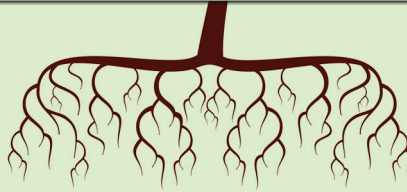




STATUS OF PARENTS

by Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā
Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *dāmat barakātuhum*



مَجْلِسُ الدَّعْوَةِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ

ISLĀMIC DA‘WAH ACADEMY

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STATUS OF PARENTS

BY SHAYKHUL-ḤADĪTH ḤAḌṢRAT MAWLĀNĀ MUHAMMAD SALEEM DHORAT

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ: وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٍ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا.

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيمُ وَصَدَقَ رَسُولُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْأُمِّيُّ الْكَرِيمُ وَنَحْنُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ لَمِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ وَالشَّاكِرِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي. سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ. اللَّهُمَّ أَنْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَعَلَّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِ.

Allāh ﷻ says,

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ

Your Rabb has decreed that you worship none but Him... (17:23)

It is the Order of Allāh ﷻ, our Creator, Cherisher and Provider, that we worship Him only. The purpose of our creation is to worship Allāh ﷻ and to devote each and every second of our lives to Allāh ﷻ.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي ﴿٥٦﴾

I did not create the jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me. (51:56)

The Owner of Benefit and Harm

We should worship none other than Allāh ﷻ, for He is our only Creator, Cherisher and Provider. It is only right that we worship Him alone, accept only Him as the true Deity and turn to Him alone for help, protection, cure, sustenance, guidance and for a solution to all our problems.

Whilst advising his cousin, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, who was much younger in age than Nabī ﷺ and thus like a child for him, Nabī ﷺ said,

يَا غُلَامُ! إِنِّي أُعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ: احْفَظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظَكَ، احْفَظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ

O child! I shall teach (tell) you some words (of advice which will benefit you); safeguard (the Commands of) Allāh and He will safeguard you. Safeguard (the Commands of) Allāh and you will find Him before you...¹

‘Safeguard the Commands of Allāh ﷻ’ means that during each and every moment, one should not do anything that displeases Allāh ﷻ. One should carry out the dos and abstain from the don’ts. This is ‘ibādah and devotion for which Allāh ﷻ has created us.

The subsequent benefit mentioned is that Allāh ﷻ will safeguard the one who safeguards His Commands, i.e. He will safeguard him

1 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: صِفَةِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالرَّقَائِي وَالْوَرَعِ Ḥadīth: 2516

in this world, at the time of death, in the grave, on the Day of Qiyāmah and on the Bridge of Şirāt. He will grant him safety from the Fire of Jahannam and grant him everlasting bliss in Jannah.

The other benefit of safeguarding the Commands of Allāh ﷻ is that one will always find Allāh ﷻ in front of him, i.e. He will always be there to protect him, help him in his affairs and create ease for him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then said,

إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ

...When you ask (for something), ask (from) Allāh (only); and when you seek assistance, seek assistance from Allāh (only)...²

Ask and seek assistance from Allāh ﷻ only, because it is only Allāh ﷻ Who controls the universe. He is the only Sovereign. Allāh ﷻ states,

إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ ط

Sovereignty belongs to Allāh alone... (12:40)

Each and every creation of Allāh ﷻ is under His Authority. A drop of rain cannot fall from the sky without His Permission. A leaf cannot fall from a tree without His Permission. Allāh ﷻ states,

قُلْ لَّنْ يُصِيبُنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا

(O My beloved Messenger!) Say (to the people), 'Nothing will ever befall us except that which Allāh has decreed for us; He is our Master... (9:51)

2 Ibid

وَإِنْ يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ
لِفَضْلِهِ ۚ

If Allāh inflicts you with harm, then there is none who can remove it except He; and if He intends good for you, then there is none who can repel His Grace ... (10:107)

If Allāh ﷻ decrees that a calamity should befall us, then no one in His creation can save us from that calamity; and if Allāh ﷻ decides that some goodness should reach us, then no one in the creation of Allāh ﷻ can deprive us of that goodness. In the advice given to Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ mentioned above, Nabī ﷺ further states,

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوْ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ
قَدْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكَ، وَأَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوْ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَنْ
يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ

And know, that if the Ummah gathered to benefit you with something, they will never be able to benefit you except with something which Allāh has decreed for you; and if the Ummah gathered to harm you with something, they will never be able to harm you except with something which Allāh has decreed upon you. ³

The Meaning of Worship ‘WAH ACADEMY

The crux of what has been mentioned thus far is that Allāh ﷻ has created us only to worship Him, and a fundamental part of worship is that we accept His Authority only. We believe in His absolute

3 Ibid

Power and His absolute Control. It is our belief that nothing can happen in the universe without the Will and Permission of Allāh ﷻ. It is only He Who controls harm and loss; and it is only He Who controls benefit and profit. Worship is that we accept this authority and then make a firm resolution to spend each and every second of our lives according to His Wish, as explained and shown in detail by the final messenger, our most Beloved Nabī Muḥammad ﷺ.

This is the essence of our Dīn. In the kalimah ṭayyibah, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (There is no deity except Allāh) alludes to the fact that there is no one who has the power to cause harm or give benefit except Allāh ﷻ, and مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh) alludes to the fact that we will only become successful in this world and the Hereafter if we spend each and every moment of our lives as shown by His final Messenger ﷺ.

Allāh ﷻ is our only Creator, our sole Provider, our sole Cherisher and He is the One Who grants us protection and sustenance. He is the One Who cures us when we become sick and He is the One Who removes affliction. It is He Who at every juncture showers upon us innumerable favours. It is He Who granted us eyes, ears, a tongue and a brain. It is He Who has made us humans, Who made us believers and Who included us amongst the Ummah of the best Nabī, Muḥammad ﷺ.

Worship Allāh ﷻ and be Good to Your Parents

Therefore, it is only right that we worship Allāh ﷻ only and we devote everything we have to Him only; and since we have come into existence due to Him creating us through the agency of our parents, we should be good to our parents too. For this reason, Allāh ﷻ says,

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا^ط

Your Rabb has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be good to parents. (17:23)

Allāh ﷻ is commanding us in this verse to worship Him alone because He is our sole Creator, and we are also being commanded to be good to our parents because our existence depended on them and it is through them we came into this world.

The Importance of Being Good to Parents

Allāh ﷻ has given the command of worshipping Him followed by the command of being good to parents in numerous places in the Qur'an:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ^ت وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

(Remember) when We took a pledge from the Banū Isrā'il: 'Do not worship anyone other than Allāh and be good to parents.'
(2:83)

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

And worship Allāh and do not ascribe anything with Him, and be good to parents... (4:36)

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَنُ لِبَنِيهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَبْنَىٰ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ^ط إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ^ع حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفُصِّلَ فِي غَمَامِينَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ^ط إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيدِ ﴿١٦٧﴾

And (remember) when Luqmān said to his son whilst advising him. 'O my dear son! Do not ascribe (partners) to Allāh. Indeed, shirk (ascribing partners to Allāh) is a grave transgression.' And we commanded man (to be good) in respect of his parents, (especially his mother as) she carried him (in her womb) despite weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in (a further) two years. (We said to man,) 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents. (Remember,) to Me is the ultimate return (and I will recompense you for your actions).'' (31:13-14)

In the above verse, Allāh ﷻ says, 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents.' Commentating on this, the Mufasssīrīn have narrated a statement of Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah رضى الله عنه in which he states,

مَنْ صَلَّى الصَّلَاةَ الْخَمْسَ فَقَدْ شَكَرَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى، وَمَنْ دَعَا لِوَالِدَيْهِ فِي
أَذْبَارِ الصَّلَاةِ فَقَدْ شَكَرَهُمَا

*Whoever prays the five (daily) ṣalāh has certainly been grateful to Allāh ﷻ, and whoever supplicates for his parents after the (five) ṣalāh has certainly been grateful to them.*⁴

Hence, in order to fulfil the command of being grateful to Allāh ﷻ, a person must perform the five daily ṣalāts punctually; and in order for a person to fulfil the obligation of being grateful to his parents, he should supplicate for his parents at least five times a day.

'Allāmah Qurṭubī رضى الله عنه states in his tafsīr that the most virtuous action after ṣalāh is obedience to parents.⁵ He رضى الله عنه substantiates this claim from a Ḥadīth in which Sayyidunā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ,

4 Al-Jāmi' li Ahkāmīl-Qur'ān, part 14 p.65

5 Ibid, part 10 p.238

أَيُّ الْعَمَلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ؟

Which deed is most beloved to Allāh?

Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied,

الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى وَقْتِهَا

Ṣalāh at its (mustaḥabb) time.

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه further questioned,

ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟

Then which (is the most beloved deed to Allāh ﷺ)?

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

ثُمَّ بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ

Then being good to one's parents.⁶

Our parents deserve a lot from us for the unimaginable sacrifices they gave to raise us. They sacrifice their youth for us so that we enjoy our youth and the bounties of this world.

A Thought-Provoking Poem

In the following heartfelt couplets, a father expresses his love and sacrifices for his son and the pain caused by the child's misbehaviour:

6 قول الله تعالى: {وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَسَنًا} chapter: الادب Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: بيان كون الإيمان بالله تعالى أفضل الأعمال chapter: الايمان Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: Hadith: 5970; Hadith: 139

غَدَوْتُكَ مَوْلُودًا وَعُلْتُكَ يَافِعًا تُعَلُّ بِمَا أَجْنَيْ عَلَيْكَ وَتُنْهَلُّ

I nourished you in your childhood and I nurtured you in your youth. You drank again and again from what I provided for you.

إِذَا لَيْلَةٌ ضَاقَتْكَ بِالسُّقْمِ لَمْ أَبْتَ لِسُقْمِكَ إِلَّا سَاهِرًا أَتَمَلُمُّ

When sickness would overcome you at night, I would spend the night awake and restless because of your sickness.

تَخَافُ الرَّدَى نَفْسِي عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّهَا لَتَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْمَوْتَ حَتْمٌ مُوَكَّلٌ

I used to fear that you may perish; I knew that death is definite and inescapable.

كَأَنِّي أَنَا الْمَطْرُوقُ دُونَكَ بِالَّذِي طُرِفَتْ بِهِ دُونِي فَعَيْنَايَ تَهْمَلُ

It was as if I was stricken by the affliction which you were stricken by, that my eyes would flow with tears.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغْتَ السَّنَّ وَالْغَايَةَ الَّتِي إِلَيْكَ مَدَى مَا كُنْتُ فِيكَ أَوْمِلُ

Then when you reached maturity, and that stage which was the fulfilment of my hope in you,

جَعَلْتَ جَزَائِي غِلْظَةً وَفَظَاطَةً كَأَنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْمُنْعِمُ الْمُتَفَضِّلُ

You rewarded me with harshness and hard-heartedness, as if you are the one who has bestowed favours (upon me).

فَلَيْتَكَ إِذَا لَمْ تَرَعْ حَقَّ أَبَوَيْي كَمَا يَفْعَلُ الْجَارُ الْمَجَاوِرُ تَفْعَلُ

If it was not possible for you to fulfil my right as a father, you could have at least done (for me) what a good neighbour would have done (for his neighbour).

We will only realise what our parents have done for us when we

ourselves become parents. We will only realise how hurtful our disloyalty and disobedience to our parents was if our children were to become disloyal and disobedient to us. May Allāh ﷻ save each and every person from disobedient children.

An Eye-Opening Incident

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ was in the vicinity of the Ka‘bah when he caught sight of a young man from Yemen who was carrying his mother on his back whilst performing ṭawāf. When he met Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ, he uttered a few couplets:

إِنِّي لَهَا بَعِيرُهَا الْمَذَلَّلُ إِن أُدْعِرَتْ رِكَابُهَا لَمْ أُدْعَرْ

I am an obedient camel for her (always ready to serve her day and night). If her other conveyances become tired and restless, I will not.

He compared his service to his mother to that of an obedient camel; an obedient camel will always oblige to the orders of his owner. Similarly, he would be ready to serve his mother in every circumstance. He would not be like others who would get fed up of having to serve their mother all the time. No, whatever the circumstances, he would always be there to support and serve her. Thereafter, he said,

يَا ابْنَ عُمَرَ! أَتُرَانِي جَزَيْتُهَا؟

O Ibn ‘Umar! Do you think I have repaid her?

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ replied,

لَا، وَلَا يَزْفِرَةَ وَاحِدَةً

No, not even for a single groan (she let out during the pains of labour).⁷

Whilst sitting in front of the Ka‘bah, where one cannot even dare to lie or exaggerate, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه told the man that all of his service to his mother did not even make up for a single pain she felt whilst giving birth to him.

