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Parents And Children

Your parents and your children, ye know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit. . . (***Qur'an, 4:11***)

This *ayah* shows the Islamic attitude towards the relationship between parents and children. From infancy to adulthood, it is unparalleled tender love and care of the parents which brings the child from the stage of absolute weakness and helplessness to perfect strength and independence.

Conversely, in old age a man becomes like a small child; the mind and body turn so weak that Allah says:

If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature . . . (***Qur'an, 36:68***)

Yesterday, your parents looked after you when you were too feeble to look after yourself; today you must look after them.

Why so much Emphasis on the Rights of Parents?

Here is a point to ponder over: We do not find in the Qur'an and *hadith so* much emphasis on looking after the children as is the case with the rights of the parents. Why?

The *shari `ah* has put a new challenge to those who think. Find out how logical this attitude is.

The fact is that the parent's heart is the fountainhead of the love for the child; this affection becomes the life-blood of the parents. The Qur'an has alluded to this instinctive parental love in several places.

On the other hand, children especially when they are no longer in need of parental care, do not feel so much love for the parents. We are not speaking about respect. Here the talk is about instinctive love;

and experience is a reliable witness to confirm this observation

It is a known fact that sign-posts are not needed on straight highways; but at a crossroads where several routes branch out, one cannot expect to get onto the right path without a guide or a sign-post.

It is for this reason that Islam does not emphasize in so many words those aspects of life which are taken care of by human nature itself. It is where the hold of natural instinct is loosened that Islam extends its helping hand and leads man on the right path by telling him what he is expected to do.

It was for this reason that Islam did not explain the rights of children so forcefully; but full emphasis was given to the rights of the parents, as will be observed in coming chapters.

Rights of Children

The Holy Prophet said to `Ali (a.s.):
O' `Ali, there are as many rights of children incumbent upon parents as there are rights of parents incumbent upon children.

Rights and duties are inter-related. The right of `A' is the duty of `B'. Although, as mentioned above, natural parental love was a sufficient surety for the upkeep, welfare and upbringing of the child, Islam prepared some wonderful guidelines for the parents.

There are many important turning points in human life - right from birth to adulthood - in which a wrong step may prove fatal for happiness and success - both of this world and of the life hereafter.

Most important is education and character building. Here are a few sign-posts concerning these two aspects.

Name

Amir al-mu'minin, `Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said:
The first beneficence of a parent towards his child is to give him a good name; therefore, you should name your child with a good name.

It is a fact that good names may have a good influence on the mind of a person. A child hears his name day and night; and it is reasonable to believe that the meaning of that name subconsciously strengthens those characteristics which are implied in that name. of course, it does not mean that no evil person has

a good name. What is emphasized here is the fact that a name has a psychological effect on the person, provided it is not countermanded by rearing or society.

A bad name has one more tangible evil effect. Whenever that name is announced, the person will feel embarrassment and the name will become a source of constant irritation, effecting his outlook of society. Hence the emphasis in *ahadith* on giving good names to children. .

The Holy Prophet used to emphasize this aspect of life so much that al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "(The Apostle of Allah) used to change the bad names of people and places."

It is recommended that the child should be named after the Holy Prophet and his family. Strangely enough, nowadays people name their children after film actors and actresses. This trend points to a far deeper malady of our society.

It shows that now our daily life and dominating thoughts have lost their connection with the founder of Islam and his family. Now we are glorifying those whose lives are diametrically opposed to Islamic tenets; and who depend on haram (forbidden) actions for their livelihood. By giving our children the names of such anti-Islamic persons, we are teaching our children not to care about Islam in their lives.

Three Stages of Life

From infancy up-to the age of 21-22 years, one's life may be divided into three stages:

The First Stage is up-to the age of 7. Ancient philosophers were of the opinion that the human mind in the very beginning is completely blank, and it is only gradually that it starts using the faculties of sight, hearing etc.

During childhood, it becomes strong enough to understand common words and ideas and associate names with objects. Still it is not developed enough to bear the strain of logical reasoning and abstract ideas.

