

Rights and Responsibilities of Family Members in Different Religions: A Comparative Study

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Abstract: In today's world, marital failure, divorce rates and illegitimate births are increasing at an alarming rate. Crimes, drugs, poverty and sexually transmitted diseases are rooted in the breakdown of the family. Good families produce good citizens, who produce good nations, which ultimately impact upon the world in a good way. Bad families produce deeply troubled citizens who form a deeply troubled nation, hence a deeply troubled world. Family values are essential to build up a peaceful world because family is the first institution where a child is born, grow and learn values. In this respect, religions play a vital role in promoting values or family values which assign rights and responsibilities of family members. Thus, the present study is a different type of study which is a humble endeavor to make a comparative study of the rights and responsibilities of family members in different religions. All religions hold more or less similar ideals regarding rights and responsibilities of family members. Therefore, some hold that 'all religions are at base but one'. This does not mean that they are altogether similar. They are different in practicing rites and ceremonies but similar in promoting moral values. Though all religions are similar in promoting values, but their expressions are different and unique.

Keyword: Unconditional love, True Love, Parental Love, Children's Love, Sacrifice, Honour, Respect, Kindness, Sweetness, Trust, forgiveness, Mutual Consultation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first and fundamental institution of human society is the unit of family. It is the cornerstone and foundation for a society. If a family is built on a solid and stable foundation, the society will be solid and stable as well. If family is based on duties and responsibilities, it becomes a true family. This kind of family produces good citizens and also good humans. But, nowadays humankind is seriously lacking of this kind of family. Therefore, marital failure, poor parenting and out-of-control children are increasing at an alarming rate in our communities. Today, technology reaches at its peak and science is more advanced than ever. But, somewhere along with the way of modernization, people have failed to maintain family values which assign rights and responsibilities of family members. Broken and dysfunctional families are facing crises increasingly in diverse ways. Divorce rates have become higher than ever, sexually transmitted diseases and illegitimate births are also increasing day by day. There are a great number of children who are running away from home or from natural life. In most of the families, it is found that husbands are not taking care of their wives, mothers are not paying enough attention to their kids, and therefore, the children are not showing enough respect to their parents. Perhaps, people are not paying attention to their families because they are more engaged in earning money and building careers. Now the question is what are the problems or faults associated with the lifestyle? The answer is that these lifestyles are not built in accordance with religious footing or these lifestyles are devoid of religion. Therefore, this leads me to study about rights and responsibilities of family members in different religions.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY LIFE

The significance of family life has been advocated by all major religions of the world. All religions recognize family life as an inevitable primary institution. Islam took great interest in the establishment of a stable and secure family institution.

Regarding family life, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an: "And those who say: our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring the comfort of our eyes, and us leaders of the *Muttaqun*." ^{vi} Again, Allah has stated in the Holy Qur'an: "O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through Whom you demand your rights, and (do not cut relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All Watcher over you. Your Lord created you of a single soul and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women." ^{vii} The institution of marriage has also been advocated by the Buddha that supporting one's mother and father, cherishing wife and children and a peaceful occupation; this is the greatest blessing. ^{viii} Hinduism as the oldest religion of the world also promotes family life. A Vedic passage says that a person, who is unmarried, is unholy. ^{ix} Mutual rights and obligations among family members have been depicted in the following verse of the *Atharva Veda* that let the son be loyal to father, and of one mind with his mother; let wife speak to husband words that are honey-sweet and gentle. Let not a brother hate a brother, nor a sister hate a sister, unanimous, united in aims, speak you words with friendliness. I will make the prayer for that concord among men at home by which gods do not separate, nor ever hate one another. Be not parted growing old, taking thought, thriving together, moving under a common yoke, come speaking sweetly to one another; I will make you have one aim and be of one mind. ^x Christianity as a Semitic religion also speaks of the necessity of the family life. God created Eve to be companion helpmate of Adam. Therefore, "A man leaves his mother and father and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." ^{xi} In Sikhism, the responsibility of the householder is considered spiritual. The union of man and woman is an important part of the individual's spiritual journey. The Guru promotes the householder's way of life. Everything can be achieved through family life. There is no need to renounce the world. ^{xii} Unification Church regards family as the basic institution of the society and without family an ideal world cannot be established. Sun Myung Moon says that the family sets the cornerstone on the road to world peace. The family also can destroy that road. The family of true love becomes the foundation for creating a society, nation, and world centered on true love. ^{xiii} From the above discussion, it is quite evident that all major religions of the world puts utmost emphasis on family life and ask every follower to lead married or family life as a necessary religious duty.

