

An Analytical Approach to the Preventing the menace of Child Abuse in Islamic point of View

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Abstract

Rights of the child are remains one of the most important areas of human rights in present times. The international community has responded well by adopting Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. However, cultures, customs, and traditions at different parts of the world have tremendous importance as compared to legal regulations. Throughout the Muslim World when Muslims do something they try to bring in justification from Islamic law. The current work is therefore intended to discuss this myth and among the important questions raised in this work are: whether child's abuse is allowed in Islam; whether Islamic law allows violence against children; what is the status of child's exploitation in Islam; what is the position of Islamic law regarding child labour as well as child sex? The methodology used in this work is the original sources of Islamic law and the opinions of Muslim jurists are cited to support or refute a position. The main findings of this work are that Islam prohibits violence against children; their abuse is unlawful, their exploitation is banned and it is against child labour. Child exploitation, child labour, and selling or buying children for sex are prohibited under the Islamic law.

Introduction

Almighty Allah created mankind and thereafter ordained the marriage of man and woman, Qur'an 4:3, 4: 22- 24. He also, entrusted to each parent or caregiver definite roles for the upkeep of their children, any deviation from the roles or shirk of responsibilities of any trustee is tantamount to child abuse. This has been a phenomenon in the society today, to the extent that men of faith begin to wonder how this ugly trend could be arrested and calls for Islamic perspective to the issue. In as much as Islam is ordained by Allah, Qur'an 3:5, the faith has solutions to global problems. Thus, child abuse could be viewed as the deviation or *shirk* of assigned roles and duties of parents or caretaker or trustee in the upkeep of children.

The lackadaisical attitude or to say child abuse by parents or caretaker today has led to depletion of the number of adherents of the Islamic faith. Rather than the population increasing at a geometrical progression, it is moving in arithmetic rate in some areas while in some it is even decreasing¹. This ugly scenario do occurs where parents, fathers in particular jettison their duties and obligations to children as commanded by Allah and such children wangle around away from Islam. In some household today, Islam is being practiced only by the father and at his death, everything about the faith is thrown to the trashcan whereas Almighty Allah has decreed in the Qur'an Chapter 20 verse 132, "enjoined your people worship, and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance; we provide it for thee. But (the fruit) of the hereafter is for righteousness."

Apart from the depleting number of Muslims in some homes, the adverse effect of child abuse as it creates a wrong impression of the faith is worrisome. Where a victim of child abuse happens to be a Muslim, there arise the tendencies by antagonists to say something unpalatable about the religion. More worrisome are cases of child soldering in some supposedly Islamic countries.

What is Child abuse?

Child abuse according to the United States of America Centers for Children and Families (CDF) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) defined child maltreatment as any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that result in harm, potential for harm or threat of harm to a child². Child abuse can occur in a child's home or in the organization, schools or communities the child interacts with. There are four major categories of child abuse, neglect, physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse and sexual abuse. In Western countries, preventing child abuse is considered a high priority and detailed laws and policies exist to address the issue. Different jurisdictions have defined their own definitions of what constitute child abuse for the purpose of removing a child from his/her family and/ or prosecuting a criminal charge. According to the Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect, child abuse is "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretakers which result in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, an act or failure to act which present an imminent risk of serious harm"³.

Types of Child abuse

Child abuse can take several forms. The most common types are physical, sexual, neglect and psychological forms. It has been reported that, a yearly Federal Report based on submission by State Child Protective Services (CPS) Agencies in the United States "as in prior years, neglect was the most common form of maltreatment⁴. The cases were substantiated as follows: neglect 78.3%, physical abuse 17.6%, sexual abuse 9.2% and psychological maltreatment 8.1%⁵. However, child abuse occurs either of the following ways:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse involves physical aggression directed at a child by an adult. In a contemporary world, most nations with child abuse laws consider the deliberate infliction of serious injury or death, to be illegal, bruises, scratches, burns, broken bones, lacerations, as well as repeated “mishaps” and rough treatment that could cause physical injury, can be physical abuse⁶. Physical abuse can come in many forms, although the distinction between child discipline and abuse is often poorly defined. However, the human Rights Committee of the United Nations has stated that the prohibition of degrading treatment or punishment extends to corporal punishment of children⁷.