That theory basically is accepted even today. And tests and experiments have led modern psychologists to believe that as a general rule the child's mind up-to the age of 7 and 8 years is not strong enough to grasp book knowledge. Children who are required to cram pages and pages of books at such a tender age suffer a lot and their originality is sacrificed on the altar of written pages.

The Second Stage begins at 8 years and goes to 14-15 years. In this period the mind remains alert and easily grasps logical reasoning and abstract theories. The child's interest in acquiring knowledge is at its peak at this age. The freshness of mind and ability to learn more is never as marvellous as is in this

period. This is because the curiosity to learn about the unknown is generally not bridled by any responsibility.

The Third Stage is after 14–15 years. The human mind becomes strong; adolescence opens new horizons before the eyes. Sex, marriage, domestic life and its complex problems come to the fore. The child of yesterday is the youth of today. He appreciates that soon he will be required to look after himself; he knows that every passing day brings him nearer to the responsibilities of a family with all that that entails.

These thoughts prepare him to exert himself to earn his own livelihood, and he starts looking for a way to do so.

In this perspective let us look at the following *ahadith* and see how our Divine philosophers explained these aspects of life which modern psychologists have discovered after hundreds of experiments

1) al–Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq (a. s.) said:

Let your child play up to seven years (1st stage); and keep him with you (for study etc.) for another seven years (2nd stage); then if he succeeds (well and good); otherwise, there is no good in him.

2) The Holy Prophet said:

The child is the master for seven years (1st stage) ; and a slave for seven years (2nd stage) and a vizier for seven years (3rd stage) ; so if he builds a good character within 21 years, well and good, otherwise leave him alone because (if you looked after him for 21 years).

you have discharged your responsibility before Allah.

As the first stage is a care–free period, it has been called mastership; the 2nd stage means taking orders from teachers and parents, therefore it has been called slavery; in the third stage the child is expected to help his parent in earning his livelihood, so it has been named viziership.

For each of these periods, the Islamic *shari `ah* has given some guidelines.

Instruction for the Three Stages

First Stage

It has been explained that the child should not be burdened with books in this period. But this does not mean that his mind's faculties remain suspended. On the contrary, the atmosphere of society continuously influence the child's mind, though he himself is not aware of this process. Therefore, it is essential to give utmost priority to the proper upbringing and character-building.

The best way to inculcate good behaviour in children is to behave with them with good grace. In this way, they will learn etiquette, good behaviour and noble character. The Holy Prophet said: "Respect your children and teach them good behaviour, Allah will forgive (your sins)."

It is emphasized that children should be kept in a good environment. The Holy Prophet said: "O' `Ali, it is among the rights of the child on his father to . . . teach him good manners and keep him in good society."

Also, it is desirable to gradually give them religious training, because the impressions gained in childhood are very difficult to erase and if respect and love of religion is infused in his mind in childhood, he will always remain attached to the religion. The syllabus of such training is given in the following *hadith*

`Abdullah ibn Fadl narrates from al-Imam Muhammad al-Bdqir (a.s.) or al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.): When the child reaches 3 years, teach him seven times to recite (*la ilahailla '* llah). Then leave him at that till he is 3 years 7 months and 20 days old; then train him to say (*Muhammadun rasulu 'llah*). Then leave him at that till he completes 4 years. then teach him seven times to say (*salla 'llahu ala Muhammadin wa aali Muhammad*). Then leave him at that till he reaches the age of 5 years; then ask him which one is his right hand and which one is the left. When he knows it then make him face q*iblah* and tell him to do *sajdah* (prostration).

This is to continue till he is 6 years of age. Then he should be told to pray and taught *ruku`* (to kneel down) and *sajdah.* When he completes 7 years, he should be asked to wash his face and hands, and then told to pray. This will continue till he reaches the age of 9 years, when he should be taught proper *wudu'* (ritual ablution before prayer - and should be punished if he is not careful) and proper *salat* (prayer - and should be punished if he is not regular). When he learns proper *wudu'* and *salat* Allah forgives the sins of his parents.

