

The Faith of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Parents.

1.0. Introduction.

In *Zia al-Nabi*, the award-winning biographical account of the Prophet's life, Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari (may Allah have mercy upon him) writes:

The majority of the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'at scholars adhere to the opinion that the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are recipients of salvation and are blessed with the bounties of paradise (*Zia al-Nabi*, vol. II, p. 78).

This means that from Adam to Abd Allah, Hawwa to Aamina, all the prophets lineage consisted of believers.

This paper's aim is to present the evidence from the Qur'an, Sunna and opinions of the esteemed scholars to support this view. In short, the opinions of the scholars can be divided into three camps. Each of the three camps approach the issue from a different angle but all point to the same conclusion: that the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are saved and are not in the fire of hell.

There are a handful of Muslims who suggest that – Allah forbid – the Prophet's parents were not Muslims and therefore will not enter the gardens of paradise. After presenting these views, a comprehensive refutation will be offered too.

1.1 A brief biography of the Prophet's parents.

Sayyiduna Abd Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) was the youngest and most beloved son of Abdul Muttalib. He was hardworking, chaste and known for his unparalleled beauty. When he was about eighteen, Abdul Muttalib chose Aamina, the daughter of Wahb ibn Abd al-Munaf ibn Zuhra, for a marriage partner. Her family agreed and the marriage took place soon after.

Abdul Muttalib was a trader and used to send trading caravans to Syria and Yemen. He deputised Abd Allah to accompany a caravan to Syria. On his way back, he fell ill and thus stayed with his maternal uncles in Yathrib, where he passed away after one month's illness. A was pregnant at the time.

Both Abd Allah and Aamina travelled little and lived brief lives: eighteen years for Abd Allah who died in Madina and nearly the same for Aamina, who died when the Prophet reached the age of six. May Allah illuminate their final resting places, Ameen.

2.0. The three camps on the faith of the Prophet's parents.

2.1. Camp One. The *Fatra* argument.

This camp states that the parents belonged to the period of *Fatra* (the period after Isa and before the mission of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, though some scholars define it more generally; the period between two messengers (*Masalik al-Hunafa*, p. 38)). Isa (peace be upon him) appeared six hundred years before our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). During this period, the divine scripture revealed to Isa (peace be upon him) had become subject to alterations and changes. Rather than referring to him as the servant of Allah, people began referring to Isa as the son of God. If people of this period were to seek guidance, where would they attain it from? If they wanted to hear the truth, who would they hear it from? Furthermore, Isa (peace be upon him) was only sent for the guidance of Bani Isra'il, not for people universally. Isa did not preach the people of Arabia, and nor did his disciples.

In light of these facts, it is difficult to understand how our Lord – the Merciful and Compassionate – would punish people of this period when there was clearly no source of true guidance. There are many verses of the Qur'an that indicate this very fact: that in the absence of true guidance (in the form of a prophet or messenger), Allah does not punish the subjects of this period. Therefore it is inconceivable that the Prophet's parents will be subject to punishment in the hereafter.

Verse One.

And We do not torment until We send a Messenger (17:15).

It is only when people have been given an opportunity to hear the truth from a messenger that Allah can punish them if they have sinned.

Verse Two.

This is because your Lord would not destroy the (populations of) towns for their wrongdoings while their people were unaware (so the messengers were sent) (6: 131).

In clear words, Allah states that it is not befitting for Him to punish people if they were unaware of Islam.

Verse Three & Four.

And if [We had] not [sent you to the people of Makka] – in case a calamity should seize them for (the deeds) that their hands have sent forth, they would have said: “Our Lord! Why did You not send us a Messenger? We would have then followed your Ayat [verses from the Qur’an] and would have been among the believers” (28: 47).

And if We had destroyed them before this [i.e. before the appearance of Muhammad and the Qur’an], they surely would have said; “Our Lord! If only You had sent us a Messenger, we should certainly have followed your Ayats before we were humiliated and disgraced” (20: 134).

If Allah had not sent messengers for the sake of guidance, then the people would have reasons to plea with Allah that punishing them is unfair.

