

Chapter 11

Analyses of the hadiths regarding the Rights of Parents

Introduction

Respect to parents is a sacred obligation in Islam. Because, they feel great compassion for their children and endure many troubles and hardships while raising them. One cannot estimate the depth of attachment and compassion parents feel for their children, or calculate the troubles and hardships they endure; therefore, respecting parents is a debt of human gratitude as well as a religious obligation.⁴³⁵ Disobeying parents is considered as disobeying God. In many verses, God emphasized on the rights of parents and warned Believers to be respectful in this regard.

“Worship God and do not associate anything as a partner with Him; and do good to your parents in the best way possible...”⁴³⁶

In this verse, worshipping God alone is mentioned first for it is the most important duty on human beings. God’s right is greater than any other right, because He creates, provides, sustains etc. whole creation alone therefore He deserves to be worshipped alone. Right after this, God commands Believers to be respectful to their parents and do good to them in the best way possible. With this expression, He allocated a great share to parents from being dutiful and obedient to them. Doing good to parents is expressed with the Arabic word ‘*ihsan*’. This word has few meanings including doing a favor to someone, doing something best and worshipping God as if seeing Him. Therefore, ‘*ihsan*’ to parents conveys the meaning of utmost care and highest attention to them. In this verse, God says, worship Me as if seeing Me and with the same care and attention, but not in the sense of worship, do good to your parents.

Worship is done to God alone but other than that, children can do all kind of good to their parents. The children are supposed to take care of their parents and be for them when they need their children. Since they spend all their life for their children, they deserve to be respected and loved. They deserve best attention and great care from their children. This fact is explained in another place in the Qur’an very eloquently;

“We have enjoined on human in respect with his parents: his mother bore him in strain upon strain, and his weaning was in two years. (So, O human,) be thankful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final homecoming.”⁴³⁷

Feeling gratitude to all kind of favors and goodness is Islamic attribute. Believers are supposed to thank God first for He is the real owner of all kind of good and blessing. After that, other good things deserve to be thanked and parents have the greatest share in this regard. They spend their entire life for their children and suffer greatly while raising them. Therefore, the smallest misbehavior against them is not allowed in Islam;

“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him alone, and treat parents with the best of kindness. Should one of them, or both, attain old age in your lifetime, do not say ‘Ugh!’ to them (as an indication of complaint or impatience), nor push them away, and always address

⁴³⁵ Fethullah Gülen, *Pearls of Wisdom*, New Jersey: Light, 2005, p. 45.

⁴³⁶ Qur’ān 4: 36.

⁴³⁷ Qur’ān 31: 14.

them in gracious words. Lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy, and say: ‘My Lord, have mercy on them even as they cared for me in childhood.’”⁴³⁸

As it can be clearly seen in the verse above, God placed parents in the center regarding who deserves care and respect most among people. The seed of family is parents and they deserve respect more. Indeed, their value is so great for the Prophet stated, “Paradise is under the feet of mothers.”⁴³⁹In order to achieve God’s pleasure and content one must keep his/her parents happy and content. Those who value their parents and regard them as a means to obtain God’s mercy are the most prosperous in both worlds while those who regard their parents’ existence as a burden or who become weary of them inevitably suffer the most severe hardships in life.⁴⁴⁰The level of respect to one’s parents is related to his/her fear from God. If one is careless regarding the rights of his /her parents, they are careless of God’s punishment.

Parents should give as much importance to their children’s moral and spiritual education as they do to their physical growth and health, and should entrust them to the care of the most honorable teachers and guides.⁴⁴¹Neglecting or ignoring children’s moral and spiritual training is a great mistake. It is very unfortunate for the children to be deprived from parents who could give moral and spiritual education to them.

