

Parental Blessing in Genesis 49:8-12 and its Implications on Children in Edo Land

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Abstract

The application of Jacob's blessings in Genesis 49:1-28 to Edo Culture is the focus of this research work. It is also to make exegetical study of the passage and make appropriate interpretation of the passage and analyse the contents of. There are two basic aims for the research work. The first one is to undertake a thorough interpretation of the passage and determine the contents of the passage. The second aim is to apply it to Edo culture with underlining motif of promoting positive pronouncements of parents on their children. The traditional way of life among the Edo people, is being gradually eroded by the influence of modernization which makes the family becoming loosely. As a result, parental obligations to children are becoming abandoned. Part of these obligations is parental care and blessing. This paper is gear toward promoting the value of parental blessing.

Key words: Parental Blessing, Children, Edo-Land

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Introduction

The relationship between parent and child is an important part of family union. The wellbeing of the family depends on the geniality of inter-family relationship. Many families are entangled in dissention, and unhealthy relationship, which ruin the physical, social, and economic as well as the spiritual life of the family union. The family as an essential part of any society has a prominent role to play in the life of individual child as well as parents. In a nutshell, parents have prominent parts to play in the lives of their children. There is no gain saying that the actions of the parents have far reaching effects on the lives of their children. Their utterances and pronouncements, consciously or unconsciously have tremendous impact on the lives of the children. This could be of negative or positive effect and this will continue to affect the lives of such children as they grow up and progress in life. Many parents see nothing wrong in cursing their children. In some families raining curses on their children is a normal way of life. Some do not even care to bless their children or use positive language on them. However, some believe in the blessing of their children to the extent that they are conscious of likely repercussions of curses on the children.

Keywords

Blessing: The root word of blessing is 'brk' (barak) meaning "he knelt, blessed, be blessed, and cursed" (Vine 18). The root word is not peculiar to Hebrew alone, it is a word that was common and found in many Semitic languages in Palestine. It has a variety of usage in the Hebrew Scriptures. Baraka appears frequently in the first five books of the Bible – Pentateuch in about 160 times and most frequently in the books Genesis and Deuteronomy where it occurred in about 135 times. This represents about one quarter of the total occurrences of the root in the Old Testament. All in all, it occurs in about 330 times in the Old Testament (Vine 18). This is due to the importance placed on the word as reflected in the idiomatic repetitions of the word (McKeon: 2003).

The word blessing is a verb as well as a verbal noun. It is a state of bringing pleasure, comfort, contentment or a better future to someone. It is an act or word uttered by someone blessing himself or herself or someone else. In other words, it is an act of expressing a hope or prayer that good, pleasant and desirable things will be the portion of someone. It may also be described as a prophetic prayer or utterance for a futuristic wellbeing, pleasure, comfort, favour or prosperity for a person. In this research, it will be used as utterance, pronouncement, declaration, expression and wishes for pleasant, prosperous, comfortable, favourable and greater future for someone.

Genesis: The book of Genesis is the first book of the Hebrew Scriptures. It takes its name from the first Hebrew word in the book *bereshith* (bereshith) meaning "in beginning". It is the traditional practice of Hebrew to name a book with the first or the first two words of the book or key word in the book. However, the English title is taken from the Greek word *genesoj* (genesos) which is taken from the Septuagint; the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The word mean, "birth", "genealogy" of "history of origin". (*Bereshith*) can be said to be the beginning of all beginnings (Harrelson 1962: 446)

Children: This is the offspring of a parents. It is the plural of a child. A child could either be a son or a daughter. One who is a product of a union between a man and woman

Edo-land: Edo Land is used here interchangeably with Edo state. Edo Land is on the Benin River and has its capital in Benin City. Edo state is located in the southern part of Nigeria. Edo Land, particularly the capital city, Benin, is the centre for trade in ivory and pepper. Edo state has been a powerful kingdom since the 15th until the late 19th

century. The Edo people are noted for wood, ivory carving and bronze casting. Edo state is boarded and connected by road to Lagos, Onitsha and the west Niger Delta. The major occupations of the people are the cultivation of rubber palm, palm oil, yams, cassava, maize and timber. The state is renowned for its museum where large collection of carvings and other decorative arts are found.

