

Right n. 7: The Right of the Hand

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وَأَمَّا حَقُّ يَدِكَ فَأَنْ لَا تَبْسُطَهَا إِلَى مَا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ فَتَنَالَ بِمَا تَبْسُطُهَا إِلَيْهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ
الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي الْآجِلِ، وَمِنَ النَّاسِ بِلِسَانِ اللَّائِمَةِ فِي الْعَاجِلِ، وَلَا تَقْبُضْهَا مِمَّا
افْتَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا وَلَكِنْ تُوَقِّرْهَا بِقَبْضِهَا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّا يَحِلُّ لَهَا وَبَسْطِهَا إِلَى
كَثِيرٍ مِمَّا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهَا، فَإِذَا هِيَ قَدْ عُقِلَتْ وَشُرِّفَتْ فِي الْعَاجِلِ وَجَبَ لَهَا حُسْنُ
التَّوَابِ فِي الْآجِلِ.

And the right of your hand is that you stretch it not toward that which is unlawful to you. Should you do so, you will be chastised by God in the future. And you are not secure from the blameful tongue of the people now, either. Do not prevent your hands from performing what God has made obligatory for them. You should honor your hands in such a way as to prevent them from engaging in many of the deeds that are not allowed for them. You should let them engage in many deeds that are not harmful for them. If they are used by the intellect and with honor now, then they are bound to receive a good reward in the future. ¹

Hand is used in several contexts:

1 – It is sometimes used to represent possession of rule as in the following verse:

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعْزِزُ مَنْ

تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Say: "O God! Lord of Power (and Rule), Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power." [The Holy Qur'an, Al-i-Imran 3:26]

2 – In other places, it is used to indicate stinginess or generosity as in the following verse:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَلِيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

The Jews say: "God's hand is tied up." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter. Nay, both His hands are widely outstretched: He giveth and spendeth (of His bounty) as He pleaseth. But the revelation that cometh to thee from God increaseth in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy. Amongst them we have placed enmity and hatred till the Day of Judgment. Every time they kindle the fire of war, God doth extinguish it; but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And God loveth not those who do mischief." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Ma'ida 5:64]

3 – In other places, it is used to refer to possession of power as in the following verse:

وَاذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ

"And commemorate Our Servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, possessors of Power and Vision." [The Holy Qur'an, Saad 38:45]

Hand as a Source of Corruption

Even though our two hands are such important God-given blessings that have a compensation equal to full compensation for one's life, they are also considered to be the source of corruption as we can read in the following verse:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil).” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Rum 30:41]

Undoubtedly crimes are committed using hands, and affect both the individuals and the society. There will also be reactions to these deeds. We read in the following verse:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَن كَثِيرٍ

“Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Shura 42:30]

Thus, we realize that many misfortunes that we experience are a direct result of our own deeds, and are sometimes divine punishment. We read in the following verse:

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And spend of your substance in the cause of God, and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction; but do good; for God loveth those who do good.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2: 195]

Therefore, we are admonished against doing evil deeds that will result in our own destruction. We are encouraged to give charity and do good deeds. Sometimes we use our hands with which we must build our homes to destroy them as we read in the following verse:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ
أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ
يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ

“It is He Who got out the Unbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes at the first gathering (of the forces). Little did ye think that they would get out: And they thought that their fortresses would defend them from God! But the (Wrath of) God came to them from quarters from which they little expected (it), and cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their dwellings by their own hands and the hands of the Believers. Take warning, then, O ye with eyes (to see):” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Hashr 59:2]

This verse refers to the Jews who destroyed their own castles from within. It may also have some philosophical connotations.