It is a religious obligation to obey parent as long as they do not command to disobey God or violate His rights. Sa’d bin Abi Waqqās embraced Islam when he was 17 years old. His mother was very upset with his Islam therefore threatened him saying; ‘if you do not denounce your religion I will not eat anything until death and you will be called as a murderer of his mother.’ She was very resilient and did not eat anything for the first day. However, Sa’d bin Abi Waqqās was very adamant for he stated, ‘O dear mother! Even if you had a hundred lives and gave one every day I would not denounce my religion, now it is your decision to eat or not.’ Thereupon the mother gave up from her decision and started to eat. After this incident the following verse was revealed to the Prophet;

“We have enjoined on human to be kind and good to his parents; but if they endeavor to make you associate with Me anything as partner, about whose being so you impossibly have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, so I will make you understand what you were doing (and call you to account for it).”⁴⁴²

Parents deserve respect and obedience even if they are unbelievers. However, if they command disobedience to God or violation of any Islamic principle they are not obeyed. There is no obedience to human beings when they command or advise to disobey God.

⁴³⁸ Qur’ān 17: 23-24.

⁴³⁹ Nasāī, *Sunan*, Jihad, 6.

⁴⁴⁰ Gulen, *Pearls of Wisdom*, p. 45.

⁴⁴¹ Gulen, *ibid*.

⁴⁴² Qur’ān 29: 8.

Analyses of Hadiths regarding the Rights of Parents

First hadith

عن أبي عبد الرحمن عبد الله بن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: سألتُ النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَيُّ الْعَمَلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى؟ قَالَ: الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى وَقْتِهَا قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ: الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud asked the Prophet, “Which of the deeds is loved most by God?” Messenger of God (pbuh) said, “Prescribed prayers at its proper time.” I asked, “What next?” He replied, “Obedience and kindness to parents.” I asked, “What next?” He replied, struggling in the way of God.”⁴⁴³

Analysis of the hadith

Bukhari and Muslim agreed on the authenticity of the hadith and recorded it in their *sahīh* collections. The Companions asked the Prophet on different occasions which of the deeds is the best at God’s side and he gave different answers according to a person and his/her need. This hadith explains the place of three religious rituals; performing the obligatory prayers at their proper time, obedience and being dutiful to parents and struggling in God’s cause.

The most important worship in Islam is the obligatory prayers for they are the foundations of Islam. The prayers must be performed in their allocated time. If a person cannot pray it in its proper time, he/she can make it up later and God accepts it. However, responsibility for neglecting the prayers remain on person’s shoulder. The second important worship in the hadith is doing good to parents and being dutiful to them. Obedience to parents comes right after worshipping God alone in the Qur’an. Here, the order is the same; first, carrying out the duties towards God by performing the prayers in their proper time and the second, being kind and obedient to parents.

By raising their children through troubles and hardships, parents deserve the best respect and the utmost care. They endure many hardships while raising their children from birth until they become adults and even further. For this reason, God prohibited children from expressing their dissatisfaction even with a word ‘ugh’. They cannot use harsh words against their parents nor they can scold them. Rather, they are supposed to speak gently and treat them kindly. They should pray for their parents to receive God’s mercy and blessings as they received affection and care from their parents when they were small.

The last good deed that is mentioned in the hadith is struggling in God’s cause. Promoting God’s word and introducing His final Messenger and His final revelation to humanity can be given as examples in this regard. Spending time, wealth, health and other means in this way is considered a great virtue. Sometimes struggling in the way of God may be physical by defending one’s country, religion, property or other worldly things while other times it can be against the carnal desires and evil acts. The latter is named greater jihad by the Prophet for it is a continuous and more difficult.

⁴⁴³ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Mawāqit, 5; Muslim, *Sahīh*, īmān, 137.

Second hadith

و عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لا يَجْزِي وِلْدٌ وَالِدًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَجِدَهُ مَمْلُوكًا، فَيَشْتَرِيَهُ، فَيُعْتِقَهُ

Abu Hurayra reports that Messenger of God (pbuh) said, “No child can repay the rights of his father unless he finds him a slave and buys him and frees him.”⁴⁴⁴

Analysis of the hadith

The hadith is authentic according to criteria of Imam Muslim therefore he recorded it in his *sahīh* collection. Additionally, Abu Dāwud, Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah report it in their Sunan collections. The hadith emphasized on the rights of parents and its outstanding importance in Islam. It is almost impossible to repay their rights. This fact is explained with an analogy to slavery. Scholars considers freeing a slave as giving him a new life. They also consider it as freeing oneself from Hell. The relationship between the two cases is obvious. Parents have a pivotal role for one’s coming into life and being raised. It is similar to freeing a slave in this regard.

