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22) Parents' Rights

About parents, there are certain rights which have been mentioned in the holy Quran, but unfortunately little attention is paid to them in the Muslim society. Every Muslim, especially the youngsters, should read books on this topic to know what duty they have and realize what benefits there are in being kind to their parents and what losses there are in annoying or hurting them.

Muhaqqiq Ardabili has been reported as saying: "Both intellect and narrations stress the respecting of parents' rights. The necessity of obeying them is supported by the Quranic verses and the Prophetic traditions in a way that their orders are so effective that they can prevent their sons from going to the warfront."

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported by Jabir as saying: "A man came to the messenger of Allah, saying: 'I am fond of Jihad and very interested in it.' The holy prophet (SAW) said: 'So fight in the way of Allah, and if you are killed, you will be living with God and given sustenance. If you die, your reward will be with God, and if you return from war front, you will be cleansed of your sins as the day you were born.' The man said: 'O messenger of Allah! I have old parents who depend on me and they are not pleased with my going to war.' The holy prophet (SAW) said: 'Attend to your parents then! By God in Whose hand my life is, your helping them for one night is better than the jihad of one year."[1]

Notes:

a. The importance of parents' rights is such that God Almighty says: ***"And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him and be good to the parents."***[2]

b. Being grateful to them as God has said: ***"And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents – his mother bears him with fainting upon fainting and his weaning takes two years – saying: Be grateful to Me and to both parents; to Me is the eventual coming."***[3]

c. God also says: ***"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a gracious word. And make yourself***

submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up* (*when I was*) *little.”[4]

This instruction is the best method of kindness and good association. In no law in the world, there are such instructions about parents.

All the traditions, which have reached us, are based on the same rights. For example, if we speak of the companions of the Raqeem (the companions of the cave), or the matter of the Cow of children Israel in the Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, or a Christian mother who converts to Islam, or when it is said that Owais al-Qarani had the smell of paradise, or when God introduces al-Khidhr to Prophet Moses (AS), they are all the result of respecting and being kind to parents.

If we think of al-Khidhr when killing the young boy during his journey with Prophet Moses (AS) or the young boy who suffered too much at dying, or Jurayh the worshipper of the Children of Israel, and other examples, we find that it is all due to hurting and annoying their parents.

Whenever we come across verses or traditions about parents, we find that they all are based on dutifulness and benevolence. Here, we would like to refer to some of stories.

The holy prophet (SAW) has been reported as saying: “Three persons of the former generations were walking in a way when it started raining hard. So they took refuge in a cave. A stone rolled down and closed the opening of the cave. One of them said: ‘By God, nothing can save you except truthfulness. So ask God’s help for being truthful.’ One of the three said: ‘O God! You know that a laborer worked in my rice field. I spent his wage on farming and buying some cows. The laborer came to me asking for his wage. I said: ‘these cows belong to you. Take them.’

The man said: ‘(O Lord) If You know that I did so because of the fear of You, so deliver us!’ The stone moved a little aside. The second one said: ‘I had old parents for whom I took milk every night. One night, I was late. When I took the milk to them, they had gone to sleep. Although my wife and children were hungry, I said to myself: I will first give milk to my parents. Therefore, I sat up and waited for my parents to wake up. O Lord! If you know that I did so because I feared You, rescue us. The stone moved further aside so they could see the sky.

The third man said: ‘O Lord! You know that I had a cousin whom I loved very much. I asked her for something indecent. She refused unless I would give her a hundred Dinars. I gave her the money and subdued her. When we were about to have conjugal relation, she said: Fear Allah, and give it up! I got up and gave it up. O Lord! If you know that I did so because I feared You, rescue us! God made an opening in the cave and they came out safely.”[5]

Imam Baqir (AS) has been reported as saying: “Among the Children of Israel, there was an ascetic called Jurayh who lived in a monastery. One day his mother came to him while he was engaged in prayer. The mother called him but Jurayh ignored her. Returning from the monastery, the mother said: I

ask the God of the Children of Israel to disgrace you!'

