

Orphan (Yateem)

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Preface

There are many subjects in the domain of religion which have been misinterpreted and believers even out of sincerity have not just delivered the rights of these acts in fact have done damage. Hence is it essential to have proper and thorough understanding of certain Islamic concepts and subjects which have a deep social impact. There are many such concepts and topics like Piety (Taqwa), Worship (Ibaadat), Fasting (Saum) and many more have become distorted thereby not allowing us to achieve what was expected from them. One such topic taken up in this book is about orphans (Yateem). The topic of orphan is something known to everyone and there is no one in an Islamic society who is completely unaware about who an orphan is and to a large extent majority has sympathy towards orphans. But the significance Islamic scriptures, traditions and Seerah of Infallibles have towards the orphans has a different philosophical dimension against what we have understood. For us being sympathetic towards orphans and feeding them something is for the sake of earning of rewards (Thawaab) similar to all other religiously good act which we for. For us today everything done in the name of religion is either for the sake of earning rewards or saving our necks from punishment.

This booklet is a translation of a lecture delivered by Ustad Syed Jawad Naqvi, Principle of Jamea Orwathul Wuthqa (The Orwathul Wuthqa Seminar) and Jamea Deenul Qayyim

(the Virtual International Islamic Institute). This lecture is part of a series of lectures delivered in the holy month of Ramadhan on the subject of Tafseer of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) sermon on the month of Ramadhan. Similar to his other works Syed Jawad Naqvi explores the subject of orphans with his deep and vast Islamic knowledge which specifically touches the philosophical dimension of the subject under discussion. Addressing the fundamental need of an orphan from a child psychology perspective is something unique, appealing and undeniable fact. Than cementing the subject with classical Quranic arguments and traditions from Infallibles (a.s) in such a brief and comprehensive manner leaves no excuses for the readers for not breaking the false ideals which we have created as regards to orphans. It might be upsetting for those who out of sincerity and pure intentions have been working on projects related to orphanages to digest the true inner side of this subject specifically when many of existing face and form of orphanages comes under condemnation.

The author under the light of the subjects is not giving a knowledgeable insight into the subject but is addressing certain social problems related to personality development and organizing, disciplining our lives in this scientific and industrial world. It is worth pausing and thinking over the arguments done on the form of relationship that exists today between parents and children in this scientific world; that too specifically about those working women.

A common reason behind why such type of discussions gets hard on our appetite is because of our understanding and vision about Islam. We have never considered Islam as a system of life which has a crystal clear agenda in governing all dimensions of life and has pointed out clearly towards all social issues. We have never looked at Islam as system and in fact just considered religion as few sets of do's and don'ts do's which we term as Islamic practical laws which than gets topped up and decorated with some of our own culturally carved rituals. When it comes to systems of life we have taken them from non-divine sources. Today the system of caressing the orphans is also derived from the secular worlds approach towards welfare activities and systems. Today Orphans are also part of our welfare system whereas Islamic presentation of the issue of orphans as clearly expressed in this book is part of social development.

A common argument that can be prophesized over here and is commonly seen is that since the arguments presented in this book are so concrete and cannot be denied but how do we it practically or some would say everything said is fine but we cannot change or reform our outlook towards orphans because we have no means or ways to do it or practically it is not possible. Today we might be able to see a practical solution on reforming our system of orphanages but we can still sow the see of this reformation. We can at least start to educate the people about the actual concept of honoring the orphans and

create a wave of awareness in our society which would pave the way for practical solutions.

Today Orwathul Wuthqa seminary is a source of reforming social issues and this seminary aims at reviving the lost Islamic values and constructing society on Islamic systems. For those who read this book and start to think but get lost on how to resolve these issues for them the doors of Orwathul Wuthqa are open for consultation and solution.

I pray to Allah (s.w.t) to broaden our hearts to accept the truth the way it is.

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The Holy Quran speaks about honoring orphans (*Takreem e Yateem*) and Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) in his Sermon related to the Holy month of Ramadhan has used the word *Tahneen-e-Yateem* as one of the etiquettes of Ramadhan. The Prophet says that you should be compassionate with the orphans of others so that others are also compassionate towards your orphans.

Feelings – Presence and Need

The reason behind Prophet (s.a.w.s) mentioning about orphans in the month of Ramadhan is because one of the specialities of Ramadhan is fasting and due to this fasting one effect is arousing of dead senses in human being. Allah (s.w.t) has kept inside the innate nature (Fitrat) of human being by birth and made it as prerequisite for the soul of human being. But when human being after his birth is brought up in specific environmental conditions certain senses of human being die due to this gradual upbringing and creation of this external environment by others.

It is possible that even the parents have created such environment or place of living is such that it is an undesirable environment. Allah (s.w.t) has kept certain things inside us a *Gariza* (natural instincts) and certain things are kept as *Aatifa* (feelings) which comes from the root word "*Utoofat*". Like love, mercy and kindness are feelings which are present in abundant inside human being which have been thoroughly analyzed by human psychologist. These feelings are present inside every human

being and the best representation of these feelings is between parents and children. The relationship, attachment present between mother and child is an outcome of these innate feelings. Mother is not educated or trained to express these feelings as such these are kept by Allah (s) by birth inside mother and child which are not present in others towards the same child. The sister of mother is not having the same feelings towards the child which the mother of child has. This is the part of the perfection whereby when human being achieves perfection this also grows towards perfection. The way intellect grows and reaches towards perfection the feelings also grow and reach perfection. Thus a perfect human being or a person in pursuit of perfection is the one whose feelings are also achieving perfection.

