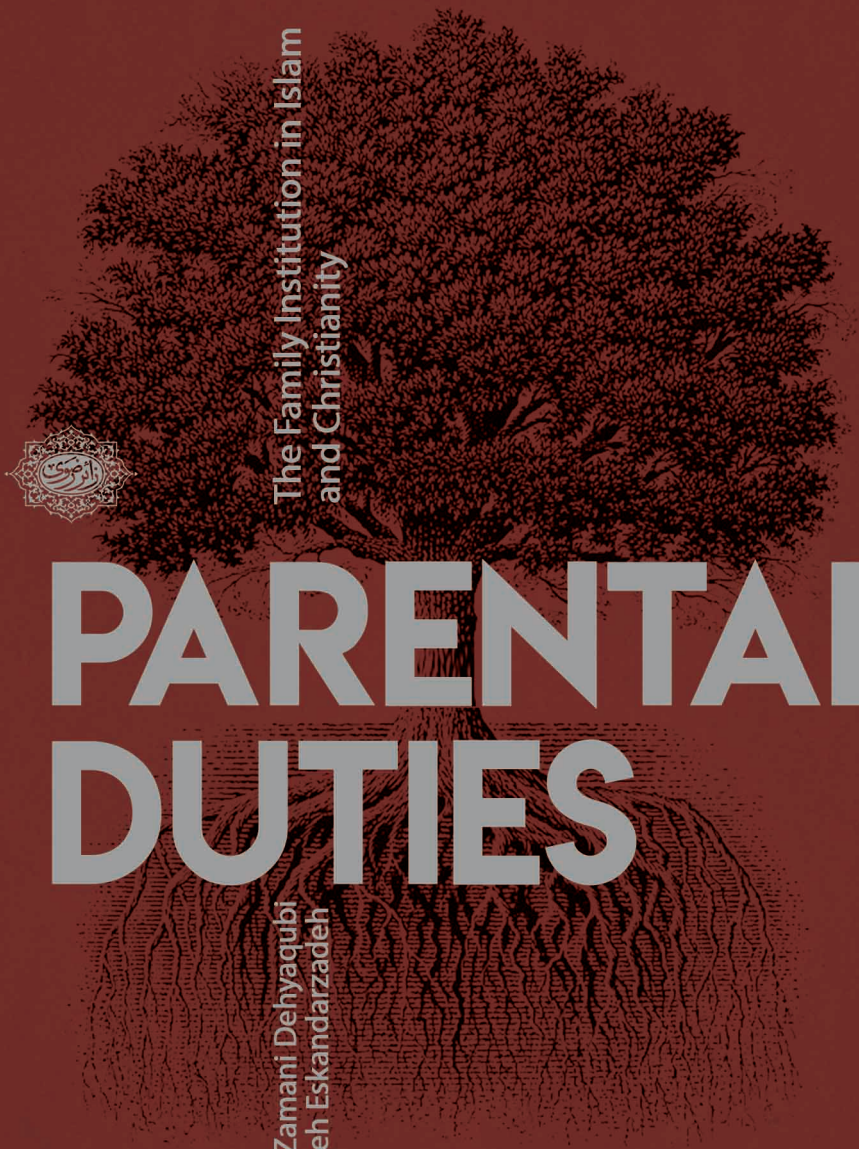
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03

The Family Institution in Islam and Christianity



PARENTAL DUTIES

Abbas Zamani Dehyaqubi
Elaheh Eskandarzadeh



IN THE NAME OF GOD

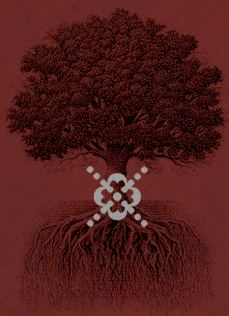
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Abbas Zamani Dehyaqubi
Elaheh Eskandarzadeh

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Publisher's word.....10
Preface.....14
Introduction.....23
Terminology.....27
The importance and value of the child.....29
Childbearing.....29
The characteristics of children.....33
Christianity.....34
Good characteristics.....34
Reproached characteristics.....35
Islam.....36
Good characteristics.....36
The adornment of the world.....38
The delight of the eye.....39
A helping hand.....39
A fragrant flower.....39
The enjoyment of worldly life.....39
A means of testing.....40
Reproached characteristics.....41
The rights of the child.....41

The right of having a meritorious father or mother.....42
Christianity.....42
Islam.....43
The right to live.....44
The right of freedom.....45
Choosing a good name.....46
Breastfeeding.....47
Affection.....49
Christianity.....50
Islam.....51
Kissing.....53
Education and upbringing.....54
The importance of upbringing.....55
Christianity.....55
Islam.....57
Individual upbringing.....59
Christianity.....59
Islam.....59
Social upbringing.....60
Christianity.....61
Islam.....62
Religious upbringing.....64
Christianity.....65

Islam.....67
Sexual education.....70
Christianity.....70
Islam.....71
The role of forbearance and harshness in upbringing.....72
Christianity.....72
Islam.....75
Education.....79
Nutrition, hygiene and adornment.....80
Providing the living expenses for the child.....81
Christianity.....81
Islam.....83
Marriage.....85
Christianity.....85
Islam.....86
Fairness between the children.....87
Respect and honour.....90
Christianity.....91
Islam.....91
Fulfillment of one's promises.....92
Christianity.....92
Islam.....93

Making one's child happy.....94
Playing.....95
Praying.....97
Consequences of protecting children's rights.....98
Christianity.....99
Parent's contentment.....99
The way to life.....100
Parents' peace of mind.....101
Islam.....102
Spiritual wealth.....102
Parents' strength.....104
The parent's helper.....105
Inheritor.....105
The parent's peace of mind.....107
Salvation from Hellfire.....107
Long life.....108
Forgiveness of sins.....108
Disadvantages of failing to honour the child's position in the family.....108
Christianity.....109
Islam.....109
Envy and enmity.....109
Change in character.....110

God's wrath.....110

Hellfire.....111

Conclusion.....112

Conclusion of the importance and value of the child.....113

Conclusion of the rights of children.....114

Conclusion of the consequences of protecting children's rights.....119

Conclusion of the disadvantages of failing to honour the child's position in the family.....120

Arabic transliteration guide.....122

References.....123

Publisher's word

In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Compassionate

'Abdullāh bin Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī narrates that Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him) has said, 'May God have mercy on the one who revives our tenets.' I then asked him, 'How can one revive your tenets?' 'Through learning our knowledge and teaching it to others; If people find out about the merits of our words, they will certainly follow us', the Imam (pbuh) replied.

'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (pbuh), vol 1, p 307

One of the great forms of God's grace and kindness toward us is His bestowal of the Infallible Imams (pbut) upon us so that we may learn how to lead a Godly life through observing their way of life and eventually achieve eternal prosperity through practising their valuable instructions.

The city of Mashhad is a piece of heaven as it is home to the son of the Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) who is the eighth star in the sky of Imamate. Every year millions of passionate pilgrims from around the world and other parts of Iran come to this spiritual sanctuary in order to quench the thirst of their souls by drinking from the limpid spring of the guidelines of

the Infallible Imams (pbut).

Each one of those serving at the Holy Shrine of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) is in one way or the other serving the respected pilgrims of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) so that such they may make their pilgrimage with peace of mind whilst being able to benefit from this heavenly shrine.

In line with the above, the Office for the Management of Foreign Pilgrims at the Holy Shrine of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) has also been making every effort to introduce in various ways the way of life of *Ahl al-Bayt (pbut)* – and that of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) in particular – to the followers and devotees of this doctrine.

The measures taken by this office are in line with propagating the Islamic civilisation and culture appropriate to the needs and requirements of non-Iranian pilgrims in order to provide them with insight and spiritual growth. Such measures take place in conjunction with the remarks made by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the instructions given by the custodian of the Holy Shrine of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) while at the same time taking into account the provisions stipulated in the Twenty-year Outlook Document of the Holy Shrine of Imam Riḍā (pbuh).

Some of the examples of the efforts made by this office in line with serving the non-Iranian pilgrims of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) in the international sphere are as follows:

1. Holding special cultural programmes
2. Holding regular seminars on Islamic knowledge known as 'Circles of Knowledge'

3. Holding academic conferences
4. Holding educational classes and workshops
5. Holding cultural competitions and contests
6. Holding poetry readings
7. Holding conversion ceremonies for new converts to Islam
8. Responding to letters received from pilgrims
9. Dispatching books and other cultural products to all over the world
10. Responding to religious enquiries
11. Offering live internet interaction at Razavi Talk
12. Publishing the best of Islamic literature in several languages in the form of authored and translated books

It has been for some time that the call of Islam is echoing in every corner of the world with the hope of bringing people back to the truth to which they have been a stranger while at the same time inclinations towards Islam and the tendency of hearts towards seeking the truth is growing rapidly throughout the world.

We hope that the seekers of truth would find this book a useful and informative read and that it would be a step in the right direction as far as increasing the knowledge of pilgrims and devotees of the Infallible Imams (pbut) are concerned. Finally, we hope that this work would bring about the pleasure and satisfaction of the Glorious God.

O' God, bless Muḥammad and Muḥammad's Household, provide me with a sound guidance which I seek not to replace, a path of truth from which I swerve not, and an intention of right conduct in which I have no doubts! Let me live so long as my life is spent in obeying you.

The Management of Foreign Pilgrims

Preface

From clay, God created an exquisite sculpture and breathed into it, and so man was created. As God found the man alone, He sculpted a charming figure, breathed into it, and the woman was created. The two were drawn to each other. The man asked God to allow them to be together and God agreed; thus love was created and the foundation of the family was formed. The man and woman had children whom they loved, and their love was reciprocated; thus parental love was created. The family gradually grew larger; children had their own children; some were named grandfathers and grandmothers, some uncles and aunts, and so on, and thus relatives came to exist. Over time families grew in number, their relationships became more complicated, and family as an institution assumed a pivotal function in the life of mankind. On the other hand, at times disagreements emerged between family members and the need arose to establish laws to govern the relationships between them.

In order to preserve the institution of the family, God sent prophets to grant mankind the gift of His commands, amongst whom Prophets Muḥammad and Jesus Christ (pbut) presented a golden recipe for saving mankind and protecting the family's position.

Throughout history, the family has generally managed to main-

tain its function and significance, paving the way for the advancement and progress of mankind and coming to its aid in every difficulty. Nevertheless, ever since humanity came to learn about modernity, the foundation of the family has faced serious threats as relationships between the family members have grown weaker and weaker. Parents do not find enough time to dedicate to their children so that they would receive the attention they deserve. The children too refuse to acknowledge their parents' position. The relationship between spouses has also suffered; accordingly, the desire to form and start a family has subsided in human societies, being replaced instead by illegitimate models of life. The void resulting from the absence of children is gradually being filled by pets. Furthermore, the connections between relatives and members of a family are being severed. This pitiful situation is becoming worse and worse every day, to the extent that certain societies are even finding their very existence in jeopardy as fewer men and women tend to form families and fewer children step into this world.

In order to get through this self-inflicted crisis, mankind began to formulate laws and regulations to preserve the family's foundation. Factual experience, however, has shown that sometimes such laws yield opposite effects or fail to alleviate the intensity of the family crisis effectively and for extended periods of time, which in turn indicates that to overcome this human challenge which intensifies on a daily basis one has no choice but to return to the teachings of divine religions.

On the other hand, bodies of Western propaganda and extremist Christians strive day after day to manufacture a false image of Islam for their audience, constantly suggesting to them that Islamic teachings regarding the family are built upon a patriar-

chal, strict, and violent structure, whereas such an intentionally fabricated outlook has nothing to do with the actual teachings of Islam with respect to the family.

Therefore, it was decided that through scientific research we study the viewpoints of Islamic and Christian scriptures concerning the position and significance of the family as well as the mutual rights of its members, analysing the religious teachings from their origins and sources.

The matter dealt with in the present research is the position of and mutual rights within the family from the viewpoints of Islamic and Christian scriptures.

The scriptures of the two religions in question comprise the scope of the present work. It is worth noting that the only revealed, sacred sources in Christianity are the 'Two Testaments', or the 'Holy Bible', which is composed of two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The former contains 39 books, divided into three parts: the historical books, the 'wisdom' books, and the prophets, and the latter is composed of 27 books. According to Christians, these 66 books together have been compiled by 40 prophets or writers of Revelation within 1500 years, affirmed by the Holy Spirit, and are regarded as the legacy of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments.

It must be noted that although Christians do not deem it obligatory to follow the faith of the Old Testament, it does not undermine its divine and ethical worth. According to the New Testament, in a letter to his student Timothy, Paul declares that the Old Testament is the word of God: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting

and training in righteousness'[1] .The book *The Teachings of the Catholic Church* also states:

> The Old Testament is an inseparable part of the Bible. Its books are the revealed words of God and are of eternal worth, for the old covenant has never been nullified. … The Church has always opposed the conception that the Old Testament must be rejected due to the fact that it has been discredited by the New Testament (Marcionism)… as an old saying goes, 'The New Testament is implied in the Old, and the Old Testament is manifested in the New.'[2]

Christians regard the Two Testaments – the Holy Bible – as revealed words of God, and it is the old and immutable belief of the church that the Bible is faultless,[3] which is emphasised by the theologians of the Protestant Church as well. It is declared in the Chicago Statement:

> 'The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. … Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.'[4]

In Islam the Qur'an is regarded as the most important of the

1. *The Bible*, 2 Timothy 3:16.
2. *Teachings of the Catholic Church*, Articles 121-129.
3. From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an, nevertheless, there are parts of the Two Testaments that shine with the light of guidance and contain the commands of God. Furthermore, the Qur'an confirms the truth of the divine books before it (3): 50; on the other hand, it reproaches Jews for altering its words and presenting improper interpretations (4): 46. Moreover, God states in the Qur'an that People of the Book omitted and concealed portions of their holy books (2): 159 and made an even graver mistake as they fabricated many verses and introduced them to others as words of God (2): 79. Furthermore, the numerous contradictions between words of the Qur'an and those of the Two Testaments verifies the fact that although parts of the Testaments are confirmed by the Qur'an, there are portions of them that are not.
4. See: The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

scriptures, as it is dictated by God to His Prophet through the Angel of Revelation, as it states:

> "This is indeed [a Book] sent down by the Lord of all the worlds, brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit upon your heart."[1]

The Holy Qur'an was sent down to the noble Prophet of Islam (pbuh & hh) in a period of 23 years. According to Islamic teachings, the Qur'an is a perfectly flawless book, all of its words and contents being the direct and exact word of God. In the Qur'an, God states:

> "Indeed We have sent down the Reminder [that is, the Qur'an], and indeed We will preserve it."[2]

He has also challenged all mankind:

> "And if you are in doubt concerning what We have sent down to Our servant, then bring a Sūrah (chapter) like it, and invoke your helpers besides God, should you be truthful."[3]

The second to Islamic scriptures are the traditions and narrations reported from the Prophet Muḥammad and members of his household (pbut), which are only considered authentic, of course, if they are ascribed to one of the fourteen Infallibles (pbut) by proper proof and evidence. Based on Islamic teachings, the fourteen Infallibles (pbut) are sources of Revelation,[4] faultless

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (26) :192-194.
2. Ibid (15):9.
3. Ibid (2):23.
4. "We are the Prophet's household and descendants. It was in our homes that Revelation was sent down, and it is through us that prophetic knowledge reaches people." *Al-Kāfī*, vol 1, p 39.

and without any sins or mistakes in their words and actions.[1] Their traditions are deemed authentic and valid and are regarded as Islamic scriptures and sacred, authentic texts after the Noble Qur'an.[2] The Holy Qur'an also commands people to obey the words of the Prophet of Islam (pbuh & hh): "Take whatever the Apostle gives you, and relinquish whatever he forbids you."[3]

After himself, the Noble Prophet (pbuh & hh) also leaves Muslims two authentic sources: the Book of God and his Household, asserting that one shall never stray if they cling to them.[4]

Traditions narrated from the fourteen Infallibles (pbut) were stated in the period between the first year of the appointment of Prophet Muḥammad by God (13 AH) and year 260 AH in which the Occultation of Imam Mahdī (may God hasten his advent) began and were compiled in tradition or *ḥadīth* corpuses. In the present work, the researchers have done extensive research in the scriptures of Islam and Christianity and have attempted to provide a relatively comprehensive clarification of the content presented in the Old and New Testaments as well as in the Qur'an and Islamic traditions with respect to the subject under discussion.

The present work's method of research is based on library studies and its scope is limited to the scriptures of the aforementioned religions. Citation is based on the "direct relation" method, discussing only verses and traditions that directly offer teachings regarding the family.

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1. *Kashf al-Murād fī Sharḥ Tajrīd al-I'tiqād*, p 471.
2. See: *Usūl al-Fiqh*, vol 2, pp 63-70.
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (59): 7.
4. «إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا، كِتَابَ اللهِ وَ عِتْرَتِي؛ أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَ إِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ» – *Al-Kāfī*, vol 1, p 294 – *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, vol 5, p 45 – *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol 5, pp 183, 189.

In order to maintain scientific fairness in the present work, Christian research centers were appointed to extract verses from the Testaments. With regard to this matter, highly valuable resources in the English language have indexed all verses of the Holy Bible in various fields; such resources include the following websites: www.biblestudytools.com, www.openbible.info, www.bible.knowing-jesus.com, etc., which skillfully extracted all verses related to the subtopics discussed in the present work, thoroughly indexing the Testaments in very specific subjects and details. Thousands of indices and subjects were extracted from the Scriptures which may be taken into consideration as a trustworthy source. Furthermore, for every subject discussed in the present research several scientific articles and specialised books have been studied in detail, from which the verses in question have been extracted. These research sources have been cited in the present work.

This piece of writing aims to review and compare the teachings of Islam and Christianity regarding the subject of the family. It does not seek to put forward new opinions regarding the concept of family in religions; rather, what is intended is merely to undertake a comparison and review of the ethical teachings in Islamic and Christian scriptures with respect to the significance and position of the family, the dos and don'ts, mutual ethical rights, as well as the results of observing and the consequences of disregarding mutual rights within the family. We intend to study the degree of importance and attention granted to the subject of the family by Islamic and Christian scriptures.

The present work discusses some of the most significant fields of study with respect to the family, including the rights of parents, the rights of children, the rights of either spouse, the rights of

relatives, and the position of the institution of the family.

A group of expert, skillful teachers and researchers in the fields of Islamic and Christian studies have authored the present work, the result of whose efforts has been the creation of the first work presenting a comparative study concerning the mutual rights within the family in the scriptures of Islam and Christianity. The present work has been organised in six volumes, the titles and authors of each of which are as follows:

SERIES TITLE: The Family Institution in Islam and Christianity

- *The Nuclear Family in Islam and Christianity*, Yasser Abuzadeh Gataabi
- *Filial Duties in Islamic and Christian Scriptures*, Abbas Zamani Dehyaqubi
- *Parental Duties in Islamic and Christian Scriptures*, Abbas Zamani Dehyaqubi, Elaheh Eskandarzadeh
- *Husbandly Duties in Islam and Christianity*, Mohammad Mahdi Kazemi
- *Relatives in Islamic and Christian Holy Texts*, Morteza Yeganeh Amiri
- *Interpersonal Relationships in Islamic Traditions*, Hossein Ansari Pour

At the end, we deem it necessary to express our gratitude and appreciation to the following individuals: the authors and translators whose hard work made this happen:

Sheikh Hossein Ansari Pour who, in addition to authoring one of the volumes of the present work, undertook the task of editing all the volumes.

