



THE  
**Prophet's  
Household**

From the book *Virtues and Rights of Ahl al-Bayt*

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رحمته الله عليه

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The Book • The Sunnah • The Family

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فَضْلُ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ وَحَقُوقِهِمْ

**The Prophet's Household**

From the book *Virtues and Rights of Ahl al-Bayt*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*These are the foundations of Islam itself: the Book and the Wisdom. Holding tightly, together, to Allah's rope is a duty for all who believe.*

There can be no doubt that Allah has made it obligatory for the believers to honour the Prophet's Caliphs, his Household, and the earliest Companions who led the way, along with those who followed them with sincerity and excellence. Allah, the Most High, declares:

*O Prophet! Say to your wives, "If you desire the life of this world and its luxury, then come, I will give you a 'suitable' compensation 'for divorce' and let you go graciously. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the 'everlasting' Home of the Hereafter, then surely Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good." (Q. 33:28-29).*

Imam Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, and others relate that when this verse (Q.33:33) was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ gathered Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn beneath his cloak and invoked:

*O Allah, these are my household, so purge them of all impurities and render them thoroughly purified.*

His Sunnah is the living exegesis of Allah's Book: it explicates its meanings, guides toward its truths, and gives voice to its message.

So when the Prophet ﷺ declared, “These are my household,” though the context of the Quranic verse plainly addressed his wives, we understand from this hadith that while his wives are indeed among his household, as the Quran affirms, these four whom he took under his cloak are more deserving of that appellation, for the bond of blood surpasses the bond of marriage.

The Arabs would use this form of expression to indicate a distinction in the perfection of a quality, not to claim exclusive possession of it in principle.[1] For instance, the Prophet ﷺ said:

*The poor person is not the one who goes about among people, receiving a bite or two of food or a date or two. Rather, the truly poor is the one who has nothing sufficient to sustain him, whose plight remains unnoticed so that no charity is given to him, and who does not ask persistently.*

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ clarified that this description applies to the highest degree of poverty. In contrast, the beggar who goes around asking is still poor, but his poverty is not complete because he sometimes receives help. So although both are considered poor, the beggar does not embody poverty as completely ‘as the one whose hardship is hidden and unmet’.

Similarly, one might say: “This is the scholar,” or “This is the enemy,” or “This is the Muslim,” referring to the one in whom the quality is most perfectly realised, even if others share in it to a lesser degree.

A similar example is found in the hadith reported by Muslim in his Sahih. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about the mosque founded on piety, and he replied, “This mosque of mine,” meaning the Mosque of Medina. Yet the Quranic context, describing the Mosque established by the hypocrites (Masjid al-Dirar), states:

*Never stand 'for prayer' there—ever. A mosque founded on piety from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. In it are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah loves those who purify themselves (Q. 9:108).*

The mosque mentioned in this verse appears to be the Mosque of Quba', as it is authentically reported that the Prophet ﷺ once asked the people of Quba', “What is this purification Allah has praised you for?” They replied, “We cleanse ourselves with water.” Nonetheless, his mosque in Medina was even more deserving of being described as “founded on piety” than the Mosque of Quba', though both shared this virtue. And of course, it was far more worthy than the Mosque set up by the hypocrites.

So when Allah declared His will to remove all impurities from the People of the Prophet's Household and to thoroughly purify them, the Prophet ﷺ summoned the closest members of his household to him by blood and most closely bound to him in affection: Ali, Fatima, and the two leaders of the youth of Paradise. Allah thus gathered for them the decree of purification alongside the perfection of the Prophet's supplication in their favour.

From this, it becomes clear that cleansing them of all impurity was a grace and mercy bestowed by Allah; a favour they did not attain solely through their own strength or merit. For had it been within their own power, they would have had no need of the Prophet's prayer. So none should imagine he can be guided or remain steadfast in obedience without Allah's aid and His guiding grace.

It is also reliably established that when these verses were revealed, the Prophet ﷺ recited them to his wives and offered them the choice, exactly as Allah had commanded him. They chose Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter. For this reason, he kept them as his wives and did not divorce any of them until he passed away. Had they desired worldly life and its adornment, he would have granted them provision and released them with dignity, just as Allah had instructed. For the Prophet ﷺ was more mindful of Allah than anyone else and the most knowledgeable of Allah's injunctions.

Since these verses indicate that both reward and burden are doubled for the Prophet's Household, it has been related from Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin, who is the joy of Islam, that he said: "I hope that Allah grants the doer of good among us a twofold reward, and I fear that He will place upon the wrongdoer among us a twofold burden."

It is reported in Sahih Muslim that Zayd b. Arqam said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ addressed us at Ghadir Khumm, between Mecca and Madinah. He declared: 'I remind you of 'being mindful of' Allah concerning my household; I remind you of Allah concerning my household; I remind you of Allah concerning my household.'" And when Zayd was asked who the Prophet's household are, he replied: "Those upon whom charity is forbidden: the family of Ali, the family of Ja'far, the family of Aqil, and the family of Abbas."

It is also reliably transmitted through numerous sound reports that when Allah revealed: {Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe, send blessings upon him and greet him with peace} (Q. 33:56), the Companions asked the Prophet ﷺ, "How should we send blessings upon you?" He replied: "Say: 'O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent blessings upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim. Truly, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.'" In another authentic version, he said: "O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad, his wives, and his descendants."

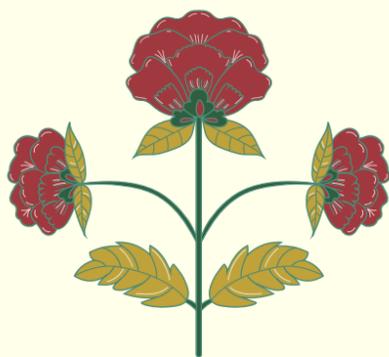
## Their Rights and Responsibilities

It is authentically reported that when the Prophet's grandson Hasan reached for a date from the charity dates, the Prophet ﷺ said to him: "Do you not know that we, the People of the Household, are not permitted to take charity?" He also said: "Charity is not lawful for Muhammad nor for the family of Muhammad."

This, and Allah knows best, is part of the purification Allah ordained for them was part of the purification Allah intended for them. Charity, after all, is seen as the residue of people's wealth, and Allah chose to keep them free of such impurities. Instead, He compensated them with what sufficed them from a share of the spoils of war and the public revenue, which He made the Prophet's means of provision. As the Prophet ﷺ said in the narration reported by Ahmad and others:

*I was sent with the sword shortly before the Hour, so that Allah alone would be worshipped without partner. He has placed my sustenance beneath the shade of my spear. He has decreed humiliation and abasement upon those who oppose my command. And whoever imitates a people belongs to them.*

For this reason, ensuring the well-being of the Prophet's Household, who are prohibited from accepting charity, deserves even more care and attention than providing for others who are eligible for it. This is especially important when they cannot access their rightful share of the spoils and public revenues, whether because those resources are scarce or because unjust authorities deny them their due. In such cases, if their needs are not met through what is lawfully theirs, they may be sufficiently supported through obligatory charity (zakat, for example).



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[1] The Arabs employed such expressions not to assert exclusive possession of a quality but to underscore its most complete manifestation in particular individuals. Thus, when the Prophet designated Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn as his household, this did not preclude others, such as his wives, from inclusion among the Ahl al-Bayt. Rather, it indicated that the distinction of belonging to his household attained its fullest exemplification in these four (TN).



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