Sexual abuse

Child sex abuse is a form of abuse in which an adult or older adolescent abuses a child for sexual stimulation. Sexual abuse according to the earlier referred Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect refers to the participation of a child in a sexual act aimed “toward the physical gratification or the financial profit of the person committing the act”⁸. Forms of child sexual abuse include asking or pressuring a child to engage in sexual act (regardless of the outcome), indecent exposure of the genitals to a child, displaying pornography to a child, actual sexual contact with a child, physical contact with the child’s genitals, viewing of the child’s genital without physical contact, or using a child to produce child pornography⁹.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is defined as the production of psychological and social defects in the growth of a child as a result of behavior such as loud yelling, coarse and rude attitude, inattention, harsh criticism and denigration of the child’s personality¹⁰. Other examples include name-calling, ridicule, degradation, destruction of personal belongings, torture, excessive criticism, inappropriate or excessive demands, withholding and routing labeling or humiliation.

Neglect

Child’s neglect is the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision to the degree that the child’s health, safety and well-being are threatened with harm¹¹. Neglect is also a lack of attention from the people surrounding a child, and the non-provision of the relevant and adequate necessities for the child’s survival which would be a lacking in attention, love and nurture.

Child Labor

Child Labor refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, or is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful¹². Child labor also refers to those occupations which infringe the development of children (due to the nature of the job and/ or the lack of appropriate regulation) and does not include age appropriate and properly supervised jobs in which minors may participate.

Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation¹³. Children are trafficked for purposes such as of commercial sexual exploitation,

bonded labor, camel jockeying, child domestic labor, drug couriering, child soldiering, illegal adoptions, begging.

Child Marriage

Child marriage is a marriage whereby minors are given in matrimony often before puberty¹⁴. Child marriages are common in many parts of the world, especially in parts of Asia and Africa. These marriages are typically arranged and often forced; as young children are generally not capable of giving valid consent to enter into marriage, child marriages are often considered by default to be forced marriages. Marriages under the age of majority have a great potential to constitute a form of child abuse.

Witchcraft accusations against children in Africa

Witchcraft accusations against children in Africa have received increasing international attention in the first decade of the 21st century¹⁵. Children who are specifically at risk of such accusation include orphans, street- children, albinos, disable children, children who are unusually gifted, children who were born premature or in unusual position and twins. Being accused of witchcraft Africa is very dangerous, as a witch is culturally understood to be the symbol of evil, and the cause of ills. Consequently, those accused of being a witch are ostracized and subjected to punishment, torture and even murdered.

Effects of child abuse

The family is the first agent of civilization for a child before others. Nowadays, the society is rife with ugly scenario of ritual killings, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape etc because of child abuse in one form or the other, at one time in the upbringing of children. Child abuse can result in immediate adverse physical effects but it is also strongly associate with developmental issues and with many chronic physical and psychological effects, including subsequent ill- health, including higher rates of chronic conditions, high-risk health behaviors and shortened lifespan. A maltreated child is bound to face one negative consequence or the other, such as:

Physical Effects

The immediate physical effects of abuse or neglect can be relatively minor (bruises or cuts) or severe (broken bones, hemorrhage, or even death). In some cases, the physical effects are temporary; however, the pain and suffering they cause a child should not be discounted¹⁶. The long-term impact of child abuse and neglect on physical health and development can be:

- i. **Shaken baby syndrome.** Shaken baby syndrome is a common form of child abuse that often results in permanent neurological damage (80% of cases) or death (30% of cases)¹⁷. Damage results from intracranial hypertension (increased pressure in the skull) after bleeding in the brain, damage to the spinal cord and neck, and rib or bone fractures¹⁸.
- ii. **Impaired brain development.** Child abuse and neglect have been shown, in some cases, to impaired development. These alterations in brain maturation have long- term consequences for cognitive, language, and academic abilities¹⁹.

