



# RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM





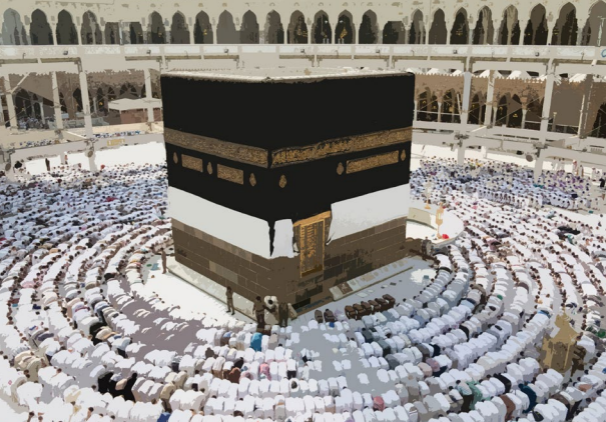
In the Name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious,  
the Most Merciful



# RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

There are well-established public and private rights in the Islamic society. In the section below we will highlight the most important public and private rights in the Islamic law and teachings:

- 01 Rights of Almighty God
- 02 Rights of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
- 03 Rights of other Prophets and Messengers
- 04 Rights of Parents
- 05 Rights of Husband towards His Wife
- 06 Rights of Wife towards Her Husband
- 07 Rights of Children
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## 01 THE RIGHTS TOWARDS GOD, THE ALMIGHTY

The essential right of man towards God is to worship Him alone, setting up no rivals or partners with Him, nor attributing any sons or daughters to Him. The eternal truth of all existence is that LA ILAHA ILLA-ALLAH: “there is nothing worthy of being worshipped except God,” meaning that there is no so-called “god”, deity, or entity worthy of worship and absolute obedience except for the One Creator. This is the testimony of faith of a Muslim that involves the following requirements:

1. God alone deserves to be worshiped and obeyed in an absolute sense. None has the right to be worshiped along with or besides Him. All statements, acts and hidden intentions must agree with what the Almighty has designated. All actions of man must be performed for the Pleasure of the Almighty. The Almighty states in the Qur'an: "And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you.' Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible." [40:60]
2. A Muslim is required to believe in the Names and Attributes that God has given Himself, or those attributed to Him through revelation by His Prophet and Messenger ﷺ. No one may attribute any name or quality to God by speculation that neither God nor His Prophet and Messenger have attributed to Him. He must not offer any undue explanation, similitude thereof, or express an opinion concerning these Names and Attributes of God. God the Exalted says in the Glorious Qur'an:

“There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.” [42:11]

3. Man must submit himself to God, in faith with total and sincere belief, declaring with his tongue, accepting with his heart and showing with his actions the truth of the statement that God, the Almighty, states in the Qur’an:

“So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows of your movement and your resting place.” [47:19]

4. Human beings are obligated to give full and total submission to the Will of God. This is based on the instruction of the following verse of the Qur’an: “It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.” [33:36]



5. A Muslim must have pure love for God as well as His Prophet and Messenger ﷺ. This love should dominate the love of other beings and his own self. God, the Exalted, says in the Qur'an:

“Say: [O Muhammad], ‘If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.’” [9:24]



6. Man must worship God only in the manner and form legislated by God through his Messenger and Prophet ﷺ. It is not allowed to invent an act of worship through speculation and then ascribe it to the true religion. All worship should be in line with the revealed religion of Islam. For example, concerning offering prayer, one of the fruits of offering and maintaining such prayer is that it helps to enjoin good and stop all evil acts. God, the Almighty, states in the Qur'an:

“Recite [O Muhammad] what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.” [29:45]

The payment of Zakah (obligatory charity) to the destitute and needy generates self-purification and elimination of miserliness, as well as alleviation of the pains and trials of the less fortunate. God, the Almighty, states in the Qur'an:

“He who spends his wealth for increase in self-purification. And who has in mind no favor from anyone to be paid back. Except to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. He surely will be pleased.” [92:18-21]

Observing fasting enables man to have better control and self-discipline over temptations and passions. Man becomes more pious and God-fearing, and becomes more conscious of the needs of the poor and less fortunate. Almighty God states in the Qur’an:

“O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may achieve piety.” [2:183]

Hajj (pilgrimage) also has many benefits, as God, the Almighty, states in the Qur’an:

“That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the downtrodden and poor.” [22:28]

All these and other acts of worship in Islam are meant for man's own benefit. There is never undue hardship when performed under normal circumstances. God, the Almighty, states in the Qur'an:

“God intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you.”  
[2:185]

The Messenger of God ﷺ said in support of this concept: “If I command you to do anything, do as much as you can.”

