

## ON FAIR TREATMENT OF PARENTS

**Hazrat** Ismail (*Alaihis Salam*) was the first child of his parents. He was born in the old age of Hazrat Ibrahim (*Alaihis Salam*). He was loved very much by his parents. The child was also very attentive and obedient to his parents. One day, the father saw something in his dream and asked his son about it. The story is narrated in the Quran in these words:

﴿قَالَ يَبْنَىٰٓ اِنِّىۤ اَرَىۤ فِى الْمَنَامِ اَنِّىۤ اَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىۤ ۚ﴾ **الصافات: ١٠٢**

Translation of Meaning: "O my darling son, I see in my sleep that I'm slaughtering you. So look what is your opinion" (As-Saffat: 102). The question was amazing but equally amazing was the answer of the child:

﴿قَالَ يَتَابَتِ اَفْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمُرُ سَتَجِدُنِىۤ اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ۝﴾ **الصافات: ١٠٢**

Translation of Meaning: "O my dear father. Do whatever you are being commanded to. You will find me forbearer, God willing" (As-Saffat: 102).

This was the apogee of the deference and obedience of a child to his father. In this way Hazrat Ismail set an ideal example for the whole world.

**There** is a famous story of three men caught up in a cave narrated by the Prophet. All the three had supplicated to God with reference to good deeds performed by them. All of them were delivered from the cave. One of them had prayed referring to his fair treatment of his parents. His parents were of old age. Every evening, when he returned with his goats after grazing them, he used to milk them and fed his parent with this milk. If some of it was left, he gave it to his wife and children. One day when he brought the milk, his parent had gone to sleep. He kept standing on their head with the milk vessel the whole night waiting for their awakening but he himself did not wake them for fear of troubling them. Although his children were crying out of hunger, he kept standing in wait for his parent's awakening. Now this good deed became instrumental in the granting of his prayer and all were saved out of the cave [unanimous].

**Honouring** the parent: Islam has put utmost emphasis on obedience to and fair treatment of one's parent. In Quranic injunctions fair treatment of the parents comes next to obedience to God. It is declared that:

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَنًا ۚ﴾ (الإسراء: ٢٣)

Translation of Meaning: "Thy Lord has decreed that you worship none save Him and that you treat your parent fairly . . . ." (Al-Israa: 23). In another place it is ordained:

﴿وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَنًا ۚ﴾ (النساء: ٣٦)

Translation of Meaning: "And treat your parent fairly" (An-Nisa: 36).

It is enjoined further:

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرِ ۚ﴾ (لقمان: ١٤)

Translation of Meaning: "And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parent. His mother bears him in frailty upon frailty and his weaning is after two years. Give thanks unto Me and unto thy parent. Unto Me is your return journey" (Luqman: 14).

**Remembering** the parents after their demise: Fair treatment of parents is enjoined not only during their life time but also after their death. Fair treatment after their death means that one should pray for the peace of their souls earnestly. If they had made any commitments during their life time, they should be honoured. If they left any testament, it should be executed. Similarly, due defence be showed to their kin, companions and friends. Once a man from Bani Salma tribe queried the Prophet if parents can be treated fairly even after their death? The Prophet replied yes. It is in this manner that you pray for their peace and forgiveness, fulfil any promises made by them, and treat well their relations [Ibn Majah]. Allah (Ta'ala) Himself has exhorted the believers to pray for their parent:

﴿رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ﴾ (إبراهيم: ٤١)

Translation of Meaning: "O our Lord, forgive me and my parent and the believers on the Day of Reckoning" [Ibrahim: 41).

In another place it is ordained:

﴿ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ﴾ نوح: ٢٨

Translation of Meaning: "O my Lord forgives me and my parent and those who enter my home as believers and all believing men and believing women" (Noah: 28).

**The** virtue of fair treatment of Parents: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was once queried about which deed was most favoured by Allah? He replied: Translation of Meaning : "Fair treatment of parent". After that which deed? He was queried again. He replied: "The struggle in the way of God" [unanimous]. The pleasure of Allah is tied to the pleasure of parents. So one who wishes to please God must keep his parent pleased and happy. If you displease them Allah will be displeased. The Messenger of Allah pronounced:

"رضا الرب في رضا الوالدين، وسخط الرب في سخطهما" (الترمذي)

Translation: "The pleasure of Allah is in the pleasure of the parent and the anger of Allah is in the anger of the parent" [Tirmidhi].

A tradition recorded by Bukhari says:

Translation: One who pleased his parent pleased Allah and one who angered his parent angered Allah" [Bukhari].

