

## Approaches to Resolving the Analysis of Problematic (Mushkil) Hadiths on "Joining Offspring to Fathers" in the Interpretation of Verse 21 of Surah al-Ṭūr

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### Abstract

The interpretation of the verse that indicates "Joining offspring to fathers in the Hereafter" is a topic that has long been the focus of commentators. This Quranic concept has also been interpreted in narrations, giving rise to problematic hadiths in this area, which are considered common hadiths between different Islamic sects. According to the theory of joining in the Quran and narrations, the children of believers will be joined to their fathers in the Hereafter, and the children of disbelievers will also be joined to their fathers, even if they do not reach their level, and this does not diminish the reward or punishment of their fathers. Interpretive narrations on this subject, insofar as they deprive a person of the motivation for righteous deeds and lead to the assumption of a judgment before evaluation, fall into the category of problematic hadith. The present study, by analyzing the chains of transmission of these narrations,

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their typology, attention to the origin of their issuance and writing, and analyzing the approaches of scholars from both sects, seeks to explain the semantic aspects of this category of hadiths in a descriptive-analytical manner, the result of which is access to solution-oriented approaches: "Conditional Acceptance," "Interpretive Acceptance," "Carrying on *Taqīyya* (dissimulation)," and "Denial Approach." Among these, the interpretive approaches of commentary on the hadith presented in this area, carrying the issue on "Conditional Joining," is the least challenging solution; that is, this joining has no connection with the decrease or increase of the fathers' deeds, but rather is a sign of family connection. The faith and deeds of fathers can be effective in the fate of children, but this effect is conditional on the children's faith eligibility. Therefore, joining is only for believers, and the children of disbelievers are calculated only based on their own deeds. As a result, the principle of individual responsibility is fully preserved, and the children of disbelievers will not be punished for the deeds of their fathers.

**Keywords:** Verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr*, Joining Offspring to Fathers, Faith, Interpretive Narrations, Problematic Hadith (*Mushkil al-Hadīth*)..

## Introduction

Verse 21 of Surah *al-Tūr* refers to the joining of the offspring of believers to their fathers in Paradise:

*"Wa Alladhīna Āmanū wa Ittabat 'hum Dhurrīyyatuhum bi Imānin Alḥaqqā bihim Dhurrīyyatahūm wa mā Alatnāhum min 'Amalihim min shay' in Kullu Imri' in bimā Kasaba Rahīn."*

Based on this verse, the believing children of believers, who have chosen faith following their fathers, will be joined with them in Paradise, and there will be no reduction in the reward for their deeds, because every person is held in pledge for what he has earned.

This verse has long been a subject of discussion and debate among commentators. However, the main issue of the present research is not the analysis of commentators' theories about this verse, but rather the analysis of narrations related to this verse that, in the context of interpreting the verse, address the issue of the offspring joining their fathers on the Day of Judgment.

A collection of narrations transmitted from the Impeccable Imams (A.S), numbering around ten, indicate that on the Day of Judgment, the children of believers and polytheists will be joined with their fathers, and this joining will not cause a reduction or loss of the fathers' deeds. These narrations, which have been reported with various expressions in the reliable sources of both schools of thought (Sunni and Shia) and are considered common ground between them, indicate that the joining of offspring means guiding the children towards their fathers on the Day of Judgment. In some narrations, the commandment on this joining sometimes extends beyond the children of believers and includes the joining of the children of polytheists with their fathers. Thus, a semantic expansion of the verse is observed. However, some narrations limit the joining to believers who have believed in the Prophet (PBUH), Imam Ali (A.S), the Imams, and the successors. The joining of children to their fathers is explained as a kind of solace for the fathers on the Day of Judgment; God elevates the offspring of a believer to the level of their father in Paradise, even if they are lower than him in deeds, and the offspring of believers enter Paradise through the deeds of their fathers, without anything

being deducted from the reward of the fathers.