- iii. **Poor physical health.** In addition to possible immediate adverse effects, household dysfunction and childhood maltreatment are strongly associated with many chronic physical and psychological effects, including ill- health in childhood, adolescence and adulthood with higher rates of chronic conditions, high- risk health behaviors and shortened lifespan²⁰. Adults who experience abuse or neglect during childhood are more likely to suffer from physical ailments such as allergies, arthritis, asthma, bronchitis, high blood pressure, and ulcers. There may be a higher risk of developing of developing cancer later in life²¹.
- iv. Exposure to violence during childhood is associated with shortened telomeres and with reduced telomerase activity. The increased rate of telomere length reduction correlates to a reduction in lifespan of 7 to 15 years²².
- v. Children who experience child abuse and neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as juveniles, 28% more likely to be arrested as adults, and 30% more likely to commit violent crime²³.

Sexual Effects

Effects of child sexual abuse on the victim include guilt and self blame, flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, fear of things associated with the abuse, self esteem issues, sexual dysfunction, chronic pain, addiction, self- injury, suicidal ideation, somatic complains, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, other mental illnesses including borderline personality disorder and dissociative identity disorder, propensity to re- victimization in adulthood, bulimia nervosa and physical injury to a child among other problems²⁴. Children who are victims are at risk of sexually transmitted infection due to their immature immune systems and a high potential for mucosal tears during forced sexual contact. Sexual victimization at a young age has been correlated with several risk factors for contacting HIV including decreased knowledge of sexual topics, increased prevalence of HIV, engagement in risky sexual practices, condom avoidance, and lower knowledge of safe sex practices, frequent change of sexual partners and more years of sexual activity²⁵.

Psychological Effects

Children who have a history of neglect or physical abuse are at risk of developing psychiatric problems or a disorganized attachment style. Disorganized attachment is associated with a number of developmental problems, including dissociative symptoms, as well as anxiety, depressive, and acting out symptoms²⁶. A study by Dante Cicchetti found that 80% of abused and maltreated infants exhibited symptoms of disorganized attachment²⁷. When some of these children become parents, especially if they suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), dissociative symptoms, and other sequel of child abuse, they may encounter difficulty when faced with their infant and young children's need and normative distress, which may in turn lead to adverse consequences for their child's socio- emotional development²⁸.

Effect on Neglect

Some of the observable signs in a neglected child include: the child is frequently absent from school, begs or steal food or money, lacks needed Medicare and dental care, is consistently dirty, or lacks sufficient clothing for the weather. Neglected children may experience delays in physical and psychological

development, possibly resulting in psychopathology and impaired neuropsychological functions including executive function, attention, processing speed, language, memory and social skills²⁹.

Effect of Child Labor

Many of these children do not go to school, do not receive proper nutrition or care, and have little or no time to play. More than half of them are exposed to the worst forms of child labor such as child prostitution, drug trafficking, armed conflicts and other hazardous environments.

Effect of Child Trafficking

Child trafficking can have long-lasting and devastating effects. Being kept captive or living or working in poor conditions can have a serious impact on a child's mental and physical health. They might also be suffering from the effects of multiple forms of abuse and neglect. Children may feel distressed and alienated if they have been separated from their families, friends, communities and cultures. They will often have had no access to education or opportunity for social and emotional development³⁰.

Effect on Child Marriage

Being married before 18 carries with it numerous risks and problems that affect girls and young women.

