

Comparative Study of Parental obligations: The perspectives of Islam and Christianity

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ABSTRACT

When an individual comes in the world, he/she is welcomed by his/her parents. Parents receive the gift of Allah and become ready to bring up the child to fulfill the obligation that society and religion has assigned to them. In every society, it is the duty of parents to look after their younger offspring and train to them according to the demands of society and religion. Each and every parent of the word train their younger ones to respond and serve the society according to their own faith. Intact, parents have significant responsibilities in training, shaping, molding and developing their children's personality and life. This study highlighted the parental responsibilities of Muslim and Christians in comparative way. Islam and Christianity, both are monotheists and believe in one Allah and have guideline to spend the life in the form of holy books i.e., Quran and Bible. This article reviewed the responsibilities of Muslim and Christian parents in the light of religious orders. It also highlighted the role and duties of parents in both the religions.

Keywords: *Parents, Children, Development, Religions, Christianity, Islam.*

Prelude:

When a child opens his eyes and come in the universe, he/she totally depends on his/her parents. Parents are very important and imperative in the life of a child. They play a vital role and have significant responsibilities in shaping, molding and developing their children's personality and life. Normally parents pay their duties according to their faith and religious briefings. For child's nourishment and development all the parents are bound to follow the instruction of their religion.

Every human being has their own beliefs, reliance and faith, that is called religion. As we know, there are many religions in this world. Every religion put the responsibilities on parents to raise their children according to their prescribed instructions. Every child seeks attention from parents; therefore, upbringing matters of offspring and young ones are not neglected by any religion, no religion will let the parents to be free from responsibilities of developing child. This article reviewed the parental responsibilities according to the two religious' thoughts; Islam and Christianity.

The Islam is a religion that means surrender in front of one Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the messenger of Allah Almighty. He (SAW) established Islamic society by his practicing His life in the light of the Holy Quran. The followers of Islam known as "Muslims". Prophet Muhammad (SAW) provided complete code of life to the Muslims; including parental roles and responsibilities. In the Islamic society, there are fixed rights and responsibilities for each individual. Muslim parents are also responsible to fulfill their duties as parents according to the obligation of their religion and faith. It is the moral duty and responsibility of parents to educate and nourish their child in the light of Quran and Sunnah. The Islam gives orders to parents about their child development. In the Islamic society, there are fixed rights and responsibilities for each individual. After the death, on the Day of Judgment each individual has to give answer to Allah about the accomplishment of his duties in life

The Christianity is a monotheistic religion based on the life and teaching of the Jesus (Hazrat Isa Alaihis Salam) the followers of Christianity called "Christians". According to religion of Christianity; Christians generally believe Jesus to be the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity (the three persons of the Christian Godhead; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). According to religion of Christians, Christians believed on death like Muslims, Christ's resurrection and ascension. Christ's second coming, Judgment Day and the Salvation of the Faithful (Although the advanced doctrine of the Trinity is not clear in books that make up the prophetic constituent covenant, the New Testament contains several trinity formulas, including Mathew¹, Corinthians², Ephesians³, 1Peter⁴ and Revelation⁵. Christianity also provides the guidance about child personality development to parents in the Holy Bible.

Views of Islam and Christianity in children's development

By following the Teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah, the parents can develop their children in pleasant and attractive manners. On the other hand, according to the Christianity when the Christian parents follow the orders of Christ mentioned in the Holy Bible, they can raise their child personality in

gorgeous manners. Here, a religious point of view of Islam and Christianity has presented as a guidance to parents about their children's overall development including thoughts, behavior and pattern of cognition and emotions.

In Christianity and Islam, the "Holy Bible" and the "Holy Quran" and "Sunnah" are the most powerful weapons to raise the personality of an individual. Allah has sent these Holy books to his Messenger for the guidance of their followers. These books guide their believer to enhance their children's personality as parent. When parents have attractive personalities, they will develop the same characteristics in their child behavior. As Christians, parents have the responsibility to understand their role in the Bible as parents. The Biblical role of a parent is to be a good steward of the children that God has placed into their care. Muslim and Christian Parents have the responsibility to care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of their children. It is compulsory for parents to learn personality traits first before they can teach their child.

