

176847 - Hating an Unjust Father

the question

I am a young woman, thirty years old. My problem is that I hate my father vehemently and I cannot even listen to any news of him. My father transgressed against my rights and the rights of my mother and siblings. He left me when I was small, eight years old, and travelled to another city where he married another woman and forgot that he had two small daughters, me and my sister. We needed him to be with us but he did not care about that. All he cared about was himself. He left me and my mother and my sister with my married brothers, and their wives were mean to us. They created trouble and my brothers believed them. The matter went so far that my mother, my sister and I were kicked out and went to live for a while in my married sister's house, and we went through a lot of problems. I blame my father because he did not think of us and he did not provide us with a peaceful life, and he left us to our fate, to suffer harshness and injustice. After that, we moved with my mother to the same city where my father lives. He has had children from his other wife and he did not treat us fairly. We lived in difficult circumstances and he did not spend on us; my poor mother used to sell our used clothes in order to provide food for us. We have grown up and I still do not see any care from my father. I hate him very much and he does not even deserve to be called a father. He has not provided a decent life for me and my sister, and he does not care about our future with regard to us getting married and settling down. I have become hardhearted because of the difficult circumstances I have gone through. Now he has sold a house of his and given all the money to his other wife and her children, and he did not remember us at all. I hate him very much; am I to be blamed for hating him? What is the Islamic ruling on that?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to recompense you for your calamity, and to relieve you of your pain, and decree reward for you. And we ask Him, may He be exalted, to guide your father,

for he has acted very badly indeed by deliberately neglecting his family whom Allah, may He be exalted, commanded him to look after and take care of, especially since those whom he neglected of his family are those who are weak. Your father has also been unjust toward your mother by not giving her her rights of maintenance and not being fair between her and his other wife. And he has been unjust in terms of giving, as he has given to his children from his other wife but not to his children from his first wife. All these things that your father has done are clearly sins and neglect of the obligations that Allah, may He be exalted, has enjoined upon him, so he deserves the warning unless he repents to his Lord, gives up this wrongdoing, establishes equal treatment of his two families, and sets straight what he has done wrong. If he does that, he will find that his Lord will accept his repentance and show mercy.

Secondly:

Despite all the things that your father has done, his right to kind treatment and obedience in that which is right and proper is still guaranteed, according to the shar'i (religious) texts. If Allah, may He be exalted, has mentioned the rights of the mushrik (pagan) father – and even the one who calls his children to associate others with their Lord, may He be glorified and exalted – to kind treatment and good companionship, then the one who is less than him in terms of evildoing is more entitled to that kind treatment and good companionship. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do”

[31:15].

Although the father deserves to be warned (of divine punishment) for his sin and neglect of shar'i duties, disobedient children and those who do not treat their parents kindly are also warned about their actions; it is not permissible to repay mistreatment with mistreatment or wrongdoing with wrongdoing.

Thirdly:

Although children are not to be blamed for feelings of resentment in the heart towards the father who commits sin or is a disbeliever, that does not contradict the duty to treat him kindly and obey him in that which is right and proper. But you have to hold your tongue and refrain from speaking badly to him, and also refrain from mistreating him in practical terms.

As the issue was caused by your father's actions and you have gone through so much pain and hardship, we advise you to seek reward with Allah for what you have gone through. And we advise you to offer du'aa (supplication) for your father, praying that he be guided and enabled to repent and set things right, because he is in the greatest need of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, may He be exalted.

And Allah knows best.