



Supplementary Notes:

UMMAHĀT AL-MU'MINĪN (MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS)



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The status of the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn

Allah ﷻ says:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ

The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are [in the position of] their mothers.¹

In essence the mothers of a believer are the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, and the Prophet ﷺ is his father². The Muhājirīn and the Anṣār are his brothers and those implied in the Qur'ānic supplication:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

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.³

This is the Household of the Prophet ﷺ. Anyone who disparages even one of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ will be said to be void of īmān 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.

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:

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا

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.⁴

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

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاهَا لِيَكُنِيَ لَكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَصْرًا وَمِغْرًا أَوْ لِيُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ بَرَكَةً أَوْ لِيُجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ أَمْراً أَوْ لِيُجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ أَمْراً أَوْ لِيُجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ أَمْراً

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.⁵

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

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 6

2 This parentage is allegorical on account of the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ, "I am to you (the believers) like a father." Reported by Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Ṭahārah, Bāb Karāhiyat Istiqbāl al-Qiblah 'inda Qaḍā' al-Ḥājah, Ḥadīth: 8.

3 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 10

4 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 52

5 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 37

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ

O wives of the Prophet ﷺ, you are not like anyone among women, if you fear Allah.¹

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:

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَن تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَن تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِن بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِندَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا

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.²

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:

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَن تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

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.³

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:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَن يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

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.⁴

Then Allah issues a stern warning:

لِّئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَتُغْرِيَنكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

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.⁵

Referring to the rumours these hypocrites were spreading concerning the marriage of the Prophet ﷺ to Sayyidah Zaynab رضي الله عنها. She was previously the wife of his adopted son, Zayd رضي الله عنه, 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.

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 32

2 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 53

3 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 53

4 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 59

5 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 60

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’ān and Sunnah and instead follows the path of the whimsical and foolish, who they take as their masters and dignitaries. If he does not repent and dies in this condition:

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَا

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.”¹

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 ‘Ā’ishah and Ḥafṣah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا—that you are standing in front of the Messenger ﷺ and he is looking at you and listening to your words... how does it feel now? Imagine what the Prophet ﷺ would be thinking of you?

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْنُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ

O wives of the Prophet ﷺ, you are not like anyone among women, if you fear Allah.²

In other words, there are undeniably no women in this world superior to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. This is not something unfathomable when one considers that they are after all the wives of that Prophet ﷺ who is the most superior of all the Prophets and Messengers—in fact the best of all creation—and they were preferred by Allah and the Prophet ﷺ over all other women in this world.

As for them fearing Allah ﷻ and possessing the quality of Taqwā, this too is proven from the Noble Book of Allah. Allah ﷻ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأَسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا وَإِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

O Prophet, say to your wives, “If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release. But if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter—then indeed, Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward.”³

They chose Allah and his Prophet ﷺ and abandoned the life of this world and its adornments. There is no other reason for them choosing Allah and His Messenger ﷺ—which meant patiently enduring the hardship and difficulty which accompanied the office of Nubuwwah—except firmness of faith and their fear of Allah. Since their decision to remain with the Prophet ﷺ was motivated by Taqwā they were honoured by Allah:

لَّا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ

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.⁴

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 66, 67

2 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 32

3 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 28, 29

4 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 52

They were honoured in two ways in this verse:

1. The Prophet ﷺ was prohibited from taking another wife after them.
2. The Prophet ﷺ was prohibited from divorcing any one of them, in order to marry another.

The reason for this was so that they would be his wives for eternity; not only in this world but in the hereafter as well. This is also the reason why the Believers were prohibited from marrying them after his demise:

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا

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.¹

And they were awarded the position of mothers to every believer:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ

The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are [in the position of] their mothers.²

Every person should ponder deeply over these points and recognise the noble status awarded to the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn.