Verse Five.

And never will your Lord destroy the towns until He sends to their mother town a messenger reciting to them our verses (28: 59).

Verse six.

And We never destroy a township, but it had its warners [i.e. messengers]. By way of reminder, and We have never been unjust (26: 208-9).

Allama Ali ibn Burhan al-Din writes in *Sirah Halbiyya*:

Allama Ibn Hajar al-Haythami has mentioned that the correct opinion in which there is no doubt is that the people of *Fatra* are recipients of salvation. These are the ones to whom a messenger has not been sent to entrust them with the faith in Allah. Thus the Arabs – even in the time when prophets were sent to Bani Isra’il – were the People of *Fatra*, because these prophets were not instructed to preach the Arabs. Their task of preaching was restricted to Bani Isra’il.’ (*Sirah Halbiyya*. Imam Muhammad Abu Zuhra, vol. I, p. 103).

2.2. Dividing the people of *Fatra*.

Furthermore, the scholars have divided the People of *Fatra* into three categories;

- a. The first are those beings who through their own enlightened insight were able to deduce the oneness of Allah, like Qus ibn Sa’ida, Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nawfal and some of the kings of the community of Tubba.
- b. The second are those who diverted from the religion of Ibrahim and began worshipping idols. They forced this misguided belief onto others too, like Amr ibn Luhayy. There is no doubt that such people are destined for the Fire of Hell.

c. The third are those who refrained from accepting other beliefs and remained firm on monotheism. They did not indulge in polytheism and idol-worship. These are the people who fall under the verse 'And We do not torment until We send a Messenger.' (17:15)

Regarding the faith of the Prophet's parents specifically, they belonged to the third group (c) of *Fatra*. No prophet was sent to them from the time of Isma'il up until the official announcement of Prophet-hood from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), nor did they perform any act associated with disbelief. Therefore they are saved from the fire of hell and subject to Allah's grace.

2.2. Camp Two. The *faith* argument.

The second camp of scholars state that the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never committed disbelief and polytheism. Throughout their lives, they remained firm on the religion of their forefather Ibrahim (peace be upon him), were known for noble moral qualities and they had unshaken belief in Allah's oneness and in the Day of Judgement. Imam Fakr al-Din Razi is one such advocate of this position. He writes:

Verily the fathers of the prophets were not disbelievers, because of the saying of Allah 'He is the One who sees you when you stand; and when you were transferred in the loins of the prostrating ones.' It is said the meaning is that his *Nur* transferred from one prostrating one to the next, proving that all the fathers of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were Muslims. (*Sirah Halbiyya*. Imam Muhammad Abu Zuhra, vol. I, p. 103).

Imam Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti writes in his book *Masalik al-Hunafa* that there are **two** facts which help us show that the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were monotheists.

2.2.1. The purity of the Prophet's lineage.

It is proven from authentic *Ahadith* that from the time of Adam to Abd Allah [the Prophet's father], the Prophet's lineage were the best of their people. No one was better than his lineage in any generation. The proof for this is as follows:

a. Abu Nu'aym writes in *Dala'il al-Nabuwwa*, with the chain of Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

Allah continued to transfer me from the loins of the pure to the wombs of the pure, clean and mannered. No two groups have appeared except I was the best of the two.

b. Imam al-Tirmidhi has recorded a Hadith which he classified as *Hasan* (Fair) as well as Imam Bayhaqi from Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

When Allah created me, He made me from the best of creations. Then when he created the tribes, he made me from the best of tribes. And when He created souls (*Nafs*) He made me from the best of souls. Then when He created households, He made me from the best of households. Thus I am the best in terms of household, and the best in terms of souls.

c. Imam al-Tabarani writes in *Awsat* and Imam Bayhaqi in *Dala'il*, from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

Jibra'il (peace be upon him) said to me: "I have searched the earth, the easts and the wests. And I did not find a man better than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and I did not find a clan better than the clan of Banu Hashim."