Our dear brother Mr. Abbas Zamani who oversaw the authoring of the present work and our dear sister Ms. Qabuli who oversaw and proofread the translation of the present work.

The prominent lecturer Ḥujjat al-Islam wa al-Muslimīn Sahhaf Kashani to whose scientific supervision and guidance we owe this work's strength.

We pray to the Creator of the home and the family for the ever-increasing success and achievement of all our colleagues and companions.

Dr. Hojjat Modarresi

Introduction

The relationship between parents and children has been amongst the issues taken into consideration in all periods of history of human life and by some means children's upbringing has been the main apprehension of parents. In each period, different societies have taken their own approaches to the relationship between parents and children. Sometimes, societies brought themselves to the verge of collapse through adopting wrong approaches emanated from a lack of recognition towards the existential essence of the family roles. On the contrary, some societies have adopted a correct behavioural approach through referring to the individuals who have been well-aware of different dimensions of the family; as a result of which, they could develop themselves and create great civilisations by forming healthy families.

This book has concentrated its efforts on the Holy Scriptures of Islam and Christianity to examine the position of the child and the rights and duties cited for them towards their parents. Eventually, we would gain an accurate understanding of the child's position in these two divine religions and can take advantage of them to make the family institution more and more warm and friendly.

In the process of authoring this book, it has been attempted to minutely examine the whole contents of each of the two reli-

gions and to cite every single holy text that propounds an issue even implicitly. What has been tried to be observed in examining the Holy Scriptures of Islam and Christianity is the principle of equity in order that the slightest negligence not to be shown towards either of the two religions.

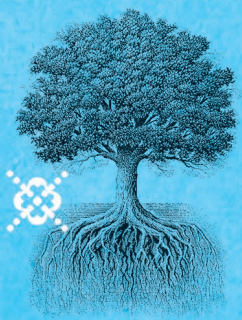
Before beginning the book, it behoves me to thank God, the Almighty, for bestowing upon me the blessing of authoring this work. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Sheikh Hojjat Modarresi who paved the way for bringing out this work. I would also acknowledge my sympathetic spouse who helped me in writing this book and in preparing the ground for a much more minute study in spite of being so busy.

This work is a gift dedicated to the holy Shrine of Imam Riḍā (pbuh) and I hope his holiness would be pleased with the results.

03

The Family Institution in Islam and Christianity

PARENTAL DUTIES



Abbas Zamani Dehyaqubi
Elaheh Eskandarzadeh

Terminology

'Child' lexically means, 'the son or daughter of a man or woman related to themselves'. In addition to the cited lexical meaning that has been considered as the biological child, there are various cases that the term 'child' is figuratively applied to. For instance, it applies to a disciple who is gaining knowledge from a teacher as a result of which the relationship between them becomes so close that they spend most of their time together. Another example is when someone adopts a child and shows them so much affection that they treat them as if they were children of their own. Sometimes, this term applies to the devotees of an individual who try to follow [the footsteps of] their spiritual leader in morals, way of conduct and behaviour.

Different terms are used for child and children in the Holy Scriptures of Islam and Christianity. In the following, we refer to the terms of the utmost importance:

The most important terms relevant to 'child' that has been employed in the English version of Bible are as follows:

The Bible has broadly used the term 'בְּנֵיכֶם: Children'[1] for conveying the concept of child. Although in some cases according to the verses only a single gender of children is meant, the Bi-

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (14): 115; 'The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.'

ble has specifically employed the word 'בֵּן equivalent to bê or Son[1]' for the male child and the word 'בַּת- equivalent to bath or Daughter'[2] for the female one. When it comes to the descendants, usually the word 'Seed'[3] and sometimes words like 'offspring'[4] are employed in the Bible.

The most important Arabic terms employed with the meaning of child in the Islamic Holy Scriptures are 'Ibn' and 'Bint'. The word 'Ibn'[5] with the plural form of 'Abnā'[6] means a male child. The term 'Banīn' is the plural form of the [Arabic] word 'Ibn'. Although, in some cases, it is broadly employed with the meaning of child[7], sometimes male children are also meant by it.[8] 'Bint'[9] with the plural form 'Banāt'[10] is applied to the female child.

Walad: The term 'Walad'[11] generally means a child, the concept of the child, and 'Awlād'[12] is the plural form of it.

Dhurrīyyah or Progeny: The term progeny is applied to the

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 19:13: 'A foolish son is the calamity of his father.'
2. Ibid, Genesis 26:34: 'And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite.'
3. Ibid, Genesis 9:9: 'And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you.'
4. Ibid, Jacob 5:25: 'Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.'
5. *The Holy Qur'an* (11): 45: 'My Lord! My son is indeed from my family.'; ﴿رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي﴾.
6. Ibid, (2): 49: 'slaughtered your sons'; ﴿يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ﴾.
7. Ibid, (16): 72: 'and appointed for you, from your mates, children'.﴿وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُم بَنِينَ﴾.
8. Ibid, (37):153; ﴿أَصْطَفَى الْبَناتِ عَلَى الْبَنِين﴾; 'Has he preferred daughters to sons?'
9. Ibid, (66): 12; ﴿وَ مَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَها فَنَفَخْنا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنا﴾.
'And Mary, daughter of Imran, who guarded the chastity of her womb, so We breathed into it of Our spirit.'
10. Ibid, (33): 59;﴿يا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْواجِكَ وَ بَناتِكَ﴾.
11. Ibid, (3): 47; 'She said, "My Lord, how shall I have a child"'; «قالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ».
12. Ibid, (17): 31; ﴿وَ لا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلاقٍ﴾.

situation where the whole generation, including children and grandchildren, is intended.

The importance and value of the child

Whatever the method of upbringing, the main issue of the presence and existence of a child has been noteworthy and of high and great value. Some societies consider children valuable for income production in future while some others find their importance in defending their own homeland and descendants. These issues are amongst the most preliminary factors of a child's value in societies.

Similar to all other societies, the importance of children has been also paid attention to in the Islamic and Christian societies; nevertheless, the important point that clearly differentiates them from other ideologies and communities is the approach adopted by these two religions towards this issue. Regarding the importance of the child, each of the two religions has mentioned some points; some of them they both share, but some are different. In the following, those of paramount importance are touched upon:

Childbearing

Although the matter of childbearing may be taken for granted in many families as an indispensable part of their culture, nowadays it has faded into insignificance particularly in Western and European societies. Some couples prefer not to have a child. This issue may bring them a two-person happiness in the short term, but as time passes it would bring them the feeling of loneliness and monotony and would gradually affect their life.

Regarding the significance of the child, the first point taken into consideration by all religions is recommendation of childbearing. Each religion has cited manifold reasons for it. One of the common reasons amongst all religions is childbearing with the aim of extending the family and the number of the believers of that religion. This issue has also been paid attention to in the Holy Scriptures of Islam and Christianity and most religions, especially divine ones, have noticed it. All believers are called to expand and increase their population to be able to protect their religion and faith and to fulfil their needs with the help of one another.

In the Bible, having a large number of descendants is an indication of God's blessing and mercy upon an individual. According to the Book of Genesis, when God wants to bestow [an] honour upon prophet Abraham, He has given him good news of a great number of descendants saying, 'And make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.'[1]

Two approaches towards the child have been pursued by the Bible. One approach pertains to the Old Testament and encourages family formation and childbearing, stating, 'Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.'[2] Although the other approach—that we have been witness to in the New Testament—recommends respecting one's parents, it offers no advice in particular for family formation and even praises celibacy in some cases.

In a case, Saint Paul considers celibacy as a factor in proximity

1. *The Bible*, Genesis 22:17.
2. Ibid, Jeremiah 29:6.

to God and represents marriage as an obstacle towards the affinity with God in his sermon, saying, 'I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.'[1]

The issue of celibacy proves highly significant for Saint Paul, in so far as he deems it God's favours. He recommends marriage merely for deliverance from the fire of lust and advises the singles and widows to remain celibate and it would be better for them: 'I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried [a] and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.'[2]

Thus, no verse of the New Testament explicitly calls on childbearing.

Having a great number of children is also considered as one of God's favours in the Qur'an[3] and procreation is amongst the goals of marriage in Islam.[4] This issue has been highly recom-

1. *The Bible*, 1 Corinthians 7:32-34.
2. Ibid, 7:7-9.
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (71):12: 'and aid you with wealth and sons'; ﴿وَ يُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوالٍ وَ بَنِينَ﴾
4. Ibid (16): 72: 'God made for you mates from your own selves and appointed for you, from your mates, children and grandchildren'; ﴿وَ اللهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْواجاً وَ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْواجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَ حَفَدَةً﴾

mended in the Islamic teachings, in so far as the holy Prophet (pbuh & hh) has said in this regard, 'Marry, beget offspring, multiply community so that I would feel proud of the great number of my community and even the miscarried fetus on the Day of Resurrection.'[1]

One of the blessings and good news granted to Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has been having abundant and blessed descendants. The Prophet (pbuh & hh) had two sons at the beginning of his prophetic mission, but he lost them. When such an incident happened, polytheists of Mecca reprimanded the Prophet (pbuh & hh) for not having a son and called him 'Abtar', i.e., 'the childless one without posterity'. Through revealing Sūrah al-Kawthar to the Prophet), God consoled him and gave him the good news of abundance. Many exegetes have considered the meaning of 'abundance' as 'the great and extended descendants' in this Sūrah.[2] In Sūrah al-Kawthar, God states, 'Indeed We have given you abundance. So pray to your Lord, and sacrifice [the sacrificial camel]. Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity.'[3]

The Holy Qur'an has invited spouses to childbearing and warned those who refuse to have children or even seek abortion for fear of poverty to prohibit these two approaches. Again, the Qur'an makes them remember the blessings of God, reminds them that God has looked on the family with favour and affection and guarantees the sustenance of all the family members, stating, 'Do not kill your children for the fear of penury: We will provide for them and for you. Killing them is indeed a great

1. *Jāmi' al-Akhbār*, p 101; «تَنَاكَحُوا تَنَاسَلُوا تَكَثَّرُوا فَإِنِّي أُبَاهِي بِكُمُ الْأُمَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ لَوْ بِالسَّقْطِ».
2. *Tafsīr al-Mīzān [Al-Mīzān Exegesis]*, vol 20, p 370.
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (108): 1–3.

iniquity.'[1]

Moreover, Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has repeatedly stressed the issue of childbearing. Having called upon believers to bear more children, he expresses pride in the great number of their children.[2] For instance, his holiness has stated, 'Seek a descendant and wish for him, so he is indeed the delight of the eye and the fragrant flower of the heart.'[3]

The characteristics of children

Many verses can be found in the Holy Qur'an and the Bible referring to the significance of the child and the childbearing issue. Some such statements praise the good children as adornments of life in the world and delights of the eye, while some others reproach bad children as a crooked and disobedient generation, unrighteous deeds, and a means of testing.

The purpose of stating such descriptions is exploring various dimensions of having a child and the impacts of their presence in the family. On the one hand, a child can be the cause of honour and delight of the eye for parents and even bring about prosperity to them in the Hereafter. On the other hand, the lack of attention towards them can lead the parents to misery in this world and the Hereafter. In the following, we shall deal with some of the descriptions given for the child.

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1. *The Holy Qur'an* (17): 31.
2. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 20, p 15; «اطْلُبُوا الْوَلَدَ فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِرٌ بِكُمُ الْأُمَمَ غَدا»
'Seek a descendant so indeed I will be proud of your great number of the community on a future day.'
3. *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p 224; «اطْلُبُوا الْوَلَدَ وَ الْتَمِسُوهُ فَإِنَّهُ قُرَّةُ الْعَيْنِ وَ رَيْحَانَةُ الْقَلْب».

Christianity

Good characteristics

Good news: According to a narration from the Torah, 'When the angel gave Sarah the good news that she would bear Isaac, this good news of the child birth made her smile and feel happy.[1] It has been also cited in the Gospel of Luke that an angel told Zachariah, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John … I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.'[2]

Divine bounty: In numerous cases, the Bible has directly and indirectly considered children as blessings bestowed by God. In one of these cases that the Bible has recounted how Jacob and Esau met, Jacob has considered his children as bounties bestowed upon him by God, saying , '"Who are these with you?" he asked. Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."'[3]

Blessing: In the Book of Deuteronomy when prophet Moses wanted to bless his children 'About Asher he said: "Most blessed of sons is Asher; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in oil."'[4]

A crown to the aged: In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon has written, 'Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.'[5]

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1. *The Bible*, Genesis 18: 1-11.
2. Ibid, Luke 1:11-20.
3. Ibid, Genesis 33:5.
4. Ibid, Deuteronomy 33:24.
5. Ibid, Proverbs 17:6.

Father's joy: The Bible has praised the wise child and cited the joy of their parents as the most significant fruits of it. 'The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him.'[1]

Reproached characteristics

In the Bible, some reproached characteristics have been employed for wilful children, including:

Father's grief: In numerous cases, foolish and ignorant children have been reproached in the Bible and they would bring their parents nothing but grief and sorrow.[2]

'To have a fool for a child brings grief; there is no joy for the parent of a godless fool.'[3]

An obstacle to the eternal life: Amongst all the descriptions stated in the Bible, a single statement has been cited in the New Testament that differs from the rest. According to this description, children have been proved an obstacle to the eternal life not in terms of the upbringing aspect but by their existence. It is believed that whoever does not consider their child and family as the enemy cannot be Jesus' follower.

In Matthew chapter 19, it has been first stated that whoever has left them will inherit eternal life. 'And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[e] or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 23:24.
2. Ibid, 19:13: 'A foolish child is a father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof'.; Proverbs 17: 25: 'A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the mother who bore him'.
3. Ibid, 17:21).

much and will inherit eternal life.'[1] If someone shows the slightest affection towards their child, they indeed have not left them, so they will not inherit the eternal life. The 15th chapter of the Gospel of Luke states in a quote attributed to Jesus, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.'[2] These verses do not indicate that a child may prove an obstacle to being Jesus' disciple but they actually use the word 'enemy'. This means that even the slightest affection towards children poses an obstacle to being Jesus' disciple. These two verses are in contradiction to the other verses which speak of showing affection towards children.

Islam

Good characteristics

Good news: **The Qur'an regards the child as a divine good news**. According to the Qur'anic narration on the birth of Isaac, Sarah, prophet Abraham's spouse, always felt enormous sorrow in her heart, although she enjoyed all the possessions of her time and her husband was the leader of a clan. Longing for a child of her own was of the utmost importance to her. This sorrow had sunk deeply in her heart when she reached old age. She used to spend day and night with a desperate craving for having a child. This was until divine angels gave her the good news that she would bear a child: 'We gave her the good news of [the birth of] Isaac, and of Jacob, after Isaac.'[3] She was given the good news of Isaac, and of Jacob after Isaac, which surprised Sarah.

1. *The Bible*, Matthew 19:29.
2. Ibid, Luke 14:26.
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (11): 69–72.

As for Zechariah, when he asked God in solitude in the temple, '"My Lord! Grant me a good offspring from You!" Then, an angel called out to him, "God gives you the good news of John, as a confirmer of a Word of God, eminent and chaste, a prophet, among the righteous."'[1]

Divine bounty: In manifold cases, the Noble Qur'an and traditions have commanded humans to show their gratitude towards God for the bounties bestowed upon them and have deemed it the cause of enjoying more of the bounty and benefiting from it. Showing ingratitude is also considered to be the cause of losing bounties and suffering from severe repercussions.[2]

In the Holy Scriptures of Islam, the principle of having a child and descendants has been introduced amongst the bounties bestowed upon man by God and they are supposed to show gratitude for it. I wonder why they are ungrateful in spite of openly beholding these great bounties. In this regard, the Noble Qur'an has stated, 'God made for you mates from your own selves and appointed for you, from your mates, children and grandchildren, and We provided you with all the good things. What, will they believe in falsehood while they deny the blessing of God?'[3]

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1. *The Holy Qur'an* (3): 38-41: 'Thereat Zechariah supplicated his Lord. He said, "My Lord! Grant me a good offspring from You! Indeed You hear all supplications."* Then the angels called out to him, as he stood praying in the sanctuary: "God gives you the good news of John, as a confirmer of a Word of God, eminent and chaste, a prophet, among the righteous." He said, "My Lord, how shall I have a son while old age has overtaken me and my wife is barren?" He said, "So it is that God does whatever He wishes." He said, "My Lord, grant me a sign." He said, "Your sign is that you will not speak to people for three days except in gestures. And remember Your Lord greatly, and glorify Him morning and evening."'
2. Ibid, Ibrāhīm (14): 7: 'If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing], but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is indeed severe.'
3. Ibid (16): 72.

The adornment of the world

According to the Islamic culture, beauty flows throughout the soul of the universe and whatever exists in this world has one of the dimensions of this concept. Based on this belief, whatever has been issued and created by God is beautiful. Pertaining to this case, the Holy Qur'an states, 'who perfected everything that He created.'[1]

The child is amongst the cases to which the Qur'an refers as the beauty of life: 'Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of the world, but lasting righteous deeds are better with your Lord in reward and better in hope.'[2]

The child would adorn the life of parents which can be discussed from two dimensions. The first clear and obvious dimension is the matter that like wealth which brings peace to the life the child too can play a part in providing such peace. Moreover, the child guarantees extending one's family tree in some way that it per se is an adornment of the human's life as well.

The second dimension which may get much less attention than it deserves is that as long as a family does not have a child, the couple would feel a lack of something. As soon as they have a child, a new vitality would be brought to the family that has been totally unexpected. The husband and wife feel like they have been reborn. The child would actually change the essence of the family. It is in this phase that the family would acquire its main sense and this feeling would grow stronger with the birth of each child.

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1. *The Holy Qur'an* (32): 7.
2. Ibid (18): 46.

The delight of the eye

One of the tender and very beautiful descriptions applied to children in the Qur'an has been cited in the verse 74 of Sūrah al-Furqān, saying, 'And those who say, 'Our Lord! Grant us comfort in our spouses and descendants, and make us imams of the Godwary.'

The above verse states that if children follow the teachings they have learned, take the right path and be steadfast in their faith, they would be the delight of the eye of their parents. Whenever the father and mother behold them, they would forget their grief and sorrows and would be cheerful.