1. **Higher maternal mortality.** This is the most serious of early marriage problems. Girls who are married before 18 will often have children long before they are physically ready³¹. Each year, 13.7 million girls aged 15-19 give birth and complications in pregnancy and childbirth are the leading killer of girls in this age range in developing countries³². Child brides also have higher rates of HIV/AIDS and other STIs than their unwed counterparts, contributing to ill health and premature death³³.
2. **Increased infant mortality.** Adolescent mothers are more likely to give birth prematurely or have stillborn babies. Their children are at increased risk of death in infancy. Infant death rates in babies of mothers under the age of 20 are 50% higher than those over 20³⁴.
3. **Lack of education.** Often overlooked when it comes to early marriage problems, the effects on girls' education are profound. Once married, girls are typically taken out of school as their lives become dominated by looking after children and domestic servitude. For every year a girl is married before adulthood, her literacy reduces by 5.6%³⁵. Daughters of young mothers are also more likely to drop out of school and be married young.
4. **Higher risk of violence.** Early marriage robs a girl of her rights, freedoms and choices. Child brides are much more likely to be the victims of physical and sexual abuse³⁶.

Islamic Perspectives

Islam views childhood with hope and aspiration, seeing it as something to look forward to, seek and long for. When it is achieved, the fruit reaped is happiness of the soul, delight of the heart and elation of the chest. According to the Qur'anic text, progeny is a gift from the Almighty Allah to His faithful servants. It is also one of the bounties bestowed upon them by the Almighty Giver of Bounties, as well as being a

fulfillment of the hope that sincere servants of God long for. “Unto Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills; or He mingles them, males and females, and He makes barren whom He wills. Lo! He is the Knower, Powerful” (Qur’an 42: Verses 49-50). Hence, it is not surprising that Islamic Shari’ah (law) pays utmost attention to securing all that is needed to guarantee a wholesome psychological climate for the rearing of children, a climate wherein they learn about the world and formulate their customs and norms. As such Islam affirms:

- A child’s right to health and life.
- A child’s right to a family, kindred, name, property and inheritance.
- A child’s right to healthcare and proper nutrition.
- A child’s right to education and the acquisition of talents.
- A child’s right to live in security and peace, and enjoy human dignity and protection under the responsibility of the parents.
- The caring role of society and the state to support all these rights and support families incapable of providing appropriate conditions for their children. The Islamic Shari’ah states all of these rights, which are evident in the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad through his sayings and actions. Apart from the types of child abuse and its consequences as analyzed in this write up can therefore be adequately addressed by Islamic Shari’ah as substantiated to avert all evils that may arise from infidelity.

Physical

The Prophet has urged all Muslims to be very kind and affectionate to children when he said: “He is not one of us who does not show tenderness to the young and who does not show respect to the elder”³⁷. Therefore, corporal punishment should be avoided as much as possible. There are many other alternative methods of disciplining the child. Some of these are giving advice, temporary isolation, admonition, withdrawing rewards, denial of play time and so on. One or more of these punishments are much more effective for the child than corporal punishment³⁸. The proper context of hitting mentioned in the *hadith* regarding *salat* (daily prayers) does not seem to be corporal punishment as such, but rather a trick that the father could even hit the child if he does not observe the daily prayers. This is explained by another report in which the Prophet said: “And for their disciplining, keep (the fear of) your stick on them, and make them to be afraid of Allah”³⁹. This is confirmed from another report in which Mu’az b. Jabal has been given some instructions by the Prophet among them was the display of a stick for their disciplining (but not for hitting)⁴⁰. Moreover, it is also reported from the Prophet that the stick should be displayed in such a place so that it could be seen by all members of the household. It is important to note that the Prophet did not order the hitting of anyone with the stick. Manawi comments on this *hadith* and says that when the members of the household could see the stick, they will not commit bad things and it will encourage them to learn good manners⁴¹.