And he ﷺ said: “Religion is easy...”



In the event of sickness and other legitimate hardships, acts of worship are either completely exempted or lessened, with some concessions. For instance, standing is required to perform the daily-prescribed prayer, but if one is unable to stand, he may offer it sitting down. If that is not possible, he may lie down on the side of the body, on his back, or in any other way that is suitable and comfortable to his situation. If a worshipper is not able to maintain his prayer in any of the above situations, he may pray by the motions of his hands or even his eyes.

It is incumbent to perform ablution prior to offering a prayer but this requirement is waived if a Muslim cannot find water or there is some harm in its use. In place of water, he performs dry ablution instead, and offers his prayer exactly as if he had performed ablution with water.

A woman in her menstrual period or one who is experiencing post-natal bleeding is exempted from both fasting and performing prayer until her bleeding

completely stops, and she is not required to make up the prayers she missed later.

A Muslim, male or female, who does not possess Nisab (the requisite minimal amount on the basis of which it is obligatory to pay the obligated charity of Zakah), is not required to pay any Zakah.

An old person who is unable to observe fasting, and a sick person who also cannot observe fasting, are exempted from fasting. They have to pay its atonement if they are able. Atonement is to feed a needy person one meal for each day not fasted. Similarly, a traveler may break his fast while traveling, as traveling involves hardship and fatigue.

The Hajj is not obligatory on any person who is incapable due to physical inability or financial constraints since the person intending Hajj must have sufficient funds to satisfy himself and his family's needs beyond the expenses of pilgrimage. God, the Exalted, says in the Qur'an:

“In [the House of worship in Makkah] are manifest signs [such as] the Station of

Abraham; whosoever enters it, he attains security. And the pilgrimage to the House is a duty that mankind owes to God, those who can afford the expenses; and whoever disbelieves, then God stands not in need of any of His creatures.” [3:97]

Another example of the mitigation of hardships in Islam is when a person faces the shortage of lawful food and is on the brink of death; in this case, he is allowed to eat even unlawful food items, like blood and the meat of dead animals, that is enough to keep him alive. This rule is also based upon the instructions of the Qur’an:

“[God] has forbidden you only the dead animals, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than God. But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [2:173]



## 02 THE RIGHTS TOWARDS PROPHET MUHAMMAD

God sent His Messenger to guide mankind. If man believes in, and obeys him, giving him all his due rights, God has promised that person success in this life and the Hereafter as a reward. These rights are summarized in the following testimony along with the above testimony: “There is nothing worthy of being worshipped except God, and Muhammad ﷺ is the slave and Messenger of God.” This declaration requires the following:

- A believer must comply with the commands of the Prophet ﷺ and must strive to avoid acts of disobedience as God, the Exalted, says in the Qur'an:

“So take whatsoever the Messenger gives you, and abstain from that which he forbids you. And fear God, verily God is severe in Punishment.” [59:7]

- A Muslim must follow the authentic traditions of the Sunnah (way of the Prophet) to the best of their ability. No one has any authority to alter, add or omit any of the Sunnah traditions of the Messenger of God ﷺ. God, the Exalted, says in the Qur'an: “Say: ‘If you really love God, follow me: God will love you and forgive you your sins. And God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’” [3:31]
- A believer must honor the special status and dignity bestowed by God to His Prophet ﷺ. No one must go to extremes, either by exaggerating or degrading this status. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians exaggerated in their praise



of [Jesus] the son of Mary; (as) I am no more than a servant (of God). So say: ‘God’s servant and His Messenger.’”

And he ﷺ said: “O people! Say what you have to say, and do not allow yourselves to be seduced by Satan. I am Muhammad, the servant and Messenger of God. I do not like you to elevate me above the status assigned to me by God, the Almighty.”

And he ﷺ is reported to have said: “Do not praise me more than I deserve. God created me as a slave before calling me a Prophet and Messenger.”