Being Good to Parents

We do not realise what our parents have done for us. We can never repay them for their favours. When we hurt them, scold them, lament them and even torment them, we do not realise how much hurt we are causing them. If they are unable to do anything due to their physical weakness, then remember that the Creator of these helpless parents is watching us.

We must always be good and kind to our parents, especially when they reach old age. Just as they went out of their way to provide for us when we were helpless in our childhood, we must try our utmost to look after them when they are in need in their old age. Allāh ﷻ commands us to adopt a gentle and kind approach when dealing with our elderly parents. Allāh ﷻ states,

إِذَا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا
تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿١٢٨﴾

...Should one of them or both of them reach old age in your presence, then do not say to them ‘uff’ (a word or expression of

7 Al-Adabul-Mufrad, chapter: جزاء الوالدين Ḥadīth: 11

anger or contempt) and do not scold them, and speak to them gently. (17:23)

Let alone using abusive language towards our parents, Allāh ﷻ has forbade us to even show the slightest contempt towards them. ‘Allāmah Qurṭubī said commentating on this verse,

لَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا مَا فِيهِ أَذْنِي تَسُرُّ

Do not say to them that which causes the slightest discomfort. ⁸

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ has said,

كُنْ مَعَ الْوَالِدَيْنِ كَالْعَبْدِ الْمَذْنُبِ الذَّلِيلِ الضَّعِيفِ لِلْسَيِّدِ الْفَطَّ الْعَلِيطِ

Be with your parents just as a sinful humble weak slave is with his rough and harsh master. ⁹

How Children and Parents should Behave with Each Other

Children should treat their parents with love. Similarly, the parents too should treat their children with affection. Look at how the Ambiyā ؑ behaved with their fathers and children. The Qur’ān mentions the incident when Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ informed his son, Sayyidunā Ismā‘īl ؑ, of the dream he saw. He said,

يٰٓبُنَيَّ اِنِّىۤ اَرٰى فِى الْمَنَامِ اَنِّىۤ اَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰى

O my beloved son! Indeed, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so consider, what is your opinion (on the matter because your life is at stake)? (37:102)

8 Al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkāmīl-Qur’ān, part 10 p.243

9 Rūḥul-Bayān, part 5 p.147

In reply, Sayyidunā Ismā‘īl ﷺ said,

يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمُرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

O my beloved father! Do what you have been ordered to do. You will find me, inshā'allāh, amongst the patient ones. (37:102)

Similarly, when Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ﷺ addressed his non-Muslim father regarding idol-worship, we find a similar tone being adopted:

وَادْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٦١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ
يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٢﴾ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي
قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾ يَا أَبَتِ لَا
تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
أَنْ يَسْكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾

And mention in the Book (the story of) Ibrāhīm. Indeed, he was a ṣiddiq (a man of truth), a prophet. (Remember) when he said to his father, 'O my beloved father! Why do you worship something that neither hears nor sees, nor benefits you in any way? O my beloved father! Indeed, there has come to me such knowledge that has not come to you; so follow me, and I shall guide you to a straight path. O my beloved father! Do not worship Shayṭān. Indeed, Shayṭān is rebellious to the Most-Beneficent (Allāh). O my beloved father! Indeed, I fear that a punishment from the Most-Beneficent (Allāh) will afflict you, hence you will become a friend of Shayṭān.' (19:41-45)

When Sayyidunā Nūḥ ﷺ encouraged his non-Muslim son to join the believers on the ark and not stay behind with the disbelievers, he said,

يٰۤاِبْنٰى اٰزْكَبْ مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ الْكَافِرِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾

O my beloved son! Come aboard with us, and do not be with the disbelievers. (11:42)

The father uses the term ‘my beloved son’ whilst the son uses the term ‘my beloved father’.

Pray for Your Parents

An important part of being good to parents is making du‘ā for them. Allāh ﷻ states,

وَ اخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا
رَبَّيْنِيْ صَغِيْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

And submit yourself before them in humility out of compassion, and say, ‘O my Rabb! Be merciful to them as they have nurtured me in my childhood.’ (17:24)

The Ambiyā ﷺ would continually pray for their parents. Sayyidunā Nūḥ ﷺ has been quoted in the Qur’ān saying,

رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ

O my Rabb! Forgive me and my parents. (72:28)

Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ﷺ is also quoted praying for his parents:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٨٠﴾

O our Rabb! Forgive me and my parents and all believers on the day when the reckoning shall take place. (14:41)

Rights of Parents

Our parents have many rights upon us. Whilst they are alive, it is their right that we feed them and clothe them if they are in need. It is their right that we immediately respond when they call us; we serve them when they are in need of our service; we respect them to the extent that we do not address them by their names; we pray for them; we wish for them what we wish for ourselves and we speak to them with respect. These are their rights.