Murder Committed by Hands

The most painful aspect of the story of the two sons of Adam is the murdering of one by the other. When God accepted the offering from one of them but rejected that of the other one, the latter threatened to kill the former. In response the brother said:

لَئِن بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ ۗ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee: for I do fear God, the Cherisher of the Worlds.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Mai’da 5:28]

Now let us look at the traditions about hands. In *Usul al-Kafi*, there is a whole chapter on the hand and other body parts, and what God has made incumbent upon them. Imam Sadiq said:

وَفَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْيَدَيْنِ أَنْ لَا يَبْطِشَ بِهِمَا إِلَى مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَأَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِهِمَا إِلَى
مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَفَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنَ الصَّدَقَةِ وَصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ وَالْجِهَادِ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالطَّهُّورِ لِلصَّلَاةِ

“And God made it incumbent upon the hands not to extend out for what God has forbidden, and do what the Almighty God has decreed for them including giving charity, establishing the ties of kinship, fighting in the way of God, and making ablutions for the prayers.”²

Then Imam Sadiq recited the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ
وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

“O ye who believe! When ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows; rub your heads; and your feet to the ankles...” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Mai’da 5:6]

There are several uses for hands mentioned in the Qur’an. We will briefly refer to some of them here.

Pledge of Allegiance with Hands

The hand is used to pledge allegiance to someone. Consider the following verse in this regard:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ
السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

“God’s Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquility to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Fath 48: 18]

Usually hand-shaking is used in making a deal. It is also used to declare one’s allegiance to someone, and one’s readiness to acknowledge his power and to obey him. This is a form of a deal which brings mutual responsibilities. One accepts to obey the other, and the other one accepts to protect and defend him. Ibn Khaldoon wrote: “When they wanted to pledge allegiance with the leader, they placed their hands in his hands, like what a seller and a buyer do.”³

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ
عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to God: the Hand of God is over their hands: then anyone who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and anyone who fulfils what he has covenanted with God, – God will soon grant him a great Reward.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Fath 48: 10]

This pledge of allegiance by the men was done by shaking hands. However, for women to pledge allegiance, a bowl of water was used to provide an intermediate media. The Prophet would put his

hands in water, and the women would touch the water to pledge allegiance to him. The pledge of allegiance of the people with the Prophet and the Immaculate Imams was meant to indicate their loyalty to them, and its breach was considered a great sin. Imam Musa ibn Ja'far said:

ثَلَاثُ مُوْبِقَاتٍ: نَكْثُ الصَّفَقَةِ وَتَرْكُ السُّنَّةِ وَفِرَاقُ الْجَمَاعَةِ.

*“There are three sins which will cause one’s destruction: breaching one’s allegiance, abandoning the tradition (of the Prophet), and separation of oneself from the society.”*⁴

We do not intend to discuss all aspects of allegiance here. It is sufficient to note that the hands are used to pledge allegiance

Payment of the Jizyah with the Hand

One of the uses for hands mentioned in the Qur’an is the payment of ‘Jizyah’. ‘Jizyah’ is a form of tax paid by the non-Muslims who live under the protection of the Islamic state. The tax is paid in return for the protection they receive. We read in the following verse:

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ
صَاغِرُونَ

“Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Tawbah 9:29]

The payment of this tax is an indication of submission to the decrees of Islam and the Holy Qur’an. It is a form of tax on individuals, not their land or property. Several treaties have been signed regarding this issue. We cite one as an example here. In the treaty between Khalid ibn Walid and the Christians we read: “This is a letter from Khalid ibn Walid to Salvaba ibn Nastoofa⁵ and his tribe.

I sign this treaty with you for tax and defense. Based on this treaty, you are under our protection. We can charge you this tax as long as we protect you. Otherwise, we have no rights. This treaty is signed in the month of Safar of the twelfth year after the migration of the Prophet to Medina.”⁶

The Anatomy of the Hand

The hand is composed of many small bones called **carpals**, **metacarpals** and **phalanges**. The two bones of the lower arm – the **radius** and the **ulna** – meet at the hand to form the wrist.

The median and ulnar nerves are the major nerves of the hand, running the length of the arm to transmit electrical impulses to and from the brain to create movement and sensation.

