

Rights of Teachers and Students

Rights of teacher

Faithful teachers who enjoy good traits occupy a high position in the society because of the appreciative efforts they exert for educating and supplying individuals with knowledge and moralities. Besides, they are the pioneers of culture and guides of the coming generation. On account of that, they must enjoy definite rights against their students. First of all, students must respect their teachers in the same way as they respect their fathers so as to express their appreciation to them.

Alexander, once, was asked why he used to respect his teacher in a way better than his respecting his father. He answered: “My father is the founder of my transient life while my teacher is the founder of my changeless life.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “He who teaches an item of knowledge that leads to the right guidance will be having the same rewards of them who apply that item to themselves, without any decrease in their rewards. And he who teaches an item of deviation will be having to burden the same punishment that is decided for those who practice such an item without any decrease in their punishment¹.”

Students must appreciate their teachers’ efforts and reward them by means of showing gratitude and respect and following their recommendations. They also must pardon and neglect any situation of strictness or discipline that are intended for their good educationally and morally. The best comprehensive word that gathered the rights of teachers is the following saying of Imam as- Sajjad (a):

“The right of the one who trains you through knowledge is magnifying him, respecting his sessions, listening well to him, attending to him with devotion, avoiding raising your voice against him, avoiding answering any question before he answers, avoiding talking to anyone during his instructions, avoiding backbiting anyone before him, doing your best to defend him when he is backbitten and cover his flaws and publicize his good traits. Do not sit with his enemy and do not antagonize his friend. If you do so, the angels will testify for you that you have attended to him and received his knowledge for the sake of Allah, not people².”

Rights of Students

Seekers of studies enjoy particular standings of virtue and honor because they exert diligent efforts for seeking, retaining, and conveying knowledge to the coming generations.

The Prophet (S) said: “The like of students among the ignorant is the alive among the dead³.”

“Seeking knowledge is a duty that is imposed upon every male and female Muslim. It is most surely that Allah loves seekers of knowledge⁴.”

“The scholar and the seeker of knowledge are partners in the same rewarding: two for the scholar and one for the seeker of knowledge. Any other class is worthless⁵.”

Such merits traits are dedicated to the sincere students who aim at achieving self-discipline and moral conduct. The students who are empty of such intentions are deprived of such memorable traits and will have nothing more than transitory goals. Let us now refer briefly to some of the students' rights:

First of all, fathers should choose well qualified, faithful, and well-mannered teachers for their sons, so that they will be good imitable examples.

Students are generally characterized by fondness of following the examples of their instructors whose qualities affect the students' personalities very soon.

Second, students must be treated with kindness and compassion. Teachers are required to treat their students as if they are their sons and avoid humiliating and persecuting them, because such behaviors may make them disregard studying. To instruct and encourage students on studying, it is wise to reward the good-doers by words of praise and reproach the negligent by means of reprimand taking in consideration the condition that such matters must not injure their emotions or abuse their dignities.

Addressing to seekers of knowledge, Imam as-Sajjad (a) said in his Treatise of Rights:

“The right of your subjects through knowledge is that you should know that Allah made you a caretaker over them only through the knowledge He has given you and His storehouses, which He has opened up to you. If you do well the missions that Allah has chosen you for, treat them as same as the treatment of the merciful caretaker who respects his master in the affairs of the slaves and the clement steadfast one who always offers money for the needy ones, then Allah will increase His graces to you and you will be on the right way faithfully, otherwise you will be regarded as betrayal, unjust to the creatures, and expose yourself to encounter Allah's seizing His graces and power from you.”

Third, it is necessary for teachers to take in consideration the intellectual levels of the students and their readiness to receive knowledge. This consideration will help teachers choose the appropriate levels of study that befit each student and avoid providing information that are too high for them to understand.

Furthermore, it is important for teachers to realize each student's main concern so as to guide him to the fields that best suit his interest, since it is improper to coerce a student on definite fields of study, which he does not like.

Fourth, to secure an ideal rise for students, it is important to keep on guiding them incessantly in the scientific and moral fields. This is the only way to guarantee their being examples of decency.

Student must understand that the main purpose beyond studying is to achieve self-control and good sense so as to attain the honor of the obedience to God and, subsequently, the eternal pleasures will be won.

Neglecting such noble goals, a student fails to exploit science, loses all aspects of spirituality, and becomes the subject of the barren worldly whims.

The best example of such shortcomings is the current civilized nations whose individuals, though preceded others in fields of science and inventions, live humble lives suffocated by disintegrated morals, loose spiritual values, and prevalent evils all because they pursue wholly material trends and free themselves completely from the religious and moral values. Owing to so, they have competed with each other using the most fatal weapons for terminating each other and, hence, they have turned this world into a volcano threatening ruination and perdition to humankind.

1. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 1 page 42 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

2. Quoted from The Treatise of Rights; Imam as-Sajjad (a).

3. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 1/58 (as quoted from at-Tusi's al-Amali).

4. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 1 page 36 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

5. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 1/56 (as quoted from Bassaair ud-Darajat).

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