These ten interpretive narrations have been the subject of discussion and criticism from various aspects, and specifically, three main problems are noteworthy in these narrations:

- 1) Reduced motivation to perform good deeds in subsequent generations: If these narrations are interpreted in such a way that believers can join their believing offspring with them in Paradise, it may give the impression that the children of believers can attain the high ranks of the people of Paradise without needing to perform good deeds. This could lead to a decrease in the motivation to perform good deeds among the children.
- 2) Judging before assessment and injustice towards children of disbelievers: Children of believers or disbelievers who die before puberty and reaching the age of responsibility have not yet had the opportunity to choose and determine their own destiny. On the other hand, a believer may have a disbelieving child, and a disbeliever may have a believing child. This type of affiliation without assessing deeds, especially in the case of children, contradicts divine justice.
- 3) Inconsistency with the final part of the verse: The verse emphasizes that every individual is held in pledge for what he has earned. Given this principle, 'How can the affiliation of children to fathers without regard to their deeds be justified?'

## 1. Research Background

Verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr* refers to one of the key topics in theological and interpretative discussions, which is linked to the concept of joining the offspring of believers with their fathers in Paradise. From the very beginning of Islam, this topic has attracted the attention of Islamic commentators and hadith scholars, leading to the emergence of various interpretations and narrations. In the contemporary era, more comprehensive interpretations of this verse have been presented, addressing ethical and social issues in addition to theological and interpretative discussions.

Interpretative articles that specifically address the interpretation of verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr* and the topic of affiliating offspring to

fathers include "Affiliating Offspring to Believers in Paradise" (Javadi Amoli, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 12-14); "Explaining the Linguistic Structure of the Word *Dhurrīyyah* [Offspring] in the Quran and Examining Some of its Effects in Imami Jurisprudence" (Haji Ismail and Soltani Ranani, 2013 AD/1393 SH: 19-38); "Analysis of the Historical Evolution of Commentators' Views on the Verse of Affiliating Offspring" (Shakouri and Haji Akbari, 2018 AD/1398 SH: 1-23). Regarding the difference between previous writings and the present article, it should be said that previous writings have only approached this discussion with an interpretative and conceptual approach, but the present research, by examining the family of verses and narrations related to this field and with a *Fiqh al-hadith* (jurisprudence of hadith) perspective, analyzes scholars in line with the conflict between this affiliation and the epistemological structure arising from divine justice, which is unprecedented in its kind.

## **2. Analysis of Sources and the Origin of Issuance and Written Form of Existing Interpretative Narrations of Joyning (Ilhāq)**

The oldest Shi'a report of this content is attributed to *Ṣaffār* (d. 290 AH) in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, followed by *Qummī* (d. 329 AH) in *Tafsir al-Qummī*, *Kulaynī* (d. 329 AH) in *Kāfī*, and *Ṣadūq* (d. 381 AH) in *Tawḥīd* and *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhul Faqīh*, who have mentioned this narrative content.

In Sunni sources as well, one can mention *Ṣan'ānī's Tafsir* (d. 211 AH), *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's Musnad* (d. 241 AH), *Ṭabarī's Jāmi' al-Bayān* (d. 310 AH), *Ṭaḥāwī's Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār* (d. 321 AH), *Ibn Abī Ḥātam's Tafsir* (d. 327 AH), *al-Naḥḥās's al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* (d. 338 AH), *al-Ḥākim al-Nīshābūrī's Mustadrak* (d. 405 AH), *al-Tha'labī's Tafsir* (d. 427 AH), *Abū Nu'aym's Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (d. 430 AH), *al-Bayhaqī's Sunan al-Kubrā*, *al-Qadā' wa al-Qadar*, and *al-I'tiqād* (d. 458 AH), and *al-Ḥaskānī's Shawāhid al-Tanzīl* (d. 490 AH) as narrators of it.

Therefore, the written origin of this narrative content in both Shia and Sunni Islam dates back to the 3rd century AH. Also, with the reporting of narrations in the era of the Prophet (PBUH) and Imam

*Ṣādiq* (AS), its origin in terms of issuance can be traced back to the period from the time of the Prophet (PBUH) to the era of Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS).