The other approach is that it is very difficult and extremely hard to find one’s father as a slave and buy him from his master and then free him. Similarly, it is extremely hard to repay all the sacrifices of a father for his children. For this reason, any good done to parents is not considered as favor to them; rather it is the religious duty of children to love, care and obey them. If they do it in the best way possible, they will get God’s pleasure. Doing good to parents doubles the rewards; one reward is for the good deed and the other one is for protecting kinship ties. If they ignore or neglect their duties towards their parents, the sin will be double too.

Third hadith

وعنه قال: قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرَغَ مِنْهُمْ قَامَتِ الرَّحِمُ ، فَقَالَتْ: هَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِدِ بِكَ مِنَ الْقَطِيعَةِ، قَالَ: نَعَمْ أَمَا تَرْضِينَ أَنْ أُصِلَ مَنْ وَصَلَكِ، وَأَقْطَعَ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ؟ قَالَتْ: بَلَى، قَالَ فَذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اقْرءوا إِنْ شِئْتُمْ: فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

Abu Hurayra reports that Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “God created all the creatures and when He finished the task of His creation, al-Rahm (ties of kinship) said, ‘(O God) at this place I seek refuge with You against severing my ties.’ God said, ‘That I treat with kindness those who treat you with kindness and sever ties with those who sever ties with you.’ It said, ‘I am satisfied.’ God said, ‘Then this is yours. Then Messenger of God (pbuh) said, ‘Recite

⁴⁴⁴ Muslim, *Sahīh*, Itq, 25; Abu Dāwud, *Sunan*, Adab, 120.

this verse if you like, ‘Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship? Such are they whom God has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.’ (47:22-23).”⁴⁴⁵

Analysis of the hadith

Bukhari and Muslim agreed on the authenticity of the hadith and recorded it in their *sahīh* collections. Occasionally, the Prophet explained the difficult topics with examples to make them more understandable. The ties of kinship are difficult concept to understand, therefore, the Prophet explained it with an example.

Rahim literally means womb and symbolizes the ties of kinship. God speaks with everything and understand their language. Speaking is not limited to letters, words or sentences. As Qur’ān states everything praises and glorifies God with their own language. The ties of kinship expressed itself before God with its unique language. The Prophet translated its statements into human language so they can get lesson. God gave a great importance to the ties of kinship and warned Believers to be cautious in this regard. Accordingly, He will protect the one who protects the ties of kinship and sever ties with those who sever it.

Treating kindly to parents first and then to other relatives brings God’s mercy and blessing. God doubles the reward of every good deed that is done to the relatives. God will not forget the one who does not forget the ties of kinship. He will treat them with His mercy and favors. The style and method used in the expression of hadith indicate that the ties of kinship must not be cut off for it will cause punishment here and in the Hereafter. God established the ties of kinship as a sacred duty upon human beings to protect it. It is a major sin to sever the ties with relatives.

Fourth hadith

وعنه رضي الله عنه قال: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟ قَالَ: أُمُّكَ قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: أُمُّكَ قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: أُمُّكَ قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: أَبُوكَ

Abu Hurayra reports; “A person came to Messenger of God (pbuh) and asked, “Who among people is most deserving of my kind treatment?” He replied, “Your mother.” He again asked, “Who next?” “Your mother”, the Prophet (pbuh) replied again. He asked, “Who next?” He said again, “Your mother.” He again asked, “Then who?” Thereupon the Prophet said, “Then your father.”⁴⁴⁶

Analysis of the hadith

⁴⁴⁵ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Adab, 13; Muslim, *Sahīh*, Birr, 16.

⁴⁴⁶ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Adab, 2; Muslim, *Sahīh*, Birr, 1.

