



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

PARENTS' RIGHTS ON THEIR CHILDREN IN ISLAM, AND
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ON THEIR PARENTS IN ISLAM

Society now, especially the Muslim society is under much western influence that the roles of parents on their children and the childrens' rights on parents in Islam are very much diluted. Role models now are very few for us to emulate in the Islamic world. However, Allah has not left us without any guidance or examples, both of the Qur'an and in authentic hadeeths. Without following these examples, the Muslim society will quickly deteriorate, and family breakdown and disintegration will be rampant. More importantly, the quality of Islam will deteriorate, as parents are unable to provide good examples at home and children lose complete respect for their parents. Shamelessly, young adults from Islamic countries who are not facing any war or where there are no persecutions are seeking asylum in non Muslim countries on the pretext that they have been mistreated at home by their parents. With the boom of social media, it is now easy to be influenced by the superficial relationship that we see in the western world, and the Muslims in Muslim countries simply mimic these worthless examples and lifestyle. We must therefore truly study and examine the rights of parents on their children that has been indoctrinated in the Qur'an and authentic hadeeths, and vice versa - the rights of children on their parents. ONLY by observing these practices rigorously would the Family Unit in Islam be intact and society be more peaceful and harmonious.

AN EXAMPLE FOR US TO GIVE THOUGHT:

Reported from the famous companion Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍyAllāhu 'anha*). It is narrated that once a man was doing *ṭawāf* around the Ka'bah and had his mother on his back. He saw Ibn 'Abbās in the distance, so he came running over to him and said, "O Ibn 'Abbās, this elderly lady on my back is my mother. She has been asking to come for

Ḥajj for as long as I can remember. She has always wanted to go for Ḥajj, and I could not afford to buy an animal to bring her, so this year I decided to carry her on my back and do Ḥajj with her on my back. Have I now fulfilled the rights of a son to his mother?" Ibn 'Abbās smiled and he said, "You have done good, but you have not even done a fraction of what you should." In other words: "*Alḥamdulillāh*, you are a good son, but don't come and tell me 'Have I fulfilled the rights of my mother?'" The man said, "O Ibn 'Abbās, I have come from the city of so-and-so [me mentioned a far-away city] carrying my mother on my back, and you are telling me I haven't done even a fraction?" Ibn 'Abbās said one thing, and *wallāhi* this shows their understanding of human psychology and human nature. The *ṣahābah* are at a different level than us completely. Ibn Abbās said, "You haven't done a fraction of what your mother did to you because when your mother took care of you and did everything that she did for you, her goal was to give you life. She did it out of love and to see you flourish. She did it genuinely for your own nourishment and flourishing. Now when you are paying her back, you are doing it as a duty and burden. You are doing it out of a sense of guilt and duty, and you are waiting for the day that she dies. You are not wanting to see her flourish and live. You are simply doing it as a dutiful son. You don't have the same genuine, selfless love that your parents had for you when they did what they did." Simply one psychological statement: your parents did for you everything to see you live and flourish. When you become old and they are now the ones being taken care of, you are not doing it in the same philosophy. You are doing it as a burden and to pay back. How can you compare the two? One is selfless love and the other a sense of gratitude and duty. How can you possibly compare?

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN ON THEIR PARENTS IN ISLAM

{O ye who believe! save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones.} (At-Tahrim 66:6)

The child's rights over their children include some that come even before the child is born, for example:

1 - Choosing a righteous wife to be a righteous mother.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "A woman may be married for four reasons: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty and her religious commitment. Marry the one who is religiously committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper)." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4802; Muslim, 1466).

Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani al-Dahlawi said: Choose from among women those who are religiously committed and righteous, and who are of good descent, for if a woman is of illegitimate descent, this bad characteristic may be passed to her children. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"The adulterer – fornicator marries not but an adulteress – fornicatress or a Mushrikah; and the adulteress –fornicatress, none marries her except an adulterer – fornicator or a Mushrik"

[al-Noor 24:3]

Rather Islam recommends compatibility for the purpose of harmony and to avoid a person being shamed if he marries into a family that is not compatible.