A helping hand

Imam Ḥasan 'Askarī (pbuh) asked someone whether he had a child. He said 'no' in reply. The Imam (pbuh) prayed for him, saying, 'O God bless him with a child to be an aid to him, for what a wonderful aid the child is!'[1]

A fragrant flower

In a tradition from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), the good child is introduced as a sweet smelling flower, stating, 'The righteous child is a fragrant flower from God which has been shared amongst His servants.'[2]

The enjoyment of worldly life

In the Qur'an, the phrase 'the wares of the life of this world' has also been used for children. In the Sūrah Āl 'Imrān has been

1. «اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْهُ وَلَداً يَكُونُ لَهُ عَضُداً فَبِعْمَ الْعَضُدُ الْوَلَدُ».
2. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 358; «الْوَلَدُ الصَّالِحُ رَيْحَانَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَسَمَهَا بَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ».

cited, 'To mankind has been made to seem decorous the love of [worldly] desires, including women and children, accumulated piles of gold and silver, horses of mark, livestock, and farms. Those are the wares of the life of this world; but God—with Him is a good destination.'[1]

'Matā'' equivalent to 'wares' in accordance with the Qur'anic literature is applied to something which is ephemeral and used by humans in [the life of] this world.[2]

In other words, all things in this world are ways and means of achieving the main goal of man's creation which is perfection and eternal Paradise. Means should not be changed into the goal for humans.

A means of testing

A means of testing for parents is the other description applied to children in the Qur'an. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states, 'Know that your possessions and children are only a test, and that God—with Him is a great reward.'[3]

The child is a means of test for parents on every aspect of the relationship between them. This test begins with choosing a suitable spouse before the birth of the child and continues through life. The proper upbringing of the child is a test for parents to specify whether they adequately fulfill their duties or not. Providing for the child's livelihood is a test to specify whether parents are ready to maintain the child's cost of living at any expense or they are careful not to trample over rights of others and

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (3): 14.
2. *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol 2, p 712; «كل ما سبق ذكره مما يستمتع به في الحياة الدنيا ثم يفنى».
'All has been mentioned before and whatever enjoys the living blessing in this world is perished.'
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (8): 28.

prevent any prohibited and impure property from entering the life of the child. The way parents behave towards the child is a test to specify the amount of their affection for them.

Reproached characteristics

In the Islamic sources, some reproached characteristics have been mentioned for wilful children. For instance, the Qur'an has called Noah's son the 'personification of unrighteous conduct' for he had accompanied the idol worshipers. Therefore, the improper conducts had been internalised in him and become part of his nature; 'Said He, "O Noah! Indeed He is not of your family. Indeed he is [personification of] unrighteous conduct."'[1]

According to a narration, Imam 'Alī (pbuh) wrote a letter to his son, Imam Ḥasan (pbuh), to teach him the principles of life. At the opening part of this letter, he reminded Imam Ḥasan of the characteristics which would penetrate inside his soul and afflict his descendant should he be neglectful of them. Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has stated, "To his son who is young, who has the desire of leading the world to sober ways of thinking and better ways of life, a desire which is rather difficult to be achieved, a son, who, is subject to ailments, is surrounded by misfortunes and calamities, has to face oppressions and tyrannies, has often to confront and sometimes to tolerate hypocrisy, deceit, guile, duplicity and treason and who is to end his life in death, is to bear sufferings, is the heir to a person who is dead and gone … ."[2]

The rights of the child

The issue of rights of the child is touched upon after the recog-

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (11): 46.
2. *Nahl al-Balāghah*, letter 31.

nition of the position and significance of them in the family. We are supposed to realise the rights whose observance is an indication of being grateful to God for this great bounty and whose lack of observance is an ingratitude towards God's favour. In the view of the Islamic sources, the lack of observance of a child's rights by the parents can bring God's wrath in its wake. Imam Kāẓim (pbuh) has stated, 'Indeed, nothing like [showing] rage towards the women and children would enrage God.'[1]

The right of having a meritorious father or mother

As soon as an individual decides to get married, the issue of the right of their future children is raised. Many of the moral and physical characteristics of your life partner have a clear and obvious impact on children. Thus, having a spouse who would be meritorious in terms of identity, morality, spirituality, etc is not only a matter of one's choice but it is also amongst the rights of the child who is to be born in future.

Christianity

Although the Bible places no emphasis upon the necessity of meeting religious, moral, identity-related criteria for choosing a meritorious spouse, in order to observe the rights of the children who are to be born in future, one can be aware of the devastating impacts of illegitimate relationships on one's descendants from the contents of the Bible.

According to the Bible, the one illegitimately born has no chance to live righteously and is doomed to misery and death. Sometimes, like the story attributed to [prophet] David and the wife Uriah, the Hittite, they would fall victim to the sin of the

1. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 73; «إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَغْضَبُ بِشَيْءٍ كَغَضَبِهِ لِلنِّسَاءِ وَ الصِّبْيَان».

man and woman.[1] The Bible asserts that there will be no place for them in the assembly of believers should they survive. 'No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even in the tenth generation.'[2] Not only are they incapable of being guided, but there is also no hope for them to be brought up. In the Hebrews, Saint Paul has believed that the one illegitimately born would never be disciplined, stating, 'If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.'[3]

Thus, if one intends to leave noble and ever-increasing descendants and offer them their own affection, they have no choice but to observe legitimate standards in sexual relationships, otherwise it would be injustice to the infant.

Islam

The influence of parents' morality and personality has been paid much attention to in the Islamic scriptures. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has stated, 'Marry among the righteous relations/tribe then indeed blood will tell, what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh.'[4] This is the child's right to have good parents. This is incumbent upon the man and woman to care much about choosing their child's future father and mother. In Islam's view, the principle which is of paramount importance in the competence of an individual is one's faith and morals not the outward beauty, race or colour.[5]

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1. *The Bible*, 2 Samual 16: 12-24.
2. Ibid, Deuteronomy 23:2.
3. Ibid, Hebrews 12:8.
4. *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p 197; «تَزَوَّجُوا فِي الْحُجْزِ الصَّالِحِ فَإِنَّ الْعِرْقَ دَسَّاس».
5. *The Holy Qur'an* (49): 13.

Due to this reason the Holy Qur'an deems the morals and faith the most significant characteristics in choosing the parents of children. It is of such value that in a verse getting married with a faithful slave has been preferred to marrying an unbeliever free-man. Moreover, it has been recommended to consider faith as the main criterion for choosing a spouse.[1]

Regarding this issue, Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has warned us not to be beguiled by the outward beauties and criteria, not to rely on them and to choose a spouse who has good upbringing and morals. A tradition has been quoted from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), 'O people, beware of the manure origin!'[2] He was asked, 'What do you mean by 'the manure origin'? He said in reply, 'A beautiful woman who grew up in a depraved family of a nasty disposition.'

Thus, the first step in observing the rights of the child is one's efforts to choose a good father and mother for them. This choice is of so much importance that it can completely change the direction the child's life takes and bring them a different future.

The right to live

When it is the will of God, the Almighty, that a creature be brought into being, undoubtedly their existence proves to be much more beneficial than their nonexistence and not a single person should dare object to their existence. As long as their life is not a menace to anyone, they should not be deprived of the

1. 'Do not marry idolatresses until they embrace faith. A faithful slave girl is better than an idolatress, though she should impress you. And do not marry [your daughters] to idolaters until they embrace faith. A faithful slave is better than an idolater, though he should impress you. Those invite [others] to the Fire, but God invites to paradise and pardon, by His will, and He clarifies His signs for the people so that they may take admonition.'

2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 332; «أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِيَّاكُمْ وَ خَضْرَاءَ الدِّمَنِ».

right to live, let alone they are young children or embryos.

The Bible has warned the believers not to kill their children. For instance, it is emphasised in the Book of Leviticus, 'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him.'[1]

Islam by no means entitles one to deprive children of this right. The Qur'an admonishes the parents who give in to Satan's temptations: 'Do not kill your children for the fear of penury: We will provide for them and for you. Killing them is indeed a great iniquity.'[2]

After warning against murdering children, the Qur'an assures them of their sustenance and guarantees it. At the end of the verse, it is further emphasised that killing children is 'a great iniquity'; a grave mistake which can probably never be compensated for. Killing the child, whether through abortion or after birth, is a grave mistake that is not compatible with human's great soul. In fact, it changes the human heart into a soulless stone.

The right of freedom

God has created humans free and no one has the right to deprive them of such freedom. Amongst some societies, the father of the family was entitled to deprive his children of their freedom and to sell them as a slave or maid. What has been inferred from the Bible is that this tradition is accepted. In other words, a (Hebrew) father is entitled to sell his child as a male servant or maid.

1. *The Bible*, Leviticus 20:2.
2. *The Holy Qur'an* (17):31.

In this regard, it is stated in the Book of Numbers:

'If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything … If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as male servants do. *If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed.'[1]

In Islam's view, no one has the right of ownership over a freeman. About this, the Commander of the Faithful (pbuh) has stated, 'Do not make yourself a slave of anybody. God has created you a freeman.'[2] Based on Islam, not only has the father no right of ownership over his children, but he has also no right over his children's possessions, even the youngest one's.[3]

Choosing a good name

Individuals usually do not choose their names themselves; it is their parents who choose a name for them before their birth and this name stays with them to the end of their life. Are the father and mother entitled to choose improper and embarrassing names for their children? Although choosing a beautiful name for the child is of paramount significance based on the Islamic sources, it is not recognised as a right for the child in the Bible. Sometimes, even God Himself has decided the name of His chosen ones.

As an example, when God gave prophet Zachariah the good news of the child[birth], He revealed to him, 'O Zechariah! Indeed We give you the good news of a son, whose name is

1. *The Bible*, Exodus 21:2–11.
2. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 31.
3. *Jawāhir al-Kalām*, vol 17, p 276.

"John." Never before have We made anyone his namesake.'[1]

As another case, Messiah's name was revealed to Saint Mary–who was to be his mother–by God. It is stated in the Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 'O Mary, God gives you the good news of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary.'[2] The point which should be taken into consideration when choosing a name is that the name of the child should not subject them to humiliation. From the early days of Islam, this matter has been taken notice of by the great personages of this religion and is deemed the first right for a child. It has been narrated from Imam Kāẓim (pbuh), saying, 'The first reverence a man shows towards his child is to give them a beautiful name; thus, choose a good name for your children.'[3]

In a tradition, Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has explicitly considered choosing a good name for the child as their right, stating, 'The right of the child upon the father is that he should give him a good name.'[4]

Choosing good names has been paid much attention to by Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) that he changed the ugly and indecent names of individuals and even cities with their satisfaction and chose good names for them.[5]

Breastfeeding

After the child is born, their first need is to be fed. God has wisely provided them with a delicious food from their mothers'

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (19):7.
2. Ibid (3):45.
3. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 389; «أَوَّلُ مَا يَبِرُّ الرَّجُلُ وَلَدَهُ أَنْ يُسَمِّيَهُ بِاسْمٍ حَسَنٍ فَلْيُحْسِنْ أَحَدُكُمُ اسْمَ وَلَدِهِ».
4. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Wisdom 399; «حَقُّ الوَلَدِ عَلَى الوالِدِ أن يُحسِنَ اسمَهُ».
5. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 127.

breast to be fed with. This is the best and most nutritious food which can bring the child a healthy growth.[1] However, can the father deprive the child of their mother's milk if the father and mother decide to get divorced after the birth of the child? In the Bible, nothing is mentioned on the right of breastfeeding the child, while it is deemed an inalienable right for the infant and their mother in the Qur'anic literature and not a single person has the right to deprive them of it.

The verse 233 of Sūrah al-Baqarah, which is the most specific verse regarding breastfeeding, states, 'Mothers shall suckle their children for two full years,—that for such as desire to complete the suckling—and on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, in accordance with honourable norms.'

The least period determined by Islam for suckling the infant is twenty one months and it is the infant's inalienable right. If one wants to observe the complete period of breastfeeding, they can continue it for two full years; however, the main point is that if an infant suckles less than twenty one months, they would be oppressed and their right would be overlooked. In this case, Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has stated, 'Suckling is twenty one months, then if it is reduced, it would be an injustice to the child.'[2]

Sometimes, some mothers are deprived of breast-feeding and are not able to do it for one reason or the other; yet, Islam prefers the milk of another mother to the other substitute milks in such cases. Of course, Islam places the emphasis on taking the utmost care in choosing the wet nurse.[3] Regarding this,

1. *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol 2, p 34; 'No milk for the child is better than their mother's milk.' «لَيْسَ لِلصَّبِيِّ لَبَنٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ لَبَنِ أُمِّهِ».
2. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, vol 3, p 475; «الرَّضَاعُ وَاحِدٌ وَ عِشْرُونَ شَهْراً فَمَا نَقَّصَ فَهُوَ جَوْرٌ عَلَى الصَّبِيِّ».
3. A woman paid to give her breast milk to another woman's baby. Longman contemporary.

Imam ʻAlī (pbuh) states, ʻYou should choose a nursemaid for the suckling just as you would choose a spouse for marriage, for the suckling indeed changes the character.'[1]

In the same way that the mother's milk makes her moral attributes and nature firm in the child, another woman's milk infuses that woman's moral attributes and beliefs into the child as well. Thus, for the child to be brought up with good manners and nature, we are supposed to take the utmost care in choosing the wet nurse.

Affection

Feeling affection for the child has been placed within the nature of all creatures of the world. No mother can be found who has no affection for her child. Humans are not excluded from this but what differentiates humans from other creatures is whether this affection is instinctive or conscious. Based on their God-given instinct, all creatures show affection towards their children. Sometimes, this affection is limited to a period of the infant's life. Humans also feels this affection in their heart based on the primordial nature which God has placed within them. This affection, however, would attain its highest value when one feels it wholeheartedly and does not forget it with the lapse of time despite all the thoughts and obstacles. Affection guarantees the family's consolidation.

When affection flows through the family, all family affairs would go on in the best way. It is affection that makes the man motivated enough to work and provide for the family.

It is affection that brings a woman new vitality to clean the

1. *Qurb al-Isnād*, p 93; «تَخَيَّرُوا لِلرَّضَاعِ كَمَا تَتَخَيَّرُونَ لِلنِّكَاحِ فَإِنَّ الرَّضَاعَ يُغَيِّرُ الطِّبَاعَ».

house and prepare delicious foods. It is affection that reinforces the tendency for the children to obey their parents. Through resorting to this vital principle, all family members should make every effort to contribute to the family's success. Thus, parents should take full advantage of this motivating force and overflow their children with love and affection. If parents do not show affection towards their child, they cannot expect their child to be affectionate and obedient. If parents treat their child harshly, the emotional attachments amongst them would weaken. It would be a deadly poison to the family's success.

Christianity

The Bible has emphasised that mothers shall learn to love children. In a letter to his disciple, Saint Paul has laid emphasis on this fact that old women shall teach the younger ones the wisdom to love their husbands and children.[1]

In his letter to Ephesians, Saint Paul has also recommended fathers not to exasperate their children[2] and affectionately make every effort to bring them up. This affection would not only make the child brimful of parent's love but it would also unleash their potential of accepting parents' teachings in full peace. Some instances of such affection come under our notice in the dialogues between parents and the child in the Bible. As an example, the mother of King Lemuel has advised him, 'Listen, my son! Listen, son of my womb! Listen, my son, the answer to my prayers!'[3]

When Jesus Christ went to Judea to propagate his doctrine,

1. *The Bible*, Titus 2:4.
2. Ibid, Ephesians 6:4.
3. Ibid, Proverbs 31:2.

people brought children to him to place his hands on them. His disciples criticised people for doing this, but by watching this Jesus raged at his disciples, saying, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.'[1]

Islam

In the Islamic scriptures, it has been frequently called upon the family members to express affection and show kindness towards one another and so much emphasis has been put on this issue that it cannot be dealt with here.

In the story of prophet Joseph, when Joseph's brothers threw him in the well and told their father, Jacob, that he had been eaten by a wolf, Jacob did not show anger and did not shout at them, but he said, 'Rather your souls have made a matter seem decorous to you. Yet patience is graceful, and God is my resort against what you allege.'[2]

In a tradition, Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has quoted, 'Mūsa bin 'Imrān (pbuh) asked God, "O God! Which deeds are better before you?" God said [in reply], "Loving children; verily I endowed them with [having a disposition towards] My monotheism."'[3]

In the above mentioned relationships, in the Qur'an as well as the other Islamic scriptures, being kind to children has been fre-

1. *The Bible*, Mark 10:13-16.
2. *The Holy Qur'an* (12):18.
3. *Al-Maḥāsin*, vol 1, p 293;
«قَالَ مُوسَى بْنُ عِمْرَانَ ع يَا رَبِّ أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَفْضَلُ عِنْدَكَ فَقَالَ حُبُّ الْأَطْفَالِ فَإِنِّي فَطَرْتُهُمْ عَلَى تَوْحِيدِي».

quently emphasised, and parents have been ordered to observe it. It has been deemed even amongst the best of man's deeds.

From the viewpoint of Islamic sources, we cannot be unkind towards children and expect God to show us great kindness.

Once when Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) was kissing his grandson, Ḥusayn (pbuh), one of his companions who was sitting beside him said, 'I have ten children and yet I have kissed none of them.' His holiness told him, 'Whoever does not have compassion on others would not receive mercy.'[1] In another statement, Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has emphasised that if someone holds their children in great affection, God will definitely have mercy upon them: 'Verily, God, to him belong mighty and majesty, would show mercy upon the man who has a strong love towards his child.'[2] Showing affection towards children and kids is of so much importance that the Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) has deemed it one of the requisites for the true faith, stating, 'The one who does not show compassion towards our young ones and does not revere our adults is not amongst our followers.'[3]

The affection of the Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) towards children was so much that he sometimes let Ibrāhīm and Ḥusayn bin 'Alī (pbuh) sit on his knees and kissed them both; 'As attested by Ibn 'Abbas who said, "I was with the Prophet (pbuh & hh) while his son, Ibrāhīm, was on his left lap and al-Ḥusayn bin 'Alī on his right lap. He once kissed this one and once the other."'[4]

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1. *Rawḍa al-Wā'iẓīn*, vol 2, p 396.
2. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, vol 3, p 482; «إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ لَيَرْحَمُ الرَّجُلَ لِشِدَّةِ حُبِّهِ لِوَلَدِه».
3. *Mishkāt al-Anwār Fī Ghurar al-Akhbār*, p 168; «لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَ لَمْ يُوَقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا».
4. *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib (pbut)*, vol 4, p 81;
«عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَ عَلَى فَخِذِهِ الْأَيْسَرِ ابْنُهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ وَ عَلَى فَخِذِهِ الْأَيْمَنِ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِي وَ هُوَ تَارَةً يُقَبِّلُ هَذَا وَ تَارَةً يُقَبِّلُ هَذَا».