General Concept of Blessings and Curses

Blessing and curse are common concepts to every religion and culture. It is generally an act of invoking a supernatural power to aid or destroy someone. Blessings and curses according to Harrelson are:

Power-laden words, spoken on cultic or other occasions and often accompanied by gestures or symbolic actions, through understanding to be safeguarded or strengthened, and evil forces controlled or destroyed ... as in most religion communities past and present, blessings and curses were a fixed part of the cultic and had a prominent place in everyday life as well.(1962: 446)

It is definitely clear from the above statement that blessing and curses are two inseparable word-actions. Blessing is positive expression of wishes for positive happenings while curse is a negative wish for someone. These two words, though opposites, go together. It is undoubtedly, clear that they are both spoken words that are laden with power. This shows that the power of spoken word goes beyond ordinary happening. It must also be noted that they are always “accompanied by gestures” or “symbolic actions”. Gesture in a given culture is a means of communication by which state of mind, attitude and emotion are expressed. There are many forms of gestures especially when associated with religious actions as worship and prayer. States of mind like joy and happenings, sadness and mourning, anger and aggression, shame and recourse are expressed by gesture.(1962)

Apart from the accomplishment of gestures there is the content of symbolism in which symbolic actions are involved. This is because it is in these symbolic actions that the words and the action of the one who is the agent of blessing or curse are expressed and to accomplish the targeted purpose of blessing or curse according to his bidding. It will be better for further clarification to state that those who understand the concept in the strictly religious sense and usage see blessings and curse as having their origin and effect within the power and purpose of the Supreme Being or the deity (1962).

In general sense, *Collins English Dictionary* defined blessing as “act of invoking divine protection or aid; the words or ceremony used for this, a short prayer prescribed for a specific occasion, approval, good wishes, and the bestowal of divine gift or favour.(116)In other words, blessing is all that is done or said to bring pleasure goodness or protection on someone. Assavirulhalkarn(2005: 979), was of the opinion that blessing is one of the most common religious acts. One cannot but agree with him on this matter that the basic aim of religious activities is to obtain the blessing of the Supreme God or gods by the adherents. The blessings is coveted by all human beings with aim of making head way in their endeavours.

Blessing is not limited only to religious activities, it transcends to the secular and civil society activities. Nearly all society attached importance to blessing. This is perhaps, because of their beliefs in the importance of the blessings in both the communal and individual lives. This can be seen in common speeches in daily usage. The expression of blessing both in words and actions in the religious and social communities point to the value attached to it. AssavirulhalkarnPrapod declared that:

Blessing nurtures hope and wards off fear; it is a companion and assurance in time of peace and a consolation and hope in time of crisis. Blessing is indispensable in celebrations, initiations, rituals, sacrifices and rites of passage.(2005: 979)

It is therefore, evidently clear that all religions, cultures and individuals place value on blessing as part of norms and values of their societies. It must also be noted according to Harrelson (1962:446), that blessings and curses are considered to be in the realm of magic and they are considered to have “origin and effect in the power and purpose of the deity”. This could be of divine or demonic forces or beings. To make a further clearance on this meaning of blessing, it is apt to note William J. Urbrock’s input. He said that blessing is a pronouncing statements or utterances which have the effective power of prompting and bringing good or goodness to someone. This could be as a result of favour that comes out of it.(1992:755).It is also an act of greeting and prayer to invoke good for somebody and or to avert or prevent or neutralize evil against such a person.