3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILY MEMBERS IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

It is well known that there are many types of relationship within the family. Some types of relationship are of worth mentioning. These are parent and child relationship, husband and wife relationship, and elder and younger member relationship. A short sketch on the rights and responsibilities of family members upheld by some religions has been given below.

3.1 Parents and Children Relationship (Parental Perspective):

In a family, parents play a vital role. Therefore, they have some rights which are the responsibility of children simultaneously. Mention can be made of:

i. Parents are like God:

Every religion treats parents as God. Their position has been raised to a position of God. Some religions hold that they are next to God or parents are like god. God becomes pleased by serving parents. It has been reported in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* that do not neglect the sacrificial works due to the gods and the fathers! Let your mother be to you like unto a god! Let your father be to you like unto a god! ^{xiv} Even in Hinduism, mother's status has been raised to the level of Goddess. Therefore, Hindus worship mother goddess. ^{xv} In this regard, the view of Christianity is reported in the book of Colossians that children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing the Lord. ^{xvi} The Holy Qur'an places parents next to Allah that worship none but Allah and be dutiful and good to parents. ^{xvii} In this regard, Sun Myung Moon says that parents share God's creative nature as they invest their love to raise and educate their children. ^{xviii}

ii. Honour and Respect:

Honour and respect are two important values advocated by every religion. According to them, parents deserve more honour and respect than others. Hinduism commands children to honour and respect their parents. They consider the service towards parents to be a pious and divine duty. According to Hindu Scripture, the wise say that he is no son who disobeys his father. ^{xix} Christianity has categorically said that children must honour their parents. As it is reported in the book of Exodus 20: 12 that honour thy father and thy mother, that you may long endure on the land which the Lord your

God giving you.^{xv} Again the same verse has been repeated in the book of Ephesians: “Honour thy father and mother.”^{xxvi} The Lord Buddha also says: “To mother and to father shouldst thou show humility, to eldest brother too and fourthly to thy teacher.”^{xxvii} In Islam, to enter paradise or *jannah* is one of the goals of life. One can enter paradise by obeying and honouring one’s parents. It was reported by Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “He is doomed, he is doomed, he is doomed.” One of his disciples said, “Who, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “The person whose parents, one or both of them, reach old age during his lifetime but he does not satisfy them and earn Paradise.”^{xxviii} In this regard, the Unification Church believes that parents deserve honour and respect like God.^{xix}

iii. Maintenance and Support:

Parents become hopeless and helpless at the old age. At that age, they need maintenance and support. Children are required to pay maintenance and support to parents. The duty of supporting and reverencing the parents was repeatedly spoken by the Lord Buddha. He says: “Son, is it not the duty of the children to cherish and support the old age of their parents? To mother and to father shouldst thou show humility, to eldest brother too and fourthly to thy teacher?”^{xxix} Islam also asks children to be good to their parents during old age. The Holy Qur’an says: “If one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour.”^{xxxi}

iv. Loyalty and Obedience:

Every religion holds that parents must get loyalty and obedience from children. They consider the service towards parents to be a pious and divine duty. According to Hindu Scripture, “The wise say that he is no son who disobeys his father.”^{xxxi} Again, it is reported in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* that let the son be loyal to father, and of one mind with his mother.^{xxxi} In the *Sigalovada Sutta*, the Buddha commands his followers to be loyal to their parents and show obedience to their parents.^{xxxi} In Christianity, children are required not only to honour their parents but also to follow their instructions. It is reported in the book of Proverbs: “A wise son hearth his father’s instruction; but a scorner hearth not rebuke.”^{xxxi} In this respect, again it is reported that “My son hearth the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother.”^{xxxi} Again, it is reported in the book of Ephesians that children must obey their parents in the Lord, for this is the right.^{xxxi} In this regard, the Holy Quran says: “And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents and lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy.”^{xxxi}

v. Punishment for Disobedience:

Most of the religions have come to a consensus that punishment is a must for disobedience of parents. In Hinduism, insulting or disobeying parents is considered to be a sinful act. It is reported in Holy Scripture: “The father, the mother, and the preceptor should never be insulted... they that injure in thought and deed their preceptors or fathers, or mothers incur the sin of killing a foetus. There is no sinner in the world equal to them.”^{xxxi} In this regard, Christianity not only asks children to honour and to follow their parents’ instruction but also warns them if they do not do so, they will be punished. It is reported in the book of Matthew: “For God commanded, saying, honor thy father and mother and, anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.”^{xxxi} In Sikhism, children are required not to quarrel with them and argue with them. In this regard, it is reported in the *Guru Granth Sahib*: “Son, why do you quarrel with your father? It is a sin to argue with him who begot you and brought you up.”^{xxxi} The Buddha also strongly prohibits neglecting parents. He considers it as a grave sin. One of the consequences of neglecting parents has been pointed out by the Buddha: “Whoso being rich does not support mother and father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast. Whoso strikes or by words annoys mother, father, brother, sister, or mother-in-law, let one know him as an outcast. The failure of a rich man to support his old parents is also said to be the cause of loss to the losing man.”^{xxxi} Islam considers repulsion of parents as one of the grave sins. The Prophet said: “Let me tell you which the greatest of sins are: ascribing to Allah partners and repulsion of parents.” Again, He said: “Allah has forbidden for you repulsion of mothers.”^{xxxi} The above two *hadiths* clearly indicate that repulsion of parents is fully forbidden in Islam. On the other hand, they must be treated with respect and kindness.

3.2 Parents and Children Relationship (Children’s Perspective):

Parents as the head of family deserve much honour and respect. In return, children as the younger members of the family deserve some rights and privileges which are as follows:

i. Unconditional Love:

Unconditional love is known as affection without any limitations. The term is sometimes associated with other terms such as true altruism or complete love.^{xxxiv} Parents' love is the highest kind of love just as God offers absolute love to each human as a child of God. The parents' most unforgettable gift to their children is unconditional love. Sun Myung Moon says that parents' unconditional love gives child an abiding sense of peace and self worth. Such qualities as self-esteem, trust, openness, devotion and obedience develop in the realm of children's love as induced through the unconditional love of the parents.^{xxxv} In Buddhism, Parents' duty is to love, care and protect the child even at extreme cost. This is the self-sacrificing and unconditional love.^{xxxvi} Therefore, the Buddha instructs parents that they should love their children, restrain them from vice, exhort them to virtue, train them to a profession, contract a suitable marriage for them and in due course of time provide them inheritance.^{xxxvii}

ii. Education:

Parents are responsible for the proper education of their children. They are made directly responsible for teaching their children. Prophet Muhammad says: "The right due to the child from his parent is for the parent to teach him writing, swimming, archery and to provide him nothing but what is wholesome."^{xxxviii} Again, the Prophet says: "Of all that a father can give to his children, the best is their good education and training."^{xxxix} Kalidas, a renowned Hindu Scholar, says that parents must provide education to their children.^{xl} In Buddhism, it is the duty of parents to guide their children on the proper path. Therefore, Buddhism believes that parents not only transmit body to their offspring but character also unlike the thinking of the soul believers.^{xli} The Buddha instructs parents that they should love their children, restrain them from vice, exhort them to virtue, train them to a profession, contract a suitable marriage for them and in due course of time provide them inheritance.^{xlii} In Christianity, children have the right to education. The book of Dueteronomy says that parents are responsible for teaching their children.^{xliii} Again, it is reported that parents are responsible for educating their children.^{xliv} In this regard, the Guru Granth Sahib says that as the child, according to its natural disposition, commits thousands of faults, the father instructs and slights, but again hugs him to his bosom.^{xlv} Unification Church says that education is the inherent right of the child. Therefore, reverend Moon says that parents are responsible for educating their children so that they can differentiate right from the wrong.^{xlvi}

iii. Equality:

Children in Islam have the right to equitable treatment regardless of sex, age or any other consideration. The Prophet says: "Be equitable in dealing with your children just as you would like them to be equitable in dealing with you."^{xlvii} Preference of sons and suppression or negligence of daughters are denounced by Islam. Of course, the pre-Islamic burial of girls has been absolutely prohibited in Islam. Equitable treatment is illustrated by an example from the *Sunnah*. It is related by Anas Ibn Malik that a man was sitting with the Prophet (PBUH) when a son of him came in; he kissed him and put him in his lap. Then a daughter of him came in, he let her sit in front of him. The Prophet said: 'Shouldn't you have treated them equitably?'^{xlviii} Unification Church also treats brothers and sisters equally. Reverend Moon says "God as the parent would want you to love your brothers and sisters more than that you love Him."^{xlix}

iv. Kindness and Sweetness:

The younger members of a family are entitled to get sweetness and kindness from the elders. Parents must show kindness and sweetness to their children. In this regard, it is reported in the *Rig Veda*: "Whose gracious favour like a father's is most sweet."^l The Buddha commands his followers to be kind towards their children. In this regard, it is reported in the *Sutta Nipata*: "Cherishing children and a peaceful occupation; this is the greatest blessing."^{li} The Guru Nanak says "Whosoever is kind to others (children), the Lord receives him with kindness."^{lii} To take good care of and show compassion toward children is one of the most commendable deeds in Islam. It has been reported: "The Prophet was fond of children and he expressed his conviction that his Muslim community would be noted among other communities for its kindness to children..."^{liii} Reverend Moon opines that kindness is the birth right of children.^{liv}

v. Protection and Care:

Parents are obliged to protect and take care of their children. Therefore, it is reported in the *Rig Veda*: "The father is bound to protect his son."^{lv} In Buddhism, Parents' duty is to love, care and protect the child even at extreme cost. Buddhists are taught that parents should care for the child as the earth cares for all the plants and creatures.^{lvi} In

Christianity, children have the right to live. Parents cannot sacrifice them. It is reported in the book of Leviticus that he who killed any man shall surely be put to death.^{lvii} Islam prohibits killing a child for any reason whether it is poverty, threat of poverty or exaggerated zeal about honour. The Qur'an says: "Kill not your children, on a plea of want, we provide sustenance for you and for them."^{lviii} Again, Allah says: "Kill not your children, on a plea of want, we provide sustenance for them and for you. Their killing is a great sin."^{lix} Even an unborn fetus has the right to life especially after taking shape.^{lx} According to Reverend Moon, children have the right to life and the right to get care.^{lxi}

vi. Inheritance:

Right to inheritance is the birth right of children. The Buddha instructs parents that they should in due course of time provide children their inheritance.^{lxii} In Hinduism, boys are allowed to get inheritance. In Christianity, boys and girls are equal in getting inheritance.^{lxiii} The Qur'an says: "To the male the equivalent of the portion of two females."^{lxiv} Hereditary rights have never been an issue in Sikhism. Sikh women have full rights to contest any hereditary claim. No restrictions can be found in the Sikh *Rehat Maryada* (Code of Sikh Conduct).

vii. Genetic Purity:

Muslim children have the right to be born with no actual or potential genetic disorders. The prophet (PBUH) says: "Choose where you deposit your sperm, for the line of descent is conducive."^{lxv} They have also to be protected from repeated consanguinity especially in families with a tendency to genetic aberration. Furthermore, children should not be exposed during pregnancy or birth to diseases transmissible from parents. In case of such diseases, contraception becomes mandatory.^{lxvi}

