

Interacting with Non-Muslim Parents

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee

Article taken and slightly adapted from: mtws.posthaven.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

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All praises belong to Allaah the Lord of all that exists. I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allaah alone without partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his slave and Messenger. May the prayers and peace be upon him, and his family and his companions, collectively. As to what follows:

The discussion pertaining to honouring the parents is an extremely tremendous affair. That is made apparent as Allaah connects the rights of the parents with His rights, in numerous places in the Noble Qur'aan.

Such as His statement:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents.¹

And Allaah the Exalted said:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

Worship Allaah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents.²

And His statement:

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنتُمْ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْنُمْ أَلَّا تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

Say (O Muhammad): "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents.³

And the Statement of the Exalted:

¹ (Soorah al-Isra 17:23)

² (Soorah an-Nisaa 4:36)

³ (Soorah al- An'aam 6:151)

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أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ

And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents.⁴

Thus all of this is clear proof upon the great rights of the parents and the obligation to honour them and show them kindness. And it is a warning against disobeying them and treating them harshly.

The topic of kindness to parents is a very broad topic, but based upon the desires of the noble brothers the topic will be restricted to: Showing kindness to the parents if they are not upon Islaam and they are upon polytheism. Likewise: How should the new Muslim interact with his non-Muslim parents?

There is no doubt that the one who is new to Islaam is in dire need to be taught the religion and given direction in this area such that his interaction with his parents will be upon clarity and knowledge. This must be based upon the religion of Allaah the Blessed and Exalted not an inclination towards what he thinks is from the religion of Allaah the Blessed and Exalted; and as a result he errors wronging himself and he interacts with his parents in an evil manner.

Allaah the Exalted explains in the Noble Qur'aan the necessary interaction between the Muslim child and the non-Muslim parents. This can be found in Soorah al-'Ankaboot when Allaah the Blessed and Exalted said:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ

And We have enjoined on man goodness to parents, but if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do. And those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will surely admit them among the righteous [into Paradise]⁵

He began these verses by enjoining upon man kindness to his parents. He said:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا

And We have enjoined on man goodness to parents

⁴ (Soorah Luqmaan 31:14)

⁵ (Soorah al-'Ankaboot 29:8-9)

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His statement 'goodness' entails goodness in every sense of the word from the statements and actions. This means he interacts with his parents with good speech, good words, and speech which is appropriate for their status and befitting to their position. And he should interact with them by serving them, aiding and assisting them, and taking care of his parent's needs. This advice is general to include every type of kindness and every path of goodness. He said:

وَإِنْ جَاهِدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

But if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge

Meaning if the parents are upon polytheism and disbelief in Allaah and they strive to make their child associate partners with Allaah and disbelieve in Allaah. And the meaning of 'make jihad or strive' is to put forth great effort and continuously urge and request their child to return to polytheism and disbelief in Allaah the Blessed and Exalted. He said:

وَإِنْ جَاهِدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

But if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge⁶

The statement of Allaah the Exalted: 'of which you have no knowledge'; this is the necessary description for polytheism because no one has any knowledge which legitimises polytheism. Polytheism (shirk) is false and there is no authentic knowledge to be found with legitimises shirk. Thus the polytheist and those with corrupt beliefs have absolutely no proof or knowledge which proves what they are upon is correct. No one has proof for the correctness of polytheism, because all of it is false, misguidance and corruption. This is similar to the statement of Allaah the Exalted:

وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ

And whoever invokes besides Allaah another deity for which he has no proof⁷

This is a necessary description of shirk which it is never void of.

He said:

وَإِنْ جَاهِدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا

But if they (both) strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not.⁸

⁶ (Soorah al-'Ankaboot 29:8)

⁷ (Soorah al-Mu'minoon 23:117)

⁸ (Soorah al-'Ankaboot 29:8)

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Meaning if they call you to polytheism and disbelief in Allaah ‘then obey them not’; meaning do not obey your parents when they order you to associate partners with Allaah the Exalted. He said, ‘then obey them not’ and He did not say, ‘then disobey them’. This means it is required from the child to be good to his parents and interact with his parents in a kind manner but he does not obey them in the polytheism and disbelief which they are calling him to. But if they request kindness or assistance from him then it is upon him to obey them in that. This is clarified in Soorah Luqmaan. Allaah the Blessed and Exalted said:

وَإِنْ جَاهِدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا

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.⁹

Thus He commanded giving the parents good companionship in this world; meaning give consideration to their previous kindness and goodness (shown to you); and the compassion of the mother and the money spent by the father. Do not forget this; rather be diligent in showing them good kind companionship. But do not obey them unrestrictedly in what they command you, in associating partners with Allaah. He completed this verse with His statement:

إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do.