Cursing on the other and as earlier said, is a way of making a negative pronouncements or wishes or harm or evil to someone. *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* defines it as “Prayer or invocation for harm or injury to come upon one; to use profanely insolent language against, to call up in divine or supernatural power to send injury upon”.(285). Just as we have seen in the case of blessings, curses also involve invocation of supernatural power by using power-laden words to bring on someone evil usually with the accompanied gestures or symbolic action to bring about the desired wishes of the one cursing.The term blessing according to Julien Ries(1987:247), has two basic or fundamental meanings. First, it has the adoration and praise of God or the deity. Human beings for what they are, take time to eulogize the Supreme Being of their religious inclinations in order to show appreciation and praise their God or gods. This includes worshipping or honouring the deity with regard, loving adoration and

devotion. The second meaning of blessing is in regard to the divine gift that is bestowed on man, nature or things. "It is a material or spiritual benefit that results from divine favour".(1987: 247),

This is showered on the creatures by the Divine, due to the favour that is shown on them for one reason or the other. This is a blessing that resulted from transfer of divine sacred and beneficent power for the purpose of blessing. This power has its origin or source from the supernatural world or realm which confers, the status of a new quality on the person being blessed. In other words, the blessing emanates from the Supreme Being or deity. Assavavirulhakarn in his own opinion said that the word blessing has a very wide range and varying shades of meaning. This is as a result of the common and technical usages in different cultures and traditions. He therefore summarized it in this way: "Blessing can be an act or just an expression to convey good will or favour, frequently invoking God, gods or Supreme Being". (2005: 979)

He concluded that blessing may be said to have three basic meanings which can be summed up as follows. 1. An act or rite to grant or receive favour, blessings, goodness or prosperity with or without divine power. 2. The expression of human desire or aspiration towards goodness. 3. The expression of praise or adoration for a power and Supreme Being.(2005)

George kirk Patrick noted that blessing is all about prosperity and it is not necessarily material or financial blessing rather it is in one's relationship with God. This is essentially in the state of being.(2) From the above assertions, blessing can be seen in the meaning of praise and adoration to the Supreme Being or prayers, supplications, wishes, aspiration for favour, prosperity or goodness for oneself or someone and or it could be to wade off evil. However, the major areas of blessing that will be focused on in this study will be blessing in form of prayer, aspiration for goodness, favour as well as pronouncement for good and favourable future on someone. These includes the spoken words that affects or shape the being of an individual involved either positively or negatively. It will therefore be appropriate to examine the component of the blessing in general term.

The Components of Blessings

Man according to Ries (1987: 247), is "homo religious" and that as appoint of the behaviour as "homo religious", he employs blessings as a means of being in continuous contact with the deity so that he can receive its blessings. In other words, one of the ways by which we have contact with the divine power is the blessings. In blessing, there is a power that intervenes to bestow the resultant benefits from divine origin upon some one or the object of blessing. Such power as it is could mean super human authority that is, God, or the gods, holy men such as priests, kings and revered objects.

The components of blessing according to Assavavirulhakarn (2005: 980) include three distinct elements which are verbal, non-verbal and religious actions. Verbal elements of the blessing are the last of the process however since it appears to be the most visible of the components it takes visible importance out of them. It is the act that is done by making a sort of pronouncement or by verbal action. It is has form of communicative elements by which the blessing, oaths, vow, are made known. It is by expression of verbal words that blessings are done in form of prayer, petition and supplication. It can therefore, be said that blessing is an action that is done by speaking. The verbal element of blessing shows the speaker's attitude towards the good and evil aspects of life.