Bukhari and Muslim agreed on the authenticity of the hadith and recorded it in their *sahīh* collections. The Companion who asked the question was Mu'awiya ibn Hayda. The hadith explains the rulings regarding who has more rights. The Prophet stated that a mother deserves best treatment first. Indeed, he repeated the same answer three times. This indicates a mother has three times more rights on children than a father has. Because a mother endures more hardships while raising her children. She carries a baby on her womb for nine months, gives birth in pain and then suckles the baby for two years. After that, she feeds the baby and takes care of his/her other needs. Therefore, a mother deserves best treatment most.

Although a mother has more rights on children they must treat kindly to both of them. Some scholars deemed the rights of parents equal but this view is against this hadith and does not have sound basis. Although children must do good to the parents without discriminating any of them mother always has more rights.

Fifth hadith

وعنه عن النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: رَغِمَ أَنْفٌ، ثُمَّ رَغِمَ أَنْفٌ، ثُمَّ رَغِمَ أَنْفٌ مَنْ أَدْرَكَ أَبَوَيْهِ عِنْدَ الْكِبَرِ، أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا، فَلَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ

Abu Hurayra reports that the Prophet (pbuh) said; “May he be disgraced! May he be disgraced! May he be disgraced, whose parents, one or both, attain old age during his life time, and he does not enter Paradise (by rendering being dutiful to them).”⁴⁴⁷

Analysis of the hadith

The hadith is authentic according to criteria of Imam Muslim. He recorded it in his *sahīh* collection. The expressions and the style of the hadith indicates the outstanding importance of the rights of the parents. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is sent as mercy to all worlds. He was very compassionate to save all humanity and endured countless hardship in this cause. With this perspective, one may not reconcile the words of the hadith with the mercy of the Prophet. However, the hadith can be interpreted in various ways.

First of all, treating parents kindly and taking care of their needs is a religious obligation and one will be asked about it in Judgment Day. Neglecting or ignoring their rights will cause one's perdition in the Afterlife. Therefore, the Prophet intended to say that it is so pitiful to lose in Supreme Gathering because of being undutiful to the parents. The Prophet will be upset by seeing some of his followers losing Paradise because of no taking care of their parents when they needed care most in their old age.

Human beings become more sensitive when they get old and expect more attention and care. Since they spent all their life to raise their children, it is their right to expect love, respect and care from them, especially when they are old.

⁴⁴⁷ Muslim, *Sahīh*, Birr, 9.

With this expression, the Prophet aimed to give a message to Believers that although it is very difficult to enter Paradise one could achieve it by treating parents kindly and taking care of them when they are old. Losing such opportunity is a great loss and a miserable consequence. The expression ‘may he be disgraced’ is a statement about a consequence of such evil act and the Prophet warned his followers with a strong emphasis on it. Depriving parents from compassion, love and respect will cause a person to be prohibited from mercy of God and intercession of the Prophet.

Sixth hadith

وعن أنس رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قال: مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُسْتَطَّ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ، وَيُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثَرِهِ، فَلْيَبْصِلْ رَجْمَهُ

Anas reports that Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “he who desires ample provisions and his life to be prolonged, should maintain good ties with his blood relations.”⁴⁴⁸

Analysis of the hadith

Bukhari and Muslim agreed on the authenticity of the hadith and recorded it in their *sahīh* collections. The hadith explains the two benefits of maintaining good ties with relatives; ample provisions and prolonged life. God predetermines destiny and He knows what will happen until the end of times. However, God never determines people’s destiny without taking into consideration their free will and preferences. In other words, God knows how they will use their free will and what preferences they will make and accordingly He records their destiny. Nothing is surprise for God and there is no changing in destiny for it comes from eternal and encompassing knowledge. In the Qur’an; “And (know that) for every community there is a term appointed (by God considering their free will); and when the end of the term falls, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor can they hasten it.”⁴⁴⁹

The hadith can be interpreted in two ways; firstly, the statement can be understood metaphorically. According to this approach, the meaning prolonging life or increasing provision is doing righteous deeds abundantly and achieving many blessings that others could obtain them in long time. The value of life is determined with righteous deeds; therefore, maintaining good ties with relatives makes life so valuable and long. People remember them with goodness for long time and pray for them. Being remembered with virtue for long time is considered like living a long life.