The skeleton of the hand is subdivided into three segments: the **carpus** or **wrist bones**; the **metacarpus** or **bones of the palm**; and the **phalanges** or **bones of the digits**.

The Carpus (Ossa Carpi)

The **carpal bones**, eight in number, are arranged in two rows. Those of the proximal row, from the radial to the ulnar side, are named the **navicular**, **lunate**, **triangular**, and **pisiform**; those of the distal row, in the same order, are named the **greater multangular**, **lesser multangular**, **capitate**, and **hamate**.

Common Characteristics of the Carpal Bones

Each bone (excepting the pisiform) presents six surfaces. Of these the *volar* or *anterior* and the *dorsal* or *posterior surfaces* are rough, for ligamentous attachment; the dorsal surfaces being the broader, except in the navicular and lunate. The *superior* or *proximal*, and *inferior* or *distal surfaces* are articular, the superior generally convex, the inferior concave; the *medial* and *lateral surfaces* are also articular where they are in contact with contiguous bones, otherwise they are rough and tuberculated. The structure in all is similar, viz., cancellous tissue enclosed in a layer of compact bone.

Bones of the Proximal Row (upper row)

The Navicular Bone (os naviculare manus; scaphoid bone)

The navicular bone is the largest bone of the proximal row. It has received its name from its fancied resemblance to a boat. It is situated at the radial side of the carpus, its long axis being from above downward, sideways, and forward. The **superior surface** is convex, smooth, of triangular shape, and articulates with the lower end of the radius. The **inferior surface**, directed downward, sideways, and backward, is also smooth, convex, and triangular, and is divided by a slight ridge into two parts, the lateral articulating with the greater multangular, the medial with the lesser multangular.

On the **dorsal surface** is a narrow, rough groove, which runs the entire length of the bone, and serves for the attachment of ligaments. The **volar surface** is concave above, and elevated at its lower and lateral part into a rounded projection, the **tubercle**, which is directed forward, provides attachment to the transverse carpal ligament, and sometimes is the origin to a few fibers of the abductor pollicis brevis.

The **lateral surface** is rough and narrow, and provides attachment to the radial collateral ligament of the wrist. The **medial surface** presents two articular facets; of these, the superior or smaller is flattened of semilunar form, and articulates with the lunate bone; the inferior or larger is concave, forming with the lunate a concavity for the head of the capitate bone.

The Lunate Bone (os lunatum; semilunar bone)

The lunate bone may be distinguished by its deep concavity and crescentic outline. It is situated in the center of the proximal row of the carpus, between the navicular and triangular. The **superior surface**, convex and smooth, articulates with the radius. The **inferior surface** is deeply concave, and of greater extent from before backward than transversely: it articulates with the head of the capitate, and, by a long, narrow facet (separated by a ridge from the general surface), with the hamate. The **dorsal** and **volar surfaces** are rough, for the attachment of ligaments, the former being the broader, and of a somewhat rounded form. The **lateral surface** presents a narrow, flattened, semilunar facet for articulation with the navicular. The **medial surface** is marked by a smooth, quadrilateral facet, for articulation with the triangular.

The Triangular Bone (os triquetum; cuneiform bone)

The triangular bone may be distinguished by its pyramidal shape, and by an oval isolated facet for articulation with the pisiform bone. It is situated at the upper and ulnar side of the carpus. The **superior surface** presents a medial, rough, non-articular portion, and a lateral convex articular portion that articulates with the triangular articular disk of the wrist. The **inferior surface**, directed sideways, is concave, sinuously curved, and smooth for articulation with the hamate.

The **dorsal surface** is rough for the attachment of ligaments. The **volar surface** presents, on its medial part, an oval facet, for articulation with the pisiform; its lateral part is rough for ligamentous attachment. A flat, quadrilateral facet, for articulation with the lunate, marks the lateral surface, the base of the pyramid. The **medial surface**, the summit of the pyramid, is pointed and roughened, for the attachment of the ulnar collateral ligament of the wrist.

