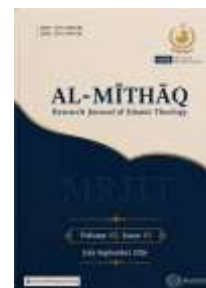




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Social Welfare in Judaism: Biblical Foundations, Ethical Principles and Contemporary Relevance

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Social Welfare in Judaism: Biblical Foundations, Ethical Principles and Contemporary Relevance

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Abstract

Examine the topic of social welfare in Judaism, especially scriptural, moral and some historical sources its central thesis is that promoting social welfare lies at the heart of Jewish thought based on a foundation of justice, compassion, dignity and community. It explores the concept of Tzedakah and treat it not as voluntary giving but a mode of justice, and discusses Mosaic laws about charity concerning needy people (the poor, laborers, debtors, slaves) (minimum threshold), or dependents (widows/orphans) (Minimum subsistence); and parents. Moreover, it depicts how these laws safeguard the rights of marginalized people and help achieve social harmony. It refers to passages from the Holy Qur'an in relative comparison for the sake of an agenda, in thinking that welfare values were once and are now common among all Abrahamic religious torchbearers. Using a qualitative and textual approach, the study draws upon scripture, canonical and non-canonical Jewish literature, as well as historical and academic resources for an assessment of Judaism's welfare model. The results show, once again, that Judaism portrays its social welfare program as a religious requirement linking justice to compassion and personal responsibility to communal well-being. The study concludes that the foundation of welfare principles inherent in Judaism still provides ethical guidelines for contemporary rise social problems and human solidarity.

Keywords: Social Welfare, Judaism, Tzedakah, Hebrew Bible, Jewish Ethics, Social Justice, Mosaic Law, Human Dignity, Compassion.

Introduction

One of the world's oldest religious traditions is the religious heritage of Judaism. From Prophet Adam A.S to Prophet Muhammad PBUH, all the prophets and messengers were sent to guide their communities toward the right path. Alongside their spiritual mission, they also worked for the welfare and well-being of their people in various ways. Allah Almighty placed deep compassion and concern for their communities in the hearts of every prophet. As a result, they constantly sought to protect their people from moral wrongdoing and spiritual decline. They also came forward to help whenever

they saw their people facing hardship, suffering, or worldly difficulties. Similarly, the teachings of Judaism contain numerous principles that are directly related to the welfare, care, and well-being of individuals and society.

The Welfare Concept of Tzedakah

One of the most significant means of promoting social welfare in Judaism is Tzedakah (צדקה), a concept that is commonly translated as charity but carries a much deeper meaning. Hebrew would be ranked number 1 in importance for understanding many ethical and religious concepts put forth in Jewish literature, because of the fact that Hebrew is primarily spoken through the Jewish scriptures or texts. Classical Hebrew does not have an exact equivalent of a modern English word "charity," which is interesting. The term instead is Tzedakah (from the Hebrew root tzedek meaning "justice," "righteousness" or "fairness"). The difference in language signifies the Jewish recognition that helping those in need is not a charitable, voluntary benevolence but a moral imperative and religious obligation based on justice. "Yet there is no Hebrew word for charity as such. The term most often used as Tzedakah, which means Justice, and the Jewish poor have therefore always had a tacit claim upon the rich."¹

The term Tzedakah acquired this meaning because classical Hebrew has no specific word for the modern concept of "charity". Tzedakah, literally meaning "justice," "righteousness" or "equity," expresses the conviction that aiding those in need is not an optional act of kindness but a matter of justice. Expanding on this, those Jews who were poorer claimed that they deserved equal rights and fair treatment from the elite who were wealthier. This practice of Tzedakah was expected to supply the needs of the poor, so that their welfare would be cared for and social welfare within society as a whole may perform.