Even after they depart from this world, they still have many rights upon us. Sayyidunā Abū Usayd رضي الله عنه narrates that a man said to Rasūlullāh ﷺ,

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! هَلْ بَقِيَ مِنْ بَرِّ آبَوَيَّ شَيْءٌ أَبْرُهُمَا بِهِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِمَا

O Rasūlullāh! Is there anything left of kindness to my parents that I can do for them after their demise?

Our Beloved Nabī ﷺ replied,

نَعَمْ، الصَّلَاةُ عَلَيْهِمَا وَالِاسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمَا وَانْفَاضُ عَهْدِهِمَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمَا وَصِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ الَّتِي لَا تُوصَلُ إِلَّا بِهِمَا وَآكَرَامُ صَدِيقَيْهِمَا

*Yes; du'ā for them, seeking forgiveness for them, fulfilling their promises after their demise, joining ties of relationship which cannot be joined except through them (i.e. joining ties with those relatives whom you would not be related to except through your parents e.g. aunts and uncles) and honouring their friends.*¹⁰

Young or old, all of us are children to somebody, whether our parents are alive or they have passed away. Let us make a firm

10 Sunan Abi Dāwūd, kitāb: الأدب chapter: في برّ الوالدين Ḥadīth: 5142

resolution that from today we will try our utmost to fulfil all the rights of our parents. This will bring immense benefits in this world and the Hereafter. Our Beloved Nabī ﷺ said,

بِرُّوا آبَاءَكُمْ تَبِرَّكُمْ أَبْنَاؤُكُمْ

Be kind to your parents, your children will be kind to you. ¹¹

Punishment in this World

However, if we are not kind to our parents and we disobey them, we will suffer the consequences in this very world. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

كُلُّ ذُنُوبٍ يُؤَخِّرُ اللَّهُ مِنْهَا مَا شَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، إِلَّا الْبَغْيَ وَعُقُوقَ الْوَالِدَيْنِ أَوْ قَطِيعَةَ الرَّحِمِ، يُعَجَّلُ لِصَاحِبِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ

Allāh ﷻ defers until the Day of Qiyāmah (the punishment of) whatever sin He desires, besides treason, disobedience to parents or breaking ties of kinship; He (Allāh ﷻ) brings forward (the punishment) for the perpetrator of these (sins) in the world before death. ¹²

So Allāh ﷻ will not only punish the person who disobeys his parents in the Hereafter, but also in this very world because disobedience to parents is a grave sin. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

الْكَبَائِرُ: الْأَشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ

The major sins are: ascribing partners with Allāh and disobedience to parents... ¹³

11 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: البر والصلة: Ḥadīth: 7259

12 Al-Adabul-Mufrad, chapter: البغي Ḥadīth: 591

13 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الايمان والتّوكل chapter: اليمين الغموس Ḥadīth: 6675

In another Ḥadīth, Sayyidunā Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked three times:

أَلَا أُنبِّئُكُمْ بِكَبِيرِ الْكَبَائِرِ؟

Shall I not inform you of the biggest of the major sins?

The Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم replied, ‘Why not O Rasūlullāh! (Please do inform us so that we can safeguard ourselves from them.)’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

الْإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ

Ascribing partners with Allāh, and disobedience to parents... ¹⁴

Punishment in the Grave

Disobedience to parents is a cause of punishment in the grave too. Al-‘Awwām ibn Ḥawshab رضي الله عنه narrates that he once came to a village where there was a graveyard on its outskirts. After ‘Aṣr, a grave opened and a man came out with the head of a donkey and the body of a human. He brayed three times and then the grave closed over him. When Al-‘Awwām رضي الله عنه asked a lady regarding this man, she said, ‘He would drink alcohol during the day and in the evening when he would return home, his mother would say to him, “O my beloved son! Fear (the Displeasure of) Allāh. For how much longer will you continue drinking alcohol?” The son used to say to her, “You are braying like a donkey.” After some time he passed away after ‘Aṣr and every day after ‘Aṣr his grave opens and he brays a few times, thereafter the grave closes over him.’¹⁵

14 Ibid, kitāb: عقوق الوالدين من الكبائر chapter: 5976

15 At-Tarḥīb wat-Tarḥīb (Al-Aṣḥabānī رحمهم الله), chapter: الترهيب من عقوق الوالدين
Ḥadīth: 471

We need to realise that our parents care a lot for us, so when they see us treading the path of destruction towards Jahannam, they cannot bare it. This is why they always try their utmost to give us good advice and guidance.