The following day, a prostitute went to the monastery. She was in labor, claiming that the child belong to Jurayh. Soon, the story spread among the Israelites. People said: 'The one who blamed us for adultery, has committed adultery himself!' The king ordered Jurayh to be hanged. Jurayh's mother went to him while beating on her head. Jurayh said: 'Be silent, for this is because of your curse! What am I to do with adultery?' The people, who heard this, said: 'O Jurayh, how can you prove that you are innocent?' Jurayh said: 'Bring the child!' The child was brought. Jurayh said: 'Who is your father?' The child said: so-and-so shepherd from so-and-so tribe.'

God denied what they had said about Jurayh. Jurayh took oath that he would serve his mother and never part from her."[6]

Undutifulness to one's parents is considered as a major sin whose punishment is Fire. Sheikh Sadooq in Khisal and Elal has reported Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: "In the book of Imam Ali (AS), I came across five major sins; polytheism, undutifulness to one's parents, swallowing up usury, escaping from the sacred war, and to join the land of disbelief after having migrate to the land of faith (turning a disbeliever after having been faithful)."

It is narrated that one day the messenger of Allah (SAW) was sitting in the mosque when Gabriel came to him, saying: Peace be on you, O messenger of Allah! Put your feet in the al-Baqee' Cemetery so that the breeze of your mercy will blow on the dead. The holy prophet (SAW) along with the companions set out to al-Baqee' Cemetery. Imam Ali (AS) met them in the way, asking: 'Where are you going?' The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: 'To al-Baqee'.' When they reached al-Baqee' Cemetery, a person was saying loudly: 'Save me, O messenger of Allah!' The holy prophet (SAW) said: 'Tell me of your punishment!' The man said: 'O the intercessor of the disobedient! The curse of my mother has afflicted me with such punishment!'

The holy prophet (SAW) asked Bilal to proclaim in Medina: "O people, gather at the graveyard of your parents." All the people of Medina came to the cemetery. A crookbacked old woman leaning on a walking-stick came to the holy prophet (SAW), bowed to him, and asked: 'O messenger of Allah! What is this order for?' The holy prophet (SAW) asked: 'Is this your son's grave?' She said: 'Yes, it is.'

The holy prophet (SAW) said: 'Your son is being tortured. Forgive him!' She said: 'I will not forgive him!' The holy prophet (SAW) asked the reason. She said: 'I reared him with much trouble and suffering, hoping that one day he might help me. But when he grew up he was a trouble for me.' The holy prophet (SAW) asked her to forgive him, raising his hands to supplicate: 'O Lord! By the holiness of the Five Ones of the Cloak,[7] make the voice of this man be heard by his mother, so that she may have pity and mercy on him.' Then, the holy prophet (SAW) said: 'O woman! Put your ears on the grave to hear the moaning of your son.' The old woman did so and she heard very moving moaning. She began weeping. She said: 'O messenger of Allah! O master of the messengers! O intercessor of sinners! What is this cry

coming from the grave that says: There is fire on me, fire under me, fire on my right, fire on my left, and fire before me. (I seek) safety, safety, safety! O mother, forgive me or I shall be tormented until the Day of Resurrection.'

Having pity on her son, the old women said: 'O Lord! I forgive my son.'

At that very moment, the son received Allah's mercy and cried out: 'O mother! May Allah be pleased with you as He is pleased with me.'8

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 52.
2. Qur'an, 4:36.
3. Qur'an, 31:14.
4. Qur'an, 17:23-24.
5. Al-Khisal, p. 184.
6. Al-Ta'reef fee Huqooq al-Walidayn, p. 62.
7. The Prophet, Imam Ali, Fatima, Imam Hasan, and Imam Husayn who were covered by the Prophet's cloak.
8. Huqooq al-Walidain, p. 101.

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