According to second interpretation, the meaning of the hadith is literal and real. There is no changing in God’s knowledge so is in His destiny. However, the angels who are in charge with human beings and their destiny may not know some external factors which may be effective for determining human destiny. Their knowledge can be changed. Because they cannot know if some people would maintain good relations with their relatives and this could

⁴⁴⁸ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Buyu, 13; Muslim, *Sahīh*, Birr, 20.

⁴⁴⁹ Qur’an 7: 34.

affect their life time and provision. The following verse implies this; “God effaces what He wills (of things and events He has created, and laws He has established), and He confirms and establishes (what He wills): with Him is the Mother of the Book.”⁴⁵⁰

When determining people’s destiny God takes into consideration all the causes and effects together. For example, if one will be good to his relatives God knows it and determines this person’s destiny accordingly. The Prophet encouraged Believers to be good to their relatives. God knows who will actualize this advice and thus, determined their destiny accordingly. Maintaining good relations with blood relatives brings blessing into one’s life. God gives abundant provision them and protects them from many calamities. Even if some relatives may be bad in relations with their blood relatives Believers should maintain their ties with them and do good to them. The following incident is an example for this;

A man said to Messenger of God (pbuh): “I have relatives with whom I try to keep the ties of relationship but they sever relations with me; and whom I treat kindly but they treat me badly, I am gentle with them but they are rough to me.” He replied, “If you are as you say, it is as if you are feeding them hot ashes, and you will be with a supporter against them from God as long as you continue to do so.”⁴⁵¹

Seventh hadith

وعن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص رضي الله عنهما قال: أَقْبَلَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: أَبَايُكَ عَلَى الْهَجْرَةِ وَالْجِهَادِ أَبْتَغِي الْأَجْرَ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. قَالَ: فَهَلْ مِنْ وَالِدَيْكَ أَحَدٌ حَيٌّ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ بَلْ كِلَاهُمَا قَالَ: فَتَبْتَغِي الْأَجْرَ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: فَارْجِعْ إِلَى وَالِدَيْكَ، فَأَحْسِنْ صُحْبَتَهُمَا

‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin al-As reports that a man came to the Prophet of God (pbuh) and said; “I give pledge of alliance to you for emigration and Jihad, seeking reward from God.” The Prophet (pbuh) said; “Is any of your parents alive?” He said; “Yes, both of them are alive.” He (pbuh) then asked; “Do you want to seek reward from God?” He replied in the affirmative. Thereupon Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “Go back to your parents and keep good company with them.”⁴⁵²

Analysis of the hadith

Bukhari and Muslim agreed on the authenticity of the hadith and recorded it in their *sahīh* collections. Additionally, Tirmidhi and Nasāī reported it in their Sunan collections. Occasionally, the Prophet took pledge from his Companions on certain conditions. For example, he would accept their Islam if they provide the conditions of performing daily prescribed prayers, giving zakat, avoiding adultery and fornication. In other occasions, when people came to him to convert to Islam he would ask them to fulfil certain conditions such as being good to everyone.

⁴⁵⁰ Qur’an 13: 39.

⁴⁵¹ Muslim, *Sahīh*, Birr, 22.

⁴⁵² Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Jihad, 138; Muslim, *Sahīh*, Birr, 5.

In this hadith, the Companion himself wanted to give pledge of alliance on two conditions; emigration and Jihad (inner and outer struggling in God's cause). In specific period, all the Muslims were required to immigrate to Medina. However, when Makka was conquered in the eight years of *hijrah* the Prophet removed this condition though jihad in the way of God continued.

Jihad has two types; one's inner struggling against his/her carnal desires and fighting in the battlefield. Serving parents and doing good to them is superior to fighting in the battlefield. Indeed, it is one of the best forms of jihad and one can get the highest reward by serving his/her parents and taking care of their needs. One can do good to his/her parents through their financial and physical means.

If a person has elder parents, his/her greatest jihad is taking care of them and serving them kindly. While they need care and service a person cannot attend battlefields to fight against enemies. Ignoring parental rights causes more evil therefore, it is preferable over jihad. Because mother and father need their children and their care.

