

Answer to Question

Who are the people of Al-Fatra?

To: Adel Abu Ahmad

Question:

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh... Our Sheikh, our dear Ameer, may Allah protect you from all harm and grant you the power on the earth.

There is an understanding that the people of Al-Fatra will be saved from the torment of the Day of Judgment, and they are those who were not sent a messenger, due to the saying of Allah (swt): ﴿وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا﴾ **“And never would We punish until We sent a messenger”** [Al-Isra': 15].

However there are noble Hadiths that mention that the Arabs in the Jahiliya days before the Bi'tha (mission) of Prophet Muhammad (saw) were Kuffar and will end up in Hellfire. In Sahih Muslim: (أن رجلا سأل الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم: أين أبي؟ فقال: أبوك في النار. فحزن الرجل. فقال له صلى الله عليه وسلم: أبا وأبوك في النار) **“A man asked the Prophet (saw): Where is my father (i.e. his fate)? He (saw) said: your father is in Hellfire. The man was sad, the Prophet (saw) said: your father and my father are both in Hellfire”.**

There are more evidences about this.

The question is: How can we reconcile both understandings? Jazak Allah Khair.

Answer:

Wa Alaikum Assalam Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh

1- Your question is regarding what is mentioned in the book, *Islamic Personality* (Shakhsiyah Islamiya) Volume 3, under the title: “No rule before the decree of the Shar’i”:

“Things and actions must not be given a ruling unless there are Shariah evidences for that ruling, hence there is in no ruling on the things and actions of the sane before the decree of the Shariah, this is for the saying of Allah (swt): ﴿وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا﴾ **“And never would We punish until We sent a messenger”** [Al-Isra': 15]. And for His (swt) saying: ﴿لِنَلَّا﴾ **“[We sent] messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise”** [An-Nisa': 165]. And because ruling is only established by one of two: either Shar' or the mind. There is no place for the mind here, because the issue is about an obligation and a prohibition. And the mind cannot dictate the obligation and the prohibition; this is not the role of the mind, it is the role of the Shariah. The rule must be given by the Shariah. This only means the rule was not given to people before a Prophet was sent to them by Allah (swt), this is why the people of Al-Fatra are saved (from Hellfire). They are the ones who lived between the loss of a message and the sending of a message. They take the ruling of those who were not sent a message, like those who lived before the Bi'tha (mission) of Prophet Muhammad (saw).” **End.**

This means that the people in between the Bi'tha of the Messenger (saw) and the previous Bi'tha of the Prophets (i.e. people of Al-Fatra) are saved from Hellfire because they did not receive a message; this is if they were polytheists or did not follow a message.

However the people of the Book (Ahl al-Kitaab) have followed a message but they changed it, they followed a messenger, therefore they were given a message, but they changed it. Therefore they are not considered as the people of Al-Fatra, because the people of Al-Fatra are those who did not follow a messenger's message. Therefore the people of the Book are not considered the people of Al-Fatra. Similarly the Kuffar of the West are not considered the people of Al-Fatra, because Islam reached them, so how is it then for the kuffar who live among Muslims? The people of Al-Fatra are those who did not receive the call, anyone else is not from the people of Al-Fatra.

2- As for the Hadiths that mention the Arabs in the Jahiliyah who passed away before the Bi'tha of the Messenger (saw) will be punished, which contradicts with the meaning of the noble verse that says that the people of Al-Fatra are saved. These Hadiths are studied according to Usul, if it is possible to take all (combine) evidences, this is what is followed, otherwise Tarjeeh or outweighing of the Hadiths is performed or the Hadith will be rejected due to the dirayah (knowledge of narration) based on this we look at these Hadiths in the following manner:

a- Muslim narrated in his Sahih, Abu Bakr Bin Abi Shayba told us, Affan told us, Hammad Bin Salama told us from Thabit from Anas: «أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيْنَ أَبِي؟ قَالَ: فِي النَّارِ. فَأَنَّ رَجُلًا قَفَى دَعَاهُ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ أَبِي وَأَبَاكَ فِي النَّارِ» **“A man asked the Prophet (saw): Where is my father (i.e. his fate)? He (saw) said: your father is in Hellfire. The man was sad, the Prophet (saw) said: your father and my father are both in Hellfire”.**

b- Ibn Majah narrated in his Sunan from Az-Zahri from Salim from his father (i.e. Abdullah Bin Ummar) he said: «جَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أَبِي كَانَ يَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ وَكَانَ وَكَانَ فَأَيْنَ هُوَ؟ قَالَ: فِي النَّارِ. قَالَ: فَكَأَنَّهُ وَجَدَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ. فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَأَيْنَ أَبُوكَ؟ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «حَيْثُمَا مَرَرْتَ بِقَبْرِ مُشْرِكٍ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِالنَّارِ» **“An I'rabi (Arab man) came to the Prophet (saw) and said: O Messenger of Allah, my father used to observe his family ties, and used to and used to...etc, so where is he now? The Messenger (saw) said: He is in Hellfire. He said: it is as if he was saddened by this, so he asked: O Messenger of Allah, where is your father? The Messenger (saw) said: Whenever you pass by a polytheist's grave, tell him he will be in Hellfire.”** Al-Busiri said: This is a correct chain of narration (Isnad) its men are trustworthy. In Az-Zawa'id it mentions that it is a Sahih Hadith.

