

THEY ONCE CARED FOR YOU,
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO HONOR THEM.

When Your Parents Grow Old

SERVING THEM WITH
LOVE, MERCY, AND PATIENCE

“

AND YOUR LORD
HAS COMMANDED
THAT YOU WORSHIP
NONE BUT HIM AND
TO TREAT YOUR
PARENTS WITH
EXCELLENCE.”

— QUR'AN 17:23



HONOR THEM
TODAY.
BEFORE TIME
RUNS OUT.



SERVE THEM
WITH LOVE



BE PATIENT
AND KIND



SEEK ALLAH'S
PLEASURE



STRENGTHEN
FAMILY TIES



EARN REWARD
THAT LASTS



PREPARE FOR
THE HEREAFTER

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Serving Them with Love, Mercy, and Patience

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be excellent to parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but speak to them a noble word."

— Sūrah al-Isrā' 17:23

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Qur'anic meanings and hadith translations are the author's renderings, presented for reflection. Readers are encouraged to return to the original sources and qualified scholars for precise wording and rulings.

This book offers compassionate, faith-based guidance on caring for elderly parents. It is not a substitute for medical, legal, or professional care advice.

First edition.

*For every son and daughter who ever sat beside an ageing
parent
and quietly wondered if they were doing enough.*

You are.

*Wa qaḍā rabbuka allā taʿbudū illā iyyāhu wa
bi-l-wālidayni iḥsānā.*

*"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him
and that you be excellent to parents."*

Sūrah al-Isrā' 17:23

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INTRODUCTION

One More Ordinary Day

Imagine that tomorrow you receive one more ordinary day with your parents.

Not a grand occasion. Not a birthday or an Eid or a milestone anyone photographs. Just an ordinary Tuesday. Your mother sitting in her chair the way she always does, the television murmuring in the background, her hands folded in her lap. Your father at the kitchen table with his tea, the same cup, the same chair, the same unhurried way of stirring. A Tuesday so unremarkable you might not even remember it.

Now imagine that you know — as you sit with them that afternoon, as the light fades and the call to Maghrib drifts through the window — that this is the last such Tuesday you will ever have. That these particular hands, this particular voice, this particular warmth will not be here next week.

What would you do differently? What would you say? Would you put the phone away? Would you stay a little longer? Would you finally ask the question you have been meaning to ask for years —

the one about where he grew up, about what she dreamed of, about who they were before they became your parents?

Most of us do not live that Tuesday with that awareness. We live it as if there will be a hundred more exactly like it. We are distracted, busy, tired, sometimes impatient. We answer the question briefly. We promise we will visit soon. We mean to call but the week disappears. And then, one day — in a way no one is ever fully prepared for — there are no more Tuesdays.

This book exists because of that gap between the Tuesday we live and the Tuesday we would live if we truly understood what we had.

The Qur'an places the command to honour our parents immediately after the command to worship Allah alone — not in a secondary chapter, not as an afterthought, but in the same breath as the greatest obligation a human being carries. This is not coincidence. It is a signal about the weight of this relationship, the closeness of its connection to our standing before Allah, and the urgency of not wasting the time we have been given.

QUR'ĀN

Wa qaḍā rabbuka allā ta'budū illā iyyāhu wa bi-l-wālidayni iḥsānā. Immā yablughanna 'indaka l-kibara aḥaduhumā aw kilāhumā fa-lā taqul lahumā uffin wa lā tanharhumā wa qul lahumā qawlan karīmā.

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be excellent to parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them even a word of contempt, nor repel them, but speak to them a noble word."

— Sūrah al-Isrā' 17:23

Notice the precision of this verse. Allah does not merely say 'be kind to your parents.' He says: be excellent — the Arabic word is *iḥsān*, a word that means to do something in the most beautiful possible way, to give more than is required, to do good as if you can see Allah watching. And He specifies the moment this excellence is most urgently needed: when they reach old age with you. When they become slower, more dependent, more repetitive. When caring for them is no longer easy or convenient. That is precisely when Allah calls for excellence.

This book is a companion for that season. It is written for adult sons and daughters whose parents are entering the evening of their lives — who may already be caring for an ageing mother or father, or who can feel that season approaching and want to meet it with grace. It is for those who love their parents deeply but sometimes feel overwhelmed, impatient, or afraid. It is for those who carry old

wounds from childhood and wonder how to honour someone who also hurt them. It is for those who live far away and carry the guilt of distance. It is for those who simply do not want to look back one day with regret.

The goal of every page is transformation — not guilt. You will not find condemnation here, only compassion and clarity. You will find the Qur'an and the Sunnah brought alive in the context of real family life. You will find practical steps grounded in spiritual depth. And you will find, again and again, the reminder that what you do for your parents in these years is not merely a family obligation. It is an act of worship. It is one of the most direct paths to the pleasure of Allah available to you right now.

Begin by calling them. Before you read another page — send a message, make a call, let them hear your voice. Because every ordinary Tuesday is a gift. And we never know which one is the last.

PART ONE

Understanding the Gift Allah Gave You

*Before we can serve them well, we must first see them
rightly.*

CHAPTER ONE

The Status of Parents in Islam

The greatest act of worship after Tawheed

"Shall I inform you of the greatest of major sins? Associating partners with Allah, and being undutiful to parents."

— Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Bilal was thirty-seven years old, a project manager with a mortgage and three children of his own, when his father was diagnosed with Parkinson's. The diagnosis arrived on a Thursday afternoon and by Thursday evening, Bilal was sitting in his car in the hospital car park, hands on the steering wheel, unable to move. Not because he did not love his father — he loved him fiercely — but because he suddenly saw the future laid out before him: the progression, the care, the years of a disease that only moved in one direction. And he felt, beneath the love, something he was ashamed to name: a fear that he was not ready for what was coming.

What brought him back into himself, he told me later, was a question that rose from somewhere deep in his faith: what does

Allah say about this? Because if there was a command — a clear, weighty, divinely-issued command about his obligation to his father — then the fear became irrelevant. You do not wait to feel ready to obey what Allah has commanded. You simply begin.

Immediately After Tawheed

The Qur'an places the obligation to honour parents in a position that no reader of the Arabic can mistake. In Sūrah al-Isrā', the commands begin with the absolute prohibition of worshipping any partner beside Allah — and then immediately, in the very next clause, comes the command regarding parents. *Birr al-wālidayn* — excellence to parents — is listed as the first specific human obligation after the foundational obligation of Tawhīd itself.

This is not the only time the Qur'an makes this connection. In Sūrah Luqmān, the great sage instructs his son: 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents.' In Sūrah an-Nisā', Allah commands worship of Him alone 'and to parents, good treatment.' Again and again, in multiple sūrahs, the Qur'an pairs these two obligations — as though they are, in some sense, part of the same fabric.

The scholars of tafsīr explain this pairing by pointing to the nature of the relationship between a child and parents. Just as Allah is the one who brought us into existence from nothing, sustained us before we could sustain ourselves, and loved us before we had done anything to deserve it — so our parents, on the human level, are the ones through whom we came into existence, who sustained us