Whenever Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) returned from a journey, children used to gather around him. He used to stop and ask them to climb on him. Some would climb up his arms while some others on his back. Then, he would ask his companions to carry other children. Perhaps, after these incidents, children felt honoured to tell one another, 'The Messenger of God embraced me and put you on his back.' while other children said, 'He asked his companions to carry you on their back.'[1]

Kissing

Perhaps, kissing would be the most significant way of expressing affection towards the child. The Bible has issued no command to kiss children, but in accordance with the Bible traditions parents used to kiss their children whenever they wanted to express their affection towards them. When Jacob decided to migrate to Palestine, Laban, the father of Jacob's spouses, stood up and 'kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them'.[2]

Amongst all the other ways of expressing affection towards children, the Islamic scriptures have highly emphasised kissing them. It is also frequently recommended that believers should kiss their children. As for kissing children, it has been cited in the traditions from the Messenger of God (pbuh & hh), 'The one who kisses his child, God, to Him belongs mighty and majesty, will record for him a good deed.'[3] Or he has also stated, 'The kissing is a good deed and this good deed would be tenfold.'[4] According to another narration, Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has stated, 'Kiss your children, as there would be a rank for

1. *Al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍā'*, vol 3, p 366;
2. *The Bible*, Genesis 31:55.
3. *Wasā'il al-Shī'ā*, vol 21, p 475; *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 49; «مَنْ قَبَّلَ وَلَدَهُ كَتَبَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ لَهُ حَسَنَةً».
4. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 16, p 445; «القُبْلَه حَسنَه و الحَسنَه عَشره».

you in Paradise for every kiss and there is a fifty-hundred-year distance between each pair of ranks.'[1] It is the right of the child to fully quench their thirst for the affection of parents. Sometimes, not only being unkind towards the child but also not expressing affection towards them would bring a good destiny or an eternal misery to parents. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has stated, 'A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said, "I have never kissed a child." When he passed, the Messenger of God said, "This man would verily be amongst the inhabitants of the Fire."'[2]

Moreover, according to the Islamic scriptures, whenever Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) returned from a journey, he would stop out of respect should he come across children on the way. Then, he would order that the children be brought, lifted from the ground and given to him. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) used to embrace some of them and put some others on his shoulders, telling his companions, 'Embrace children and put them on your shoulders.'[3]

The Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) sometimes let Ibrāhīm and Ḥusayn bin 'Alī (pbuh) sit on his lap and kissed them one by one.[4]

Education and upbringing

The upbringing is the cornerstone and foundation of everyone's character. People's personal and social behaviour can be deemed a perfect reflection of their capability to be educated.

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1. *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p 220;«قَبِّلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ بِكُلِّ قُبْلَةٍ دَرَجَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ مَا بَيْنَ كُلِّ دَرَجَتَيْنِ خَمْسمِائَةِ عَامٍ».
2. *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol 8, p 113;
«جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ص فَقَالَ لَهُ مَا قَبَّلْتُ صَبِيّاً قَطُّ فَلَمَّا وَلَّى قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ هَذَا رَجُلٌ عِنْدَنَا أَنَّهُ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ».
3. *Al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍā'*, vol 3, p 366;
كان ﷺ «يقدم من السفر فيتلقّاه الصبيان فيقف لهم ثمّ يأمر بهم فيرفعون إليه ، فيرفع منهم بين يديه ومن خلفه ويأمر أصحابه أن يحملوا بعضهم ، فربما يتفاخر الصبيان بعد ذلك فيقول بعضهم لبعض : حملني رسول الله ﷺ بين يديه وحملك أنت وراءه ، ويقول بعضهم : أمر أصحابه أن يحملوك وراءهم».
4. *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib (pbut)*, vol 4, p 81;

An individual would be an influential force for human society and would contribute to the society's growth in different dimensions should they be brought up well. Such a person can also form and manage a healthy and successful family in smaller dimensions.

The term "upbringing" may not apply to every right of the child which has been so far referred to per se, but each one of them would undoubtedly play a contributory part in the accurate upbringing of the child and would help parents to be successful in the accurate upbringing—that is to say, the upbringing and educating of children would not be solely realised through words or instructions. Sometimes, observing their rights proves to be much more influential than various kinds of education. Pursuing children's duties in indirect ways would help them internalise educational matters.

The importance of upbringing

Christianity

Perhaps it could be said that most of the verses in the Bible which directly deal with the rights of children are concerned with upbringing and edification. In the Bible, childhood is considered as the bedrock of upbringing. In the Book of Proverbs it is stated, 'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.'[1] Upbringing should not be a short-term process. With regard to upbringing, continuation is the key to effectiveness. In the Book of Deuteronomy it is mentioned, 'Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 22:6.

road, when you lie down and when you get up.'[1]

Sometimes the parents may excessively put their children under pressure in the way of their upbringing and edification. The Bible focuses on this point in another verse and recommends that, 'Fathers, [b] do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.'[2] In spite of all the attempts made by the parents, this point should be considered that parents' determination and efforts would not be sufficient during the process of children's upbringing. Along this path, they should also ask for God's help in the same way that David prays for his son, Solomon, in the Book 1 Chronicles, 'And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, statutes and decrees.'[3]

The important point in the upbringing of the child is that their education must be taken into consideration from the beginning. The Bible says, 'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.'[4]

The Bible does not consider the parents as the only ones to observe the matter of upbringing; it also regards children as those who must obey and accept the parents' teachings. Such a kind of upbringing will prepare the grounds for their honor and glory and will create and improve their perception and awareness. In the Book of Proverbs it is mentioned that, 'Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.'[5]

There are numerous verses that invite children to obey and ac-

1. *The Bible*, Deuteronomy 6:7.
2. Ibid, Ephesians 6:4.
3. Ibid, 1 Chronicles 29:19.
4. Ibid, Proverbs 22:6.
5. Ibid, 4:1.

cept the instructions and teachings of the parents.[1] According to the Bible, refusing to accept the parents' upbringing by the children is out of their imprudence and it says, 'A fool spurns a parent's discipline.'[2] This is while it introduces obedience and acquiring the [parents'] teachings as the signs of child's wisdom, 'A wise son heeds his father's instruction.'[3]

Islam

In comparison to other sorts of rights, upbringing encompasses a wider scope, in a way that all of the boundaries of one's life from the beginning would be embraced. As a result the matter of upbringing is mentioned as one of the most significant rights of a child. Concerning upbringing and the right of the child, Imam Sajjād (pbuh) states in his Treatise on Rights, 'And you are responsible towards yourself and your child for what you are in charge of including good upbringing and guiding towards his God and helping in the way of His obedience; then you would be rewarded or punished based on this; thus, raise the child so that you would be graced in this world should it have good effects here, and you would have proof before God due to how well you have taken care of him.'[4] Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has also said, 'The right of the child upon his parents is that they give him good breading.'[5]

Inattention to the issue of upbringing has many detriments which would primarily bring harms to the parents themselves and cause the children to show them disrespect. This is exactly the issue from which even the Messenger of God (pbuh & hh)

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 6:20; Deuteronomy 6:6; Proverbs 27:11; Proverbs 3:1.
2. Ibid, 15:5.
3. Ibid, Proverbs 13:1.
4. *Tuḥaf al- 'Uqūl*, p 263.
5. *Nahj al-Balāgha*, wisdom 399; «حَقُّ الوَلَدِ عَلَى الوالِدِ أن ... يُحسِنَ أدَبَهُ».

sought refuge in God and said, 'My God, I seek refuge in You from the child who would be a lord to me.'[1]

The Islamic culture considers good upbringing as the best thing that a person can grant to their child. This is due to the influence of upbringing on one's character and the guarantee that it offers for their future. In this regard, Imam 'Alī (pbuh) says, 'No father has donated his child a gift better than good breeding.'[2]

The first issue concerning the child's education that has been focused on in Islam is the subject of upbringing itself and its relation with the age of children, meaning that the methods of education should vary according to the age of a person, and every age group has its own requirements. Generally speaking, Islam has placed three time spans for the child's upbringing. Each time span involves seven years. This issue has been referred to with a single concept but different wordings, for instance Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) says, 'The child is a master for seven years, and a servant for seven years and a minister for seven years. Then, if you were satisfied with his manners at the age of twenty one [you have done well], otherwise you will have an excuse before the Exalted God'[3]

According to Imam Ṣādiq's (pbuh) statement, the best inheritance that a person can leave for their children is good-breeding and good upbringing. He says, 'Verily, the best thing that fathers can leave for their sons is good-breeding, not wealth, as wealth would perish while good-breeding would remain.'4

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1. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, vol 3, p 588; «اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ يَكُونُ عَلَيَّ رَبّا».
2. *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol 15, p 165; «مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَداً نُحْلًا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ».
3. *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p 222;
«الْوَلَدُ سَيِّدٌ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ وَ عَبْدٌ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ وَ وَزِيرٌ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ فَإِنْ رَضِيتَ أَخْلَاقَهُ لِإِحْدَى وَ عِشْرِينَ وَ إِلَّا فَاضْرِبْ عَلَى جَنْبِهِ فَقَدْ أَعْذَرْتَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى».
4. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 8, p 150; «إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَا وَرَّثَ الْآبَاءُ لِأَبْنَائِهِمُ الْأَدَبُ، لَاالْمَالُ؛ فَإِنَّ الْمَالَ يَذْهَبُ، وَ الْأَدَبَ يَبْقَى».

Individual upbringing

The first issue concerning the child's upbringing is teaching individual and behavioral skills that are related to the personal life of a child. However, it is possible that they prove to be practical in the society as well. In the religious sources of both Islam and Christianity, there are certain instructions concerning the necessity of individual upbringing of a child.

Christianity

In the Bible there is some emphasis based on the necessity of behavioral upbringing of a child. For instance, one of the most important principles of a human's character is their morality and rectitude. Solomon recommends in his advice, 'Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.'[1]

Solomon also considers wisdom as the best of all virtues in his advice to his son and says, 'The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.'[2] He also considers good-breeding as the cornerstone of life and says, 'Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.'[3]

Islam

The holy Islamic scriptures are overflowing with instructions about individual upbringing. In order to express all of them we would be required to write several books but as an example we will mention some of these points in this section.

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 3:3-4.
2. Ibid, 4:7.
3. Ibid,4:13.

Endurance is one of the most important and at the same time beautiful attributes that one can be adorned with.

Endurance can free the human from dead ends and open a new door for them. Amongst Luqmān's recommendations to his son is to observe endurance which is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He says, 'and be patient through whatever may visit you. That is indeed the steadiest of courses.'[1] Imam Bāqir (pbuh) tells his child, 'O my son! Nothing is more delightful in your father's eyes than a gulp of rage the end of which is patience.'[2]

In the verse 19 of Sūrah Luqmān, some recommendations concerning individual upbringing can also be found. 'Be modest in your bearing, and lower your voice. Indeed the ungainliest of voices is the donkey's voice.'[3] Moreover, Luqmān has laid a strong emphasis on refraining from talkativeness. Once he told his son, 'My son, if you assume that speaking is as valuable as silver, be sure that silence has the same value as gold.'[4]

Although the above mentioned recommendations concern the individual and would be materialised through one's will, observing them would be useful and advantageous for a person in all arenas and would deliver a noble and precious character to the society.

Social upbringing

Based on the demands of one's nature, humans inevitably establish relations inside the society and are in touch with other members of the society due to various reasons. These relations

1. *The Holy Qur'an*, (31):17.
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 2, p 110; «يَا بُنَيَّ مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَقَرَّ لِعَيْنِ أَبِيكَ مِنْ جُرْعَةِ غَيْظٍ عَاقِبَتُهَا صَبْرٌ».
3. *The Holy Qur'an*, (31):19.
4. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 2, p 114.

would affect the whole life of a person. Achieving success in any kind of legitimate relation is dependent on the way we interact with the other side. The degree of receiving social influence defines one's success in their relations. Should they not be committed to social mores, their relations would be short term and fruitless. On the other hand, if they observe the standards of their relations such as mutual respect, they would be successful in their activities.

Christianity

Recommendations of the Bible concerning behavioral upbringing generally concentrate on justice, honesty, beneficence, and respect. In his recommendations to his son, Solomon says, 'Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you—when you already have it with you. Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you. Do not accuse anyone for no reason—when they have done you no harm. Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways. For the Lord detests the perverse but takes the upright into His confidence. The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed. The wise inherit honor, but fools get only shame.'[1]

In the above mentioned recommendations, all of the four topics are noticeable. At the beginning he talks about beneficence and calls his son to show benevolence towards the needy. In the midst of it, he considers a special status for a neighbor. He asks his son to observe honesty and not to give others a false promise for the future due to various reasons in spite of being financially

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 3:27-35.

secure. Following this he advises his son to observe respect and warns him to avoid quarreling with the one who has not done wrong. At the end, he censures oppression and considers the destiny of the tyrants as nothing but damnation and being distanced from God. On the other hand, he considers those who are just to be under the auspices of God.

In another part, in his recommendations to his son, Solomon names seven characteristics that are hated by God. All of these characteristics enjoy social aspects and would gain meaning merely through having relations with others. These seven characteristics are the opposite side of those four social values that were previously mentioned, namely oppression, cruelty, telling lies and showing disrespect. 'There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.'[1]

Other recommendations and affairs belonging to behavioral upbringing that are mentioned on behalf of the parents in the Bible would fit into this boundary.[2] Failing to observe them would result in nothing save affliction and annihilation both in this world and the Hereafter. If a person places them at the forefront of their life, they would live a life of prosperity and spirituality that is full of blessings.

Islam

The religion of Islam contains many recommendations con-

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 6:16–19.
2. Ibid, 4:14–19; Ibid, 24: 19–20.

cerning a person's behavior in the society and the way of treating others. It is based on these rules that one can formulate the principles of an ideal society or a utopia. One of the most basic social rules in Islam that the parents are obliged to teach their children is "mutual respect."

According to this rule of Islam, it is not the duty of the addressee to start to show respect; but rather the person himself is also commanded to observe it. In the letter 31 of *Nahj al-Balāghah*—which on its own can be considered as a complete course and a charter of rights[1]—Imam 'Alī (pbuh) makes a lot of recommendations to his son, Imam Ḥasan (pbuh), amongst which he says in a part of the letter, 'like for others the things that you like for yourself and dislike for them the things that you dislike for yourself.'

This statement is not only a recommendation but also a principle for social tranquility which the Imam reminds about. The importance of this principle is so great that the holy Prophet (pbuh & hh) considers observance of it as the sign of one's perfection of faith.[2]

The Holy Qur'an is brimful of social teachings. Amongst them, some teachings are in forms of a father-and-child relationship. Amidst these teachings, one can refer to the educational recommendations of Luqmān to his son. In these recommendations, Luqmān forbids his son from ostentation and says, 'Do not turn your cheek disdainfully from the people, and do not walk exultantly on the earth. Indeed God does not like any swaggering

1. The moral and behavioral concepts of Imam 'Alī's (pbuh) letter to Imam Ḥasan (pbuh) is so much important and valuable that cannot be included in this book and must be carefully studied in another single book. Many commentaries have been written concerning this precious gem.
2. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 69, p 257; «لَا يَسْتَكْمِلُ الْمَرْءُ الْإِيمَانَ حَتَّى يُحِبَ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُ لِنَفْسِهِ».

braggart.'[1]

Luqmān continues his recommendations in this way, 'Be modest in your bearing, and lower your voice. Indeed the ungainliest of voices is the donkey's voice.'[2]

True social teachings guarantee the health of a society. Paying attention to them as well as teaching them to the children and the next generation keeps the soul of the society alive, brings joy to the society, improves the hope for life amongst its members, and maintains the self-esteem of all people. Consequently, the feeling of satisfaction with the present situation as well as cooperation in improvement of the society would increase day after day and people would consider their personal advantage to be reliant on the advantage of the society. On the contrary, inattention to these rules would sometimes lead to irreparable damages to the society. As a result, People would grow disheartened, they would become indifferent towards the destiny of each other, and ultimately the soul and the spirit of humanity would die in the society.

Religious upbringing

One of the most important issues that all of the religions adhere to regarding the upbringing of the children is religious upbringing. They try to familiarise the children with these teachings from childhood. In the holy religion of Islam, it has been introduced as a duty for the parents due to the talented mind of the children.

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (31):18.
2. Ibid, (31):19.

Christianity

In the Old Testament it has been recurrently recommended to the fathers to teach religious matters to the children and the next generation. The Book of Genesis, chapter 18, speaks the words of God and about the methods of Abraham, 'For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.'[1] Moses, too, has frequently directed the attention of the parents towards the orders and commands of God. In one of them he tells *Banī Isrā'īl*, 'Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law.'[2] In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses also reminds *Banī Isrā'īl* that, '"Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb", when he told me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."'[3] Or in the Old Testament God gives some commands to Moses and tells him, 'These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.'[4] David too, emphasises this point and considers it as a firm principle for the fathers. In the Book of Psalm 78 he tells his people, 'We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He? commanded our

1. *The Bible*, Genesis 18:19.
2. Ibid, Deuteronomy 32:46.
3. Ibid, 4:10.
4. Ibid, 6:6-7.

ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.'[1]

David's recommendation to his son, Solomon, could be deemed an example of these verses, according to which he calls his son to have a heartfelt faith in God. He also considers eternal misery as the result of being distanced from God. The Book 1 Chronicles thus quotes him, 'And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house as the sanctuary. Be strong and do the work.'[2] Solomon warns his son that the sinful individuals lie in ambush and tells him to beware of being deceived by them since no blessings would be granted by them. 'My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them. ... my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into evil, they are swift to shed blood.'[3] Sometimes it is likely that the children become deceived by Satanic temptations, make a mistake, and be punished by God. Solomon regards such a kind of punishment as God's mercy and considers its result to be nothing but health and happiness. He asks his son to accept such punishments wholeheartedly and not feel resentful of them.

'My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, as a

1. *The Bible*, Psalm 78:2-6.
2. Ibid, 1 Chronicles 28:9-10.
3. Ibid, Proverbs 1:10-16.

father the son He delights in. ... Her ways are pleasant ways, and all er paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.'[1] In the New Testament, Saint Paul recommends that the widows be taught to raise their children and grandchildren with religious upbringing. He writes to his student, Timothy, 'But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family.'[2]

Islam

Teaching monotheistic bases is the most significant principle in educating the children and according to the Islamic texts, they have always been emphasised by the Divine prophets (pbut) and great personages. They used to make their children familiar with these teachings through their pleasant utterance. In the Glorious Qur'an it has been commanded that, 'O you who have faith! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.'[3] Regarding this issue, Imam Sajjād (pbuh) says, 'And you are responsible for what you are in charge of including guiding [him] towards his God'[4] In a beautiful verse, Luqmān calls his son to monotheism and says, 'When Luqmān told his son, as he advised him: "O my son! Do not ascribe any partners to God. Polytheism is indeed a great injustice." '[5]

According to the Holy Qur'an, one of the keys to success concerning education is steadfastness and continuation in teaching these matters. About teaching one of the most important religious deeds, the Holy Qur'an says, 'And bid your family to

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 3:11-18.
2. Ibid, 1 Timothy 5:4.
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (66):6.
4. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥū al-Faqīh*, vol 2, p 622; «... الدلالة على ربّه من وَليته عمّا مسئولٌ أنّكَ».
5. *The Holy Qur'an* (31):13.

prayer and be steadfast in its maintenance.'[1]

That is to say, this education should not be temporary, but rather one should show continuation and care in achieving it. The individuals themselves should be committed to this matter, meaning that, as an example, the person should not be careless about saying prayers as cited in the verse. If the parents be indifferent towards it, their orders for saying prayer would never be effective.