Therefore, children should only be disciplined but corporal punishment should be avoided as this will have negative effects on the child. Moreover, alternative methods of punishments should be used as

these are very effective with children. One of the biggest disadvantages of punishing a child is that the parent will deprive himself of the mercy of Allah. The Prophet is reported to have said to Aqra b. Haabis Al-Tameemi (who told the Prophet that he has ten children, but he never kissed one of them) that “The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy [by Allah]”⁴². It is reported that a Bedouin was surprised to see that the Prophet kissed his grandsons, Al-Hasan and Al-Husain, and asked the Prophet, “Do you kiss children? We do not kiss them. The Prophet said, “It is beyond my control if Allah has removed mercy from your hearts”⁴³.

Punishing the child might make him disobedient of his parents which will deprive the parents of all the goods the child was going to do them when they will be old. Ibn Qaiym mentions that a person who punished his son for disobedience was told by him (his son), “You have punished me when I was a child, I am punishing you when you are old. You neglected me in my childhood; I am neglecting you in your old age”⁴⁴. As you sow, so shall you reap. Thus a child who is taken care of in his childhood will pay it back when he is a father.

Even, Islam has taken extreme care of children, women and other vulnerable persons during armed conflict. This is evident from the Qur’anic verse 2:190 and many *ahadith* of the Prophet. The Qur’an says, “Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress, for Allah does not love transgressors”. According to ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas, ‘Umar b. ‘Abdul ‘Aziz and Mujahid b. Mawla ‘those who fight against you’ in the verse means those who participate in the war against you. That is, do not fight women, children and elderly⁴⁵. According to Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Shaybani (d.189/804), women, children, elderly and the like cannot be killed in war because of the verse (2:190) and because Muslim army have to fight only combatants⁴⁶. In one tradition the Prophet is reported to have said, “Don’t kill women and children”⁴⁷. Ibn ‘Abbas reports that the Prophet prohibited from the killing of women and children⁴⁸. In another tradition the Prophet is reported to have said: “Never, Never to kill children and a servant”⁴⁹. Thus, there is a general prohibition on the killing of children during war. Another reason for sparing children is that only the combatants are fought and not those who cannot fight. This is why Allah in his wisdom has granted immunity to children from killing, maiming, and targeting them. Therefore, places for civilians and especially children shall not be the target of attacks by the Muslim forces. Moreover, it means that Allah has shown tremendous mercy to children even during war.

Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation

Islamic considers an act of prostitution as a form of sexual exploitation and thus forbids it⁵⁰. Forced prostitution is likewise forbidden, as is sexual exploitation for profit, according to Quran 24:33, stating but force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that ye may make a gain in the goods of this life. The tradition of the Prophet likewise prohibited taking the earnings of a soothsayer and the money earned by prostitution⁵¹. In Islamic law, if a man had sex with a female child, he will be given *hadd* punishment⁵². In most cases a minor is forced or lured into sex by someone and sedated before sex. This carries a heavier punishment than sodomy for the active partner but no punishment for the minor.

Psychological

The Prophet would only advise the child in a polite way if he would see that someone had made a mistake. This is evident from the report of Anus who said: "I was with the Prophet for ten years and I swear in the name of God that he never said 'uff' (fie) to me nor did he say, "why have you done this or why have you not done that"⁵³. He further asserts that whenever I delayed to do something according to his orders or would do otherwise than would be ordered (by the Prophet), he would never blame me or chide me. Anus further says that when any member of the household of the Prophet would complain against me to the Prophet, he would say "Do not say him anything (to him), if Allah would will this thing, it would happen"⁵⁴. As is known Anus, 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas, Zaid b. Haritha b. Shurahbeel (d. 7/629 C.E.), and Osama b. Zaid (d. 53/673 C.E.) remained with the Prophet for a longtime and served him and his household but none of them have complained of any chiding, blaming, scolding and reprimands by the Prophet. Thus, the Prophet had never blamed a child in his life