The way every person possesses feelings similarly human being is also in need and dependent on feelings. If Allah has kept a specific feeling inside mother towards the child than at the same time Allah has made the child needy of this feeling. The child is in dire need of this feeling. The way Allah has kept milk inside the existence of mother than the child is also in severe need of this milk and there is no alternative for this. Even if we make alternative of this mothers milk than also it would not be as effective as mother milk. Thus if milk is kept inside mother than the child is also made needy of this milk. Hence the mercy and compassion of mother is amongst the fundamental need of child. It is possible that physical needs of child that is food;

shelter etc. can be fulfilled by others better than the mother. A mother under poverty might not be having good food to be served to child, no proper clothes, no proper house and proper environment for the child. This does not mean that this child should be taken away from the mother and given all these materialistic goodness in some dormitory or other place. The way it is done in western societies where they take children from poor parents and in some cases even the parents give their children to someone else where they definitely get good things but still there is a fundamental missing element which cannot be provided by anyone else other than the mother. Specifically in that age when the child is heavily dependent on mother that is the age of infancy up to 4 to 5 years where the child is in dire need of the feelings of mother and father.

Effect of Feelings on personality of child

If these feelings are not provided to the child in this age than the personality of the child develops a deficiency as regards to this feeling. And this vacuum remains and when the child matures the same deficiency expresses itself in an unsuitable form such as inferiority complex or some other psychological problem which develops a deficiency in his personality and it affects his actions as well. In comparison to the child who was brought up in a poor home where all physical things were lacking but the feelings of child was present and parents addressed those feelings; this child grows up without any complexities though there was a

poverty of wealth but the poverty of feelings was not present.

Religion has categorized feelings as well; those who do not have wealth are poor, those who do not have intelligence are bigger category poor, those who do not have knowledge and guidance are also poor and those who do not have Imamah and Wilayah are also poor. Religion considers all these category of people are poor and amongst all these poor people the lowest degree is poverty of wealth. Every type of poverty leaves an effect and damages on man but the lowest effect is from poverty of wealth and after that poverty of knowledge which effects highly and then the poverty of feelings, then poverty of wisdom, then poverty of religion and guidance and the most effecting poverty which leaves a disastrous damage on man is poverty of Imamah and leadership. Amongst this poverty one of them is the poverty of feelings.

The psychological analysis done on criminal reveals that these people have been victims of severe lack of feelings and as a consequence their personality developed such orientation and thoughts that led them towards the world of crimes. This is the system which Allah has made; on one hand he created child and gave the child stomach and kept the source with mother. Similarly when the child is born there are other things also required for child whose source has been kept with mother and father.

According to a Russian child expert the upbringing and nurturing of child should start hundred years prior to birth. This is not an exaggeration which he has made; by putting up these figures he is expressing the importance of this element. This means his ancestors should be first nurtured and brought up properly and then from them their children should be born who should be nurtured and then this child is born in the third generation. This is because till the time the parents are not well nurtured and brought up it is not possible that all what is required by the child can be given to the child. The child is born with certain rights and this is a very significant point for human being that the child is not born with responsibilities but born with rights. There are certain rights that come before the responsibilities and then certain responsibilities come up after the deliverance of rights.

Effects of Industrialization on families

In the era of naturalization when industries were not present such disturbances were not present for man to this extent. In that era when everything was natural the need for education for man was also limited because in a natural environment everything gets done naturally. If we ponder over the natural world there is nothing dependent on education everything gets done in a natural system.

Similarly when everything was natural there was no need to make the parents realize their responsibilities towards the children because they were naturally doing it. Loving the

child, being merciful and kind to children the parents knew it naturally. But the mechanical and industrial world has brought some disturbance in the natural life of human being due to which the first damage is done to children. The first generations born to these parents who have distanced themselves from natural criteria of life and are victims of false and deviated mechanical criteria of life suffer a lot. These parents are not able to deliver those rights which they should be doing it due to false standards of life. In earlier days it was not possible that a mother would refrain from breastfeeding her child just because it would disturb her beauty or physique. A young girl who gets a child does not breastfeed her child because it is true that breastfeeding will disturb her appearance as the milk is produced from the food eaten by the mother and her energy gets transferred through this milk; hence she desires that her smartness and beauty should not get affected so she starts to feed cow milk and this child gets deprived of his rights. Just because of a false orientation of mother the child has been deprived of his or her natural rights. This was very less in the past but now this is found a lot.

Similarly the artificial and scientific world has increased the expenses and hence the mother who is supposed to give entire time to the child and it is the rights of the child that he or she gets hundred percent of her mother's time is deprived of it because now she has to go out for work to fulfill the increased cost of living.

The responsibility of running the home and all expenses is given to man so that mother remains wingless (a Persian phrase "*farigh-az-baal*") (means she should not be flying out for earning) and with her entire existence dedicates and pays full attention towards her children and the children by birth have these rights to get full time from their mother. The industrial world has taken this time away from mother and they are running after earning more and decorating their lives with false ideals. We are not referring to those woman and mother who are pursued to work due to social conditions and earn for living but about those who in order to raise their social status and actually are not in need to earn because they have their livings provided by their husband.

There are some woman do not work but still waste and spend their time in other activities like roaming around, unnecessary socialization, mobile and internet chatting, gossiping, gathering and hence these mothers are also not able to give full time to their children though she provides the children with servants, maids and all other amenities. But this mother is not fulfilling the actual legitimate need of the child and she is not able to transfer those rights to the child.