Children's religiosity should receive the attention of the parents until the end of their lifetime and parents should always remind them of it. That was the life and manner of the apostles of God who were apprehensive about their children's monotheistic beliefs until the end of their life. The Glorious Qur'an mentions Abraham and Jacob as an example and says, '"Abraham enjoined this [creed] upon his children, and [so did] Jacob", [saying], "My children! God has indeed chosen this religion for you; so never die except as Muslims."'[2]

The Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) says, 'Whoever brings up a child in order that he says 'There is no god but God' God the Sublime would not subject him to reckoning.'[3]

Placing an emphasis on religious upbringing, Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has said, 'The right of a child upon his parents is that they teach him the Qur'an.'[4]

The Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) emphasises that children be brought up based on three characteristics: 'Love for the Proph-

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (20):132.
2. Ibid (2):132.
3. *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*, vol 2, p 603, ḥadīth 8696; مَن رَبَّى صَغيرا حَتَّى يَقولَ : «لا إلهَ إلاَّ اللهُ » لَم يُحاسِبهُ اللهُ عز و جل.
4. *Nahj al-Balāgha*, wisdom 399.

et, love for the members of his household, and recitation of the Qur'an.'[1]

Suliymān bin. Khālid says that he asked Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh), '"I have a family that obeys my words; should I call them towards this matter [*Wilāyat/Guardianship*]?" The Imam said, God the Sublime states in His book, "O you who have faith! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones."'[2]

Particularly when the sects and deviational thoughts try to attract the youth towards their doctrine, parents should embark on their children's religious upbringing more sensitively. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) says, 'Teach your children those things for which God will benefit them, [beware of] *Murji'a*[3] not to overwhelm them through their ideas.'[4] 'Set out to [make] your children [familiar] with tradition before *Murji'a* get ahead of you towards them.'[5] 'Beware of *Ghulāt*[6] not to corrupt [the beliefs of] your youths; indeed *Ghulāt* are the most wicked creatures of God, they minimise the greatness of God and claim to be a lord of the servants of God.'[7]

According to the Holy Qur'an, the reward of those people who

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1. *Kanz al- 'Ummāl*, vol 16, p 456, ḥadīth 45409; حُبّ نَبِيّكُم، وحُبّ أهلِ بَيتِه، وعَلى قِراءةِ القُرآنِ.
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 2, p 211, ḥadīth 1.
3. Murji'a, a deviational sect who believed that for being rescued, the mere faith would be enough and there is no need to perform the obligatory deeds and avoid performing prohibited deeds. «عَلِّموا صِبيانَكُم ما يَنفَعُهُمُ اللهُ بِهِ، لا تَغلِب عَلَيهِمُ المُرجِئَةُ بِرَأيِها».
4. *Tuḥaf al- 'Uqūl*, p 104.
5. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 47, ḥadīth 5; «بادِروا أحداثَكُم بِالحَديثِ قَبلَ أن تَسبِقَكُم إلَيهِمُ المُرجِئَةُ».
6. *Ghulāt*, they were a deviational sect who considered a divine status for their prophets and Imams.
7. *Al-Amālī Lil Ṭūsī*, p 650, ḥadīth 1349.
«اِحذَروا عَلى شَبابِكُم الغُلاةَ لا يُفسِدوتهُم، فَإنَّ الغُلاةَ شَرُّ خَلقِ اللهِ، يُصَغِّرونَ عَظَمَةَ اللهِ، ويَدَّعونَ الرُّبوبِيَّةَ لِعِبادِ اللهِ».

bring up believing children is Paradise.[1]

Sexual education

Guiding sexual instincts and controlling them is not an issue which can be achieved whenever a person wills, but rather a main part of it is the result of the parents' education in this field. It is necessary to pay attention to sexual education from the childhood. On the one hand the minds of the children are empty of any assumption about this issue and on the other hand their minds are not able to analyse these issues. So, they should not be involved in them. An appropriate educational method is needed to teach this issue to the children through several steps and according to their perception.

Christianity

In the Bible, there are numerous recommendations about avoiding illegitimate looks and relations. For example, Solomon advises his son, 'For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, keeping you from your neighbor's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes. For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread, but another man's wife preys on your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? *Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. … But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (52):21.

wiped away.'[1]

Islam

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, these issues should be taught to the children indirectly and through the passage of time. In these teachings it advises the believers, 'O you who have faith! Let your permission be sought by your slaves and those of you who have not reached puberty three times: before the dawn prayer, and when you put off your garments at noon, and after the night prayer. These are three times of privacy for you. Apart from these, it is not sinful of you or them to frequent one another [freely]. Thus does God clarify the signs for you, and God is All-Knowing, All-Wise. *When your children reach puberty, let them ask permission [at all times] just as those who asked permission before them.'[2]

According to this verse parents should notice that although they should not treat the child strictly, the child should not intrude upon the privacy of the parents and should ask for permission to enter during the parents' resting time. These times of resting include mornings, noontime, and nights. This rule applies to the children who have not reached the age of puberty, but whenever they reach the age of puberty–like other mature individuals–they should ask for permission whenever they want to enter the parents' room. These are all for maintaining the child's health of mind and thought. Sexual education of the child must be done while observing its privacy. Gender should also be observed during sexual education. Such emphasis is due to the fact that children should not be witness to their parents' sleeping together. Concerning this issue, the Messenger of Islam (pbuh

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 6:23-33.
2. *The Qur'an* (24):58-59.

& hh) says, 'I swear by God, in whose hands is my soul, that if a man sleeps with his wife while a child is awake in the room, looking at them and hearing their words and breathes, he will never prosper; if he is a boy he would become an adulterer, and if she is a girl she would become an adulteress.'[1]

As for the methods of sexual education, Islamic texts emphasise that bedrooms of male and female children who have reached the age of ten should be separated. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) states, 'make distinction between boys and girls in terms of their beds when they reach the age of ten.' This is the age of a child's recognition of and attention to this issue, particularly for the girls. Beginning this period of life calmly and peacefully would hugely help their sexual upbringing and afterwards the parents can offer the required teachings to their children properly and away from any harm.

The role of forbearance and harshness in upbringing

Apart from indirect methods like preparing the environment, parents serving as a role model, and many others, there are various tools for the direct upbringing of children such as friendship, leniency, advice, rebuke, and finally punishment. We intend to study the view point of the two religions of Christianity and Islam concerning the application of these tools in the upbringing of a child.

Christianity

From the Bible's point of view, in the course of upbringing, one should firstly advise the child through employing a soft language. In his Epistle Saint Paul writes to Ephesians, 'Fathers,

1. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 500, ḥadīth 2.

do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.'[1] In his letter to Colossians Saint Paul has also stated, 'Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.'[2]

The Bible has also considered the use of punishment as an obstructive factor in the child's disconnection. It is also essential for the stabilisation of the teachings, particularly in cases that the child shows indifference towards the parents' orders and breaches their rules exceedingly. 'A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.'[3]

Concerning physical punishment two points must be noted in the Bible; the first point is that the Bible has not determined an age for the punishment of the child. It has only granted the permission for this punishment and has authorised it from early childhood. 'Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away.'[4]

The second point is that the Bible has not defined any boundaries for physical punishment and inflicting any amount of it is considered to be effective in the upbringing of a child. 'Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death.'[5]

The Bible has frequently called fathers towards physical punishment and introduced it as an essential matter in the course of upbringing. It only forbids the parents from killing the child as

1. *The Bible*, Ephesians 6:4.
2. Ibid, Colossians 3:21.
3. Ibid, Proverbs 29:15.
4. Ibid, 22:15.
5. Ibid, 23:13–14.

the result of punishment. 'Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.'[1]

From the viewpoint of the Bible, if the punishment of the child is meted out appropriately and in time, it would be a very helpful and beneficial approach. Although it is true that at the time of punishment the child would be hurt and undergo pain but this punishment shall guarantee their health in the future[2] and shall really save the child from the Abyss [scorching fire].

In addition to this, other outcomes have also been mentioned such as bringing about respect for the child in the future. It has also been stressed that whoever willingly undergoes punishment shall acquire knowledge but if a person neglects it or flees from it, they would not be affected by the upbringing. In other words they would become brutal[3] and undervalue their own souls[4] whilst poverty and shame shall await them. Regarding this issue, in the book of Proverbs it is stated that, 'Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.'[5]

Punishment is a method for edification and it must be put to use occasionally. Sometimes the child's mischief is so intense that they will not learn even through the most extreme punishments and they will continue to take the false path. In such circumstances, the Bible considers their lives to be useless and

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 19:18.
2. Ibid, Hebrews 12:11: 'No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.'
3. Ibid, Proverbs 12:1: 'Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.'
4. Ibid, 15: 32: 'Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.'
5. Ibid, 13:18.

has ordered to edify them through the town's elderly. It has also ordered to stone them should they continue to take their own paths.

Islam

From the viewpoint of Islamic behavioral doctrines, one must primarily benefit merely from lenient methods for the upbringing of a child. Using gentle methods is considered as a right of the child. It has been narrated from Imam Sajjād (pbuh) that in upbringing, a child has a few rights upon their father and mother, including 'Amongst the rights of the young are showing kindness in teaching him, showing forgiveness towards him as well as covering [his mistakes], showing friendliness to him and giving support to him.'[1] Abī Baṣīr also states, '"I asked Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) about the interpretation of the verse" "Save yourselves and your families from a Fire." He replied, "Order them and forbid them."'[2]

Such a kind of advice must be accompanied by forbearance and leniency. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has said, 'May God have mercy upon he who helps his child in the way of honoring him.'

[Someone] asked, '"How can he help him to honor?" He said, "to accept whatever is easy for him, and disregard whatever is difficult for him, and not to demand too much of him and not to exceed the ordinary [limits], then there would be no [gap] between him and getting into a boundary from the boundaries of unbelief should he step into [the path of] disrespect or cutting

1. *The Book Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, vol 2, p 625, ḥadīth 3214; *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 62, ḥadīth 3; «...حَقُّ الصَّغِيرِ رَحمَتُهُ فِي تَعلِيمِهِ، وَالعَفوُ عَنهُ وَالسِّترُ عَلَيهِ، وَالرِّفقُ بِهِ، وَالمعونَةُ لَهُ».
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 62, ḥadīth 3; «قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَ أَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا».

the bonds of relations.'"[1]

From the viewpoint of Islamic sources, the parents do not necessarily need to remind the child about all their errors like a strict inspector. Sometimes it is essential to be forgetful in the upbringing of a child and to turn a blind eye to some of their mistakes. It has been narrated from Imam 'Alī (pbuh), 'whenever you censure a young man, neglect [censuring] some of his sins so that it would not cause him to show stubbornness.'[2]

Sometimes it happens that a child is disobedient and would not be educated through advice and leniency; on the next level the parents may use the method of criticism and reproach; however, they should not show excessiveness in this method either. Imam 'Alī (pbuh) said, 'The excess of rebuke would break out the fire of obstinacy'[3], and 'whenever you censure [do it as much that you can] make him stay',[4] 'Avoid repeating a censure, as it will provoke a sin and belittle a censure.'[5]

Censuring should not be done in such a strict manner so that the child would miss the chance for providing an excuse and explanation. It has been narrated from Imam 'Alī (pbuh), 'whenever you censure a young man, neglect [censuring] some of his sins so that it would not cause him to show stubbornness.'[6]

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1. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 50, ḥadīth 6
«رَحِمَ اللهُ مَن أعانَ وَلَدَهُ عَلى بِرِّهِ. قالَ : قُلتُ : كَيفَ يُعينُهُ عَلى بِرِّهِ؟ قالَ : يَقبَلُ مَيسورَهُ، ويَتَجاوَزُ عَن مَعسورِهِ، ولا يُرهِقُهُ ، ولا يُحَرِّقُ بِهِ فَلَيسَ بَينَهُ وبَينَ أن يَصيرَ في حَدٍّ مِن حُدودِ الكُفرِ إلاّ أن يَدخُلَ في عُقوقٍ أو قَطيعَةِ رَحِمٍ».
2. *A Commentary on Nahj al-Balāgha*, vol 20, p 333, ḥadīth 819
«إذا عاتَبتَ الحَدَثَ فَاترُكْ لَهُ مَوضِعا مِن ذَنبِهِ لِئَلاّ يَحمِلَهُ الإخراجُ عَلَى المُكابَرَةِ».
3. *'Uyūn al-Ḥikam wa al-Mawā 'iẓ*, p 22, ḥadīth 159; «الإفراطُ في المَلامَةِ يَشِبُّ نيرانَ اللَّجاجَةِ»
4. *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, ḥadīth 3977; «إذا عاتَبتَ فَاستَبقِ»
5. Ibid, ḥadīth 3748; «اِيّاكَ أن تُكَرِّرَ العَتَبَ؛ فَإنَّ ذلكَ يُغري بِالذَّنبِ، ويُهَوِّنُ العُتبَ»
6. *A Commentary on Nahj al-Balāgha*, vol 20, p 333, ḥadīth 819
«إذا عاتَبتَ الحَدَثَ فَاترُكْ لَهُ مَوضِعا مِن ذَنبِهِ؛ لِئلاّ يَحمِلُهُ الإخراج عَلَى المُكابَرَةِ».

If the child has refused to be disciplined and still continues to take the false path, one can benefit from the method of sulking, however, even in such method, too, one must not sulk for too long and be strict with one's own child. One of the companions of Imam Kāẓim (pbuh) complained to him about his own child, Imam Kāẓim (pbuh) told him, 'Do not hit him; abandon him, and do not lengthen [it].'[1]

When the child still continues to disobey and would not be instructed even by using rebuke, one can also benefit from punishment, but there are a few points about punishment that must be taken into account.

The first point is that punishment is forbidden up to the age of seven, as up to this age, it is the time for the child to reign and play. Punishment is only meaningful when one fails in performing their duty or refuses to perform it. For children under seven, it merely suffices to notify them, and in case of danger the hazardous element must be taken out of their reach. Regarding religious deeds, one can punish the child from the age of ten and has no right to punish them under this age. About this issue Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has said, 'Educate the young members of your household by your tongue towards saying prayers and [observing] purity and when they reach the age of ten, hit them, but not more than three times.'[2]

The second point is that the punishment does not always have to be given by the parents. Sometimes the mere consequences of an action could be considered as a punishment and seeing the result of what they have committed would be the best punish-

1. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 99; «لَا تَضْرِبْهُ وَ اهْجُرْهُ وَ لَا تُطِل».
2. *Tanbīh al-Khawāṭir wa Nazhat al-Nawāẓir*, vol 2, p 155; «أَدِّبْ صِغَارَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ بِلِسَانِكَ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَ الطُّهُورِ فَإِذَا بَلَغُوا عَشْرَ سِنِينَ فَاضْرِبْ وَ لَا تُجَاوِزْ ثَلَاثًا».

ment for a child. Regarding this point Imam ʻAlī (pbuh) has said, ʻThe one who is not reformed by excellent affability would be reformed by bad consequence.ʼ[1]

For example, if a child ignores the warnings about taking care of their own stuff and damages one of their own toys, they do not need to be punished, since being deprived of having that toy would be the best punishment.

The third point is that the maximum amount of punishment that is prescribed is three hits and the highest number of lashes mentioned for a child are six. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) recommended Imam ʻAlī (pbuh), ʻDo not hit more than three for [the sake of] education, indeed if you did, it would be chastised on the Day of Resurrection.ʼ[2] The punishment of a child must not be carried out in such an extreme manner that causes the body to turn red or leaves a bruise on it; if so, it would entail paying compensation by the punisher even though the punisher is the father of the child.

The fourth point is that parents do not have the right to hit the child for purposes other than edification; for example, parents have no right to hit the child for crying. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) said, ʻDo not hit your infants for their cries.ʼ[3]

The fifth point is that such punishments must not be imposed out of rage and parents do not have the right to strike the child when they are in rage. This is because such a punishment may not be for the sake of upbringing but rather it may be for sooth-

1. *ʻUyūn al-Ḥikam wa al-Mawāʻiẓ*, p 444
«مَنْ لَمْ يُصْلِحْهُ حُسْنُ الْمُدَارَاةِ أَصْلَحَهُ سُوءُ الْمُكَافَاة».
2. *Tanbīh al-Khawāṭir wa Nazḥat al-Nawāẓir*, vol 2, p 155;
«لَا تَضْرِبَنَّ أَدَباً فَوْقَ ثَلَاثٍ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَهُوَ قِصَاصٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَة»
3. *Al-Tawḥīd*, p 331; «لاتَضْرِبُوا أَطْفالَكُمْ عَلى بُكائِهِم».

ing their burning rage, and they must let themselves cool down. It has been narrated from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), 'The Messenger of God (pbuh) prohibited education in times of rage.'[1] Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has also said, 'There would be no education with rage.'[2]

Hence, Islam has considered punishment to be permissible at times, in the course of the child's upbringing, but it does not allow physical punishment for those under the age of ten. When the parents do have the right to punish the child, they must be very careful in hitting them. They should at most strike them with three whips, although it would be better not to resort to physical punishment.

Education

One of the most important rights that a child has is receiving proper education from their father and mother. In the Bible a wise child is honored and it is said, 'A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.'[3]

From Islam's point of view, the education of children must begin from childhood so that it would remain in the child's inner self and would be in the forefront of their mind. If this happens, such an education would never leave their minds. There is a very beautiful and eloquent phrase narrated from Imam 'Alī (pbuh), 'learning in youth is like an engraving on stone.'[4] Sometimes parents show carelessness towards education during childhood and disregard it on the pretext of the child's freedom. Prophet

1. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 7, p 260, ḥadīth 3;«نَهَى رَسولُ اللهِ صلي الله عليه و آله عَنِ الأَدَبِ عِندَ الغَضَبِ».
2. *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, ḥadīth 10529; «لا أدَبَ مَعَ غَضَبٍ».
3. *The Bible*, Proverbs 15:20.
4. *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, vol 1, p 319; «الْعِلْمُ فِي الصِّغَرِ كَالنَّقْشِ فِي الْحَجَرِ».

Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) warns about failing to fulfill the aim of upbringing and edification during childhood and says, 'Whoever does not learn in youth will not make progress in old age.'[1]

In Islam, even teaching some of the sports is mentioned as the parent's duty. In a tradition, Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) advises his companions to teach their children swimming, shooting[2] and horse riding[3].[4] Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) said, 'Teach your sons shooting as it would defeat the enemy.'[5] He has also stated, 'the child's right upon his father is to teach him writing, swimming and shooting and bequeath him pure [possessions].'[6]

Nutrition, hygiene and adornment

One of the issues that parents need to notice is the nutrition and hygiene of a child, failing to maintain which can harm a child. No verse has been mentioned in the Bible about the necessity of maintaining the hygiene of a child. But in the holy Islamic texts the issue of children's hygiene has been stated as the parent's duty towards children.

