

The orphan — the promise attached

The Prophet ﷺ was one. The Qur'an guards the orphan's money with some of its sharpest language, and attaches to his care the closest place it names.



He was one himself

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

“Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?” The reminder is addressed to the Prophet ﷺ, three verses before the command.

Qur'an 93:6

So do not crush him

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

“So as for the orphan, do not oppress him.” The word covers being harsh as much as being unjust.

Qur'an 93:9

Not honouring is enough

بَلْ لَا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ

“No! But you do not honour the orphan.” The charge is not theft here — it is the absence of honour.

Qur'an 89:17

Fire, swallowed

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا

“Those who consume the property of orphans wrongfully are only consuming fire into their bellies.” The image is of eating, not of borrowing.

Qur'an 4:10

Only in the best way

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ

“Do not approach the orphan's property except in the way that is best, until he reaches maturity.” Not approaching it at all is one reading of safety.

Qur'an 17:34 • 6:152

Hand it over, with witnesses

وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ آنَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا

فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ

“Test the orphans until they reach marriageable age; if you find sound judgement, release their property to them.” And take witnesses when you do.

Qur'an 4:6

Setting right is better

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ

“They ask you about orphans. Say: improving their condition is best.” If you mix your household with theirs, they are your brothers.

Qur'an 2:220

Among the seven

اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُوبِقَاتِ

“Keep away from the seven destructive sins.” Consuming an orphan's wealth is listed there beside shirk, sorcery, killing and riba.

Sahih al-Bukhari 2766 • 6857

Two fingers apart

أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ هَكَذَا

“I and the one who sponsors an orphan will be in Paradise like this” — and he held up his index and middle fingers.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5304 • 6005