Psychological deficiencies in child

When mother and father due to separation or some other reasons are not able to deliver the rights of addressing the feelings of child a big deficiency gets developed inside the

child which remains present throughout life time. If in the age of infancy a deficiency gets developed in the child due to mother or father than this deficiency remains forever in the life of child. There are very few children who possess the power to eliminate this deficiency when they grow up. And these people are highly sensible, matured who by their willful activities are able to compensate this childhood deficiency.

Like there are some people who always have ill views about others which means they consider everyone as bad and never look or consider anyone as good. The cause for this problem is the same that some childhood deficiency has remained inside them. These ill views increase the fury of revenge inside them and when they look at anyone else having something good they feel that these people have usurped their rights. This way he gets more revengeful and gradually this incites them to turn into dacoits, criminals and terrorists.

In most cases children from divorced families become victims of these deficiencies and eventually turn into criminals. In our country these things are not done but many other nations have done this that when criminal cases come to court they do an analysis about the family background of the criminal. The outcome of this analysis in some nations have revealed that majority of these criminals belong to divorced families which implies when they were very young the parents divorced or separated. This divorce or separation affected the child and this child than turned

into a professional criminal. It is possible when this child enters in any type of world whether religious, secular, business or any type of society he or she will carry this deficiency with him or her.

Inferiority complex

Some develop inferiority complex and to hide this inferiority complex they start to do abased and lowly acts. These children who developed the deficiency of love and feelings in childhood first develop inferiority complex which means they develop this feeling that I am lower and inferior than others and to suppress this complex he does certain acts to show to others that I am like or superior than others. To spread this impression that I am like or better than others he really does very lowly acts like he dresses up very differently; he will make his hairstyle and exterior to show that I am better than others; he does certain acts to draw attention of others.

There are some people who throughout their life have only one objective that they should be the center of attraction for people. And to draw this attention they turn themselves into jokers. When they are sitting in gathering they put all efforts to ensure that the entire gathering pays attention towards them. But those who are prestigious and heavy in personality are not concerned whether people are attentive towards them or not. Some people are very sensitive that who all have not done salutations (*Salaam*) to them but for prestigious people it does not matter even if no one salutes

them or even if all salutes to them it makes no difference on them.

When this same category of people enters the religious world they articulate a false personality to draw the attention of religious people towards them. For example if he is a theological student he will do this by dressing up in that form, or putting up shoes of different type or create such an environment around his self just to show that I am a big personality and I have a status. He considers himself as a big personality but others do not recognize him so in order to make others also recognize he starts to do such strange things. This is where various forms of diseases get born.

Organizing our lives in Industrial world

As said before these things are very common nowadays because the industrial life has created this deficiency in human beings and this is getting reflected in many fields. If small things are analyzed on regular basis and it is done in some societies; like the effect of Television on families. When television was not present the entire family would sit together for dinner and talk to each other which were natural but when television has come they do not look at each other whereas looking at each other has a significant effect. Like husband and wife need to look at each other and pay attention to each other but both are drowned in Television serials and when serial is over they go to sleep. That time which is required to be attentive and looking at

each other; that time is non-existing because television has absorbed their attention.

Similarly children and parents both are watching the television and now their feelings do not get tranquilized. The place of child and parents cannot be substituted by Television. Those families who do not have children we can see how disturbed they are for children. If someone tells them that why are you asking for trouble; you know how difficult it is to take care of child and how much trouble you will get into. They will say yes we know and accept all these troubles but still they are demanding for children because the one who is demanding for a child is not their intellect but instead the natural instincts inside them is telling them that you need a child. The parents are feeling a vacuum inside them due to absence of children and a similar vacuum and deficiency is present inside that child as well who is without parents.

At times the parents get children after a lot of efforts, supplications, invocations but what they are expected to give to children they are not able to give and what the children are expected to give them they are also not getting from the child. The deficiency remains as it is though both parents and child are present but because the industrial world has developed this deficiency. We need to organize ourselves to live in an industrial world and we need special discipline in our lives for living in industrial and scientific world. How we should be able to organize and discipline our lives in this industrial world so that this world should

not be effective on our natural instincts, relationships, feelings, emotions and should leave negative effects on our rights. This is essential but in this industrial world man is not even having the time to think about organizing and disciplining himself.

One of the gifts of the industrial world is telephone; earlier there were only landline telephone which was also disturbing. Like husband and wife are talking at lunch or dinner and it might be an emotional talk and all of a sudden telephone rings. Now this would only happen when they were both at home but these days the telephones which are present like mobile phones are disturbing even their most private time.

It is necessary to organize these things; attending telephone twenty four hours is destroying human beings life and at certain times these mobile phones should be switched off. Man should organize himself in this industrial world. We have seen such people whose telephones are on even during worship and prayers because their business is such that they have to be present on telephone all the time. When they are present with their wife, children or parents or friends and everywhere, every time their telephone is on and these things are effective. Since we have become used to living a life without etiquettes we do not care about such things that there are certain moments when there should not be any disturbance. Like when you are sleeping there should not be any disturbance during sleep as well. For instance if man needs normally seven hours of sleep than

these seven hours should not be disturbed. If you are student and for studying you need to concentrate and it is a very difficult thing to concentrate the mind on some particular meaning. A student with all efforts brings his concentration on a certain meaning and at the same time telephone rings; and these moments are precious. We have to organize this in prayers, supplications and religious gatherings. This telephone should be off at certain times and should not interfere in your studies, analysis, and worship and specifically when you are in your family affairs. Like when you are busy with children and father has only five minutes with children and children with affection come to their father than at the same time mobile phone rings and he listens that he lost a deal and now his temperature goes up and kicks the children away and becomes annoyed. He has this pain and grief that I have lost two thousand dollars but the loss which he has incurred by distancing the children is much bigger than these two thousand dollars. Thus this thing has become common in the industrial world.