- A Muslim must show acceptance of and satisfaction with any verdict passed by the Prophet of God ﷺ as God, the Exalted, says in the Qur'an:

“But no, by Your Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions and accept them with full submission.”  
[4:65]

- Belief in the universality of the Message of Prophet Muhammad to all of humanity. Islam is not designated to a specific category of people, as it was the case with previous Prophets and Messengers ﷺ. This is derived from the Qur'an: “Say: [O Muhammad], ‘O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, [from Him] to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death.’ So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him that you may be guided.” [7:158]

- Belief that God's Messenger and Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ, has been protected by God against possible human errors in relation to his mission to mankind. This includes the belief that the Prophet ﷺ never omitted or added anything to the complete Message of God. This is based on the following statement from the Qur'an: "Nor does he speak of his own desire." [53:3]
- Belief that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the final Prophet and Messenger of God to mankind, and that no Prophet or Messenger will come after him ﷺ. God says in the Qur'an:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of God, and the Last of the Prophets." [33:40]

And the Messenger of God ﷺ said: "... and there is no prophet after me."

- Belief that the religious duties and divine commands God sent to mankind are complete, and that the Prophet ﷺ has delivered the Message of God in its entirety, and gave the best advice to

his community and the best guidance to do all good and to avoid all evil. This is based on the verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

“This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.” [5:3]



■ Belief that the laws legislated in Islam are approved by God, and that all the various types of worship are based upon and revolve around these divine laws. Independent human actions will not be accepted, unless and until they are in conformity with these divine laws. This is based on the statement of the Qur'an: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." [3:85]

■ A Muslim must offer the proper greeting to God's Prophet and Messenger ﷺ when his name is mentioned as a form of respect, as instructed in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, Allah confers praise upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] praise upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace." [33:56]

■ A Believer must have true love and affection for the Prophet and Messenger of God ﷺ above the love of all others. As all the information and practices of the true religion of God, the only true

means of salvation, were delivered to us through the relentless efforts of the Prophet, we should love him dearly. Additionally, we should not forget the many blessings that the Prophet ﷺ brought as guidance. This is based on the instruction of the Qur'an:

“Say: [O Muhammad], ‘If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.’” [9:24]

- A Muslim must devote every possible effort and opportunity available to him to call, with wisdom and patience, all others to the Message of Muhammad ﷺ. He should strive to inform those who are unaware and misinformed and strengthen the faith of people with weak, wavering faith. As God, the Most Wise, says in the Qur'an:

“Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and dialogue with them in a way that is better and most gracious. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Most Aware of those who are guided.” [16:125]

This is also based on the statement of God’s Prophet and Messenger ﷺ, “Share with others, on my behalf, even one verse.”





### 03 RIGHTS TOWARDS OTHER PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS

A Muslim's belief in Islam is not complete or acceptable unless he declares belief in the truth of all the previous Prophets and Messengers of God. A Muslim must believe that all the previous Prophets and Messengers were sent for specific groups of people during a specific time, whereas the Message of Islam is universal, and is for all times and places until the Day of Judgment. God says in the Qur'an:



“The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], ‘We make no distinction between any of His messengers.’ And they say, ‘We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.’” [2:285]

Muslims are required to deliver the Message of Islam to others, but never to force or compel others to accept it, as God, the Exalted, says in the Qur’an: “Let there be no compulsion in religion.” [2:256]





## 04 THE RIGHTS OF PARENTS

The rights of parents include respect, love and obedience. This obedience is conditional in that it does not contradict obedience to the commands of God and His Messenger. It involves care and kindness to both parents, and provision of necessities for elder parents. Humility and respect to both parents equally is an obligation, and any arrogance or insolence is forbidden. Patience and perseverance are required when serving parents, no matter what the circumstances. God says in the Qur'an: "And your Lord has decreed

that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them even the mildest word of disrespect, nor abuse them, and address them with kind words.” [17:23]

The Messenger of God ﷺ instructed us saying:

“God’s Pleasure (on someone) is based on the pleasure of his parents. The Wrath of God is based upon the anger of his parents.”

