Servant Job. Behold, he cried to his Lord: The Evil One has afflicted me with distress and suffering!" [The Holy Quran Sad 38:41]

In these verses the second meaning is used for servant, and the Prophets Noah (MGB), Job (MGB) and Muhammad (MGB) have been introduced to be the best of God's servants. There are two forms of obedience to God. One form is obeying his decrees regarding what is forbidden and what is legitimate as in the following verses:

"Verily, I am God: There is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise." [The Holy Quran Ta-Ha 20:14]

"I have only created Jinns and men that they may serve Me." [The Holy Quran al-Dh;riy;t 51:56]

"There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!" [The Holy Quran Hajj 22:11]

The other meaning of worshipping or servitude is self-humiliation accompanied by the recognition of God's Majesty, and His absolute Perfection and Purity. Therefore, when we talk about servitude to God in Islam, we mean that man should be freed from the servitude of all except God, especially the kings, the rulers or the chiefs. We must realize that all harm or benefit is in the control of God, and none of the material powers in the world can bring us any harm or gain. God the Almighty said:

Say: "Will ye worship, besides God, something which hath no power either to harm or benefit you? But God, - He it is that heareth and knoweth all things." [The Holy Quran Maida 5:76]

In another verse He said:

"For ye do worship idols besides God, and ye invent falsehood. The things that ye worship besides God have no power to give you sustenance: then seek ye sustenance from God, serve Him, and be grateful to Him: to Him will be your return." [The Holy Quran Ankabut 29:17]

In another verse we read:

"O' ye people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness." [The Holy Quran Baqarah 2:21]

[1] Aqrab al-Mawarid.

[2] This refers to the ascension of the Prophet of God (MGB) via a creature called Al-Boraq which carried the Prophet from the al-Haram Mosque in Mecca to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Arab word 'Alboraq' comes from the word 'Barq' which means light. We also know that the angels are created from light and therefore this might imply that the ascension was a transportation based on the speed of light, as we see in the modern theory of relativity by Albert Einstein.

THE RANGE OF WORSHIPPING IN ISLAM

Here we will address the question of the range of worshipping in Islam. Worshipping does not imply just one's action. Rather it applies to an extensive number of actions. It is similar to a deeply rooted tree with its many branches. Various actions are considered to be worshipping. We will briefly discuss them below.

1- Gratitude is worship

Expressing one's gratitude is defined as worshipping in many of the verses of the Holy Quran. First let us define gratitude, and then review some of the relevant verses of the Holy Quran. Expressing one's gratitude has been defined to be the act that is either verbal or spiritual and mental. It implies respect for and humbleness before the One who has sent us His Blessings for which we must be grateful. Another form of gratitude is the proper application of blessings that we are given. For example, one way of expressing our gratitude for the eyes is looking at the Signs of God and taking heed therefrom:

Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth"; but neither Signs nor Warners profit those who believe not." [The Holy Quran Yunus 10:101]

Imam Ali (MGB) said:

الأبرار غَضُوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَوَقَفُوا أَسْمَاعَهُمْ عَلَى الْعِلْمِ النَّافِعِ لَهُمْ.

"The pious ones close their eyes to the forbidden sights, and dedicate their ears to hearing useful knowledge." [1]

Imam Ali (MGB) said:

شُكْرُ كُلِّ نِعْمَةٍ الْوَرَعُ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ.

"Gratitude for each blessing is piety, abstinence and avoiding the divinely forbidden things." [2]

Therefore, we should not use the resources that God has provided for us in order to commit sins.

[1] Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon on The Pious Ones, 193.

[2] Safinat ul-Bihar, v.1, p.710.