Fundamental deprivation of an Orphan

Now even if we look at the natural world apart from the industrial world this deficiency gets developed due to certain incidents and that is becoming orphan. The Industrial world has made everyone orphan even those who have parents. But in the natural world due to certain incidents these deficiencies gets developed and most significant gap and deficiency is the one that gets developed

in children due to the death of their parents. This gap or absence is a very important point and specifically for these children who become orphans during their delicate young age when their personality is being built up. Either the presence of father or mother gets off from their head or both as well.

Religion has given a lot of significance to these children and wants high degree of attention to be drawn towards these children. In a religious environment these orphan children are eligible for highest degree attention. Generally it is considered that the reason behind the emphasis of religion towards orphan children is only for the purpose of feeding them but if you see the interpretations of religion in this context than this issue comes out to be much more beyond feeding of stomach. The issue is much more important than what we have understood. The most charitable people do certain things which are against the principles of religion though they are very sincere in what they are doing. They spend money for orphans and even give time for the sake of orphans and possess the feelings as well. But the way they provide the environment for the orphans in such a careless manner that it would have been better if they would not have done this. And this is construction of orphanages and specifically the form of orphanages commonly seen.

In these orphanages the orphans are given everything except what religion wants to be provided to them. They gather the orphans from various places in one place which is known as an orphanage and thereby develop such a

feeling inside orphans or such a status is given to them in the society which is a status or feeling of emotional deprivation. It is a similar environment which in past was given to certain contagiously diseased people like those suffering from leprosy. People would take these people suffering from leprosy out of town and keep them in some remote place. Religion never says that you should take the orphans out of society. They should live their lives in the same society in which they were born. Now you take them out of that society than construct a special place for them with a sign board stating that this is an orphanage and then collect donations for them, put donation box in the orphanage and then various people come to visit them. Sometimes the Hajj Pilgrims come to orphanage and all the orphans are made to stand there in front of them, they see and assess them and then day and night make the orphans realize that we are being fed by the money of these people. This is what religion did not wanted that the orphans should realize that they are orphans.

Pioneer of Islam – An Orphan

Allah (s.w.t) himself has taken care of orphans and incidentally the pioneer of Islam was an orphan child and Allah (s.w.t) nurtured this orphan. But how Allah did this? Quran has recorded this fact in Quran specifically. And Allah(s) has a complete chapter in the Quran for this orphan. Allah (s.w.t) says:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?

(Ad dhuha-6)

O Prophet! You were an orphan and Allah supported you with the shelter of Abu Talib (a.s) and this was the grace of Allah (s.w.t) that in the childhood an orphan was provisioned with such good environment. He got such guardianship that caressed and took care of this orphan in a way better than their own children. The best way in which the mother of Imam Ali (a.s), Lady Fatema binte Asad (s.a) treated this orphan that when this esteemed lady left this world the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) himself went inside the grave and slept inside the grave because the Prophet (s.a.w.s) knew all what this mother had done for me and how well she took care of me. And all these arrangements were done by Allah (s.w.t). It was Allah (s.w.t) who kept in the heart of this lady and her husband mercy, kindness, compassion, love and being favorable towards the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s). Allah (s.w.t) says in the Quran it was we who did this. *“Did we not find you an orphan? And then gave you this shelter”*. This was the arrangement made by Allah (s.w.t) and this is how the orphans should be brought up and nurtured.

Allah (s) made this orphan as the greatest person of entire humanity and Allah (s) made such a great personality of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) who was an orphan. A personality who is unmatched, incomparable and it is a fact that the work of Allah (s.w.t) is like this only because the creation cannot do such things. But there is a wisdom in this that if

you want to give shelter to an orphan; which is also necessary to do than do it in the way Allah (s.w.t) did for an orphan. Allah (s) made this orphan as the leader of humanity and made him such a great personality that entire world tried their best to break this personality but they could not because the degree of perseverance which was created inside this personality was so high.

Sympathy towards Orphans

Personality has big effects and we should not come towards the orphans only in a symphathetic way which touches their feelings in negative way. There are two category of people; one are those who are completely negligent towards orphans and Quran has condemned them whereas there is another category who is cautious towards Quran but they also do it in the same way that it becomes an insult to the orphans; hence both the categories than become the same. Allah (s.w.t) has mentioned on few occasions in the Holy Quran that there are some people who do not pay attention towards orphans. Allah (s.w.t) in the Quran first made the Prophet (s.a.w.s) remember that we gave you shelter when you were an orphan and then immediately says

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

Therefore, as for the orphan, do not oppress him

(Ad dhuha-9)

An orphan is highly valuable in the eyes of Allah (s.w.t) and we should not pass by an orphan in a simple manner. Hence

do not wade off orphans or make them uncomfortable and it was in the *Seerah* (character) of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) that his state would change whenever he would come in front of an orphan irrespective whether the orphan was Muslim or non-Muslim.

Quranic vision on Orphans

Allah (s.w.t) has pointed towards some people who are worthy of condemnation and tells the Prophet have you seen such people.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ

Have you considered him who denies religion?