Both parents are entitled to this right even if they are not Muslims, so long as they do not command their children to do any act of disobedience to God. Asmaa -the daughter of Abu Bakr- said: “My mother came to visit me while still not a Muslim. I asked God’s Prophet ﷺ concerning her visit (and how to treat her while visiting me) and said, ‘My mother is eager to visit with me. Should I (or should I not) extend my courtesy (as a host) to her?’ He ﷺ said: ‘Yes, extend her your courtesy.’”

The mother must be given priority in terms of kindness, sympathy, good feelings, love, and affection as mentioned by God's Prophet ﷺ: "A man came to God's Prophet ﷺ and asked him, 'O Prophet of God! Who is the most worthy and deserving person of my good treatment and companionship?'

He ﷺ replied, 'Your mother.' The man asked, 'Who is next worthy person of my companionship?' God's Messenger replied, 'Your mother.' The man asked, 'Who is next?' God's Messenger replied, 'Your mother'. The man asked, 'Who is next?' God's Messenger replied, 'Your father.' In another version, there is the ending: '...your father, and then the next nearest and next nearest.'"

God's Messenger ﷺ assigned the mother with a three-fold portion of the right of companionship. The father, in comparison, receives only one share. This is due to the fact that mothers suffer more hardships during pregnancy, during the delivery, and during caring of their children. God says in the Qur'an:

“And we have enjoined on man kindness to his parents. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship...” [46:15]

This in no way demeans the rights of the father, since the Prophet ﷺ said:

“No son can repay (the right of his father) unless he finds him a slave, buys him and then emancipates him.”





## 05 THE RIGHTS OF A HUSBAND ON HIS WIFE

A husband has the right of ultimate authority of the home management since he is responsible for the family and is accountable for all aspects of their maintenance. His leadership should be with justice, patience and wisdom. As God says in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given one more than the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means.” [4:34]

The main reason for this added degree of responsibility is that men are given a higher portion of the inheritance as a result of their financial obligations. A wife is required to obey the commands and instructions of her husband as long as these do not involve any act of disobedience to God's command and the Prophet's instructions. 'Aishah, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ questioned him:

"Whose right is the greatest on a woman?" He ﷺ replied, 'That of her husband.' The Messenger ﷺ was asked: "Whose right is the greatest on a man?" He ﷺ replied, "That of his mother."

A wife must not demand from her husband things that he cannot afford, what he is not capable to produce, or tasks beyond his ability. A wife is required to protect the children and the reputation of her husband by protecting herself and being completely chaste. She should be a trustworthy guardian of his wealth. She should not leave her husband's home without his prior knowledge, nor allow any person who her

husband dislikes to enter his home. This is to protect the honor and harmony of the family, as instructed by the Messenger of God ﷺ: “The best of women is the one, who, if you look at her you will be pleased with her, if you request her [to perform any lawful action] she will obey you, and if you are absent, she will protect and preserve your wealth and honor.







## 06 THE RIGHTS OF A WIFE ON HER HUSBAND

The rights of wives concerning their husbands are many and may be summarized as follows:

Dowry:

A wife is entitled to receive a dowry from her husband at the time of marriage; a marriage contract is void without it. The dowry is not to be forfeited, but after the completion of a marriage contract, she may forfeit her right as God says in the Qur'an:

“And give women [upon marriage] their dowry graciously. But if they give up willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease.” [4:4]

#### Financial Support:

A husband is required to provide, within his means and limits, all the essential and basic requirements of his wife, children and entire household. God, the Exalted, says in the Qur'an:

“Let a man of wealth spend from his wealth, and he whose provision is restricted-let him spend from what Allah has given him. Allah does not charge a soul except [according to] what He has given it. Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease.” [65:7]

To encourage generosity towards the wives, Islam has considered this financial support as charity which is rewarded greatly by God. The Prophet ﷺ said to Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqas: “No amount you spend on your family seeking reward from God but that He will reward you, even if it is a bite of food that you put in your wife's mouth.”

A wife has a right to take the required amount from her husband's property for herself and her children without her husband's knowledge if he spends miserly on them, according to the hadith wherein Hind bint 'Utbah said: "O Messenger of God: verily, Abu Sufyan is a miser and doesn't give me enough for myself and my child except what I take from his wealth without his knowledge," so he ﷺ said: 'Take what is reasonably enough for you and your son.'"

