100947 - Should he leave his job so that he can live with his parents?

the question

I work abroad. My parents are in my home country. I have sisters there as well, but every one is busy with her life, although they live in the same country. I feel guilty towards my parents. I always feel that they are in need of me, although I always ask about them, and visit them in my holidays. Should I leave my job abroad and return to my country to work beside them? What should I do to fulfill my duty towards them?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There are different degrees of honouring one’s parents, the least of which is upholding ties with them by spending on them, caring about them, asking after them and showing concern. As for the greatest of these degrees, there is no limit to it, and the righteous and the believers compete in that, in ways that are limitless. This is the essential attitude of the message brought by the Prophets, motivated by the verses and ahaadeeth which place a great emphasis on parents and mention their rights alongside the rights of Allaah, may He be exalted, and which speak of a great reward for honouring them and upholding ties with them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) regarded that as the best of deeds after prayer, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard the recitation of Haarithah ibn al-Nu’maan in Paradise and said: “He attained this level (in Paradise) because of honouring his mother.” Narrated by Ibn Wahb in al-Jaami’ (22); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (913). The prayers of Uways al-Qarni were answered because he honoured his mother.

Al-Bukhaari narrated in al-Adab al-Mufrad (15), in a report that was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Adab, from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them) that a man came to him and said: I proposed marriage to a woman but she refused to marry me; someone else proposed to her and she agreed to marry him. I got jealous and killed her. Can I repent? He said: Is

your mother alive? He said: No. He said: Repent to Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, and seek to draw near to Him as much as you can. I went and asked Ibn ‘Abbaas: Why did you ask him if his mother was alive? He said: Because I do not know of any deed that will bring one closer to Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, than honouring one’s mother.

We say to you:

When it comes to honouring your parents and upholding ties with them, it is undoubtedly better to stay with them to serve them and take care of them. Abu Hurayrah stayed with his mother and he did not do Hajj until she died, so that he could keep her company, as it says in Saheeh Muslim (1665). The fuqaha’ stated that it is haraam for a son to travel to seek knowledge or engage in business if that will result in neglect of his parents.

It says in al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah (3/156):

If he – the son – wants to go out to seek knowledge in another country, or engage in trade, but he fears that his parents may be neglected, then he does not have the right to go out without their permission.

The basic principle with regard to that is the report narrated by Abu Dawood (2528) and al-Nasaa’i (4163), that a man came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: I have come to swear allegiance to you and pledge to migrate, and I have left my parents weeping. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Go back and make them smile as you have made them weep.”

Classed as saheeh by Ibn al-Mulqin in al-Badr al-Muneer (9/40) and al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

Abd ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas narrated that a man came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allaah, should I go for jihad? He said: Do you have parents? He said: Yes. He said: Then your jihad is with them. Agreed upon. End quote.

But if it will not result in any neglect of the parents, and they have others around who can look after them, or they are able to look after themselves, then he may go out to seek knowledge or do business, and it is not essential to have their permission.

It says in al-Mudawwanah (2/101):

Maalik said: Once a boy reaches the age of puberty he may go wherever he wants, and the father has no right to prevent him. End quote.

See al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (8/7071).

But we advise you to do what is best and to do that which will bring a great reward with Allaah, which is to be closer to them and make them happy during the remainder of their lives, and look after them. Do not deprive them of your company, and do not be a cause of them grieving every time you bid farewell to them and travel. Whoever wants to honour them completely, let him fulfil their wishes and do what makes them happy. 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr interpreted the verse (interpretation of the meaning): "And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy" [al-Isra' 17:24] by saying: Do not refrain from doing anything they want. End quote. Tafseer al-Tabari (17/418)

Al-Bukhaari narrated in al-Adab al-Mufrad (18), in a report that was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Adab al-Mufrad, from Abu Burdah that Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) saw a Yemeni man circumambulating the Ka'bah, carrying his mother on his back and saying, I am her humble camel, do you think that I have repaid her? Ibn 'Umar said: No, not even one contraction.

'Abd-Allaah ibn Ja'far said: I heard Bandar – who is one of the imams of hadeeth – say: I wanted to go out – i.e., to seek a hadeeth – and my mother told me not to, so I obeyed her, and I was blessed in that.

Al-Dhahabi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Siyar (12/144): he compiled the hadeeth of Basra and he did not travel, out of respect for his mother, then he travelled after she died. End

quote.

Ja’far al-Khaldi said: Al-Abbaar – Abu’l-‘Abbaas Ahmad ibn ‘Ali ibn Muslim (d. 290 AH) was one of the most ascetic of people. He asked his mother for permission to travel to Qutaybah – i.e., to hear hadeeth – and she did not give him permission; then she died, so he went out to Khurasaan, then he reached Balkh and Qutaybah had died. They offered him condolences for that, and he said: This is the result of knowledge; I chose to please my mother. End quote. Al-Siyar (13/443).

Imam Ibn ‘Asaakir was asked about postponing travel to Isbahaan, and he said: I asked my mother for permission to travel there and she did not give me permission. End quote. Al-Siyar (20/567).

Bishr al-Haafi said:

The son who draws close to his mother so that he can hear his mother is better than the one who strikes with his sword for the sake of Allaah, and looking at her is better than everything. End quote. Al-Tabsirah by Ibn al-Jawzi (1/188).

This is how our righteous predecessors were: they did not give precedence to any deed at all over honouring one’s parents and they did not feel that this entire world could make up for one of the parents needing the son and not finding him there.

If you can go back to your parents and stay in their city, and that will not cause you any serious harm due to leaving your work, then strive to honour them and give precedence to that which is better, and do not hesitate to do that, for Allaah has enjoined us to hasten and hurry to do good things.

But if pleasing them is more likely to be achieved by your staying in your job and earning money that you can spend on them, then keep your job and strive to make the most of every opportunity to travel to visit them and spend your vacations with them. And seek in all of that the pleasure of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted.

And Allaah knows best.