(Al-Maa'un-1)

The one who denies religion is not the one who declares that Allah is not there, Qayamat is not there or he is writing books against religion, but the Quran says he is the one who :

فَذُلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ

That is the one who treats the orphan with harshness,

(Al-Maa'un-2)

It is possible that he might be a pious practicing person but if he pushes away and neglects the orphan than he is a denier of religion. And Allah (s.w.t) is telling the prophet have you seen the one who pushes away the orphan is the denier of religion. This means one who neglects and pushes away orphans is the one who is denying entire religion. One more category which Allah (s.w.t) mentions in the Quran

are the one whom when we bestow bounties they become happy but when we straighten our sustenance on them they start to complaint that Allah (s.w.t) has disgraced us.

Surah Fajr – after verse 15 and 16

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ

And as for man, when his Lord tries him, then treats him with honour and makes him lead an easy life, he says: My Lord honours me.

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ

But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to him his means of subsistence, he says: My Lord has disgraced me

This is the psychology of human being presented that man is such a being that when Allah examines him; the point which is made till here is that every human being is under examination even those who are given a lot and those who possess nothing. This is the examination paper for both the rich and deprived ones and now we should not waste our time in complaining about what others have and what I don't have. You have the examination paper in hand so now complete this. Like in an examination room papers are distributed and some papers are printed on white and some papers on green; and now one person wastes the entire time in this argument that my paper is white and his is green. This is the time for your examination; and you leave aside these arguments and complete this paper. You are wasting this limited time in this argument rather than giving answers to the examination paper. On contrary the one

who gets colorful examination paper becomes happy and spends his time in kissing, admiring the paper, calling his friends that I got a very colorful paper. And then time is over and you have not given the reply. These are all examinations and all are wasting their time; one who has been given less spends his time in complaining and one who has more spends his time in pride and lavishness. We should be attentive towards this examination and deliver the rights of exam quickly before the time passes away. Now see what Quran says man is doing.

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ
And as for man, when his Lord tries him, then treats him with honour and makes him lead an easy life, he says: My Lord honours me.

When Allah as an examination gives a lot to someone, he is happy and says that Allah has given him a lot. But when he gives less or limited

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ
But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to him his means of subsistence, he says: My Lord has disgraced me

He says that Allah has disgraced me by giving less but Allah (s.w.t) says that we have not disgraced you by giving less but instead you are disgraced because

كَأَلَّاظِلًّا لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ
Nay! But you do not honour the orphan
(Surah Fajr-17)

كَلَّا means never, you have misinterpreted this. The actual reason why your sustenance has been straightened and you are in disgrace which you are putting in the account of Allah is because you have not honoured the orphans. You have not done “*Takreem-e-Yateem*” تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ . You are not being kind and merciful towards orphan.

Serving food to orphan does not falls under this category of تَكْرُمُونَ honouring an orphan. “*Takreem-e-Yateem*” means to give respect and take care of the personality of orphan. It is not that orphans are begging around in the street and you give them some alms or invite media and make orphans stand in queue and then donate them something to show to people. I have seen this myself in some western countries as well and I have told to people also that do not put these boards of Orphanages on such places. But they insisted that it is mandatory requirement from the donor that Orphanage should be written on the building, road signs should be made pointing towards the direction of orphanage and also name of the Haji who is the sponsor should be written over there. I have seen pictures of orphans placed on the wall of mosques with files for each orphan made and below it is written that our organization is serving so many orphans in such places. This is because every day five hundred people look at these pictures inside the mosques and also read that these orphans are being taken care of by the mosque or organization. Is this an honour to an orphan (*Takreem*) or is a disgrace and insult to the orphans?

This orphan will not be able to raise his eyes throughout his life. He will never consider himself equal to others.

Everyone will say you have been brought up with donation money. This was not the demand of religion and religion has very carefully pointed out towards this issue specifically in the Holy Quran.

First we have to realize and understand who is an orphan? He is the one who has lost his parents and due to which a gap has developed in his life. And this gap is not just of food, clothing and shelter; more than this it is the gap of feelings. The problem which we have is that this industrial world has murdered our feelings as well; the way our intellect has died due to dominance of lust as mentioned in Munajaat of Imam Ali (a.s) says:

“O Allah! My heart is veiled, my soul has turned defective and my lusts have overcome my intellect and now what should I do to resolve this?”

This is a very important question which Ameerul Momineen (a.s) is raising and it is our question and not that of Ameerul Momineen (a.s) because on his intellect lusts and desires are not dominant. He is telling us that you should be raising this question in front of Allah that O Allah! What should I do about this difficulty whereby my feelings, intellect are all under dominance of lusts and desires? What is the solution for this? The solution is also given by the religion. It is there in narration that one person came to Imam (a.s) and questioned that my heart has hardened and I want to know how to soften it and solve this problem of mine. Imam (a.s) replied “orphan”; you go to an orphan and put your merciful hand on his head and your heart will soften, you wash his tears and your heart would soften.

The way the Infallible Imams had a very special way of treatment of orphans. It is not found very specifically or at least I have not come across clearly anywhere in narrations that Imam Ali (a.s) ever played with his own children, though this is a separate chapter on how the Imams (a.s) dealt with their children. But for the orphans it is found in abundant places in narrations that Imam Ali (a.s) and other Imams (a.s) would play with the orphan children. And children never play with elders unless the elders also play and act like children. A child enjoys and likes more if an elder becomes a child and plays. The Prophet would do the same; he would turn into a child and play with them. Imam Ali (a.s) would do the same and play with the orphans in a childish way. Imam Ali (a.s) at times would also say in the presence of Allah that *“O my Lord! Do not catch our necks in the matter of rights of orphan”*.