Non-verbal elements include those elements that 'accompany and evolved with or around blessing' such as the objects of blessing, venues and person. It also includes the use of signs, symbols, emblems, paraphernalia, regalia, diagrams and images which are regarded as sacred and auspicious.(2005). Non-verbal elements in blessings also include gestures such as raising of hands with open palms, music and dance, which are commonly involved in the rituals of blessings. Non-verbal elements mediate and enhance blessing. They are also used in rituals which are performed by the religious agents such as priests, monks or shamans.(2005: 982)

Blessing as a supplication, is all about wishes for oneself or for another favour or good things. There are however, a little distinctions between the two, in the sense that it wishes for others it may be through expressions by vows and strong altruistic of no beneficial intentions while if it is wished for oneself, it leads to focus on its beneficial aspect. It could therefore be concluded that blessing is one's wishes and what one asks from the ultimate. However, blessing is pervasive in nature because it benefits all parties or everybody that take part in it. Participants have the right to direct the blessing to whatever end they like.(2005)

The third component of blessing is the religious element of blessing. It is the most important component of blessing. This is the mystical power involved in blessing. It is intangible as well as the most fundamental element of blessing. This is because human beings assume that there is an entity, force or being that is the power behind blessing, though the power and that process of power transformation is not visible or quantifiable. It is also considered that such power is transcendental though it can take any form. It is also in some belief settings that this power is both fearful and graceful. Faithful's can therefore approach the power for favour but how the power is transferred to supplicants varies. It is also believed that the Divine power can transfer the blessing to human beings without any human intermediary.(2005: 981)

Ries also considered blessing as having three elements which are; first, "the establishment of a relationship with the realm of the wholly other". That is the supernatural realm which is the source of the desired beneficial

effect or the source of the blessing sought. Secondly, the transfer of the quality of the efficacious power of the blessing emanates from the source of blessing to the object of the blessing. This can be done through some form of mediation. The final element of blessing is the enhancement of the existence and person of the being that received the blessing. He observed that a blessing is not only limited to the verbal expression of the vow wishes or desires, in favour of the person concerned but also includes the thought, will and action that the agent of blessing put into bringing about the transfer of the quality of the blessing from the transcendent or supernatural realm to the object of blessing(247).

From the above discussion of the views of these scholars, it is clear that blessing has some essential components, and these components are necessary for the conveying of the blessing to the object of blessing by the agent of blessing in a solemnized and meditative manner from the object of blessing. Blessing is an act which is mysterious by which the transcendent power becomes immanent in the life of the recipient or the adherents of such power. It is quite necessary to know that all these elements must be there before can be effective and extricable. There must be a power that will be the source of the blessing, this is transcendental power. Though this transcendent power is given different names by different people at different times and places; the concept of the transcendent power is the same(247).

The transcendent power is venerated in the religious worship circles as sacred and powerful. In any belief system, especially in monotheism, the Supreme Power or Being is regarded as both fearful and graceful; this power manifests in various forms to give or meet man's need. It is also seen as the refuge to the faithful. The power is transcendent and blissful as well as always available to be supplicated to and to bless. It is also important to note that the means and power for the transfer of the power and how the power is transferred to the supplicant vary. The transcendent power can bless or transfer blessing to human beings without an intermediary.

Process of General Blessing

Blessing has a general process that it takes before it could be bestowed on the recipients. This is because of the fact that blessing manifests in almost all worldly activities and common speeches involved in daily uses. It is also commonly in use in religious culture. Blessing is a medium of nurturing hope and warding off fear. In time of peace, trouble and crisis it serves as hope, consolation and companion and assurance to the recipients. It is also, essential and indispensable in the time of celebrations, initiations, rituals, sacrifices and rites of passage. The process involves the following:

1. The act of blessing. This involved a benefactor, a petitioner and a beneficiary. This is the pronouncement of blessing itself. This includes the gesture, intention, verbal utterances of the agents of blessing as well as the involvements of the recipients of the blessing. In other words, it is the totality of the performance of the blessing, which usually includes the physical and mental processes that are involved in the action.
2. The content of blessing. This is the real desire that is expressed or conveyed to the recipients. This is what one wishes or asks from the ultimate or supreme power. Assavarirulhalkarn (2005: 982). Blessing concept can be specific or universal. However, in religious worship contents of blessing are generally directed, they are not specific. All participants are usually involved in the blessing and the agents of the blessing usually direct the blessing to them.

