

Sixth Greater Sin: **ʿUq al-Walidayn** (Disobedience to parents)

Those Who Are Disobedient to Their Parents

The sixth Greater Sin is to be disobedient to one's parents as expressly mentioned in the traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Pure Imams (a.s.). These have already been quoted in the first chapter. A tradition of the Prophet (S) says that the greatest sins are Shirk and to be disobedient to one's parents. The seriousness of disobedience to parents as a Greater sin can be gauged from the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) has mentioned it along with Shirk which is the greatest of all Greater sins, and unforgivable. “ʿUq” is a sin, the punishment of which is promised in the Qur'an and the traditions.

The words of Hazrat Isa (a.s.) as quoted by the Qur'an are:

“And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed.” (Surah Mariyam 19:32)

As Isa (a.s.) did not have a father, his mother is alone mentioned. In the same Surah, both the father and mother of Hazrat Yahya (a.s.) are mentioned.

Both the verses mention Three characteristics of the disobedient child (**ʿUq al-Walidayn**).

- 1) ‘Jabbar’ (insolent)
- 2) ‘Shaq^ʿ’ (unblessed)
- 3) ‘ʿSi’ (disobedient)

Each of these negative qualities render one liable for severe punishment. Regarding ‘Jabbar’ (insolent) the Qur'an says:

“And they asked for judgement and every insolent opposer was disappointed. Hell is before him

and he shall be given to drink of festering water: He will drink it little by little and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and death will come to him from every quarter, but he shall not die; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him.” (Surah Ibrahim 14: 15–17)

The one who is Shaqiq will be punished as follows:

“So as to those who are ‘Shaqiq’, they shall be in fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it; Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases.” (Surah Hud 11: 106–107)

Those with the third characteristic, that is, those who are ‘si’ will be dealt with severely by Allah (S.w.T.).

“And whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire, to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.” (Surah an-Nisa’ 4: 14)

Tradition Regarding ‘iq al-Walidayn

The Holy Prophet (S) says:

“Beware! Abstain from angering the parents. The fragrance of Paradise is perceived even at a distance of a thousand years, but those who are disobedient to parents and those who cut off ties with relatives will not be able to smell it.”¹

The Holy Prophet (S) also said.

“One who displeases the parents, (it is as if) he has displeased Allah. One who angers both his parents (it is as if) he has angered Allah.”

Elsewhere, it is mentioned,

“One who hurts his parents, hurts me and one who hurts me has hurt Allah. And the one who hurts Allah is accursed.”

Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il

The Prophet (S) has also stated:

“Allah will not speak to Three kinds of people on the Day of Qiyama. Neither will He have mercy upon them, nor will He purify their sins. There is for them a horrible chastisement. The Three types of people are the believers in destiny, the drunkards and those who disobeyed their parents.”²

ʿĪq al-Walidayn is Not Eligible For Divine Forgiveness

The wretchedness of the ʿĪq al-Walidayn is sufficiently evident from the fact that the trustworthy Jibrīl (a.s.) has cursed him and said,

“One who is blessed with parents but does not fulfill their (his parent’s) rights will not be forgiven (his sins) by Allah.”³

When Jibrīl (a.s.) said this, the Holy Prophet (S) uttered, ‘Amen’! Hazrat Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said,

“Accursed, Accursed is the one who beats his parents. Accursed is the one who distresses his parents.”⁴

Prayer is Not Accepted

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said,

“Allah will not accept the Salāt of the person who stares angrily at his parents. Even though they (parents) may be unjust.”

A Young man is interceded by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)

A young man was on his deathbed when the Holy Prophet (S) came, sat near him, and told him to recite two kalimas (*Shahadatain*). But the youth could not speak. The Holy Prophet (S) enquired if his mother was present? A woman sitting near his head said, “Yes, I am his mother.”

The Holy Prophet (S) asked, “Are you displeased with him?”

‘Yes, O Prophet (S), we have not spoken to each other since the last six years.’

The Holy Prophet (S) asked this woman to forgive her son. Thus at the Prophet’s instance she forgave his mistakes and was reconciled. At once the young man was able to recite the Kalima al-Shahadat.

The Holy Prophet (S) asked him,

“What do you see, at this moment.” “ O Prophet of Allah a dark and smelly man has got hold of me and is not leaving me.”