Every sentence of this valuable *hadith* deserves attention. See how gradually the child taught his duties of the *shari`ah* without putting any burden upon him. of course, a child may be taught *wudu'* and *salat* in a short period of 3-4 days when he is 12 or 13 years old. But that crash-programme training will not have the benefits of that gradual and early training recommended in the *hadith.*

Second Stage

Now comes the period of formal education. It is the most crucial period of life, the foundation-stone of the future. Islam directs that in this period a child should first be given necessary religious education so that he may not be misled by anyone in belief or action.

Al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:
Make haste in teaching your youngsters *hadith* before they are approached by murji *'a* or Murji'ite (a wrong sect).

Children are like a green, tender branch; they may easily be bent in any direction. If they are not given proper religious education at this stage, then only Allah can save them from misleading influences.

Unfortunately, our people do not care at all about this instruction. There was a time when the teaching of the Qur'an and elementary religious subjects was a MUST. Alas! now our children in quite a tender age are sent to such institutions where inconspicuously they are saturated day in and day out with anti-religious propaganda. No wonder that when they grow up the anti-religious feeling also grows up to become a deep-rooted bias.

In 1948 the writer had occasion to visit a village of Ithna `asharis. On asking questions it appeared that even aged people did not know *usul ad-din* (principles of religion) or the names of the Imams. It was one village. How may other such villages must be in the length and breath of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent? It is a frightening thought.

The Holy Prophet emphasized the teaching of two things to male children. He said: "It is the right of the male child on his father to . . . teach him the Book of Allah . . . and riding and swimming."

Al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said that it is the duty of the father to teach his son writing.

These traditions guide us to compulsorily include `Religion', `physical training' and writing in the syllabus of male children. In addition, other subjects (which are in conformity with the aptitude of the child or are necessary for earning his livelihood) may be added. In other words, the above-mentioned three are compulsory subjects while others are optional.

A separate syllabus has been prepared for the girls.

The earlier mentioned *hadith* of the Holy Prophet goes on to say:
And if the child is female then it is her right that she . . . should be taught the *surah* of ` Light' and she should not be taught the surah of Yusuf and should not be allowed to go on the roof or windows.

According to the Qur'an and traditions, what she is obliged to learn and do is as follows:
She must learn the fundamentals of faith and the commandments of the *shari `ah;* and obey her husband by allowing him his conjugal rights.

But she is not obliged to earn her livelihood; nor is she duty-bound to take up the drudgery of domestic work. Similarly, it is not her duty to bur den herself with matters concerning the general welfare of society, nor to learn various subjects other than those mentioned above, nor to participate in industrial or agricultural ventures.

She is not obliged to do so. But if she acquires such additional knowledge, or perform her domestic work, or participates in matters useful to society, it will be regarded as her additional excellence, provided she keeps within the limits of *hijab* (woman's veil) imposed upon her by the *shari `ah* To sum it up, the girls should be given such an education which makes them the "Light of the Home" not a "Decoration of Public places."

Our readers should note that even a part of the Qur'an (i.e., S*urah* of Yusuf) is not permitted to girls to learn because it contains the references to the love of Zulaykha towards Prophet Yusuf (a.s.). Seeing this restriction, those Muslims who allow their children (and especially girls) to read sexy novels, visit cinemas where they are practically taught all kinds of obscene thoughts and deeds should be ashamed of their irresponsible behaviour. Such parents should be ashamed of themselves, if they have an iota of Islamic feelings left in their hearts.

Third Stage

This is the period of earning one's livelihood. But it is not possible to go into the details of "Livelihood" here.

Also, this is the period when children should get married. And much emphasis has been given to getting girls married as soon as possible.

The Holy Prophet said that it is the right of the girl upon her father that he should make haste in sending her to the house of her husband.

