

## **THE FAVOURITE CHILD AND THE LAMPSTAND: THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Mrs.P.J.Jeba Regis**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli*

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Families relate to families by their education, assets, status and family background. It is indeed a kind demonstration that families would render generous assistance and invaluable assistance in times of distress. There was however great noise in the sixteenth century, when people like John Rogers was taken to be burnt at the stakes. He was given no opportunity to bid farewell to his ten children, of whom one was a baby.

On the way to the stakes, he kept repeating words of forgiveness. As Ryle further narrates about the atrocities committed against the Protestants, he says that these Protestants would suffer even more at the hands of the Romans if they were given the power. It is like the story of the woman who had no child and of whom a child was said to be born. There is a "need for positive interpersonal relationships in infancy, childhood and adolescence. It suggests that, for healthy development, a child need to experience warm and consistent relationships within the family" (DWC 113). It is also discovered that "the loss of genealogical history caused by separation has major implications for the development of identity and self-esteem" (DWC 116) Thus Rogers' children would have developed a regressive behavioural pattern but the question of it as the absolute consistent pattern is the astonishment.

Rogers' prayer before his death and his submissive behaviours were very significant. Aldgate et. al. further opines that, "When parents display violent mood swings and ineffective and inconsistent behaviour, children may become very frightened" (132). Even mothers are said to experience depression. Aldgate observes, "Acute depression is associated with mothers who have been found to be related to a "callous unconcern for others, a low threshold for frustration, a discharge of regression and an inability to feel remorse' (stroud 1997, p.158): 'And when you've got children dependent on you it's very difficult to answer their needs because you're so wrapped up in your own. I don't want to be, I want to put them first but I haven't been able to do that' (lone parent with mental health problems, quoted in Aldgate and Becker 2003, p.57) (133).There is an event recorded in an ancient Book -- a

child was born and he was such a darling to his parents. A small room was built for the seer and as the child grew the love for him grew in great measure, especially for his parents. There was to be however for this mother, a tragedy that was to occur. It was indeed a modern idea that the child was to learn from his father, the prime duties of a valuable career, and as the classes happened, this child cried out one day that his head hurt in severity in an unusual manner and so his father sent the lad through his servant to be carried to the arms of his mother. The poor woman took her child and carried him to the seer's room. A novel idea did a grateful heart that prepared herself to build a room for a person who had done her good. Moralistic theory speaks of goodness and virtue – that would construct a new society. It is to the benefit of the lady that the seer asked the Maker for a son.

The woman from Shunem made provision for Elisha's accommodation. It is written that -- she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man ---(of the Maker), who passes by us regularly. "Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand, so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there" (2 Kings 4.9,10). The revelation of the information to the public of a lampstand did not come without costs and sacrifice and without trials. It was in the sixteenth century that changes were found in England. King Henry, as Carter and Mc Rae state was married six times but he had only three children: King Edward VI, Queen Mary I, and Queen Elizabeth I. It was indeed to the astonishment of the public that he had returned six wives but only three children. Such was the importance: the birth. He had wanted many children and also had a fancy for beautiful women. It was when he had married his sixth wife, that after a few years toll, death struck him. It was the fancy for children and pretty women that drove him to such occasions. It was his daughter Elizabeth who had secured the throne after a sibling feud. It was the idea of provision for a seer that secured a place among the mothers in the triumphant acknowledgment of the social institution called marriage. It was a blessing no doubt but the Shunem woman of whom

shall be called Doria was barren. Elisha enquired of his servant, Gehazi who said, "Actually, she had no son, and her husband is old" (2 Kings 4.14). And Elisha foretold in prophecy that, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son" (2 Kings 4.16). The woman was unbelieving, she never fathomed the prospect of conception and it was quite a long time ago that her husband had been youthful, but, to everyone's astonishment, "the woman ... (gave birth to) a son when the appointed time had come of which Elisha had told her" (2 Kings 4.17). It was then that the child cried, "My head, my head!" ... the child "sat on ... (Doria's) knees till noon and then died" (2 Kings 4.19). The stories from the book were favourites of the Kings of England, of kings who had dwelt upon the thought of the writing of the good book. Elisha's lamp was still on the table, and it was set to burn. The story of Doria and Elisha is of a different culture, but all families and seers have inherent qualities that are identical. Similar disposition of motherhood was found in the twentieth century. Aldgate et al avers,