In addition to the concept of Tzedakah, the Old Testament also refers to offerings in two separate passages, illustrating the importance of giving as part of religious and social responsibility: "Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Likewise, shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me."²

Similarly, another passage in the Old Testament states: "And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;"³

Limiting Parental Authority for Social Welfare

The teachings of Prophet Moses A.S also reflect a strong concern for social welfare through legal and social reform. As the tribal system evolved, he sought to abolish many harmful customs and regulate traditional practices by establishing a more just and orderly legal framework. In the patriarchal family structure of the time, the father exercised extensive authority over his household and was often regarded as having absolute power, even over matters of life and death. The concentration of power led to widespread denial of children's rights and subjecting them to injustice.

This would leave a huge imbalance which is why Allah SWT, through the words of Prophet Moses A.S, imposed legal and moral boundaries on parents in regards to how they treat their children so that parental powers are not abused whilst ensuring the rights of children are protected and that their protection/ welfare/ needs etc. Widely recognized as necessary steps towards achieving family justice for the children involved. This development is recorded in Jewish historical and religious tradition as

follows: "Among the nomad tribes, from which the Hebrews descended the father was an arbitrary sovereign, in his family, as under the Roman law, with the power of life and death. Moses, while he maintained the dignity and salutary control, limited the abuse of the parental authority."⁴

As He is merciful and gracious, so be you merciful and gracious. As He is righteous, so be you righteous. As He is holy, strive to be holy," Indeed even more daringly, God is described as clothing the naked, nursing the sick, comforting the mourners, burying the dead, so that man may recognize his own obligations.⁵

Social Welfare in the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments revealed to Prophet Moses A.S constitute the foundation of the Mosaic Law and encompass the essential principles of religious, moral, and social life. These commandments were revealed by Almighty God as a comprehensive code to guide the Israelites in their relationship with God and with one another. Beyond their spiritual significance, the commandments also promote justice, respect for human dignity, and protection of family life, honesty, and social responsibility values that are fundamental to social welfare and the well-being of society. The Ten Commandments are described in detail in the Old Testament, in the Book of Exodus, as follows:

1. And God spake all these words, saying,
2. I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
5. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;
6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
7. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
8. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
13. Thou shalt not kill.
14. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
15. Thou shalt not steal.
16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.⁶

A careful examination of the Ten Commandments shows that seven of them are directly related to the principles of social welfare and the regulation of human relationships

within society. Together they stress the need to treat others with kindness, respect, honesty and fairness while also protecting their rights and dignity. They include prohibitions against murder, theft, false testimony and covetousness which erode societal order and fairness. Together, these commands lay a basis for moral and ethical principles that are integral to the community's sustainable peace, stability, and trust in one another. They are also really a keyway to protect individual rights and inspire good deeds, philanthropy, social responsibility and these things all help the society as a whole to thrive. "A passage in the traditional prayer book enumerates a series of virtuous acts, honoring parents, deeds of steadfast love, attendance twice daily at worship, hospitality to wayfarers, visiting the sick, dowering brides, accompanying the dead to the grave, devotion in prayer, peace-making in the community and in family life and concludes by setting study of Torah as the premier virtue."⁷

Social Welfare and Care for the Poor

It is a commonly accepted fact of history that the early adherents to most religious traditions came primarily from among weaker and poorer social groups. As a result, much of religious instruction focused on caring for and protecting the poor. The other unique point was that believers were guided to hold those in need with love, compassion and generosity treating people as individuals worthy of dignity/dignity before their rights entitlements used within the bounds defined for all members together. Judaism similarly has values supporting this, as the Jewish tradition constantly calls for caring actions towards the poor and those in need while portraying an ethical duty of individuals or society to provide assistance via benevolence. They are also indicative of the general Jewish sense of social justice and concern for out-of-the-box. "A title of all produce was left to the poor, as well as windfalls, gleanings, and anything left growing on the margins of a field. Nor could one join in any festive occasion, especially a religious festival, without providing for the poor, to give to the poor, said proverbs, is to lend to the lord."⁸

The Book of Leviticus refers to the treatment of the poor as follows: "And if thy brother be waxen poor and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee."⁹

Similarly, another passage in the Old Testament states: "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee."¹⁰

The aforementioned passages are guidance for the followers of Prophet Moses A.S to be good and benevolent in dealing with the poor and needy. They stress that no one in need should be sent away empty-handed and those who can help out, must do so to the best of their abilities. These teachings also highlight that one has to pay the wages of poor workers in a timely manner. One will be guilty of oppression for leaving a laborer to eat his due (wages), and rewarding one him who is entirely reliant upon them in providing for himself day by day not so much souls as significant acts against their employment you are presented with the dead.

