5053 - What Are the Rights of the Mother in Islam?

the question

I have a few questions concerning parents:

1- What right does my mother have over me?
2- What right do I have over my mother?
3- What do I have the freedom to do (which is Halal or Mubah, of course) without my mother having the right to stop me?
4- When does the father have the final say in a matter?
I love my mother very, very, very much. She is very over protective, and sometimes I feel like I'm in chains. I know she is doing it out of extreme love for me. How can I tell her that I need a little choice of my own in life?

Summary of answer

Some of the rights of mother in Islam are: 1- Love and respect, 2- Taking care of her and looking after her affairs, 3- Not offending her, 4-Spending on her if she is in need.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Rights of mother in Islam

The mother has many major rights over her child . These rights are innumerable, but we may mention the following:

- Love and respect, as much as possible, because she is the most deserving of people of her son’s good companionship.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “A man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is most deserving of my good companionship?’ He said, ‘Your mother.’ The man asked, ‘Then who?’ He said, ‘Your mother.’ He asked, Then who?’ He said, ‘Your mother.’ He asked, ‘Then who?’ He said, ‘Your father.’”

She is the one who made her womb a vessel for you and nourished you from her breast. You have no option but to love her. The fitrah (natural inclination of man) calls you to love her. Love between mothers and children and children and mothers is something that Allah has instilled even in animals, so it is even more befitting for the children of human beings, and for Muslims in particular.

- Taking care of her and looking after her affairs if she needs that; this is a debt that rests on the child’s shoulders. Did she not take care of him when he was a child and stay up with him at night and bear it all with patience?

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship…” [al-Ahqaf 46:15]

This even takes precedence over jihad if there is a conflict between the two.

‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: “A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and asked him for permission to participate in jihad. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him, ‘Are your parents alive?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Then your jihad is with them.’” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2842; Muslim, 2549)

- Not offending them or saying or doing anything that they dislike.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“say not to them a word of disrespect” [al-Isra 17:23]

If Allah has forbidden us even to say “uff” [paraphrased as “a word of disrespect” in the translation of the meaning of the verse] to our parents, then how about someone who hits them?!

- Spending on her if she is in need and does not have a husband who can spend on her or if her husband is poor; for the righteous, spending on one’s mother and feeding her is more precious than feeding their own children.

Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Three men went out walking and rain began to fall on them. They entered a cave in a mountain, then a rock fell (blocking the entrance to the cave). They said to one another, Pray to Allah by virtue of the best deeds that you have done. One of them said, O Allah, my parents were elderly and I used to go out and tend to my flocks, then I would milk them and bring the milk to my parents for them to drink from it, then I would give some to my children. One night I came home late and found them sleeping. I did not want to wake them, and the children were crying at my feet. I kept waiting and the children kept crying until dawn broke. O Allah, if You knew that I did that for Your sake, then open a way for us through which we can see the sky. So a way was opened for them…” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2102; Muslim, 2743)

- Obeying her when she tells you to do something good. But if she tells you to do something bad, such as shirk, then there should be no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator.

Allah 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” [Luqman 31:15]

- After one’s mother dies, it is Sunnah to fulfil any vows that she had made, and to give charity and perform Hajj and ‘Umrah on her behalf.

Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that a woman from Juhaynah came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: “My mother vowed to go for Hajj, but she died before she did so. Can I perform Hajj on her behalf?” He said, “Yes, perform Hajj on her behalf. Do you not think that if your mother owed a debt that you would pay it off for her? Fulfill her debt to Allah, for Allah is more deserving that what is owed to Him should be paid.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1754)

- After she dies, it is also Sunnah to honour her by maintaining ties with those whom she used to keep in touch with, such as her relatives and friends.

‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The best of righteous deeds is for a man to keep in touch with his father’s friends after he dies.” (Narrated by Muslim, 2552)

Rights of children over mother

- That she should take care of you when you are a child, breastfeeding and nurturing you. This is a well-known aspect of human nature that has been handed down from the beginning of creation.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years, (that is) for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of suckling” [al-Baqarah 2:233]

- She should bring you up in a righteous manner, for she will be responsible for that before Allah on the Day of Resurrection. You are part of her “flock” and she is your “shepherd”.

‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Umar said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: ‘Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The imam is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of his family and is responsible for his flock. A woman is the shepherd of her husband’s house and is responsible for her flock. A servant is the shepherd of his master’s wealth and is responsible for his flock.’ I think that he said,

‘A man is the shepherd of his father’s wealth and is responsible for his flock. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock.’” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 853; Muslim, 1829)

Permissible things that it is permissible for you to do without your mother interfering in your affairs

- She does not have the right to make decisions about what you should like with regard to permissible things over which she has no authority, such as food, drink, clothing, means of transportation, etc.
- Neither does she have the right to interfere in your choice of a wife – if she is righteous – so long as you are not disobeying Allah with regard to that. At the same time it is prescribed (by Islam) that you should try to please her even in your choice of a wife, if she advises you in a way that will not harm you.

With regard to her interfering with such matters as when you go out of the house or come in, or your going out in the evening with your friends: both parents have to watch their children with regard to this, so as to keep control of things and not let their children be led astray by bad company.

In most cases, when young people are corrupted it is because of bad company. Concerning this matter, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “A man will follow the way of his close friend, so let each of you look to who his close friends are.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2387; Abu Dawud, 4833. This hadith was classed as hasan by al-Tirmidhi and as sahih by al-Nawawi, as stated in Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi, 7/42).

Parents also have to watch when their child goes out and when he comes in, because they should not give him free rein, especially if he is not righteous.

You have to acknowledge their status and respect them and offer them good companionship, even if they give you a hard time with regard to things that Allah has made permissible for you. Allah

has commanded us to treat our parents well even if they are non-Muslims who call you to disbelief, so how about if they are calling us to something which they sincerely believe to be good? Even if sometimes it causes you some difficulty with regard to something that is permissible for you, the best thing to do is to obey them and do what they want. Even though you do not have to do this, it is a kind of sacrifice and giving them preference, because they are the most deserving of being given good treatment. In the Quran, Allah has mentioned obedience to parents immediately after worship of Him, in order to demonstrate the high status afforded obedience to parents.

When does the father have the final say?

Your father has the final say concerning everything that comes under his responsibility. For example, he is the one who decides in which school a child who is dependent on him will study. The father also has the final say concerning anything to do with his property, such as your using his car, taking his money, etc.

With regard to a son who is grown up and independent, he makes his own decisions concerning things that Allah has permitted. It is prescribed for him to please his father so long as that does not conflict with his obedience towards Allah. The son must continue to respect his father no matter how old he gets, because this has to do with honouring one's parents and treating them kindly. It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar said: "I never climbed onto the roof of a house in which my father was."

If a father tells a child to do something good, or to stop doing something that is permissible, he should obey him so long as that will not cause the son any harm.

How to tell mother to create a bit of space of freedom for you

With regard to how you can tell your mother that you want more freedom, this can be achieved by words and by deeds.

- Deeds

After proving to your mother in practical terms that you are no longer the child whom she used to know and that you have become a man who is able to bear responsibility and you behave like a man in front of her, if she sees that repeatedly, she will trust you. Then things will start to get better and you will have a higher status in your mother's eyes.

- Words

By clearly proving, quietly discussing and speaking softly, giving examples of your sound attitude. May Allah open your mother's heart so that she will deal with you as a wise, mature, sensible, adult man, so long as you are like that.

We ask Allah to guide us, you and your parents to the straight path. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad.

For more about rights of individuals in Islam, please see these answers: 70042 , 14630 , and 10680 .

And Allah knows best.