

In Islam, orphans hold a special status, and there are specific guidelines and rights established for their care and well-being. These rights are derived from the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah (the practices and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him). Here are some of the key rights of orphans in Islam:

1. Protection of Wealth:

Orphan's wealth should be preserved and protected. It is not permissible to misuse or misappropriate their property. The guardian (usually a close relative) is responsible for managing and safeguarding their assets.¹

"Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze."

2. Corruption in Orphan's wealth is strictly prohibited

Allah the Almighty has declared this as one of the biggest sins. One can understand the concept by comparing two verses. Allah has commanded to refrain fornication strictly.

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّيْنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

And do not even go near unlawful sex (adultery).

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ

And do not (also) go near the orphan's property but in a way that is beneficial (to the orphan) until he reaches his maturity.

One can see that the Lord of all humanity has declared these two sins prohibited with same intensity. In today's word we do consider adultery as a sin but corruption is not considered as a sin even our community don't even bother this. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has mentioned this point in the following hadith.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Avoid the seven great destructive sins. The people enquire, "O Allah's Apostle ﷺ! What are they? "He said, To join others in worship along with Allah, to practice sorcery, to kill the life which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause,

¹ Surah An-Nisa (4:10)

(according to Islamic law), to eat up Riba (usury), to eat up an orphans wealth, to give back to the enemy and fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting, and to accuse, chaste women, who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers.

3. Fair Treatment:

Orphans should be treated with kindness, compassion, and fairness. They should not be subjected to any form of discrimination or injustice.

“And worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.”²

4. Provision of Basic Needs:

The guardian is responsible for providing for the basic needs of the orphan, including food, clothing, shelter, education, and healthcare. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has announced the glad tiding of highest rank to the person who take cares of an orphan.

"I and the guardian of the orphan will be in Paradise like this," and he held his two fingers together.”³

In another hadith same essence has been mentioned in the following words.

Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: One who looks after the orphan whether he is his relative or not, I and he would be together in Paradise like this, and Malik (explained it) with the gesture by drawing his index finger and middle finger close together.⁴

5. Educational and Financial Support:

Orphans should be given access to education and opportunities for personal development. Providing them with a good education is a crucial aspect of fulfilling their rights.

² Surah An-Nisa (4:36)

³ Sahih Bukhari:5304

⁴ Sahih Muslim:7469

(Your meditation should be) on (matters relating to) this world and the Hereafter and they ask you about orphans say: ‘It is meritorious to set (their affairs) right and if you associate them with yourselves (in subsistence and business), then they are also your brothers and Allah distinctly recognizes the one who is destructive from the other who is constructive and if Allah willed, He would put you in distress verily Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.’⁵

6. Emotional Support and Compassion:

Orphans should be shown love, care, and emotional support. They may have experienced trauma and loss, and it is important to provide them with a stable and nurturing environment. Allah the Almighty has guided us to never be harsh with an orphan by commanding His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

So, never should you be strict with any orphan,⁶

7. Rebuking Orphans is Negation of religion

Allah the Almighty has categorically mentioned in the Qur’an that any person who misbehaves with an orphan is like the one who negates the whole religion. He further added that the rituals of these persons will never be accepted.

“Have you seen him who denies Din (Religion)?

So he is the one who pushes away the orphan (i.e. rejects the needs of the orphans and deprives them of their right),

And does not promote the cause of feeding the poor (i.e. does not strive to end the economic exploitation of the poor and the needy).

So woe to those worshippers, Who are unaware of (the spirit of) their Prayers (i.e. they are mindful only of the rights of Allah but are heedless of the rights of fellow human beings),”⁷

8. Guardianship with Consent:

If an orphan has reached an age of maturity, their opinion and consent should be sought when appointing a guardian.

⁵ Al-Baqara 220

⁶ Sura Waduha:9

⁷ Sura al-Maon 1-5

Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "The consent of an orphan should be sought as much as possible with regard to his property, and his consent is taken if he is mature enough, otherwise the orphan's property is entrusted to a reliable person."

9. Avoiding Exploitation:

Orphans should not be exploited for personal gain, and their rights should not be violated in any way.

These are some of the key rights of orphans in Islam, based on the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. It is important for the Muslim community to uphold and protect the rights of orphans, as their well-being and proper upbringing are highly emphasized in Islamic teachings.

Best Home in the sight of Allah

In a hadith the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ mentioned the virtue of orphan's brought-up in a home. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

"The best house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated well. And the worst house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated badly."⁸

Virtues of striving for an orphan and widow

One can comprehend the status of a person in the sight of Allah who is making efforts for an orphan and widow. The person who is trying to make their life easy in every manner.

"One who makes efforts (for earning to be spent) on a widow and the destitute is like a striver in the cause of Allah, and I think he also said: He is like one who constantly stands for prayer and observes fast without breaking it."⁹

⁸ Sunan Ibn Maja:3679

⁹ Sahih Muslim:7468