

# Etiquettes of Dealing with Parents

1. Behave well towards your father and mother and consider this good conduct as a propitious act which will earn God's grace in this world as well as in the next. Next to God, man owes the greatest obligation to his parents. The greatness and value of this obligation towards one's parents may be realised from the fact that the Holy Qur'an at several points mentions the rights of parents and the rights of God simultaneously at one place. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an has ordained the duty of offering thanks to the parents along with thanksgiving to the Lord.

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا .  
«بنی اسرائیل - ۲۳»  
*Wa qadā rabbuka an-llā ta'budū illa iyyāhu wa bil wāli.  
dāini ihsānā. (17 : 23)*

*"Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none save Him and (that ye show) kindness to parents."*

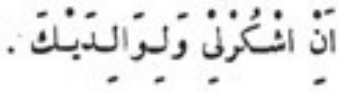
Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (God be pleased with him) relates "I submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which deed will win the highest favour of God?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) answered : **"The prayer which is offered at the appointed hour.** I submitted again: 'Next to this which other deed will win the greatest favour of God?' The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : **"Good conduct towards father and mother.**" I again submitted : 'And next to this ?' The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: **"Jihad (earnest endeavour) in the way of Allah."** (Bukhari, Muslim)

Hadrat 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) reports : "One day a person went to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted : "I give my hand into your hand and swear allegiance for performing *Hijrat* and *Jihad* and I beseech a reward from God in return for this." The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired: **"Is one of your parents alive?"** He submitted: "Yes, praise be to God, both my father and mother are alive." Thereupon the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : **"Well then do you really want to receive a reward from God for performing *Hijrat* and *Jihad*?"** The man replied : "Yes, indeed, I beseech reward from God in return for these acts." The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Go then. Attend to your parents and serve them well". (Muslim)

Hadrat Abu Umama (God be pleased with him) relates: "A man enquired from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! What are the rights of parents over their offspring?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: **"Your entry into Paradise or Hell depends on your good or bad conduct towards your parents,"** (Ibn Majah)

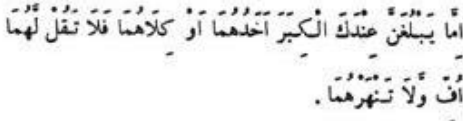
In other words, if you treat them well, you will be sent to Paradise and if you violate the rights that your parents have over you, you will be consigned to serve as fuel for Hell-Fire."

2. Be grateful to your parents. Thanksgiving and an acknowledgement of debt and gratitude are the first duties which a beneficiary owes to the benefactor. It is a fact that the parents are the palpable cause for our existence. Again, it is under their protection and upbringing that we grow up to an age of maturity. The extraordinary self-sacrifice, unparalleled devotion and deep affection with which they patronise us demand that our hearts should be filled with sentiments of reverence, indebtedness, love and an acknowledgement of their magnanimity and every fibre of our heart should pulsate with feelings of gratitude to them. It is for this reason that God has ordained offering of gratitude to parents along with thanksgiving to Him.

  
*Anishkurlī wali walidaika.*

*"(We willed) that you should offer thanks to Me and remain grateful to your father and mother."*

3. Always try to make your parents happy. Do not say anything in opposition to their will or temperament which may displease them, especially when they are advanced in age they acquire a peevish and irritable temperament. In old age parents start making unexpected demands and begin proffering impossible claims. In this case also tolerate their behaviour in good cheer and do not say anything in anger in response to their demands which may cause them pain and may injure their feelings.

  
*Imma yablughanna 'indakal kibara ahadu-huma au kilahuma fala taqullahuma uffin wa la tanharhuma.*

**"If one or both of thy parents reach an advanced age with thee, say not 'fie' unto them nor repulse them."**

As a matter of fact, the strength to tolerate unpleasant things is sapped during old age and weakness increases the sense of self-importance in old people. Hence they react sensitively to even minor offensive matters. Keeping in view their delicate and sensitive nature, do not let your parents feel angry by any of your words or deeds.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. Amr (God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : **"The pleasure of God is contained in the pleasure of the father even as His displeasure is contained in the displeasure of the father."** (Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, Hakim)

In other words, anyone who wants to please God should seek the pleasure of his father, for if the father is angry, the favour of God cannot be earned. The one who makes his father angry provokes the wrath of God."