Sharh Sunan Ibn Maajah, 1/141

Rights after the child is born:

1 - It is Sunnah (recommended) to do tahneek for the child when he is born:

It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The son of Abu Talhah was sick. Abu Talhah went out and the child died, and when Abu Talhah returned he said, "What happened to my son?" Umm Sulaym (his wife) said, "He is quieter than he was." Then she brought him his dinner and he ate, then he had marital relations with her, and when he finished she said, "They buried the child." The following morning, Abu Talhah went to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and told him what had happened. He said, "Did you have marital relations last night?" He said, "Yes." He said, "O Allaah, bless them." She later gave birth to a boy. Abu Talhah said to me, "Keep him until I bring him to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." He brought him to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and I sent some dates with him. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) took him and said, "Is there anything with him?" They said, "Yes, some dates." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) took some and chewed it, then he took some from his mouth and put it in the child's mouth (tahneek), and named him 'Abd-Allaah.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5153; Muslim, 2144

Al-Nawawi said:

The scholars are agreed that it is mustahabb (preferred) to do tahneek with dates for the child when he is born; if that is not possible then to use some similar kind of

sweet. The dates should be chewed until they become soft enough to be swallowed, then the child's mouth should be opened and a little of the dates put in his mouth.

Sharh al-Nawawi 'ala Muslim, 14/122-123

2 - The child should be given a good name, such as 'Abd-Allaah or 'Abd al-Rahmaan.

It was narrated from Naafi' that Ibn 'Umar said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The most beloved of your names to Allaah are 'Abd-Allaah and 'Abd al-Rahmaan."

(Narrated by Muslim, 2132)

It is mustahabb to give the child a Prophet's name:

It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "A child was born to me last night and I called him by the name of my father Ibraaheem."

Narrated by Muslim, 2315

It is mustahabb to name the child on the seventh day, but there is nothing wrong with naming him on the day of his birth, because of the hadeeth quoted above.

It was narrated from Samurah ibn Jundub that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Every child is in pledge for (sacrificial animal) which should be slaughtered for him on the seventh day, his head should be shaved and he should be named."

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 2838; classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', 4541

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

The purpose of naming is to define the thing named, because if there is something whose name is unknown it is difficult to refer to it. So it is permissible to name him (the child) on the day he is born, and it is permissible to delay the naming until the third day, or until the day of the 'aqeeqah, or before or after that. The matter is broad in scope."

Tuhfat al-Mawlood, p. 111

3 - It is Sunnah to shave the child's head on the seventh day and to give the weight of the hair in silver in charity.

It was narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) slaughtered a sheep as the 'aqeeqah for al-Hasan,

and he said, "O Faatimah, shave his head and give the weight of his hair in silver in charity." So she weighed it and its weight was a dirham or part of a dirham.

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1519; classed as hasan by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 1226.

4 - It is mustahabb for the father to do the 'aqeeqah, as stated in the hadeeth quoted above, "Every child is in pledge for his 'aqeeqah."

Two sheep should be sacrificed for a boy and one for a girl.

It was narrated from 'Aa'ishah that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded them (to sacrifice) two similar sheep for a boy and one for a girl.

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1513; Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 1221; Abu Dawood, 2834; al-Nasaa'i, 4212; Ibn Maajah, 3163

5 - Circumcision (boys)

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The fitrah (natural state) is five things, or five things are part of the fitrah: circumcision, shaving the pubic hairs, plucking the armpit hairs, clipping the nails and trimming the moustache."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5550; Muslim, 257

The child's rights with regard to education and upbringing:

It was narrated from 'Abd-Allaah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Each of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The ruler who is in charge of people is a shepherd and is responsible for them. The man is the shepherd of his household and is responsible for them. The woman is the shepherd of her husband's house and child and is responsible for them. The slave is the shepherd of his master's wealth and is responsible for it. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2416; Muslim, 1829.

So parents must take care of teaching their children the duties of Islam and other virtues that are recommended in sharee'ah, and worldly matters that they need in order to live a decent life in this world.