Save from Hell by preventing from Sins

In Islam, it is the duty of Muslim parents; try to save their family and themselves from the torment of the hell. He can save his family from the hell, when he forbids the deeds which Allah has forbidden and makes his family to perform the deeds, which Allah has commanded. In different verses of Holy Quran, Allah orders to believers, as parents to protect themselves and their family from the fire of netherworld whose fuel is of people and stone.

"Allah says: oh, people who has believed, protect yourself and the members of your family from the fire whose fuel is people and stone".⁶

Parents should advice their offspring at every step of their life because they really need it. There are useful advices of Hazrat Luqman (Rahmatullah alaih) to his son, mentioned by the Holy Quran:

"My lovely son, nothing is hiding from Allah. There is no doubt that Allah knows about everything. My lovely child, establish prayer in a right way, enjoin others what is good and stop others from badness and have patience in hardships, certainly this is a great dare and do not be proudly, certainly Allah do not like the proudly people. Slow down your voice. No doubt the bad voice is of donkey".⁷

Here are the useful advices or orders by Hazrat Luqman (RA) to his son, the parents should make their children to follow these advices such as nothing is hide from Allah, establish prayer in a right way, enjoin others what is good, avoid from abuse, be patient and do not be proudly, there is no doubt Allah don't like proudly people and have soft voice.

On the other hand, Christianity also focuses on child last moment that mean world after life. That is why there is an order in Bible that

"The one who loves his son often punishes him so that he is happy at the last moment".⁸

This verse of Bible commanded the parents to teach their child about the faith of the Christianity and responsibility to fulfill their all needs and parents have the rights to punish them to save them from the torment of hereafter. So, both religions emphasize on developing their children for the success of hereafter.

As Quran, the Bible also advices the children, oh my son do not enjoy the company of sinners' people. This advice is mentioned in Bible as

"Oh, my child if sinners entice you, do not consent".⁹

In this proverb Hazrat Solomon tells the child if sinner people talk to you, walk away from them because they make you like themselves. They will lead you to evil and then you have no choice to return. Therefore, its parent's duty to have grip on their child that they do not allow to walk with evil people, parents have also the responsibility to teach their child about judging right and wrong people. Therefore, both religion faith and their holy books order that, parents need to build up their child cognitive thinking.

Trial for parents

The Quran says if the love of wealth and children disturbs your remembrance of Allah then it is a great temptation. Children are a trial for you because they may interrupt your worship.

"Allah says: there is no doubt, your commodity and children are a huge trial for you, and Allah has a great reward".¹⁰

Allah guides us about that the commodity and children are a great trial for parents. Allah, tests us about commodity and child. The parents, who teach their child the characteristics of believer, are successful.

On the other side, the Bible verse also talks about trial for parents in the form of children that do not wish for increment sinner children they may disturb parents' life Bible commands the parents that they took away from the sinner child, therefore parents should be better off alone than live with non-profit children.

"Desire not a magnitude of unprofitable children, neither delight in ungodly sons."¹¹

Nourishment with love and care

Allah instructs to parents to have mercy and affection with children either they are male or female. There was a custom in Arab island that they murdered their children because of the fear of poor economic condition. They were hardhearted for their daughters. They considered their daughters as economic burden on them

and felt shame in doing marriage of daughters. Allah ordered to Muslims in Quran,

“do not murder your children because of the fear of poverty, we feed you and them, certainly their murder is a major sin”.¹²

To eliminate the custom of childhood murder it was said by the Allah that does not kill your children because of doubt of poverty and to varnish this doubt Allah said we are food giver. It is our duty to give food to you and them so why are you getting anxiety for nothing. Moreover, it is a parent's duty to give their child the right of spending life.

On the other hand, it is the major reality of Christianity and the holy Bible that parents are not to become the owner of their children life, But GOD is. We cannot reflect this reality because Bible has proved it.