It is very unfortunate to see many Muslims nowadays ignoring and neglecting this responsibility till the girls sometimes reach the age of 35 or 40 years; and then nobody wants to marry those old maids. The harm which is done by this "irresponsible parenthood" is too obvious to need any description. But the sad facts is that their attitude is governed by snobbery - sometimes it is financial superiority and sometimes it is caste or clan - and those people would rather let their daughters grow into old spinsters than marry them to a young man of good character who is not equal to their financial or tribal status.

The Holy Prophet said that “Every believer is equal in status (in matter of marriage) to any other believer.” But we are so much influenced by un-Islamic cultures (based on caste or race system) that we tend to look down upon our bright Islamic culture. May Allah have mercy upon us.

The same *hadith* guides us about male children; that they should be married when they be-come mature. It does not necessarily mean that the boys should be married just after reaching the age of 15 years.

The first marriage of the Holy Prophet was performed when he was 25 years of age. Amir al-mu'minin `Ali (a.s.) also married Fatimatu'z Zahra' (a.s.) when he was 25 years old. But even then, there is no criterion for age. The only thing which matters is that when a young man becomes emotionally mature and he feels an urge to enter into matrimonial relationship then he should get married without any delay. It is a condition which cannot be measured by age or time.

At this stage the parents' responsibility towards their offspring comes to an end. If anyone brings up his children remaining within these Islamic limits, then that child surely will be the apple of the parents' eyes and the delight of their hearts; and it is this child who, in his turn, may be hoped to fulfil his obligation towards his parents.

Referring to such offspring, the Holy Prophet said that “The virtuous child is a flower from the flowers of Paradise.” Also he said: “Among the good fortunes of a man is the virtuous child.”

Rights of Parents

Allah says in *Hadith al-Qudsi:*

I swear by My Glory and Power that if a (child who is) *disobedient to his parents comes to me with all the good deeds of all the prophets, I will not accept them from him.*

The parents proceed to the old age side by side with the progress of the children towards youth. Naturally the love and kindness of the parents and their efforts in caring for the children **must** be reciprocated by the children with obedience and help.

In this world, it is the parents who are the cause of the existence of the child; it is they who strive to bring it up; it is they who endeavour and look forward to take it to the height of perfection.

If there is anyone, after the Creator, who is directly responsible for the existence and progress of the

child, it is parents. Metaphorically speaking, the parents are the lords of their children. It is for this reason that the Qur'an has, in many places, mentioned the obedience of the parents side by side with the worship of Allah.

And worship Allah and join not any partner with Him and do good to parents . . . (***Qur'an, 4:36***)

And thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents (***Qur'an, 17:23***)

It seems that the lordship of parents is a mirror of the Lordship of Allah. Right from birth to weaning, and from protection to upbringing, at every stage it is the parents who are the means of conveying the Grace of Allah to the child. Like-wise, the rights of the parents are very much akin to the rights of Allah.

The rights of Allah may be divided into three categories:

- **First:** The right upon the "soul", e.g., the knowledge of Allah.
- **Second:** The right upon the "body", e.g., prayer and fast.
- **Third:** The right upon "property and wealth", e.g., *zakat* and *khums* (religious tax).

The rights of the parents also may be divided into these very categories:

First let us look at this *ayah* of the Qur'an (together with the explanation of al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq [a.s.] given in parenthesis):

And thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents, (behave kindly with them and do not compel them to bring their needs to your attention; but fulfil their requirements before they have to tell you, even though in reality they are not in need of your assistance); ***if one or both of them attain old age in thy life,*** (and be-come angry with. you) ***say not to them a single word of contempt, and*** (*if* they beat *you*) ***repel them not; but address them in terms of honour*** (and respect, i.e., say to them `May Allah forgive you') ***and, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility*** (and whenever you look at them, look with gentleness and kindness; do not raise your voice upon their voices, nor your hands above their hands; nor walk before them); ***and say: "My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."*** (***Qur'an, 17:23-24***)

This explanation covers all three rights of parents: To cheerfully bear the hardship inflicted by parents, to talk to them gently, and not to raise your hands and voice above theirs and not to pre-cede them in any way, all these injunctions cover the obedience by the body. To look at them with kindness and mercy

and always to ask Allah's Mercy for them shows love. And to fulfil their needs before their demand concerns the rights on wealth. And thus the similarity between the rights of Almighty Lord and these metaphorical lords reaches the last point of completion.