Once a person came to Medina to the presence of the Prophet. He asked permission to join *jihad*. The Prophet asked him if he had mother and father. When he answered affirmatively, the Prophet asked him again if they permitted his jihad. This time he answered negatively. Thereupon the Prophet said; "go to Yemen and ask their permission. If they permit you, come, if not, try your best to make them happy."⁴⁵³ Another time, a Companion came to the Prophet to give a pledge of alliance on a condition to immigrate to Medina. However, he left his parents crying behind. When the Prophet learned about it, he said; "go back to your parents and make them smile as you caused them cry."⁴⁵⁴

Father and mother have great rights on their children even if they are unbelievers. The following hadith is an evidence for it. Asma bint Abu Bakr reports; "My mother came to me while she was still a polytheist, so I asked Messenger of God (pbuh); "My mother, who is ill-disposed to Islam, has come to visit me. Shall I maintain relations with her?" He replied; "Yes," and told me to maintain relations with my mother."⁴⁵⁵

Eighth hadith

وعن أبي الدرداء رضي الله عنه فقال سمعتُ رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ الْوَالِدُ أَوْسَطُ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَأَصْبِحْ ذَلِكَ الْبَابَ، أَوْ احْفَظْهُ

Abu al-Darda heard Messenger of God (pbuh) saying; "a parent is the middle of the gates of Paradise; so, if you wish, keep to the gate (open), or lose it."⁴⁵⁶

Analysis of the hadith

⁴⁵³ Abu Dāwud, *Sunan*, Jihad, 31.

⁴⁵⁴ Abu Dāwud, *Sunan*, Jihad, 31; Nasāi, *Sunan*, Bay'at, 10.

⁴⁵⁵ Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ*, Hiba, 29; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, Zakat, 50.

⁴⁵⁶ Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Birr, 3; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, Talaq, 36.

The hadith is ḥasan (fair) according to criteria of Tirmidhi. He and Ibn Mājah recorded it in their Sunan collections. The outstanding importance of parents are expressed one more time in this hadith. Respecting parents, taking care of their needs and making them happy is a reason to enter Paradise from its middle gate. There are many ways to achieve Paradise but the surest and easiest way for it is doing good to parents.

God commanded children to respect their parents and keep them happy all the time. Entering Paradise from the middle door is connected to parents. Obtaining or losing the chance of Paradise is left to the decisions of children. If they desire to achieve the eternal bliss, they must take care of their parents. The Prophet explained this in another occasion as follows; “God’s pleasure and content is achieved by obtaining parents pleasure and content. On the other hand, God’s wrath is incurred by causing parents to be angry.”⁴⁵⁷

Ninth hadith

وعن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص رضي الله عنهما عن النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: الْكِبَائِرُ: الْإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ، وَالْيَمِينُ الْعَمُوسُ

Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin al-As reports that the Prophet (pbuh) said; “(Of the) major sins are: to ascribe partners to God, disobey parents, murder someone, and to take a false oath (intentionally).”⁴⁵⁸

Analysis of the hadith

This hadith is authentic according to criteria of Imam Bukhari and he recorded it in his *ṣaḥīḥ*. Additionally, Tirmidhi and Nasāī reported this hadith in their Sunan collections. The hadith mentions four major sins; ascribing partners to God, disobeying parents, murdering someone, and taking a false oath intentionally. The first and greatest major sin is associating partners to God. Disobeying parents and ignoring their rights is the second major sin. The order of sins indicates their degree of evilness at God’s side.

In order to achieve God’s content and His Paradise one must comply with all the commandments and avoid all the prohibitions. Disrespecting parents or not taking care of them when they need care most in their old age is a great sin and it causes one to lose Paradise. The hadith explains the sins that are committed against God, parents and humanity. Without taking parents’ content, it is very difficult to enter Paradise. The Prophet stated; “it is one of the gravest sins to abuse one’s parents. The Companions asked; “O Messenger of God, can a man abuse his own parents?” Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “he abuses the father of somebody who, in return, abuses the former’s father; he then abuses the mother of somebody who, in return, abuses his mother.”⁴⁵⁹ In another occasion the Prophet emphasized on the evilness of disobeying parents by mentioning it first among others sins. He said; “God has forbidden you disobedience to your mothers, to withhold (what you should give), or

⁴⁵⁷ Tirmidhi, Sunan, Birr, 3.