### 3. Typology and Analysis of the Text and *Isnād* of Interpretive Narrations Related to Joining (*Ilḥāq*)

Verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr*, known as the "*Ilḥāq Dhurrīyyah*" verse, is one of the controversial verses in the field of concepts related to justice and resurrection. The hadiths that have been issued in interpreting this verse have different types, which include the sub-topics present in the verse, such as "*Ilḥāq Dhurrīyyah*" (Joining the Offspring), "The Meaning of *Alatnā*," "Joining children of a lower rank to the rank of their fathers," "The guardianship of the children of believers by Lady Fāṭima (AS), Ibrahim (AS), and Sarah," etc. However, what is the basis of this research is the category of narrations that deal with the beginning of the verse, "*Alḥaqnā bihim Dhurrīyyatahum*"; because this part is inconsistent with the epistemological structure based on reason and tradition in the field of divine justice.

The examination of the narrations in this area reports six types of transmission:

The first type is a narration that appears only in Imami sources and includes only the children of believers, who, when they die in childhood, are under the guardianship of Lady Fāṭima (AS) and are guided to their fathers on the Day of Judgment: "*Alḥaqnā bihim Dhurrīyyatahum Qāla: Yahdūna ilā Ābā'ihim Yawm al-Qīyāmah.*" (Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 332)

The second type is narrations common to both schools of thought that deal with the issue of joining the children of polytheists and Muslims to their fathers in the Hereafter: "*Awlād al-Mushrikīn ma'a Ābā'ihim fī al-Nār wa Awlād al-Muslimīn ma'a Ābā'ihim fīl Jannah,*" (Ṣadūq, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 3, 491; Ibn Ḥanbal, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 2, 349 - with slight differences -) which is sometimes attributed to verse 21 of *al-Ṭūr*: "*Ammā Atfāl al-Mu'minīn fa Innahum Yulḥaqūn bi Ābā'ihim wa Awlād al-Mushrikīn Yulḥaqūn bi Ābā'ihim wa Huwa*

*Qawl Allāh 'Azza wa Jall bi Īmānin Alḥaqnā bihim Dhurrīyyatahūm.*" (Kulaynī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 3, 248) These narrations explicitly state that the children of polytheists will join their fathers in the fire of hell, and the children of Muslims will join their fathers in paradise. The apparent meaning of these narrations operates on the dichotomy of "Polytheist-Muslim" and considers the eternal destiny of children dependent on the religion and destiny of their fathers.

The third type is a narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) who considers the meaning of "Those who believe" to be the Prophet (PBUH), Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (AS), and his children, meaning the Imams (AS), who have joined him. This means that the argument that the Prophet (PBUH) brought regarding Imam Ali (AS) is also true regarding his descendants. As a result, they are all considered one, and the ruling on obeying them is also one: "*Alladhīna Āmānū binnabī wa Amīr al-Mu'minīn wa al-Dhurrīyyatul A'immatu wal Awṣiyā': Alḥaqnā bihim Dhurrīyyatahūm wa lam Nanquṣ Dhurrīyyatahūm min al-Ḥujjah.*" (Ṣaffār, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 480; Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 332; Kulaynī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 1, 275)

The fourth type, in a way, considers the reason for attaching offspring to fathers. Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) says regarding verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr*: "The good deeds of some of the children are not equal to the good deeds of their fathers, but God attaches their children to them so that the eyes of the fathers may be gladdened by seeing their children." In reality, the attachment of offspring is a reward for the deeds of the fathers, not a gift to their children: "*Qaṣarat al-Abnā'u 'an 'Amal al-Ābā', fa Alḥaqū al-Abnā'a bil Ābā' li Taqarr bi Dhālika A'yunuhum.*" (Kulaynī, 1967 AD/1387 SH: 3, 249; Ṣadūq, n.d.: 394; *ibid.*: 1983 AD/1404 AH: 3, 490) In non-Shia narrations, this attachment is considered to mean reward and recompense; meaning that whatever is given to the fathers is also given to their children as a result of honoring them, without anything being reduced from the reward of the fathers: "*U'ṭū Mithla Ujūri Ābā'ihim, wa lam Yunquṣ min Ujūrihim Shay'an.*" (Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 21, 582).