A closer examination of Jewish teachings shows that they advocate for loving, kind, charitable and cooperative behavior among society members since ancient times. Teaching compassion for the underprivileged, defending workers' rights and promoting a feeling of social awareness that can create an equitable, amicable society in which the wellbeing of every individual is foremost what these doctrines strive to instil. "The Jew, it is often said, 'Looks after his own,' which he does, but people who don't rarely look after anyone else, the practice of charity is basic to his creed. So are often observances

has the highest status among all revealed religions that revolve around their right. All religions have that one thing in common: they teach we should love, respect and be grateful to the parents who spend their lives sacrificing for us. Every prophet has taught his people to respect their parents, serve them and fulfil the obligations on it. This rule is likewise given extraordinary significance in Judaism and respect for guardians as one of the essential good and religious commitments.

The Bible strongly emphasizes honoring one's father and mother while prohibiting behaviors that undermine both individual morality and social harmony, such as insulting parents, adultery, murder, theft, bearing false witness, and coveting a neighbor's possessions. These teachings serve not only to strengthen family relationships but also to establish a just, ethical, and peaceful society, making the family the primary centre of social welfare and moral development.¹⁴

The Holy Qur'an also refers to the covenant taken from the Children of Israel, in which they were commanded to worship Allah alone, honor their parents, and uphold the rights of others. Allah Almighty says:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا¹⁵

“And (remember) when we took a covenant from the Descendants of Israel that, “Do not worship anyone except Allah; and be good to parents.”

In this verse, Allah Almighty is mentioning a very basic religious teaching that absolutely every prophet (Peace be upon him) of history has brought humans to worship Allah Aza wa Jal and treat their parents nicely. These principles, therefore, are fundamental and remain unchanged across the Lord's revelations to mankind in various times intended for different peoples as they formed a solid basis upon which all righteous and merciful societies can be built. In the Qur'an, there is a special emphasis on venerating parents. This right becomes apparent in sequence as it occurs extremely early after the command to worship Allah Almighty alone. This association highlights the high status of parents with regard to their children, and due reverence that should be shown towards them by their offspring through love, respect, action of gratitude.

The Old Testament alone has literally hundreds of verses regarding obedience, taking care of your parents and so on. In these teachings, filial piety is presented as a religious obligation and an essential foundation for family cohesion, social order and community harmony. One such passage states: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”¹⁶

The commandment, in black and white ink, lists the duties of children to their parents. Above all else, children shall be dutiful to and respectful toward their parents in word, conversations/attitude/actions (in every area of life). You are also expected to honor their parents, following lawful orders and giving due weight to parental advice and correction as part of modesty in spirit. And it does not only apply to parents who are gentle and nice, but also extends too strict or difficult ones as well because thereby honors the commandment of God. In addition, children are responsible for providing care to their parents especially when they have aged, which in turn provides support either by making them comfortable or otherwise addressing a need with patience and love.

Also Allah Almighty had commanded the People of the Book to show kindness towards their parents and, with them being faithful servants. It came with a promise from God that those who honor and respect their parents shall be rewarded the gift of longevity as well as find divine favor.