3.3 Husband and Wife Relationship:

Husband and wife as the cornerstone of the family have some mutual rights and responsibilities which are as follows:

i. True Love:

True love is the highest possible love.^{lxvii} It is unconditional, servicing, sacrificial, forgiving, other-centred, principled, eternal, unique, faithful, obedient, public, ethical, courageous and for the sake of others.^{lxviii} The Vedas recognize that the essence of wedded life lies in the profound reciprocal love between the parties to marriage. It is reported in the *Ramayana* (117:22) that wife must love her husband.^{lxix} In Christianity, it is reported in the book of Ephesians: "Nevertheless let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as herself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."^{lxx} According to Unification Church, conjugal life must be based on true love. Reverend Moon says "True love is generous, unselfish- to give and give, and forget what was given."^{lxxi}

ii. One Spirit in two Bodies:

Every religion treats husband and wife as one entity not as two separate entities. In Hinduism, it has been reported in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* that husband and wife has come from one spirit.^{lxxii} In Christianity, it is stated: "A man leaves his mother and father and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."^{lxxiii} Now, it is evident that through the sacred bond of marriage husband and wife become one. Though they are physically two persons but in spirit they are one. According to Unification Church, through true love husband and wife become one. Therefore, Reverend Moon states "Man symbolizes heaven and woman symbolizes earth. Man and woman are to come together and realize harmony."^{lxxiv} Allah has stated in the Holy Qur'an: "O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through Whom you demand your rights, and (do not cut relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All Watcher over you. Your Lord created you of a single soul and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women."^{lxxv} It is reported in the Guru Granth Sahib: "They are not said to be husband and wife, who merely sit together. Rather they alone are called husband and wife, who have one soul in two bodies."^{lxxvi}

iii. Honour and Respect:

As human beings, everyone (Husband and Wife) wants love, honour and respect. Therefore, every religion provides so. Hinduism has given honour and respect to husband and wife equally. Laws of Manu (3:56-57) states that when women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards. When the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes.^{lxxvii} The Buddha made a remarkable change and uplifted the status

of a woman by a simple suggestion that a husband should honour and respect his wife. The Buddha says: "Husband should respect his wife."^{lxxviii} Again, their mutual rights and duties are uttered by them during marriage ceremony. The husband says: "I will honour my wife. I will not disrespect my wife."^{lxxix} According to Unification Church, husband and wife should have honour and respect to each other.^{lxxx} In Christianity, it is stated in the book of Ephesians that the wife must respect her husband^{lxxxi} and husband must love his wife.^{lxxxii}

iv. Sacrifice:

True love between husband and wife demands sacrifice. Reverend Moon says: "God is creator and originator of the two basic principles of service and sacrifice."^{lxxxiii} According to him, sacrifice is essential for conjugal life. The Holy Bible affirms that man and woman were created for one another. And the Lord God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate for him."^{lxxxiv}

v. Better Treatment:

Better treatment means good attitude towards each other. In Hinduism, mutual rights and obligations among family members have been depicted in the following verse of the *Atharva Veda*: "Let wife speak to husband words that are honey-sweet and gentle. Come speaking sweetly to one another; I will make you have one aim and be of one mind."^{lxxxv} Again, it is reported in the *Ramayana* (33:36): "Great men never behave roughly towards the females."^{lxxxvi} In Buddhism, it is reported in the *Sutta Nipata*: "Cherishing wife and children and a peaceful occupation; this is the greatest blessing."^{lxxxvii} According to Unification Church, husband and wife must treat each other well.^{lxxxviii} In Christianity, it is stated in the book of Titus that train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind and submissive to their husbands. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.^{lxxxix} In Islam, it is incumbent upon the husband to live with her on a footing of kindness and equity. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an says the following words, "Keep them in good fellowship and treat them kindly".^{xc} In this regard, the Prophet said the following words: "The best among you is the one who is the best toward his wife."^{xcii} "The perfect among the faithful is one whose moral character is the best, and the best among you are those who are kindest to their wives."^{xciii} "Your wife has rights over you."^{xciiii}

vi. Equality:

In the family setting, equality between husband and wife is necessary for the flourishing of society. In Hinduism, it is stated that the husband and the wife as *nmano-paiti* and *nmano pathni*, showing thereby that they were equal partners and joint owners of the common household.^{xciv} In Buddhism, their mutual rights and duties are uttered by them during marriage ceremony. The husband says: "I will treat my wife as equal in days of happiness and prosperity."^{xcv} In Christianity, it is stated in the book of 1 Corinthians: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband."^{xcvi} In Unification Church, Reverend Moon states: "A woman is half of the universe. When a woman unites with a man, 180 degrees and 180 degrees come together. In marriage they form a sphere equal in value to the universe."^{xcvii} In Islam, man and woman are equal but not same. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an: "And woman shall have rights similar to the rights against them."^{xcviii} Again, it is reported: "And one who does good deeds, whether man or woman, provided that one is a believer, will enter paradise and they not be unjustly treated in respect of their rightful rewards."^{xcix} And also it is reported: "The believers, men and women are protectors of one another; they enjoy what is just and forbid what is evil."^c Sikh Gurus consider marriage as an equal partnership of love and sharing between husband and wife. Married life is celebrated to restore to woman her due place and status as an equal partner in life. When husband and wife sit side by side why should we treat them as two? Outwardly separate, their bodies distinct, yet they are inwardly joined as one.^{ci} Again, it is reported in the Guru Granth Sahib: "Woman is one half of the complete personality of man, and is entitled to share secular and spiritual knowledge equally."^(Gurdas Var 5, Pauri 16:59)

vii. Obedience:

Obedience is necessary in order to have a good family. In Hinduism, according to Holy Scripture, a good wife is one, who is obedient to her husband.^{cii} In return, husband has the reciprocal duties and obligations towards his wife. It is reported in the *Ramayana* that Vasishtha argues that "Sita had the same rights and privileges as Rama, being his wife. Sita shall not go to the forest. She shall occupy Rama's seat. She will govern the earth as she is Rama's self."^{ciii} In Christianity, it is stated in the book of Ephesians: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."^{civ} In Islam, the Holy Qur'an

states: “The righteous women devoutly obedient...”^{cv} In Unification Church, Reverend Moon says: “In true love, both spouses must obedient to each other and be willing to be united to each other. In true love, obedience, loyalty, surrender-everything is possible.”^{cv} In Sikhism, Guru Arjun Dev says: “Wife is obedient, sagacious and beautiful.”^{cvii}

viii. Trust:

For the most part, however, the moral demands of the wedded life are faithfulness, loyalty, obedience and service. In Hinduism, there is no separate standard of morality between husband and wife. Nevertheless, it is the wife who should be of one mind with the husband.^{cviii} In Buddhism, a husband should be faithful to his wife, which means that a husband should fulfill and maintain his marital obligations to his wife thus sustaining the confidence in the marital relationship in every sense of the word. The Buddha says: “Wife must be faithful to her husband.”^{cxix} According to Unification Church, husband and wife should be faithful to each other.^{cx}

ix. Forgiveness:

In order to have a happy and prosperous family, forgiveness is necessary. According to Unification Church, forgiveness is an important part of love. Reverend Moon states: “Without the balm of forgiveness, marriage becomes an accumulation of grievances, hurts, and accusations.”^{cx} In this regard, the Holy Qur’an states that “He has planted affection and mercy between you.”^{cxii}

x. Mutual Consultation:

Fruitful cooperation between family members is highly advocated by Islam. Such sharing is mostly important between husband and wife in regard to child rearing and household management. Woman and man complement each other and must, therefore, share household responsibilities. Dialogue may have great effect on fostering self confidence and resolving life issues. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to seek the advice of his wives. He used to be pleased with the opinion and wisdom of Umme Salma.^{cxiii} In Buddhism, mutual consultations between the husband and wife on all family problems would help to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding in resolving whatever issues that may arise.^{cxiv}