USAGE OF GRATITUDE IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Scientists today have classified the encouraging effects of gratitude of managers and leaders on their workers. When managers express their gratitude for the way the workers perform their duties they are encouraged and work harder. On the other hand, if the managers do not care about the way their workers perform their duties and do not thank them, they will be discouraged and might even not do their basic duties. Imam Ali (MGB) said:

لَا يَكُونَنَّ الْمُحْسِنُ وَالْمُسِيءُ عِنْدَكَ بِمَنْزِلَةٍ سِوَاءٍ، فَإِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ تَرْهِيْدًا لِأَهْلِ الْإِحْسَانِ فِي الْإِحْسَانِ، وَتَدْرِيْبًا لِأَهْلِ الْإِسَاءَةِ عَلَى الْإِسَاءَةِ.

"You should not consider good-doers and wrongdoers as equal, since this will lead to indifference in the good-doers and daring to sin in the wrongdoers." [1]

Regarding this issue the Holy Quran says:

"Shall We then treat the People of Faith like the People of Sin? What is the matter with you? How do you judge ye?" [The Holy Quran Qalam 68:35-36]

This implies that faithful people are different from people who commit sins.

[1] Nahjul Balaghah, Sobhi Salih, Letter No. 53.

MORAL ASPECTS OF GRATITUDE

Gratitude consists of the following:

- 1- Recognition of the blessing and the one who has bestowed it
- 2- Being humble to the one who has done us good, and being pleased with the blessing
- 3- Using the blessings for the purpose intended for it by the donor of the blessing

Imam Sadiq (MGB) said the following regarding the recognition of blessings:

مَنْ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةً فَعَرَفَهَا بِقَلْبِهِ فَقَدْ أَدَّى شُكْرَهَا.

“Whoever recognizes that something he received is a blessing from God has indeed expressed his gratitude.”[1]

Imam Sadiq (MGB) said:

وَأَدَّى الشُّكْرَ رُؤْيَةَ النِّعْمَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ.

“The lowest level of gratitude is to recognize that God is the source of the blessings that we receive.”[2]

Imam Ali (MGB) said:

الْتِنَاءُ بِأَكْثَرِ مِنَ الْإِسْتِحْقَاقِ مَلَقٌ، وَالتَّقْصِيرُ عَنِ الْإِسْتِحْقَاقِ عَيٌّْ أَوْ حَسَدٌ.

“Exaggerating about someone’s good qualities is a form of boasting and flattery. Insufficient appreciation of people is a sign of jealousy or one’s own inability.”[3]

We mentioned that God considers our being thankful for His blessings to be a form of worshipping Him.

The following verses of the Holy Quran point this out:

“O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to God, for it is Him ye worship.”[The Holy Quran Baqarah 2:172]

“Nay, but worship God, and be of those who give thanks.”[The Holy Quran Zumar 39:66]

Great divine men have been grateful to God because of His blessings. The Almighty God said:

In order that ye may sit firm and square on their backs, and when so seated, ye may celebrate the (kind) favor of your Lord, and say, "Glory to Him Who has subjected these to our (use), for we could never have accomplished this (by ourselves).”[The Holy Quran Zukhruf 43:13]

Solomon expresses his gratitude for God’s blessings as we read in the following verse:

So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: "O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Thy favors, which thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee: And admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous servants.”[The Holy Quran Naml 27:19]

2 - Earning a Living as a Form of Worshipping

Another deed that is considered to be worshipping God is working in order to earn a living legitimately so that one does not become needy of others. In this regard, the Holy Quran says:

“And when the Prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of God: and celebrate the Praises of God often (and without stint): that ye may prosper.”[The Holy Quran Jumu’a 62:10]

This verse implies that we can go to work even after the congregational Friday prayers. Even the Prophet (MGB) went to the bazaar after the prayers.[4] Imam Baqir (MGB) quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet (MGB):

الْعِبَادَةُ سَبْعُونَ جُزْءًا أَفْضَلُهَا طَلَبُ الْحَالِ.

“There are seventy parts in worshipping, the highest of which is seeking to earn a legitimate income.”[5]

Abu Hamzeh quoted the following on the authority of Imam Baqir (MGB):

مَنْ طَلَبَ الدُّنْيَا اسْتِعْقَافًا عَنِ النَّاسِ وَسَعِيًّا عَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَعَطُّفًا عَلَى جَارِهِ لِقِيَّ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَوَجْهُهُ مِثْلُ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ.