However, the modern era has brought a whopping discord of family and caregivers in much of civilized society today chiefly among Western powers. Institutionalized elderly parent care (in nursing homes or assisted-living centres) is now common and a reflection of social, economic and demographic changes. Islamic law asserts that, at least

in theory, children will personally care for their elders if they are able to do so. The importance attached to respect for and service to parents as a moral obligation seems elementary; nothing more universal can be encountered in the declarations of Western cultures, Jewish or Christian scriptures argue that honoring parent should be considered a social precondition essential not only for family stability but also cultural identity.

The Book of Leviticus also addresses the issue of disrespect and abusive behavior toward parents, stating: “For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.”¹⁷

Of course, a thorough analysis of Leviticus 20 indicates that the chapter outlines multiple actions deemed serious crimes against Mosaic Law along with prescribed punishment for each act. Many of them, such as blasphemy and witchcraft were punishable by death in ancient Israelite society; hence their inclusion. For example, one of those deplorable acts is cursing or dishonoring father and mother. This indicates the irrelevance of this news, since there is no punishment in Jewish law only for cursing parents or purposely making them lose their temper. To respect your parents was considered not just a personal virtue, but an absolute moral and religious duty for the common good of society.

The type of behavior that is considered a serious moral transgression in these teachings would be children speaking disrespectfully to their parents, wishing harm upon them or treating with contempt and hatred. JUDGES in the Mosaic legal system were responsible for dealing with such offenses, since they had been charged by God to uphold his law and keep order. This conduct was against the family relationship of nature and divine appointment, destroys natural affection for parents, and subverts their honor due to them by God's ordination, forced society out of its law under a spiritual symbolism. Therefore, respect for parents was considered not just an individual moral obligation but also a social necessity because the strength of familial bonds was seen as critical to upholding law/justice and promoting harmony within society.

Similarly, the Book of Deuteronomy also emphasizes this principle, stating: “Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.”¹⁸

A close reading of Deuteronomy 27 reveals that here the chapter contains six penalties for serious moral and social wrong-doings. One of those includes the sin of dishonoring or despising your father and mother! In the Mosaic tradition, disrespect for parents is considered to be a very serious sin because it disturbs the family structure which is critical to proper functioning of society. That this command is placed alongside or even above the most serious of offenses gives a good indication as to how highly Jewish law regards honoring one's parents and maintaining their dignity.

Even so, many scholars have noted that contemporary social norms in some modern western societies influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition do not always express these ideals of familial care or what is viewed as a fair and just way to distribute responsibilities. Demographic, economic and social changes are making nursing homes and residential care facilities appeal to families with elderly parents in many Western countries. Consequently, older adults who didn't receive such care spent their twilight years in institutional settings instead of living with a child. Nonetheless, from Islamic principles at least caring for the parents in person particularly when they grow elderly is still considered by many as a preference ideal and one of the most basic moral obligations. Also, recognizing that residential care homes exist as a reflection of the current social context does not mean that traditional full-fledged religious practices to honor parents do not continue to exist. In both the Qur'an and the Hebrew Bible, honoring, caring for, and showing compassion on one's parents is clearly recognized as values not only needed to enable family life but also essential to social welfare.

In addition, the Book of Exodus employs particularly strong language in condemning the dishonoring of parents. It states: “And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.”¹⁹

Perusal of these commandments in a more condensed version and strictly focusing on Mosaic Law reveals that verbally abusing parents or hitting them, or cursing them was treated as the second most heinous crime next to murder a capital punishment. The severity of these laws means how important Yahweh ranked parents in Judaism and respect is the highest virtue for rights over other virtues, and social order must also be maintained.

These laws were to help regulate the societal norm of ancient Israel, and while we may have all levels acknowledgment found in your truth: parents do require an abundance of honor and care, respect. These teachings remind the believers to treat their parents well and with respect from cradle to grave. Moreover, there is so much more behind this bid of these commandments than your own family and honor for those fathers or mothers’ rights. The teachings therefore, in their aspect of being honorable or compassionate acts, add to better families and social welfare as well as healthy communities.