Also, according to the teachings of the Prophet, parents should never curse their child. Instead, they should always make *du'a* (supplication) for him as their supplication for their child is responded to by God. The Prophet is reported to have said: "Three *du'as* (supplications) are surely answered: The *du'a* of the oppressed, the *du'a* of the traveler and the *du'a* of the father/mother upon their child"⁵⁵. In addition, the Prophet is reported to have said: "Don't curse yourself, your children, your servants, your property, least you ask Allah at a time in which supplications are accepted"⁵⁶. Moreover, the Prophet has said: "*Du'a* can change even God's decree"⁵⁷. Imam Ghazali narrates that a person complained regarding the disobedience of his son to Abdullah b. Mubarak b. Wadhah al-Hanzali (d. 181/797 C.E.), who asked him: "Did you curse him?" He said: "Yes, I did it." On hearing these Ibn Mubarak said: "You are yourself to blame for this"⁵⁸. Cursing is a despicable act and no one should be cursed let alone your own child.

Neglect

Children have many psychological needs also. Small children need to be loved, caressed, kissed and hugged. The Prophet loved children greatly. He would allow his grandsons Hassan and Hussain (R.A) to ride his shoulders even during his prayers. In streets he would offer 'salaam' to children, play and cut jokes with them. Sometimes he would even kiss small children in the street. Once a Bedouin saw the Prophet kissing a small kid out of wonder he said, "I have eight children but I never kiss them". The Prophet remarked, "What can I do if Allah has taken away love and compassion from your heart". The Prophet would show special kindness to orphaned children. Some parents believe that being frank with children is not good from discipline point of view. This is wrong. Love and leniency can do much that fear and strictness cannot do. If leniency leads to rudeness on the part of children it should be mixed with strictness⁵⁹. That will tell the children that parents are basically kind but can be tough if children show rudeness and bad manners. Over-protection and over-care are undesirable. Let the child grow up as a responsible person. Only provide them guidance.

Child Labour and Islam

Islam gives human being a golden rule to live a balanced life in this world. Islam has given the fundamental rights to everyone, whether he is child, women, man or old man. So, Islam is a religion which is according to the human nature. In this world, there are two basic necessities of man. On the one hand, he requires materialistic and physical resources for the establishment of the relation of body and soul, and on the other hand: for living an individual and social life at strong basis, ethical guideline is requiring for the man. Thus heavy tasks and laboured work, which is more than the capacity of child and a hurdle in the way of child to get education and it also affects its health is be against Islamic law. Employing children in hard and dangerous labor falls into the category of inflicting hardship and harm, even done unintentionally or through ignorance. If to say, as explained by Shari'ah, that inflicting harm is prohibited, it follows that commissioning children with hard labor is therefore not permitted. Shari'ah does not expect humans to undertake arduous tasks, as clearly manifested in the Qur'anic verse: "He has chosen you and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship." (Quran 22: verse: 78). The Almighty Allah also said: "Allah desires for you ease. He desires not hardship for you." (Qur'an 2: 185) He also said: "Allah tasks not a soul beyond its scope." (Qur'an 2: 286). If Allah willed that no hardship should be suffered because of what he commands, it follows that humans are forbidden from inflicting hardship on one another.

Islamic Position on Human Trafficking

Islamic position on Human Trafficking is clear. Even though human trafficking is not explicitly prohibited in Islam, there are many aspects of it that are clearly forbidden. In pre-Islamic Arabia, slavery was an established practice, one that Islam aimed to eradicate gradually. Muslims were told that there was great reward in manumitting a slave. Qur'an, chapter 2 verse 177 underscores the meritorious act of freeing a slave: In addition to encouraging manumission and a move away from the social practice of slavery, Islam is clear about the treatment of slaves. A *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad instructs those who still had slaves how to treat them.

Your slaves are your brothers. Allah has placed them under your authority. He who has his brother under him, should feed him from whatever he eats, and dress him with whatever he wears, and do not burden them (assign burdensome task to them) beyond their capacity; and if you burden them then help them⁶⁰.