Now, let us look at this in more details with the help of traditions.

The Similarity Between the Financial Rights of Almighty Allah and Parents

Firstly: Almighty Allah (Who is the Lord of not only man and his wealth but of the whole universe) has no need to demand any part of man's wealth in His name. Still, He prescribed a portion from it as offering to Himself. So these weak-structured metaphorical lords (i.e. parents) have more right to benefit from the earnings of their children; to enjoy the fruits of the garden which they developed so lovingly in their early life. Even if they are not in need of such assistance, their metaphorical lordship demands that the children should offer them a part of their earning as a tribute.

It is for this reason that al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said that you should: "Fulfil their requirements . . . even if they in reality are not in need of your assistance."

Secondly: Also, we have to look at the fact that, though Allah has a right to demand financial tribute from every person, He has made it compulsory only on those who have a specified amount of wealth; and for others, the spending in the ` way of Allah' has been highly recommended (but not compulsory). Thus a vast field for the test of the gratitude to aim has been opened for us. Likewise, we see that everyone has been exhorted to give financial help to their parents.

. . . (***O' Prophet***)***, tell them that whatever*** (***wealth***) ***ye spend, it is*** (***primarily***) ***for parents and relatives. . .*** (***Qur'an, 2:215***)

And We exhorted man to do good to parents (***Qur'an, 46:15***)

But this obligation towards the parents is only at the time when the child has ability to maintain himself and his wife and is still able to help the parents provided the parents need his help. If either of the conditions is not fulfilled, there remains no compulsory obligation; but the emphasized recommendation to help the parents remains in its place, because al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) said:
These expenditures are essential for him whether he be affluent or in a strait condition.

Furthermore, if we look at the *ahadith* which repeatedly exhort a man to look after his parents and keep them comfortable, we will have to admit that spending on the comforts of the parents is highly emphasized even if the child is himself poor and even if the parents are not in need of his help.

Thirdly: It is known that the worship of Allah is one of the important ways of attaining prosperity and happiness. It is said in *surah Nuh:*

***So I said to them, `Ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is oft-forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance, and will give you increase in wealth and sons, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers* (*of flowing waters*).*" (Qur'an, 71:10-12*)**

Likewise, Allah has made the obedience to parents and financial help to them a means of expanding livelihood and sustenance and longevity of life, so that even poor children should look after their parents by their own will in the hope of getting increased sustenance and prosperity.

The Holy Prophet of Islam has said:
Anyone who likes long life and increased livelihood should do good to their parents; because doing good to them is in fact obeying Allah.

Another tradition from al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) has the same meaning, but instead of long life, it mentions ease at the time of death. And surely all the promises of Allah are true.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

***Verily, Allah forgives not that anything be associated with Him; but He forgives what is besides that of whomsoever He wishes* (*Qur'an, 4:48*)**

Likewise, it is said in *Hadith al-Qudsi:*

Tell (*O'* Prophet), *to the child who is obedient to his parents: "Do whatever* (good deeds) *you want* (to do), *you will never enter the Fire* (of Hell);" *and say to the child who is disobedient to his parents: `Do whatever* (good deeds) you want (to do), you will *never enter Paradise. "*

But there is a difference. The Almighty Allah is above all rulers and superiors; therefore, His commandments can never be superseded by any other rule, regulation or order. But the superiority of parents is derived from the superiority of Allah; their authority is based upon the commands of Allah. Therefore, if ever they give any order which is against the Law of Allah, it must be ignored and disobeyed. Allah says in the Qur'an

And We enjoined on man (*to be good*) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him; and in two years was his weaning: Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents. To Me is your

return. And if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with fairness and consideration ... (Qur'an, 31:14-15)

The following *hadith* refers to the above mentioned *ayah*

Al-Imam `Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (a.s.) said that the Holy Prophet said: "Verily, Allah has ordered three things joined with three other things. He ordered prayer and *zakat* (wealth-tax), so if someone prayed and did not pay *zakat,* his prayer will not be accepted; and ordered to show gratitude to Him and to his parents, so if anyone did not thank his pa-rents, he did not thank Allah; and ordered to fear Him and join the relationship, so if anyone did not join his relationship, he did not fear Allah."

