

Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn

(MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS)

The blessed wives of Nabī 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 Nabī ﷺ. The Ahl al-Bayt (Family of Nabī ﷺ) have been granted a lofty rank and elevated status in the eyes of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah in accordance with what Allah ﷻ has decreed of loving them and honouring them. This is in keeping with the bequest of Nabī ﷺ, when he said, "I remind you (to be kind) to the members of my family." The Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah 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 Nabī ﷺ or his blessed wives, all of whom form part of the Ahl al-Bayt.

Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn are from the Ahl al-Bayt

Allah ﷻ praised the wives of Nabī 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 Ahl al-Bayt (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]."* [Aḥzāb: 32-34]

Usage of the term Ahl al-Bayt in the Qur'ān

The incident of Ibrāhīm ؑ mentioned in the Qur'ān further strengthens the inclusion of wives in the term Ahl al-Bayt, wherein the wife of Nabī Ibrāhīm ؑ was specifically addressed: *"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]

Nabī ﷺ addresses them as his Ahl al-Bayt

Imām al-Bukhārī ؒ reported: 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."* [Ṣaḥīḥ 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."* [Aḥzāb: 6]

Disparaging the wives of Nabī ﷺ is prohibited

Anyone who disparages even one of the wives of Nabī 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.

Harming them is harming Nabī ﷺ

Nabī 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."* [Aḥzāb: 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."* [Aḥzāb: 59]

Then Allah ﷻ 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."* [Aḥzāb: 60]

This verse indicates that criticism of the wives of Nabī 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 Nabī ﷺ and 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."* [Aḥzāb: 66, 67]

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 Nabī ﷺ as they ought to be honoured. And may Allah unite us with them in the gardens of Jannah.