Companionship and intimate relationship:

One of the most important rights of a wife is to secure from her husband a satisfactory level of intimate relationship, as well as a fair amount of time with him. This right of the wife and family members must be fully maintained since a wife needs an affectionate husband to take care of her and fulfill her basic needs. As stated by the Prophet ﷺ: "The best of you are those who are the best to their wives."

Protection of all the secrets of the wife:

A husband must not disclose any of his wife's deficiencies or shortcomings. He must keep all what he sees and hears from his wife as a secret that should not ever be disclosed. The intimate relationship between a husband and wife in Islam is cherished and protected. Marital relationships are sacred relationships according to Islam, as we read in the instructions of God's Messenger ﷺ: "One of the worst circumstances in the sight of God on the Day of Judgment is that of a man who will have an intimate relationship with his wife, and then spread the secrets of his spouse to the public."



## Equality and Fairness:

The husband who is married to more than one wife must provide equally to all of his wives by offering them the same - or comparable - housing conditions and clothing. He is to spend equal time with each one of them. Any injustice in this regard is strictly prohibited as the Messenger of God ﷺ said: "He who has two wives and does not treat them both equally will appear on the Day of Judgment while he is half paralyzed."

## Fair and kind treatment:

A husband must extend just treatment to his wife and household. A husband must demonstrate care and kindness, and must solve any problem within his means, while being gentle and forgiving with his wife, seeking the Pleasure of God in both worlds. A good Muslim husband should consult with his wife concerning their life, and future needs and plans. He is required to provide for his wife and household all means of a peaceful environment, at home and outside. The Messenger ﷺ of God

said: “Those believers who have the most complete faith are those who possess the best of character, and the best among you are those who are the best to their wives.”

Protection and Preservation:

By all abilities available, a husband must not place or expose his wife or family members to any immoral situation or evil environment. This is based on the instructions of the verse of the Glorious Qur’an:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, over which are appointed angels stern and severe, who flinch not from executing the Commands they receive from God, but do precisely what they are commanded.” [66:6]

He must protect the private wealth and property of his wife, and must not use any of her personal funds or possessions without her prior approval. He must not engage in any transaction concerning his wife’s finances without her consent.



## 07 THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

### THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The rights of the children are numerous, beginning with the entitlement to be given honorable names. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Verily, you will be called by your names and your fathers’ names on the Day of Judgment, so give yourselves good names.”

Their rights include provision of all the necessities of life, such as affordable housing, lawful food, beneficial education and proper upbringing. The Messenger of God ﷺ said,

“It is a sufficient sin to lose and waste those whom you are obligated to support [i.e., by not providing proper care and upbringing].”

Parents should teach them good moral behavior and protect them against bad habits such as lying, cheating, deception, selfishness, etc. The Messenger of God ﷺ said:

“Each one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for those under his care.”

Children are entitled to receive just and equal treatment without being preferred one over another in terms of dealings and treatment, gifts, grants, inheritance etc. Unfair treatment to children may result in bad behavior towards either or both parents and the other siblings.



Nu'man b. Basheer said the following: "My father offered me a gift from his wealth, so my mother Umrah bint Rawah said: 'I would not agree to that until the Messenger of God ﷺ witnesses it.' So, my father went and asked him to witness my gift. The Messenger of God ﷺ asked: 'Did you offer the same to all of your children?' The man replied, 'No!' God's Messenger ﷺ said to him: 'Fear God and be just in dealing with your children.' So, my father returned and placed back that gift."





## 08 THE RIGHTS OF RELATIVES

Relatives have specific rights entitling them to special attention, visits and support. A wealthier Muslim is obliged to assist his or her relatives, with priority given to the nearest in kin, and then in order of nearness in relationship. A Muslim supports his siblings and relatives in times of need and shares their concerns. In the Qur'an, we find the saying of God, the Almighty:

“O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him He created his wife; and from them He created many men and women; and fear God through Whom you demand your mutual rights and do not cut the family ties. Surely, God is ever an All-Watcher over you.” [4:1]

Islam encourages a Muslim to be kind to his relatives even when they are unkind to him, and asks him to continue his relations even when they cut them off. Boycotting relatives and family members falls into the category of a major sin in Islam, as God says in the Glorious Qur'an:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Such are the men whom God has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision.” [47:22-23]

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**“Human Rights in Islam”**  
by Abd Ar-Rahman  
bin Abd Al-Kareem Ash-Sheha.

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