Who are the Ahl al-Bayt

عن زيد بن أرقم أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما فينا خطيبا بماء يدعى خما بين مكة والمدينة فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ووعظ وذكر ثم قال أما بعد ألا أيها الناس فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به فحث على كتاب الله ورغب فيه ثم قال وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي

Zayd ibn Arqam رضي الله عنه narrates: One day Allah's Messenger ﷺ stood up to deliver sermon at a watering place known as Khumm situated between Makkah and Madīnah. He praised Allah, extolled Him and delivered the sermon and exhorted (us) and said, "O people, I am a human being. I am about to receive a messenger (the angel of death) from my Lord and I, in response to Allah's call, (would bid good-bye to you), but I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah in which there is right guidance and light, so hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it." He exhorted (us) (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah and then said, "The second are the members of my household I remind you in the name of Allah (of your duties) to the members of my family I remind you in the name of Allah (of your duties) to the members of my family."³

Beloved brethren, amongst the foundations of Islamic creed lay the love of the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as he has exhorted us thus, "*I remind you in the name of Allah (of your duties) to the members of my family I remind you in the name of Allah (of your duties) to the members of my family.*" He gave this advice as he was returning from the holy pilgrimage at a watering place known as Khumm situated between Makkah and Madīnah. When he reached this place, he stood to advise and lecture the Companions. He then mentioned leaving two weighty things. What are they? They are, the Qur'ān and his family. Some scholars have stated, they have been indicated to as weighty due to their greatness and high standing. Other scholars have cited the reason for them being called weighty is due to the difficulty in complying them.

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 53

2 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 6

3 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 2408.

Deconstructing the narration leads one to the conclusion that Rasūlullāh ﷺ advised the Muslims regarding two tremendously important matters; the first being the compulsion of holding fast to and complying with the Book of Allah ﷻ. To know that it is the straight path, the beginning lies in this world and its end if followed will lead one into Jannah. The second matter that Rasūlullāh ﷺ stressed upon was his advice regarding the duties one has towards his family members. He advised Muslims to respect the sanctity of his household, realize their rights, and not to be averse towards them by ill talk or by harming them.

عديد الحصى والرمل في الفلوات
و بشرى لهم لقاء في الجنات
و اخرهم بالبشر والبركات

عليهم سلام الله في كل ساعة
هنيئاً لهم قربي النبي محمد
به شرفوا حتى استنارت حياتهم

*May the peace of Allah be upon them every moment;
according to the number of pebbles and grains of sand in the dessert.
Glad tidings to them on having family ties with Muḥammad ﷺ;
and so too their meeting him in paradise
Through him their lives lit up casting them into nobility;
forever earning glad tidings and blessings.*

Who form the Ahl al-Bayt regarding whom Rasūlullāh ﷺ exhorted us?

The scholars have differed in defining the Ahl al-Bayt, however the view of the general body of scholars retain them to be those who cannot receive zakāh, and they comprise of the Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib. Rasūlullāh ﷺ is reported to have said:

إنا وبنو المطلب لا نفرق في جاهلية ولا إسلام وإنما نحن وهم شيء واحد وشبك بين أصابعه صلى الله عليه وسلم

We and the Banū al-Muṭṭalib have been together before and after the advent of Islam. We are one. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then placed his fingers into each other.¹

Together with them are the honorable consorts of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. They form part of the Ahl al-Bayt through marriage. Their bond is an unbreakable one as they are his wives in this world and the next. Linguistically too the words ‘Āl’ and ‘Ahl’ are inclusive of a man’s wives, progeny, and relatives. The Qur’ān indicates towards this as well in the story of Mūsa عليه السلام:

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا

[Mention] when Moses said to his family, “Indeed, I have perceived a fire.”²

His family here being his wife who was with him.

Similarly, Allah ﷻ speaks about Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and his wife:

رَحِمْتُ الْوَحْشَةَ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَّجِيدٌ

*May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, people of the house. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honorable.*³

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 3989. Abū Dāwūd: 2980. The wording is of Abū Dāwūd through the narration of Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im رضي الله عنه.

2 Sūrah al-Naml: 7.

3 Sūrah al-Hūd: 73.

Therefore, the term Ahl al-Bayt comprises of the Banū Hāshim, Banū al-Muṭṭalib, and the wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. They have been granted certain specialties by Allah ﷻ which makes them unique in some aspects of which we will mention four:

1. The Right of Love and Well Wishing

Love for every believer is a compulsion based on the creed we share, however love and well-wishing for the Ahl al-Bayt holds a special place in the heart of every believer. When the uncle of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه complained to him on the untoward behavior of some of the Quraysh in relation to the Banū Hāshim, Rasūlullāh ﷺ offered the following:

والله لا يدخل قلب امرئ إيمان حتى يحبكم لله ولقرايتي

By Allah! Imān has not penetrated the heart of a man until he loves you (the Banū Hāshim) for the sake of Allah ﷻ and for the sake of my relation.¹

2. The Right of the Ahl al-Bayt in One Fifth of the Ghanīmah and in Fay'

Ghanīmah is the spoils of war in contrast to fay which is achieved peacefully without battle. Allah ﷻ says:

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنتُمْ أُمِنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّقَىٰ الْجَمْعَانِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And know that anything you obtain of war booty - then indeed, for Allah is one fifth of it and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and the orphans, the needy, and the [stranded] traveller, if you have believed in Allah and in that which We sent down to Our Servant on the day of criterion - the day when the two armies met. And Allah, over all things, is competent.²

This share is established for them after the passing of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as well.