“Whoever strives hard in order to earn a living for his family, to be independent of others, help his

neighbors and save his honor will meet God in the Hereafter with his face shining like the full moon.”[6]

[1] Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.96, tradition No. 15.

[2] Safinat ul-Bihar, v.1, p.710.

[3] Nahjul Balaghah, Fayzul Islam, Wise Saying No. 339.

[4] Tafsir-i-Nemooneh, v.24, p.128.

[5] Wasj`il al-Sh`ah, v.12, p.11.

[6] Ibid, Tradition No. 5.

PASSING AWAY WHILE WORKING

Mohammad ibn Ya'qoob Kolayni quoted on the authority of Ali ibn Ibrahim, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Muhammad ibn Shazan, on the authority of Ibn Abi Amir, on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Hajjaj, on the authority of Imam Sadiq (MGB) that Muhammad ibn Monkadir said: "I did not think that Ali ibn Al-Hussein (MGB)[1] might appoint some child better than Muhammad ibn Ali (MGB)[2] as his successor to lead the Muslims until one day I decided to advise him, but he advised me instead." He was asked about the advice he was given. He explained: "One day I was walking in the alleys around Medina when I ran into Imam Baqir (MGB). It was a hot day. The Imam (MGB) had two slaves with him, and he was working hard. I thought to myself why was one of the noble men of the Quraysh tribe working so hard on such a hot day seeking the benefits of this world? I thought I should advise him. I went to him and greeted him. The Imam (MGB) was sweating. I asked him: "How come you who are one of the noble men of the Quraysh tribe are working so hard seeking the benefits of this world on such a hot day? What would happen if your death approaches now? How will you then answer God? Then Imam Baqir (MGB) replied: "If the angel of death comes now while I am obeying God and working to earn a living for my family to be needless of others, I have no fear. I should be worried if I was committing a sin when the angel of death arrives to take my life." The Monkadir said: "O' Grandson of the Prophet (MGB)! I wanted to advise you, but you advised me!"[3] We see that Imam Baqir (MGB) considers working to earn a living to be a form of worshipping. In another tradition Musa ibn Bukayr quoted on the authority of Imam Kazim (MGB): "Whoever seeks legitimate income for himself and his family is like a soldier who is engaging in a holy war."[4]

[1] Imam Sajjad (MGB).

[2] Imam Baqir (MGB).

[3] Wasj`il al-Sh`ah, v.12, p.9, Ch.4, Tradition No. 1.

[4] Ibid, p.11, Tradition No. 4.

SEEK YOUR SUSTENANCE FROM GOD BY HARD WORK

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Al-Hussein quoted on the authority of Fuzayl ibn Yasar that he told Imam Sadiq (MGB): "O' Grandson of the Prophet! I have quit working." Imam Sadiq (MGB) said: لا تَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ! افْتَحْ بَابَكَ وَأَبْسِطْ رِزْقَكَ وَاسْتَرْزِقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّكَ.
"Do not do that! Open your shop's doors and seek your sustenance from God—your Lord." [1]

[1] Ibid, p.8, Tradition No.11.

HARD-WORKING WORSHIPPERS ARE SUPERIOR TO IDLE ONES

Ruh ibn Abdul Rahim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq (MGB) regarding the following verse

“By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of God, nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity: Their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new).”[The Holy Quran Nur 24:37]

(لَمْ يَنْجِرُوا أَصْحَابَ تِجَارَةٍ إِذَا حَضَرَ الصَّلَاةُ تَرَكَوا التِّجَارَةَ وَأَنْطَلَقُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَكْبَرُ أَجْرًا مِمَّنْ لَمْ يَنْجِرُوا).