The fifth type, which is specific to Sunni narrations, indicates that God elevates the rank of believers because of the joy of their eyes in

their descendants and attaches them to their fathers: *"Inna Allāh Yarfa'u Dhurrīyyata al-Mu'mini ma'ahu fī Darajatih fī al-Jannah, wa in Kānū Dūnahū fīl 'Amali li Yuqirra Allāhu bihim 'Aynah."* (San'ānī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 2, 200; Ṭaḥāwī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 3, 107; Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 21, 579; Ibn Abī Ḥātam, 1998 AD/1419 AH: 10, 3316; Naḥḥās, n.d.: 230; Bayhaqī, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 10, 453; *ibid*: 2000 AD/1421 AH: 357; Tha'labī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 9, 128; Abū Nu'aym, n.d.: 4, 302; Ḥākim Nīshābūrī, 2014 AD/1435 AH: 4, 424) Another version of this narration exists, which can be considered a summary of the previous text: *"al-Mu'minu Turfa'u laḥū Dhurrīyyatuhū, fa Yulḥaqūn bihi, wa in Kānū Dūnahū fī al-'Amal."* (Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 21, 580) This elevation and joining occur in such a way that nothing is diminished from the fathers' deeds: *"Fa Adkhala Allāh al-Dhurrīyyata bi 'Amalil Ābā' al-Jannata, wa lam Yanquṣi Allāh al-Ābā'a min 'Amalihim Shay'an."* (*ibid*: 581).

It should be noted that in the fifth type of narrations, a slight difference is observed. For example, some narrations use the phrases *"In Kāna lam Yablughā bi 'Amalih"* and *"In Kānū Dūnahū fīl 'Amal"* to refer to the difference in performance between the offspring and the fathers. However, this difference in wording does not affect the meaning and can be the result of paraphrasing (Bayhaqī, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 274; Ḥaskānī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 2, 273).

The sixth type of narration is also among the narrations specific to Sunnis, which makes the joining of adult children conditional on deeds and obedience, but does not impose any condition for joining minor children to their fathers: *"Alladhīna Adraka Dhurrīyyatuhum al-Īmān fa-'Amilū bi Ṭā'atī Alḥaqtuhum bi Īmānihim ilā al-Jannāh wa Awlādihim al-Ṣiḡhāru Nulḥiquhum bihim."* (Ṭabarī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 21, 580)

Among the types listed, the second type can be considered the most challenging. One of the biggest challenges that this narration brings is the discussion of divine justice. According to this narration, the children of polytheists enter Hell without having committed any sin and without their own choice. This may conflict with the concept of justice in Islam, because according to Quranic and narrative



teachings, each person will be judged on the Day of Judgment based on their own deeds: "*Kullu Imri'in bimā Kasaba Rahīn*" (al-Ṭūr/21); every person is held in pledge for what they have earned.

This problem becomes even more severe when the subject of children is raised. If a child has not reached the age of responsibility, how can he be punished for the actions of his fathers? This issue has been a serious challenge for religious scholars, and some of them have tried to preserve divine justice by offering various interpretations of this narration.

Another challenge is the conflict of this view with Quranic teachings, as the Quran explicitly states that no one bears the burden of another's sin: "*Wa lā Taziru Wāziratun Wizra Ukhrā*" (al-An'ām/164); no sinner bears the sin of another. This verse indicates that each individual is rewarded or punished based on their own actions. However, the aforementioned narrations seem to contradict this principle by consigning the children of polytheists to their fathers in Hell. The narration, in a way, ties the fate of children to the fate of their fathers, without acknowledging their opportunity for choice and guidance. In some cases, the child of a polytheist may be guided to the path of guidance and believe in the future. Therefore, these narrations somehow disregard the right to choose and the agency of individuals after puberty. Furthermore, there are other narrations in the hadith sources that, contrary to this narration, depict the fate of the children of polytheists in a different way. For example, some narrations state that the children of polytheists will be tested by God in the afterlife, and their fate will be determined based on the results of this test. This difference in narrations creates a challenge for the definitive acceptance of this narration and highlights the need for its more precise analysis.