3. The Impermissibility of Receiving Zakāh

The jurists are unanimous that the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ are not allowed to take the monies of Zakāh just as it was impermissible for Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself. The Messenger ﷺ said:

إن الصدقة لا تنبغي لآل محمد، إنما هي أوساخ الناس

The Zakāh is not appropriate for the family of Muḥammad, it is but the filth of people.³

4. The Right of Sending Salutations upon them

Allah ﷻ says:

1 Narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad*: 1777/1755. The narration relies on Yazīd ibn Abi Yazīd regarding who there is a difference of opinion. Aḥmad Shākir has considered the narration to be ṣaḥīḥ in his examination of the *Musnad*: vol.3 pg. 210. Ibn Taymiyyah has considered it strong in his book *Iqtidā' al-Sirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*: vol.1 pg.428 by citing other narrations which serve as a testimony to its meaning.

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 41.

3 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 1072.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.¹

There is great virtue in this verse and it holds a high status as it shows us the manner of conferring salutations upon Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Sending salutations upon the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ falls under the meaning of this verse as well. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was asked regarding sending salutations upon him he replied with the following:

قولوا: اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد، كما صليت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد، اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد، كما باركت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد

Say: O Allah! Send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad as You sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm; indeed, you are praiseworthy and glorious. O Allah! Bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm; indeed, you are praise worthy and glorious.²

To reiterate, these chapters are in part a humble effort to bring to the fore some of the greatness of these giants, a concern on my part for the noble Ahl al-Bayt and illustrious Companions. They are, as the world has witnessed honourable and pious. The best of humanity after the prophets. Their noble endeavours in Islam are well accounted and are almost impossible to innumerate. Here are some of our responsibilities towards them. Make a concerted effort to study their legacy, read through the pages of their history, review their words and actions establishing upon it the yardstick of our life, and take them as our role models.

It is unfortunate that we suffice on displaying love for them without that love influencing our words, actions, and lives. True love demands the beloved be shadowed in every aspect by the lover. The poet aptly captures this with the following:

هذا محال في القياس بديع
إن المحب لمن يحب مطيع

تعصي الحبيب وأنت تزعم حبه
لو كان حبك صادقاً لأطعته

You disobey your beloved yet claim love;

this is an impossibility if you apply your mind.

If you genuinely love him then you would have obeyed him:

since the lover obeys the one, he loves.

Article Refuting the Shī'ah denial of the virtue of the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn

Ramaḍān 1437: Scholars and Islamic institutions around the world in Masjids, over the airwaves, and even through social media sought to enlighten the Ummah regarding the numerous historical events associated with this month. On the 17th of Ramaḍān they shed light on the incidents of Badr expounding at great length the virtues of the Noble Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ who participated in this decisive battle. The 17th of Ramaḍān also saw the demise of the honourable Mother of the Believers, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا; and the dutiful sons of Umm al-Mu'minīn recounted her virtues, nobility and status in the eyes of Allah, His Nabī ﷺ, and Ummah at large. It came as no surprise when a faction took particular offense to the virtues of Umm al-Mu'minīn being broadcasted on such a large scale, more so when this effort sat in stark contrast with their own activities for the day. The Shi'ah have always harboured rancour and hatred for Sayyidah Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and in recent years they have taken to joyous celebration on the 17th Ramadan, which is the

1 Sūrah al- Aḥzāb: 56.

2 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 319. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 406. Both books have it from the narration of Ka'ab ibn 'Ujrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

date of our beloved mothers demise; hurling shameless heart-shattering abuses, curses, and profanities at her. Yes, so it came as no surprise that they would be offended by the proclamation of her merit and virtues.