This verse is about people who did business, but stopped doing business whenever it was time to pray. These people will receive a better reward than those who just worship and do not work.”[1]

There are many such traditions regarding the worth of and the reward for working, but we will suffice with the few mentioned. Our intent is to show that working and worshipping are not contradictory. Rather if work is done to earn a living, it is a great form of worship itself since worshipping is of no value if one does not work. One must have a reasonable financial condition before he can sincerely attend to his worshipping. The Commander of the Faithful (MGB) said:

مَنْ وَجَدَ مَاءً وَتُرَابًا ثُمَّ افْتَقَرَ فَأَبْعَدَهُ اللَّهُ.

“If one has land and water but he is poor, God will deprive him of His Mercy.”[2]

People were talking to the Prophet (MGB) about a man who was known for his abstinence, piety and constant fasting and praying. They told the Prophet (MGB): “O’ Prophet of God! We have never found anyone more pious than him.” The Prophet (MGB) asked: “How does he then earn a living?” The Prophet (MGB) said: “We run his life.” Then the Prophet (MGB) said: “Then you are more pious than he is.”[3]

3 - Supplications for Worshipping

Praying or reciting supplications is a part of worshipping God. It is the means of communication between man and the Lord. There are many hardships that we face which we cannot overcome by ourselves. Sometimes we need to rely on something or someone. The best One to rely on is God. Prayers and supplications are the means to approach God. He says:

And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation!"[The Holy Quran Mumin 40:60]

We see that God likes us to pray and call on Him. God has promised to answer. This answering is conditional. Prayer is itself a form of worship as we read in the following verse:

“When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way.”[The Holy Quran Baqarah 2:186]

In the above verse, God has referred to Himself and His servants several times showing the closeness between Him and His servants. Praying is a form of worshipping and expressing one’s humility to God and one’s servitude. All acts of worshipping have educational effects. Praying has some educational effects as well. It has been reported that an Arab went to see the Prophet (MGB) and asked: “Is God close to us so that we pray to Him, or is He far away from us and we must call Him?” The Prophet (MGB) was silent, and Gabriel descended and revealed the above verse [Baqarah 2:186] in response.

[1] Ibid, Tradition No. 14.

[2] Ibid, p.24, Tradition No. 13.

[3] Kar va Huqooq-i-Kargar, p.119.

PRAYING CURES SPIRITUAL AILMENTS

When man gets spiritual problems and develops complexes, he tries to save himself by resorting to praying. He talks to God, and asks Him for help.

CALAMITIES CAUSE MAN TO TURN TO GOD

Man inherently forgets God when he is having good times. He forgets that God has given him the blessings that he has. However, whenever he faces calamities and sees himself stuck with many problems, he turns to God. The Almighty God said:

“When We bestow favors on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us); and when evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!” [The Holy Quran H. Mim 41:51]

Traditions on Supplications

There is a tradition from the Prophet Muhammad (MGB) that says:

الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ.

“Saying supplications is a form of worshipping.” [1]

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq (MGB) was asked:

تَقُولُ فِي رَجُلَيْنِ دَخَلَا الْمَسْجِدَ جَمِيعاً كَأَنَّ أَحَدَهُمَا أَكْتَرَّ صَلَاةً وَالْآخَرَ دُعَاءً، أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: «كُلُّهُمَا سَيِّئٌ». قَالَ: «قَدْ عَلِمْتُ، وَلَكِنْ أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ؟» قَالَ: «أَكْتَرُهُمَا دُعَاءً. أَمَا تَسْمَعُ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى ﴿بِإِيتِاقًا﴾ وَوَقَالَ: «هِيَ الْعِبَادَةُ الْكُبْرَى».

“If two people enter a mosque, and one says more prayers and the other one says more supplications, which one is nobler than the other?” The Imam (MGB) replied: “Both of them are good.” He was asked: “Which one is nobler?” Then Imam Sadiq (MGB) replied: “The one who says more supplications is nobler than the other one, since saying supplications is a good form of worshipping.” [2]

4 - Looking can be Worshipping

Islam considers any looking that results in taking heed or acquiring knowledge and recognition for God as a form of worshipping. Imam Ali (MGB) said:

نَظَرٌ إِلَى الْعَالَمِ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الْإِمَامِ الْمُفْسِدِ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الْوَالِدَيْنِ بِرَأْفَةٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الْإِخْيَارِ يَوْدُهُ فِي اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِبَادَةٌ.