The Holy Prophet (S) told him to recite the following Du’a,

يا من يقبل اليسير ويعفون الكثير اقبل مني اليسير واعف عني الكثير انك انت
الغفور الرحيم

“Ya man Yaqbalul yasra wa y’afu ‘Anil Kathra Iqbal minnil Yasra Wa ‘fo ‘Annil Kathra.”

Then asked, “Now what do you see?” He replied, “A fair complexioned man, handsome and fragrant, is moving towards me.”

The Holy Prophet said, “Keep repeating this Du’a.” When the youth repeated this Du’a he said “O Prophet of Allah (S) both of them have disappeared from my sight.” After this the face of the Holy Prophet (S) was illuminated with joy. He said, “O Allah forgive the sins of this young man.” Then the youth passed away.⁵

This tradition shows how difficult are the last moments of the **iq al-Walidayn**. He leaves this world in disbelief and remains, forever, in Divine punishment. The tutor of Kalima for this young man was the Holy Prophet (S). In spite of this his tongue did not move till his mother forgive him. The blessings of the Holy Prophet (S) and the forgiveness of his mother brought salvation for this youth.

What is **iq al-Walidayn**?

Allama Majlisi (r.a.) writes in his commentary on al-Kafi:

iq al-Walidayn means that the son or the daughter cause disrespect to parents by speech or actions. Or they do not obey them in matters which are within reason and matters which are not in any way against religion.

iq al-Walidayn is absolutely **Harām**. The books of traditions of both the Shias as well as the Sunnis validate this fact.

To look at the parents with anger is **iq**, to cause unhappiness to the parents results in **iq**. It is **Harām** to take any step, which one is sure, will displease the parents.

Benevolence to Parents is **Wajib**

The verses of the Qur’an as well as the traditions of the infallible Imams (a.s.) not only prohibit displeasing and angering the parents, but also stress that benevolence towards them is *Wajib*.

A few examples of the Qur’anic Ayats are presented for the readers:

1) **“And We have enjoined on man goodness to his parents.” (Surah Al-‘Ankabūt 29:8)**

2) **“Be grateful to Me and both your parents...” (Surah Luqmān 31: 14)**

The above verse is specially worth noting for the fact that Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned together gratefulness towards Himself and to the parents. Certainly thankfulness to Allah (S.w.T.) is *Wajib*, and in the same way it is *Wajib* for the children to be thankful to their parents.

3) “And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) “Uff” nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little. (Surah al-‘Isrā’, 17:23–24)

In this Ayat Allah (S.w.T.) has mentioned goodness to parents. In the same sentence He exhorts about service to Him. As service to Allah (S.w.T.) is Wajib, benevolence to parent is Wajib too.

When the Imam (a.s.) was asked to explain the meaning of the term “Bil Walidayn Ihsana” (and goodness to your parents), he said,

“Be good to your parents and if they are in need of something, procure it for them before they ask for it.”

Then the meaning of the words, “Taquallahuma Qualan Karīma” (speak to them a generous word) was explained by the Imam (a.s.)

“If the parents beat you, say ‘May Allah forgive you’. The phrase ‘*Wakhfiz Lahuma*’ (and make yourself submissively gentle to them) is elaborated by the Imam (a.s.):

“Do not look at them with distaste. Do not raise your voice above theirs. When you walk with them do not precede them. When you go to a gathering, do not sit before they do. Never keep your hand above theirs (while giving them something).”

Service to Parents is Better Than Jihad

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) narrates that a young man presented himself to the Holy Prophet (S) and said that he wanted to participate in Jihad. The Holy Prophet (S) told him:

“Certainly, go for Jihad in the way of Allah. If you are killed you will be alive near Allah and be provided sustenance from Him. The recompense for your sacrifice would be with Allah. If you return alive your sins would be washed off as if you were a newborn child.”

This man said: “O Prophet of Allah, my parents are alive and they are aged and have great expectations from me. They do not like me to be away from them.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“If that is so, then stay behind to serve your parents. By Allah in whose hands is my life, to serve parents for a day and night is equal to a year of Jihad.”