In the famous incident where Ameerul Momineen (a.s) questioned a poor woman who had difficulties in carrying water about her husband and she replied my husband got martyred in a battle alongside Ameerul Momineen (a.s). He (a.s) asked her, do you have anyone else to support you; she replied no there is no one. He (a.s) himself carried her water bag to her home and then asked her to wait and I will return back. He brought food to her home and told her that let us distribute the work; either you cook food and I will play with children or I will cook food and you play with children. This level of nurturing and taking care of children cannot be found easily. Ameerul Momineen (a.s) would make the orphans ride on his back. It is present in Nahjul Balagha, in his will at the time of his martyrdom. He says in his will that for the sake of Allah do not forget or neglect the orphans.

Imam Hasan (a.s) would spend maximum time in taking care of orphan.

Honouring Orphans (Takreem e Yateem)

Allah (s.w.t) says you are disgraceful because you have not honoured the orphans (*Takreem*). Feeding orphans is different from honouring orphans. You give status, position and personality to orphans. If you read history some people have good mind and they have done very good analysis by touching this topic that many of the big personalities in history were orphans. In the Islamic world and non-Islamic world also it is seen in history that some helpless orphans turned into international personalities and amongst this list also they have mentioned the name of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) as the topmost. Who were these orphans? They were the ones who in their era of orphanage got the honour (*Ikram*). Allah (s.w.t) made such arrangements to grace them with honour that they turned into such personalities. There is no alternative or replacement work as worth as honouring an orphan (*Takreem e Yateem*).

Allah (s.w.t) replies that your difficulty is not that Allah has straightened your sustenance; your difficult is that you are not honouring orphans.

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ

Nay! But you do not honour the orphan

وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor

(Fajr-18)

They would not feed the poor, so you can see the beauty and precision of Holy Quran, than when it came to the issue of not serving food it is in context to poor and not for orphan. For orphan the guilt which is mentioned is that you were not honouring the orphan.

Now the Quran further says, why you were not doing these things (i.e. honouring orphan and feeding the poor)?

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا

*And you eat away the heritage, devouring (everything)
indiscriminately,*

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

*And you love wealth with exceeding love.
(Fajr- 19,20)*

You had so much love for your wealth that you would just pass by the orphans neglecting them. There are some who look at the orphans as if they are pests and insects. There are many other instances in Quran where this issue of honouring of orphans has been brought up.

The believers are emphasized that if you want to get married than marry an orphan but at the same time be careful about their rights. It is very difficult to deliver their rights and if you are not confident of delivering their rights than do not marry an orphan girl. This is because the orphan just does not need food, what she needs is honour, respect and mercy. And it is possible that you might not be

able to honour an orphan. This is the gap of feelings which develops inside an orphan.

Honouring Orphans in month of Ramadhan

The holy month of Ramadhan is the month of reviving of senses and hence the Prophet (s.a.w.s) says do not forget the orphans in this month. In the Sermon of Ramadhan the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) says *..wa tahannano aitaam min naas..* (means be favourable and merciful to orphans) *“Hannan”* is among the beautiful names of Allah. *“Hannan”* has a composite meaning which means certain specialities when they gather together it becomes *“Hannan”*. One speciality is that of *“Ishtiyaaq”* enthusiasm which means to be enthusiastic about something; the second speciality is *“Meharbaan”* which means to be kind and third is *“Shafqat”* which means being compassionate or tender. When these specialities gather within one person he or she becomes *“Hannan”*. These specialities are kept inside mother and this is what is known as motherliness. Mother is kind, compassionate and also enthusiastic towards the child.

To being *“Hannan”* towards orphans does not mean to distribute food to them and this is not what the Prophet (s.a.w.s) is asking us to distribute food to orphans in the month of Ramadhan. We put posters and banners that food will be distributed to the orphans in the month of Ramadhan at this place. There was a news in Karachi that one charitable person gathered all poor, widows and orphans in a big playground to distribute food and fourteen

widows and orphans died after being stampeded. Is this being honourable to orphan (*Takreem e Yateem*)? Honouring an orphan does not mean that you bring a truck load of food and then invite all press reporters to tell them that we distributing food to orphans. Honouring of orphans is the way Ali (a.s) did and the way Ali ibn Hussain (a.s) did.

Imam Baqir (a.s) says that when I was giving the funeral to my father Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s) I saw on his back big lumps similar to those present on the legs of camel. Someone asked him what these lumps are; He (a.s) replied that my father at midnight would carry sacks of food on his bag for the orphans. Ameerul Momineen (a.s) never invited the orphans on his door instead he would carry sacks of food and visit the orphans that too in such a covert way that even neighbours would remain unaware.

He (a.s) would deliver food to the orphan with such respect that neither the widow or orphan would get disgraced in any way nor anyone would get an opportunity to insult, defame or disgrace the orphan. The most astonishing thing is that even the orphans themselves were not aware as to who was provisioning them with food. When the food did not reach them on nineteenth evening of Ramadhan and the physician announced that now no medicine is required for Ali (a.s) and make arrangements for his funeral and then when there was chaos in Kufa that the Caliph has passed away than the orphans realized who was feeding them food every night. "*Wa tahannan min aitaam min naas*". This

means relieve their difficulties with kindness, compassion and being enthusiastic about them.