Surprising though was the counteraction of certain Shī'ī laymen who took it upon themselves—despite their constant portrayal of being advocates for unity—to begin circulating long refuted Shī'ī propagandist literature sourced directly from the internet. The article was a poor attempt to rob Umm al-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا of the virtue she shares with her co-wives in the verse:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ

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

Sadly, he did not only trample upon the honour of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا contained in this verse but brazenly trampled upon the honour of **all** the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn, even if they may be from those whom the Shī'ah are pleased with, such as Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and so on.

The Shī'ah claim that reference to the spouses of Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as “Mothers of the Believers” served no purpose other than to indicate that it is unlawful for the Ummah to marry the wives of the Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ after him, and carries no other merit or significance whatsoever. The Shī'ī propagandist presented a number of half quotes from a range of Sunnī Tafsirs which served his agenda and deliberately omitted that which was against it. He haughtily mocks the Sunnī deduction from this verse, namely that the pure spouses are deserving of the same love, honour, and veneration that is due to one's biological mother. He then stated:

The reality is that there exists no evidence from the blessed tongue of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ nor do we have an authentic tradition that would suggest the verse relates to venerating the wives of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on account of their being the Mothers of the Believers... if it were true then men and women would have to venerate them but in *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, 'Ā'ishah denied being the mother of women...

Had he said that he did not find any tradition or come across it as yet, then perhaps one could have said that this was a misconception that arose on his part because of insufficient research but when he said, “there exists no evidence... nor do we have an authentic tradition,” asserting the inexistence of such narrations, it made him guilty of deceit and outright falsehood.

He also forwarded the narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا found in *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, wherein it is reported that she herself negated being the Mother of the Believing women and was only a mother to the Believing men, thus drawing support from this narration for their twisted hypothesis.

Response

The verse in question:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ

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

This verse is *Muhkam* (clear in its purport and not ambiguous in any way), yet the Shi'i propagandist claims that all it seeks to convey is that marriage to the noble consorts of the Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is prohibited on account of their relationship being akin to the relationship of a mother, and that it contains no indication or even inference that one ought to venerate them or respect them as such.

The Master ﷺ has said in a tradition as reported by Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه:

كما روى أبو داود (٢٢٧٨) عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ : (الْخَالَةُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْأُمِّ)

The maternal aunt holds the same status as the mother.

The purpose of this narration is obviously not to indicate mere prohibition of marriage but to highlight the right of the maternal aunt, that she is deserving of the same respect and reverence as one’s own biological mother. However, it is quite possible that the Shī’ah will deny the virtue of the maternal aunt as well, and say that this narration only seeks to announce the law of marriage and no such veneration is due to her.

Prohibition of marrying the wives of the Nabī ﷺ had already been emphatically proven and were these verses meant to emphasise the previous decree then it would have done so categorically and insistently as is the case with zakāt. Zakāt was made incumbent in the Qur’ān but when its importance needed to be emphasised then Allah stressed upon its observance to such an extent that severe punishment was also mentioned for failing to discharge it.

Nonetheless the impression created by the Shī’ah is that all Sunnī Tafsīr literature attest to the same and thus their view is supported by our own commentaries—a farce which we will expose shortly. Had the author of this piece, and the forwarder too at that, carried out a more comprehensive analysis of either the Sunnī or Shī’ī ḥadīth and tafsīr compilations, he would have been ashamed at traipsing his pride in disrespecting ALL the Mothers of the Believers. His rancour and hatred for Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها would be expected but does he, as a Shī’ī, know the status of Umm al-Mu’minīn Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها — not only according to the Ahl al-Sunnah but in the eyes of the Ahl al-Bayt and Shī’ah? Immediately after the narration from Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah in Suyuti’s *Durr al-Manthūr*, the following narration is mentioned:

واخرج ابن سعد عن ام سلمة قالت انا ام الرجال منكم و النساء

Umm Salamah said, “I am the Mother of the men amongst you and the women.” (*Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 8/65)

A virtue they would deny on account of their own warped understanding.

We would ask at this juncture: Why would a devotee of the Ahl al-Bayt ignore the narration of Umm al-Mu’minīn Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها, who was trusted by Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to the extent that he left his writing in her care when he departed for Kūfah, as did Imam Ḥusayn رضي الله عنه when he left for Karbalā’ (as recorded in the books of the Shī’ah) and instead insist on quoting only the narration of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, whom they regard as an enemy of the Ahl al-Bayt (Allah forbid)?

We will now examine the commentaries of the Ahl al-Sunnah regarding this verse, which will reveal the deceptive half-quoting tactics of the Shī’ah.