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine”.¹³

In this verse, the Prophet Ezekiel tells that God say all human being has his own soul whether he is father or son, no one has the right to control it, not even his parents. Christianity also focuses that the child are from Allah, parents should give them the right of life. In addition, in another verse:

“He said which ones? Jesus replied, these: you shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steel. You shall not give false witness”.¹⁴

St. Mathew explains the Jesus words in which Jesus give ordered and commands to human being to do not murder, do not steel, do not commit adultery and do not given false witness. Jesus) tells if anyone obey these orders and choose the Jesus way, he saves his hereafter life and he can become the part of heaven.

Mother Feeding

The Islam is a complete religion that guides every human being in the world. It looks at the all perspectives of lives. The Quran also discusses about newborn child mother feeding. The Allah addresses that for the mothers who have newborn baby that the total time for breastfeeding is of two years.

“Allah orders in Quran that the mothers who are intended to feed the breastfeeding to their newborn child feed the child for two years completely but the father of the child will be responsible of the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis. No person shall have a burden laid on him greater than he can bear”.¹⁵

Therefore, mothers should suckle the baby until first two years of baby life. On the other hand, there are not particular or direct verses in Bible that order to mother for breastfeeding for specific time; but in many verses Bible emphasis the mother's breastfeeding power, such as

"As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed".¹⁶.

Here St. Luke describe a woman words that she uses for the Jesus Christ when he is sacrificing his life for the whole humanity, the women appreciate Jesus mother's breastfeeding. It is evident form another verse,

"But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children".¹⁷

Good Names

The Islam orders to give a good name to newborn child. The parents should choose beautiful, good, decent and respectable name for their child. The Holy Quran discusses this perspective in the story of Hazrat Zikariya (AS) and Hazrat Yahiya (AS). In Holy Quran Allah says that:

"Oh Zikria (rahmatullah alaih), we bring please to you of a child, whose name is Yahiya. We have given the same name to none before him".¹⁸

Islam contains every type of guidance in human life and provides guidance in the perspective of naming child. In contrast, Christianity says name should be meaningful. Christianity took the importance of human name and promoted it as it freed it from the suffocating space-time binds of this world by placing it in the eschatological dimension.

"However, the angel said to him, do not be afraid, Zechariah: your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are named him John".¹⁹

Here St. Luka described the order of God for Zechariah and his wife for their child naming and introduced the important of naming near the God. Alternatively, in another verse, *"And behold, you well conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus".²⁰* St. Luke here describes the angle message to St. Marry by the God for her child's birth and name. Therefore, Christian parents also ordered by God to take their child name with beautiful and good meanings that have positive impact on the child life and others that relate to him.

Ethical and Moral Development

Parents not only bear the expenses of their offspring they also pay in developing education and ethics in the personality of children. Parents are responsible for their child ethical education because Allah orders to parents.

"Allah says that when your children reach to puberty they should ask for permission, as people asked permission before. Allah explains his orders clear to you and Allah is ever knowing and wise".²¹

This order by Allah teaches that you should educate your child about the methods of getting move from one place to another place. The parents are responsible to develop manners in child personality so that they should teach their child how to enter the other's house. That is why every religion in this universe emphasis on upbringing child in gorgeous manners but the Islam focuses on educating and upbringing matters as duties and responsibilities for parents.

Children also need a solid structure to keep their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development on track. Parent's responsibility to treat their children in such a manner that they make their thinking positive that they became sincere them till the last stage of their life.

"The messenger of Allah, talked about good manners that there is no gift more virtuous than good manners, that a father gives to his son".²²

Teaching the good manners is the most precious gift by the father to his children. Manners are an important part of our personality. Having good manners is just like a good personality.

Christian parents also play a significant role in the process of spiritual development of the children. They have the opportunity to develop a Christian worldwide in the child. Christianity ordered parents in different ways and in different verses. These included, teaching their children to pray, taking their children to church, sending their children to a religious school, and encouraging them to be confirm, here are some verses that could be proving to it.