This is very important that we need to be enthusiastic about supporting the orphans. You should be enthusiastic and excited for the orphans and not they are enthusiastic about you coming to help them. The Prophet (s.a.w.s) says do favours on orphans so that tomorrow someone would do it to your orphans. When you see an orphan just think that may be tomorrow your children might be the same because there is no information when death can come. It is possible that you will pass away and the same situation might happen to your children so be kind to the orphans so others would be kind to your orphans as well.

Covenant from Allah (s.w.t)

Allah (s.w.t) has demanded many covenants related to orphans. In Surah Baqarah, verse 83, Allah makes a covenant with Bani Israel

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ

*And when We made a covenant with the children of Israel:
You shall not serve any but Allah **and (you shall do) good** to
(your) parents, and to the near of kin and **to the orphans**
and the needy,*

In this verse Allah (s.w.t) is taking a covenant to do إِحْسَانًا
good act towards orphan. In our culture إِحْسَانًا means to do

such goodness with someone that throughout the life the beneficiary out of shame does not even look in our eyes, he always lowers his eyes when in front of us. In Arabic **إِحْسَانًا** means to do an act in a beautified manner.

Making Orphans needless

There are many interesting narrations related to orphans. In Meezan ul Hikmah, volume 10 there is a tradition extracted from the last will of Imam Ali (a.s). We need to consider that this will was delivered in the last moments of his life when he was also suffering from severe pain. When it was assured that he will not survive any more he gathered all his family members and delivered his last will and everything he said in this was for the sake of Allah. He says *“For the sake of Allah, always be attentive towards Quran”*. Ameerul Momineen (a.s) in his will is asking us for the sake of Allah please do such and such things and we also ensured that for the sake of Allah never touched those things which he wanted us to do. Amongst these things which he delivered in his will one was *“Allah Allah Fi Aitaam”*, for the sake of Allah be attentive towards orphans; *“Do not give promises and just raise the expectations of orphans without delivering”*. These days people come forward to do something for the martyrs and their orphans and they start internet campaigns, make websites, send emails , make groups to support and help orphans, collect donations and then eventually nothing is given to them. Do not open the mouth of orphans and then do not give anything to them.

Than He (a.s) says *“Do no waste them with your presence”*. This means while you are present do not waste them. *“I have heard myself from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) that one who sponsors an orphan to the extent that he makes the orphan independent and needless”*.

We for instance give only to the extent to the poor that they should not die. We expect them to be on our doors every day. It is better not to give anything and let them die in a day rather than given so little that they are begging every day. Religion does not say that support the orphans in this manner that for sixty years they are dependent on you. We have to make the orphan independent in a year itself. Honouring an orphan does not mean for ten years he keeps on coming to you for support. We have to make them independent and needless by giving them to that extent. Educate the orphan to the extent that he or she becomes independent; make him stand on his feet and given him that much wealth that he or she becomes needless.

Imam Ali (a.s) says that *“I have heard myself from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) that one who sponsors an orphan to the extent that he makes the orphan independent and needless Allah and the way Allah makes hell incumbent on the one who usurps the wealth of an orphan Allah makes Paradise incumbent on one who sponsors an orphan”* (which means to become a guardian in such a way that you make the orphan independent of everyone).

Merciful father for orphans

In other narrations it is said that become a merciful father for orphans. This implies that in reality the orphan should feel that he is my father. By giving donation he does not develop this feeling that you are his father. Do not get work done from orphans in return of some favours you do for them; like after giving some money to an orphan you ask him to wash your car.

Imam Sadiq (a.s) narrates from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) that *“Become an elderly merciful father for orphan; remember whatever you sow you will reap”*. This means if you maltreat the orphans than your orphans will also be mistreated the same way.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s) says that *“When a believing man or woman spreads a merciful hand on the head of an orphan; the number of hairs that touch the hand of this person Allah (s.w.t) writes those many goodness in the account of this person”*. Just by passing your hand on the head of an orphan you are rewarded to this extent shows the importance over here. This also depicts what part is important for an orphan, only feeding or expression of feelings? The hand should also not be kept on the head in a manner that he should realize that he is an orphan but in a manner that he should feel that I have a father.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) in one narration joined his index and middle finger and by pointing at the finger said; I and the one who sponsors and takes care of an orphan will be in Paradise similar to these two fingers (means nothing in

between). As per this narration also taking care of orphan does not mean giving food only that too in the name of orphanages and insulting them.

The Prophet (s.a.w.s) says that *“There is a place in Paradise called the House of Happiness which none shall enter except those who cheered up the orphan of believers and he will be recorded for Paradise till the time he does not commits any sin”*. It is evident that the one who troubles or disgraces or insults the orphans of believers than they will receive severe punishment as well. It should also be noted that everything is conditional; it is not that you honour one orphan and keep on doing all other sinful acts and still you will go to Paradise.

The Prophet (s.a.w.s) says *“One who sponsors three orphans is like the one who gets up every night for prayers (Salaatul Layl) and he is like the one who fasts throughout the day and he is like that crusader (Mujahid) who takes a sword and gets out to fight in the way of Allah; and he and me are brothers in Paradise, similar to these two fingers”*

Abu Darda says that one person came in the presence of Messenger of Allah (s.w.t) and complained *“My heart has hardened and there is no tenderness and mercy in it, so what should I do? The Prophet (s.a.w.s) replied; “Do you desire that your heart be softened and your needs fulfilled? He said yes I need that. The Prophet said “Be merciful to orphan, kind to them and fulfil their needs and your heart will be softened and your desires would get fulfilled”*.