Specific blessing content can be classified as material or spiritual. The material content includes all that are tangible such as wealth, health, prosperity, longevity, progeny and protection as found in various traditions and religions.(982)The spiritual aspect of the content of blessing is also known as intangible content. This includes liberation from suffering and salvation.

3. The means of conveying blessing. This is another important elements of the process of blessing. This is the means by which the blessing request is conveyed to the Supreme Power and how blessing is bestowed on the recipient. Blessing as earlier said is expressed in various forms, verbal, non-verbal and super natural means. Verbal includes words, speeches or language formulas which include invocation, praise, prayer and eulogy. Prayer makes blessing really sacred and bring them to the real presence of the Supreme Power. Nonverbal means include signs, symbols and gestures which are done to bring about the blessing. Also included in this set are emblems and diagrams. These are deemed to be sacred in several traditions. There many means of blessing depending on their understanding of the concept. They include all that are regarded as sacred means of blessing which are the ways of asking for favour from the transcendent power.
4. The agent of blessing. This is the person that serves as the instrument of conveying blessing on the recipient. These include the holy men people; sacred people; the parents and priests. They pronounce the blessing on the person involved as an agent of the Supreme power. They are not the source or power behind the blessings, but they are doing it on behalf of the transcendent power. They make things happen on behalf of God. They participated in it as the intermediaries, petitioners and the initiators of the act of blessing. They are neither the source of blessing nor can they make blessing to come on someone by their own will or power, but they act on behalf of the transcendent power or the Supreme

- Being. Assavavirulhakarn 979).
5. The authority to grant blessing. The sole authority in granting blessing is the Supreme Power. This could be God or gods as the case may be. The Supreme power has the prerogative authority to confer blessing on individuals. The divine authority has the Supernatural Power, authority and strength that are inherent in him who is both real and effective. It therefore, can be said that blessing is a divine gift bestowed on man, nature or things as a result of divine favour. The divine authority can transfer or confer blessing on someone without the help of any intermediary.
 6. The recipient of blessing. There is also in this process the recipient who craves for and receives the blessing. This is the subject of the blessing. He seeks and requested for blessing.

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 49:8-12

After Jacob had passed his pronouncement on his three eldest sons, he now turned to Judah, the fourth son who happened to be the first to receive blessing from his father. It must be stated that many scholars believed this blessing was an allusion to the Davidic achievement that temporarily placed the tribe of Judah over the tribes of the north (Simpson 820).

v. 8 Jacob did a play upon the name of Judah when he said “Judah your brothers shall praise you” hd'Why> “shall praise you” from hd'y" “yadah” meaning praised, object of praise. Be praised is a play upon the name Judah which in chapter 29:35 literarily means “I will praise Yahweh”. This Jacob used to introduce his prophecy on Judah hence, his brothers will praise him. By the implication of this, he is to be the leader of the tribes of Israel, the pre-eminence taken away from Reuben is given to him and the right of the first-born to rule over his father’s house is transferred to Judah. (Assohoto and Negewa 2006: 82). Before now, Judah had shown a kind of noble and strong character, in his attempt to deliver Joseph from death (Gen. 37:26ff); and by his offering himself to return Benjamin to his father (Gen. 43:9-10) as well as his pleading to Joseph on Benjamin’s behalf (Gen. 44:16). Thus might endear him to his father. This phrase could be interpreted to mean his father’s children will praise him for his heroic deeds and leadership in battle field.(Westermann1987: 228). The second prediction about Judah is ^yb,_y>ao @r<[oâB. ^Bd>y" “your hand on the neck of your enemies.” This is perhaps a prediction of the future role of Judah in the battles that the Israelites will be involved in, with the enemies in the disguise of surrounding nations. He is to send enemies fleeing before him.