The man should start by teaching them the most important things, then the next most important. So he starts by teaching them correct 'aqeedah (creed), free from shirk (polytheism) and bid'ah (innovation). Then he teaches them the acts of worship,

especially prayer. Then he teaches them and trains them in good manners and characteristics, and everything that is good.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) when Luqmaan said to his son when he was advising him: “O my son! Join not in worship others with Allaah. Verily, joining others in worship with Allaah is a great Zulm (wrong) indeed”

[Luqmaan 31:13]

Praying

It was narrated from ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Rabee’ ibn Sabrah from his father that his grandfather said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Teach the child to pray when he is seven years old, and smack him (lightly) if he does not pray when he is ten.”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 407; Abu Dawood, 494. Classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 4025

Fasting

It was narrated that al-Rubayyi’ bint Mu’awwidh said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent word on the morning of Ashoora’ to the areas where the Ansaar lived (on the outskirts of Madeenah), saying: Whoever did not fast this morning, let him not eat for the rest of the day, and whoever started fasting this morning, let him complete his fast. She said: We used to observe this fast after that, and we used to make our children fast and make them toys of wool; if one of them cried for food we would give him that toy until it was time to break the fast.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1859; Muslim, 1136

Hajj/Umrah

It was narrated that al-Saa’ib ibn Yazeed said: I was taken for Hajj with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when I was seven years old.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1759

Training in good manners and characteristics:

Every father and mother should train their children in praiseworthy characteristics and good manners, whether towards Allaah, His Prophet the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), towards thei Qur’aan and their ummah (global community of believers), and with everyone whom they know and who has rights over them. They should not behave badly with those whom they mix with, their neighbours or their friends.

Al-Nawawi said:

The father must discipline his child and teach him what he needs to know of religious duties. This teaching is obligatory upon the father and all those in charge of children before the child reaches the age of adolescence. This was stated by al-Shaafa'i and his companions. Al-Shaafa'i and his companions said: This teaching is also obligatory upon the mother, if there is no father, because it is part of the child's upbringing and they have a share of that and the wages for this teaching may be taken from the child's own wealth. If the child has no wealth then the one who is obliged to spend on him may spend on his education, because it is one of the things that he needs. And Allaah knows best.

Sharh al-Nawawi 'ala Saheeh Muslim, 8/44

The father should bring them up with good manners in all things, eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping, going out of the house, entering the house, riding in vehicles, etc, and in all their affairs. He should instill in them the attributes of a good man, such as love of sacrifice, putting others first, helping others, chivalry and generosity. He should keep them away from evil characteristics such as cowardice, stinginess, lack of chivalry, lack of ambition, etc.

Al-Manaawi said:

"Just as your parents have rights over you, so too your child has rights over you, rather many rights, such as teaching them the individual obligations, teaching them Islamic manners, giving them gifts equally, whether that is a gift, a waqf (endowment), or other gift. If preference is shown with no reason, that is regarded as invalid by some of the scholars and as makrooh (disliked) by others.

NOTE: BEST EXAMPLES ARE ALWAYS AT HOME

- Read to them on the akhlaq of the prophet Muhammad SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam and the sahabah, instead of focussing on celebrities as role models.
- Limit the use of mobile phones and use of social media

Fayd al-Qadeer, 2/574

He must also protect his sons and daughters from everything that may bring them close to the Fire. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded"

[al-Tahreem 66:6]

al-Qurtubi said:

Al-Hasan commented on this verse by saying: Command them and forbid them. One of the scholars said: (The phrase) Ward off (or protect) yourselves includes children, because the child is part of him, as it says in the verse (interpretation of the meaning): "...nor on yourselves, if you eat from your houses..." [al-Noor 24:61], where the various relatives are not mentioned individually. So he should teach him what is halaal (lawful) and what is haram (unlawful), and make him avoid sin, and teach him other rulings.

Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 18/194-195.

Spending:

This is one of the father's obligations towards his children; it is not permissible for him to fall short in that or to neglect this matter, rather he is obliged to do this duty in the fullest sense.

It was narrated that 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "It is sufficient sin for a man if he neglects those on whom he is obliged to spend."

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 1692; classed as sahan by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', 4481.

Another of the greatest rights is to **give the child a good upbringing and take good care of him or her - especially in the case of girls**. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) encouraged this righteous deed.