⁴⁵⁸ Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ayman; Nasāī, *Sunan*, Tahrim, 3.

⁴⁵⁹ Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Adab, 4; Abu Dāwud, *Sunan*, Adab, 120.

demand (what you do not deserve), and to bury your daughters alive. God dislikes idle talk, asking too many questions (for things which will be of no benefit to one), and wasting your wealth.”⁴⁶⁰

It is prohibited to disobey parents in thought, words or in actions. Upsetting them with any cause is considered a major sin. Breaking their hearts causes calamities in this world and punishment in the Hereafter. God will not look at those people who disobeyed their parents in Judgment Day. He will not solve them from their sins for they ignored their parents in their old age when they needed care most. The following incident demonstrates the significance of their rights and importance of obeying to them. The Prophet (pbuh) said;

“None spoke in the cradle but only three (persons), Isa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary), the second one was the companion of Jurayj who was a pious person. Jurayj took a secluded monastery for worship and confined himself in it. His mother came to him as he was busy in prayer and she called Jurayj. He said, ‘my Lord, my mother (is calling me while I am engaged in) my prayer.’ He continued with the prayer. She returned and she came on the next day and he was (still) busy in prayer. She called Jurayj and he said, ‘my Lord, my mother (is calling me while I am engaged) in prayer, and he continued with the prayer’ and she returned. Then on the next day, she again came while he was busy in prayer and called Jurayj. He said, ‘my Lord, my mother (is calling me while I am engaged) in my prayer’ and he continued with the prayer. She said, ‘my Lord, don’t let him die until he has seen the faces of the prostitutes.’ The story of Jurayj and that of his meditation and prayer spread amongst Banī Israel. There was a prostitute who had been a beauty personified. She said (to the people), ‘if you like, I can lure him to evil.’ She presented herself to him but he paid no heed (to her). She came to a shepherd who lived near the temple and she offered herself to him. He (the shepherd) had sexual intercourse with her and so she became pregnant. When she gave birth to a baby, she said, ‘this is from Jurayj.’ Therefore, they came and asked Jurayj to get down and demolished the temple and began to beat him. He asked them what the matter was. They said, ‘you have committed fornication with this prostitute and she has given birth to a baby from you.’ He asked, ‘where is the baby?’ They brought him (the baby) and then he said, ‘just leave me so that I should perform prayer.’ He performed prayer and when he finished it, he lifted the baby in his stomach and asked him, ‘O boy, who is your father?’ The baby answered, ‘he is such and such a shepherd.’ So, the people turned towards Jurayj, kissed him and touched him (for seeking blessing). They said, ‘we are prepared to construct your temple with gold.’ He said, ‘no, just rebuild it with mud as it had been.’ So, they did.

The Prophet (pbuh) continued, there was a baby who was sucking at his mother’s breast when a person dressed in fine garment came on a priceless riding animal’s back. His mother said, ‘O God, make my child like this one.’ He (the babe) left sucking and looked at him, and said, ‘O God, don’t make me like him.’ He then returned to the breast and resumed sucking. There happened to pass by them a slave girl who was being beaten and they were saying, ‘you have committed fornication and theft.’ She was saying, ‘God is enough for me and He is my Protector.’ This time his mother said, ‘O God, don’t make my child like her.’ He left sucking looked at her and said, ‘O God! Make me like her.’ It was followed by a conversation between the mother and the child. She said, ‘a good-looking man happened to pass by and I said, O God, make my child like him, and you said, O God, don’t make me like him. And

⁴⁶⁰ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Istiqraz, 19; Muslim, *Sahīh*, Aqdiya, 10.

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there passed a girl while they were beating her and saying, you committed fornication and theft, and I said, O God, don't make my child like her, and you said, O God, make me like her.' The child said, 'that man was a tyrant, and I said, O God don't make me like him. And they were saying about the girl, you committed fornication, whereas in fact she had not committed that. And they were saying, you have committed theft, whereas she had not committed theft. So, I said, O God, make me like her.'⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ*, Anbiyā, 48; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, Birr 7.