Usurping the rights of orphans

There is another narration about those who usurp the wealth of orphans. There would be a group of people who would be dragged towards hell with their mouth full of fire; when Gibrael was asked who are they? He replied they are ones who usurped the wealth of orphan.

It is there in another narration that the pleadings and sighs of orphan tremors the heaven of Allah. One pleading that Allah listens and it is impossible that he will not listen is the sighs of orphan. It is an established fact that the sighs of orphan is effective from whichever family he or she is. If he is an orphan and someone hurts or breaks the heart of an orphan than his sighs will affect that person.

In our childhood we would see some persons suffering very badly; the elders would say that they have been hurt by the sighs of orphan. Like a person dies and his brother usurps the wealth and land of the orphans of his brother. In majority of cases this happens within family but eventually such people get compensated in this world itself and some calamities falls on them from during their life and they turn into lessons. For such type of people the elders would say that they have been afflicted by the sighs of orphans. It is definite that they will be afflicted and these sighs of orphans will show their effect either on them or someone in their generation.

Orphans of “Aal-e-Mohammad”

It is there in narration that the expanse of orphans is very vast. There is a category of orphan known as “Orphans of Aale Mohammad” (*Aitamaane Aale Mohammad*) and the Shias fall in this category. As said before the definition of an orphan is the one who when their father or mother passes away a gap develops in his or her life. The terminological meaning of “Yateem” (orphan) in Arabic is that pearl which is alone and unique. The shell which makes pearls in ocean sometime carries two pearls inside and sometimes there is only one pearl but very precious. Say for an example if a person brings one thousand shells from the sea bed; than some of them would have two similar pearls inside and some pearls would have one pearl but many such shells when opened will have similar single pearls. But from one such shell a pearl comes out that is unique and having no match. This child is called “Yateem” because he or she is unique because he has lost his mother and father who can never come back again. And another meaning is that other children have parents but this orphan is not having any parents; now goodness with others will not yield that benefit which will come out from doing goodness with this orphan.

It is necessary to make them independent by educating them, taking best care of them and turning them into a respected personality in society so that he or she does not feel ashamed in the society. There are certain things which are done for the orphan are worse than being careless about orphan.

It is there in narrations from Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) who narrates from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s) *“The orphan who has been disconnected from his Imam is a higher degree orphan than the one who is orphan because of disconnection from his father and now he cannot reach his Imam. And he does not know what are his religious obligations? Know that anyone amongst our Shia who is aware about our religion and sciences than all those Shia’s who are unaware about our religion are orphans in the lap of this Shia who knows. And one who teaches, educates, imparts knowledge, guides our orphans (Shia’s) is the friend of Aale Mohammad (a.s)”*.

The one who is disconnected from his Imam and Leader is an orphan and he has developed a big gap. In context of this narration the Shia *Faqeeh* is the one who teaches the sciences of Ahlulbayt (a.s) to the Shias. They should teach and educate the Shias in such merciful and compassionate manner the way the guardian of an orphan should take care of them mercifully.

There is another tradition from Lady Fatema (s.a) *“ I have heard from my father (s.a.w.s) that the Shia scholars when they will be gathered on the day of Judgement they will be adorned with attires of sciences in context to the degree of sciences they have learned and they have imparted to our Shias. For every level and activity of guidance they have done for the Shia’s they will be gifted with one attire. And there will be some from amongst whom each one will be gifted one million attires of light and then it will be announced; O the people who have taken the guardianship*

of orphans of Aale Mohammed at the time when they were disconnected from their Imam”.

Imam Sajjad (a.s) says “From our followers anyone who becomes guardian of the orphans of Aale Mohammad (a.s) i.e. teaches them our sciences; Allah tells his angels O my angels! I am granting my mercy to him and note down how many knowledgeable things he has spoken throughout his life and for every word of guidance prepare thousand palaces for him and grant him bounties in accordance with that. They are the guardians of the orphans of Aale Mohammad.”

This is not for those scholars who eat the money of Shias because now in context of these traditions the definition of orphan has broadened. This means now even all the Shias who are in the era when their Imam is not present are also orphans which implies that those scholars who just eat way the money of Shias are eating away the money of orphans; which could be with any excuse in the name of fees for lectures or compensation. All these are usurpers of wealth of orphans of *Aale Mohammad*. For them hell is incumbent. Those who give something like sciences and guidance to the Shia’s as a religious obligation and not as a means of living they fall in the category mentioned in this tradition. But those who only like Shias because they give Khums or they take some other personal benefits from them but do not impart education and guidance are usurpers.

The role of scholars is to impart knowledge and guidance; and not to distribute food and do welfare activities which scholars do these days. They have full attention towards welfare activities and all wants to become Abdul Sattar Eidhi. There are many such persons in society who can distribute food. Allah has given this divine opportunity to the entire businessmen who have lot of money to do charity and not for scholars whose foremost duty is to impart knowledge and guidance. The expectation from scholars is to give knowledge and guidance. And the orphans of *Aale Mohammad* are expecting this mercy from the scholars. And for such scholars Allah is telling his angels that *"O my angels! I am granting my mercy to him and note down how many knowledgeable things he has spoken throughout his life and for every word of guidance prepare thousand palaces for him and grant him bounties in accordance with that. They are the guardians of the orphans of Aale Mohammad."*

We invoke Allah (s.w.t) to bless us with this divine opportunity to honour the orphans the way Allah (s.w.t) expects us to do.