Sunnī Tafsīrs

1. Tafsīr Qurṭubī:

وأزواجه أمهاتهم شرف الله تعالى أزواج نبيه صلى الله عليه وسلم بأن جعلهن أمهات المؤمنين: أي في وجوب التعظيم والمبرة والإجلال وحرمة النكاح على الرجال

And his wives (i.e. wives of the Prophet) are their mothers (i.e. mothers of believers). Allah venerated the wives of His Prophet ﷺ by giving them the status of Mothers of Believers, i.e. to be respected and venerated and the prohibition of re-marrying. (vol.14, p.123)

2. Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr:

وقوله : (وأزواجه أمهاتهم) أي : في الحرمة والاحترام ، والإكرام والتوقير والإعظام ، ولكن لا تجوز الخلوة بهن ، ولا ينتشر التحريم إلى بناتهن وأخواتهن بالإجماع

(and his wives are their mothers.) i.e. in terms of prohibition (of marriage), and in terms of honour, respect and veneration, it is not permissible for them to be alone with them, and the prohibition of marriage to them does not extend to their daughters and sisters, according to scholarly consensus. (vol. 6, p. 380)

3. Tafsīr Fath al-Qadīr:

وأزواجه أمهاتهم أي : مثل أمهاتهم في الحكم بالتحريم ومنزلات منزلتهن في استحقاق التعظيم فلا يحل لأحد أن يتزوج بواحدة منهن كما لا يحل له أن يتزوج بأمه ، فهذه الأمومة مختصة بتحريم النكاح لهن وبالتعظيم لجنابهن

(And his wives are their mothers) means: they are like their mothers in the ruling of prohibition of marriage, and they share the station of deserving treatment of grandeur, so it is not permissible for anyone to marry anyone of them, just like it is impermissible for them to marry their mothers. Thus, this motherhood is about forbidding marriage with them and about respecting/venerating them.

4. Tafsīr al-Baydhāwī:

منزلات منزلتهن في التحريم واستحقاق التعظيم وأزواجه أمهاتهم

“And his wives are their mothers” means they share the station of prohibition in marriage and deserving treatment of grandeur. (vol. 1, p. 364)

5. Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Maʿānī:

وأزواجه أمهاتهم أي منزلات منزلة أمهاتهم في تحريم النكاح وإستحقاق التعظيم

“And his wives are their mothers” means they share the station of mothers in the prohibition of marriage and the deservedness of respect. (vol. 21, p. 151)

6. Tafsīr al-Lubāb:

وأزواجه أمهاتهم أي مثل أمهاتهم وهو أب لهم وهن أمهات المؤمنين في تعظيم حقهن وتحريم نكاحهن

“And his wives are their mothers” means they are like mothers to them (i.e. the believers) and he (i.e. the Prophet ﷺ) is their father and they are the mothers of the believers in deserving respect and honour and prohibition of marriage with them. (vol. 13, p. 52)

Yet even after having read the commentaries of the Sunnī scholars and having become acquainted with the true meaning of “Mothers of the Believers”, it is possible that a Shīʿah may claim that Sunnī Tafsīrs have no credibility in their eyes and thus has no bearing on their belief. Therefore, we now present to you the commentaries of both classical and contemporary Shīʿ scholars. We can then once and for all conclude that this verse does indeed contain special virtue for the blessed wives of the Nabī ﷺ and the reality is not as present day Shīʿ propagandists would have us believe.

Shīʿ Tafsīrs

1. Tafsīr al-Mizān of Ayatollah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī:

وقوله: (وأزواجه أمهاتهم) جعل تشريعي أي انهن منهم بمنزلة أمهاتهم في وجوب تعظيمهن وحرمة نكاحهن بعد النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم

(and his wives are their mothers). This is the Sharia ruling i.e. his wives are to them like their mothers, and by necessity they (i.e. the wives of the Prophet) **have to be honoured** and are not allowed to be taken as wives after the Prophet ﷺ. (vol. 16, p. 288)

2. *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi* of the renowned Muḥsin al-Fayd al-Kāshānī, who is also the author of *al-Wāfi* — one of the eight canonical works of Shīʿī law:

وأزوجه أمهاتهم منزلات منزلتهن في التحريم مطلقا وفي استحقاق التعظيم

(And his wives are their mothers) means they share the station of prohibition in marriage and **deserving treatment of grandeur**. (vol. 4, p. 168)