Social Welfare and the Treatment of Slaves

One of the main religious traditions over treated slaves humanely. While the slavery existed in the ancient world, revealed religions proposed legislated laws and moral principles which allowed them to regulate this institution by protecting the rights of slaves against cruel treatment. The Book of Exodus is an important part of Judaism, and it has a special concern for the welfare of slaves. As a result, Chapter 21 lay down various legal provisions pertaining to their treatment, such as rights and service conditions, protection from abuse etc. They were designed to protect slaves from abuses and inequality, and are thought to have sought. More humane conditions and greater fairness under the social and legal framework of ancient Israel. “And if a man smites his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.”²⁰

Though the Mosaic Law is not intended to provide a legal basis for slavery, it does contain provisions that are aimed toward protecting slaves from abuse or mistreatment. It indicated that masters were not free to abuse their slaves with impunity. The law stated where a master inflicted such barbaric violence on a slave that death ensued legal liability would be incurred, indicating the life of the slave was not worthless and under no circumstances to be completely at the mercy of its master. Thus, the law contained checks on the power of masters, and it established that acts of oppression and unwarranted violence could not be allowed to go unpunished. These regulations demonstrate a particular intention within the Mosaic legal system to avoid injustice, prevent abuses as well as protect vulnerable people in society. The text further states: “And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perishes; he shall let him go free for his eye’s sake. And if he smites out his manservant’s tooth, or his maidservant’s tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth’s sake.”²¹

These provisions reflect a good balance of the scales of justice. The master was punished for acts of oppression, and the suffering slave was awarded freedom in damages. In that manner, the law punished the violator and restored a basic right to the victim. The greatest gift that could ever be given to a slave or bondservant in the ancient world would have to be freedom.

In addition, the principles articulated in these laws carry a wider ethical lesson about how we should treat those economically vulnerable. And they commend being helpful, equitable and respectful towards people who are in the service of others including those who may work domestically, as a cleaner or other manual labor. Those workers should be treated

with dignity, compensated fairly, and insulated from any kind of exploitation, intimidation, or forced to take on responsibilities that they were not physically able to perform.

In a broader sense, these teachings acknowledge that for many the choice to be in positions of servitude or low-paid labor is not freely made but necessitated by economic maleficence and scarcity of avenues. No one should use their situations to exploit or injustice. By contrast, people who hire or manage others are supposed to be humane. These teachings help safeguard the rights of vulnerable individuals and prevent further oppression, thereby advancing justice, human dignity, and social welfare. The text further states: “And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant.”²²

It is reasonable to expect that the Mosaic Law sets out a clear expectation of work for servants based on their skills and abilities. They should avoid being forced to do anything that is outside of their physical or practical limit, and also should not have to do something they originally did not sign up for in exchange for service. More work required, more pay; seems quite consistent with the usual fair-and-just idea of labor relations theory here.

Most importantly, these doctrines extoll the virtue of kindness and compassion in dealing with serfs. Instead of keeping another in perpetual servitude, the ideal found in the Mosaic tradition is that a servant should be helpfully and honorably released after completion of his period of service. Freedom is depicted as possibly one of the best gifts that can be given to a person, through facilitating their basic dignity and autonomy. These principles show that the welfare of servants was not just a legal matter, but also from the moral viewpoint required consideration, justice and respect for human dignity. The text further states: And if thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore, I command thee this thing to day.”²³ These four verses the emancipation and treatment of servants from the Book of Deuteronomy thus offer profound compassion. They set an explicit and firm limit on how long someone can be a servant, saying that if a Hebrew man or woman is enslaved, he or she must appropriate and work only six years after which they are to be released in the seventh year. It prevented permanent servitude and confirmed that every human being should eventually be able to live free.

In the context of this verse, too it stresses that when a servant is freed from his slavery, he should not depart empty handed. Instead, the Master is commanded to give adequately from his herds, fields, and possessions so that the former slave can be self-sufficient with dignity and security. This is an expression of the larger underlying principles of justice, compassion and social responsibility inherent in the Mosaic Law.