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1. *Ghurar al-Ḥikam wa Durar al-Kalim*, p 649; «من لم يتعلّم في الصّغر لم يتقدّم في الكبر».
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 47; "Teach your children swimming and shooting"; «عَلِّمُوا أَوْلَادَكُمُ السِّبَاحَةَ وَ الرِّمَايَة».
3. *Al-Nahāya Fī Qharīb al-Ḥadīth*, vol 3, p 428; 'Teach your children swimming and horsemanship.' «علموا أولادكم العوم والفراسة».
4. The role of playing in children's education: viewpoints of Qur'an and imams, Quarterly Journal of New Thoughts on Education, p 97; 'Perhaps due to the characteristics of the modern world, the concept of horse riding or camel riding could be extended so that it could involve cycling, motorcycling and driving. If in the old days swimming in the water was propounded, today swimming in the air is also suggested. Therefore the connotation of swimming could perhaps be extended to parachuting, flying a helicopter and an airplane, jumping competition, mountaineering, climbing the heights and other martial arts.'
5. *Kanz al-Ummāl*, vol 16, p 433, ḥadīth 45341; «عَلِّموا بَنِيكُم الرَّميَ ؛ فَإنَّهُ نِكايَةُ العَدُوّ».
6. *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, vol 10, p 26, ḥadīth 19742.
«حَقُّ الوَلَدِ عَلَى الوالِدِ أن يُعَلِّمَهُ الكِتابَةَ وَ السِّباحَةَ وَالرَّميَ، و أن يُوَرِّثَهُ طيّبا».

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has always advised, 'Wash the dirt of your young children, for Satan will smell the dirt and the youth would be frightened while sleeping.'[1]

Amongst Imam 'Alī's (pbuh) recommendations to his son, it has also been stated, '"Oh my son! Should I not teach you four characteristics by which you will have no need for medical treatment?" He said, "Yes, O, the Leader of the Faithful." He said, "Do not sit for eating unless you are hungry and leave the food while you still feel an appetite for it, and chew the morsel well and when you want to sleep go to the toilet. If you employ these, you shall have no need for medical treatment."'

There are various traditions that recommend parents to observe the hygiene of children but they cannot all be cited and explained here. Therefore, suffice it to mention only two of them.

Providing the living expenses for the child

One of the father's duties towards a child is to provide them with their living expenses or *Nafaqa*. *Nafaqa* means the maintenance costs of wife and child.[2] Such a right is mostly upon the father of the family who shoulders the responsibility of providing the living expenses.

Christianity

From the viewpoint of Christianity the parent's possessions belong to their children. In Corinthian's second letter, it is stated, 'After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.'[3]

1. *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol 2, p 69.
2. *The Moein Persian dictionary*.
3. *The Bible*, 2 Corinthian 212:14.

In the Bible, wherever it is talked about the inheritance and properties of a person, it would be perceived from the tone of words that inheritance is an inalienable right of the living ones and the heirs consider themselves to be entitled to a share of the inheritance; Like the time that a person asked Christ to act as an intermediary in order to obtain his share of the inheritance. The New Testament narrates this request as such, '"Someone in the crowd told him", "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."'[1]

In response to his request, Christ turned to those who were present there and recommended them to abstain from greed and not to assume that the only way to benefit is through excess of possessions. Referring to the other verses of the Bible that are related to the issue of inheritance, we can see that this tone is evident and one can infer such a right for children.

In the Old Testament, there are some rules for dividing the inheritance and each of the family members and relatives of the deceased have different shares of the inheritance[2]. According to the rules of inheritance in the Old Testament, when there is no son or children of the son, it will be the daughter's or their children's turn to receive inheritance. Accordingly, if the deceased has a son or a grandchild of his son plus ten daughters, his daughters would not receive any share of the inheritance. If the daughters are the sole heirs to the deceased's estate, they can enjoy a share of the inheritance should they marry a member of

1. *The Bible*, Luke 12:13.

2. For instance, if a father passes away and leaves five boys, the eldest son will own one third of the inheritance and the other four sons will each own one sixth. If the father leaves nine sons, the eldest child will own one fifth and the other eight children will each own one tenth of the inheritance.

their own clan.[1] Of course the inheritance is not divided equally between the sons, and the elder son will own a greater share of the estate compared to the other sons.[2]

Islam

In the Islamic culture, the man has the duty to provide the living expenses for the mother and the children. Concerning this issue, the Holy Qur'an says, 'and on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, in accordance with honorable norms. No soul is to be tasked except according to its capacity: neither the mother shall be made to suffer harm on her child's account, nor the father on account of his child.'[3]

When the man is providing the living expenses, the ability and the status of the family must be taken into consideration. On the one hand, the man must not be tight-fisted towards the mother and her child and on the other hand the mother and child must not demand anything more than the man's ability. It is the man's duty to provide the mother and her child with an ordinary living which is in line with social norms.

A man who is hard on his family in spite of his financial capability is reproached in traditions, and this very sin is considered to

1. *The Bible*, Numbers 37: 1-7: The issue of dividing inheritance in the Holy Bible began from the tale of dispute amongst the daughters of Zelophehad over dividing inheritance. Zelophehad belonged to the clan of Joseph. He died in the wilderness and since he had no sons, his brothers possessed all his inheritance. The daughters of Zelophehad complained to Moses and asked for a share of their father's inheritance. God confirmed Zelophehad's daughters' request. (Numbers 27: 1-8) but such division of the inheritance did not satisfy the brothers of Zelophehad. They complained to Moses that if the daughters of Zelphehad grow up and marry people from other clans, their share of the land will also be transferred to the other clan. Then, by God's command, Moses ordered once more that the daughters of Zelophehad could only marry men from their own clan and must not marry men from other clans.
2. Ibid, Deuteronomy, 22:17.
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (2):233.

be enough for his unfortunate consequence. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has forbidden a man from being full whilst his family is being hungry and in hardship. He says, 'It would suffice for the perdition of a man to neglect the person whom he has to feed/he is responsible for, and it would suffice for the sin of a human to neglect the one whom she is responsible for.'[1]

On the contrary, he has praised those who strive for their family's welfare and comfort and says, 'whoever is after the world's livelihood to refrain from [requesting] people and increase the means of subsistence for his family members and have compassion with his neighbors, he would visit God the Sublime on the Day of Resurrection while his face is like the full moon.'[2]

According to a saying from Imam Riḍā (pbuh), 'it is obligatory for the one who is financially secure to be generous to his household.'[3]

Although it is the parents' duty to provide the livelihood for the kids, can they offer illegitimate property to their children? It has been narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh), 'The unlawful earnings would become evident in the progeny.'[4]

One of the inalienable rights of the children is inheritance which must be given to them after the father is deceased. The subject matter of inheritance is so important that God Himself has defined and determined the share of each heir. Regarding the children's right to inheritance, the Holy Qur'an says, 'God

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1. *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, vol 2, p 254.
«كَفَى بِالرَّجُلِ هَلَاكاً أَنْ يُضِيعَ مَنْ يَعُولُ وَ كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْماً أَنْ يُضِيعَ مَنْ يَعُولُ».
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 78.
«مَنْ طَلَبَ [الرِّزْقَ فِي] الدُّنْيَا اسْتِعْفَافاً عَنِ النَّاسِ وَ تَوْسِيعاً عَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَ تَعَطُّفاً عَلَى جَارِهِ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ وَجْهُهُ مِثْلُ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ»
3. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 540; «صَاحِبُ النِّعْمَةِ يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِ التَّوْسِعَةُ عَلَى عِيَالِهِ».
4. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 124, ḥadīth 4; «كَسبُ الحَرام يَبِينُ فِي الذُّرِيَّةِ».

enjoins you concerning your children: for the male shall be the like of the share of two females.'[1,2]

Marriage

Choosing a spouse and a person who can accompany us throughout the journey of life is amongst the inalienable rights of every human. In order to gain spiritual and physical comfort, it is essential for every person to have a companion and a partner in life.

Christianity

From the viewpoint of the New Testament, marriage is basically considered as a secondary value and Saint Paul has written in his letter to Corinthians, 'I wish that all of you were as I am ... Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.'[3] But if one cannot manage to stay single, they can get married. Therefore the Bible does not introduce marriage as a right for the child and does not say anything about the parents' duty to assist the child for choosing a spouse. Only in some verses it is mentioned that a spouse had been chosen for some individuals by their parents. In the Genesis it is said that, 'While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (4):11.
2. *'Uyūn Akbār al-Riḍā*, vol 2, p 198; the reason for which women's share from the inheritance is half that of men is that in case of marriage women will take but men will give. This is why it has been added to men's share. Moreover, another reason for which the man's share is twice the woman's share, is that if the woman becomes needy, she is dependent on the man, and it is the duty of the man to provide her with livelihood and pay off her subsistence, but the woman is neither bound to provide livelihood for the man nor does she have a duty to pay off his subsistence should he be in need. These are the reasons for which God the Sublime has increased the share of men.
3. *The Bible*, 1 Corinthians 7:27.

mother got a wife for him from Egypt'[1] This verse talks about picking out a spouse for Ishmael by his mother. From this, one can infer that picking out a spouse for the child by their parents has been long established in all customs and nations.

Islam

Not only is marriage considered as every person's right in Islam but it is also considered as the right of every child upon the parents to pave the way for their marriage. Concerning this issue Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has said, 'and it is amongst the rights of the child [upon the parents] to marry him off whenever he attains puberty.' Regarding this matter, the Exalted God has ordered all people, 'Marry off those who are single among you and the upright among your male slaves and your female slaves. If they are poor, God will enrich them out of His grace, and God is All-Bounteous, All-Knowing'.[2]

According to the above mentioned verse, in addition to the parents' duty, in the past that it was customary to have servants and maids, finding a spouse for these servants and maids was also amongst the masters' duties.

If some parents neglect this right of their child or prevent them from getting married without any reason and then the child does not get married and cannot protect themselves against devilish temptations and consequently commits a sin, their parents too would be equally responsible for such a sin. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) said, 'the one whose child reaches the age of marriage and has with him whatever [is needed] to marry off the child but he does not engage the child in wedlock and then

1. *The Bible*, Genesis 21:21.
2. *The Holy Qur'an* (24):32.

causes an evil [happening] so the sin would be upon him.'[1]

Fairness between the children

Fairness is of utmost importance in family relationships and it forms the underlying principle for stability of a family. Failing to observe fairness amongst the children would bring about discontent and weaken the structure of the family.

However, there is a lot of emphasis on justice in the Holy Bible—amongst them is when Jesus Christ rebuked Jewish priests and said, 'Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices- mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness'[2]—But no verse was found which would explicitly emphasise fairness amongst the children.

Observing fairness amongst the children is very much noted In Islamic sources. According to the words of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), observing fairness amongst the children is what shall cause the children to be fair between the father and the mother as well.[3]

Fairness is a behavioral principle. It may be that the parents have more love and affection towards one child amongst their children. Although one child may show more sweetness and merits, the parents should not treat their children unfairly. Being unfair amongst the children can on the one hand destroy the less loved child and on the other hand be harmful to the most

1. *Kanz al-Ummāl*, vol 16, p 442; «مَن بَلَغَ وَلَدُهُ النِّكاحَ وعِندَهُ ما يُنكِحُهُ ، فَلَم يُنكِحهُ ثُمَّ أحدَثَ حَدَثا فَالإثمُ عَلَيهِ».
2. *The Bible*, Matthew 23:23.
3. *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p 220; 'Act justly among your children in secret just as you like them to act justly among you in terms of kindness and politeness.'
«اعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ أَوْلَادِكُمْ فِي السِّرِّ كَمَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَكُمْ فِي الْبِرِّ وَ اللُّطْف».

loved child and bring about troubles for them. Just like what was seen in Sūrah Joseph in which Jacobs' indescribable love for Joseph blazed the fire of jealousy in his brothers—who thought of themselves as role models and worthy of attention. This kind of love led to paying less attention towards the other children1 and had no result but forty years of separation between Jacob and Joseph.

Observing fairness amongst the children is the least of what one can do in regard to them. In cases like expressing affection, sometimes one should overstep the limits and behave equally towards the children. This is why Imam al-Sādiq (pbuh) has said, 'I swear by God that I flatter one of my children and sit him on my leg and I show a lot of affection to him and encourage him a lot while the right lies with another one of my children but I [do so] to protect him against those other than him so that others would not do just like what Joseph's brothers did with him, and God has not revealed the Sūrah 'Joseph' unless as an example so that some of us will not be envious of others in the same way that Joseph's brothers envied and oppressed him. [God] has placed it as proof and mercy for those who befriended us and got close to us through having affection for us as well as those who declared war on us.'[2]

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) was sitting in a place with his companions. He saw a man with his two children. The man kissed only one of the two. When the Prophet (pbuh & hh) saw this scene, he made the man recognise his mistake by asking a question. He asked, 'Why did you not observe equality amongst

1. *The Holy Qur'an* (12):8; 'When they said, "Surely Joseph and his brother2 are dearer to our father than [the rest of] us, though we are a hardy group. Our father is indeed in manifest error." '

2. *Wasā'il al-Shī'ā*, vol 19, p 246.'

them and only kissed one of the two?'[1]

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has repeatedly reminded about the necessity of observing fairness and equality amongst the children. In a narration he considers observing such fairness and equality as the means of God's satisfaction and has said, 'Verily God the Sublime likes that you act justly amongst your children even in kissing.'[2]

In order to observe such equality one must not even have a preference for a boy or a girl. Sometimes it happens that the father or the mother shows more affection towards their son. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has noted this and said, 'Whoever has a girl and does not show her [to others] and does not humiliate her and does not prefer his son to her, God shall take him to Heaven.'[3]

Therefore fairness amongst the children must be observed at all times. Though there may be dissimilarities between them in different aspects such as intelligence, beauty or affection, but in order to prevent confusion and gap amongst children, equality must be observed and this is the right of all children.

There is a narration from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) that, 'Treat your children as equals while [giving] gifts; if I were to prefer somebody, I would prefer women.'[4] In another narration a person came to the Prophet (pbuh & hh) and told him "'I gave

1. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 99; '[The holy Prophet] peace be upon him and his household saw a man from the followers who had two children; he kissed one of them and left the other, so He said, "Why did not you treat them as equal?/Why did not you make peace between them?"'
«رَأى صلى الله عليه وآله رَجُلًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ لَهُ وَلَدَانِ قَبَّلَ أَحَدَهُما وَ تَرَكَ الْآخَرَ فَقالَ هَلَّا وَاسَيْتَ بَيْنَهُمَا».

2. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 16, p 445; «إنَّ اللهَ تَعالى يُحِبُّ اَن تَعدِلوُا بَينَ اَولادِكُم حَتّى في القُبل».

3. *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol 15, p 118; «مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ أُنْثَى فَلَمْ يُئْدِهَا وَ لَمْ يُهِنْهَا وَ لَمْ يُؤْثِرْ وُلْدَهُ عَلَيْهَا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ».

4. *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol 11, p 280, ḥadīth 11997;
«سَوّوا بَينَ أولادِكُم فِي العَطِيَّةِ، فَلَو كُنتُ مُفَضِّلاً أحَدا لَفَضَّلتُ النِّساءَ».

a gift to one of my children" the Prophet said, "Did you give your other child a similar gift too?" he said, "No" The Prophet (pbuh & hh) said, "Be wary of God and treat your children with justice.""[1] It is narrated from Imam al-Ḥasan (pbuh) that when Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) was speaking to his companions a child came in and went near his father at the corner of the mosque. The Father stroked the boy's head and sat him on his right knee. After a short time his daughter came in and went to him. He stroked her too but sat her on the ground. The Prophet (pbuh & hh) said, 'Why did not you [sit her] on your other leg?' He sat her on his other knee. The Prophet (pbuh & hh) said, 'You have acted justly now.'[2]

Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has also narrated that Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) saw a person who had two children. The father kissed one and not the other. [At this moment] the Prophet told [him], 'Why didn't you act justly among them?'[3]

Respect and honour

Human personality development starts from childhood and this start sometimes determines a child's destiny. If a child is treated with neglect and disrespect by adults, the child would be humiliated and lose their dignity. As a result, they would try to gain this respect and would resort to any action to achieve it. This attempt will lead to precariousness of character or other behavioral issues in adulthood. Therefore, father, mother and other close relatives should respect the child's character in order for a bright future to await them.

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1. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 16, p 585.
2. *Al-'Ayāl*, vol 1, p 173.
3. *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p 220.

Christianity

In the Holy Scriptures of Christianity there are few cases in which showing respect towards children has been mentioned. The most important and prominent verse which can be referred in this regard is chapter 18 of the Gospel of Luke, the 25th verse of which reads, '"People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them." But Jesus called them and said. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."'[1] Prophet Jesus (pbuh) also said, 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones.'[2]

Islam

We see many cases in Islamic scriptures in which believers have been ordered to respect and honour the children. This respect has been introduced in these cases as the duty of parents and adults and the children's right over them. In a tradition Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) said, 'Honour your children and teach them good manners, so that you might be forgiven.'[3]

One of the deeds that Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) never ceased to do was greeting the children. He said, 'I would not leave five things until my death: … and [amongst them is] greeting the children so that it would become a precedent after me.'[4]

It has been numerously seen in Prophet Muḥammad's (pbuh & hh) code of conduct that he insisted on greeting the children and youths and caring for them. Anas, one of the companions of the

1. *The Bible*, Luke 18:25-26.
2. Ibid, Matthew 10:11.
3. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 476; «أَكْرِمُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ وَ أَحْسِنُوا آدَابَهُمْ يُغْفَرْ لَكُم».
4. *Al-Amālī*, Ṣadūq, p 72; «خَمْسٌ لَاأَدَعُهُنَّ حَتَّى الْمَماتِ: … وَالتَّسْليمُ عَلَى الصِّبْيانِ لِتَكُونَ سُنَّةً مِنْ بَعْدى».

Prophet of Islam (pbuh & hh) has narrated, '[Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh)] used to greet the children whenever he passed by them.'[1]

It has been narrated in the book *Makārim al-Akhlāq* from Anas who said, 'The Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) greeted a group of children when he passed by them in a hurry.'[2]

It has been also narrated from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), 'Make room for the youth in your gatherings.'[3]

Having said that, parents have been recommended to consult their children in their youth. It has been narrated from Imam 'Alī (pbuh), 'Whenever you needed consultation regarding an unexpectedly arisen situation, start with consulting the youth.'[4]

Fulfillment of one's promises

Fulfillment of one's promises is a criterion to determine their worth, and the trust between people is built and maintained as a result of this fulfillment. This is used as a criterion by humans since their childhood, seeing that the children think highly of their parents when they fulfill their promises.

