

## Should it be compulsory for children to look after parents?

Parents-child relation is the only one which we do not choose but still is one of the wonderful and most misunderstood relations of the world. It starts from birth and unlike other relation it remains mostly unchanged throughout the life. They are the ones who support you on your every endeavor, will help you be strong but will never take advantage of your weakness and of all will love you unconditionally. This might not be correct for all but holds true for majority of us.

As the parents sacrifice a lot for their child so comes the question of social and moral obligation children have toward their parents. Should it be necessary for children to look after their parents and therefore return the favors that they received? In fact Karnataka High Court ruled last year that looking after parents is not charity but a moral obligation and if you have inherited any material benefit from your parents then it also becomes your legal obligation to take care of them.

There can be many ways to look into it, some believe that just by virtue of being your parents you hold some minimum obligation towards your parents as shown in the movie Awara even though Raj Kapoor do not get any benefit from his father but still his mother tells him to take care of him. Which can be summarized by the English phrase "isn't the blood thicker than water". However this might also mean as mentioned above that we need to take care of parents even if they did not care about us and their parenting was horrible. And whom should an adopted child be obliged to should it be his biological parents who just left him or his adopted parents who took care of him.

Then comes second group of people who suggest that you owe as much as you have benefitted from your parents. If your parents took good care of you, provided you with proper environment to grow and prosper then you owe them a lot but if they neglected you then you owe nothing. Summarized by English phrase "you reap what you sow". This thought aligns with the principles of social morality. Just like you follow traffic rules even though you have not entered into any explicit contract with the government but as you reap the benefit of the system in place this can automatically seen as you giving your consent for the agreement, parenting can be seen corollary to this. However a contract can be made only between free, self interested and rational person. And a child is neither free as he never had choice to be born or not and nor is he rational. Hence it can be concluded that a contract cannot exists where child is a party.

Finally we can conclude that a child owes nothing to parents regardless of what you have received from them. A child is born out of love and not of any contract. When a mother takes care of her child she does so without any expectation, she simply cares out of love. Infact parents are the ones who owe to child. Parenting is not any easy job, a child if not handled properly could turn out to be menace to society, so parents are the one who are in contract with the society. As pointed out by Jane English, this relation should be seen just like friendship. Where a friend dosent keep tally of helping his friend, he does so out of love. If the parents loved child, gave them freedom then undoubtedly the child will reciprocate back to them. But if there



is no love in this relation then once child grows adult both parties hold no obligation towards each other.



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