The command is reinforced by reminding the Israelites of their own history. They themselves had once lived in bondage under Pharaoh in Egypt until Allah Almighty delivered them through Prophet Moses A.S. Because they had personally experienced the hardships of slavery and the blessing of freedom, they were expected to treat those under their authority with mercy, fairness, and generosity. The memory of their own liberation was intended to inspire compassion and prevent the oppression of others. Allah Almighty declares:

وَأَذِّنْ لَكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَدَّبْحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ²⁴

“(And remember) When We rescued you from Firaun’s people, for they

were inflicting you with a dreadful torment, slaying your sons and sparing your daughters; that was a tremendous trial from your Lord (or a great reward).”

After delivering you from the darkness of slavery, God commands that those who serve under your authority should be granted their freedom once the prescribed period has ended. Their release is meant to remind you of your own experience of bondage and the blessing of liberation, inspiring gratitude to your Lord for His mercy and favor. Remembering your own deliverance should motivate you to treat others with the same compassion and justice that God showed to you. Also, it is unfair to send away servant without money. They must not be sent forth empty-handed, but rather freely with a gift of one's wealth, livestock and produce to aid those at the beginning of a new life on one own. For just as God liberally blessed the Israelites without limit when He freed them from bondage, so too must they show generosity and kindness to those whom they set free. This is how the memory of divine deliverance also becomes a basis for establishing justice, mercy and welfare among community members.

Compassion for Debtors as an Aspect of Social Welfare

Jewish teachings offer a substantive emphasis on being compassionate, fair and understanding when dealing with debtors. This moral principle is represented by the saying: "To give to someone is to lend to the Lord."

It means that helping the needy is seen as serving God himself. As all human beings are created by God thus providing their needs is considered a moral and religious duty. One may say that with this divine quality, God has created people in such a manner that they will rely on one another so that they can fit well for each other to become survive and assistance. As such, people are invited to assist in fulfilling the needs of others by being generous, lending and doing nice things for each other.

Judaism teaches that someone who has gone into debt due to inability to meet expenses should never be humiliated or treated as less than an equal. A debtor is not to receive harassment, humiliation or undue pressure from a creditor for repayment also. Creditors are instead told to deal with debtors in brotherhood, kindness, and forbearance, allowing time and dignified respect. This manner of treating others is representative of the wider tenets that Judaism teaches concerning justice, mercy and social welfare. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as a usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury."²⁵

Furthermore, the Mosaic Law very sensitively guides creditors in their treatment of debtors. It offers practical guidance which ensures that debtors do not suffer unnecessary hardship, embarrassment or distress. Creditors are told to be patient, fair and humane respecting the dignity of individuals grappling with money problems rather than exploiting them for it. The text states: "When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God."²⁶

The above verses outline several important principles of social welfare and ethical conduct in dealing with debtors. These instructions demonstrate that the Mosaic Law sought to balance the rights of creditors with the dignity and basic needs of those who were financially vulnerable.

a. Essential Means of Livelihood Should Not Be Taken as Security

The Law forbids using a hand mill or its upper millstone as security for a loan because

they were essential equipment used in grain grinding to prepare bread, the family's basic food. Imagining confiscating such basic equipment would mean removing a household's means of making a living and would push them into great poverty. This means that they will protect a person above from the day-to-day subsistence level even though he has debts.

This humanitarian principle is captured in modern legal systems. Common law in particular protects some property, such as a cobbler's tools or a scholar's books (which you need to earn a living), from being taken. That creditor, who seeks to be paid regardless of whether or not the debtor and his family are left without a roof over their heads and food on the table, goes against both the teachings of Christ himself and humanitarian principles upon which The Law of Moses was founded.

b. Respect the Debtor's Privacy and Preserve Human Dignity

The Law also prescribes that the creditor shall not enter on dispassionately for a pledge. The creditor should then stay outside, whilst the debtor presents to you voluntarily that which has been given as security. This injunction preserves the privacy, dignity and personal honor of the debtor by preventing creditors from misusing their position to take whatever they please from the house of a debtor.