Another tradition from Holy Prophet (S) says:

“Acquire your place in Heaven by serving your parents. If you are guilty of ‘عق’ then make Hell your abode.”

Goodness to Parents is the Expiation of Sins

Goodness towards the parents is the expiation of various sins. It is related in a report that a man came to the Holy Prophet (S) and said, “O, Prophet of Allah (S) there is not a single misdeed, that I have not committed. Is there repentance for me?” The Holy Prophet (S) told him,

“Go and do goodness to your father in order that your sins may be expiated.”

When the man left the assembly the Prophet (S) said,

“If his mother had been alive, it would have been more meritorious to do good to her.”

Satisfaction of Parents is Satisfaction of Allah (S.w.T.)

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated,

“In the happiness of parents lies the happiness of Allah and in their dissatisfaction is Allah’s dissatisfaction.”⁶

He (S) further said,

“A person who is good to his parents will be just a grade below the prophets in Heaven. And the ‘عق al-Walidayn will be only a grade higher than the Fir’ons in Hell.”⁷

Angels Pray for Those Who do Good to Their Parents

Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s.) says,

“Benevolence to parents is the greatest of the religious obligations.”

The Holy Prophet (S) says that Allah (S.w.T.) has two Angels one of whom says, “O Allah! Protect those who do good to the parents.” The other Angel prays, “O Allah! Destroy those people by retribution, with whom their parents are angry.” Needless to say, the prayers of the Angels are always accepted by Allah (S.w.T.).

The Material Effects of ‘عق

The previous traditions mention the ill effects of ‘عق al-Walidayn’ in the hereafter. The following traditions describe the evil repercussions of ‘عق al-Walidayn in this life.

The last of the Prophets (S) says:

“There are Three kinds of sins which are punished in this world, rather than being given respite till Qiyāma. The first is ʿuq al-Walidayn. The second, injustice upon men and third, thanklessness for favour.”

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) stated,

“Secret charity cools down Divine anger while goodness to parents and benevolence to relatives, prolongs life.”⁸

Another tradition says,

“Benevolence to parents and secret charity, ward off poverty, and both (these deeds) prolong life. Seventy types of death are kept away.”⁹

“Those who assure me that they will be benevolent to parents and do good to the relatives, I will give them excess of wealth and a long life and assure them of being close among our group.”¹⁰

Hazrat Imam Naqi (a.s.) said,

“The displeasing of parents causes decrease in sustenance and degradation (also follows).”

ʿuq al-Walidayn Cause Poverty and Misfortune

There was a young man from Madinah. His parents were very old. He never did any good towards them. He neglected them and did not expend any of his wealth for their well-being. After sometime he became a destitute and fell sick. His wretchedness and misery reached such extreme, that he became a pitiable character. The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“Those who cause hurt to their parents should derive lessons from the life of this man. See how his wealth and property has been taken away. His affluence and independence has changed to poverty and his health has turned into disease. Whatever position he was to get in Heaven, he has been deprived of due to his sins; in its place the fire of Hell has been prepared for him.”¹¹

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) narrates:

“When Hazrat Yaqūb (a.s.) went to Egypt to meet his son Hazrat Yūsuf (a.s.), he (Yūsuf a.s.) did not alight from his horse to pay respect to his father. Hazrat Jibrīl (a.s.) descended, and told Hazrat Yūsuf (a.s.) to open his fist. As he did so, a light shot out from his palm and rose towards the sky. Hazrat Yūsuf (a.s.) enquired, “What was this light which came out of my hand and shot to the sky?.” Jibrīl (a.s.) replied, “The light of Prophethood has departed from your loins. You did not pay due respect to your father hence none of your descendants will get Prophethood.” It is true that Hazrat Yūsuf (a.s.) did

not descend from his horse to pay respect to his father. However, this was not due to any feelings of pride and vanity. The Prophets are sinless and could never harbour such emotions. His intentions were merely to maintain his dignity as a King among his subjects.”

