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Rights of Leaders

15) The Right of the Possessor of authority

The right of the possessor of authority (*sultan*) is that you know that God has made you a trial (*fitna*) for him. God is testing him through the authority He has given him over you. You should not expose yourself to his displeasure, for thereby you cast yourself by your own hands into destruction¹ and become his partner in his sin when he brings evil down upon you. ²

ثم حقوق الأئمة

حق السلطان 15

فَأَمَّا حَقُّ السُّلْطَانِ فَإِنَّ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّكَ جُعِلْتَ لَهُ فِتْنَةً وَأَنَّهُ مُبْتَلَىٰ فِيكَ بِمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ لَهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ السُّلْطَانِ وَأَنْ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ لَا تَتَعَرَّضَ لِسَخَطِهِ، فَتَلْقَىٰ بِيَدَيْكَ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ، وَتَكُونَ شَرِيكَاً لَهُ فِيمَا يَأْتِي إِلَيْكَ مِنْ سُوءٍ.

16) The Right of One who Trains through Knowledge

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 raise 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 make manifest his virtues. You should not sit with him in enmity or show hostility toward him in friendship. If you do all of this, God's angels will give witness for you that you went straight to him and learned his knowledge for God's sake, not for the sake of the people.

16. حق سائسك بالعلم.

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ سَائِسِكَ بِالْعِلْمِ التَّعْظِيمِ لَهُ وَالتَّوَقِيرِ لِمَجْلِسِهِ وَحُسْنُ الاسْتِمَاعِ إِلَيْهِ وَالْإِقْبَالَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْ لَا تَرْفَعَ عَلَيْهِ صَوْتَكَ، وَلَا تَجِيبَ أَحَدًا يَسْأَلُهُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هُوَ الَّذِي يَجِيبُ، وَلَا تَحْدِثْ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ أَحَدًا وَلَا تَغْتَابَ عِنْدَهُ أَحَدًا وَأَنْ تَدْفَعَ عَنْهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَ عِنْدَكَ بِسُوءٍ وَأَنْ تَسْتَرِ عَيْبَهُ وَتُظْهِرَ مَنَاقِبَهُ وَلَا تَجَالِسَ لَهُ عَدَاوًا وَلَا تَعَادِي لَهُ وَلِيَا فِإِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ شَهِدْتَ لَكَ مَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهِ بِأَنَّكَ قَصَدْتَهُ، وَتَعَلَّمْتَ عِلْمَهُ لِلَّهِ جَلَّ اسْمُهُ لَا لِلنَّاسِ.

17) The Right of One who trains through Property

The right of him who trains you through property is that you should obey him and not disobey him, unless obeying him would displease God, for there can be no obedience to a creature when it is disobedience to God.

17. حق السائس بالملك.

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ سَائِسِكَ بِالْمَلِكِ فَأَنْ تَطِيعَهُ وَلَا تَعْصِيَهُ إِلَّا فِيمَا يَسْخِطُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَانَّهُ لَا طَاعَةَ لِمَخْلُوقٍ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ.

1. Allusion to 2:195: Cast not yourselves by your own hands into destruction.

2. Imam Zayn al-`Abidin's attitude of respect toward the Umayyad rulers was clearly based upon this principle.

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