

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

Two Doors to Paradise Standing in Your Own Home

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

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SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Two Doors to Paradise Standing in Your Own Home

After the worship of Allah alone, no obligation weighs heavier than the honour you owe your mother and your father — and no door to Paradise stands closer to you right now.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The Door You Keep Walking Past

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me begin with a question I want you to sit with honestly before you read another line. **When was the last time you looked at your mother or your father and truly saw them?** Not glanced at them while your mind was somewhere else, not answered them while your eyes were on a screen, but actually saw them, the way they once looked at you when you were small and helpless and could do nothing at all for yourself. If the answer makes you uncomfortable, do not close this page. That discomfort is a mercy. It is Allah pulling on your heart while the door is still open.

I want you to imagine something. Imagine that Paradise had a door, and that door was placed not in some distant land you must travel to, not on the summit of a mountain you must climb, but inside your own home. Imagine you walked past it every single day. Imagine it stood in the living room where an old man sits waiting for someone to talk to, or in the kitchen where an ageing woman still worries about whether you have eaten. And imagine that all you had to do to pass through that door was to lower yourself, soften your voice, and serve the two people already sitting there. Would you walk past it? My dear reader, this is not imagination. This is exactly the reality the Prophet ﷺ described, and by the end of this lecture I pray it changes something in you that no reminder has managed to change before.

There is a pattern woven through the Qur'an that should stop every one of us in our tracks. Again and again, when Allah commands us to worship Him alone and to join nothing with Him, He places right beside that command, in the very same breath, the duty to be good to our parents. Worship Allah, associate nothing with Him, and be good to your parents. This is no accident. This is Allah teaching us that after tawhid itself, after the oneness of Allah which is the greatest right in all of existence, the very next obligation placed upon a human being is the honouring of a mother and a father. Think about what company that duty keeps. It stands shoulder to shoulder with the greatest command ever given to mankind.

And from the perfection of this religion, from the tenderness of a Lord who knows us better than we know ourselves, is that He did not leave us to guess at how to treat them. He legislated the smallest interaction. Listen to how fine, how precise, how merciful the guidance is.

ج
وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ
لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾
وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ
ارْحَمُهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

*And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be good to parents. If one or both of them reach old age with you, **do not say to them a word of disrespect, and do not repel them, but speak to them a noble word.** And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy, and say: My Lord, have mercy upon them as they raised me when I was small.*

Surah Al-Isra (17:23-24)

Look at what Allah forbade. He did not simply prohibit hitting your parents, or shouting at them, or abandoning them. He forbade the word *uff* — that tiny sigh of irritation, that small breath of annoyance that escapes the lips when a parent asks the same question for the third time or interrupts you at the worst moment. If even that quiet exhale of frustration is forbidden, then what, my dear brother, about the raised voice? What about the rolling of the eyes? What about the sharp reply, the slammed door, the

cold silence? Allah drew the line so far back, so gently, that everything harsher than a whisper falls on the wrong side of it.

And then, as if He knew our hearts would need more than a prohibition, Allah gave us an image of breathtaking tenderness: lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy. The scholars explained this as the picture of a bird folding its wing gently over its young — soft, protective, full of care. That is the posture we are commanded to take toward the two people who once folded their arms around us. Not the cold discharge of a duty. Not the resentful bare minimum. But mercy. Notice, too, that the command intensifies precisely when they grow old and weak — in the very season when they become difficult, when their needs multiply and their patience shortens. That is exactly when Allah says: do not even say *uff*. Because that is exactly when it is hardest, and exactly where the reward is greatest.

