



The Honour of Parents in Islam

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The respect and honour for parents is on a constant decline. Many people do not understand the honour that Allah Ta'ala has granted to parents and how we have been commanded to conduct ourselves with them, especially in their old age.

Allah Ta'ala has exalted the status of parents in Islam and has commanded utmost respect and honour for them.

In Surah Bani Israeel, Allah Ta'ala has commanded,

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۗ إِمَّا
يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ
وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ۗ

And your Lord has ordained that you do not worship anyone except Him, and treat your parents with kindness; if either or both of them reach old age in your presence, do not say (even) 'Ugh' to them and do not scold them, and speak to them with the utmost respect. {Surah 17:23}

From this verse we learn that after Tauheed (Oneness of Allah Ta'ala), a great act of necessity is to be kind towards one's parents. Allah Ta'ala mentioned kindness to parents with His Oneness, because the absolute reason for one's existence is Allah Ta'ala while the apparent reason for one's existence is one's parents. Therefore Allah Ta'ala is worthy of absolute honour and obedience while parents are worthy of apparent honour and obedience. Allah Ta'ala is not dependent on anyone's service but humans in their old age and weakness are dependent on being served. Therefore Allah Ta'ala ordered that parents must be served with kindness, especially in their old age. {Tafseer Roohul Bayaan}

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Should I not inform you of the worst sin from all the major sins? Should I not inform you of the most terrible sin from all the major sins? Should I not inform you of the most atrocious sin from all the major

sins?” The Companions replied, “Please inform us.” He said, “To attribute partners to Allah Ta’ala and to torment the parents.” {*Sahih Bukhari*}

Even if the parents are non-believers, it is still obligatory upon the children to fulfil the rights of their parents, because Allah Ta’ala has mentioned parents without any condition or restriction. Furthermore, parents must be served physically and financially because the word ‘kindness’ is mentioned without any condition or restriction. {*Tafseer Noorul Irfaan*}

Although serving the parents is important at all times and it is desirable even when they are not in need, but in their hour of need it becomes absolutely incumbent and obligatory. Therefore when they are ill or helpless it is obligatory to serve them. The son should not keep his parents like despised servants. One must not speak to them in a tone of anger and one must bear their unpalatable behaviour due to old age, because during old age a person tends to become easily irritable, suspicious and angry. {*Tafseer Noorul Irfaan*}

Allah Ta’ala further states,

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۖ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ
وَفَصَّالَةٌ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرِ ۗ

And We ordained upon man concerning his parents; his mother bore him enduring weakness upon weakness, and his suckling is up to two years – therefore be thankful to Me and to your parents; finally towards Me is the return. {Surah 31:14}

From this verse we learn that the rights of the mother are greater than that of the father in that the father brought up the child with his wealth but the mother nourished the child with her blood. That is why the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that Paradise lies under the feet of the mother and that you and your wealth belong to your father. The right of service of the mother is greater but the right of respect and the economic right of the father is greater. {*Tafseer Noorul Irfaan*}

A’la Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Qadri (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) quotes a Hadith in which it is stated that a Companion once came to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and stated, “Ya Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)! There is a path on which there are such hot stones that if meat had to be placed on it, it would become roasted. I placed my mother upon my neck and carried her for 6 miles (on that path). Have I now fulfilled the right of my mother?” Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, “The jolts of pain that she experienced during your birth, perhaps one of those jolts could be compensated for.” {*Al Huqooq li Tarhil ‘Uqooq*}

Furthermore, Allah Ta’ala in this verse has joined gratitude to parents with gratitude to Himself. This is to emphasise the extent of gratitude we owe to our parents.

We need to show gratitude to Allah Ta’ala because He brought us into existence and granted us the guidance of Islam, and we need to show gratitude to our parents because they were the means through which

we were created, and they nurtured, taught and trained us when we were small. Showing gratitude to parents means together with respecting and honouring them, one must be compassionate and merciful towards them. {*Tafseer Roohul Bayaan*}

Allah Ta'ala reminds us here about the sacrifices of our parents to bring us into this world and to bring us up. Yet today, many people after attaining worldly positions and wealth, do not care about their parents in their old age and just dump them in an old age home or neglect and ill-treat them in their own homes. This is the height of ingratitude towards parents. If only one knew what reward lies in serving and taking care of parents in their old age!

Allah Ta'ala then further emphasises,

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا ۖ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي
مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۗ

And upon man We ordained kindness towards parents; and if they strive to make you ascribe a partner with Me, about which you do not have any knowledge, then do not obey them. {Surah 29:8}

This verse further emphasises the command of showing kindness towards parents. However, when it comes to religious obligations one cannot follow the instruction of a parent if they ask one to give up faith or to leave any obligatory worship. With everything else there must be utmost respect and obedience. {*Tafseer Noorul Irfaan*}

Hazrat Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh)

reported that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Whoever gets up in the morning being obedient to Allah Ta'ala regarding his parents, two doors of Paradise are opened for him in the morning. If he has only one parent, then one door is opened. Whoever disobeys Allah Ta'ala regarding his parents in the morning, two gates of Hell are opened for him in the morning and if there is only one parent, then one door is opened." A man asked, "Even if they oppress him?" Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, "Even if they oppress him, even if they oppress him, even if they oppress him." (i.e. even if the son is disobedient because of the fault which lies on the parents' side) {*Baihaqi; Mishkaat*}

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stated that Allah Ta'ala says, "Cursed is the one who torments his parents! Cursed is the one who torments his parents! Cursed is the one who torments his parents!" {*Tibraani*}

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) further stated, "There are three people that Allah Ta'ala neither accepts their obligatory worship nor their voluntary worship; the one who hurts his parents, the one who gives charity and reminds the receiver of his favour, and the one who denies Taqdeer (destiny)." {*Al Huqooq li Tarhil 'Uqooq*}

From the consequences of disrespect and disobedience, one can understand how great the honour of a parent is.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to honour, respect and serve our parents with compassion and mercy, Allahumma Ameen.