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## Contemporary Applications of Religious Teachings on the Welfare of Orphans: An Insight from Christianity, Judaism and Islam

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### Abstract:

Based on contemporary applications of religious teachings on the welfare of orphans, this research analyzes the texts and principles of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The purpose of this study is to understand the guidance provided in these three religious traditions for the care and welfare of orphans and to examine their contemporary applications. The research findings show that these three religions place great emphasis on helping and supporting orphans and the relevance and importance of these teachings remain in the present day. Commonalities and differences in principles provided for the welfare of orphans in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are also highlighted, which may be useful for current social policies and programs.

This research provides guidance for religious leaders and policy makers to design effective and comprehensive programs for the welfare of orphans. The findings of this study show that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have strong principles for the support and welfare of orphans, which can be used to address contemporary social problems.

### Introduction:

The average number of orphans worldwide is estimated to be around 140 million. These numbers are caused by various factors such as natural disasters, war, diseases, and causes of poverty. Pakistan also has a high number of orphans, around 4.2 million. Many of these children are orphaned for various reasons, such as poverty, disease, and natural disasters.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of the welfare of orphans is recognized in every society, and its importance is especially emphasized in religious traditions. Religious traditions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have clearly defined principles for the care and welfare of orphans. These principles emphasize not only the physical and financial support of orphans but also their education and training and moral development. The purpose of this research is to examine the contemporary

applications of these religious teachings and to understand their relevance in the present day so that these teachings can be incorporated into the current social policies.

### **Background: Importance of Orphan Welfare:**

The welfare of orphans is very important for the moral and social development of any society. These children, who are deprived of the shadow of their parents, need special attention and support. An effective system for the welfare of orphans not only fulfills their basic needs but also provides them with an opportunity to join the mainstream of society. Caring for orphans is given a high place in religious teachings as this practice is based on principles of service to humanity and social justice.

The principles of orphan welfare in different religious traditions are defined from different angles, but all have the same goal: to provide love, protection, and support to orphans. The teachings on the care of orphans in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam provide a strong foundation for the welfare of these children. These teachings are not only important for adherence to religious principles, but their practical applications can bring positive changes in the society.

### **Research Objectives and Significance:**

The purpose of this research is to study the principles of orphan welfare in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and examine their contemporary applications. This study will find out what teachings have been provided in various religious traditions to help orphans and how relevant these teachings are in the present day. The research findings will also clarify how these principles can be incorporated into existing social policies and programs.

A study of the religious teachings for the welfare of orphans reveals that these principles are of great importance not only in the past but also today. Contemporary applications of these principles may lead to new and effective methods for the welfare of orphans. This research will provide a guide for religious leaders, policy makers, and social workers to design comprehensive and effective programs for the welfare of orphans.

### **Basic research questions (Research Questions):**

What principles and teachings are provided for the welfare of orphans in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam?

How relevant are these religious principles today and how can they be incorporated into current social policies?

What are the common features and differences in the principles provided in different religious traditions for the welfare of orphans?

## **Insights from Christianity:**

### **Biblical References:**

To understand the importance of the welfare of orphans in Christianity, it is important to study the Gospels. Helping orphans and other disadvantaged people is emphasized in the Gospel.

For example, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said:

"Give food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, take the foreigner into your home, clothe the naked, care for the sick and prisoners."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, in the Gospel of Luke, there is an example of Jesus' emphasis on helping **orphans and widows:**

"And he said to him, 'Jesus said, Help the orphans and the widows.'<sup>3</sup>"

### **Efforts of Christian Scholars and Institutions:**

Christian scholars and institutions are making various efforts for the welfare of orphans. Christian thinkers have always emphasized the care and support of orphans. For example, Saint Augustine said that "caring for orphans is the will of God and an essential part of Christianity."<sup>4</sup>

Christian institutions are also playing an important role for the welfare of orphans. Organizations like Catholic Charities and World Vision are working to help orphans around the world. These institutions not only provide basic needs to orphans but also make efforts for their education and social integration.

**Contemporary Applications:** Contemporary applications of Christian teachings are vital to the welfare of orphans. Christian institutions and organizations are finding new ways to help orphans even in modern times. The main objective of these organizations is to provide education, health, and social services for the welfare of orphans.