In v. 9 Jacob used the metaphor of lion for Judah ‘hyEr>a; rWGÝ “a lion, whelp”. Lion in the biblical usage symbolizes power and strength. It is noted as a ruthless, unstoppable killer who lays ambush for its preys and when it roars, his voice is heard audibly miles away and sends its fear abroad (Ryken, Wilhort and Longman III 1998: 514). By using this imagery, Judah is credited with a picture of pride, strength and rapacity, as fearing no one and destined to be supreme as lions dominate the animals’ world hence the phrase WNm,(yqiy>ymlî“who dares rouse him up”. At this point the two oracles of Balaam come to mind in Num. 23:24 and 24:9.

In looking at the structure of the verse ynIâB. “my son” a first person singular and followed by t'yli_[] “thou art gone up” second person and finally a third person singular #b;ôr” “he concluded” seem to be awkward and disturbing the flow of the structure. This some scholars believed is a way of framing an address of a father to a son by the collector of the poem as the original saying of Jacob.(Westermann 228).It could be noted that the three fold variation is a stylistic popular device in poetic language some examples of this are found in Num. 23:24; Isa. 5:29, and Eze. 19:1-7.(Westermann 228 -229).By using the imagery of lion and lines, it is a promise to Judah of being the most powerful, the strongest and the most daring tribe of Israel of which Judah was.

In v. 10 Jacob predicted the royal prerogatives for Judah. The word ‘jb,ve” “rod, staff, club, Scepter” and jb,ve’ rWsiy"-al{)“commander’s staff” shall not depart him. Scepter in the Bible is a symbol of kingship and the accompanying power of authority. Sceptre is also symbolic in the ancient Egypt and indeed ancient near east. In Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, sceptre is the symbol of the word “to rule”. The imagery has a dynamic quality that evokes a coercive kingly power and acceptance (Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman III 1998:764).

The word qqEßxom. ispo'al participle of qq;x' meaning to cut in, inscribe, govern or decree”. It is therefore translated commander’s staff(Lewis 1980: 316). The imagery of staff in the Bible is noted walking aid, (Zech. 8:4) instrument of discipline and punishment, shepherd’s instruments or tools (Ps. 23) or symbol of authority and power. By the use of this, Judah is given the prerogative to lead the tribes of Israel.

The word wyl'_g>r: “his feet” is rendered lg<r, in the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch. The text is more appropriate in this context. However, the most difficult part of the verse for interpretation is Alâw>Alêyviaboây"-yKi(d[;... which is translated as “until he comes to whom it belong”. Is rendered “send, send away, let go” in the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch, in other words, it reads “until he come let loose” (Austel 928) and (Brown 1999: 1020).

Considering the above renderings, the authority and power as symbolized by staff and sceptre is to be held until it is either the rightful owner take it or it is let loose. The actual meaning or rendering is not certain since this is the only place that this rendering appears in the scripture. Since the renderings are pointing to the same thing I prefer retain. Many interpreters interpreted this to be a messianic prophesy. Others saw it as appropriate for David’s

reign when he established Judah as a ruling tribe which is regarded as the peak of Israel nation's expansion (Baldwin 1986: 209).

In v. 11 – 12 Jacob made a pronouncement of prosperity on Judah. A Qal active participle makes the ruler the subject. The coming will bring along blessing of fertility. The blessing as promised will be with peace, which signifies peaceful disposition. There is portrayal of plenty in verse 11. The plenty is portrayed in imagery of wine. Wine always signifies prosperity and abundance. In Gen. 27:28 Isaac blessed Jacob that God will give him "heaven's dew and of earth's richness and abundance of grain and wine". Wine is also a covenant blessing promised by God to Israel if they obey. It therefore becomes a covenant blessing of abundance (Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman III 1953). It is worth of note that verses 10 – 12 cannot be regarded as tribal saying. It was a promise of blessing to Judah especially with a king that was to come forth out of Judah. This is a promise that wisely related with Balaam oracles (Westermann 232).