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah the wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: A woman came to me with two daughters and asked me for food, and I could not find anything except one date which I gave to her. She shared it between her two daughters, then she got up and went out. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came in and I told him what had happened. He said: "Whoever is in charge of any of these girls and treats them well, they will be a shield for him against the Fire."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5649; Muslim, 2629

Another important matter which is one of the rights of children to which attention must be paid, is **treating children fairly**. This right was referred to by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in the saheeh hadeeth (authentic narration): "Fear Allaah and treat your children fairly." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2447; Muslim, 1623). It is not permissible to show preference to females over males, just as it is not permissible to show preference to males over females. If the father makes this mistake and shows preference to some of his children over others, and does not treat them fairly, this will lead to many evils, such as:

The harm that befalls the father himself, for the children whom he denies or deprives will grow up to hate him. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

referred to this in the hadeeth narrated by Muslim (1623) when he said to the father of al-Nu'maan, "Would you like them to honour you equally?" He said, "Yes." In other words, if you want them all to honour you equally, then be fair in giving gifts to them.

Another evil consequence is the children hating one another, and stoking the flames of hatred and enmity between them.

RIGHTS OF PARENTS ON THEIR CHILDREN IN ISLAM

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour.

And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small."

17: 23-24

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, ascended the pulpit and he said, "**Amīn, amīn, amīn.**" It was said, "O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said amīn, amīn, amīn." The Prophet said, "**Verily, Gabriel came to me and he said: Whoever reaches the month of Ramadan and he is not forgiven, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amīn. I said amīn. Whoever sees his parents in their old age, one or both of them, and he does not honor them and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amīn. I said amīn. Whoever has your name mentioned in his presence and he does not send blessings upon you and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amīn. I said amīn.**"

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān 915

Grade: *Saḥīḥ* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

Islam teaches us that of the most beloved deeds to Allah, having respect for one's parents is second only to that of prayer and is greater than that of Jihaad (fighting in His cause). In this respect, Abu 'Abdur-Rahmaan 'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنه narrated the following: "I asked the Prophet ﷺ: 'Which deed is the most beloved to Allah?' He ﷺ replied: "Prayers performed on time." I then asked: 'Which one is next?' He replied: "Goodness to parents." I then asked: 'Which is next?' He replied: "Jihaad in the path of Allah.""

Verily, Allah made the creation and when he finished, the womb said: At this place, I seek refuge in you from those who sever me. Allah said: Are you not pleased that I keep good relations with those who are good to you and I will cut off whoever severs relations with you? The womb said: Yes, my Lord. Allah said: Then it is for you.

Then the Prophet SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam said:

Recite the verse if you wish: Will you then, if you were given authority, spread corruption in the land and sever your family ties? (47:22)

Source: Sahih Bukhari 5641, Grade: [Muttafaqun Alayhi](#)

Abu Ad-Darda reported: The Prophet, SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam, said, **“The father is the middle of the gates of Paradise, so keep this gate or lose it.”**

Source: Sunan Ibn Majah 3663

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to At-Tirmidi.

In this 21st century, we find that a lot of children have completely lost their ability to respect their parents, let alone take care of them. After marriage, children would conveniently leave the family nest in order to set up their own homes, and visit their parents sometimes only once a year during Eid.

We must completely ensure that everyone is crystal clear on their duties to their parents, which would last until their parents' death.

“And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents” [al-Ahqaaf 46:15]

“And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents” [al-'Ankaboot 29:8]

“but behave with them in the world kindly” [Luqmaan 31:15]

Shaykh al-Sa'di (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: *“be dutiful and kind to parents”* means: treat them kindly in all ways, in word and in deed.

Tafseer al-Sa'di, p. 524.

Islam has placed a lot of emphasis on being dutiful to parents. It is an obligation for us to show respect, obedience and kindness to them. In fact, just by googling “kindness to parents”, you will find the first 6-7, and thereafter the majority the websites all based on Islamic principles, rather than in any other religions!

FROM THE QUR'AN

Be grateful to parents but do not obey them if they strive to make you associate things with God

...Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual coming. But if they strive to make thee join in worship with Me things of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration), and follow the way of those who turn to me (in love): in the end the return of you all is to Me, then will I inform you of what you did (31:15)

These verses make it clear that we must honour our parents, appreciate their sacrifices and efforts for us, and do our best for them. This is required regardless of whether they are Muslims or not.