Evil Consequences of ʿIq al-Walidayn

ʿIq al-Walidayn brings disgrace in the Hereafter, and goodness to parents brings honour and glory. As Imam Jaʿfar as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said,

“Those who wish an easy death should do good to the relatives and be kind to parents. When one does this, Allah will make easy the agony of death. In this world he will not face difficulties and poverty.”¹²

Prayers of the Parents Are Accepted Soon

The supplication of parents for the welfare of the child are quickly answered by Allah (S.w.T.) and in the same way their ill wish (curse) due to displeasing them also takes quick effect. Numerous traditions have been recorded in this connection. One such tradition is connected with the merits of Duʿa al-Mashlūl. It is said that a young man had lost the use of his right hand which was paralysed due to the curse of his father. After his father’s death, the man prayed the entire night, continuously for a period of Three years in Masjidul Haram. One day Hadhrat ‘Ali (a.s.) saw him and took pity upon him. He taught him Duʿa al-Mashlūl. By the virtue of this Duʿa the young man was cured.

The Mother Has More Rights Than the Father

Goodness towards the mother is more rewarding. The Holy Prophet (S) emphasized that benevolence shown to the mother should be three times the magnitude of that shown towards the father. When he was asked as to which of the parents had more rights, he replied,

“Was it not your mother who suffered the birth pangs to give birth to you and provided you with your natural diet from her breasts? Indeed the rights of a mother far outweigh those of the father.”¹³

Rights of the Parents

Someone asked the Holy Prophet (S) about the rights of the father. He (S) replied,

“He should be obeyed always, as long as he lives.”

Then he was asked, “What is the right of the mother?”. He answered,

“If the service to a mother equals the quantity of the particles of sand in the desert and the drops of rain on earth, it (this service) will not repay for a single day that she kept you in her womb.”

(Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il)

A Young Man and His Invalid Mother

It is reported that a young man approached the Holy Prophet (S) and asked,

“O Prophet of Allah (S), I have a mother who is an invalid. She cannot even move by herself. I carry her on my back and feed her with my hands. I also clean her excreta. Have I fulfilled her rights?”

The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

“No. Because you have remained in the womb for a long period during which you derived your nourishment from her body. She was every busy in caring and protecting you at all costs. In spite of such hardships she always wished a long life for you. But you are waiting for her to die so that you may be relieved of the responsibility of taking care of her.”

The Holy Prophet (S) described the eminence of a mother's position in the following statement:

1) “If you are praying a mustahab prayer and your father calls you, do not break your prayer but if your mother calls, break the prayer.”

Truly, this assigns a remarkably high status to a mother. The Prophet (S) states,

“Paradise is at the feet of your mother.”

Hence one need not go far in search of Paradise.

Be Good to Parents Even if They Are Kafirs

Whether the parents are believers and pious or Kafirs and sinful, goodness towards them is Wajib. And ‘Iq al-Walidayn’ is Harām.

The verse of Surah Luqmān says thus,

“And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly...” (Surah Luqmān 31:15)

Du'a For Sunni Parents

Muammar Ibn Khallad asked Imam Riḍā (a.s.) whether one is allowed to pray for one's parents if they had not followed the truth and had not been Shia.

Imam Riḍā (a.s.) replied,

“If they are dead, pray for them and give Sadaqah on their behalf. If they are alive keep them happy.”

The Holy Prophet (S) says;

“Allah the Most High has sent me as the Mercy for the worlds, except to the ‘aq’ (of parents).”

Jabir Ibn Abdullah (r.a.) reports that someone asked Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.), “My parents are against the truth, i.e. they are not the Shia of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)”. Imam replied:

“Be good towards them like you would be towards out Shias.”¹⁴

Mu’mins and Kafirs Are Equal Under Three Circumstances

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said;

“Allah has not given superiority to a Mu’min in three circumstances.

First, to return what has been entrusted to you for safe keeping whether it belongs to a Mu’min or a Kafir.

Second, fulfilling an oath, whether given to a Mu’min or a Kafir. Third, doing good to the parents, whether they be Mu’min or Kafir.”¹⁵

A letter on various aspects of Islamic Shari’a, written by Hazrat Imam Riqa (a.s.) to Mamun, include the following:

“Benevolence to parents is Wajib even if both of them are ‘Mushrik’. However obedience to parents is not Wajib if their order is against the orders of the Creator.”¹⁶

Advice of Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) to Zakaria Ibn Ibrahm

Zakaria, the son of Ibrahm, was a Christian. Later he converted to Islam and had the honour of meeting Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.). He told Imam (a.s.) “My mother is a Christian and she is old and blind.”