After citing the above narration, Imam al-Suyuti includes the saying of Imam Ibn Hajar:

Imam Ibn Hajar said, 'And it is known that being the 'best', being the 'chosen' and 'preferred' comes from Allah. And in the eyes of Allah, being the 'best' cannot occur with *Shirk* (polytheism).'

d. Furthermore, when the enemies suddenly began firing arrows to the Muslims in the Battle of Hunayn, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ascended his animal and charged into the battlefield proclaiming:

I am the Prophet without doubt; I am the son of Abd al-Muttalib.

If Abd al-Muttalib was not a monotheist, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would never have taken pride in taking his name, since taking pride in a lineage of disbelief is prohibited.

These reports have clearly shown that the Prophet's forefathers – in each generation – were the best people of their respective times. This superiority can only be achieved when they believed in Allah and their belief was not tarnished with polytheism.

2.2.1. The permanent existence of at least some Muslims on earth.

Secondly, it is proven from *Ahadith* and traditions that from the time of Adam up until the time of Abd Allah, there was no period in which at least some people of *Fitra* existed, who worshipped Allah, performed *Salah* for Him and thus through their means and blessings the earth was preserved [from destruction]. Were it not for them, the earth and all above it would have perished. The proof for this is as follows:

a. Imam Abd al-Razzaq wrote in *al-Musannaf*, from the chain of Ma'mar, from Ibn Jurayj, from Ibn al-Mussayyab, from Ali ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

The earth has continuously been occupied with at least seven Muslims or more. If this was not the case, the earth and its inhabitants would have perished.

This chain is authentic (*Sahih*) according to the conditions set by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, and though it is saying of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), we assume he heard it from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

b. Ibn al-Munzir has mentioned in his exegesis with a sound chain, from Ibn Jurayj in the commentary of the verse 'O Allah! Make me [Ibrahim] an establisher of Prayer, and from my offspring'; he said: 'there has remained from the offspring of Ibrahim to our Prophet people on *Fitra* who have worshipped Allah.

c. Allah says in the Qur'an:

And (remember) when Ibrahim said to his father and his people: "Verily, I am innocent of what you worship. Except Him (i.e. I worship none but Allah Alone) Who did create me, and verily, He will guide me. And he made it [i.e. *La ilaha ill-Allah*] a Word lasting among his offspring, that they may turn back. (43: 26-28)

In an explanation of this verse, the following quote is from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): 'The saying of Allah 'Word lasting among his offspring' means that *La ilaha ill-Allah* remains in the offspring of Ibrahim, peace be upon him.'

Also under this verse, Imam Razi (d. 606) has deduced that the *Nur* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed on from pious people who performed prostration. This indicates that all his forefathers were believers. Allama Alusi writes that in the commentary of *Sajidin* [in this verse], Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) has stated that it proves that all of the ancestors of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were faithful believers. He added that if someone thinks any of his ancestors were infidels, then in his opinion such a person himself becomes an infidel (*Sharh Sahih Muslim* 1: 830-1).

When we analyse these two facts collectively – that the Prophet's lineage were the best of Allah's creations and that at least some Muslims have always existed on earth – then it clearly proves the thesis that his parents were believers. Imam al-Suyuti writes that if we hypothetically assume that the forefathers of the Prophet were polytheists, then we must ask; were they still better than the others of that generation or not? If his fathers were still deemed better, then this necessitates that a polytheist and disbeliever is better than a Muslim. This maxim can never be accepted. And if others from previous generations were better than the Prophet's forefathers, then this too is unacceptable because it has been proven from authentic *Ahadith* that his ancestry were the best of each

generation. Therefore, it can only be deduced that the forefathers of the Prophet were all monotheists and believers, and were the best of their generations.

2.3. Camp Three. The *resurrection* argument.

The opinion of some scholars is as such (as mentioned in *Masalik al-Hunafa*):

Allah Almighty resurrected his parents so that they brought faith in him. This opinion has generated support from a large group of Hadith experts and others, including Ibn Shaahin, Abu Bakr al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Suhayli, al-Qurtubi, Muhibb al-Tibri and Allama Nasir al-Din Ibn al-Munir.