The Pisiform Bone (os pisiforme)

The pisiform bone may be known by its small size, and by presenting a single articular facet. It is situated on a plane anterior to the other carpal bones and is spheroidal in form. Its **dorsal surface** presents a smooth, oval facet, for articulation with the triangular: this facet approaches the superior, but not the inferior border of the bone. The **volar surface** is rounded and rough, and gives attachment to the transverse carpal ligament, and to the Flexor carpi ulnaris and Abductor digiti quinti. The **lateral** and **medial surfaces** are also rough, the former being concave, the latter usually convex.

Bones of the Distal Row (lower row)

The Greater Multangular Bone (*os multangulum majus; trapezium*)—The greater multangular bone may be distinguished by a deep groove on its volar surface. It is situated at the radial side of the carpus, between the navicular and the first metacarpal bone. The **superior surface** is directed upward and towards the middle; medially it is smooth, and articulates with the navicular; laterally it is rough and continuous with the lateral surface. The **inferior surface** is oval, and forms a saddle-shaped surface for articulation with the base of the first metacarpal bone.

The **dorsal surface** is rough. The **volar surface** is narrow and rough. At its upper part is a deep groove, running from above obliquely downward and towards the middle; it transmits the tendon of the Flexor carpi radialis, and is bounded laterally by an oblique ridge. This surface gives origin to the Opponens pollicis and to the Abductor and Flexor pollicis brevis; it also affords attachment to the transverse carpal ligament. The **lateral surface** is broad and rough, for the attachment of ligaments. The **medial surface** presents two facets; the upper, large and concave, articulates with the lesser multangular; the lower, small and oval, with the base of the second metacarpal.

The Lesser Multangular Bone (*os multangulum minus; trapezoid bone*)

The lesser multangular is the smallest bone in the distal row. It may be known by its wedge-shaped form, the broad end of the wedge constituting the dorsal, the narrow end the volar surface; and its four articular facets touching each other, and separated by sharp edges. The **superior surface**, quadrilateral, smooth, and slightly concave, articulates with the navicular. The **inferior surface** articulates with the proximal end of the second metacarpal bone; it is convex from side to side, concave from before backward and subdivided by an elevated ridge into two unequal facets.

The **dorsal** and **volar surfaces** are rough for the attachment of ligaments, the former being the larger of the two. The **lateral surface**, convex and smooth, articulates with the greater multangular. The **medial surface** is concave and smooth in front, for articulation with the capitate; rough behind, for the attachment of an interosseous ligament.

The Capitate Bone (*os capitatum; os magnum*)

The capitate bone is the largest of the carpal bones, and occupies the center of the wrist. It presents, above, a rounded portion or head, which is received into the concavity formed by the navicular and lunate; a constricted portion or neck; and below this, the body. The **superior surface** is round, smooth, and articulates with the lunate. The **inferior surface** is divided by two ridges into three facets, for articulation with the second, third, and fourth metacarpal bones, that for the third being the largest. The **dorsal surface** is broad and rough. The **volar surface** is narrow, rounded, and rough, for the attachment of ligaments and a part of the Adductor pollicis obliquus.

The **lateral surface** articulates with the lesser multangular by a small facet at its anterior inferior angle, behind which is a rough depression for the attachment of an interosseous ligament. Above this is a deep, rough groove, forming part of the neck, and serving for the attachment of ligaments; it is bounded superiorly by a smooth, convex surface, for articulation with the navicular. The **medial surface** articulates with the hamate by a smooth, concave, oblong facet, which occupies its posterior and superior parts; it is rough in front, for the attachment of an interosseous ligament.