Additionally, there should not be overnight possession of any property that is necessary for a poor person to live such as a coat or bedding. If something of such a nature is borrowed temporarily during the day, it should be returned before sunset so that the debtor may benefit from it for heat and rest. In practice, the law makes very clear that if one is to take such essentials at all, they are not accepted in security. These laws mirror the Biblical injunction to uphold justice, mercy and compassion for the less fortunate segments of society and ensure that financial commitments would never be a means of oppression or deprivation.

Social Welfare and the Care of Widows and Orphans

Throughout history, widows and orphans have long been considered to be some of the most vulnerable people in society. With no husband or father to protect and care for them, they have too often been victims of abuse, oppression and abandonment. From the beginning of time, people have misused these vulnerable situations, illegally acquiring their property and inheritance, enslaving them, victimizing them and depriving them of their God-given rights. This has meant that widows and orphans have, in many instances, faced discrimination by society at large.

Due to their vulnerability, Allah Almighty has repeatedly commanded that the rights of widows and orphans be upheld. Divine guidance has always highlighted the lessons of kindness, compassion and fairness based on posturing them with a sense of dignity and protection. According to this charity should not simply be offered to the less fortunate people of the world, but rather that you actually have a moral and religious obligation to help those who need your compassion and submission through mercy, social justice and human responsibility.

The Book of Exodus also contains explicit instructions concerning the protection and proper treatment of widows and orphans. It states: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;"²⁷

The aforementioned verse makes it clear to you that no harm, pain or injustice should be caused to a widow and an orphan. The text also includes an admonition that those who oppress these defenceless members of the community will not escape being brought to justice before God. For the widows and orphans who cry out to God, the text indicates that their cries are heard with special interest. When they are wronged and cry

to Him for justice, He hears them and acts on their behalf. You receive in that being exploited or wronged is an invitation to God judgement against them.

On the contrary, those who act kindly and compassionately towards widows and orphans will be blessed from Heaven. Giving them solace, shelter and assistance becomes a genuine prayer of thankfulness from whom they offer support. These prayers are considered to be particularly precious with Allah and become a means of all goodness for the benefactor in this world and the Hereafter. Thus, the biblical doctrine exposes the care of widows and orphans as a basic illustration/element of social welfare, justice, and moral obligation.

The same principle is reiterated elsewhere in the Old Testament: Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge: But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore, I command thee to do this thing. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.²⁸

The above passages reiterated the just rights of widows and orphans, declaring that they are entitled to a fair share in the common resources. The Israelites shall provide for the orphan and the widow; they are commanded to leave a part of their harvest as a gift to those who have no one to care for them so that the poorest members of society will not die out, being left without food or protection. The community is likely to become their home and protector until they grow older or are capable of keeping themselves. For this reason, widows and orphans alike are protected from the humiliation of begging for sustenance or relying on the good will of others for subsistence.

The idea is that you are entitled to only a certain amount of wealth, and you should not keep more than your share for yourself. Instead, it is to be considered a trust from God and used in the service of those who are truly needy and underprivileged. A person would be fulfilling their moral responsibility and their religious duty by sharing their blessings with the poor, widows, orphans and other underprivileged individuals. This generosity is framed as a divine blessing and a tool of social justice and community wellness.

Besides the material support, biblical teachings strongly condemn making life difficult for widows and orphans. We are ordered to defend the weak and help them out instead of taking advantage of their weakness, or bringing about added difficulty. God is displeased with and will judge those that neglect or oppress these most vulnerable members of society; but, God favors those who show kindness and support for them. The text states: "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen."²⁹