Another statement of Hadrat 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) runs as follows: "A man left his parents weeping and came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for the purpose of offering

allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for *Hijrah*. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to him: "**Go back to your parents and return after making them happy as you came after leaving them crying.**" (Abu Dawud)

**4.** Do service to your parents with heart and soul. If God has afforded you the opportunity to serve your parents, it is in fact a favourable opportunity for you to earn entitlement to Paradise and to win the Pleasure of God. Good service to parents secures blessings and grace in both worlds and man obtains salvation from the calamities of this world and the next. Hadrat Anas (God be pleased 'with him) relates: "Any man who desires that his life should be prolonged and his subsistence may be increased ought to do good service to his parents and show kindness to them." (Al-Tarhib-o-Tarhib)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed : "**Let that man be disgraced, and disgraced again and let him be disgraced even more.**" The people enquired : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) who is that man?" The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "**I refer to the man who finds his parents old in age – both of them or one of them – and yet did not earn entitlement to Paradise by rendering good service to them.**" (Muslim)

On one occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave precedence to the obligation of looking after one's parents over one of the supreme forms of worship like *Jihad*. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade a companion (God be pleased with him) to proceed on *Jihad* and urged him to look after his parents.

Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (God be pleased with him) relates that a person came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the intention of participating in the *Jihad*. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him : "**Are your father and mother alive?**" He submitted : "Yes, they are alive". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed: "**Go and render good service to them. This is the *Jihad***". (Bukhari, Muslim)

**5.** Respect and adore your parents and do not show disrespect to them by a single word or action. The Holy Qnr'an affirms:

وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا . (بنی اسرائیل ۲۳)  
Wa qullahumā qaulan karimā. (17 : 23)

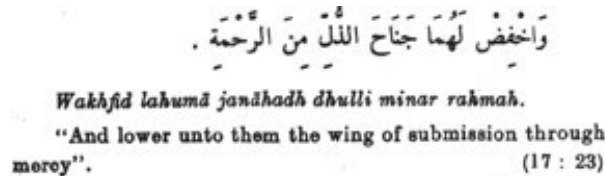
**"But speak to them a gracious word."**

On one occasion Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) enquired from Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) : "Do you wish to ward off Hell and gain entry into Paradise?" Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) answered : "Yes, why not, I swear in the name of God I cherish this desire". Hadrat Ibn 'Umar (God be pleased with him) then asked : "Are your parents alive?" Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) replied : "Yes, my mother is alive," Ibn 'Umar (God be pleased with him) remarked: "If you talk to them in a polite manner and look after their needs and feed them well, you will certainly be admitted to Paradise provided you abstain from capital evils." (Al-Adab-ul Mufrad)

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) once saw two men. He asked one of them : "What is your relationship with the other man?" The person replied: "He is my father." Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) thereupon

advised him, "Look, never call him by his proper name, walk ahead of him nor sit before he takes his seat." (Al-Adab-ul Mufrad)

**6.** Be faithful and humble towards your parents.



*"And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy". (17:23)*

To offer humble obedience to parents implies to pay constant regard to their dignity. Do not assume a haughty attitude towards them, nor treat them with insolence.

**7.** Love your parents and consider this act as a privilege and a source of reward in the eternal world. Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : **"The pious offspring who casts a single look of affection at his parents receives a reward from God equal to the reward of an accepted Hajj."** The people submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) : If someone casts a hundred such glances of love and affection at his parents, what then?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed; **"Yes, indeed, even if one does so a hundred time a day, he will get a hundredfold reward. God is far greater than you imagine and is completely free from petty narrow mindedness."** (Muslim)

**8.** Obey your parents with full devotion. Even if they show some intransigence, obey their will cheerfully. Keeping in view the great favours which they have done to you, try to fulfil all their demands willingly which may be offensive to your own taste or temperament, provided, of course, they are not derogatory to the tenets of religion.

Hadrat Abu Sa'id (God be pleased with him) narrates that a person came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Yemen. The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him; **"Do you have any relations in Yemen?"** He submitted: "Yes, my father and mother are there". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then asked: **"Did they give you permission to leave?"** He submitted: "No, I did not take their permission". The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed : **"Go back then and ask the permission of your father and mother. If they agree, come back and join the Jihad, otherwise, attend on them and render good service to them."** (Abu Dawud)

Realise the value of rendering obedience to parents from the fact that a man came from miles intending to join the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Holy war for the glory of religion, yet the Holy Prophet (peace

and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned him back saying: **"You can join the Holy War only if both your father and mother allow you to do so."**

Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) reports that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: **"The man who wakes up in the morning having previously discharged all the duties and obligations laid upon him by God concerning his parents, he will find the two gates of Paradise open for him on waking up in the morning; and in case there is only one parent, the person will find one door of Paradise open for him. And in contrast if a man wakes up in the morning having previously disregarded any obligations or duties laid upon him by God concerning his parents, then he will find two gates of Hell open for him on waking up in the morning; and in case one of the parents is alive, then the man will find one gate of Hell open for him"**. The man submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you), if the parents are treating him wrongly, what then?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: **"Yes, even if they are treating him wrongly; yes, indeed, even if they are treating him wrongly."** (Mishkat)