3. *Tafsīr Namunah/al-Amthal Fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (written by Ayatollah Naṣer Makarem Shirāzī and other researchers):

در اینجا سؤال مطرح است و آن اینکه آیا تعبیر ((ازواجه امهاتهم)) : ((همسران پیامبر مادران مؤمنین محسوب می شوند)) با چیزی که در چند آیه قبل گذشت تضاد ندارد؟ زیرا در آنجا می فرماید: ((کسانی که گاهی همسرانشان را بمنزله مادر خود قرار می دهند، سخن باطلی می گویند، مادر آنها فقط کسی است که از او متولد شده اند)) با این حال چگونه همسران پیامبر که مسلمانان از آنان متولد نشده اند مادر محسوب می شوند؟ در پاسخ این سؤال باید به این نکته توجه کرد که خطاب مادر به یک زن یا باید از نظر جسمانی باشد یا روحانی، اما از نظر جسمانی تنها در صورتی این معنی واقعیت دارد که انسان از او متولد شده باشد، و این همان است که در آیات پیشین آمده که مادر جسمانی انسان تنها کسی است که از او متولد شده است، و اما پدر یا مادر روحانی کسی است که ینوع حق معنوی بر او داشته باشد، همچون پیامبر (صلی الله علیه و آله و سلم) که پدر روحانی امت محسوب می شود، و هم به خاطر او همسرانش احترام مادر را دارند.

A question arises here that isn't the explanation of the verse (and his wives are their mothers) against the verses mentioned before. Because there it is mentioned, "Those who declare their wives as their mothers, and in fact they use false words, their mothers are only the ones who bore them." In this situation, how can the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) be considered the mothers of the believers. This point should be noted in answering the question at hand that addressing a woman as mother is either due to biological relation, or spiritual relation. This meaning could be only in the case of biological relation, and this is the same thing which is mentioned in the earlier verses, that a person's biological mother is only the one who bore him. **But the spiritual mother and father are those who have a kind of special right over them, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) is considered the spiritual father of the nation, and due to him, his wives hold the respect which a mother holds.** (vol. 17, p. 180)

It is abundantly clear that this verse contains a great merit for the beloved consorts of Nabī ﷺ, a fact which cannot be denied. The virtue of the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn being so glaringly evident in this verse greatly disturbed Shīʿī scholar Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Qummī, who sought to exclude Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah from the merit that this verse expounds by concocting a whimsical tale of having sought guidance from the Absent Imām himself. It is recorded in *Tafsīr Nur al-Thaqalayn*:

عن القائم (عليه السلام) انه سئل عن معنى الطلاق الذي فوض رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) حكمه إلى أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام)؟ قال: إن الله تقدس اسمه عظم شأن نساء النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله) فخصهن بشرف الأمهات، فقال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله): يا أبا الحسن إن هذا الشرف باق ما دمن على الطاعة فآيتهن عصمت الله بعدي بالخروج عليك فأطلقها في الأزواج، وأسقطها من تشرف الأمهات ومن شرف أمومة المؤمنين

It is narrated from Imām al-Qā'im that he was asked about the right of divorce, That the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left it at the discretion of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (i.e. 'Alī)? He replied: "The Almighty Allah, hallowed be His name, gave an exalted status to the wives of the Prophet and **gave them the honour of being the mothers of the faithful**. Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told Amīr al-Mu'minīn: 'O Abū al-Ḥasan, this status is valid for them till they remain in the obedience of the Almighty Allah. So, whoever of them disobeys Allah and after that me, comes out in armed confrontation against you, remove her from my wife-hood and **take away her status of Mother of the faithful**.'" (vol. 5, p. 372)

The fairy tale of the right to divorce having been handed to Sayyidunā ‘Alī عليه السلام aside, the Final Imām too acknowledged that this verse contains merit and virtue for the blessed wives of Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم, “The Almighty Allah, hallowed be His name, gave an exalted status to the wives of the Prophet and gave them the honour of being the mothers of the faithful.”