The Shi'a document link indicates the "*Istifāda*" of this narration in Shi'a sources (Diagram 1). Also, in the Sunni document network (Diagram 2), paths that lead to "Ali (AS) and *Ibn 'Abbās*" are reported from the Prophet (PBUH), but other Sunni paths that are reported from "*Ibn 'Abbās, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibrāhīm, 'Āmir, and Rabī*" are considered to be the sayings of the Companions (*Mawqūfāt Ṣaḥābī*) or the

statements of the Successors (*Mawqūfāt Tābi'ī*). Therefore, they are weak and *Mursal* (interrupted) narrations. However, since similar narrations exist with authentic chains, this weakness can be remedied by referring to the *Marfū'* (traced back to the Prophet) paths.

Another noteworthy point is that the names of the narrators in the chain of transmission are mentioned differently in various versions. For example, "*Junādah ibn al-Muflis*," which appears in *Tha'labī's* narration, is named "*Jabbārah ibn al-Mughlis*" in *Abū Nu'aym's* narration. Similarly, "*Amr ibn Murrah*," as he is named in most chains of transmission, is referred to as "*Amr ibn Murrah*" in *Tha'labī's* narration. Given the similarity in the written form of these names, it is possible that a "Visual Error" (*Taṣḥīf Dīdārī*)<sup>1</sup> occurred in the aforementioned chain of transmission, which can be resolved through corroboration of the chains of transmission and by referring to other chains of transmission. Considering that all chains of transmission have narrated from this narrator with the name "*Amr ibn Murrah*," and only *Tha'labī* in his commentary mentions him as "*Amr ibn Murrah*," the former name can be accepted.

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1 . Hadith *Muṣaḥḥaf*: A Hadith in which a part of its chain of narrators (Sanad) or text (Matn) has been altered to something similar or close to it. Zayn al-Din b. Ali (Shahid al-Thānī), *al-Ri'āyah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, (Qom: Maktabat Ayatollah al-Mar'ashi, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 82); Abdullahi Masoudi, *Pathology*, vol. 1, (Qom: Zaer, 1969 AD/1389 AH: 68).

Diagram 1.