Likewise, al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

There are three things in which Almighty Allah has not given any option to his servant: To return to the owner the thing entrusted to one's care, whether the owner be a pious or a debauchee; and to fulfil the promise whether it was (made) to a pious or a debauchee; and to do good to parents whether they be pious or sinners.

According to the Right of Love

Before explaining this subject, it is necessary to mention that, according to our faith, love for the Holy Prophet and his family is an integral part of love for Allah. So we will not look at the similarity between the love of parents and love of Allah. Instead, we will consider the similarity between the love for parents and love for *Ahlu'l-bayt* (*a.s.*).

First: Allah has made the enmity of the rightful *wasi* (successor) of the Holy Prophet a criterion of illegitimacy and it surely leads to Hell. Abu Zubayr al-Makki says: "I heard Jabir ibn `Abdillah al-Ansari saying, `O' People of *ansar,* teach your children the love of `Ali, and if any-one rejects it then investigate the morality of his mother." This saying of Jabir ibn `Abdillah al-Ansari is based upon the tradition of the Holy Prophet.

Now here is a similar *hadith* about parents:
Anyone who beats his parents is an illegitimate child.

Second: The *hadith* of the Holy Prophet about Fatimatu'z-Zahra' (a.s.) is accepted by all the Muslims that:
Fatimah is a part of mine; whosoever hurts her, hurts me; and whosoever hurts me hurts Allah.

Likewise, the Holy Prophet said about the parents:
Anyone who hurts his parents hurts me; and one who hurts me hurts Allah; and whosoever hurts Allah is cursed in *Tawrat, Injil, Zabur* and Qur'an.

The Holy Prophet, in one *hadith,* has described himself and `Ali (a.s.) as fathers of this *ummah:* "`Ali and I are Fathers of this *ummah."* One of the reasons of this description may be to show the greatness and importance of the parents of his *ummah.*

Anyhow, the net result of all these *ahadith* is that love for parents is a part of love for Allah; and, as the man who disobeys or has enmity to wards the beloved ones of Allah, is an enemy of Allah and far from Paradise, likewise the person who hurts the feelings of his parents is an enemy of Allah and far removed from Paradise.

According to the Right of Obedience

Love and obedience are two inseparable things. Love is like the flame of a lamp and obedience is like its light. Thus, after exhorting the children to love their parents it is but natural to expect them to obey them. And in this respect also obedience of parents is a mirror of obedience of Allah. The *ayat* (verses) mentioned in the beginning are enough to show this aspect. Furthermore, the following similarity is worthy of attention:

First Similarity

Second Similarity

Now comes a very interesting aspect of this discourse: Allah is Ever-living and Self-existent; He is Eternal; He can never die, nor can His `Lordship' and `Rule' ever come to end.

But the life of a man is flanked by `non-existence' on both sides. First he was non-existent, then became existent, then again he dies.

Ordinarily, it would have been quite enough to order the child to obey his parents so long as they are alive, and make him free of all obligations as soon as they depart from this world. But it would not have been in keeping with the 'metaphorical lordship' of parents. Islam ordained that as the Lordship of Allah does not come to end; like-wise, the lordship of the parents is not effected by their death. It continues so long as the child is alive.

Al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a. s.) said:

Verily, a servant of Allah remains good to his parents when they are alive; then they die and he neither repays their loan nor asks pardon (of Allah) for them. At that, Allah writes him as a disobedient child. And, verily, he remains disobedient to them during their life-time, not being good to them, but when they die, he repays their loan and asks pardon (of Allah) for them. Then Allah writes him as an `obedient and good' child.