A Shī‘ah might resign and admit that the verse does contain merit and immense virtue for the wives in general but he will not be willing to accept that Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام is included in it, and rather believe that Sayyidunā ‘Alī عليه السلام has excluded her from this virtue on account of her misdeeds, since he had the right to divorce her as the narration of *Nur al-Thaqalayn* alleges. Shifting the goal posts when backed into a corner is a special Shī‘ī trait but nevertheless in response we would say: While this narration might seemingly be against Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام, her inclusion in this virtue is proven by the word of the greatest of the twelve Imāms, and the father of the A’immah, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. *Nahj al-Balāghah* mentions the statement of Sayyidunā ‘Alī عليه السلام after the Battle of Jamal regarding Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام:

ولها بعد حرمتها الاولى والحساب على الله

She has the same respect afterwards as she had earlier, and the accountability is on Allah to take. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 335

After the Battle of Jamal, ‘Alī عليه السلام came up to her and asked, “how are you, O my beloved mother?” She replied, “(I am) well.” He said to her, “may Allah forgive you”. She responded, “And you.” (*Tārikh Ṭabarī*)

‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام said, “By Allah, there was nothing (negative) between me and ‘Alī prior to this (the Battle of the Camel), except those (minor differences) that any woman has with her in-laws. I take an oath by Allah, even though he fought against me, I regard him as one of the best (men).” ‘Alī عليه السلام responded to this by saying: “By Allah, she has spoken the truth. There was nothing (negative) between us besides that. She is most definitely the wife of your Nabī in this world as well as the hereafter.” Ibid

When Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام was on her deathbed; Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās visited her and reminded her of some of her merits. Among that which he said to her was: “You were the most beloved wife of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, and he would not love anything that was not pure.” (*Al-Hakim*)

A person once spoke ill of ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام in the presence of Sayyidunā ‘Ammār عليه السلام. He angrily responded: “Get away O scum! Are you insulting the beloved of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم?” (*Tirmidhī*)

There is no doubt that the verse in question seeks to convey more than the impermissibility of wedding the wives of the Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم—as is apparent from the tone, meaning, and context of the verse and more so because another verse has quite adequately conveyed that message:

وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا (٥٣)

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. (Ahzab: 53)

And when the verse carries merit for the spouses of Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم, as is apparent from the narration of Umm Salamah عليها السلام, then without a doubt the same virtue applies to Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام. Any attempts to discredit her therefrom have been thoroughly debunked by Sayyidunā ‘Alī, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās, and Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir عليه السلام.

The Narration Of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah

All that remains is the narration of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها wherein it is reported that she said she is not the Mother of the believing women; this narration despite being sound as far as its chain of narration is concerned is contradicted by numerous other narrations making it *shadh* (incongruous). Firstly, the verse itself is clear in its purport—including both males and females—and secondly the ḥadīth of Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها as mentioned before also contradicts it. Furthermore, there are numerous other narrations wherein Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was addressed as Umm al-Mu’minīn by other females and she did not correct, rebuke or deny them. The Shī’ah are deceptively selective in how they quote narrations whereas it is necessary to examine all the reported material before one can come to a conclusion, which is the dictate of intellectual and academic honesty. Hereunder we mention a few of such narrations:

1. Shaykh Abu Ishāq al-Huwaynī writes:

فأخرج ابن سعد - كما في "الدر المنثور" (١٨٣ / ٥) - عنها أنها قالت: "أنا أم الرجال منكم والنساء"

Ibn Sa’d has reported, as is mentioned in *Durr al-Manthūr* (5/183) that Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah said, “I am the mother of the Believing men among you and the women.”

Al-Huwayni then says: “... know that it was the Madhhab of ‘Ā’ishah (that the verse includes all male and female believers). This is Ṣaḥīḥ and in line with the verse: “The Prophet is closer to the believers than their selves, and his wives are their mothers.” The word “Al-Mu’minīn/the believers” includes all men and women, for His سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى saying “his wives” is plural and applies to all (believers). Ḥaḍīf Ibn Ḥajar also said in *Al-Fath* (18/1): “And this is the soundest opinion.” And this was also the opinion of al-Qurṭubī and the vast majority of Mufasssirs. [*Tanbīh al-Ḥājid*, vol. 2 p. 425]

2. Here is an authentic but lengthy narration, we will only make mention of the relevant portion wherein a woman approaches Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah and addresses her with “O MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS” and Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها accepts the address without rebuking her:

- دخلت امرأة على عائشة قد شلت يدها فقالت: يا أم المؤمنين، بت البارحة صحيحة اليد فأصبحت شلاء! قالت عائشة الراوي: - المحدث: ابن رجب - المصدر: يتبع الميت ثلاث - الصفحة أو الرقم: ٤٢٩ / ٢ خلاصة حكم المحدث: إسناده حسن

A women entered upon ‘Ā’ishah whose hand had become paralysed and she said, “O Umm al-Mu’minīn, when I went to bed my hand was fine and when I awoke it was paralysed...”