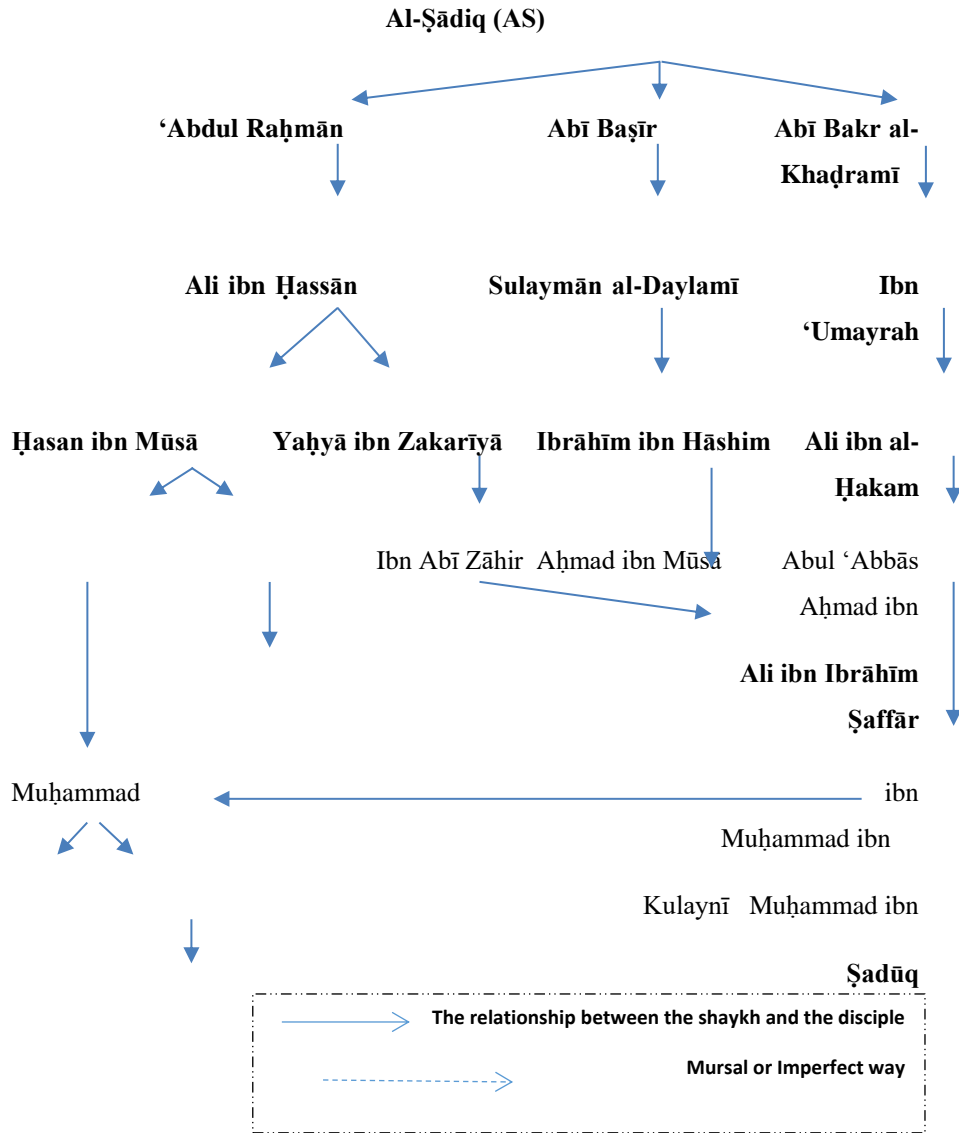
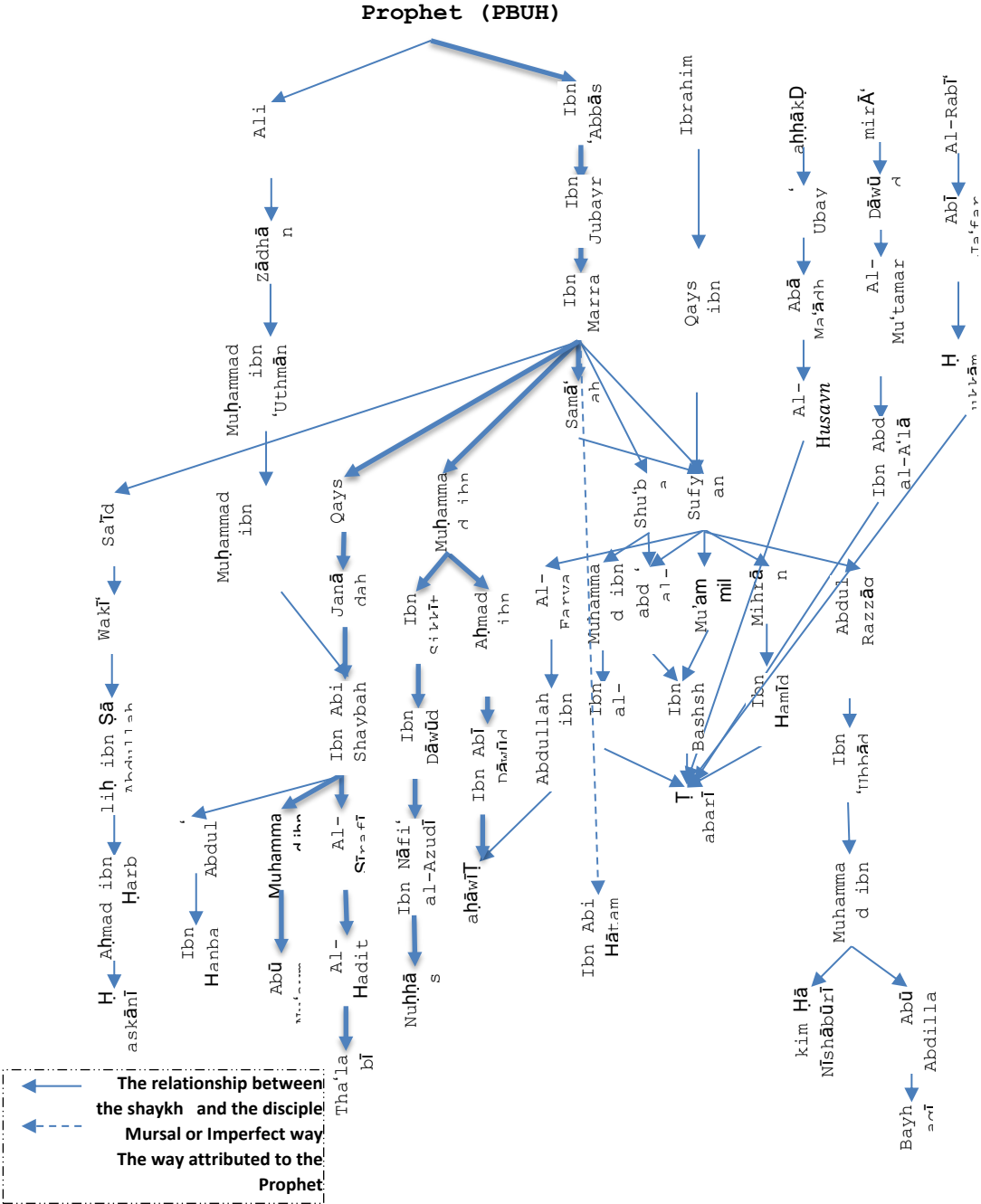