The treatment described in this *hadith* is unlike what is typically associated with slavery and human trafficking where there is a hierarchical relationship. Slavery, therefore, in any form is considered a social ill that should be eradicated and once it has been, as has been the case in modern societies, it should be prohibited. In addition to Islam's position on slavery, a central Islamic tenet is that any form of exploitation is forbidden. Muslims are repeatedly warned against oppressing other human beings. Both Qur'an chapter 4 verse 75 and chapter 7 verse 33 demonstrate the prohibition against oppression. In both verses, oppression in a general sense is warned against and forbidden. Also, there are grave warnings against those who abuse the vulnerable in society, for example, orphans. Qur'an 4 verse 10 illustrates this point in graphic terms: Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a Fire into their own bodies: they will soon be enduring a blazing Fire!

So the fact that trafficking is built on oppression of human beings, makes it contradictory to Islamic principles. Islam is also very respectful of the rights of workers. Contracts between employer and employee must be clearly articulated and respected. Breaching the contract in any way is considered a serious offense. Qur'an chapter 7 verse 85 illustrates the point that human beings are commanded by Allah to give each other their dues and not to withhold each others' rights. In another *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Muslims are commanded to pay for work immediately, preventing any undue hardship on the person providing the labor and room for abuse: Give the hired man his wages before his sweat dries⁶¹. The fact that trafficking exploits the labor of those taken as slaves makes it contradictory to Islam.

Islam and child marriage

In Islam, the Almighty Allah said: "Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! Allah loves the beneficent." (Qur'an 2 verse 195) Contrary to a popular misconception, we find nowhere in the Shari'ah a specification of the age of marriage. What exists is a fixed standard of mental maturity or sound judgment. The Almighty Allah said in the Quran: "Prove orphans till they reach marriageable age; then, if you find them of sound judgment, deliver over unto them their fortune; and devour it not by squandering and in haste lest they should grow up. Whosoever (of the guardians) is rich, let him abstain generously (from taking of the property of orphans); and whosoever is poor let him take thereof in reason (for his guardianship). And when you deliver up their fortune unto orphans, have (the transaction) witnessed in their presence. Allah suffices as a Reckoner." (Qur'an 4 verse 6) There is clearly a difference between attaining puberty and physical aptitude on one hand and maturity and the qualification to manage life on the other. Married life necessitates that both husband and wife are enlightened and sensible. It is not, therefore, served by the marriage of children.

Islam and Witchcraft

Islam recognizes the existence of evil power and practice of magic and its efficacy which may affect people psychologically and physically. But its effects are largely dependant on Allah's will⁶³. In Qur'an chapter 113, Allah specifically refers to the practice of witchcraft, when He states:

Say: I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of the daybreak from the evil of what He has created. And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or goes away). And from the evil of those who practice witchcraft when they blow in the knots. And from the evil of the envier when he envies. (Qur'an2:102, Q10:77, 81-82and Q72:6)

In other words, these particular verses of the Qur'an and others rightly establish the fact that sorcery really exists. Most of the exegetes of the glorious Qur'an emphasize that this particular verse '...and from the evil of those who practice witchcraft when they blow in the knots...' refer to activities of the Witchcraft⁶³. The Prophet in this regard identifies tying and blowing on knots (i.e. witchcraft) as another form of *Sihir* (sorcery or magic)⁶⁴.