"Discipline your son, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire".²³

Here St. Solomon advices parent that discipline your son because if he has discipline, he will bring you peace and will make your soul happy. Parents who truly loves their children will discipline them, as God does with us.

"Nurture them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."²⁴

In this verse, St. Palus in his letter sent to Ephesians advices the parents to nourish their children in well manner and by the order of God. In another verse, *"Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them".²⁵* In this verse the Prophet Solomon emphasis the child discipline and advices the parent to discipline their child and for this they can took struck action. These verses of bible have commands for the parent to teaching their child discipline firstly polity if they not agree to take strictness because this verse improve that whose parents love their children good manners for his goodness. This means that parents need to stay in their children's lives, helping them to develop their personality.

Bible has also to say about how to educate our children. Parents are their children's first teachers and they should be their best teacher for life. The proper role of parents is to provide support, and access to activities that enable the child to

improve his personality and life task. There are number of verses in which we learn, why we educate, what we teach, or how we educate.

*“Train ups the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”.*²⁶

Education is a moral component. As the above verse says, there is a right path in one’s, and a wrong path, and we will not let our children stumble, but will lead them on the path of God. Prophet Solomon advices the parent to train up their children in such a way that when they became old children not leave them. When planting oxen and some shrubs, gardeners attach them to framework such as a pole or compass to control them.

Nourishing the girls

Parents should not look at daughters odiously. Daughters are a mercy of Allah. Parents should give attention equally in the matter of development of their offspring whether they are daughters or sons. Our Holy prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) ordered to fear from Allah and establish equality between your children. So, it is parent’s duty to develop each child equally”.²⁷ Children learn about equality and justice when they receive equal attention, gifts, love, kindness, and affection from parents. Consequently, this learning from parents affects positively on the growing personality of children.

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) narrated that a woman with two daughters came to her and begged. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) gave her a date. The woman divided the date between her two daughters and gone. When the Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), came to the Hazrat Ayesha (RA), she told to him this story then the “Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) said,

*“that who will bring up her daughters in this way and treat well. The hell will be far from this person. Bringing up daughters with kind and love is a huge good deed that will make its follower away from the hell”.*²⁸

This hadith proves that the process of bringing up daughters with love and affection is a big good deed by the parents. The person, who is affectionate on his daughters, will be distant from the hell that is the place of punishment for sinners and disobedient. The messenger of Allah said,

*“whoever, will raise his daughters he will be in paradise with me as these two and, he showed his two fingers”*²⁹

It is a meritorious deed to raising daughters in well manners. Whoever does well with daughters has honor to enter in paradise and will stay there closely with prophet as two fingers of hand of a man.

Christianity also promoted to look after the daughters. In the Bible it is stated,

“Hast thou daughters? Have a care of their body and shew not thy countenance gay towards them”.³⁰

In this, verse advices parent to care of her daughter honor and do not feel her embarrasses. In another verse,

*“If you marry your daughter, you will do great things and hand over her to a wise man”*³¹.

Bible guides about daughter to marriage her with a well-mannered man. It is very great job for father if he does this. In these Bible, verse not only commanded the parents to protect their daughters honor, but also commanded to marry them with a wise person is a great responsibility of the parents and this thing become honorable to them.

Like the Muslims, Christians also have commanded by God and Jesus about the equality of child, gender, rank and nation in the bible: *“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”*.³² In this verse bible tells that God created the men and women in his own image they are no difference whether there is men or women.

Love and Kindness

Love is natural emotion that Allah created in parents. It is a responsibility of parents to love their kids. Kissing the child is a sign of kind parents and from these act children learn to give kind and love to others that are why parents should show their love to offspring. The Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) kissed Al- Hassan RA, Al-Aqra bin Habis sitting near the messenger of Allah, he said I have ten children and I have never kissed them then the messenger of Allah “Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) said,

“that whoever, is not kind he will not be treated with kindness”.³³

Parents should be kind in the matter of developing their children. “Our Holy prophet, pointed out that the person who does not have mercy on our younger and respect for our elders, that person is not one of us”.³⁴ The parents should give respect their children if they want to see them as well developed. When children see their parents when they love younger and respect elders, they automatically develop this kind act in their personality by observing their parents. Therefore, in this way the parents help the children in increasing kind behavior as child personality trait.