Christianity

The Bible has not recognised the fulfillment of promises to children as a right for them. Isaac broke his promise of blessing Esau, though he was not to be blamed for that since Jacob seized

1. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 7, p 156, ḥadīth 18497; «كانَ[صلي الله عليه و آله] يَمُرُّ بِالصِّبيانِ فَيُسَلِّمُ عَلَيهِم».
2. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 16, p 229.
3. *Al-Firdaws*, vol 1, p 98, ḥadīth 320; «أوسِعوا لِلشَّبابِ في المَجلِسِ».
4. *Sharḥ-i Nahj al-Balāgha*, vol 20, p 337, ḥadīth 886.
«إذَا احتَجتَ إلَى المَشورَةِ في أمرٍ قَد طَرَأَ عَلَيكَ فَاستَبدِهِ بِبِدايَةِ الشُّبّانِ».

his father's blessing. As stated in the Bible, despite this treachery and breaking of promise, God gave the blessing to Jacob and Esau was deprived of it.[1]

Islam

Fulfillment of one's promises is highly recommended in Islam, 'Whenever you make a promise, do not break it.'[2] This recommendation is of higher importance when it comes to children. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) puts an emphasis on the fulfillment of promises to children, 'If one of you promised a child, he should fulfill it.'[3] Imam Kāẓim (pbuh), in his advice to parents about the fulfillment of their promises to their children, stated, 'When you promised the children, fulfill it for they think that you are the ones who provide for them [the sustenance].'[4]

Lying to the children has not only an ethical but also a practical dimension [it would be recorded in one's dossier of deeds]. 'Abdullāh b. 'Āmir b. Rabī'a narrates that, 'The Messenger of God (pbuh & hh) came to our home when I was a little boy. I went to play. My mother told me, "O 'Abdullāh come here, [so that] I would give you [something]." The Messenger of God [pbuh & hh] said, "What did you want to give him?" She said, "I wanted to give him some dates." He said, "A lie will be recorded for you [in your dossier of deeds], should you fail to do so."'[5]

If parents fulfill their promises it would leave a long-lasting impact on a child's mind. By fulfilling their promises, parents can have more hope to see the impact of their upbringing in

1. *The Bible*, Genesis 27:18-27.
2. *Al-Amālī, Ṣadūq*, p 90; «وَ إِذَا وَعَدْتُمْ فَلَا تُخْلِفُوا».
3. *Al-Ja'fārīyāt*, p 166; «إِذَا وَاعَدَ أَحَدُكُمْ صَبِيَّةً فَلْيُنْجِزْ».
4. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 50; «إِذَا وَعَدْتُمُ الصِّبْيَانَ فَفُوا لَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَرْزُقُونَهُمْ».
5. *Al-Iṣāba*, vol 4, p 120.

their child. But if they break their promise to their child in their childhood, they shall not expect their child to easily accept and practice their education, because parents have missed the trust which they could obtain by accomplishing a small promise.

They can expect their upbringing to be more effective should they fulfill their promises and they should expect the contrary if they fail to do so. Their children would not act upon their upbringing since they have failed to gain the trust they could have gained by fulfilling a small promise.

Making one's child happy

During their childhood, children regard joy as a means to their happiness. They feel they are the happiest people in the world, should they feel joyful. As the Bible reads, 'Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.'[1]

Holy Islamic scriptures have placed great importance on making children happy. It has been said in a prophetic tradition that, 'Whoever makes his daughter happy, it is as if he has set a slave free from among the descendants of [Prophet] Ishmael [pbuh]. Whoever gladdens his boy [and brightens up his day], it is as if he has wept, out of his fear for God, and whoever wept because of his fear of God, God will make him enter the bountiful Paradise.'[2]

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) was of the opinion that even an affectionate look that makes one's child happy is important. He has stated, '"When a father looks at his child and makes them happy by this affectionate look, God will favor him the reward

1. *The Bible*, Colossians 2:21.
2. *Wasāil al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 514.
«فَإِنَّ مَنْ فَرَّحَ ابْنَتَهُ فَكَأَنَّمَا أَعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً مِنْ وُلْدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ- وَ مَنْ أَقَرَّ بِعَيْنِ ابْنٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا بَكَى مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَ مَنْ بَكَى مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ».

of freeing a slave." He was asked, "O Prophet of God! Even if he looks three hundred and sixty looks in a day?" Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) replied, "Yes, God is far greater [than not favoring him this much]."'[1]

It has been also narrated from the Prophet of God (pbuh & hh) that, 'There is a house in Heaven which is called [the house of] joy. No one shall enter that house except those who have made children happy.'[2]

The Prophet of God (pbuh & hh) has placed heavy emphasis on heartening tearful children. For instance, he states, 'Whoever pleases his crying child in order to make him calm, the Exalted God will grant him enough Heavenly blessings until he is satisfied.'[3]

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has even laid emphasis on planning recreational activities for children's holidays and leisure time. He has said in this regard, 'Buy meat for your children and remember them on [the day of] Friday.'[4]

Playing

Children are in need of playing during their childhood. The Bible has not mentioned playing as a right for children. However, playing forms one of the most important parts of children's life, in Islamic scriptures. We read in a tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh), 'Let your son (children) play [for] seven years.'[5]

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has said in this regard, 'Play-

1. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 71, p 80.
2. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 3, p 170, ḥadīth 6009.
3. *Al-Firdaws*, vol 3, p 549, ḥadīth 5715; «مَن بَكى صَبِيٌّ لَهُ فَأرضاهُ حَتّى يُسَكِّنَهُ ، أعطاهُ اللهُ عز و جل مِنَ الجَنَّةِ حَتّى يَرضى».
4. *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol 6, p 99, ḥadīth 6525; «اشتَرُوا لِصِبيانِكُمُ اللَّحمَ، وذَكِّروهُم يَومَ الجُمُعَةِ».
5. *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, vol 3, p 492; «دَعِ ابنَكَ يَلعَبْ سَبعَ سِنِين».

fulness of the child in his childhood would cause an increase in his intellect in his adulthood.'[1] It is also narrated from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) that he has said, 'I love children for five things: the first is that they cry a lot, the second is that they play with soil, the third is that their enmity is without rancor, the fourth is that they do not save anything for tomorrow, the fifth is that they build and then destroy [what they built].'[2]

Imam Kāẓim (pbuh) has also said, '"Playfulness of the child in his childhood is desirable, so that he would become tolerant in his adulthood." Then he added, "It is not good to be other than this."'[3]

From the viewpoint of Islam, not only children have the right to play, but also their parents have been enjoined to be their children's playmates. Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has said in this regard, 'Whoever has a child should be a child [in behaviour].'[4]

We should hearten children in their playing and do not stop them from playing as long as it proves not to be dangerous. In various cases, it has been cited that Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) used to participate in children's games or hearten them [while doing so].[5] Once, when Imam Ḥasan and Imam Ḥusayn (pbut) were kids, the Prophet (pbuh & hh) was playing with them. He had put them over his shoulders and was crawling across the floor saying, 'What a great ride is your ride and what great riders you are.'[6]

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1. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 11, p 91, ḥadīth 30747; «عَرامَةُ الصَّبِي في صِغَرِهِ زِيادَةٌ في عَقلِهِ في كِبَرِهِ».
2. *Al-Mawā'iẓ al-'Adadīyyah*, p 259.
3. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 51; «تُستَحَبُّ عَرامَةُ الصَّبِي في صِغَرِهِ لِيَكونَ حَليما في كِبَرِهِ، ثُمَّ قالَ: ما يَنبَغي أن يَكونَ إلاّ هكَذا».
4. Ibid, vol 6, p 50; «مَنْ كانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ صَبَا».
5. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 100, p 189.
6. *Shawāid al-Tanzīl*, vol 1, p 455.
«حَمَلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ الحَسَنَ وَ الحُسَيْنَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ- ثُمَّ مَشَى وَ قَالَ: نِعْمَ الْمَطِيُّ مَطِيُّكُمَا- وَ نِعْمَ الرَّاكِبَانِ أَنْتُمَا، وَ أَبُوكُمَا خَيرٌ مِنْكُمَا».

Praying

Praying for children is amongst the instructions that the great scholars of the religion have given parents. These prayers can have significant impacts on the lives of their children. There are some cases in the Bible in which parents prayed for their children to be healed. As in the case of a Canaanite girl, whose mother came to Jesus Christ (pbuh) crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.'[1] However, no case was found in the Bible in which parents are instructed to pray for their children.

In an Islamic point of view, it has been narrated from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) that, '"The prayer of father for his child is like the prayer of the Messenger [of God] for his people."[2] "May God have mercy on the person who assists his child in his good deed, i.e. to forgive his wrongdoing and to pray for him in his solitude with God."'[3]

Imam Sajjād (pbuh) in his supplication with God has said prayers for his children in this way, 'O God! Be kind to me through the survival of my children, setting them right for me, and allowing me to enjoy them! My God, make long their lives for me, increase their terms, bring up the smallest for me, strengthen the weakest for me, rectify for me their bodies, their religious dedication, and their moral traits, make them well in their souls, their limbs, and everything that concerns me of their affair, and pour out for me and upon my hand their provisions! [O God!] Make them pious, fearing, insightful, hearing, and obedient to-

1. *The Bible*, Matthew 15:22; Mark 7:26.
2. *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, p 162; «دُعاءُ الوالِدِ لِوَلَدِهِ كَدُعاءِ النَّبِيِّ لأُمَّتِهِ».
3. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 104, p 98, ḥadīth 70.
«رَحِمَ اللهُ مَن أعانَ وَلَدَهُ عَلى بِرِّهِ، وهُوَ أن يَعفُوَ عَن سَيِّئَتِهِ، ويَدعُوَ لَهُ فيما بَينَهُ وبَينَ اللهِ».

ward Thee, loving and well-disposed towards Thy friends, and stubbornly resistant and full of hate towards all Thy enemies! Amen! … [O God!] Make them loving towards me, affectionate, approaching, upright, obedient, never disobedient, disrespectful, opposed, or offenders! Help me in their upbringing, their education, and my devotion towards them, … Give me and my progeny refuge from the accursed Satan …'[1]

In Islamic teachings, parents have been prohibited from cursing their children just as much as they have been enjoined to pray for them. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has said, 'Do not curse your children, lest it be accepted by God.'[2] It's also narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) that, 'Whoever curses their child has inherited poverty [destitute] for him.'[3]

Consequences of protecting children's rights

In this world, each and every action would provoke a reaction and every deed has a consequence. To achieve the desired consequences and reactions, every individual must adhere to these two principles: to do the right thing and to do it right. This very rule applies to the cases regarding children too. Therefore, any attitude towards children as well as any upbringing method, based on the way we employ it, would have its consequences in life. As a result, for upbringing a child with outstanding qualities, first it's necessary to adopt the right upbringing method and second to implement it right.

If we succeeded in adopting the right attitude and upbringing method, it would bring many advantages for the child, fami-

1. *Al-ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādīyyah*, p 105, Supplication 25.
2. *Tārīkh Iṣbahān*, vol 2, p 296, ḥadīth 1784; «لا تَدعوا عَلى أولادِكُم أن توافق مِنَ اللهِ إجابَةً».
3. *'Uddat al-Dā'ī*, p 80; «أيُّما رَجُلٍ دَعا عَلى وَلَدِهِ أوزَثَهُ اللهُ الفَقرَ».

ly and the society. If the children's position is honoured, they would become people with outstanding qualities who would make their family proud and successful in the future. This successful family would become a fertile ground for successful individuals whose presence would prove to be beneficial in developing the social culture. Therefore, protecting children's position in the family is not only beneficial for them but it also affects every one's happiness.

Christianity

In Christian scriptures, the consequences of protecting children's rights have been mentioned in some verses, as it follows:

Parent's contentment

According to the Bible, the contentment of the parents is within the acceptance of the wisdom by their children; 'My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad indeed; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.'[1] A Father endures all the hardships of life for upbringing a child who follows in his footsteps. If he sees his child embracing his teachings, he would be filled with such a joy, the like of which he can never achieve in anything else, 'The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him.'[2]

It also applies to one's disciples since they are regarded as children. For mentors, who are regarded as fathers, no joy is more overwhelming than seeing their teachings being embraced by their disciples and followers. John has written in his third Book, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 23:15-16.
2. Ibid, 23:24.

in the truth.'[1]

The way to life

Humans try their best to save their lives. However, many of them, alas, see their life merely in benefitting from the instinctive and material pleasures and fail to think about the life of their soul, while reality is just the opposite. If someone enjoys soundness of soul, other pleasures would be brought about as well. Consequently, both soul and body would enjoy life and would be delighted. Conversely, if they think only about their material life, and fail to feed their soul, it would cause the soul to die as time passes, and the person will be considered to be in a silent death.

One of the best ways to keep the soul lively is for the relation between parents and their children to be preserved, the position of children among family to be honoured and the teachings of the parents to be learnt by the children. Parents and children feed each other's souls; the former by teaching and the latter by learning those teachings. [Prophet] Solomon [pbuh] has said in his sermons, 'Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.'[2]

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) in another part of his sermons considers the instructions and the teachings of the parents as enlightenments through one's way to life. He also introduces correction and instructions as the way to life. 'When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the

1. *The Bible*, 3 John 4.
2. Ibid, Proverbs 10:17.

way to life.'[1]

Sometimes, the thing that matters is not an individual's life but it is the society's. Therefore, it is on the parents and the children of the society to put their efforts into achieving such an aim. As long as the society is on its designated path, all its people would be alive. But, if the society goes astray, death will wait at the end of their road.

Prophet David (pbuh) in the Book of Psalms, Chapter 78, remarks this point and considers the teaching of commands to future generations to be necessary. 'So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.'[2]

Parents' peace of mind

Parents keep struggling from the moment their children are born and never get to pass a night with peace of mind. They would only achieve this peace [of mind] should they see that their struggles and endeavours have resulted in their disciplines being embraced and employed by their children. The Book of Proverbs reads, 'Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.'[3]

The Bible calls the children and the grandchildren a crown to the aged and considers them a source of their parents' peace of mind in the autumn of their life. It reads, 'Children's children

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 6:22-23.
2. Ibid, Psalm 78:6-7.
3. Ibid, Proverbs 29:17.

are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.'[1]

Islam

In different cases, the Holy Scriptures of Islam state the results of acting upon its instructions to make the impacts reach even farther. Such statements are also seen in the instructions of Islam about upholding the children's rights. The most important impacts of upholding the children's rights will be discussed in the following.

Spiritual wealth

When it comes to affection towards children, parents are introduced as the ones who sympathise with them. Sometimes this issue gets stressed upon, to the extent that the children's sympathy for their parents is forgotten. If a child goes through proper upbringing and education and their souls remain intact despite all the hardships that time has brought upon, they would be filled with sadness and sorrow upon seeing their parents facing any difficulty and will try their best to deal with it. In such a situation, nothing would prove to be as joyful as their parents' peace of mind and the sadness being removed.

Uways Qaranī can be considered an outstanding example of spiritual wealth. Yearning to visit Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), he asked his mother's permission to go to Medina and promised her to come back by sunset. Upon reaching Medina, he failed to visit Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), and in order to fulfill his promise, hastened back to be at his mother's service, for he considered nursing and serving his mother to be more

1. *The Bible*, Proverbs 17:6.

important than paying a visit to the Prophet (pbuh & hh). When Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) came back home, he said that he smelled the fragrance of Paradise from the direction of the tribe of Qaran. Then he asked everyone to convey his greetings to him if they happened to see him.[1] Failing to visit Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh), Uways Qaranī met his demise with a longing heart full of sorrow.

The care and concern that a righteous child shows towards their parents is not restricted to their lifetime but it continues even after their parents perish. Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) narrates a parable about prophet Jesus (pbuh), saying, 'Once prophet Jesus (pbuh) passed a grave whose owner was in torment. When he passed there next time, [the owner of the grave] was not in torment [anymore]. So he said, "O Lord! I passed this grave last year while [its owner] was in torment and I passed it this year while he is not in torment!" Therefore, God revealed to him that, "A virtuous child of him has matured. This child reconstructed a road and accommodated an orphan. So, I forgave him because of what his son did.'[2] It is also narrated from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) that he has said, 'When a believer dies, all his deeds die [with him] except three: Ongoing alms, knowledge that benefits [others], or a virtuous child who invokes [God] in favour of him.'[3] Once someone went to Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) and told him, '"I used to renounce child [bearing] until I was [once] in 'Arafāt when all of a sudden there was a young man next to me, invoking [God in favour of his parents], weeping tears and saying, O Lord! My parents… my parents…" and so he made me

1. *Al-Iṣāba*, vol 1, p 359.
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 4; «أَنَّهُ أَدْرَكَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ صَالِحٌ فَأَصْلَحَ طَرِيقاً وَ آوَى يَتِيماً فَلِهَذَا غَفَرْتُ لَهُ بِمَا فَعَلَ ابْنُهُ».
3. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 2, p 22.
«إِذَا مَاتَ الْمُؤْمِنُ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَه»

interested in child [bearing] when I heard that.'[1]

Elsewhere it has been narrated that Ḥasan Baṣrī used to say, 'How bad is the child! If he lives, he tires me and if he dies, he destroys me.' This reached Imam Sajjād's (pbuh) ears and in return he commented, 'By God, he lied. How good is the child! If he lives, he prays [for you] in the present time and if he dies, he becomes an intercessor [for you] before your death.'[2]

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has also said, 'The child is the heart of the believer. If [the child] dies before him, becomes [his] intercessor and if [the child] dies after him, asks God's forgiveness on behalf of him and [God] forgives him.'[3]

Parents' strength

In order to state another consequence of protecting children's position, Islam has described the child as the strength of the family. According to Islamic scriptures, children are the means to strengthen the family and the help to resort to in times of difficulty. As Imam Riḍā (pbuh) has regarded the '...increase in the number and increase in the children for the ups and downs of the time and the occurrences of matters...'[4] amongst the advantages and consequences of marriage.

There are many scriptures in which the children are introduced as the strength of their parents. In the verse 6 of chapter Isrā', God has said, 'And we aided you with children and wealth, and made you greater in number.'[5] In this verse, children are intro-

1. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 3.
2. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 79, p 132 «كَذَبَ واللهِ! نِعمَ الشيءُ الولدُ؛ إن عاشَ فدعاءٌ حاضرٌ، و إن ماتَ فشفيعٌ سابقٌ».
3. *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol 15, p 112 «الوَلَدُ كَبِدُ المؤمِن إن ماتَ قَبلَه صارَ شفيعاً، و إن ماتَ بَعدَه يَستغفرُ اللهَ له فيَغفِرُ له».
4. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 374; «تَكْثِيرِ الْعَدَدِ وَ تَوْفِيرِ الْوَلَدِ لِنَوَائِبِ الدَّهْرِ وَ حَوَادِثِ الْأُمُورِ».
5. *The Holy Qur'an* (17):6.

duced as the indicators of Divine help, who can prove to be of great help for their household during the wars.

A child not only can be of great help for the parents in wars, but also he can be a means of strength in the daily life. That is why Imam Sajjād (pbuh) has stated in his supplication towards God, 'O God! Through them strengthen my arm.'[1]

The parent's helper

The Old age is one of the most mysterious and also hardest phases of one's life which remains an area of uncertainty and anxiety before reaching it. One always lives with this anxiety that how they will enter this phase and how they will pass it.

