458029 - She wants to seek Islamic knowledge, but her parents are putting obstacles in her way

the question

I am a young woman, and I have a father and mother. I am studying Islamic knowledge via the Internet and memorising the Quran. My question is: do I have to give up seeking knowledge in order to serve my parents? Please note that my parents are in good health, but they want me to be with them all the time and only do housework. What should I do?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is well known in Islam that it is obligatory to honour one's parents and show them kindness, and the best way to honour them and show them kindness is to do what pleases them and makes them happy**.**

According to the hadith of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The pleasure of the Lord is attained by pleasing the father and the anger of the Lord is incurred by angering the father." Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 1899; classed as authentic (sahih) by al-Albani in *Sahih Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, 2/340.

Shaykh `Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If it is said: What is the honouring of parents that Allah and His Messenger enjoined?

The answer is: Allah and His Messenger defined it clearly and explained it in a way that anyone can understand. Allah, may He be Exalted, enjoined showing kindness to them in general terms, so any word or act of kindness, according to the circumstances of the parents and the children, and the time and place, comes under the heading of honouring them and showing them kindness.

In this hadith, it says that the ultimate goal of honouring parents is to please them, so kindness is the cause and their being pleased is the effect. So whatever pleases the parents, in whatever way one deals with them according to custom, and finding all possible means of pleasing them, comes under the heading of honouring parents and showing them kindness.

End quote from *Bahjat Qulub al-Abrar*, p. 216.

If what makes the parents happy and pleases them is for their child to stay close to them, then undoubtedly the aim of honouring them and showing them kindness is achieved by going along with what they want, unless staying close to them could prevent the child from doing some obligatory religious duties, in which case he should sit with them for long enough to comfort and please them, then gently seek their permission to leave and take care of his own affairs.

It was narrated from ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no obedience if it involves disobedience towards Allah; obedience is only in that which is right and proper.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 7257; and Muslim, 1840. Imam Ahmad narrated it in *Al-Musnad*, 2/318, as: “There is no obedience to any human if it involves disobedience towards Allah.”

Rather he should only obey them by staying close to them, even if he misses out on righteous deeds that are not obligatory.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

A man does not have to seek his parents’ permission to do an obligatory prayer that is due, but he should not do any voluntary prayers except with their permission.

End quote from *Al-Kafi*, 1/357.

Islamic knowledge is of two types: some of it is obligatory and some of it is recommended.

That which is obligatory is that without which the Muslim cannot carry out his religious duties and avoid what is prohibited.

That includes learning how to purify oneself (wudu’ and ghusl), pray, fast, give zakah if he is one of those who are obliged to give zakah, and buy and sell if he is a trader, and so on.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The scholars are unanimously agreed that some knowledge is an individual obligation which each person should learn for himself, and some of it is a communal obligation which, if someone undertakes to learn it, it is waived from other people in that locality. But they differed in their definition of what is an individual obligation and what is a communal obligation.

What is obligatory for everyone to learn is that which a person cannot afford to be ignorant of, such as the obligatory religious duties that are required of him.

Whoever realizes that testifying verbally and believing in one's heart that Allah alone – with no partner or associate, and nothing resembles Him or is like unto Him; He begets not nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him – is the Creator of all things and all things will return to Him…

And whoever realizes that the five daily prayers are obligatory, will realise that he needs to learn about the rulings pertaining to them, such as purification before prayer, and all other pertinent rulings.

And whoever realises that fasting Ramadan is obligatory will realise that he should learn what could invalidate his fast and that without which fasting cannot be valid,

and if he has wealth and is able to do Hajj, it becomes obligatory for him to learn about what types of wealth are subject to zakah, and when it becomes obligatory and how much he must give.

End quote from *Jami` Bayan al-`Ilm wa Fadlihi*, 1/56-58.

Al-Qarafi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Ghazali narrated in *Ihya’ `Ulum ad-Din*, and ash-Shafa`i narrated in his *Risalah*, that there was scholarly consensus that it is not permissible for the accountable person to do anything until he

learns the rulings of Allah concerning that thing. So whoever engages in trade must learn about the rulings on buying and selling; whoever engages in hiring or renting must learn about the rulings on hiring and renting; whoever engages in borrowing and lending must learn about the rulings on loans; whoever prays must learn about the rulings on how to pray, and the same applies to purifying himself. This is applicable to all words and deeds.

End quote from *Al-Furuq*, 2/275.

Based on that:

It is not permissible to sit with parents for so long that it distracts you from learning what you are required to learn. In this case, you must try to do both things, and not anger your parents.

For more information, see the answer to question no. 161081.

As for what is not obligatory for you – such as spending time in memorizing more of the Quran and learning more about the religion – our advice to you is that you should strive to do that, but without making your parents angry. You can achieve that by showing kindness to them and being gentle with them as much as you can, so that you can find a way to both please your parents and increase your knowledge as much as you are able to, and we hope that striving to do both will lead to much good for you.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{As for those who strive hard in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our paths, for verily Allah is with the doers of good}[Al-`Ankabut 29:69].

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

A father is preventing his son from attending halaqahs (study circles) and lessons, and that has resulted in the son giving up on practising Islam, and now he spends his time in watching movies and other unlawful pastimes. Does the action of this father come under the heading of barring people from the path of Allah? Is it obligatory to obey him in this case?

He replied:

If your father or mother forbids you to attend halaqahs, do not obey them, because attending halaqahs is something good that does not cause any harm to the parents.

Hence we say: do not obey them, but strive to be tactful with them. What is meant by being tactful with them is not telling them that you are going to a halaqah; rather you can tell them that you are going to see your friends and the like.

With regard to the father or mother who prevents their son from attending halaqahs for the purpose of learning about Islam, their preventing him from doing that is akin to barring him from the path of Allah, and they are sinning by doing that. What the father and mother should do, if they see that their son is interested in seeking Islamic knowledge, is to be happy about that and help him in whatever way they can, because this is a blessing from Allah to him and to them. What type of child could benefit a person after he dies? It is a righteous child, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When a man dies, his good deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge or a righteous child who offers supplication for him.”

End quote from *Liqa’ al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 99/10.

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Obeying the parents by refraining from doing a righteous deed that is not obligatory is up to the child to decide, because it is up to the individual to decide about recommended righteous deeds [that are not obligatory]: if he wishes he may do the deed, and if he wishes he may not do it. But if he wants to do it, he should be tactful, so he should conceal whatever he can of his righteous deeds.

End quote from *Liqa’ al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 83/23.

You should understand that serving your parents and doing what pleases them is one of the best of righteous deeds and one of the most important means of attaining admittance to Paradise. If the parents are old, then focusing on honouring them and trying to please them becomes even

more important. Hence Allah urged children to be especially kind to parents when they reach old age, as He, may He be Exalted, says:

{Your Lord has ordained that you should worship none but Him and show kindness to parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, do not say to them even the mildest word of annoyance or reproach them; rather speak to them with respect.

And lower to them the wing of humility out of compassion, and say: My Lord, have mercy on them, as they cared for me when I was small}[Al-Isra’ 17:23].

We ask Allah to help you to do all that is good.

And Allah knows best.