3.4 Elder and younger member relationship:

The relationship between brothers and sisters is described in every religion as a happy one. There are indications that brothers are allies, helpmates and reliable supporters of one another. So commonly, it seems, was the case that their solidarity, compassion, and natural fealty became proverbial or set apart as lofty ideals, whose implementation is both desired and desirable. In the *Ramayana*, it is reported: “The elder brother, father and instructor- these three should always be regarded in the light of a father.”^{cxv} In this regard, the Buddha says: “To mother and to father shouldst thou show humility, to eldest brother too and fourthly to thy teacher.”^{cxvi} The Holy Qur’an speaks of the believers as constituting one brotherhood and referring to the Muslim individuals as brothers, this must have meant a strong bond, an appealing sentiment, a familiar rallying cry, and above all, a special relationship.^{cxvii} In this connection, it is reported in the Holy Qur’an: “The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy.”^{cxviii} Islam also gives multiple examples of relations between brothers such as Haaron & Moosa, Ismail & Is’haaq, Hamza & Abu Talib, Hasan & Hussain and Yusuf & his brothers. Of them Yusuf displayed an outstanding example of love and forgiveness (towards his brothers) for humanity to follow. The Buddha says: “Those who wish to be born in the pure land of the Buddha...should serve and respect teachers and elders.”^{cxix} It is also reported in the book of Leviticus: “Honour the face of an old man.”^{cxx} From the above pronouncements, it is clear that elder members deserve love, support, respect and honour. In return, younger members deserve care, support, sweetness and kindness.

4. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion it is found that every religion strongly emphasizes upon marriage and family life. Most of the religions consider family life to be Divine. There is no doubt that it is impossible to ignore the institution of family because without leading family life the existence of society cannot continue. Therefore, almost all religions take more or less similar views regarding the family life. Every religion protects the honour, chastity, purity and lineage of the family. So, it encourages marriage and forbids any kind of illicit relationship between man and woman. All religions promote a healthy, moral and secure environment where children can be raised, the natural desires of men and women are

safeguarded and where virtues like love, kindness and mercy can be fostered. In a family, every member has an important role to play. So, parents should take care of children and provide them good environment. In return, children are required to show kindness, respect and obedience to their parents. Family life starts through the sacred bond of marriage and it is the basis of the family life. A good and sound society can only grow if a man and woman are bonded in a solid relationship through a sacred contract of marriage which confers mutual rights and obligations on both husband and wife. Therefore, marriage develops love, care and cooperation between the husband and wife. It gives peace of mind and provides a secure atmosphere for the growth and progress of the whole human race. A family where there is no love, affection, compromise or consideration, cannot be a family in its true sense. A healthy family environment is essential for the welfare of the family and the society. The family is the part and parcel of social order. Family relationships play an enormous role in one's life. There is no doubt that children's mentality and values depend upon the environment of family. It is the duty of the parents to ensure good environment in the family. The strength of the entire society is based on good parenting. Parents have to teach the moral, social and ethical values to children. Truth, righteous living, honesty and faith should be taught to children. Parents must nurture children with positive messages which will make them self-confident. They must be taught to be patient, to be content and to exercise self-control. If they get these training in the family, they will be good citizen. Otherwise, they will be deviated from the right path. Therefore, every religion speaks of a society where people will live peacefully with keeping a sense of divinely ordained brotherhood. This is only possible when they are well trained in the family or when they get good teaching in the family. Then, this family would be able to establish of the basis of society with a high level of moral awareness. In this way, a true family will create a true society, a true society will help to build a true community, a true community will build a true nation and finally a true nation will turn the universe into a perfect and peaceful living universe. This is the sole purpose of every religion. So, it is high time to restore original family values which assign rights and responsibilities of family members prescribed by different religions in order to have a peaceful living world.

END NOTES

ⁱThe Holy *Qur'an*, 25:74

ⁱⁱ *Ibid*, 4:1

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