THE DEBT YOU CAN NEVER REPAY

Grateful to Me, and to Them

My dear reader, I want you to do something in your mind right now. I want you to try, just for a moment, to add up what your parents actually gave you. Not the gifts. Not the money. I mean the raw, unglamorous labour of raising you. The sleepless nights when you were sick and they did not close their eyes. The food taken from their own plate and placed on yours. The clothes they wore threadbare so that you could have something new. The worry that aged them, the sacrifices you never saw because they made sure you would never see them. Try to add it up. You cannot. It is a debt with no ceiling, a mountain with no summit. And Allah, who knows this better than any of us, ties gratitude toward them so tightly to gratitude toward Himself that He mentions the two in a single verse.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ
وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدِكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ



*And We have enjoined upon man, concerning his parents — his mother carried him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years — **that you be grateful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final return.***

Surah Luqman (31:14)

Weakness upon weakness. Ponder that phrase, my dear sister. Your mother did not carry you in comfort. She carried you as her own body grew heavier and slower and more exhausted, weakness piled upon weakness, month after month, and then she endured the pain of bringing you into the world, and then she gave you two full years of nursing and sleeplessness before you could even speak her name. And in the middle of describing all of that, Allah commands you: be grateful to Me and to your parents. He placed His right and their right in the same sentence, because to be truly thankful to the One who gave you life is to honour the very people through whom He gave it.

And gratitude, my dear reader, is not a word you say. It is a life you live. It is not enough to feel warm about your mother in your heart while you neglect her in your conduct. So weighty is this reality that the Prophet ﷺ tied the pleasure of Allah Himself directly to the pleasure of the parent.

رِضَا الرَّبِّ فِي رِضَا الْوَالِدِ، وَسَخَطُ الرَّبِّ فِي سَخَطِ
الْوَالِدِ

The pleasure of the Lord is in the pleasure of the parent, and the displeasure of the Lord is in the displeasure of the parent.

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhi: 1899 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Read that again slowly. Your route to the pleasure of Allah runs directly through the pleasure of your parent. This is a reality most of us overlook, because it is not measured in grand, public acts of worship. Nobody claps for it. There is no crowd, no announcement, no reward you can post about. It is measured in the quietest moments of your day: in the patience you show when a parent asks for your attention while you are dead tired, in the gentle word you choose when your ego is screaming for a sharp one, in the way you set down what you are doing and actually listen when they start telling you the same old story, in the harsh reply you swallow purely for the sake of Allah. Those tiny, invisible moments are where your nearness to your Lord is being built or broken. And they are exactly the moments where pride loves to trip us.

HOW HEAVY THIS REALLY IS

The Sin Right After the Greatest Sin

If honouring parents stands among the greatest of deeds, then know that its opposite stands among the gravest of sins. My dear brother, we live in a time where disrespecting parents has almost become normal, even celebrated — a joke in a show, an eye-roll in a video, a boast about how someone put their parents in their place. But listen to how the Prophet ﷺ ranked it. When he warned his Companions of the most enormous of the major sins, of the sins that destroy a person, where did he place disobedience to parents? He placed it directly after the single gravest sin in all of existence.

أَلَا أُنبِّئُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرَ الْكِبَائِرِ؟ قَالُوا: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ.
قَالَ: الْإِشْرَاقُ بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ

*Shall I not inform you of the greatest of the major sins? They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He said: **Associating partners with Allah, and disobedience to parents.***

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 5976 and Sahih Muslim: 87 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Reflect on that order with me. After shirk — after the breaking of the right of Allah Himself, the one sin He has said He will not forgive if a person dies upon it — the very next thing the Prophet ﷺ named was the breaking of the right of the parents. He did not say murder. He did not say theft. He did not say adultery. He said disobedience to parents. This is how high Allah has raised their station, and how seriously He takes their neglect. And here is a shift I want you to make in how you think, my dear reader. When you deal with your parents, you are not really dealing with them on the basis of what they deserve from you. You are dealing with Allah, on the basis of what He deserves from you, and He has commanded their honour. So even on the day your mother is unreasonable, even on the day your father is unfair, your good treatment of them is not a transaction with two flawed human beings. It is an act of worship directed to a perfect Lord.

A HIDDEN TREASURE

The Du‘ā That Cannot Be Refused

My dear brother, there is a hidden treasure sitting in your home that most of us never think to open, and it is this: the supplication of a parent is answered. There is a special potency in it, a direct line to the heavens that few of us bother to use. The Prophet ﷺ named three supplications that ascend without being blocked, without doubt.

ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ مُسْتَجَابَاتٌ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِنَّ: دَعْوَةُ
الْمَظْلُومِ، وَدَعْوَةُ الْمَسَافِرِ، وَدَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ عَلَى وَلَدِهِ

*Three supplications are answered, without doubt: the supplication of the oppressed, the supplication of the traveller, and **the supplication of the parent for and against his child.***

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhi: 1905 · **Authenticity:** Hasan

Now, we rightly tremble at the thought of a wronged parent raising their hands against a child. But the scholars drew out the beautiful flip side of this hadith: if the duʿā against a child is that powerful, then the duʿā of a pleased parent for a child is among the mightiest engines of good a human being can ever have working in his life. And I want to prove this to you with a story you have benefited from every single day of your life as a Muslim without even realising it.

Consider Imam al-Bukhari, the man who compiled the most authentic book after the Book of Allah itself. Do you know that as a child, al-Bukhari went blind? His mother, heartbroken, turned to Allah, and with nothing but the raw love of a mother she begged Him to restore her son's sight. And she was given glad tidings in a dream, and she woke to find that her boy could see. My dear reader, hear what this means. That mother did not know she was making history. She was not thinking about hadith or scholarship. She was simply a mother who loved her son and turned to her Lord. And every single hadith that has reached us through Sahih al-Bukhari — thousands of them, the backbone of this religion — flows, after the mercy of Allah, through that one supplication of one anonymous mother in the dark.

But notice how that duʿā came. It did not come because al-Bukhari marched up to his mother and demanded, pray for me. It rose from her heart on its own, as the natural overflow of a heart that loved her son. And that, my dear brother, is the entire lesson. You do not need to walk up to your mother and ask her to pray for you — though that is good, and you should. What you truly need is to live in such a way that the duʿā rises from her heart without you ever asking. Serve her, honour her, sit with her, delight her, and watch how her heart begins to pour prayers over you that you never even hear. Those prayers are shaping your life right now.

Your Jihad Is Waiting at Home

Let me show you just how far this right reaches. There was a young man in the time of the Prophet ﷺ, full of zeal, aching to go out and give his life in the path of Allah — the highest, most celebrated deed a man could dream of. He came to the Messenger ﷺ asking permission to march out for jihad. And what did the Prophet ﷺ do? He did not praise the young man's ambition. He asked him a single, quiet question.

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَاسْتَأْذَنَهُ فِي الْجِهَادِ، فَقَالَ:
أَحْيَىٰ وَالِدَاكَ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: فَفِيهِمَا جَاهِدْ

*A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked his permission to go out for jihad. He said: Are your parents alive? The man said: Yes. He said: **Then strive in serving them.***

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 3004 and Sahih Muslim: 2549 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Then strive in serving them. My dear brother, absorb what just happened. The Prophet ﷺ took a young man burning to reach the highest station of reward, and he pointed him back home. He told him, in effect: your battlefield is your living room. Your struggle is the care of your mother and your father. Your path to Paradise is not out there in some distant war — it is right here, in the patience you show, in the service you give, in the ego you crush every day at the feet of your parents. If we truly believed this, how differently would we treat that phone call we keep postponing?

And when another Companion asked the Prophet ﷺ who among all the people on earth was most deserving of his good and loving companionship, the answer that came was so emphatic that it repeated three times before the father was ever mentioned even once.

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟ قَالَ:
أُمُّكَ. قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: أُمُّكَ. قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ:
أُمُّكَ. قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ

O Messenger of Allah, who among people is most deserving of my good companionship? He said:

Your mother. *The man said: Then who? He said: Your mother. He said: Then who? He said: Your mother. He said: Then who? He said: Then your father.*

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 5971 and Sahih Muslim: 2548 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Three times the mother, my dear reader, before the father is named once. This repetition is not filler. It is Allah, through His Messenger ﷺ, placing an immense weight on the scale of the mother — the months she carried you in weakness upon weakness, the night she laboured in pain to bring you into this world, the years she poured herself out for you, debts that can never, ever be fully repaid. And yet see the mercy in it: Allah does not ask you to repay the debt, because you never could. He simply asks you to strive. To try. To lower yourself and serve, and through that striving, He hands you His pleasure.