As compare to Christianity, the Bible verses also ordered and commands the parent to love the children and take care of their child emotions.

“When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”.³⁵

Here St. Mark describes the Jesus words that he says to her follower that do not hinder the child and let them children come to him because the kingdom of God belongs to this. Therefore, if parent should have to go in kingdom, they love their child and allow their child to go in the Jesus way. Christian love is sacrificial. Jesus proved it by dying on the cross; parents and children called to sacrifices for each other. Family is the first place where children can find out about love, companionship and forgiveness. The Prophet Solomon tells in this verse that if a son's personality has brief effects on his parent emotions. If the son has good manners, he becomes the source of happiness while if he has negative sense in his behavior, he becomes source of unhappiness for their parents. "And put love on top of all of them because it is the belt of perfection".³⁶ St. Palus emphasis the love in humanity he says that keep the love on top because love is the holder of accomplishment. If parent should get successes in life and make good relation with child, put the love in front of all other thing. Parents have responsibility towards their children that they care for their children's emotional well-being. In a verse St. Palus ordered the parent do not show aggressiveness on their child because they are not hurt and not to discourage and take care of their emotion. Not harshly, but gently with the intention of the Lord, in this way those who intend to became creators will grow up.

Gratitude and charity

It is sunnah to perform aqiqah (sacrifice an animal at the birth of child) at the seventh day after the newborn childbirth to gratitude the blessings of Allah in the form of newborn baby. Aqiqah removes difficulties of children. Parents divide the meat of sheep in neighbors, relatives and poor people then child receives many best wishes and prayers from the poor people. Aqiqah makes the relations strong and spreads the sense of unity and goodwill. When the newborn child reaches to puberty and knows about his\her ceremony of aqiqah then he develops the emotions to follow the Sunnah. An Aqiqah is an Islamic traditional activity. An Aqiqah includes the scarifying the animal when the child born. "Our Holy prophet (SAW) said there is an Aqiqah for a boy to perform. So, leak blood for him and abolish his harm".³⁷ The parents should perform An Aqiqah regarding their child development and shaving of newborn child head hair is useful for his health because it opens the pores.

The messenger of Allah, instructed to parents that the boy is pledged by his Aqiqah, slaughtering should be done on the seventh day, give him a name and shave his head"³⁸. According to some scholars, we perform Aqiqah as an act of gratitude because the child is a blessing from Allah for parents. Therefore, it is

duty of parents to give name their newborn baby and perform his aqiqah. Here Our Holy prophet also mentioned about the numbers of sheep in order to perform an Aqiqah. Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) instructed to parents that there should be two sheep for boy and one for girl, to perform Aqiqah it will not harm you if the sheep are male or female".³⁹

Like the Muslims, Christian has not ordered to sacrifice the animals for their child but they have ordered to charity in poor and share goods with each other.

*"And do not forget to do well and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."*⁴⁰

The most important Biblical duty of a parent is to teach their children about Jesus (AS) in action and word. The Holy Bible tells us who is the God and who we are the relationship between the God and human being. The Bible teaches us that parents have specific role in the children life at a particular time they have to done their duties.