For example, World Vision is an international Christian organization that works to help orphans and other disadvantaged children. This institution provides orphans with education, health services, and opportunities for social integration. Similarly, Catholic Charities also runs various programs to help orphans, including housing, education, and employment opportunities.

Contemporary applications of Christian teachings show that the concept of the welfare of orphans in Christianity is important not only for adherence to religious principles, but also for the practical application of these teachings for social justice and the service of humanity.<sup>5</sup>

## **Insights from Judaism:**

### **References from Torah and Talmud:**

A study of the Torah and Talmud is essential to understanding the importance of the welfare of orphans in Judaism. Helping orphans and widows is repeatedly emphasized in the Torah.

For example, the Torah says:

"Thou shalt not oppress the fatherless and the widow, nor oppress them."<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, Deuteronomy also emphasizes helping orphans:

"From the fruit of your trees spare the fatherless, the widow, and the sojourner."<sup>7</sup>

Helping orphans is also emphasized in the Talmud. The Talmud states that helping orphans is a great virtue and a means of gaining God's pleasure.

### **Efforts of Jewish Scholars and Institutions:**

Jewish scholars and institutions are making various efforts for the welfare of orphans. "Helping orphans is an essential part of Jewish law and occupies an important place in Jewish society,"<sup>8</sup> said Rabbi Moses ben Maimonides.

Jewish institutions are also playing an important role for the welfare of orphans. Organizations like "Jewish Federations of North America" and "Orthodox Union" are working to help orphans around the world. These institutions not only provide basic needs to the orphans but also make efforts for their education and training and social integration.<sup>9</sup>

### **Contemporary Applications:**

Contemporary applications of Jewish teachings are vital to the welfare of orphans. Jewish institutions and organizations are finding new ways to help orphans even in modern times. The main objective of these organizations is to provide education, health, and social services for the welfare of orphans.

For example, Jewish Family Services is an international Jewish organization that works to help orphans and other disadvantaged children. This institution provides orphans with education, health services, and opportunities for social integration. Similarly, the "Orthodox Union"<sup>10</sup> also runs various programs to help orphans, including housing, education, and employment opportunities.

Contemporary applications of Jewish teachings show that the concept of the welfare of orphans in Judaism is not only important for the observance of religious principles, but also that the practical adoption of these teachings is necessary for social justice and the service of humanity.<sup>11</sup>

## Insights from Islam:

### References from the Quran and Hadith:

To understand the importance of the welfare of orphans in Islam, the study of the Qur'an and Hadith is essential. Helping orphans and protecting their rights has been repeatedly emphasized in the Qur'an.

For example, the Qur'an says:

It is said in Surat al-Nisa':

"Those who eat the wealth of orphans unlawfully fill their bellies with fire. And they will be cast into Hell"<sup>12</sup>

Allah Almighty says in Surah Al-An'am:

"And do not approach the property of an orphan except in a way that is better, until he reaches his puberty."<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, it is said in Surah Al-Baqarah:

And they ask you about the issue of orphans. Say: It is better to do good to them, and if you share your expenses with them, then they are your brothers. I would have put it. Indeed, Allah is of great wisdom."<sup>14</sup>

In Surah Al-Dhar, Allah Almighty says about meeting the nutritional needs of orphans, prisoners, etc.:

"And they feed the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner in the love of Allah, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner."<sup>15</sup>

In Surah Al-Zuha, Allah Almighty says about not being harsh on orphans:

"So do not be angry with the orphan."<sup>16</sup>

In one place it is mentioned in the Holy Quran:

"And do not go to the wealth of an orphan except in a way that is best until he reaches his full age and fulfill the measure. When you speak, be just, even if the person is a relative, and fulfill the covenant you made with Allah, the Most High, so that you may remember it."<sup>17</sup>

Helping orphans has also been emphasized in hadiths. Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"This is how I and the sponsor of the orphan will be in heaven." And you pointed between your two fingers (index finger and middle finger).<sup>18</sup>

In a hadith:

It was narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Whoever keeps a Muslim orphan with him and feeds them, Allah will surely admit him to Paradise, except that He commits a sin (polytheism) that cannot be forgiven."<sup>19</sup>

In a hadith, eating an orphan's property unjustly is considered a grave sin:

" Prophet (PBUH) said, "Beware of the seven deadly sins. What are they, O Messenger of Allah?" What Allah has forbidden is taking usury, eating the wealth

of orphans, turning away on the day of battle, and slandering innocent believing women.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Efforts of Islamic Scholars and Institutions:**

Islamic scholars and institutions are making various efforts for the welfare of orphans. "Caring for orphans is an essential part of Islamic society," said Hazrat Umar bin Abdulaziz.