WHEN THE PARENT IS HARD

Honour Them Even When They Are Wrong

Now let me speak to a harder reality, because I know that for some of you reading this, your parents are not gentle, and your relationship is not easy. Maybe your father was harsh. Maybe your mother is difficult, demanding, unfair. Maybe there are old wounds that still ache. My dear brother, my dear sister, I want you to hear this clearly: the duty of honouring a parent does not depend on the parent being perfect. It does not even depend on the parent being a believer.

Consider Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, one of the earliest to embrace Islam. When his mother learned that he had become Muslim, she took a terrible oath: she would not eat, she

would not drink, she would not shelter from the burning sun, until he abandoned his faith. Imagine that pressure on a young man who dearly loved his mother — watching her waste away, blaming himself, her suffering hanging over him like a blade. And yet Allah revealed guidance for exactly this moment: he must never obey her in leaving his religion, and at the same time he must never stop honouring her.

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

*And if they strive to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them, but **accompany them in this world with kindness.***

Surah Luqman (31:15)

Do not obey them in disobedience to Allah, yet accompany them with kindness. My dear reader, understand the enormity of this. Even disbelief — the greatest thing a person can be wrong about — does not erase the obligation of good treatment. So what does that tell us about the far smaller flaws we hold against our own parents? Their strictness, their old-fashioned ways, their sharp tongues? Here is the principle that must reshape how you think: **your character is not defined by how your parents treat you; it is defined by how you respond, for the sake of Allah.** You do not get to lower your standard of excellence because they lowered theirs. Your kindness is your worship, not their reward.

This is why Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, gave the answer he gave when a man came to him crushed by guilt, confessing a major sin and desperate to know how to expiate it. Before anything else, Ibn ‘Abbas asked him a strange question: is your mother alive? When the man said she had passed away, Ibn ‘Abbas told him to seek Allah's forgiveness and increase in good deeds. And then he explained his reasoning with words that should be written on the walls of every home.

He said: *I know of no deed that brings a person nearer to Allah than honouring one's mother.* Think about what he was implying. If that man's mother had still been alive, Ibn ‘Abbas would have sent him straight to her feet — because in the eyes of a Companion who learned directly from the Prophet ﷺ, serving your mother is such a powerful means of drawing near to Allah that it could wipe away even a major sin.

My dear brother, if your parents are still alive, that door of atonement is standing wide open in front of you. Do not wait until it closes to wish you had walked through it.

BEYOND THE MINIMUM

They Deserve Iḥsān, Not Leftovers

Some of us, if we are honest, feel that we have already done enough. We say to ourselves: I send money home. I call once in a while. I show up when I have to. I have fulfilled my duty. And my dear brother, I do not want to dismiss that — it is something. But the standard of this religion was never the bare minimum. The standard is *iḥsan*: excellence. Doing more than what is strictly required, and doing it beautifully.

Iḥsan with your parents is anticipating what they need before they have to ask, so they never have to feel like a burden. It is serving them in a way that makes them feel honoured and cherished, not merely managed and maintained like a chore on your list. It is in the tone of your voice when you answer them. It is in how you sit when you are in their presence — not restless, not glancing at the door. It is in setting your phone face-down and giving them your eyes, your attention, your whole self, even if only for ten minutes. My dear reader, this is where a servant of Allah truly distinguishes himself, because anyone can serve a parent when it is convenient. Sincerity is revealed in the small, unglamorous, inconvenient moments when nobody is watching and there is nothing in it for you but Allah.

And here is a barakah in it that most people never even consider: the way you treat your parents becomes the atmosphere of your entire home. When you honour your mother and father, a strange tranquillity settles over the household. Family ties grow stronger. A spirit of mercy fills the rooms. And your own children — they are watching. They are learning without a single word being spoken. When they see you speak gently to your ageing parents, when they watch you carry your father's shopping and sit patiently with your mother, they are quietly absorbing the manners they will one day use on you. My dear brother, this is from the perfect justice of Allah: the way you treat your parents today is very often the exact way your children will treat you tomorrow. So plant seeds of mercy now, through your conduct, through your living example, and know that you are planting a harvest of mercy for a future you cannot yet see.

