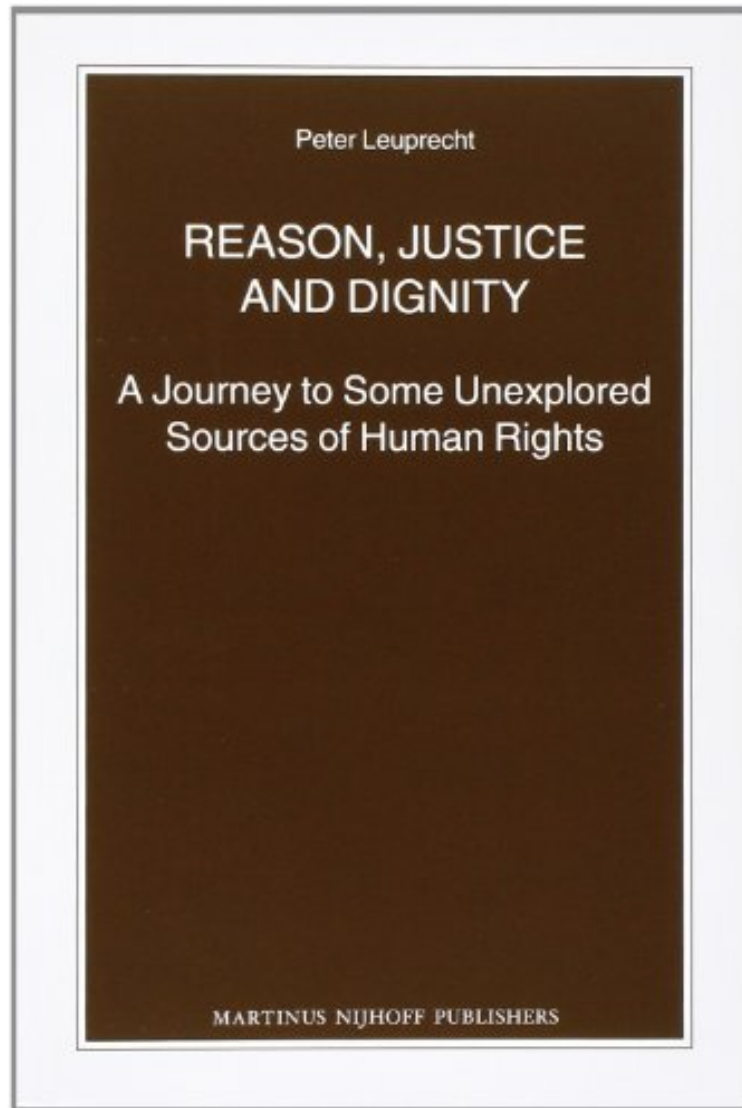


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The term human rights is relatively recent. It was first used in the late 18th century, in the West. However, many of the basic ideas behind that concept had long been current in various other cultures and civilizations. The book traces those ideas on a journey to some unexplored, or insufficiently explored, sources of what we now call human rights, in three

stages: ancient China with Confucius and Mencius; the golden age of Islam with Avicenna, Averroes and Ibn Khaldun; and 16th century Spain with Las Casas and de Vitoria. The authors conclusion is that human rights and the fundamental concepts of reason, justice and dignity which underlie them can be a powerful, leavening source of universal human unity.

About the Author Peter Leuprecht, Doctor of Law, University of Innsbruck (Austria), former Director of Human Rights and Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, retired Professor of McGill and Université du Québec à Montréal. He has published extensively on international law and human rights.