

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 (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)² 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 (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)³: There is nothing in the Qur'aan stating explicitly that Ahl-ul-Fatrah will be saved or will perish. Allaah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)⁴ says, **[And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).]**⁵ 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 (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): **Where is my father? He** (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) **replied, "In Hellfire." When he** (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) **saw the man's face had changed, he** (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) **said, "My father and yours are in the Fire."**⁶

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) wished to console the man and let him know that this fate is not confined to his father. Perhaps the Prophet's (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the man's fathers had heard Da`wah and thus the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **Verily my father and your father**

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

² (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

³ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

⁴ (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) (Azza wa Jaal) Glorified and Exalted be He

⁵ سورة الإسراء – Soorah al-Israa [17-15]

⁶ Related by Muslim in his Saheeh

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are in the Fire. Therefore he was talking about something that he knew, as he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never lied or spoke of his own desire. Allaah (عزوجل) states, **[By the star when it goes down (or vanishes).]⁷ [Your companion (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) has neither gone astray nor has erred.]⁸ [Nor does he speak of (his own) desire.]⁹ [It is only a Revelation revealed.]¹⁰** Perhaps `Abdullah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet's (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) father, had realised the Divine Message, so the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said that about him. The Qur'aysh knew the Deen of Ibraaheem (Abraham (عليه السلام)), for they had been following Prophet Ibraaheem's (عليه السلام)¹¹ 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 worshipping 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 (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) 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.**"¹² Also, it is related that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) 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.¹³

She might have known that the beliefs of Qur'aysh were baseless, as was the case of her husband, `Abdullah. Accordingly, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) 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.

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 (سبحانه)¹⁴ says, **[And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).]¹⁵** 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

⁷ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:1]

⁸ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:2]

⁹ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:3]

¹⁰ سورة النجم – Soorah an-Najm [53:1]

¹¹ (عليه السلام) (alaihissalaam) Peace be upon him

¹² Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

¹³ Related by Muslim in his Saheeh

¹⁴ (سبحانه) (Subhanahu) Exalted be He

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

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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 (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) 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 (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saw them when he entered Paradise in a garden with Ibraaheem (عليه السلام) 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.