'In African-Caribbean society men often had a visiting rather than residential role in the lives of their children, leaving women (often from at least two generations) to carry out the day to day work of child rearing. Taking work in Britain frequently resulted in families being divided, as adults left their children in the care of grandparents while they established themselves in Britain. Children were generally sent for when parents could afford to support them, and joined reconstituted families where some but not all were blood relatives. Family patterns were reasserted but without the existence of the extended family, frequently leaving mothers to bring up their children with little support.'

(124)

The lamp kept burning for all mothers even of those mothers in the sixteenth century and also for those dating back in history to the years before A.D. and B.C.. -- the method was to shed light in the dark world. There is also the incident of Hosea and his wife. It is said of Gomer that "her eyes wander" (Amazing Love). Block et. al. avers, The Maker "told Hosea to find a wife and revealed to him ahead of time that she would be unfaithful to him. Although she would bear many children, some of the offspring would be fathered by others" (1402) and "as predicted, Gomer left Hosea to pursue her lusts. But Hosea found her, redeemed her, and brought her home again fully reconciled" (1402). A very reluctant woman whose eyes focussed on jewellery, and her husband could not afford it. She suffered immense

lack and stood gazing at the bracelet she could not afford. Her husband loved her dearly but he could not spare her the money for her adornment. This caused a rift between the couple. The story reads as if the woman had not felt with her heart the love for her husband but if she was willing to work she would indeed be the heiress to plenitude.

It was at one instance that the lamp went out. Hosea was conversing with his wife about these things and she suddenly left him. A man had warned him and as the story goes he had even told him to find another wife but he loved her because the Maker had told him to marry a prostitute. It was indeed a crime for her to indeed dwell upon jewellery and rich men but she did dwell in one of their houses by the thread of a lie, that she had gone to her father's house. She was indeed comfortable with the jewels around her lean neck and the bracelets around her slender arms. Yes, she was bewitching. He tried to meet her father for that was the lie she had told her husband and she did indeed not go there for it was her father who had told him that she had not seen his daughter for a very long time. She irked her husband and he questioned the Maker as to the wedding commitment they had made. The lamp had gone out and was yet to return. Hosea was a potter, and as he made his pot he floundered with a quick irksome smile. That he had married one who did not love her was indeed painful to his gentle heart. He had known her nature and he is to listen for the burning lamp to return. The lamp did return and she was not happy about her husband. She left him and went off to her rich master. She was not humiliated by the presence of men around her husband but she only craved his attention and gifts. She did not get gifts from her husband, so this was a consolation.

Hosea's wife was soon left in the street sale to be sold. She was auctioned off and it was someone she knew who had bought her again. She was pitiful. She looked at the man who had bought her. His voice had sounded familiar. As the man came closer and closer she could not even recognise him. She was a broken vessel. He took her and carried her in full sight of the people who had gathered there. Some of them he had friendship with, and some of them -- his relatives, gazed at the odd couple. The people were surprised by Hosea's unashamed action and perhaps the reason finds basis in his obedience to the Creator. He had married Gomer out of obedience and the Maker knew that love is unconditional. The story also parallels the Maker's love for mankind and carries man from the pit to solace, love and protection. Crane writes, "There are plenty

of people to do the possible ... The prizes are for those who perform the impossible. If a thing can be done, experience and skill can do it; if a thing cannot be done, only faith can do it" (CC69). The resonance is of tolerance and forgiveness and redemption. It is quite impossible to save a loved one who has betrayed and dishonoured love. The fact that the story of Hosea is real only makes the possibility of Love that delves to catch the one who has betrayed the faithful one true and a perspective worth considering in the present day that the Creator's love is one of loyalty.

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