Imam al-Tabarani narrates from Sayyida Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that during the Farewell Hajj, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to a graveyard called Hujun. He was in a state of sadness and due to the will of Allah, he remained there. He then became happy and returned to us. I asked: 'O Prophet of Allah! You were sad earlier but you have returned happy. He replied:

I asked Allah about my mother so Allah made me alive for my sake. She professed belief in me and she was then returned to [the world of] Barzakh. (*The Parents of the Prophet were Muslims*. Mufti Muhammad Khan Qadri. Released by www.aqdas.co.uk (p.5))

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi has mentioned a similar report in *al-Sabiq wa al-Lahiq* (Ibid).

Imam al-Qurtubi writes:

Being made alive and declaring Islam is possible both rationally and in terms of Shari'ah. This is because in many places, the Qur'an has talked of making the dead alive, such as the murdered man from Bani Isra'il becoming alive and informing of his murderer and Isa (peace be upon him) resurrecting the dead... (*The Parents of the Prophet were Muslims*. Mufti Muhammad Khan Qadri. Released by www.aqdas.co.uk (p.7): *Masalik al-Hunafa*, p.87)

Some have understood from this report that the Prophet's mother must have been a non-Muslim, only for her to be resurrected and for her to accept Islam. This is not the case. Rather, she was resurrected not to accept Islam but to attain the rank of Companionship (*Sahabiyyat*).

To conclude the analysis of these three camps, all differ in terms of evidence and approach. But they all point to the same fact; that the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are recipients of salvation and the grace of Allah Almighty.

3.0. Other arguments to support the faith of the Prophet's parents.

3.1. Innocent till proven guilty.

Imam Muhammad Abu Zuhra indicates that if someone wants to even suggest that the Prophet's parents were sinful people, then evidence is required to suggest so. There is nothing to imply that they were morally corrupt, let alone religiously. He writes:

And in reality, I feel that someone is striking my ears and understanding when I imagine that the Abd Allah and Aamina are subject to the fire. This is because Abd Allah was a young man known for his patience; he was willing to be sacrificed according to the solemn promise of his father and placed his head forward for it. And when Quraysh offered a *Fidya* of one-hundred camels in its place, he was content. He refrained from pointless play, leisure and sin despite his young age and beauty; when a woman tried to seduce him, he replied, 'As for the forbidden [that you are enticing me towards, I would rather die.' Why would he thus be punished in the fire, [in addition to the fact] a prophet's call did not reach him?' (*Khatam al-Nabiyin*. Imam Muhammad Abu Zuhra. Vol. I, pp. 132-4)

As for the Prophet's mother, this is the woman who experienced the death of her husband shortly after marriage, and thus responded with unparalleled patience and brought up her orphan child. No one can imagine that such a woman would be punished in the fire, despite the fact that no prophet came to her to give her guidance to Islam and to teach her monotheism.

Imam Muhammad Abu Zuhra concludes by writing:

'In conclusion and after studying all the reports in this matter, the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were from the people of *Fatra*, were close to guidance and noble manners as preached by his son thereafter. After analysing the Qur'anic verses and *Ahadith*, we cannot state that they are in the fire; his mother was a hard-working, patient woman who was caring to her son. There is no evidence present that suggests she is deserved of punishment in the fire. Rather, evidence points to the necessity of praising her and her husband, the one known as the *Zhabih* and *Tahir*...

...We have not reached this conclusion merely because our love for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), though we pray to Allah to increase our love for him. We have reached this conclusion because it is a result of common sense, logic, strong proofs from Shari'ah and the *Khuluq Mustaqim* that point us in this direction.'

3.2. Abu Talib.

In a Hadith recorded by Imam Muslim, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared that the person with the *least* severity of punishment in the fire will be (his uncle) Abu Talib (*Sahih Muslim*, Book of Faith, Hadith 300, Chapter: The Prophet's intercession for Abu Talib and the relief in punishment as a result of him: *Sharh Sahih Muslim* vol. I. p. 834).