Islamic institutions are also playing an important role for the welfare of orphans. Organizations like "Idara-ul-Khidmat" and "Muslim Hands" are working to help orphans around the world. These institutions not only provide basic needs to the orphans but also make efforts for their education and training and social integration.

### **Contemporary Applications:**

Contemporary applications of Islamic teachings are very important for the welfare of orphans. Islamic institutions and organizations are finding new ways to help orphans even in modern times. The main objective of these organizations is to provide education, health, and social services for the welfare of orphans.

For example, "Helping Hands for Relief and Development" is an international Islamic organization that works to help orphans and other disadvantaged children. This institution provides orphans with education, health services, and opportunities for social integration. Similarly, "Idara-ul-Khidmat Foundation", "Edhi Centre", "Mercy International Foundation", "Al Islah Center" also runs various programs to help orphans including housing, education, and employment opportunities.

Contemporary applications of Islamic teachings show that the concept of the welfare of orphans in Islam is not only important for the observance of religious principles, but the practical adoption of these teachings is also necessary for social justice and the service of humanity.<sup>21</sup>

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Summary of Research Findings**

The purpose of this research was to study and compare the teachings of the welfare of orphans in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. During the research, it was revealed that the welfare of orphans has been given a lot of importance in all the three religions. The Bible, the Torah, the Talmud, and the Qur'an repeatedly emphasize the protection of orphans and their rights. Moreover, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scholars and institutions are working in various ways for the welfare of orphans.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

**Importance of Caring for Orphans:** Research findings show that the care of orphans is highly valued in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. All three religions emphasize protecting the rights of orphans, supporting them, and treating them well.

**Common features:** The common features of the welfare of orphans in all the three religions include protecting their rights, treating them well, and educating them. These common features show that the concept of the welfare of orphans is a fundamental principle in all three religions.

**Differences and Unique Aspects:** Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have different laws and principles for the welfare of orphans. The welfare of orphans is regulated by the teachings of Jesus in Christianity, the laws of the Torah and Talmud in Judaism, and the Qur'an and Hadiths in Islam.

**Contemporary Applications:** The research findings also show that contemporary Christian, Jewish, and Islamic institutions are using modern methods for the welfare of orphans. These institutions are working for the social integration of orphans along with providing education, health, and social services.

### **Policy Recommendations for the Welfare of Orphans**

**Provision of Education:** Special measures should be taken for the education of orphans. Governments and non-governmental organizations provide free education and scholarships for orphans.

**Health Services:** Special health services should be provided for the health care of orphans. Free or reduced cost health facilities should be provided for orphans.

**Social Services:** Special programs should be run for the social integration of orphans. Social services and employment opportunities should be provided to orphans.

**Legal Protection:** Laws should be made and strictly enforced to protect the rights of orphans. Special laws should be made to protect the property of orphans.

**Social Awareness:** Awareness programs should be conducted for the welfare of orphans in the society. People should be encouraged to help orphans and be informed about their rights.

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<sup>6</sup> The Torah, Exodus 22:22.

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<sup>8</sup> Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 21a.

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<sup>12</sup> Surat al-Nisa'10:4

<sup>13</sup> Al-An'am 6:152

<sup>14</sup> Al-Baqarah 2:220

<sup>15</sup> Surah Al-Insan 08:76

<sup>16</sup> Surat al-Zahi 09:93

<sup>17</sup> Surah Al-An'am 125:5

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari, Al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih Al-Mukhtasar min Amor Rasoolullah wa Sunnah Wayama, Kitab al-Adab, Chapter Fazl min Ya'ul Yatima, Hadith No. 6005

<sup>19</sup> Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Albar wal-Salaat, chapter Maja' fi Rahmat al-Yatim wakfalta, Hadith No. 1917

<sup>20</sup> Sahih Ul BuKhari, Hadeath No: 6857

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