**Once** a person came to the Prophet (ﷺ) seeking permission to join *Jihad*. He told him to go and serve his mother. Since he was very keen to join *jihad* he came back to seek permission again. Again he told him to go back and serve his mother. When he came back the third time the Prophet (ﷺ) scolded him saying "woe be to you. Go stay on the feet of your mother because paradise lies there." [Ibn Majah]. In the same way a person approached the Prophet saying he had a keen desire to join *jihad* but had no capacity for it. The Prophet asked him: "Is any one of your parent alive?" He said "yes my mother is alive." The prophet directed him "go serve your mother. If you treated your mother well it is as if you have performed the *hajj*, the *umrah* and also *jihad*." [Tibrani].

**In** a similar episode, a man came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "O Messenger of Allah I take an oath of allegiance [*bai'at*] to join you in emigration [*hijrat*] and *jihad* and wish to receive my compensation from Allah." The Prophet (ﷺ) inquired, "Is any one of your parent alive?" He replied "yes both my father and mother are alive." The Prophet asked again: "Do you want

your compensation?" He replied yes. Then the Prophet told him to go serve his parent and treat them well [Muslim].

**Quid pro quo:** It is a truism that the way you treat others they will treat you the same way. Fair treatment of the parents has its own consequential effect. If you treat your parents fairly Allah will enable your progeny to treat you fairly. So if you desire that your progeny is loyal and obedient to you must treat your parents well. There is a pronouncement of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

"بروا آباءكم تبركم أبناؤكم وعفوا تغف نساؤكم" (طبراني، حاكم)

Translation: "Do good to your parent your progeny will do good to you. Be chaste yourselves. Your women will remain chaste" [Tibrani; Hakim].

**The** prominent companion of the Prophet Hazrat Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqas (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) was given the tiding of paradise during his life time. Its background is that when he embraced the faith of Islam his pagan mother became very angry. She threatened him that unless he gives up his new faith she will neither eat nor drink until death. Then the people will call him the killer of his mother. Hazrat Sa'd (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) became extremely worried. He entreated his mother not to so as he cannot renounce his religion. But his mother acting upon her threat did not eat and drink for whole one night and one day. When her condition began to deteriorate he told her mother that even if you had 100 lives and all of them perished on this demand I would not leave my religion. You are free to eat or not to eat. Confronted with his resolve and firmness she was compelled to retreat and began eating and drinking. It was against this background that this *ayat* was revealed to the Prophet:

﴿وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا ۚ﴾

لقمان: ١٥

Translation of Meaning: "But if they quarrel with thee to ascribe unto Me as co-partner that of which thou hast no knowledge, then obey them not. Treat them in the world fairly and follow the path of him who repented unto Me. Then unto Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what ye used to do" (Luqman: 15).

**Fair** treatment is obligatory even if parent are pagans: It is reported of Hazrat Asmaa Bint Abu Bakr (*Radhi Allahu Anha*) that once her mother, who was still a pagan, came to visit her. Hazrat Asmaa (*Radhi Allahu Anha*) queried the

Prophet (ﷺ) about how to deal with her. The prophet directed her to treat her mother fairly [unanimous].

**Disobedience** of parents; Allah (Ta'ala) has forbidden disobedience of the parents even in the slightest way. There should be no laxity in the discharge of obligations towards them. Nothing should be done which causes them annoyance or displeasure. Allah (Ta'ala) proclaims:

﴿فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا نَهْرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا﴾ (الإسراء: ٢٣)

Translation of Meaning: "Nor rebuke them, but speak unto them gently" (Al-Israa: 23). Hazrat Ali (Radhi Allahu Anhu) said: Teasing or offending one's parent is tantamount to their disobedience.

**The** Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has counted disobedience of parent as one of major sins and equated it with *shirk billah* [ascribing co-partner to Allah]. He declared three times:

"ألا أنبئكم بأكبر الكبائر؟ ثلاثا، قالوا: بلى يا رسول الله، قال "الإشراك بالله، وعقوق الوالدين...." (متفق عليه)

Translation : Should I not tell you what is the greatest of all major sins? They replied please O Messenger of Allah. He said: Ascribing co-partner unto Allah and disobedience of parents [unanimous].

It is well-known that all wrong-doing will be visited with punishment on the Day of Judgment. But the punishment for disobedience of parent is executed in this world itself, though punishment of the after-world shall remain due. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has pronounced:

Translation of Meaning: "Allah defers the punishment for all sinful acts to the Day of Judgment except disobedience of parents for which He punishes the offender in this worldly life itself." [Bukhari].

\* \* \*