The Test That Strips Away Pretence

There is a deep wisdom hidden in the fact that family is so difficult. Have you noticed, my dear sister, how many of us can worship Allah beautifully in private — the long prayer, the quiet fast, the recitation in the still of the night — and yet fall apart the moment we are tested through our own family? That is not a coincidence. Private worship, as precious as it is, still allows the ego a certain distance. But family strips away all the formalities. Family sees you at your worst. Family knows exactly which button to press. And that is precisely why serving a parent when it is pleasant is good, but serving a parent when it is hard is where the real reward lies, and where your sincerity is actually proven.

The Prophet ﷺ once told the story of a man who had killed one hundred souls — a man drowning in sin — and yet the door of repentance was not shut in his face. He was guided toward forgiveness through a journey: leaving the land of his sin and travelling toward a land of obedience. My dear brother, for most of us, our journey of return to Allah does not require us to cross any distance at all. It requires a journey within our own four walls. Turning back to Allah may begin with turning back to a parent — repairing a relationship that has gone cold, swallowing your pride and saying sorry, offering warmth where for years there has only been distance and neglect.

And to those of you whose parents are genuinely, painfully difficult — I have not forgotten you. Know that Allah sees your struggle, and that honouring a parent has never meant accepting abuse or silently enduring harm. It means keeping your respect intact, setting boundaries with wisdom and softness rather than with rage, and never abandoning the du‘ā for their guidance and their good. If anything, my dear sister, because your situation is harder, your patience in it may be more beloved to Allah than the easy kindness of someone whose parents are gentle. He does not burden a soul beyond what it can carry, and within every hardship you carry for His sake there is buried a seed of immense reward that you will one day be overjoyed you did not throw away.

How Serving a Parent Rewrote Two Lives

Let me give you two more stories, because I want you to feel in your bones just how far this barakah reaches. First, consider Uways al-Qarni. Here was a man the Prophet ﷺ never even met in this life, and yet the Prophet ﷺ praised him by name and instructed his greatest Companions to seek him out. Uways lived in Yemen, completely unknown to the people around him — an ordinary man nobody would look

at twice. And what was it that kept this man from migrating to be in the blessed company of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself? It was his service to his elderly mother. He would not leave her.

And so the Prophet ﷺ told ‘Umar and ‘Ali that if they ever met this man, they should ask *him* to pray for *their* forgiveness — for his du‘ā was answered by Allah. Imagine it, my dear brother: two of the greatest human beings to ever walk this earth, and they are told to go and seek the prayer of an unknown man in Yemen. When the pilgrims arrived from Yemen, the great ‘Umar himself moved through the crowds asking, is Uways among you? Until they finally pointed him out — a plain, forgettable man that nobody had ever noticed — raised to that towering rank by Allah for one single thing: his honouring of his mother. He never knew his place in history, just as al-Bukhari’s mother never knew hers. He thought he was simply a man serving his mother in Yemen. And through that, Allah made him famous in the heavens.

Then consider Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. He came to the Prophet ﷺ in tears, in genuine anguish, because his mother — still upon disbelief — was speaking ill of the Messenger of Allah. Now, what did Abu Hurayrah do with that pain? He did not raise his voice at her. He did not raise his hand. He did not curse her or storm out. He came and asked the Prophet ﷺ to make du‘ā for her guidance. Then he went home. And as he arrived, he heard the sound of water running — his mother was making ghusl. When she emerged, she declared: there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger. Through his patience and his du‘ā, Allah guided his own mother to Islam and saved her forever.