IMPLICATIONS OF JACOB'S BLESSING TO EDO PEOPLE

Jacob made pronouncements on his children at his death bed, as it had been analysed in chapter three. The passage as the studies revealed, contained pronouncements about the future of his sons. These pronouncements were not entirely blessings as they also contained blame, condemnation, and even curses against some of his sons in the other verses of the chapter. Though these pronouncements, some scholars said were tribal put together at a later date by a collector and were presented as the sayings of Jacob, others believed that the poem as it stands now is the work of a rector and it contains salient or blessings on one's descendants have some exceptions which may likely influence the decisions of the one making the pronouncements.

The pronouncements of curses depend on the lifestyle that a descendant chooses to live. A descendant may choose to do what calls for blessing or curse, just as for Reuben, Simeon and Levi did what called for their father's condemnation while others like Judah and Joseph received blessings and praises (Yusufu, Turaki 2001: 153). Like Jacob's pronouncement on his children the Edo culture also placed high value on pronouncements on its children. These pronouncements can be positive or negative at times. The focus of this section therefore, is to apply Jacob's blessing scenario to the Edo culture. This shall be achieved in the following implications

Spiritual Implication for the Edo people

Parents as earlier indicated in this essay, have spiritual authority over their children. This is as a result of the fact that they were the channels by which they came into the world. It is with the understanding that both parents hold some mystical authority over the lives of their children. This cannot be explained, but it is real. As a result, anything said by both parents over their children will come to pass (Ries Julien 1987). When a parent blesses a child there will be a spiritual undertone that will work in the favour of the child. True to the blessing of one's father, the child is successful in whatever he or she does.

When a father or mother withholds blessings on a child there is a general belief in Edo culture that the gods are angry with the child. Thus, by withholding the blessings, the parents had shot the door of favour against the child. It is believed that by virtue of fatherhood or motherhood a father or mother has power to bless or curse his or her offspring effectively. (Idowu 185)

It is believed that for a curse to be reverted the child must seek for forgiveness and reconciliation, and then some ritual will be performed for restitution or reconciliation. Forgiveness takes place immediately after restitution or reconciliation by the accursed child. Some of the likely spiritual effects of parental curses are lack of physical blessing, sickness, lack of protection from evil attacks among others (Jacobs A. B 1977: 238).

In like manner, parental blessings bring about prosperity, protection from spiritual attacks, guaranteed backing and support of parents. It is believed that even if the father is not alive again he will still support his child. On the other hand, the blessing of parents therefore, give a child spiritual authority to operate within the family and to exercise his family right freely. His or her birth right is guaranteed without any spiritual alienation in any way. On the other hand, parental displeasure and dissatisfaction may bring about an uncomfortable spiritual atmosphere on the part of the child (Jacobs).

Social Implication for Edo People

In Edo culture, a child that enjoys his father blessing is regarded as a responsible son of the family and society at large. He is acceptable to the family and community. On the other hand, a child that is curse by his parents is regarded as social misfit and a *persona non granta*. Everybody, within the family and those that were aware of it in the immediate community will be avoiding him like a plague. He will be regarded as a social outcast. This has untold effects on the child.

Socially, he will be regarded as disobedient and wayward child. He will neither receive the support of his immediate family nor that of the larger society. Morally, he is regarded as a miscreant. He had attracted a stigma on himself. This is because morality and ethics are governed by a set of regulations which prohibit some certain behaviours within the society. Among these is lack of respect for parents and elderly persons. So, a breach of these

regulations is met with societal disapproval and rejection.

If a child is blessed, he will be seen as a responsible member of the society. He enjoys good relationships, fellowships and acceptance in the society. Nobody will want to associate with a child that does not receive the blessing of his or her parents (Yusufu). If a child by whatever reason, is cursed especially at death-bed, he suffers social set back which may be difficult to redeem.