The Imam advised him,

“Serve your mother and behave kindly towards her. Upon her death, do not leave her dead body to others. Perform her funeral rites yourself.”

Thus this statement of the Imam (a.s.) is pregnant with two prophecies. Her death, and her conversion to Islam.

When Zakaria returned to Kufa he began to behave very kindly with his mother. He fed her with his own hands. Changed her clothes, washed and bathed her too. In short, he served his mother in every possible way. His mother asked, “My son you were not so dutiful when you were a Christian. Why is it

that now you serve me day and night?”

Zakaria replied, “O my mother. I have a master who is the son of the Prophet of Allah (S). He advised me to serve you in this way.” The mother asked, “Is he a prophet?” “No. But he is a son of the Prophet (S).” “Such a person must be a Prophet because only prophets teach such manners.” The mother remarked.

Zakaria explained to his mother, “The chain of the Prophets came to an end with the Prophet of Islam (S). He was the seal of the Prophets. The one who has guided me is the son of the Prophet (S).” The mother said, “My son, the religion of Islam that you have embraced is better than all the religions. Teach me, so that I too may become a Muslim.”

So, Zakaria made her recite the ‘Kalima’ and taught her the true beliefs. Later, this lady performed the Zohrain and the Maghrebain prayers. The same night death approached her. She told her son: “Dear son, repeat to me again whatever you have taught me.” Zakaria began to recite while she listened carefully and in this way she passed away.

Displeasing the parents is Harām and goodness towards them is Wajib, whether they are alive or dead. In other words parents have rights upon their children even after they (the parents) are dead.

If the son or the daughter forgets the parents after their death and does not perform good deeds on their behalf, it is ‘Īq al-Walidayn’ irrespective of the fact that the child had fulfilled all his or her rights and served them till the time of their death.

Rights of Parents After Their Death

First: To carry out the Wajib acts which they did not perform during their life time, like Salāt, Siyyam, Hajj and repayment of debts.

Second: To Act on their will and testament.

Third: To perform various good deeds for their salvation, i.e., to give Sadaqah, to perform charitable acts, and to carry out recommended acts on their behalf. In short, one should strive to the utmost in doing good deeds on their behalf so that Allah (S.w.T.) may shower His blessing and mercy on them.

The Disobedient Children After the Death of Their Parents

It is narrated from Hazrat Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.):

“Certainly, if a person is good to his parents when they are alive but forsakes them after they die and does not repay their debts or pray for their forgiveness, Allah will record ‘Īq al-Walidayn’ in the account of his deeds. On the other hand, if a person is ‘Īq al-Walidayn’ when they are alive but after their death

repays their debts and prays for their forgiveness and salvation, Allah will include him among the righteous people”.

Single Action, Multiple Rewards

Hazrat Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said,

“What prevents you from serving your parents in their life and death? The Holy Prophet (S) remarks about the goodness to parents after death. “Perform their ‘Salāt’ (if some Wajib prayers have been omitted by them, the eldest son should perform them himself, or have them fulfilled by someone else on payment. However, if no Wajib prayer is remaining upon them, then he could pray Nawafil Salāt for them or have them performed on payment.) Pay Sadaqah on their behalf. Complete their Qaḏa fasts and fulfill the obligation of their Hajj. Whatever you do, both of you will be rewarded (i.e. you and your parents).

Apart from this, goodness to parents carries double rewards. One for the action itself, and second for the benevolence towards the parents.

Praying (Du'a) For the Parents and Seeking Forgiveness On Their Belief

It is narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that a man approached him and asked whether his parents have any rights upon him after their death? The Holy Prophet (S) replied,

“Yes, pray Salāt for them, seek forgiveness on their behalf, respect their tradition, and be good to their relatives.”¹⁷

When is Obedience to the Parents Wajib?

The orders and restraints of the parents are of no significance with respect to the Wajib acts and the Divine prohibitions. For example if the parents order the child to drink wine or restrain him from the obligatory prayers and fasts, they should not be obeyed. It is expressly mentioned in this Verse of Surah Luqmān:

“And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them...” (Surah Luqmān 31: 15)

The traditions also support this Ayat:

“No Obedience of a creature in contravention to the Divine command.”¹⁸

Apart from these circumstances, obedience to parents is obligatory with regards to the Makruh and Mubah acts. The same applies to the Wajib al-Kifai.