My dear reader, look at the golden thread running through every one of these stories. In not one of them did the son walk up and demand a supplication or force a change. The du‘ā rose naturally. The guidance came quietly. It was all the fruit of *khidmah* and *takrim* — of service and honour given gently, without announcement, without demand. And the scholars relate one more beautiful account to drive this home. It comes without a chain of narration, so we take from it only the lesson and never a ruling: it is said that Musa, peace be upon him, asked his Lord who his companion in Paradise would be, and Allah directed him to a certain man. Musa found him — an unremarkable man who, every single day, gathered the very best food and water he could find and carried it faithfully to his mother to serve her. When Musa asked what passed between them during that service, the man said that every single time he served her, she would raise her hands and pray: O Allah, make my son the companion of Musa in Paradise — not knowing that Musa himself was standing right in front of her. Whatever the chain, the lesson is

unmistakable: the duā of a mother can reach so high that it draws down the companionship of a prophet in Paradise. Do you now see the treasure sitting untouched in your home?

THE DOOR THAT NEVER SHUTS

When They Are Already Gone

Perhaps as you read this, your heart is aching because your mother, or your father, or both, have already passed away. Perhaps you are thinking, it is too late for me. My dear brother, my dear sister, I have wonderful news for you. In the mercy of Allah, the door of birr does not slam shut with the death of a parent. You can still honour them. You can still serve them. Your good deeds in their name still reach them where they rest in their graves, arriving as light.

Make duā for them. Give charity on their behalf. Fulfil the promises they were unable to keep. Maintain the ties of the people they loved, the friends and relatives who were dear to them. The righteous never stopped asking for their parents, even long after they were gone, exactly as Ibrahim, peace be upon him, taught us to pray.

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ



*Our Lord, **forgive me and my parents and the believers** on the Day the account is established.*

Surah Ibrahim (14:41)

Every sincere supplication you send up for your parents in their absence returns to you as mercy and forgiveness for yourself, so that in serving them you are also serving your own soul. So visit their graves if you are able. Speak well of them. Keep their good name alive in your own conduct so that when people see your character, they see the fruit of the parents who raised you. My dear reader, whether your parents are sitting in the next room or lying beneath the earth, the opportunity to honour them is still, right now, open to you.

The One Whose Nose Is in the Dust

And now I must give you the warning, because the Prophet ﷺ gave it, and he did not soften it. He said it three times — that a certain person's nose be rubbed in the dust, that he be humbled and disgraced. Who could earn such words from the mouth of the most merciful of creation?

رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ، ثُمَّ رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ، ثُمَّ رَغِمَ أَنْفُهُ. قِيلَ: مَنْ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: مَنْ أَدْرَكَ أَبَوَيْهِ عِنْدَ الْكِبَرِ،
أَحَدَهُمَا أَوْ كِلَيْهِمَا، ثُمَّ لَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ

May his nose be rubbed in dust, then may his nose be rubbed in dust, then may his nose be rubbed in dust. It was said: Who, O Messenger of Allah? He said: The one who finds his parents in old age, one or both of them, and yet does not enter Paradise.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 2551 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Do you feel the weight of that, my dear brother? Old parents are a doorway to Paradise standing wide open, right in front of you. And to have that door there — to have your father growing frail in the next room, your mother's hands trembling as she pours the tea — and to still fail, to still walk past that door and miss Paradise, is a loss so catastrophic that the Prophet ﷺ called down disgrace upon it three times over. This is not the language of a small mistake. This is the language of a tragedy.

And remember, the roles of this life reverse. The one who once carried you will one day need to be carried. The one who once fed you will one day need to be fed. The one who taught you your first words may one day forget your name. That reversal is your test, my dear reader. Will you show them the patience they once showed you when you were a screaming, helpless infant who kept them awake for years? In our age the test rarely looks dramatic. It looks small and ordinary and easy to postpone. It is the phone call you keep meaning to make. The visit you are always too busy for. The message that sits

unanswered while you scroll past a hundred others. We tell ourselves: I will be better to them later — when work calms down, when the kids are older, when life settles. But my dear brother, time is not promised. How many people right now would give anything for one more conversation, one more chance to serve, one more kind word they can never say again? Do not let regret be your teacher. And take heart, for Allah does not let a single grain of this kindness go to waste.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

Is the reward for good anything but good?