1. The social implication of parental blessing on the child cannot be quantified. These among others give a sense of pride to a child. He has the acceptability of the society in whatever he does (Yusufu). He can rise to any level of social ladder and relates with any group within the social set up. But in the case of parental disapproval, he or she has the stigma of being a wayward child. However, parental blessing is still relevant socially, despite the societal changing order. If a child refused to receive the blessings of his parents he is seen as socially irresponsible and he may remain socially irrelevant for life.

Parental bless has social effects on the parents also. It makes them to be honoured among their peers and in the society at large. When a child is patient, enduring and obedient to the extent of presenting opportunity for the parents to bless him it makes them fulfilled. Blessing always has beneficial effects on the one concerned it, for it makes him move better and happy. He is seen as somebody that command respect and honour not only from outside but right from inside his home (www.homeschoolblogger.com).

Material Implication for Edo People

Parental blessing is a sign of parental acceptance of a child. It also confers on the child material blessings. In the first instances, material inheritance within the family will not elude him. On many instances, parents may curse a child and in the process bar him from inheriting any of the material possessions (Kumuyi W. F 1990). They may even disown him as their child which will immediately rob him of any right to their inheritance.

Secondly, parental blessing brings material blessings on the offspring. Generally, it is believed among the Edo people, that when one receives his parent's blessings, there will be physical manifestations in his life. By this, he will prosper in whatever he does and he will have increased in material prosperity. Property and wretchedness are due to family curses. Lack of parental blessing can hinder material blessing which includes, wealth, good health and reproduction (Kumuyi).

It is the belief of many people that materially a child is blessed when he receives the blessings of his parents. This will confer upon him/her the right to the material possession of the family and unlock the door of his own wealth. He cited the example of Isaac being blessed by Abraham. Isaac blessed Jacob and Jacob blessed his sons Judah and Joseph in particular all were materially blessed. It must also be noted that, though parental blessing can bring blessings of material possessions to the beneficiary of the blessing, it is not all that are poor that are under the curse of their parents. However, some persons may seek the blessing of their parents if they find out that they are not prospering. This will surely arrest many help to alleviate the level of his property.

Psychological Implication for Edo People

Parental blessing has a way of making psychological impact on the children. Parental blessing gives a child a sense of security at least that his parent pictured a special future for him or her.¹⁴ This usually encourages a child to live and be true to the prediction of his or her parents. The child will be confident of himself or herself so as to be able to forge ahead in life. It also helps the child to be more confident in the future. It will make a child to have a sense of a beautiful future without any distortion.

To buttress this, Carry Smaller and John Trent Sand "an important element of blessing is the way it pictures a special future for the child that is being blessed". It therefore sends a psychological security for a child to know that he has a brighter and better future. This will help him to out-grow fear and intimidations of failure, since he can picture a better future according to his father's blessing. On the other hand, a child that is cursed or have his or her blessing withheld suffers due to inferiority complex.

Another psychological impact on the child is the sense of rejection and loss. Every child wants to be loved and accepted by his or her parents. This acceptance can be demonstrated through parental blessing. Some children have a difficult time to relate to the family. This is because they had been cursed by a mother or father. As a result they felt rejected. Many are filled with anger, anxiety, and resentment while some are emotionally troubled for life.

It had been established by scholars that moral obligations and attitudes have direct relationship with relevant intention and behaviours (Ortberg C.2001). Hence the children's inability to receive the moral supports of the parents and the society will affect their attitudes and behaviours

Conclusion

Parental blessing as it had been revealed in the study is a biblical concept relevant to our present day Edo culture and practice. The lives of our young ones must be shaped with all available resources parental blessing in particular to make them useful to themselves, their families and humanity at large. They need the support of every parent in a special way, therefore, parents should bless them continually to enhance their future prospect.

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