If by performing these actions, the parents are displeased or hurt, it is 'Harām', a Greater Sin and causes one to be 'ʿĀq al-Walidayn'. Suppose the son wishes to proceed on a non-obligatory journey and the parents restrain him as they fear some harm for him, or because they cannot bear to be separated from him; and the son disobeys them and goes ahead with the journey, such a journey is Harām. It is a journey of sin. Salāt and Fasting is not Qasr for this journey. In short, anything that causes displeasure and hurts the parents, is absolutely Harām.

Obedience to parents is not obligatory in the following cases:

When it causes unbearable hardships or harm. For instance, if they restrain the son from marriage when he feels the need for it. Or they order the son to divorce his wife without a sound reason. If such an action will result in harm to both the spouses, it is not obligatory to obey the parents.

As far as I know, it is not obligatory to obey parents even in cases where they do not get angry or hurt if their commands are disobeyed.

As far as possible one should obey their orders and restrain from opposing them. Especially when the parents advise their children for their own benefit and without any selfish motive.

Disagreement among the Parents

If a situation arises when there is a disagreement between the parents on any subject, as far as possible, one should try to pacify and satisfy both of them. However, if it is not possible then the wish of the mother should be given precedence.

We have already seen the reasons why her rights far exceed those of the father. She is also more deserving of obedience because being a woman she is more sensitive in comparison to men. The mother is easily disturbed by the slightest hurt caused by her child. She becomes restless and uncontrollable due to her motherly feelings. In contrast, the father exercises reason and intelligence and being less emotional, is much less affected. He would realize that the son is obeying the mother because of the very special status granted to her by Allah (S.w.T.) and not because he intends to disobey his father due to disregard for him.

Permission of the Parents is Necessary

The Islamic Shari'a has prescribed certain matters wherein it is necessary to obtain the permission of both the parents. Or at least of one of them. For example, the Wajib al-Kifai acts like Jihad, or the Mustahab acts like the recommended fasts, or matters like taking an oath, vow and promises. In all such cases it is Wajib to obtain the parents' permission. The First Martyr¹⁹ had mentioned ten topics on the rights of parents in his book "Qawaid". It will be appropriate to mention them.

Journey of the Child and the Martyr's viewpoint

- 1) Mubah and Mustahab journey without the permission of parents is Harām. However a business journey and the journey undertaken for acquiring knowledge is allowed according to some Mujtahids.
- 2) Some Jurists are of the opinion that, obedience to parents is Wajib upon the child in every condition where there exists a doubt. Hence if the parents order their son or daughter to eat with them, and if there is doubt regarding the food, it is incumbent to obey the parents. Because, obedience to parents is Wajib while avoiding food in case of doubt, is Mustahab.
- 3) If it is time for prayers and the parents would like to get some work done, it is necessary to carry out the orders before offering Salāt. Here again the offering of Salāt at the earliest is Mustahab whereas the obedience to parents is Wajib.

Refraining From Salāt al-Jama'a

- 1) Parents cannot prevent their child from performing Salāt in congregation unless it causes some problem to them. For example, the absence of the son, while he goes for Fajr or Isha prayers, may cause them anxiety regarding their own safety or the safety of their property. Or, it may make them apprehensive about the son's safety.
- 2) If it is not absolutely obligatory (Wajib al-A'ini) the parents can stop their son from going on Jihad.
- 3) Regarding the commands, which are Wajib al-Kifai, the parents can prevent their son or daughter only if there is a certainty or a chance of the Wajib being fulfilled by other people.
- 4) Some jurists are of the opinion that if one is praying a recommended prayer, he can interrupt it if his parents call him.
- 5) One must forgo recommended fasts if the father disallows them.
- 6) In the matter regarding vows and promises, if the parents are against it, then one must not disobey them.
- 7) It is the duty of the son to ensure that he causes no harm to his parents. And if someone else intends to harm them, the son must do everything in his capacity to ward off the harm.