**9.** Consider your own goods as the property of your parents and spend your capital on them with an open hand. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ  
قَالُوا الَّذِينَ . «البقره ٢١٥»

*Yus'alunaka madha yunfiquna qul ma anfaqtum min khairin falil walidaini. ( 2:215 )*

***They ask thee, what they shall spend. Say what ye spend for good must go to parents."***

On one occasion a man came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and complained that his father took whatever goods he wanted from him. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent for that man's father. An old, infirm man came walking with the help of a stick. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) interrogated him on the point, the old man submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! There was a time when I was strong and he was weak and helpless. I had money and he was empty-handed. I never forbade him then to lay his hands on anything that I possessed. Today, he is strong and healthy and I am old and infirm. He has money and I am empty-handed. He now denies me access to his goods." Upon hearing this tale of the old man, the Benefactor of the humanity (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) burst into tears and addressing the son of the old man observed: "You and your goods are the property of your father."

**10.** Even if your father and mother are non-Muslims, treat them well. Continue to pay them respect and devotion and serve them faithfully. However, in case they command you to become a polytheist or indulge in a sinful act, refuse to obey them and sternly repulse their demand.

وَأَنْ جَاهِدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا  
تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا .  
Wa in jahadaka ala antushrika bimā laisa laka bihi  
'ilmun fala tuti 'huma wa sahihuma fiddunya ma 'rūfa.

**"And if your (parents) pressure you to associate someone with Me of which you have no knowledge, obey them not, yet continue to treat them well in the world."**

Hadrat Asma' (God be pleased with her) states : "In the sacred lifetime of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), my mother visited me on one occasion. She was a polytheist at that time. I submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "My mother has come to pay me a visit and she is an unbeliever in Islam. How should I treat her?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 'observed: **"Yes, you should continue to show kindness to your mother."** (Bukhari)

**11.** Offer prayers begging grace for your parents, Bring to mind their fervent appeals to the Lord and beg His mercy for them with a zealous and sincere heart. God ordains:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا .  
Waqul rabbirhamhumā kamā rabbayānī saghīra.

**"And say: My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little."**

In other words, say: "O Creator, with mercy, devotion, affection and love, my Lord, they reared me in childhood and sacrificed their own pleasure and ease for my sake but, they, in their infirmity and helplessness of old age, are more deserving of kindness, and love than I ever was. God! I can pay them no recompense. Do patronise them and show them mercy in their miserable state".

**12.** Observe special care in looking after your mother. By nature, the mother is weak and more sensitive and needs your better treatment and devotion. Moreover, her favours and sacrifices are comparatively far greater than the father. Hence religion has conceded preferential rights to the mother and has enjoined upon the believers to treat their mothers with special consideration. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ، حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا  
وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمَلَهُ وَفِصَالَهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا .  
والاحقاف ١٥

***"And We have commanded unto man kindness towards parents.  
His mother beareth him with suffering, bringeth him forth with suffering,  
bearing of him and weaning of him is thirty months."*** (46:15)

While enjoining upon the believers to show good behaviour towards both father and mother, the Holy Qur'an has drawn a poignant picture of constant suffering of pain and hardships by the mother and has excellently pointed out in a psychological manner the fact that the devoted mother deserves comparatively more of your service and kind behaviour than your father. The same fact has been elucidated in greater detail by the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) reports: "A man came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted 'O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! Who deserves the noblest treatment from me?' The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: 'Your mother.' He again submitted: 'And next?' The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: 'Your mother.' When the man submitted for the fourth time: 'And who next?' The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: 'Your father.'" (Al-Adabul Mufrad)

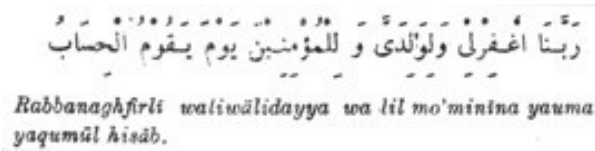
Hadrat Jahma (God be pleased with him) paid a call on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! I wish to join you in the *Jihad* and have come to solicit your guidance in this matter. I seek your command". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him: "**Is your mother alive?**" Jahma (God be pleased with him) submitted: "Yea, she is alive." Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), said "**Return to her then and devote yourself to her service, for Paradise lies under her feet.**" (Ibn Majah, Nasa'i)

Hadrat Awais (may God show him mercy) was a contemporary of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but he could never attain the privilege of calling on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He had an old mother to whose service he devoted himself day and night. He cherished a great desire to see the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it was but natural for every Muslim to have a burning desire to catch a glimpse of the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Hadrat Awais (God be merciful to him) indeed wanted to pay a call, yet the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade him to come. Similarly, Hadrat Awais (mercy of God be on him) cherished an ambition to discharge the obligation of *Hajj*, yet as long as his mother remained alive, Hadrat Awais (God be merciful to him) never set out for the *Hajj* alone. He fulfilled the desire to perform *Hajj* only after his mother's demise.