Be good to parents and everyone else who you meet

Serve God, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For God loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious;- (4:36)

FROM THE HADEETHS

Let's see what Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said about parents in the authentic Hadiths. *Whatsoever the Prophet gives you, take it and whatsoever he forbids you, refrain from it. - Quran 59:7*

Disobedience to parents is a major sin

Anas narrated from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ about the major sins. He (Mohammed) observed: Associating anyone with God, disobedience to parents, killing a person and false utterance. (Muslim)

One of the dearest deeds to Allah is being good & dutiful to parents

Narrated 'Abdullah: I asked the Prophet ﷺ "Which deed is the dearest to God?" He replied, "To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times." I asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To be good and dutiful to your parents"...(Bukhari)

Being dutiful to parents is one of the keys to enter Paradise

Abu Huraira reported Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as saying: Let him be humbled into dust; let him be humbled into dust. It was said: God's Messenger, who is he? He said: He who sees either of his parents during their old age or he sees both of them, but he does not enter Paradise (because he has been undutiful to them). (Muslim)

Acts of kindness we can do for our parents after their death

While we were with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. A man of Banu Salmah came to Him and said: Apostle of God is there any kindness left that I can do to my parents after their death? He replied: Yes, you can invoke blessings on them, forgiveness for them, carry out their final instructions after their death, join ties of relationship which are dependent on them, and honour their friends. (Abu Dawood)

The above narration urges a Muslim to be kind to his parents whether they are dead or alive. Such obedience occurs by invoking Allaah's forgiveness for them, fulfilling any covenants they made when they were alive, showing homage to their friends and keeping good relations with their relatives.

The High Status given to Mothers

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him for permission to join a military expedition. The Prophet ﷺ asked him if he had a mother, and when he replied that he had, he said, "Stay with her, for Paradise is at her feet." (Ahmad)

The People Who Most Deserve Good Company

The people who most deserve good company are one's parents. Through good company, one pleases his Lord and hopes for an excellent reward in the Hereafter. Good company means that one should be grateful to his parents and take care of them especially when they are old and need help.

Once, a person came to the Prophet, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, and asked: "Who among the people is the most worthy of my good company?" He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "Your mother." He again, asked: "Who comes next?" He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, answered: "Your mother." He asked once more: "Who comes next?" He (the noble Prophet, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Your mother." He finally asked: "Who comes next?" Thereupon he, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, replied: "Your father." [Al-Bukhaari and Muslim]

The Prophet, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, also said: "Allaah enjoins you to keep good relations with your mothers (he repeated it three times). Allaah enjoins you to keep good relations with the nearest of kin then the next nearest of kin and so on." [Ibn Maajah]

Being Kind and Dutiful to Parents Precedes Jihaad

Islam urges us to take care of our parents and it considers this as being equal to Jihaad in the Cause of Allaah. No one is allowed to march for Jihaad while his parents or one of them needs his assistance.

Once, a man came to the Messenger of Allaah, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, and said: "I pledge allegiance for Jihaad seeking Allaah's reward." He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, asked: "Are either of your parents alive?" He said: "Yes, both of them." He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, asked: "Do you seek reward from Allaah?" He said:

"Yes." The Messenger of Allaah, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, then said: "Go back to your parents and treat them kindly." [Al-Bukhaari and Muslim]

Another narration reads: A man emigrated to the Messenger of Allaah, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, from Yemen to take his permission to participate in Jihaad. He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, asked (him): "Have you left any (of your relatives) in Yemen?" He replied: "My parents." He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, asked: "Did they permit you to participate?" He replied: "No." He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "Go back to them and ask for their permission. If they permit you, then fight (in the cause of Allaah), otherwise keep yourself devoted to them." [Abu Daawood]

Being dutiful to parents even if they are non-Muslims

Moreover, the Prophet, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, instructed his companions to be dutiful to their non-Muslim parents. Asmaa' Bint Abi Bakr, may Allaah be pleased with her, narrated: "During the period of the peace treaty between Quraysh and Allaah's Messenger, my mother came to visit me, and she was a pagan. I consulted Allaah's Messenger, "O Allaah's Messenger! My mother has come to me and she desires to receive a reward from me, shall I keep good relations with her?" He, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, said, "Yes, keep good relations with her." [Al-Bukhaari and Muslim]

Examples of Being Dutiful to Parents:

The companions of the Prophet, sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam, and our pious predecessors, may Allaah have mercy on them, were the best examples in being kind and dutiful to their parents. For example, Usaamah Ibn Zayd, may Allaah be pleased with him, had a piece of land cultivated with palm trees. Back then, the price of a palm tree was one thousand Deenaars (a golden currency). One day, his mother wanted to eat the core of a palm tree which is the wet part in the centre. Usaamah, may Allaah be pleased with him, cut a fruit-bearing tree to feed his mother its core. When some people asked him about what he had done, he said: "If my mother asks for anything in the whole world and I can give it to her, I will do it."