In Hashiyat As-Sindi on the Sunan of Ibn Majah 1/476.477 regarding the Hadith of Ibn Majah above, the following:

“As-Syooti said, he only mentioned it (i.e. That your father and my father are in Hellfire in the Hadith of Muslim), it is mentioned by Hammad Bin Maslama from Thabit, but Mu'ammār's from Thabit disagreed, and did not mention it, but he said: if you pass by the grave of a polytheist then tell him he will be in Hellfire, and there is no meaning in this version that mentions the situation of the father which is a confirmed narration, because Mu'ammār took it from Hammad. Hammad's memorization is contested, and his narrations were numerously rejected, and Bukhari did not narrate from him, neither did Muslim, in Usul except in his narration from Thabit. As for Mu'ammār, his memory is not contested and his Hadiths are not rejected, and both Sheikhs agreed upon his narrations, so his is more confirmed. Then we found out that the Hadith was also mentioned from the Hadith of Saad bin Abi Waqqas in the same version of Mu'ammār on the authority of Thabit on the authority of Anas and was narrated by Al-Bazzar, Tabarani, Baihaqi, and so from the Hadith of Ibn Umar, narrated by Ibn Majah. Therefore this version is adopted, and should be taken above the rest. It is known that Muslim's narration is from the understanding of the meaning by the narrators. Our scholars, who follow Shafi'i and the Ash'ari agreed that who does not receive the call, will not be punished and will enter Jannah for Allah's saying ﴿وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ﴾ **“And never would We punish until We sent a messenger”** [Al-Isra': 15] And Allah knows best.” End.

c- At-Tabarani narrated in Al-Ma'jam Al-KAbeer from Az-Zahri, from 'Amir Bin Saad, from his father (Saad Bin Abi Waqqas) he said: «جَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ أَبِي كَانَ يَصِلُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَأَيْنَ أَبُوكَ؟ قَالَ: حَيْثُ مَا مَرَرْتُ الرَّجْمَ، وَكَانَ وَكَانَ، فَأَيْنَ هُوَ؟ قَالَ: فِي النَّارِ، فَكَانَ الْأَعْرَابِيُّ وَجِدَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَأَيْنَ أَبُوكَ؟ قَالَ: حَيْثُ مَا مَرَرْتُ بِقَبْرِ كَافِرٍ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِالنَّارِ» “An l'rabi (Arab man) came to the Prophet (saw) and said: O Messenger of Allah, my father used to observe his family ties, and used to and used to...etc, so where is he now? The Messenger (saw) said: He is in Hellfire. He said: it is as if he was saddened by this, so he asked: O Messenger of Allah, where is your father? The Messenger (saw) said: Whenever you pass by a polytheist's grave, tell him he will be in Hellfire.” Al-Haithami said its men are those in the Sahih (narrators).

3- Combining the evidence shows the following:

- The verse shows that the people of Al-Fatra are saved and will not be punished; therefore none of the Hadiths that contradict this verse can be taken; if they cannot be combined.

- Evidences can be combined according to what Sayooti said regarding the Hadith of Muslim as mentioned in Hashiyat As-Sindi on the Sunan of ibn Majah, that the Messenger (saw) most probably did not answer the inquirer by saying: «إِنَّ أَبِي وَأَبَاكَ فِي النَّارِ» “Your father and my father are in Hellfire”, but he (saw) answered: «إِذَا مَرَرْتُ بِقَبْرِ كَافِرٍ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِالنَّارِ» “If you pass by a polytheist's grave, tell him he will be in Hellfire.”

The Hadith of Tabarani on the authority of Saad Bin Abi Waqqas (ra) is outweighed and taken and the Hadith of Ibn Majah from Ibn Umar may Allah be pleased with them.

4- In conclusion, the answer about the ruling on the people of Al-Fatra is that they are saved, and what I outweigh as likely after combining the evidences is what As-Syooti said: “As-Syooti said in Hashiyat Al-Kitab i.e. the Sunan of Ibn Majah from the best answers that when the l'rabi was sad, the Prophet (saw) wanted to cheer him up and changed the answer to a general one that includes every polytheist and did not mention the Prophet's father, not in denial nor confirmation” this is due to At-Tabarani Hadith: «حَيْثُ مَا مَرَرْتُ بِقَبْرِ كَافِرٍ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِالنَّارِ» “When you pass by a polytheist's grave, tell him he will be in Hellfire”. And the Hadith of Ibn Majah «حَيْثُ مَا مَرَرْتُ بِقَبْرِ مُشْرِكٍ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِالنَّارِ» “Whenever you pass by a polytheist's grave, tell him he will be in Hellfire”. And they are both Sahih Hadith. This is what I see when combining all the evidences with the conformation that any contradiction between the verse and Hadith if combining the evidences is not possible, then the rule is that the Hadith is rejected due to dirayah (details of narration) and the verse is taken as in known in Usul. Allah is most wise and all knowing

Your brother,

Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah

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<https://web.facebook.com/AmeerhtAtabinKhalil/photos/pb.122848424578904.-2207520000.1528315012./823483071182099/?type=3&theater>

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