The Hamate Bone (os hamatum; unciform bone)

The hamate bone may be readily distinguished by its wedge-shaped form, and the hook-like process which projects from its volar surface. It is situated at the medial and lower angle of the carpus, with its base downward, resting on the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones, and its apex directed upward and lateralward. The **superior surface**, the apex of the wedge, is narrow, convex, smooth, and articulates with the lunate.

The **inferior surface** articulates with the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones by concave facets that are separated by a ridge. The **dorsal surface** is triangular and rough for ligamentous attachment. The **volar surface** presents, at its lower and ulnar side, a curved, hook-like process, the **hamulus**, directed forward and sideways. This process gives attachment, by its apex, to the transverse carpal ligament and the Flexor carpi ulnaris; by its medial surface to the Flexor brevis and Opponens digiti quinti; its lateral side is grooved for the passage of the Flexor tendons into the palm of the hand.

It is one of the four eminences on the front of the carpus to which the transverse carpal ligament of the wrist is attached; the others being the pisiform medially, the oblique ridge of the greater multangular and the tubercle of the navicular laterally. The **medial surface** articulates with the triangular bone by an oblong facet, cut obliquely from above, downward and medialward. The *lateral surface* articulates with the capitate by its upper and posterior part, the remaining portion being rough, for the attachment of ligaments.

The Jurisprudents' View on the Value of the Hands

In Islamic jurisprudence the hands are so highly valued that one-half of full compensation is decreed for each one. The compensation for both hands is equal to full compensation for one's life: "The compensation for chopping off both hands is equal to the full compensation for one's life. The compensation for each hand is half of that amount. There is no discord among the jurisprudents on this issue."⁷

There are many traditions to support this. We can refer to the traditions that hold that there is full compensation for body parts of which we have two, like the eyes, the hands and the legs. Hisham ibn Salim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq : "There is full compensation for parts of which we have two, and half compensation for each."⁸

Imam Khomeini said: “There is full compensation for both hands. There is half compensation for each hand. The left or the right hands are not any different in this respect. There is half compensation for one who only has one hand either through birth or through losing one hand before.”⁹

He also said: “What is the extent of the hand that is so valuable? It extends from the joints that connect the palm of the hand to the wrist. The compensation for the fingers is half of full compensation too.”¹⁰

Trustworthiness Makes the Hands Valuable

It was said that the blood money to compensate for both hands is equal to that for one’s life. Once Abu’l-`Ala`al-Ma`arri went to see Sayyid Morteza to object to the chopping off of fingers as a penalty for theft. He said: “How is it they chop-off a hand worth five hundred Mithqals¹¹ of gold for stealing only one quarter of a Dinar?” Abu’l `Ala who was an infidel did not agree with this ruling.

Then Sayyid Morteza replied: “The nobility of trustworthiness has raised the value of the hand, but the humility of treachery reduces it. Then try to understand the Wisdom of your Lord.” In another reference the reply is recorded as: “It is the guarding of property that has raised the value of the hand, but transgression of property reduces its value. Then try to ponder over the Wisdom of your Lord.” There was another man present who replied: “The hand is highly valued when it is oppressed. But it loses its value when it oppresses.”

There are many other sayings in this regard which all support the idea that the hand is valuable as long as it is trustworthy, but it loses its value when used in treachery, for stealing or oppression.¹²

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1. If the hands are not used to engage in what is forbidden.
 2. Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.36.
 3. Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun, p.209
 4. Tafsir Namuneh, v.22, p.70, quoted from Bihar al-Anwar, v.67, p. 185.
 5. The Christian chief.
 6. Tafsir Namuneh, v.7, p.357, quoted from Tafsir al-Minar, v. 10, p.294.
 7. Mabani Tuklimat al-Minhaj, v.2, p.299.
 8. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, v. 19, p.217.
 9. Tahrir al-Wasilah, v.2, p.578.
 10. Ibid.
 11. A unit of weight equal to 4.25 grams.
 12. Rawzat al-Jinnat, v. 1, p.271.

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