3. Al-Bukhārī too has recorded such a narration wherein she is addressed as Umm al-Mu’minīn by another female and she had no problem with being addressed by it:

دَخَلَتْ عَلَى بَرِيرَةَ وَهِيَ مُكَاتَبَةٌ، فَقَالَتْ يَا أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اشْتَرَيْتَنِي فَإِنَّ أَهْلِي يَبِيعُونِي فَأَعْتِقْنِي قَالَتْ نَعَمْ. قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَهْلِي لَا يَبِيعُونِي حَتَّى يَشْتَرُوا وَلَا يَتِي. قَالَتْ لَا حَاجَةَ لِي فِيكَ. فَسَمِعَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْ بَلَغَهُ، فَقَالَ "مَا شَأْنُ بَرِيرَةَ فَقَالَ اشْتَرَيْتَهَا فَأَعْتَقْتُهَا وَلَيْشْتَرُوا مَا شَاءُوا". قَالَتْ فَاشْتَرَيْتَهَا فَأَعْتَقْتُهَا، وَاشْتَرَطَ أَهْلُهَا وَلَاَءَهَا، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "الْوَلَاءُ لِمَنْ أَعْتَقَ، وَإِنْ اشْتَرَطُوا مِائَةَ شَرْطٍ". الراوي: عائشة المحدث: البخاري - المصدر: صحيح البخاري - الصفحة أو الرقم: ٢٧٢٦ خلاصة حكم المحدث: صحيح

Barīrah who had a written contract for her emancipation for a certain amount came to me and said, “O Umm al-Mu’minīn! Buy me and manumit me, as my masters will sell me.” ‘Ā’ishah agreed to it. Barīrah said, “My masters will sell me on the condition that my Walā will go to them.” ‘Ā’ishah said to her, “Then I am not in need of you.” The Prophet ﷺ heard of that or was told about it and so he asked ‘Ā’ishah, “What is the problem of Barīrah?” He said, “Buy her and manumit her, no matter what they stipulate.” ‘Ā’ishah added, “I bought and manumitted her, though her masters had stipulated that her Walā would be for them.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “The Walā is for the liberator, even if the other stipulated a hundred conditions.”

Interesting to note is that this incident took place in the presence of Nabī ﷺ and he too did not reprimand her for addressing Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah as Umm al-Mu’minīn. And with this we conclude our discussion.

The abysmal level of scholarship and deceitful tactics of the Shī'ī propagandist has become apparent to you, respected reader. The statements made by 'Abbās al-Khu'ī, son of renowned Shī'ī scholar Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī, come to mind at this juncture, which he made in an interview regarding the state of the *Howzat 'Ilmiyyah* (Islamic universities) in Iran. Enumerating the qualities one requires to become a *Marja'* (scholar whose opinions are valid for the Shī'ī masses) in the present day, he says:

Firstly he should have a turban and a beard. Secondly he should have a huge entourage who are knowledgeable with banter, how to defame, praise, drop and raise ranks... like media. They must have links with foreigners, with local and foreign rulers. Third important point is that they should have money to distribute to all people. These are the main conditions, practical conditions. Whoever he may be, even if he is English, has blue eyes and yellow hair, tall and commits evil deeds, and has despicable traits known to all. He too can be a *Marja'*... even after 30 or 40 years of education, I asked one is it "Ashadu ana Muhammadan Abduhu or Abdahu?" He said, "I don't know, both are the same." You see! And many of them do not even know how to recite Surah al-Fatihah correctly...

This is a practical lesson of "*all that glitters is not gold*." When this is the state of senior graduates qualifying from the *Howzat 'Ilmiyyah* what reliance should the Shī'ah—and ordinary Sunnīs for that matter as well—have upon fraudulent articles such as this; whose authors and their credibility are a tale of wonder and mystery? The lesson we all might have learnt from our elders is worthy of adherence in today's time, "*don't believe everything you read*," they would say with regards to the propagandist articles against Islam and the Muslims that would appear in the daily papers from time to time, being well aware that there exist those whose sole purpose is to turn you away from Islam. A simple advice but a valuable one at that, a summary of a priceless divine decree:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful. (Hujurat: 6)