This itself is proof that the Prophet's parents are the recipients of salvation because of three reasons:

- a. Abu Talib was the uncle of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In terms of proximity, parents are closer than an uncle. If – hypothetically speaking – the Prophet's parents were destined for the fire, then they would receive even less punishment than Abu Talib. But like the hadith states, it is Abu Talib who will receive the least punishment, because he was the closest being to the being who did **not** accept faith.
- b. And if the reason for the lightening of Abu Talib's punishment is because of the service and care he showed for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), then again the parents of the Prophet showed infinitely more care than his uncle. If they were non-Muslims, then certainly the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have mentioned them too as recipients of a lighter punishment. The fact that he did not is a clear indication that they are saved from the fire.
- c. Furthermore, Abu Talib witnessed the miracles of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), saw his perfect character, heard about Islam and the recitation of the Qur'an. He was asked to recite the *Kalima Sharif* by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but it seems he did not. On the other hand, the Prophet's parents did not live to see the public announcement of *Nabuwwa* from their son nor were taught about Islam. If – hypothetically speaking – his parents were non-Muslims, then surely they would receive a lesser punishment than Abu Talib, because unlike him, they did not hear the call to Islam. All this indicates that his parents were Muslims and will not be subject to punishment.

3.3. The Sawad example.

Hafiz Ibn Kathir reports in *al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya* that on the occasion of Badr, Sayyiduna Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was preparing his Companions for the battle. He passed through the rows with a arrow in his blessed hand and ensured that everyone stood in a straight line. One Companion called Sawad (may Allah be pleased with him) was slightly forward and so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) poked him gently with the arrow to place him back in line. To the astonishment of everyone, Sawad spoke up and said 'O Messenger of Allah! You have hurt me. Allah sent you with the truth and fairness so I want to take revenge for this.' The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lifted his shirt [to show his stomach] gave him

the arrow and told him he was free to take revenge. Sawad took the arrow but instead fell onto his knees hugged him and kissed the stomach of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). 'Why did you do this O Sawad?' enquired the Prophet. He replied: 'O Messenger of Allah! Present is what you see [that we are about to engage in battle]. So I wanted one of my final acts that my skin touches yours, [knowing this would be a protection from the fire of hell].' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed for him as a result (*al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*, III: 40).

If touching the skin of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) momentarily is a protection from the hell-fire, then what is the state of Sayyida Aamina, who held the Prophet in her womb for nine months?

3.4. 'And your Lord shall give you so that you shall be pleased.'

In the verse 'And your Lord shall give you so that you will be pleased', Ibn Jarir quotes in his *Tafsir* the opinion of Ibn Abbas regarding the commentary of this verse: 'From the pleasure of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is that no one from his family enter the fire.' (*Masalik al-Hunafa*, Imam al-Suyuti, p. 34).

3.5. The Du'a of Ibrahim (peace be upon him).

Allah states in the Qur'an:

And remember when Ibrahim said: 'O My Lord! Make this city (Makka) one of peace and security, and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols' (14:35).

Ibn Jarir reports (in his *Tafsir*) from Mujahid that 'Allah answered the supplication of Ibrahim in his children. Thus no one from his sons ever worshipped idols ...' (*Masalik al-Hunafa*, p. 58-9). And because Sayyiduna Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the son of Ibrahim, this means his father (Abd Allah) too never worshipped idols.

3.6. Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz.

G.F. Haddad writes:

The rightly-guided caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz once faced a Muslim administrator whom he heard say that the father of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a *kafir*. Umar said: 'Shall I cut off his tongue? Shall I cut off his hand? Shall I cut off his leg?' Then he ordered that the man to be ostracized [i.e. banished from the town]' (*The Four Imams and their Schools*; G.F. Haddad, p. 63)

4.0. Objections raised on this issue.

4.1. 'My father and your father are in the fire.'

