

How Do Muslims Treat the Elderly?



In the Islamic world, one rarely finds “old people’s homes.” The strain of caring for one’s parents in this most difficult time of their lives is considered an honor and a blessing and an opportunity for great spiritual growth. In Islam, it is not enough that we only pray for our parents, but we should act with limitless compassion, remembering that when we were helpless children, they preferred us to themselves. Mothers are particularly honored. When Muslim parents reach old age, they are treated mercifully, with kindness and selflessness.

In Islam, serving one’s parents is a duty second to prayer, and it is their right to expect it. It is considered despicable to express any irritation when, through no fault of their own, the old become difficult.

God has said:

“Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect, or scold them, but say a generous word to them. And act humbly to them in mercy, and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy on them, since they cared for me when I was small.’” (Quran 17:23-24)