Respect For Parents

As it is Wajib to fulfill the rights of the parents, it is also necessary to give them due respect and honour. Numerous traditions have been recorded from the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)

- 1) One must not address the parents by their names. However, they can be addressed by their title or kunniya.
- 2) One must not precede them while walking, nor should one sit down before them.
- 3) While having meals one should not begin before the parents. Hazrat Imam Zayn ul-'Abidin (a.s.) did not have meals with his mother for the fear that he may pick a morsel which she intended to.
- 4) One must never sit with one's back to our parents in a gathering.
- 5) While speaking, one's voice should not rise above the voice of one's parents.
- 6) One should not do anything that would cause the parents to become a butt of criticism. We must not insult the parents of others, or they would insult our parents in retaliation.
- 7) Hazrat Sajjad (a.s.) saw a young man walking on the street with the support of his father's hand. He was much displeased and did not even speak to the boy again.²⁰

It is the unanimous opinion of the jurists that 'Ahsan' of parents means refraining from everything that displeases them.

The following actions are considered disrespectful:

- 1) Not providing them with the necessities, thus compelling them to beg for them.
- 2) Not inviting them to a function where others have been invited.
- 3) Not getting presents for them from a place where one had been to, on a journey.

All the above acts are Harām. In addition, the jurists also consider the following actions Harām:

- 1) To turn away from the parents with disdain.
- 2) To sit with one's back towards the parents.
- 3) To speak in a voice louder than the parents.
- 4) Walking ahead of the parents.

If any of them do not cause disrespect or displeasure, they are allowed. However, to refrain from them is '*mustahab*'.

Rights of the Children Upon Their Parents

Just as it is Wajib for the children to respect, honour and fulfill the rights of their parents, it is incumbent

upon the mother and the father to fulfill the rights, which the children have upon them. If the parents do not fulfill these rights, it would amount to Qat'a ar-Rahm (cutting off the relationships). Since children are the closest to parents it is a must to refrain from Qat'a ar-Rahm with them, and Qat'a ar-Rahm is a great sin, as would be described later.

Just as the children become 'فاجر' al-Walidayn' by not complying with their duties, the parents also become 'فاجر' if they fail to perform their duties towards their children. Further, the parents should not impose unbearable commands upon the children such that the children are forced to find excuses for not obeying them and thus become 'فاجر'.

The parents should not ridicule their children for their actions. Rather the children must be corrected by constructive criticism. Ridicule makes the children stubborn and creates enmity between them and the parents. When the parents fail to fulfill the rights of the children, it induces the children to forsake the rights of the parents in retaliation. As a consequence, both the parents and the children are involved in a Greater Sin.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“The parents are liable to be 'فاجر' in the same way as the children who do not fulfill the rights of the parents become involved in the sin of 'Uq' (plural of 'ق').”

It is therefore a solemn duty of the parents to behave kindly with their children and give them a good training and education. They should keep them under gentle control and must not do anything that would cause them to be 'فاجر'.

For example, the parents should overlook the minor faults of the children. They should appreciate insignificant favours and show happiness and gratitude for these favours which would encourage the child to further good actions. They should make the children aware that they wish them the best and pray for their happiness in the world and the Hereafter.

We will now put forward the rights of children upon their parents, as enunciated by educated jurists and propounded in the books of Islamic Law.

Maintenance of Children

It is Wajib upon the parents to bear the expenses of the children right from the time of their birth till they become independent, and in case of a daughter, till she gets married.

Arranging the Marriage

One of the most important duties of the father is to arrange for the marriage of the son when he attains maturity. In case of the daughter too the father must strive to find a good match for her. The parents

cannot restrain their daughter from matrimony. The Holy Qur'an states clearly:

"...then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:232)

Religious Education and Training

Another important duty for the parents is to give a good education to their children. The parents must strive to instruct the children with regard to the fundamentals of Islamic faith. The seriousness and significance of observing the laws of Shari'a should be inculcated in the children, and no leniency must be shown if the religious laws are not strictly followed.

However, the aspect of Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar must be kept in mind. The details regarding the same shall be explained in the chapter of Amr bil Ma'ruf (enjoining good) and Nahy Anil Munkar (forbidding evil).

Various traditions stress upon the duty of the parents to shower their love and affection upon the children. A few of these are quoted below.