Islamic scriptures also call the children as the parent's helpers and consider this help as an indication of one's happiness. In a tradition Imam Sajjād (pbuh) has said, '[A sign] of a man's happiness is to have a child to turn to for help.'[2] He has also said in the supplication 25 of *Al-Ṣaḥīfât al-Sajjādīyyah*, 'Straighten my burdened back.'[3]

Inheritor

'Heir' is used to refer to someone who inherits the properties of the deceased. This inheritance can be either material or spiritual which comes down to the remaining family members of the deceased. Sometimes there is no one to inherit the property or there is a person but is incompetent. In these cases the deceased is called 'without inheritor' or 'with bad inheritor'. Every person desires to see their legacy continued and their property pre-

1. *Al-Ṣaḥīfât al-Sajjādīyyah*, p 105, Supplication 25; «اللَّهُمَّ اشْدُدْ بِهِمْ عَضُدِي».
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 5, p 257; «مِنْ سَعَادَةِ الرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وُلْدٌ يَسْتَعِينُ بِهِمْ».
3. *Al-Ṣaḥīfât al-Sajjādīyyah*, p 105, Supplication 25; وَ أَقِمْ بِهِمْ أَوَدِي؛.

served after their death. In most of the cases, none other than one's own child deserves to receive this spiritual and material property. This will come true only when the parents honour the position of the children in the family and the children learn parents' teachings.

Islamic scriptures have paid attention to the subject of heirs. Some of them point out that, in fact, it is the person's heir who keeps their memory, name and legacy alive in different times. Hence, if a person does not have an heir, even their thoughts would not be continued. In a meaningful tradition Imam Riḍā (pbuh) has said, 'Whoever dies without an offspring [as an heir] it is as if he has not ever been amongst people. Whoever dies with an offspring [as an heir] it is as if he has not ever died.'[1] Imam Sajjād (pbuh) has also referred to this point asking God, 'Revive my [name and] remembrance through my children.'[2]

Paying further attention to some other scriptures, we realise that those who were chosen by God used to ask their Lord for the children who would walk in their footsteps and continue their beliefs. In the Holy Qur'an, When prophet Abraham (pbuh) is praying before God, he is not praying for himself alone but he thinks of the next generation too and says in his prayer, 'My Lord! Make me a maintainer of the prayer, and my descendants [too].'[3]

Also prophet Zechariah (pbuh) when praying in the temple, asking God for a child, does not only ask for a mere child, but he asks God in his prayer to bestow him an heir who would inherit his and Jacob's (pbuh) household to walk in their footsteps. He

1. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 357; «أَنَّ مَنْ مَاتَ بِلَا خَلَفٍ فَكَأَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي النَّاسِ وَ مَنْ مَاتَ وَ لَهُ خَلَفٌ فَكَأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَمُتْ».
2. *Al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādīyyah*, p 105, Supplication 25; «أَحْيِ بِهِمْ ذِكرِي».
3. *The Holy Qur'an* (14):40.

says, 'Indeed I fear my kinsmen, after me, and my wife is barren. So grant me from Yourself an heir who may inherit from me and inherit from the House of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You]!'[1]

The parent's peace of mind

A couple who do not have a child always have a feeling of vague nervousness. No matter how busy they are and how much they communicate with other people, they would still feel lonely, and no matter how much wealth and comfort they are in, they would not enjoy a perfect peace of mind. This feeling continues until the day they embrace a child. It is with the presence of this child that they will achieve true peace [of mind]. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) advises the young couples who do not have children to ask God like this, 'O God! Do not leave me alone [with no heir] so that my gratitude would be less than my thought. Rather, grant me intimacy [with] and true offspring, either boy or girl, so that I would rely on them in times of loneliness and keep their company in times of solitude, and I express my gratitude for all your blessings.'[2]

Salvation from Hellfire

Showing affection towards children and honouring their position is so important that Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) considers this affection a means of being forgiven and emphasises that, 'Indeed God will have mercy on the servant because of his affection to-

1. *The Holy Qur'an*, (19):5-6.
2. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 9.
«اللَّهُمَّ لَاتَذَرْنِي فَرْداً وَحِيداً وَحْشاً، فَيَقْصُرَ شُكْرِي عَنْ تَفَكُّرِي، بَلْ هَبْ لِي أُنْساً وَ عَاقِبَةَ صِدْقٍ ذُكُوراً وَ إِنَاثاً، أَسْكُنُ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنَ الْوَحْشَةِ وَ آنَسُ بِهِمْ مِنَ الْوَحْدَةِ وَ أَشْكُرُكَ عَلى تَمَامِ النِّعْمَة...؛ ».

wards his child.'[1]

Long life

According to the Holy Scriptures, long life is amongst the results of showing affection towards children and family. In a tradition Imam Bāqir (pbuh) has said, 'Whoever shows his family great kindness, his lifetime will be lengthened.'[2]

Forgiveness of sins

Forgiveness of sins is another result of honouring children's position in the family. In a tradition Imam Bāqir (pbuh) has said, 'Honour your children and teach them good manners, so that you might be forgiven.'[3] It has been also narrated from Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) that, 'There is no man who teaches his child the Qur'an but on the Day of Resurrection a majestic crown is placed on his parent's heads and they are dressed in garments the likes of which no one has seen.'[4]

Disadvantages of failing to honour the child's position in the family

Honouring children's position would bring many advantages for the parents. Similarly, failing to do so would also bring serious and irreparable disadvantages. Both Islamic and Christian scriptures have directed their attention to these disadvantages. Some of these disadvantages like misery in this world and the Hereafter, poverty, humiliation, etc. are mentioned in this book.

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1. *Al-Kāfī*, vol 6, p 50; «إِنَّ اللهَ لَيَرْحَمُ الْعَبْدَ لِشِدَّةِ حُبِّهِ لِوَلَدِهِ».
2. Ibid, vol 2, p 105; «مَنْ حَسُنَ بِرُّهُ بِأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ مُدَّ لَهُ فِي عُمُرِهِ».
3. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 476; «أَكْرِمُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ وَ أَحْسِنُوا آدَابَهُمْ يُغْفَرْ لَكُمْ».
4. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol 1, p 540, ḥadīth 2421
«ما مِن رَجُلٍ عَلَّمَ وَلَدَهُ القُرآنَ إلاّ تُوِّجَ أبَواهُ يَومَ القِيامَةِ بِتاجِ المُلكِ، وكُسِيَ حُلَّتَينِ لَم يَرَ النّاسُ مِثلَهُما».

Christianity

According to the Bible, those parents who fail to honour the child's position in the family and are negligent in disciplining them in fact hate their child and if someone wishes their child good, then they should endeavour to protect their rights such as their upbringing. 'Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.'[5]

Darkness [of ignorance] and stupidity would fall into the child's heart as a result of parents' failing to care about their child's position on one side and children failing to obey their parents on the other side. If this happened, nothing except sorrow and sadness would be the result. 'A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the mother who bore him.'[6]

Islam

Holy Islamic scriptures have also emphasised on some disadvantages and harms that would befall on parents and children. Some of them, we are going to mention below.

Envy and enmity

Fair treatment towards one's children has been stressed upon in Islamic scriptures. It should be preserved in every aspect of children's life. If disregarded, it can have many consequences such as envy and enmity amongst children. Imam 'Alī (pbuh), regarding this disadvantage, has said, 'To praise [someone] more than what they deserve is considered flattery, and [to praise someone] less

5. *The Bible*, Proverbs 13:24
6. Ibid, 17:25

than what they deserve is considered as incapability or envy.'[1]

A good example of this kind of envy can be seen in the story of Prophet Joseph (pbuh). Although Prophet Jacob (pbuh) warned him not to recount his dream to his brothers, out of his fear from their envy, they finally found out. As a result, Joseph's (pbuh) brothers, who were already offended by their father's deep affection towards him, were led by the flames of their envy to commit the sin they shouldn't have.

Change in character

One of the important issues regarding children's position and rights that needs to be taken into consideration is to care about the milk that the child feeds on. Choosing a good nursemaid has been mentioned as a right for children. Disregarding this right and failing to check a nursemaid's virtues, characteristics and adherence to religion can affect the child's future. Imam 'Alī (pbuh) has remarked the necessity of this consideration in a tradition, saying, 'You should choose [a nursemaid] for the suckling likewise you choose [a spouse] for marriage, for the suckling indeed changes the character.'[2]

God's wrath

Disregarding children's position in the family and behaving aggressively and violently towards them not only leaves an impact on their soul and mind but also brings about God's wrath. According to Imam Kāẓim's (pbuh) saying, 'Indeed, nothing like [showing] rage towards women and children would enrage God.'[3]

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1. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p 535; «النِّسَاءُ بِأَكْثَرَ مِنَ الِاسْتِحْقَاقِ مَلَقٌ وَ التَّقْصِيرُ عَنِ الِاسْتِحْقَاقِ عِيٌّ أَوْ حَسَد».
2. *Qurb al-Isnād*, p 93.
3. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 73; «لَيسَ يَغضَبُ لِشَيءٍ كَغَضَبِهِ لِلنِّساءِ وَالصِّبيانِ».

Hellfire

As it was mentioned above, showing affection towards children proved to be so valuable that it could bring about God's contentment as well as the parent's redemption from the Hellfire and their salvation. On the contrary, failing to show affection towards children and violence against them would bring about God's wrath. If a person does not repent on such a deed and fails to satisfy their child, they will be amongst the inmates of Hell. Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has said in this regard, 'A man came to the Prophet [Muḥammad (pbuh & hh)] and told him, "I never kissed a child." After he turned back, the Messenger of God [pbuh & hh] said, "This man, in our view, is indeed a man amongst the inmates of the Hellfire."'[1]

If a person is unkind towards children or wishes their death, not only their efforts are in vain and will not be recompensed, but also they will visit their God as sinners on the Day of Resurrection. 'Whoever desires the death of the girls is deprived of the honour of [parenting] them and faces the Sublime God as a sinner.'[2] It goes without saying that nothing awaits a sinner except the punishment of Hell.

Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has said about a person who used not to show affection towards his children, 'Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown any.'[3] According to this statement, those who do not show affection towards their children shall not expect to be a subject of God's forgiveness and compassion after their death.

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1. *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol 8, p 113.
2. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 99; «مَنْ تَمَنَّى مَوْتَ الْبَنَاتِ حُرِمَ أَجْرَهُنَّ وَ لَقِيَ اللهَ تَعَالَى عَاصِيا».
3. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 485; «مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمْ لَا يُرْحَمْ».

Conclusion

What we tried to accomplish in this book was to study the true position of children as well as their certain rights in Islam and Christianity, in order for us to have healthy and strong families.

First of all, the importance of the child's position in the family was discussed and we found out as a result that both Islam and Christianity think highly of children and consider them to be Divine blessings. Then, we talked about children's rights that would shape a bright future for them, if upheld by all family members.

The reason for all this attention towards the position of children in Islam can be uncovered in this statement of Imam 'Alī (pbuh), 'I found you to be not only a part of me, but rather the whole of me. So that, if something befell you, it is as if it has befallen me and if death embraced you, it is as if it has embraced me. Therefore, any of your matters worry me as any of my own do.'[1]

In the following, all the headlines are listed in separate tables in order to come to a fair conclusion. A relevant example of each subject has also been provided. The related cell has been left blank, in case no relevant example was found.

1. *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, p 68;
«وجدتک بعضی، بل وجدتک کلی حتی کأن شیئا لو اصابک أصابنی، و کأن الموت لو أتاک أتانی، فعنانی من أمرک ما یعنینی من أمر نفسی».

Conclusion of the importance and value of the child

The importance	Islam	Christianity
Childbearing	'Seek a descendant and wish for him, so he is indeed delight of the eye and fragrant flower of the heart.'	Two approaches towards the child have been pursued by the Bible. One approach pertains to the Old Testament and encourages the believers to (the category of) the family formation and child-bearing, stating, 'Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.' (Jeremiah 29:6) The second approach in the New Testament is stated by Saint Paul,* 'Now to the unmarried [a] and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.' (1 Corinthians 7:7-9)
The characteristics of children	'God made for you mates from your own selves and appointed for you, from your mates, children and grandchildren, and We provided you with all the good things. What, will they believe in falsehood while they deny the blessing of God?'	"'Who are these with you?" he asked. Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."' (Genesis 33:5)

Conclusion of the rights of children

The rights of children	Islam	Christianity
Good parents	Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has stated, 'Marry among the righteous relations/tribe then indeed blood will tell, what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh.' 'Do not kill your children for the fear of penury: We will provide for them and for you. Killing them is indeed a great iniquity.' *The Holy Qur'an* (17): 31.	'No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even in the tenth generation.' (Deuteronomy 23:2)
The right to live	'Do not kill your children for the fear of penury: We will provide for them and for you. Killing them is indeed a great iniquity.' *The Holy Qur'an* (17): 31.	
The right of freedom	The Commander of the Faithful (pbuh) has stated, 'Do not make yourself a slave of anybody. God has created you a freeman.' *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 31.	According to the Bible, a (Hebrew) father is entitled to sell his child as a male servant or maid. 'If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as male servants do. If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed.' (Exodus 21:2-11)

Choosing a good name	It has been narrated from Imam Kāẓim (pbuh), saying, 'The first goodness/kindness of the man towards his child is to give a good name to him; then, every one of you give a good name to his child.' *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol 21, p 389	
Suckling	'No milk for the child is better than his [their] mother's milk.' 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, vol 2, p 34 Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has stated, 'Suckling is twenty one months then if it is reduced, it would be an injustice to the child.' *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥū al-Faqīh*, vol 3, p 475.	
Affection	'Indeed God, to him belong mighty and majesty, has mercy upon the man for his great affection towards his child.' *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥū al-Faqīh*, vol 3, p 482	In his letter to Ephesians, Saint Paul has also recommended fathers not to exasperate their children. (Ephesians 6:4)

Kissing	Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh & hh) has stated, 'Kiss your children, as there would be a rank for you in Paradise for every kiss and there is a fifty-hundred-year distance between each pair of ranks.' *Makārim al-Akhlāq, p 220.*	
Upbringing and edification	'And you are responsible towards yourself and your child for what you are in charge of including good upbringing and guiding towards his God and helping in the way of His obedience; then you would be rewarded or punished based on this; thus, raise the child so that you would be graced in this world should it have good effects here, and you would have proof before God due to how well you have taken care of him.'	
Education	'The child's right upon his father is to teach him writing, swimming and shooting and bequeath him pure [will].'	'A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.'

Nutrition, hygiene and adornment	'Wash the dirt of your young children, for Satan will smell the dirt and the youth would be frightened while sleeping.'	
Providing the living expenses for the child	'And on the father shall be their maintenance and clothing, in accordance with honorable norms. No soul is to be tasked except according to its capacity: neither the mother shall be made to suffer harm on her child's account, nor the father on account of his child.'	'After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.'
Marriage	'Marry off those who are single among you and the upright among your male slaves and your female slaves. If they are poor, God will enrich them out of His grace, and God is All-Bounteous, All-Knowing'.	'While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt' This verse talks about picking out a spouse for Ishmael by his mother. From this, one can infer that picking out a spouse for the child by their parents has been long established in all customs and nations.
Fairness amongst children	'Verily God the Sublime likes that you act justly amongst your children even in kissing.'	

Respect and honour	Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) said, 'Honour your children and teach them good manners, so that you might be forgiven.'	'People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them'. But Jesus called them and said. 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'
Fulfillment of one's promises	'When you promised the children, fulfill it for they think that you are the ones who provide for them [the sustenance].'	
Making one's child happy	'When a father looks at his child and makes them happy by this affectionate look, God will favor him the reward of freeing a slave.'	'Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.'
Playing	'Playfulness of the child in his childhood is desirable, so that he would become tolerant in their adulthood.'	
Praying	'May God have mercy on the person who assists his child in his good deed, i.e. to forgive his wrongdoing and to pray for him in his solitude with God.'	

Conclusion of the consequences of protecting children's rights

Christianity	
The parent's contentment	'My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad indeed; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.'
The way to life	'Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.'
Parents' peace of mind	'Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.'

Islam	
Spiritual wealth	'Once prophet Jesus (pbuh) passed a grave whose owner was in torment. When he passed there next time, [the owner of the grave] was not in torment [anymore]. So that he said, 'O Lord! I passed this grave last year while [its owner] was in torment and I passed it this year while he is not in torment!' Therefore, God revealed to him that, 'A virtuous child of him has matured. This child reconstructed a road and accommodated an orphan, so I forgave him because of what his son did.'
Parents' strength	'...increase in the number and increase in the children for the ups and downs of the time and the occurrences of matters...'
The parent's helper	'[A sign] of a man's happiness is to have a child to turn to for help.'

Inheritor	'Whoever dies without an offspring [as an heir] it is as if he has not ever been amongst people. Whoever dies with an offspring [as an heir] it is as if he has not ever died.'
The parent's peace of mind	'O God! Do not leave me alone [with no heir] so that my gratitude would be less than my thought. Rather, grant me intimacy [with] and true offspring either boy or girl. So that, I would rely on them in times of loneliness and keep their company in times of solitude, and I express my gratitude for all your blessings."
Long life	'Whoever shows his family great kindness, his lifetime will be lengthened'
Forgiveness of sins	'Honour your children and teach them good manners, so that you might be forgiven'

Conclusion of the disadvantages of failing to honour the child's position in the family

Christianity	
Parents' hatred	'Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them'

Islam	
Envy and enmity	'To praise [someone] more than what they deserve is considered flattery, and [to praise someone] less than what they deserve is considered as incapability or envy'.
Change in character	'You should choose [a nursemaid] for the suckling likewise you choose [a spouse] for marriage, for the suckling indeed changes the character.'

God's Wrath	Imam Kāẓim (pbuh) has stated, 'Indeed, nothing like [showing] rage towards women and children would enrage God.' *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol 101, p 73
Hellfire	Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh) has stated, 'A man came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said, "I have never kissed a child." When he passed, the Messenger of God said, "This man would verily be amongst the inhabitants of the Fire." '

At the end, I extend my hand towards God in prayer and ask Him humbly not to deprive any couple from the pleasure of having a child, this heavenly blessing. I wish all hard-working fathers, compassionate mothers and the children on the earth the best wishes and pray for them to live together happily and in good health. I also ask God to embrace those parents and children who have departed this life into His Paradise. Amen!

Arabic transliteration guide

ا	alif	a ā (long vowel)	ط	ṭā	ṭ/Ṭ
ب	bā	B	ظ	ẓā	ẓ
ت	tā	T	ع	‘ayn	‘
ث	thā	Th	غ	Ghayn	gh
ج	jīm	J	ف	Fā	f
ح	ḥā	ḥ/Ḥ	ق	Qāf	q
خ	khā	Kh	ك	Kāf	k
د	dāl	D	ل	Lām	l
ذ	dhāl	Dh	م	Mīm	m
ر	rā	R	ن	Nūn	n
ز	zā	Z	ه	Hā	h
س	sīn	S	و	Wāw	w (consonantal) ū (long vowel)
ش	shīn	Sh	ي	Yā	y (consonantal) ī (long vowel)
ص	ṣād	Ṣ/ṣ	ء	Hamza	’
ض	ḍād	ḍ/Ḍ			
Short vowels	fatḥa		ـَـ		= a
	kasra		ـِـ		= i
	ḍamma		ـُـ		= u

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