65867 - Is it disobedience towards his parents if he travels to seek provision and leaves them?

the question

I am a young man, 28 years old. I got engaged two years ago, praise be to Allaah, but my income is little. Praise be to Allaah I have got a contract in one of the Arab counties with a good salary, but I am hesitating to accept the job because I am my parents' only son, and the only brother of three girls. If I travel for the sake of my future and so that I can get married, will there be any element of disobedience towards my parents? If I travel I will be leaving them on their own and they are elderly. Please note that if I get married here I will never live with them, and they are preventing me from moving out of their house. Please advise me as to what is best and is right.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

If one or both of your parents needs you to serve them, and there is no one else who can do that after you travel, then you should not travel without their permission.

If they give you permission to travel or they do not need you, either because they are able to take care of themselves or because there is someone else who can look after them, then there is nothing wrong with you travelling in order to get married in that case, so as to preserve your chastity. But even if they do not give you permission, your travelling is not regarded as disobedience towards them.

But it is undoubtedly better to please them and to explain to them that travelling is in your best interests, and that you will never neglect them, and that you will be away only so long as you need to, then you will come back to them, and so on.

The scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) stated that it is permissible for a son to travel in order to seek provision without his parents' permission, subject to the condition that travelling is safe and will not put the son in any danger, and that they do not need him to be there.

Al-Kaasaani said in Badaa'i' al-Sanaa'i' (7/98), in his discussion on jihad if it is fard kifaayah (a communal obligation):

It is not permissible for a slave to go out except with the permission of his master, or for a woman to go out except with the permission of her husband, because serving one's master and fulfilling the husband's rights are individual obligations (fard 'ayn) which take precedence over communal obligations (fard kifaayah). Similarly a son should not go out without the permission of his parents, or of one of them if the other is dead, because honouring one's parents is an individual obligation which takes precedence over communal obligations.

The basic principle is that if travelling is not safe and the traveller may die or be exposed to severe danger, it is not permissible for a son to travel without his parents' permission, because they love their son and will be harmed by that. If there is little danger involved, it is permissible for him to go out without their permission so long as he does not neglect them, because there is no harm involved. Some of our shaykhs granted a concession allowing a son to travel in order to seek knowledge without parental permission, because they will not be harmed by that, rather they will benefit from it, so it cannot be described as disobedience to parents. End quote.

Al-Sarkhasi said in al-Siyar al-Kabeer (1/197):

If a person wishes to undertake a journey that is not for jihad – such as for business, Hajj or 'Umrah – and his parents object to that, but there is no fear that they will suffer hardship because of his absence, then there is nothing wrong with him travelling, because in most cases these journeys are safe and his travelling will not cause them undue hardship. The sorrow at his absence is offset by their looking forward to his return. But if there is the fear of danger on the journey, then it comes under the same ruling as going out for jihad, because it is more likely that he will die on such a journey. End quote.

Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo’ (8/314):

If a son wants to travel in order to seek knowledge, then al-Musannif (i.e., Abu Ishaaq al-Shiraazi (may Allaah have mercy on him)) stated at the beginning of Kitaab al-Siyar that it is permissible for him to do so without his parents’ permission. He said: The same applies to travelling for business purposes, because in most cases such journeys are safe.

Secondly:

With regard to your not living with them after you get married, even though they want you to stay with them, there is no sin on you in that, in sha Allaah, because that does not mean that you are neglecting them or harming them, especially since there are reasons for you not to do so, such as the house being small, or your wife wanting to live in her own home – which is her right – and other such reasons.

It should be noted that your living apart from them does not mean that you should not ask about them, or meet their needs or honour them. Rather these are duties which you owe them, especially now that you are an adult. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour.

24. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: ‘My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young’”

[al-Isra’ 17:23, 24]

Honouring one’s parents opens the door to Paradise, so strive to please them and treat them kindly, and do not upset them.

And Allaah knows best.