Conclusions

We have discussed about the two faiths in this article that are very serious about the development of child and have put great responsibility on parents in this regard. Therefore, to fulfill the responsibility of child development and nourishment both Muslim and Christian parents contact to their religion. Both the religions focus on the development of good manners and ethical reflections. To a specific period of time children totally rely on their parents whether they are Muslims, Christians, or belong to any other religion of the world. Parents try to arise the personality traits and prepare their kids according to the demands of their religion and faith. The parents who are aware from their responsibilities are better able to modify their child personality traits. Children learn from the environment that the parents provide. If the parents are well personalized such as good character, patience educated and have religious life style then they will definitely develop the same characteristics into their children. Children of our society will be parents in future. When the parents are good, they definitely raise good children with socially and religiously acceptable manner. If parents have religious knowledge of their own religion, then they can develop their offspring personality properly according to the religion that, they follow. Unfortunately, many non-serious parents in our society do not pay enough attention to educate their offspring. They do not show interest in upbringing their children properly. These kinds of parents destroy the personality of child during his\her childhood time by pampering them and when children reach to their puberty, they create difficulties for their parents. Parents who do not have well personality they are responsible for offensiveness from children, in our society such as: maladministration, discomfort, dissatisfaction, faithlessness, dishonesty, selfishness etc. these all because of uneducated parents who are not aware about the principles of

personality development, importance and requirements of childhood period of children. Children are spotless and pure when they open their eyes to the world at the time of birth then he\she converts his personality according to the environment provided by parents and surrounding. According to psychologists, the education of childhood effects on the mind for long time.



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¹ Mathew 28:2-20 (New Revised Standard Version).

² 1 Corinthians 12:4-5 (NRSV).

³ Ephesians 4: 4-6 (NRSV).

⁴ 1Peter 1:2 (New International Version).

⁵ Revelation 1: 4-5 (NIV).

⁶ At-Tahrim 66:6.

⁷ Luqman 37:16-19.

⁸ Ecclesiastes 30:1 (New King James Bible).

⁹ Proverbs 1:10 (NKJ).

¹⁰ At-Taghabun 64: 15.

¹¹ Ecclesiastes 16:1 (NKJ).

¹² Al-Isra 17: 31.

¹³ Ezekiel 18:12 (New International Version)

¹⁴ Mathew 19:18 (KJV).

¹⁵ Al-Baqarah 2: 233.

¹⁶ Luke 11:27 (NIV).

¹⁷ 1 Thessalonians 2:7(NIV).

¹⁸ Maryam 98: 7.

¹⁹ Luke 1:13 (NIV).

²⁰ Luke 1:31 (NIV).

²¹ An-Noor 24: 59.

²² Imam Hafiz Abu Eisa Mohammad Ibn Isa, *Jami At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Abu Khaliyl (Riyadh: Islamic Research Section Darussalam, 2007), 4(59), Hadith no, 1952.

²³ Proverbs 29:17 (NIV).

- ²⁴ Ephesians 6: 4 (NIV).
²⁵ Proverbs 13:24 (NIV).
²⁶ Proverbs 22:6 (NKJ).
²⁷ Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin Ismail, *Sahih Bukhari*, (Riyad: Dar al-Salam, 1999), Hadith # 2587.
²⁸ Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin Ismail, *Sahih Bukhari*, 4:430, no. 5995.
²⁹ Imam Hafiz Abu Eisa Mohammad Ibn Isa, *Jami At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Abu Khaliyl 7:34 Hadith no, 1914.
³⁰ Ecclesiasticus 7:26 (NIV).
³¹ Ecclesiasticus 7:27 (KJV).
³² Genesis 1:27 (KJV).
³³ Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin Ismail, *Sahih Bukhari*, 7:430, no. 5997.
³⁴ Imam Hafiz Abu Eisa Mohammad Ibn Isa, *Jami At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Abu Khaliyl 4:37 Hadith no, 1919
³⁵ *Mark 10:14 (KJV)*.
³⁶ Colossians 3:14 (KJV).
³⁷ Imam Hafiz Abu Eisa Mohammad Ibn Isa, *Jami At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Abu Khaliyl 3:292 Hadith no, 1515
³⁸ Imam Hafiz Abu Eisa Mohammad Ibn Isa, *Jami At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Abu Khaliyl 3:297 Hadith no, 1522
³⁹ Imam Hafiz Abu Eisa Mohammad Ibn Isa, *Jami At-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Abu Khaliyl 3:292 Hadith no, 1516
⁴⁰ Hebrew 13:16 (KJV).