

And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: Allaah states in His Glorious Book:

[And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).]¹

It is narrated in some Hadeeths that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) mentioned that his parents would be in Hellfire. The question is: Were they not from Ahl-ul-Fatrah (people having no access to Divine Messages), those whom the Qur'aan clearly mentioned as being saved in the Hereafter? Please answer me. May Allaah guide you.

Shaykh Bin Baaz (*May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him*): There is nothing in the Qur'aan stating explicitly that Ahl-ul-Fatrah will be saved or will perish. Allaah (*Glorified and Exalted be He*) says,

[And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).]²

Because of His Perfect Justice, Allaah does not punish anyone until He sends a Messenger. So, whomever the message of Islaam does not reach, they will not be punished until the proof is established against them, as narrated in the Sunnah that the proof will be established against Ahl-ul-Fatrah and they will be tested on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, those who respond and obey will be saved and those who disobey will be consigned to Hellfire.

When a man asked the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*): **Where is my father? He** (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) **replied, "In Hellfire." When he** (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) **saw the man's face had changed, he** (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) **said, "My father and yours are in the Fire."³**

The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) wished to console the man and let him know that this fate is not confined to his father. Perhaps the Prophet's (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) and the man's

¹ سورة الإسراء – Soorah al-Israa [17-15]

² سورة الإسراء – Soorah al-Israa [17-15]

³ Related by Muslim in his Saheeh

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fathers had heard Da`wah and thus the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said, **Verily my father and your father are in the Fire.** Therefore he was talking about something that he knew, as he (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) never lied or spoke of his own desire. Allaah (*Glorified and Exalted be He*) states,

[By the star when it goes down (or vanishes).]⁴ [Your companion (Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*)) has neither gone astray nor has erred.]⁵ [Nor does he speak of (his own) desire.]⁶ [It is only a Revelation revealed.]⁷

Perhaps `Abdullah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet's (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) father, had realised the Divine Message, so the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said that about him. The Qur'aysh knew the Deen of Ibraaheem (Abraham (*Peace be upon him*)), for they had been following Prophet Ibraaheem's (*Peace be upon him*) Deen until `Amr ibn Luhay al-Khuza`y ruled Makkah and the worship of idols prevailed. `Amr propagated the worship of idols and they followed him and supplicated to them instead of Allaah. It may have been evident to `Abdullah that what the Qur'aysh were doing in worshiping idols was null and void, but he still followed them. This was a proof against him. It is also narrated in the Hadeeth that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated,

I saw `Amr ibn Luhay dragging his intestines in the Fire; he was the first one to release animals (for the idols) and change the Deen of Ibraaheem."⁸

Also, it is related that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) sought permission to ask forgiveness in favour of his mother, but he was not given the permission. Then he sought permission to visit her grave, and He was permitted.⁹

She might have known that the beliefs of Qur'aysh were baseless, as was the case of her husband, `Abdullah. Accordingly, the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) was prevented from asking Allaah to forgive her. It might be said that the people of Jaahiliyyah (pre-Islaamic period of ignorance) are similar to non-Muslims of this era. So, it is not allowed to supplicate to Allaah for them or to ask Him to forgive them, because they committed the acts of disbelievers. Consequently, they are regarded in this life as non-Muslims and their affair in the Hereafter is left to Allaah.

⁴ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:1]

⁵ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:2]

⁶ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:3]

⁷ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:1]

⁸ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

⁹ Related by Muslim in his Saheeh

And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger

If the proof is not established against someone in this life, they will not be punished until they are tested on the Day of Judgment. Allaah (*Exalted be He*) says,

[And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).]¹⁰

This applies to the people of any era when the Da`wah of a Prophet does not reach them. In this case, they will be tested on the Day of Resurrection; if they obey, they will enter Paradise, and if they disobey they will enter Hellfire. This ruling applies to the old people whom the Da`wah does reach, as well as the insane and the children of the non-Muslims. When the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) was asked about them, he replied, **Allaah knows what they would have done.** The case of the children of non-Muslims is similar to Ahl-ul-Fatrah, as both of them will be tested on the Day of Judgment. If they go through this test successfully, they will be saved; if not, they will be among the disbelievers in Hellfire. However, a group of scholars hold that the children of non-Muslims will be saved from the torture of Hell, for they die on Al-Fitrah (natural disposition) and the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) saw them when he entered Paradise in a garden with Ibraaheem (*Peace be upon him*) along with the children of Muslims.

This opinion is stronger for its explicit evidence. As for the children of Muslims (if they die young), they are among the people of Paradise, according to Ijmaa` (consensus) of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah (adherents to the Sunnah and the Muslim mainstream). Allaah knows best and He is Most Wise.

¹⁰ سورة الإسراء – Soorah al-Israa [17-15]