'Ali Ibn Al-Husseyyn, may Allaah have mercy upon him, was very dutiful to his mother, but he would never eat from the same dish that she was eating from.

Someone asked him: "You are one of the most dutiful people to their mothers. Why don't you eat with her from the same dish?" He said: "I am afraid that my hand might take a certain piece of food that my mother wanted to eat, and in this way I would have been undutiful to her."

It is also reported that one night, a woman asked her son to bring her a cup of water. When he went to fetch the water and came back, she had fallen asleep. He was afraid that she might get up and not find him, and at the same time, he did not like to wake her up. Thus, he stayed near her holding the water until the morning.

The Companions' Behaviour

Abdullah ibn Omar, a leading scholar from among Prophet Muhammad's companions once saw a man carrying his mother on his back and going around the Holy House in Mecca. He did not complain or show any signs of annoyance; rather he kept repeating a line of poetry comparing himself to a camel. He looked at Abdullah ibn Omar and asked him whether by so doing he discharged his debt to his mother. Ibn Omar said, "No. You have not even paid back one twinge of the pain she felt when giving birth to you".

Another companion from the early days of Islam, Dhibyan ibn Ali ath-Thowree also used to travel with his mother to Mecca. The journey was long and very hot; on the side of the road during their travels, he would dig a little pool and fill it with cool water. He would then turn to his mother and say, "Mother, sit in this water to cool yourself."

Muslims who are obedient to Allah can never be unmindful or unkind to their parents. Great reward is offered to those who treat their parents, especially their mothers, with affection and gentleness, but a stern warning is also given. The danger of disrespect is illustrated in the following saying of Prophet Muhammad.

A man came to Prophet Muhammad and said, "A young man is dying and people are asking him to say there is "Laa ilaaha illa Allah", but he is unable to do so. "The Prophet then asked, "Did this man offer prayers?" The answer was yes. The Prophet then went to see the man and tried to encourage him to say there is no god but God. Still he was unable to pronounce the words. Prophet Muhammad then called for the dying man's mother. The mother he had persistently disobeyed.

When she appeared, the Prophet asked, "Respected lady, is he your son?" She replied yes. He then asked, "O respected lady, if we threaten to throw your son into a raging fire, would you recommend him to be forgiven?" The lady replied that she would definitely ask him to be forgiven. The Prophet then said to her, "Then declare, making God and me your witnesses, that you are now pleased with him." The old woman readily declared, "O God, you and your Prophet are my witnesses that I am pleased with this beloved son of mine." Then Prophet then turned to the dying man and asked him to recite, "None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, He is the One and has no partners and I witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger." (At Tabarani, Ahmad)

Because of his mother's forgiveness, the dying man was able to recite the words that, by the Grace and Mercy of Allah, may have allowed him to enter Paradise. The good treatment of parents can be the key to Paradise, on the other hand, bad behaviour towards them may result in a punishment in hellfire.

Islam is a religion of justice and compassion. It teaches morality and forbids bad conduct. Special status has been afforded to the elderly; they are treated with respect and dignity. Muslims are urged to honour them and this is especially true when it comes to the treatment of parents. Although death may take us at any age, parents are often elderly and as such require special care and attention. Even though the rigours of old age may cause parents to be demanding, impatient or petulant, a

Muslim is still obligated to treat them with kindness and to look after them lovingly. Allah linked honouring parents to the command to believe in Him Alone.

“Worship Allah and join none with Him (in worship); and do good to parents...” (Quran 4:36)

One of Prophet Muhammad’s companions asked about the deeds Allah loved most. The Prophet replied, the prayer offered on time and honouring parents... (Saheeh Bukhari)

The sayings of Prophet Muhammad abound with words of wisdom about the obligation to be dutiful and kind to parents. He was once heard to say:

“May he perish, May he perish, may he perish”. Those around him immediately asked whom he was referring. Prophet Muhammad replied, “He whose parents (one or both) attain old age in his life and he does not enter Paradise (because of his goodness towards them).” (Saheeh Muslim)

Respect for parents is a key to the gates of Paradise. By upholding the commands of God and giving parents the affection and love due to them, we receive the reward of eternal bliss.

