59990 - Her mother mistreats the servants and does not respond to advice

the question

I have a mother whose nature is somewhat hard-hearted. She treats the servants harshly because she had some experiences with servants which made her not trust them. When I try to advise her she gets angry with me and says that I prefer the servants to her. I cannot speak if she does anything to the servant and I cannot keep quiet because I see her mistreating her. What should I do?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If a Muslim abuses the power that Allaah has given him over those who are under his care or authority, such as servants, workers or others under his care, then he should remember the power that Allaah has over him.

It was narrated that Abu Mas'ood al-Badri (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I was beating a slave of mine with a whip, then I heard a voice behind me saying, "Remember, Abu Mas'ood." I did not recognize the voice because I was so angry, but when he drew close to me I saw that it was the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he was saying, "Remember, Abu Mas'ood; remember, Abu Mas'ood." I threw the whip aside and he said, "Remember, Abu Mas'ood, that Allaah has more power over you than you have over this slave." I said, "I will never beat another slave again." Narrated by Muslim, 1659.

Allaah made our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) a good example for us, whose example and guidance we should follow. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was the best of people in attitude towards his servants; he did not scold them and beat them, even if they went against his instructions. Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) served the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for ten years, and he describes to

us how he treated him:

It was narrated that Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I served the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for ten years and he never said to me “Uff!” (a word of contempt) or “Why did you do such and such?” or “Why did you not do such and such?” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6690; Muslim, 2309. According to a version narrated by Muslim: He never criticized me for anything. According to another version narrated by Muslim (2310): Anas said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was the best of people in attitude. One day he wanted to send me on an errand and I said, “By Allaah, I will not go.” But my intention was to go and do what the Prophet of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had told me to do. I went out and passed by some boys who were playing in the market, and there the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) took hold of me by the neck from behind. I looked at him and he was smiling. He said, “O Unays, did you go and do what I told you to?” I said, “Yes, I will go, O Messenger of Allaah.” Anas said: By Allaah, I served him for nine years and I never heard him say for anything that I did, “Why did you do such and such?” or for something that I did not do, “Why did you not do such and such?”

Al-Nawawi said:

With regard to the phrase “nine years” – most reports say ten years. What this means is that it was nine years and some months. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stayed in Madeenah for ten years exactly, no more and no less, and Anas started to serve him during the first year. In the report which says nine years, the partial year is not counted, rather the complete years are counted, and in the report which says ten years, the partial year is counted as a full year. Both are saheeh.

This hadeeth gives a clear picture of the good attitude, kindness, forbearance and tolerance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Sharh Muslim, 15/71

The Sunnah describes the rights which must be accorded to workers, employees and slaves who

may be under the authority of a Muslim. This universal sharee'ah brought something that no divinely-revealed law had brought before, and no earthly legal system had produced the like thereof, so the Muslim should feel proud of belonging to this religion and should hasten to act in accordance with its rulings.

It was narrated that al-Ma'roor ibn Suwayd said: I saw Abu Dharr wearing a hullah (a suit of two garments) and his slave was wearing something similar. I asked him about that and he said that he had insulted a man at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) by saying something disparaging about his mother. The man went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and told him about that, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "You are a man who still has something of Jaahiliyyah in you. They are your brothers and servants whom Allaah has placed under your authority. Anyone who has his brother under his authority, let him feed him the same food as he eats and dress him in the same clothes as he wears, do not overwhelm them with work and if you give them work to do then help them with it." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 30; Muslim 1661.

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said:

This hadeeth shows that it is forbidden to insult slaves or speak disparagingly of those who bore them; we are encouraged to treat them well and be kind to them. Although it speaks of slaves, that also includes employees and others.

It also shows that we should not feel superior to another Muslim or look down on him.

Fath al-Baari, 5/175

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah says: 'There are three whose opponent I will be on the Day of Resurrection: a man who makes a promise in My name then breaks his word, a man who sells a free man and consumes his price, and a man who employs another and benefits from him (his labour), then does not give him his wages.'" Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2114.

From the ahaadeeth quoted above, it is possible to sum up the rights of servants and the etiquette with which their employer or master should treat them. These rights and etiquette are as follows:

1-He should give his servant the same food as he eats

2-He should clothe him as he clothes himself.

3-He should not give him more to do than he is able for, and if he does that he should help him.

4-He should pay him a wage that is appropriate to his work and his efforts.

5-He should not insult him or hit him.

6-He should treat him well and be kind to him.

7-He should overlook his mistakes and shortcomings,

Your mother should fear Allaah in her dealings with her servants. She should remember that Allaah has more power over her than she has over her servants, and that things do not always remain the same, she cannot be sure that things will not change and that she will not lose blessings because of such actions. Hence the wise Muslim should pay attention to that, and be grateful for blessings so that Allaah may increase them by His bounty.

Perhaps if your mother reads what we have quoted here of ahaadeeth, rulings, etiquette and warnings, she will stop being so harsh towards the servants and will repent to her Lord, and will ask forgiveness from those whom she has wronged, and will treat them kindly, before there comes a Day on which there will be no dirham and no dinar, rather it will be the matter of good deeds and bad deeds. How many Muslims have exhausted themselves doing acts of worship and good deeds in this world, but the reward thereof is lost in the Hereafter because it is taken from them and given to those against whom they transgressed in this world by insulting and slandering them.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever has wronged his brother, let him seek forgiveness from him for it – because (on the Day of Resurrection) there will be no dinar and no

dirham – before some of his good deeds are taken and given to his brother, and if he has no good deeds (to his credit) some of his brother's bad deeds will be taken and added to (his burden)."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6169

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do you know who the bankrupt one is?" They said, "Among us, the one who is bankrupt is the one who has no money or goods." He said: "The one who is bankrupt among my ummah is the one who will come on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting and zakaah (to his credit), but he will come having insulted this one, slandered that one, consumed the wealth of this one, shed the blood of that one, beaten this one, so they will all be given some of his good deeds, and if his good deeds run out before all the scores are settled, then some of their bad deeds will be taken and thrown onto him, then he will be thrown into the Fire." Narrated by Muslim, 2581.

What you must do is to advise your mother and keep on doing so; do not despair of her being guided or repenting. But that must be done kindly and gently, paying attention to your mother's rights, for her rights are great. Do not worry if she gets angry with you, because she has no right to do so. You will be rewarded if you bear her wrongs with patience.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about a man who had a sum of money stolen and he thought that one of his children had taken it. He started to pray against him and cut him off, but he was innocent and had not taken anything. Would the son be rewarded for his father's prayers against him?

He replied:

Yes, if the son was wronged, for Allaah will expiate his sins by means of the wrong that was done to him, and will reward him for his patience; and the one who prays against another unjustly is sinning. End quote.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 31/303

And Allaah is the Source of strength.