In the Hadith from *Sahih Muslim*, Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reports:

A man said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Where is my father?' He said: 'In the fire.' When the man left, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Verily my father and your father are in the fire.' (*Sahih Muslim*, Book of *Iman*, chapter 88: *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Allama Ghulam Rasul Sa'idi, vol. I, pp. 830-1)

Seemingly, the Hadith of *Sahih Muslim* indicates that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said that his father was in the fire. In answer to this, the scholars have given many answers:

a. By father (*Ab*), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) meant his uncle Abu Talib. Quite often, the Arabs use the word father (*Ab*) to mean their paternal uncle. In fact, there are places in the Qur'an where *Ab* has been used to mean Uncle. For example, Ya'qub was the son of Ishaq (peace be upon them). Ishaq and Isma'il were brothers and so in this regard, Isma'il was the uncle of Ya'qub (peace be upon them). But the Qur'an has used the word *Ab* to describe this relationship:

Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub? When he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, the One God. And to Him we submit" (2: 133).

b. The hadith of Imam Muslim may be *Sahih* but the narrators do not agree on the words 'Verily my father and your father are in the fire'. The chain (*sanad*) that Imam Muslim used is that of Hammad ibn Salama from Thabit from Anas. This chain contradicts the chain of Mu'ammara, from Thabit, from Anas, which does not mention those words, but instead says: 'When you pass by the grave of a disbeliever, tell him of the fire.' There is no mention of the Prophet's father in this latter version whatsoever and moreover, its chain is more established as Mu'ammara is more reliable than Hammad, whose memory has been questioned and some of whose narrations have been rejected. Imam al-Bukhari did not take anything from him, nor did Imam Muslim in the *usul* (i.e. *Ahadith* related to the principles of the Shari'ah except through Thabit. Mu'ammara is impeccable from all those points of views and both Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim use him. His version is therefore more reliable (*The Prophet's parents are saved*. Imam al-Suyuti, translated by G.F. Haddad)

c. Even if we assume that this narration of Imam Muslim is of acceptable standard, then it is still rejected in light of the clear verses (e.g. 'And We do not torment until We send a Messenger') that oppose it. When a Hadith and a Qur'anic verse seemingly give different messages, then precedence is given to the Qur'an.

d. The Hadith of Imam Muslim might be abrogated by later rulings. Al-Hakim reported in *al-Mustadrak* from Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) an authentic Hadith that:

A young man of the Ansar who asked a lot of questions once asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'Are your parents in the fire?' He replied: 'My Lord promised to give me what I ask concerning them, and on that day I shall stand at the Praiseworthy Station (*Maqam Mahmud*) [as the chief intercessor] (*The Prophet's parents are saved*. Imam al-Suyuti, translated by G.F. Haddad).

This Hadith pertains to the Madani period. When two prophetic reports contradict one another, then we act upon the latter one. Likewise, there is the hadith of Abu Sa'id in *Sharaf al-nabuwwa*, Tabari and al-Mulla in his *Sira* from Umr ibn Husayn:

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I asked my Lord that He not enter any of my family into the fire and it was granted me" (*The Prophet's parents are saved*. Imam al-Suyuti, translated by G.F. Haddad).

4.2. Permission refused to pray for her mother.

Imam Muslim and Imam Abu Dawud narrated on Abu Hurayra's authority:

That the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked permission to ask forgiveness for his mother and it was not granted [and he asked permission to visit her grave and it was granted]. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book of funeral prayers, 36).

In reply, firstly, a counter-argument may be made that in the beginning of Islam the Muslim who died with unpaid debts was not prayed upon (and asking forgiveness for them was not allowed). The Prophet's mother may have had this or other reasons which prevented his praying upon her, which does not make her a non-believer (*The Prophet's parents are saved*. Imam al-Suyuti, translated by G.F. Haddad).

Secondly, this Hadith is abrogated by the Hadith of Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) when on the occasion of the Farewell Hajj, the Prophet went to Hujun and his parents were resurrected for him. Imam al-Qurtubi and Imam Ibn Shahin support this view.

Thirdly, at the time of the Prophet's birth, a shining light appeared by which Sayyida Aamina (may Allah be pleased with her) could see the palaces of Persia. According to another narration, the light appeared from Aamina herself (*Masalik al-Hunafa*, p. 72) Would this be the case if she was destined for the fire?