Punishment on the Day of Qiyāmah

Disobedience to parents will also be a means of punishment on the Day of Qiyāmah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

There are three (categories of people) whom Allāh, Most Honoured and Exalted He is, will not look at (with mercy) on the Day of Qiyāmah...

One of the categories of people that Nabī ﷺ mentioned was:

الْعَاقُ لِوَالِدَيْهِ

...the one who is disobedient to his parents.¹⁶

Similarly, this person will be deprived from direct entry into Jannah. He will be punished in the fire of Jahannam first and then be granted entry into Jannah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

وْثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ

And there are three (categories of people) who will not enter Jannah...

One of these three categories mentioned was again:

16 Sunanun-Nasa'i, kitāb: الرِّكَاء chapter: المَنان بما أعطى Ḥadīth: 2562

الْعَاقُ لِوَالِدَيْهِ

...the one who is disobedient to his parents.¹⁷

Benefits of Obeying Parents

Whilst disobedience to parents brings destruction in both worlds, obedience to them brings success in both. The following Aḥādīth mention the virtues of being good to ones parents:

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was once asked,

مَا حَقُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ عَلَى وَلَدِهِمَا؟

What are the rights of the parents over their children?

Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave a very short and sweet reply which each and every person should embed in their hearts and minds:

هُمَا جَنَّتُكَ وَنَارُكَ

They are your Jannah and your Jahannam (i.e. the means of your entry into Jannah due to obeying them or your entry into Jahannam due to disobeying them).¹⁸

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مُطِيعًا لِلَّهِ فِي وَالِدَيْهِ أَصْبَحَ لَهُ بَابَانِ مَفْتُوحَانِ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنْ كَانَ وَاحِدًا فَوَاحِدًا وَمَنْ أَصْبَحَ عَاصِيًا لِلَّهِ فِي وَالِدَيْهِ أَصْبَحَ لَهُ بَابَانِ مَفْتُوحَانِ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنْ كَانَ وَاحِدًا فَوَاحِدًا

17 Ibid

18 Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: الادب chapter: برّ الوالدين Ḥadīth: 3662

Whoever wakes up in the morning in a state that he is obedient to Allāh in regards to his parents, two doors of Jannah will open for him. And if it is one (parent who he is obedient to) then one (door of Jannah will open for him). And whoever wakes up in the morning in a state that he is disobedient to Allāh in regards to his parents, two doors of Jahannam will open for him. And if it is one (parent who he is disobedient to) then one (door of Jahannam will open for him).¹⁹

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها reports that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

نِمْتُ فَرَأَيْتُنِي فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَسَمِعْتُ صَوْتَ قَارِئٍ يَقْرَأُ ، فَقُلْتُ : مَنْ هَذَا ؟
” فَقَالُوا : هَذَا حَارِثَةُ بْنُ التُّعْمَانِ ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ : ” كَذَلِكَ الْبِرُّ ، كَذَلِكَ الْبِرُّ

I fell asleep and (in my dream) I saw myself in Jannah. I then heard the voice of someone reciting Qur’ān. So I said (to the angels present), ‘Who is this?’ They said, ‘This is Hārithah ibn Nu‘mān.’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ further said, ‘This (type of status) is (acquired through) being good (to one’s parents). This (type of status) is (acquired through) being good (to one’s parents).’²⁰

This virtue was attained by Sayyidunā Hārithah ibn Nu‘mān رضي الله عنه through his obedience towards his mother. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said regarding him,

وَكَانَ أَكْبَرَ النَّاسِ بِأُمِّهِ

He was the most obedient of people to his mother.²¹

19 Tārīkh Dimishq, part 33 p.365

20 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: البرّ والصّلة Hadīth: 7247

21 Ibid

In another Ḥadīth, Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah ibn Jāhimah رضي الله عنه reports that his father, Sayyidunā Jāhimah رضي الله عنه, came to Nabī ﷺ and said,

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعْرُوزَ وَقَدْ جِئْتُ أَسْتَشِيرُكَ

O Rasūlullāh! I have made an intention to fight (in the Path of Allāh ﷻ) and I have come to consult you (in this matter).