Surah Ar-Rahman (55:60)

And beware, my dear sister, of how Shaytan works on you here. He does not tell you to hate your parents — that would be too obvious. Instead he beautifies your distance. He whispers: they do not understand you, they are too strict, they have always been unfair, you deserve better than this. And there may even be a grain of truth in some of what he whispers. But he takes that grain of truth and uses it to break the bond, to plant resentment, to justify the neglect. The believer recognises this whisper for what it is and fights it — because he knows that the pleasure of Allah is worth infinitely more than the fleeting, hollow satisfaction of winning an argument against the very people whose du‘ā could change his destiny.

A REMINDER CARRIED HOME

Small, Steady, and Forever

So how, practically, do you honour this right? My dear brother, it is not through occasional grand gestures — the expensive gift once a year, the big trip that lets you feel you have paid your dues. The most beloved deeds to Allah are the small ones done consistently. A daily phone call, just to hear their voice, even for two minutes. Checking on what they need before they have to ask for it. Sitting with them and actually listening rather than waiting for a gap to escape. And making du‘ā for them after every single prayer — *rabbi irhamhuma kama rabbayani saghira*, my Lord have mercy on them as they raised me when I was small — so that five times a day, their names rise on your tongue to Allah.

Do not underestimate how the doors of mercy hide in the simplest actions. A smile to your mother. A gentle answer to your father when he is irritable. A single moment of patience when he tells the same

story for the third time this week. These are not trivial things in the sight of Allah — they are among the greatest of deeds, because they flow from humility, and humility is beloved to your Lord. When you lower yourself before your parents, Allah raises you in ways you will never even perceive. So before you leave this lesson, my dear reader, let me ask you the questions that matter. When did you last sit with your parents without watching the clock? When did you last thank them, in plain, spoken words, for what they gave you? And what is one thing — just one — you could do this week to make your mother or your father feel truly honoured and loved? The answers are within reach of every single one of us. And the time to act on them is now, while the door is still open and they are still here — for these opportunities do not last, and one day all that will remain of them are the deeds you chose to do.

☰ Your Action Plan: Honour Them Now

Don't just read — choose what you will act on this week.

1 Pray for them after every salah

After each of the five prayers, raise your hands and say *rabbi irhamhuma kama rabbayani saghira*. Their names on your tongue five times a day is a bond that never breaks, whether they are with you or have passed.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

2 Call or sit with them — clock off

Make a genuine call, or sit in their presence, with your phone away and your full attention given. Listen as if it is the last conversation you will ever have, because one day one of them will be.

TODAY

Make it last: once you begin today, keep it every day after — until it becomes a permanent habit for life.

3 Say the words you keep swallowing

Thank them out loud, in plain words, for something specific they sacrificed for you. And if you have wronged them, lower your pride and say sorry. That humility may unlock a *du'ā* that reshapes your entire life.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

4 Do one act of *ihسان* they never expected

Anticipate a need before they ask, or serve them the best of what you have as *Uways* and the man in *Musa's* story did. Aim for excellence, not the bare minimum, so their heart pours prayers over you on its own.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

🚩 The 7-Day Honour Challenge

For seven days straight, commit to three things every single day: pray *rabbi irhamhuma* after each *salah*, do one deliberate act of kindness for a parent (a call, a visit, a task, a gentle word), and hold your tongue completely from any sharp reply, any eye-roll, any *uff*. Watch how the atmosphere of your home softens and how your own heart begins to change. But do not let it end on day seven. These are not a challenge to complete and set down — they are the seeds of a lifelong habit. Let this week be the beginning of a way of living that follows you until the day

you meet Allah, and let the mercy you show your parents become the mercy your own children one day show you.

Make it stick – and make it last

- ✓ **Write it down.** Put your chosen action on a sticky note on your mirror, desk, or fridge – somewhere you cannot miss it.
- ✓ **Print this plan** and tick each action off as you do it.
- ✓ **Set a daily reminder** on your phone or calendar so it never slips your mind.
- ✓ **Keep a one-line journal** each night – did I do it today? how did it go? – and watch your streak grow.

Don't aim for one good day or week – aim to keep it for life. A habit only counts once it outlives the challenge.