So instead of causing hardship for widows and orphans, believers are brought by those two realities to become a comfort, hope, and joy in their lives. Their call is to relieve their pain, defend their rights and assist them with compassion and kindness. That conduct is the essence of social welfare turn vulnerability into security and despair into hope. Welfare to widows and orphans is not just an act of kindness, but also a strict responsibility that strengthens social solidarity as part of the performance of ordering those who are right and prohibit what is wrong according to God's strings.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica similarly highlights the significance of caring for widows and orphans, stating: "To parental respect and family tranquillity are added, in other contexts, the responsibility of parents for children, the duties of husband and wife

in the establishment and maintenance of a family, and ethical obligations that extend, from the conjugal rights of each to the protection of the wife if the marriage is dissolved. The biblical description of God as upholding the cause of the fatherless and the widow and befriending the stranger, providing him with food and clothing."³⁰

Most of these responsibilities are now actually fulfilled by charities and welfare organizations in modern society. Orphan Charity works for prevention of Orphanage and through orphanages promote Child Welfare Institutions so that, these orphans get a dignified life with safety where they can grow and live in a proper manner with education and skill development for their future. These institutions no longer only attempt to provide for children's immediate material needs but also seek to shape their emotional, moral and intellectual well-being.

Likewise, different associations have been made to assist widows and destitute ladies with security, sanctuary, professional openings and fundamental social administrations. These institutions protect their rights, represent them in legal practices, and assist in gaining ownership of a life with dignity. In this way, such structures ensure the inclusion of widows, orphan children and other vulnerable layers in society and protection from discrimination as well as exploitation in order to integrate them into social and enterprising life and be seen as worthwhile members of their communities.

Conclusion

It has been shown through research that social welfare has an important role in Judaism, and Judaism's religious theology is closely intertwined with ethical and social teachings. This study uses the historical material from Hebrew Bible, Mosaic Law Jewish ethical traditions and some historical material to show Judaism does not regard social welfare as a charitable act of kindness but as a requirement morally and religiously instituted by God. Tzedakah embodies this concept: when relief to the poor is classified as justice and charity and social responsibility as opposed merely philanthropies. Well, that awareness becomes the welfare state where each one of us lives up to be responsible to ensure adherence to dignity and well ness of all.

According to the study: The Hebrew Bible reflects a wide range of social welfare principles, including protections for the poor as well as regulations regarding laborers, debtors and servants as well as providing parents, widows and orphans and strangers with protection. These teachings intrigue action to create a just atmosphere for people in which nobody can dominate over the other, and opportunity of benevolence and collaboration will help everybody enjoy without creating any objection about anybody's character. The 9th, 10th, and 11th Commandments are the bedrock of a society that requires obligations towards those who are oppressed and governs economic and social relationships so as to honor human dignity.

This ideal is reinforced by many Jewish sources, which formalize the legal and ethical measures which protect society's most vulnerable members from individual acts of benevolence. In particular, the passage relates to the biblical precepts regarding fair wages, humane treatment of servants, compassionate debtor policy, care and protection for widows and orphans; honor of parents; goodwill towards the poor all examples of a macro view of social welfare seen in all scriptures. They highlight that social peace can come as a result of justice being moderated, limited or balanced by mercy, charity, and community responsibility.

In addition, the few comparative citations to Holy Qur'an that are made in this paper suggest that these welfare values largely echo within other elements of appropriate portions of the Abrahamic religious tradition. Common elements in both scriptures reinforcing compassion, justice, human dignity and care for the vulnerable, show continuous divine guidance regarding human welfare and social responsibility.

The results confirm that Judaism is an eternal, comprehensive paradigm of social welfare justice and compassion and the moral imperative to care for one another. Despite the fact that their teachings appeared in a religious context further back in history, almost all of their ethical teachings can remain meaningful today in societies suffering from institutional poverty and inequality which is often rooted in top-down exclusion of particular groups of people whose vulnerabilities are continued through generations for the benefit of others. Thus, the study argues that even if the Jewish idea of social welfare therefore we still provide key understanding to reinforce social justice expanding human dignity building up social capital through community sustainable holistic societies. Permanent principles like these are a good substantive basis of moral common sense for most contemporary welfare discourse and they stand in broad relation to the literature on religion and development.

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