**13.** Treat your foster mother well. Do service to her and show her respect and adoration. Hadrat Abn Tafail (God be pleased with him) states: "I once witnessed the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) distributing meat at a place called 'Ja'rana'. Presently, a lady arrived and approached near the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spread out his sheet for her and the lady sat on it. I enquired from the people, 'Who is this lady?' The people told me: 'This lady is the foster mother of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).' (Abu Dawud)

**14.** Remember your parents after they have passed away. Observe the following etiquettes to render good service to your deceased parents:

(i) Offer prayers continuously invoking mercy of God upon your dead father and mother. The Holy Qur'an enjoins upon the pious to say this prayer:



*O our Lord! Grant forgiveness to me and my parents and pardon all the faithful on the day of Reckoning.*

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) states: "When the deceased is elevated to high degrees of favour, he enquires in astonishment : "How so?" He is informed by God, "Your offspring have been offering prayers begging mercy for you (and God has accepted those petitions of mercy)."

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) also states:

"The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : The opportunity to do something ends with one's death, yet there are three things which continue to afford benefit to him after death – a recurring charitable act; knowledge which he has imparted to others from which people derive benefit and thirdly, pious offspring who continue to offer prayers invoking mercy of God upon him.

(ii) Fulfil all the contracts and promises made by your parents and carry out their will. Your parents must have made many agreements with some people, they might have made a covenant with God; they might have taken a vow; they might have promised to deliver goods to someone; they might have owed a debt to somebody but were unable to discharge it before death overtook them ; they might have made a will at the time of their death. Fulfil all these obligations to the extent of your means.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) narrates: "Hadrat Sa'd b. 'Ubada (God be pleased with him) submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! My mother had taken a vow, but she expired before discharging it. Can I carry out the vow on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "**Why not! You must carry out the vow taken by her.**"

(iii) Show good conduct to the friends of your father and the female companions of your mother. Treat them with respect. Seek their advice just as you seek the advice of your elders and pay due regard to their opinions and advice. On one occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "There is no superior deed of piety than that man should do good service to the companions and friends of his father".

Once Hadrat Abu Darda (God be pleased with him) fell ill and his condition continued to aggravate till they lost all hopes of his life. Hadrat Ynsuf b. 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) made a long journey and came to enquire after his health. On seeing him, Hadrat Abu Darda asked in astonishment: "How are you here?" Yusuf b. 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) replied : "I have come here only to enquire after your health, for you were on terms of deep friendship with my late father."

Hadrat Abu Barda (God be pleased with him) relates: "When I arrived in Medinah, 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) paid me a visit and said : "Abu Barda (God be pleased with you), do you know why I have come to see you?" I replied : "No. I have no idea why you have come here." Thereupon Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) said: "I have heard the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as affirming : "**The man who wishes**



**to render good service to his father, who is in the grave, ought to show good treatment to his father's companions and friends.**" Having related this saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) remarked: "Brother, my father 'Umar and your father (God be pleased with him) were on terms of deep friendship. I wish to commemorate this friendship and fulfil its duties." (Ibn Hibban)

Show constant good treatment to the relations of your parents and entertain full respect and pay due regard to the sanctity of these connections. An indifferent and irresponsible conduct towards these relations is tantamount to treating your own parents with indifference and negligence. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: **"Do not observe indifference towards your forefathers. To show carelessness in your conduct towards your parents is to display ingratitude to God."**

18. If, God forbid, you have been guilty of negligence in treating your parents well or discharging your full obligations towards them during their lifetime, do not despair of God's mercy. Offer prayers constantly invoking blessings of God upon your deceased parents. It is possible God may forgive your sin of negligence and admit you among the ranks of the pious people.

Hadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) relates: The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: **"If a person does not observe filial devotion to his parents during their lifetime, and both parents or one of them passes away, the person ought to offer prayers for his deceased parents and beg His Mercy and beseech Him to grant salvation to them till God in His Mercy ordains their admission to the rolls of the pious people."**

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