Love and Affection For the Children

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"Be affectionate to your children and have mercy upon them. When you promise them something, fulfill your promise because the children repose hope only in the parents. When a promise is not fulfilled, it causes dissatisfaction and strains relationships. Certainly Allah is most wrathful when the women and children are disheartened."

Kissing the Children

The Holy Prophet (S) has told that when a person kisses his child, a good deed is recorded in his *Sahifat al-Amr* (Scroll of deeds).²¹

Daughters Are More Deserving of Kindness

The parents have been ordered to be more kind towards the daughters. It is mustahab that when a father brings something for the children he must first offer it to the daughter; especially the one who is named Fatima.

If the children oppose the parents, they must never be abused or reviled. The curses of the parents cause an increase in the misery of the children.

Spiritual Fathers Are More Qualified For Kindness

Whatever has been mentioned till now concerns the biological parents; however the spiritual fathers or the guides of humanity are Hazrat Muhammad (S) and his Purified Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). All of us are spiritually related to them. In every circumstance their followers can be enriched by virtues and get protection from calamities. The Holy Prophet (S) has informed, "I and 'Ali (both) are the fathers of this Umma."

The spiritual fathers are superior to the biological parents in a manner that the soul is superior to the physical body. Similarly the punishment of the 'uq' of the spiritual fathers is much more severe than that of the 'uq' of ordinary parents.

High Rewards and More Punishment

The rewards for kindness to the spiritual father is a thousand times more than kindness to the real parents. In the same way the 'uq' of a spiritual father is far more severely punishable, i.e., Heaven is prohibited for the person who disobeys the spiritual father, and none of his deeds are accepted even if he prays in the nights and fasts during the day.

The punishment for those who do not acknowledge the Wilayat of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) is more severe because the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) are the real spiritual fathers. It would be wrong to consider all the Qur'anic verses and traditions in connection with Uq'q al-Waledain to be restricted to biological parents. The Holy Qur'an and hadith are unanimous in declaring that the commands for Uq'q al-Waledain apply equally and more stringently to the spiritual as well as biological parents. The ultimate argument in this connection is the Qur'anic verse wherein Allah (S.w.T.) has ordered obedience towards the parents along with His own worship.

"Be grateful to Me and both your parents." (Surah Luqman 31: 14)

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents." (Surah al-Isrā', 17:23)

A similar reference to the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) is to be found in the chapter of Silet ar-Rahm. Two traditions are reported from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.)

The first tradition is when Umr bin Yazid enquired about the meaning of the following Ayat of Surah ar-R'd:

"And those who join that which Allah has bidden to be joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning." (Surah ar-R'd 13:21)

The next tradition is concerned with the tafsir of the same 'Ayat'. It says that the above Ayat has been

revealed about the Silet ar-Rahm to Muhammad (S) and the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.), the close relatives of the Mu'min being included in it. The tradition further says,

“And do not be of those who restrict the Ayat to some particular personalities. But whenever you hear of a verse regarding a kind of people you must consider it to be applicable to the other people of the same kind.”

The Uqūq of Spiritual Fathers

The *Uqūq* of the spiritual fathers means to disobey their commands and to be heedless of their orders. To sever relationships with them in this world by not acknowledging their leadership. Imam Riḍa (a.s.) asked,

“Won't you feel bad if your parents are displeased and say that you are not their child?”

Those who were present answered, “Yes”. Imam (a.s.) continued,

“The spiritual parents are superior to your biological parents. Do not give them an opportunity to say this. Rather consider yourself lucky be to their son or daughter”.

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1. Wasa'il ul-Shia
 2. al-Kāfi
 3. Bihār al-Anwār
 4. Mustadrak
 5. Bihār al-Anwār
 6. Bihār al-Anwār
 7. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
 8. Bihār al-Anwār
 9. Bihār al-Anwār
 10. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
 11. Safinat'ul-Bihār
 12. Safinat'ul-Bihār
 13. Mustadrak ul-Wasa'il
 14. al-Kāfi
 15. al-Kāfi
 16. Uyūn al-Akhbar ar-Riḍa
 17. al-Kāfi
 18. Bihār al-Anwār
 19. Al-Shahīd Al-Awwal Faqih Al-Sarbidaran
 20. al-Kāfi
 21. Wasa'il ul-Shia

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