Nabī ﷺ said,

هَلْ لَكَ مِنْ أُمٍّ

Do you have a mother (i.e. is your mother alive)?

He said, ‘Yes.’ Nabī ﷺ thereupon said,

فَالْزَمِهَا فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ رِجْلَيْهَا

Then hold fast to her (i.e. look after her), for Jannah lies under her feet (i.e. through serving her you will acquire Jannah).²²

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said,

الْوَالِدُ أَوْسَطُ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ فَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَاصْبِرْ ذَلِكَ الْبَابُ أَوْ احْفَظْهُ

The father is the central door of Jannah; if you desire, neglect that door (as a result of disobeying your father), or protect it (by obeying him).²³

The choice is ours. Either we obey our fathers and become worthy of entering through the main door of Jannah or disobey them and become deserving of Jahannam.

22 Sunanun-Nasa’i, kitāb: الجهاد chapter: الرَّحْصَةُ فِي التَّخَلُّفِ لِمَنْ لَهُ وَالِدَةٌ Ḥadīth: 3104

23 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: البرِّ والصَّلة chapter: رِضَا الْوَالِدَيْنِ فِي مَا جَاءَ مِنَ الْفَضْلِ فِي رِضَا الْوَالِدَيْنِ Ḥadīth: 1900

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has also said,

ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُنَّ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِنَّ: دَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ وَدَعْوَةُ
الْمُسَافِرِ وَدَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ لِوَلَدِهِ

Three du'ās are (always) accepted; there is no doubt whatsoever in their acceptance: the du'ā of an oppressed person, the du'ā of a traveller and the du'ā of a father for his child. ²⁴

Final Words

Let us resolve to fulfil the rights of our parents. If our parents have passed away, then we must fulfil their rights upon us by making du'ā for them, doing good deeds and sending their rewards to them, fulfilling their promises and bequests, and being kind and respectful to their relatives and friends. Inshā'allāh, if we do this, then on the Day of Qiyāmah Allāh ﷻ will resurrect us like those who were obedient to their parents.

As for those of us whose parents are alive, they must value this great blessing and be obedient and faithful to them with love and sincerity. Only those whose fathers or mothers have passed away will be able to truly recognise how valuable a mother and a father is. Let us therefore be obedient, kind and respectful to our parents. If we have erred and made mistakes in any way, let us sort out our matter with our parents at the earliest opportunity; and thereafter make sure that we do not hurt their feelings. We should always remain obedient to our parents. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the tawfīq to fulfil the rights of our parents.

24 Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: الدَّعَاء chapter: دعوة الوالد ودعوة المظلوم Ḥadīth: 3862

It is worth taking another look at the verses we started with and also that we briefly touch upon the verse that follows after them:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغَنَّ عَنْكَ
الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا
قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَخُضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ
ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْنِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

Your Rabb has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be good to parents. Should one of them or both of them reach old age in your presence, then do not say to them 'uff' (a word or expression of anger or contempt) and do not scold them, and speak to them gently. And submit yourself before them in humility out of compassion, and say, 'O my Rabb! Be merciful to them as they have nurtured me in my childhood.' (17:23-24)

After these verses which have been discussed in some detail, Allāh ﷻ states,

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ ط

Your Rabb knows best what is in your hearts... (17:25)

Hence, be good to your parents not only externally, but also with sincerity in the heart. This part of the verse is not only related to the command of being good to parents, but to every aspect of our lives that we should always remember that Allāh ﷻ is aware of what our hearts are concealing. Further, Allāh ﷻ says,

إِنْ تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا ﴿٢٥﴾

...If you are righteous, then He is Most-Forgiving for those who frequently turn to Him in repentance. (17:25)

If you are sincere and good at heart and you have concern for the Hereafter, then if overcome by Shayṭān and nafs you make a mistake and thereafter repent, Allāh ﷻ will forgive you.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all acceptance. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all Jannah and safeguard us all from Jahannam. May He make us all the coolness of the eyes of our parents and make our children the coolness of our eyes. May Allāh ﷻ make this deed of being good to parents a means of forgiveness and salvation in the Hereafter. Āmīn.

وَأٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اِنَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَّعَلٰى اٰلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ اَجْمَعِينَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