Islamically, the witch can call on the devil to harm innocent people, but such malicious power and action will not come to effect except by Allah's leave. A Muslim should therefore have implicit trust in

Allah that no evil can afflict him except if Allah wills. The Qur'an says: Say: Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our protector. And in Allah, let the believers put their trust' (Qur'an9:51). He emphasizes elsewhere: 'No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves, but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (*al-Lawh al-Mahfūz*) before We bring it into existence...' (Qur'an57:22 and Qur'an 64:1). The inference that can be drawn from the above cited portion of the Qur'an is that whatever has befallen a Muslim was as a result of Allah having His full knowledge and allowing it. The sayings of the Prophet also lend credence to this, when the Prophet says: ...Know that if all the people get together in order to benefit you with something, they will not be able to benefit you in anything except what Allah has decreed for you. And if they all get together in order to harm you with something; they will not be able to harm you in anything except what Allah decreed for you. The pens have stopped writing (Divine Allah's preordainments). And (the ink over) the paper (Book of Decrees) has dried...' ⁶⁵

Observations

From the foregoing discussions, it is appears that, Islam wants parents to love their children, however, love of children should have some limits. A balance must be kept between loving children and spoiling them. As the English says goes, "excess of everything is bad." This should also include excess in love. As a matter of fact spoiled children will manipulate parents who would then fulfill all their demands. Fulfilling all their demands is harmful for the child as he would not be able to focus on his studies and other co-curricular works. This is why Islam focuses on disciplining the child for the sake of teaching him good manners and what is good for him, especially for his future. Moreover, the Prophet was for moderation in religion as he said: "Islam is a firm religion. So choose the middle course in it and do not (exceed in) in worships to make it hateful to you because the one who puts a heavy load on his donkey will neither reach his destination nor will his donkey survive" ⁶⁶. In another report the Prophet said: "The best course is the middle course" ⁶⁷. Thus, parents should never allow their children to do whatever they want otherwise this will be bad for the children themselves as well their parents. The Prophet has said: "O people! A cruel person is cruel to himself. No father should be cruel to his son nor should a son be cruel to his father" ⁶⁸. Moreover, every parent is responsible for the actions of his child and will be questioned by Allah the Exalted on the day of Resurrection. The Prophet is reported to have said: "All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of the people of his house and he is responsible. A woman is the shepherd of the house of her husband and she is responsible. Each of you is a shepherd and each is responsible for his flock" ⁶⁹. Thus, a parent will be questioned why he spoiled his child, therefore, parents must keep a fine balance between loving their children and spoiling them.

Recommendations

Allah has recommended good breastfeeding for a period of at least two years, Qur'an 31 verse 14. The Prophet of Allah recommends shaving the hair of a new born baby, giving of good name and sacrifice of ram at seventh/eight day of birth. Muslims should endeavor to bequeath to their children sound Islamic and

Western education to be relevant to themselves and their society. Parents and caregivers should be alive to their responsibilities. Fathers should not neglect their roles likewise mothers. Muslim households should have knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Allah to know which culture conform to the tenets of Islam. There is need to fear Allah follow the Qur'an and *Hadith* as well as avoid broken homes which has contributed in no small measure to child abuse. Parents should settle scores and unite for the benefit of their children and the society at large. These among several others would prevent child abuse in society at large. The Prophet wants his followers to be humane and friendly with children to the extent that they should accompanying parents while praying at the mosque.

Conclusion

It has been revealed in this paper that, child abuse is a deviation from the pathway laid by Almighty Allah and a breach of trust of the Creator. Therefore whoever runs afoul of the injunctions of Allah in the discharge of his/her duties will even be questioned on the Day of Judgment, Qur'an Chapter 33 verse 68. Parents or caregivers must follow to the letter the injunctions of Allah in the Qur'an starting from the duties of parents at birth of a child. Children are Allah's blessing, Qur'an 41 verse 49- 50. The paper recommended that, there is need to fear Allah follow the Qur'an and *Hadith* as well as avoid broken homes which has contributed in no small measure to child abuse. Therefore, physical abuse is not of Islam. Almighty Allah has given vivid description of whom to marry and those who should not. Quran 4: 22 - 25 strictly warned against fornication and adultery. The Prophet wants his followers to always speak good things or keep quiet. He enjoined sitting down if angry or if on sit already to lie down. The paper concluded that, Islam is against any kind of child abuse, child soldiering, infant wedlock, child labor, child trafficking Child sexual abuse among others.

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