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Faith of the Ancestors of the Holy Prophet

It is the accepted belief of the Shi'a Ithna–Asheris, the Hanafis, and the Shafi'is that the ancestors of the Holy Prophet from 'Abdullah to Qidar ibn Isma'il, and from there right up to Adam, were true believers. They believed in the One and Only God and faithfully followed the Divine religion of their times. From Qidar to 'Abdullah, all of them followed the *Shari'ah* of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), which was the religion prescribed for them by God.

The famous Sunni scholar Imam Jalaluddin as–Suyuti has written nine books on this subject and has proved beyond doubt that all the ancestors of the Holy Prophet were true believers. Shaykh 'Abdul–Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi has written: "All the ancestors of the Holy Prophet from Adam up to 'Abdullah were pure and clean from the uncleanness of disbelief and paganism. It was not possible for Allah to put that Holy Light (of the Holy Prophet) into dark and dirty places, i.e. the loin of a pagan man or the womb of a pagan woman. Also, how could it be possible for Allah to punish the ancestors of the Holy Prophet on the Day of judgement and thus humiliate him in the eyes of the world?"

The Holy Prophet himself has said: "I was always being transferred from the loins of the clean ones to the wombs of the clean ones."

'Allamah al-Majlisi has written that it is the unanimous belief of Shi'a scholars that the father, mother and all ancestors of the Holy Prophet followed the true religion, and his Light never entered into the loin of any pagan man or the womb of any pagan woman. Also, the accepted traditions say that all his ancestors were "Siddiqun" (Truthful Ones): They were either prophets or successors of prophets.

After Isma'il, all his ancestors were successors of Isma'il (a.s.). Other traditions specify that 'Abdul–Muttalib was a "Hujjat (Proof) of Allah and that Abu Talib was his successor."

Amirul-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said: "By Allah, neither my father ever worshipped the idols, nor my grandfather 'Abdul-Muttalib, nor his father Hashim, nor his father 'Abd Munaf. They prayed facing towards the Ka'bah and followed the religion of Ibrahim."

If you look again at the preceding life-sketches of some of the ancestors of the Holy Prophet, you will find that many traditions established by them are now included into the tenets of Islam. Qusayi started the night-stay at Mash'arul-Haram during the *hajj*, and Allah kept that system in Islam. Can anybody think that Allah would confirm a religious rite established by a pagan?

Likewise, as we have seen the customs established by 'Abdul-Muttalib were adopted in Islam. Could Allah glorify 'Abdul-Muttalib if he were a pagan?

Also, read again the events of the discovery of Zamzam and the appearance of the well in the desert. Read again the events of 'Amul-Fil, and see the firm conviction that Allah would surely save His House. That statement, repeated several times, shows that 'Abdul-Muttalib knew what was going to happen. Why was he so sure? There can only be one explanation: He was informed by Allah. And this, in turn, proves the earlier statement that he was a "Hujjat" of Allah.

In all these events and narrations, he is always seen praying to Allah, and there is no hint from any quarter that he ever prayed to the idols of Quraish (to Hubal, Lat or 'Uzza). When he finds Zamzam, he exclaims "Allahu Akbar!" When he emphasizes anything, he swears by the name of Allah. When he stakes his claim, he says that Allah gave it to him. What further proof is needed to show that it was a family of True Believers?

The Holy Prophet said: "Jibril (Gabriel) said to me: 'I searched the east and the west of the earth, but I did not find anyone superior to Muhammad; and I searched the east and the west of the earth, but I did not find the children of any father better than the children of Hashim."

Also, the Holy Prophet said: "Verily, Allah chose Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He selected Quraish from Kinanah and chose the children of Hashim from the Quraish, and selected me from the children of Hashim."

'Abdullah

When, at the discovery of Zamzam, 'Abdul-Muttalib encountered the enmity of Quraish, he was quite worried because he had only one son to help him. He, therefore, prayed to Allah, making a nadhr (vow) that if Allah gave him ten sons to help him against his enemies, he would sacrifice one of them to please Allah. His prayer was granted, and Allah gave him twelve sons, out of whom five are famous in the Islamic history: 'Abdullah, Abu Talib, Hamza, 'Abbas and Abu Lahab. The other seven were: Harith (already mentioned), Zubayr, Ghaydaq, Muqawwim, Dharar, Qutham., and Hijl (or Mughira). He had six daughters: 'Atikah, Umaymah, Baydha', Barrah, Safiyyah, and Arwi.

When ten sons were born, 'Abdul-Muttalib decided to sacrifice one of them according to his nadhr. Lot was cast and 'Abdullah's name came out. 'Abdullah was the dearest to him, but he did not flinch from the decision of the fate. He took 'Abdullah's hands and started towards the place where sacrifices were offered. His daughters started crying and begged him to sacrifice ten camels in place of 'Abdullah. At first 'Abdul-Muttalib refused.

But when the pressure of the whole family (and in fact, the whole tribe) mounted, he agreed to cast lot between 'Abdullah and ten camels. Again the name of 'Abdullah came out. On the suggestion of the people, the number of the camels was increased to twenty, again, the same result. Repeatedly, the number was increased to thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty and ninety. But the result was always the same. At last the lot was cast between 100 camels and 'Abdullah.

Now the lot came out for the camels. The family was jubilant, but 'Abdul Muttalib was not satisfied. He said: "Ten times the name of 'Abdullah has come out. It is not fair to ignore those lots just for one lot." Three times more, he repeated the lot between Abdullah and 100 camels, and every time the lot came out for the camels. Then he sacrificed the camels and the life of 'Abdullah was saved.

It was to this incident that the Holy Prophet referred when he said: "I am the son of the two sacrifices." He meant the sacrifices of Isma'il and 'Abdullah.

The name of the mother of 'Abdullah was Fatimah, daughter of 'Amr ibn `Aidh ibn 'Amr ibn Makhzum. She was also the mother of Abu Talib, Zubayr, Baydha', Umaymah, Barra and 'Atikah.

A year before "the year of the elephant," 'Abdullah was married to Aminah daughter of Wahb ibn 'Abd Munaf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab. In that very gathering, 'Abdul-Muttalib married Hala, daughter of Wuhaib, i.e. cousin of Aminah. Hala gave birth to Hamza, and Thawbiyah, the slave-girl of Abu-Lahab, breast-fed him. She also gave her milk to the Holy Prophet for some time. Thus, Hamza was the uncle of the Holy Prophet and also his cousin as well as foster brother. Various traditions put the age of 'Abdullah at the time of his marriage at 17, 24 or 27 years.

'Abdullah went with a trade caravan to Syria. While returning, he fell ill and stayed at Yathrib (Medina). When 'Abdul-Muttalib sent Harith to look after him and bring him back, he had already passed away. 'Abdullah was buried in Yathrib. The Wahhabis walled up his grave and nobody was allowed to visit it. Then, in the 1970s the Wahhabis dug up his body together with those of 7 companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and buried them somewhere else under the pretext of extending the Mosque.

'Abdullah had left some camels, goats, and a slave-girl, Ummu Ayman. The Holy Prophet got it all as his inheritance.

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