“Looking at a scientist or a just leader, and kindly looking at one’s parents are considered to be various forms of worshipping God. Also looking at a brother in faith who is loved for the sake of God is a form of worshipping.” [3]

It is clear that any kind of looking that is done for the sake of God is a form of worshipping, and God will reward it. Therefore, when Imam Sajjid (MGB) says that it is one of God’s rights incumbent upon us to worship Him, it implies any of the various forms of worshipping.

[1] Majmaul Bayan, v.8, p.528.

[2] Ibid, p.529.

[3] Majmueye Var’ram, v.2, p.175.

WORSHIPPING UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Our religion tells us that we must worship God under all circumstances. We should know that God is always present. Various states such as happiness or sadness, poverty or affluence, health or illness should not affect our worshipping of God. Some people only remember God when they are in trouble and need Him. The Almighty God said:

“There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!”[The Holy Quran Hajj 22:11]

This verse implies that they only say that they worship God, but they do not whole-heartedly believe in God. They have a very weak faith. This implies that they are not in the main stream of faith and Islam, but only on the side. Such people are not firm in their belief and might change if they experience even minor problems. Zurarah quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir (MGB): “There are some people who abandoned paganism and worshipped God, but they did not acknowledge the Prophet (MGB). Their worshipping sprung from pagan roots since they said: We will acknowledge him as the Prophet of God if God increases our wealth and children.”[1]

[1] *Noor ul-Saqalayn*, v.3, p.437.

TAKE PLEASURE IN WORSHIPPING

Muhammad ibn Yahya quoted on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa on the authority of two other people on the authority of Imam Baqir (MGB) on the authority of God's Prophet (MGB):

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ عِبَادَةٍ شِرَّةً ثُمَّ تَصِيرُ إِلَى قَتْرَةٍ، فَمَنْ صَارَتْ شِرَّةُ عِبَادَتِهِ إِلَى سُيِّئَتِي فَقَدِ اهْتَدَى، وَمَنْ خَالَفَ سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ ضَلَّ وَكَانَ عَمَلُهُ فِي تَبَابٍ. أَمَا إِنِّي أَصَلِّي وَأَنَامُ وَأَصُومُ وَأَفْطِرُ وَأَصْحَكُ وَأَبْكِي. فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنِّي مِنْهَا جِي وَسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

“Beware that worshipping may be accompanied by pleasure or boredom. If you take pleasure in worshipping and follow my tradition, then you will be guided. However, if you oppose my tradition you will be lost. Beware that this is my tradition. I pray, and then I go to sleep. I fast, and then I break my fast. I laugh and cry. Whoever abandons my tradition is not from my nation.”[1]

He also said:

وقال: كَفَى بِالْمَوْتِ مَوْعِظَةً وَكَفَى بِالْيَقِينِ غِنًى وَكَفَى بِالْعِبَادَةِ شُغْلًا.

“Death is the best admonition, certitude is the best wealth, and God's worship is the best job.”

Imam Sadiq (MGB) said:

لِكُلِّ أَحَدٍ شِرَّةٌ وَلِكُلِّ شِرَّةٍ قَتْرَةٌ، فَطُوبَى لِمَنْ كَانَتْ قَتْرَتُهُ إِلَى خَيْرٍ.

“Each person has some eagerness. For each instance of eagerness, there is also some sluggishness. How prosperous are those who are inclined towards the good even in their times of sluggishness.”[2]

Hafs ibn Bakhtary quoted Imam Sadiq (MGB):

لا تُكْرِهُوا إِلَى أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْعِبَادَةَ.

“Do not force yourself to worship God when you are tired or unwilling to do so.”[3]

[1] Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.85.

[2] Ibid, p.86.

[3] Ibid.

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