

THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

The Ahl al-Bayt (Family of the Prophet ﷺ) have been granted a lofty rank and elevated status in the eyes of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jamā'ah in accordance with what Allah has decreed of loving them and honouring them. This is in keeping with the bequest of the Prophet ﷺ, when he said, "I remind you (to be kind) to the members of my family." In light of this, we dissociate ourselves from those who exaggerate with regards to only specific members of the Ahl al-Bayt (ignoring the rest) and also from the Nawāsib, who cause harm to them and harbour malice for the pure members of the Ahl al-Bayt.

A MUSLIM LOVES THE AHL AL-BAYT

All Muslims love the pure members of the Ahl al-Bayt and consider it strictly forbidden to disparage, belittle, or harm them in any way, whether this be directed to the progeny of the Prophet ﷺ or his blessed wives, all of whom form part of the Ahl al-Bayt. The blessed wives of the Prophet ﷺ not only hold a distinguished status and virtue as the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn (Mothers of the Believers), as mentioned in the Noble Qur'an and Blessed Sunnah, but are also honoured as being part of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet ﷺ.

UMMAHĀT AL-MU'MINĪN ARE AHL AL-BAYT

Ahl al-Bayt refers to the residents of a house. Similarly, the term Ahl al-Qurā means residents of a village and the ahl of a religion will refer to its adherents and followers. A man's ahl, thus, refers to his wife and his children are also included. Allah ﷻ praised the wives of the Prophet ﷺ as his Ahl al-Bayt:

And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification. And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom. Indeed, Allah is ever Subtle and Acquainted [with all things]. [Ahzāb: 32–34]

The wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ are included in the word Āl which is the plural of Ahl (family) in his statement:

Verily, zakāh is not permissible for Muhammad and his family. [Tārīkh Baghdād]

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها emphasized this:

Khālid ibn Sa'id sent a cow from zakāh to her, and she returned it explaining, "Zakāh is not permissible for us, the family of Muhammad." [Ibn Abī Shaybah]

USAGE OF THE TERM AHL AL-BAYT IN THE QUR'ĀN

The incident of Khālil Allāh Ibrāhīm عليه السلام mentioned in the Qur'an further strengthens the inclusion of wives in the term Ahl al-Bayt. Allah ﷻ while relating the incident of the messengers coming to Nabī Ibrāhīm عليه السلام with glad tidings says:

And his Wife was standing, and she smiled. Then We gave her good tidings of Ishāq and after Ishāq, Ya'qūb. She said, "Woe to me! Shall I give birth while I am an old woman and this, my husband, is an old man? Indeed, this is an amazing thing!" They said, "Are you amazed at the decree of Allah? May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, Ahl al-Bayt (people of the house). Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honourable." [Hūd: 71–73]

The wife of Nabī Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is being addressed here and no one else.

THE PROPHET ﷺ ADDRESSES THEM AS HIS AHL AL-BAYT

The Nabī ﷺ entered 'Ā'ishah's room and greeted, "May peace be upon you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and the mercy of Allah." She replied, "And may peace and Allah's mercy be upon you." [Sahīh al-Bukhārī]

THE STATUS OF THE UMMAHĀT AL-MU'MINĪN

Allah ﷻ says:

The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are [in the position of] their mothers. [Ahzāb: 6]

In essence, the mothers of a believer are the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, and the Prophet ﷺ is like a father to the believer as is reported in the Hadīth of Abū Dāwūd. The Muhājirīn and the Ansār are brothers to a believer as implied in the Qur'ānic supplication:

Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful. [Hashr: 10]

DISPARAGING THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET ﷺ IS PROHIBITED

Anyone who disparages even one of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ will be said to be void of imān because if he were a believer in the true sense of the word then he would never have disparaged the Mothers of the Believers; a son does not speak ill of his mother.



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RESPECT THEM AS YOUR OWN MOTHER

This motherhood is the same as biological motherhood as far as the rights of respect and honour are concerned, and also as a means of being proud of one's ancestry. Can anyone boast of having a nobler mother than those whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose to be his spouses? In fact, they were selected by Allah ﷻ Himself, as Allah says:

Not lawful to you, [O Muhammad], are [any additional] women after [this], nor [is it] for you to exchange them for [other] wives, even if their beauty were to please you, except what your right hand possesses. And ever is Allah, over all things, an Observer. [Ahzāb: 52]

Allah ﷻ stated regarding Sayyidah Zaynab bint Jahsh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا:

So, when Zayd had no longer any need for her, We married her to you in order that there not be upon the believers any discomfort concerning the wives of their adopted sons when they no longer have need of them. And ever is the command of Allah accomplished. [Ahzāb: 37]

THE MOST SUPERIOR WOMEN OF THE WORLD

Allah ﷻ said regarding their superiority over the women of the world:

O wives of the Prophet ﷺ, you are not like anyone among women, if you fear Allah. [Ahzāb: 32]

Such is their distinctiveness that Allah ﷻ has forbade any of the believers from ever marrying them just as it is prohibited for a son to marry his biological mother. Allah ﷻ says:

And it is not [conceivable or lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in the sight of Allah an enormity. [Ahzāb: 53]

HARMING THEM IS HARMING THE PROPHET

The Prophet ﷺ is harmed by any word or action that would hurt his wives, to such an extent that Allah ﷻ even instructed the believers to only address them from behind a veil. Allah ﷻ says:

And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. And it is not [conceivable or lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah. [Ahzāb: 53]

When this is the level of honour that has been accorded to the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn, what can be said about those who disparage them, curse them, and attribute to them that which does not befit their noble status? Shortly after the above-mentioned verses, Allah ﷻ says:

O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful. [Ahzāb: 59]

Then Allah issues a stern warning:

If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease and those who spread rumours in al-Madīnah do not cease, We will surely incite you against them; then they will not remain your neighbours therein except for a little. [Ahzāb: 60]

Referring to the rumours these hypocrites were spreading concerning the marriage of the Prophet ﷺ to Sayyidah Zaynab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. She was previously the wife of his adopted son, Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, whose mention was made in the verses cited previously. This verse indicates that criticism of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ is amongst the traits of the hypocrites, and the Believers have been sternly warned from imitating them.

Allah ﷻ has clarified in this sūrah that He will not accept any justification for slandering the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. The one who does so, abandons the Qur'an and Sunnah and instead follows the path of the whimsical and foolish. If he does not repent and dies in this condition:

The Day their faces will be turned about in the Fire, they will say, "How we wish we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger." And they will say, "Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our masters and our dignitaries, and they led us astray from the [right] way." [Ahzāb: 66, 67]

Is attributing to them that which does not befit their noble status a meritorious deed? Or is it one of the most heinous crimes? Just imagine for moment—while you curse the wives of the Prophet ﷺ—that you are standing in front of the Messenger ﷺ and he is listening to your words... how does it feel now? Imagine what the Prophet ﷺ would be thinking of you?

They are his wives for eternity; in this world and the hereafter as well, which is why the Believers were prohibited from marrying them after his demise:

And it is not [conceivable or lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in the sight of Allah an enormity. [Ahzāb: 53]

Every person should ponder deeply over these points and recognise the noble status awarded to the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn. May Allah ﷻ guide us, grant us understanding, and the ability to honour the family of the Prophet ﷺ as they ought to be honoured. And may Allah unite us with them in the gardens of Jannah.



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