A man from Banu Salamah asked the Holy Prophet, "After the death of my parents, is there any right of theirs, still remaining which I should perform (by which I should do good to them)?" The Holy Prophet said: "Yes, praying for them, asking pardon of Allah for them, fulfiling their promise and respecting their friends."

Third Similarity

The above *hadith* shows one more similarity. To respect the chosen servants of Allah (like Prophet and Imams) is an important part of the rights of Allah. Likewise, to respect the friends of one's parents is among the compulsory rights of the parents.

Superiority of Mother's Rights

Uptil now, I have explained the joint rights of both parents on the children. But we know that during pregnancy and rearing children, the mother gladly suffers such turmoils which paternal love can never endure. Islam is the natural religion; it has nowhere ignored the natural urges. It is for **this reason** that many *ayat* specially refer to the troubles endured by mothers.

. . . in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in two years was his weaning . . . (***Qur'an, 31 : 14***)

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carry-ing of the child to his weaning is thirty month (***Qur'an, 46: 15***)

Hakim ibn Hizam asked the Holy Prophet "O' Messenger of Allah, whom should I do good to?" The Holy Prophet said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" The Holy Prophet again said: "Your mother." He again asked, "Then who?" The Holy Prophet again said, "Your moth-er." He asked fourth time, "Then who?" Then the Holy Prophet said, "Your father."

It is because of this *hadith* that Muslim scholars say that the right of the mother is three times greater than the right of father. Also, the Holy Prophet has said: "Paradise is under the feet of mothers."

A Warning

Islam has given parents so much right on their children. But it does not mean that the parents have been given licence to ill-treat their children. Tyrant parents are a danger to Muslim society and family.

As a check against such high-handedness, the Holy Prophet has said: “Allah has cursed those parents who (by their behaviour) compel their children to disobey them.”

How can this happen?

If the parents themselves do not care about the rights of their children; if they do not give proper religious education; if they neglect their character-building; if they put so much burden upon them that is beyond their strength; if they behave towards the children tyrannically - then it is they who are compelling the children to revolt against them; and they will become candidates of the above-mentioned curse of Allah.

The Qur'an and the Gospels

The Rev. G. Margoliouth has written in the introduction of the translation of *The Koran* by Rev. J. M. Rodwell:
The shortcomings of the moral teaching contained in the Koran are striking enough if judged from the highest ethical stand-point with which we are acquainted.

Well, we have seen what the Qur'an and the Prophet of the Qur'an teach about the moral and ethical obligations of parents and children. Let us see what light is thrown on this subject in the Gospels

While he (*Jesus*) yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one (*man*) said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, who is my mother? and who are my brethren? (*Mathew, 12:* 46-48).

What a gentle way of talking about one's mother and brethren

of course, we Muslims know that Prophet `Isa (a.s.) could never talk like this about his mother. But this

knowledge comes not from the Gospel, but from the Qur'an itself, where he is quoted as saying:

(**Allah**) ***has made me kind to my mother, and did not make me over-bearing or miserable.*** (***Qur'an, 19:32***)

Now, we may easily judge which book presents the "highest ethical stand-point."

Rev. J. M. Rodwell has translated the 40th *ayah of* 4th *surah* like this:

"Worship God, and join not aught with Him in worship. Be good to parents . . .

And under this *ayah,* he has written the following foot-note.

An undutiful child is very seldom heard of among the Egyptians, or the Arabs in general. Sons scarcely ever sit, or eat, or smoke, in the presence of the father unless bidden to do so; and they often wait upon him and upon his guests at meals and on other occasions; they do not cease to act thus when they have become men.[1]

This foot-note under this *ayah is* an acknowledgement that this respect and honour of the parent in the Muslim societies is the direct result of the teaching of the Qur'an.

1. Lane's Mod. Egypt, vol. I, p.69.

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