Imam al-Zarqani has ended all confusion through a brilliant line of reasoning:

Both narrations [‘my father and your father are in the fire’ and ‘the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked permission to ask forgiveness for his mother and it was not granted] can be reconciled by saying that his parents believed in Allah but did not have detailed belief in Qiyama, Prophet-hood and other aspects of the Shari’ah even though belief in things such as the hereafter are essential. It is noteworthy that their becoming alive occurred at the time of the Farewell Hajj, when the Shari’ah had become complete and it was announced in the Qur’an: ‘This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion’ (5:3). Hence, Allah made them alive at such a time when the Shari’ah was complete so that they would *Iman* on all its constituents in detail. This explanation is very exquisite (*The Parents of the Prophet were Muslims*. Mufti Muhammad Khan Qadri. Released by www.aqdas.co.uk (p.13)).

4.3. Imam Abu Hanifa’s opinion.

In *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, it is reported that Imam Abu Hanifa wrote that the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died on disbelief (*mata ala al-kufr*).

In response to this, the learned scholars have clarified that this is a typing error and nothing more. Imam Tahtawi writes that to accuse Imam Abu Hanifa of this opinion is slander because relied-upon versions of *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* do not contain these words. The actual words are ‘the parents of the Prophet did **not** die on disbelief (*ma mata ala al-kufr*).

Further proof is found when we look at the full sentence of Imam Abu Hanifa’s script:

The parents of the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not die on *kufr* and Abu Talib demised on *kufr*.

If the ruling for Abu Talib was the same as the parents, then surely one sentence would have sufficed (the parents of the Prophet and Abu Talib demised on *kufr* (God forbid)). The fact that there are different sentences and statements means they had different rulings (*The Four Imams and their Schools*; G.F. Haddad, p. 58).

5.0. Concluding remarks.

*We should always have *Husn Zann* (good opinion) about people. This certainly extends to the faith of the Prophet's parents. Declaring his parents non-Muslims says more about the mind-set of the speaker rather than the issue itself.

*In the famous *Dala'il al-Khayrat*, the author Imam al-Jazuli describes the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as *Karim al-tarafayn*, noble on both sides of his parents.' (*The Four Imams and their Schools*; G.F. Haddad, p. 54).

*Qadi Abu Bakr ibn Arabi, a great Maliki Imam and the author of *Tafsir Ahkam al-Quran* decreed:

Qadi Abu Bakr ibn Arabi was asked about a man who said that the Prophet's parents were in the fire. He replied: "Whosoever says such is cursed (*Mal'un*), since Allah Almighty said, 'Verily those who hurt Allah and His Messenger; Allah curses them in this world and the hereafter (33: 57).' And there is no hurt greater than that 'father of such and such is like that'".

*It is simply not an appropriate discussion for Muslims to say: 'The Prophet's parents are in the fire' as he himself said: 'Do not annoy the living by insulting the dead.' When Durra, the daughter of Abu Lahab, migrated from Makka to Madina, the ladies said to her: 'You are the daughter of Abu Lahab, about whom Allah has said: May his hands perish'. Durra complained to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who said to the people:

O people! I do not like that you hurt me due to my family. By Allah! My intercession will reach my close relatives and those who follow them and on the Day of Judgement, they will attain my intercession.

When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) showed anger due to Abu Lahab – even though he definitely died as a kafir – then how angry will the Prophet be at the person who says similar things about his parents, who demised on *Fitra*?

May Allah grant the parents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) eternal bliss, Ameen.

6.0. Further Reading.

- *The Four Imams and their Schools*; G.F. Haddad. pp. 51-64.
- *The Prophet's parents are saved*. Imam al-Suyuti, translated by G.F. Haddad. Muslim Academic Trust, London, 2007.
- *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Allama Ghulam Rasul Sa'idi, vol. I, pp. 830-1.
- *Masalik al-Hunafa*, Imam Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti.
- *Zia al-Nabi*, Zia al-Ummah Pir M. Karam Shah al-Azhari vol. II, pp. 78-91. Ziā al-Qur'ān Publications, Lahore, Pakistan.

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