IN SUMMARY

What can we do with our parents? In other words, what does Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta’āla*) require from us? To summarize very briefly, if one’s parents are alive a number of things can be done. First and foremost, financial rights and obligations. No doubt, parents have financial rights over us.

Secondly, physically helping and serving them. Taking care of their needs, giving them food and water, making food for them. Instead of your mother going to the kitchen to get a glass of water, *wallāh* this is your duty. If you see your mother stand up to do something, you should stand up and do it for her. The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said to the *ṣahābi*, “Go and stick to her feet...” This is an Arabic expression and means to go and lower yourself to her and humble yourself to her. You are literally and metaphorically a servant. “Go and stick to her feet because Jannah is under her feet.”

Thirdly, respecting them, controlling your anger in front of them, and never showing your irritation. Next time you feel irritated against your parents, remind yourself of the verse of Allāh: “Don’t say *uff*.” Ask Allāh to help you in preventing to say that *uff* even if you feel it and even if you feel the anger and frustration, close it. Withdraw and withhold that sentiment from being expressed.

Lastly, showing your love to them. Going above and beyond the call of duty. This is what Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*) says: "Lower unto them your wings of mercy."

If your parents have passed away, one or both of them, then no doubt this is a great loss and a very traumatic experience. Once it is narrated that the father of the famous companion al-Ḥarīth al-Aqlī passed away, and he was uncontrollably crying. The *ṣaḥābah* around him consoled him and said, "*Inshā' Allāh* he is in Jannah and *inshā' Allāh* Allāh has forgiven him." He said to them, "Do you think that I am crying because he has passed on? *Wallāhi* I am sad that he has passed on, but that is not why I am crying. I am crying because my main door to Jannah has now been taken away from me. This is how I wanted to get to Jannah."

The father of another *ṣaḥābi* died and he said, "For one year after he died, every time I raised my hands I could not think of any *du'ā'* except for him. All I could think of was to make *du'ā'* for him."

After a parent dies and moves on to the next life, still a lot can be done. First and foremost, as the *ṣaḥābi* said, seek forgiveness for them and ask Allāh to forgive them and raise their ranks for them. Make *du'ā'* for them. Secondly, make sure that their wishes, requests, and wills were fulfilled. Make sure that anything they wanted done is executed on their behalf. Thirdly, give *sadaqah*. Give money and say, "O Allāh, reward my mother for this ten, twenty, thirty dollars." Give regularly – every week, every month. Give something on their behalf and say, "O Allāh, give this reward to my mother and father." Sacrifice an animal, mentioning Allāh's Name and giving it to the poor and saying, "O Allāh, reward my mother for feeding the poor."

Also, make Ḥajj and 'Umrah for them. Making Ḥajj and 'Umrah is one of the greatest and most noble acts that you can do as a son or a daughter as long as you have done Ḥajj and 'Umrah. When you put on ihram, "*Labbayk* on behalf of my mother" or "*Labbayk* on behalf of my father." Then, each and every penny, minute and toil and circumstance that you face, Allāh will reward your mother, and you will be rewarded as a righteous son for doing this for your mother.

Also, the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said one of the ways we can show respect to the parents and to fulfill their rights after they have moved on is – and this is something hardly anybody does – meet the friends and relatives of our parents who we would not have met otherwise. In other words, our parents have their circle of friends, and because they were alive, we would also go to those friends and

distant relatives. When they have moved on, we have no reason to communicate with them. We have nothing much in common. The only thing we have in common is our parents. The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, “A part of being a good son and a good daughter is that after your parents have moved on, go to those relatives and family members and acquaintances and friends for the sake of your parents.”

Some scholars have derived the wisdom behind this, and they say one of the wisdoms is that when you go to these people, and of course they will be of a different age and generation than you, you don't have much in common except one thing: your mother, your father. What will the topic of discussion be? Your mother or your father. What do you think will happen when this person reminds you of how they interacted and what your mother did? How will you feel after that? You will feel so much love and tenderness and want to go home and give *ṣadaqah* on her behalf and make *du‘ā'* for her. That love will be rejuvenated and revived. Therefore, by visiting the friends and relatives of our deceased parents, the love of our parents is once again rekindled within us. This is one of the wisdoms some of the scholars derived from this particular legacy of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).