This is an incentive as well as a threat. It is an incentive for those who are good to their parents that Allaah the Glorified and Exalted will give him a great reward for that. And it is also a threat for the disbelieving parents if they remain upon their polytheism because of the punishment awaiting the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment. As for the one who is patient upon Tawheed and faith and he is not affected by his parents, and the polytheism they call him to; and he gives his parents good companionship in this world he will have a praiseworthy ending and a good result. For this reason Allaah said in the following verse:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ

And those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will surely admit them among the righteous [into Paradise]

And this is an advice for those in this situation to remain patient upon faith and upon the religion and to not be affected by his parents in any way, by the polytheism and disbelief they call him to.

⁹ (Soorah Luqmaan 31:15)

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And then it is upon the child to spare no effort in guiding his parents to this religion and to strive diligently in this with gentleness, kindness, and continuation supplication and asking Allaah the Exalted to guide his parents. He should pray during the night—as much as Allaah wills—and supplicate for his parents. He should supplicate while in Sajood during his obligatory and supererogatory prayers for Allaah to guide his parents. Thus he combined giving Da'wah to his parents and making Du'aa for them. He supplicates to Allaah and he invites his parents to Islaam with gentleness and a kind word as Aboo Hurairah did with his mother—may Allaah be pleased with him.

The story is in Saheeh Muslim, and it is a tremendously great story. He said:

I invited my mother—who was a polytheist—to Islaam. I invited her one day and she said to me something about the Messenger of Allaah peace be upon him, which I hated. I came to the Messenger of Allaah peace be upon him weeping and said: O Messenger of Allaah, I invited my mother to Islaam but she did not accept (my invitation). I invited her today but she said to me something which I did not like. Supplicate Allaah that He may guide the mother of Aboo Hurairah to Islaam.

Thereupon the Messenger of Allaah peace be upon him said: '**O Allaah, guide the mother of Aboo Hurairah.**' I came out quite pleased with the supplication of the Messenger of Allaah peace be upon him and when I came near the door it was closed from within. My mother heard the noise of my footsteps and she said: Aboo Hurairah, just wait, and I heard the noise of falling of water. She took a bath and put on the shirt and quickly covered her head with a headdress and opened the door and then said: Aboo Hurairah, I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allaah and Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger.

He (Aboo Hurairah) said: I went back to the Messenger of Allaah peace be upon him and (this time) I was shedding the tears of joy. I said: O Messenger of Allaah, be happy, for Allaah has responded to your supplication and He has guided the mother of Aboo Hurairah. He (the Prophet) praised Allaah, and glorified Him and uttered good words. I said: O Messenger of Allaah, supplicate to Allaah so that He may instil love of me and that of my mother into the believing servants and let our hearts be filled with their love, whereupon Allaah's Messenger peace be upon him said: '**O Allaah, let there be love of these servants of yours, i.e. Aboo Hurairah and his mother, in the hearts of the believing servants and let their hearts be filled with the love of the believing servants.**' (Aboo Hurairah said: This prayer) was so well granted by Allaah that no believer was ever born who heard of me and who saw me except that he loved me.¹⁰

¹⁰ Collected by Muslim 2491

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Therefore this great story is a methodology for the Muslim who has been tested by one or two disbelieving parents; so he can proceed as Aboo Hurairah proceeded with his mother by supplicating to Allaah to guide them and also giving them Da'wah with kindness and good words. Good interaction with the parents and taking into account good manners with them, softness in dealing with them, and being a good companion with them as much as possible is from the reasons for the parents to be guided to Islaam.

Some of the youth make a mistake when they enter into Islaam, thus they distance themselves from their parents or they disassociate from them or they do not visit them, or treat them kindly. And no doubt this is a mistake. It is required for him to be a good companion to his parents and to strive to be kind to his parents. And he should not obey them if they call him to disbelief and associating partners with Allaah the Exalted. And there is no contradiction between these two affairs. There is no contradiction between being a good companion to the parents while at the same time not obeying them in their call to associating partners with Allaah the Exalted.

I call upon every Muslim who has been tested with one or two parents who are disbelievers to read Soorah Luqmaan and also Soorah al-`Ankaboot and also the statements of the scholars in the books of Tafseer explaining the meaning of these verses and the direction extracted from them in showing kindness and goodness to the parents; while avoiding their call to polytheism and disbelief in Allaah the Exalted.

This is the conclusion of this subject. I ask Allaah the Generous the Lord of the great throne by His Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes to benefit us all from what He has taught us, and to rectify all of our conditions. And I ask Him to guide us to the straight path, and to not leave us to ourselves even for the blink of an eye. Verily the Blessed and Exalted responds to the supplication and He is the One hope is placed in and the best to rely upon. And Allaah knows best. May the prayers and peace of Allaah be upon His slave, His Messenger, and our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and his companions.