Diagram 2.



#### **4. Solution Approaches in the Analysis of Interpretive Joining Narratives**

An investigation into the approaches of scholars in dealing with problematic hadiths reveals that the path to resolving the ambiguity of a narration involves adopting one of the following approaches:

**Absolute Acceptance Approach:** In this approach, the initial and apparent meaning of the narration is accepted by scholars absolutely, without explanation, clarification, or interpretation. It seems that, from their perspective, the apparent meaning of the narration is without issue or challenge.

**Explanatory Acceptance Approach:** In this view, the narration is acceptable in its apparent meaning, and scholars attempt to remove the apparent problem that is directed at the intended meaning through explanation and clarification, and to view the hadith from a new perspective.

**Interpretive-Acceptance Approach:** Interpreting hadith has been a long-standing method employed by scholars when faced with problematic hadith. Its outcome is setting aside the apparent and initial meaning of the narration and focusing on the non-apparent and less likely meaning [hidden meaning]. In other words, when the content of a narration appears inconsistent with the cognitive framework, or for any other reason, the apparent meaning of the statement is unacceptable, interpretation and consideration of the less likely meaning can pave the way for an accurate understanding of the narration and its justification and acceptance.

**Suspensive Approach (*Tawaqquf*):** The suspensive approach, which has a narrative precedent, is derived from numerous narrations that advise Shi'a scholars and hadith transmitters to avoid rejecting a narration. If a narration appears inconsistent with their prior knowledge, they should inquire about it from the Imam (AS) or knowledgeable and erudite scholars. If access to the impeccable Imam (AS) is unavailable, they should leave the narration as it is until they can inquire from the Imam (AS). This act is referred to as "Returning knowledge to its people" (*Radd al-'Ilm ilā Ahlihī*) or suspending

action upon the narration.<sup>1</sup>

**Attribution to Dissimulation (*Taqīyya*):** When the ruling of some narrations aligns with the intellectual and ideological foundations of the Ahl al-Sunnah and contradicts Shi'a beliefs, some scholars have considered attributing it to dissimulation (*Taqīyya*) as a solution. In this approach, while acknowledging the issuance of the narration, they reject and deny its implication because the Imam (AS) felt a expediency in expressing it, not that he intended its apparent meaning.

**Conflict Resolution Approach:** Some scholars, when faced with narrations that contradict and conflict with other narrations, attempt to resolve the conflict by offering methods of reconciliation (*Jam 'ī*) or preference (*Tarjīhī*).

**Rejectionist Approach:** The rejectionist approach refers to the practice of scholars who, when confronted with problematic narrative texts, reject them and deny their issuance from the Imam (AS), categorizing them as fabricated and spurious narrations. This approach has two forms: some engage in semantic rejection, meaning they consider the original narration to have been issued but reject its ruling and meaning through abrogation (*Naskh*) and so on, which is somewhat similar to the practice of scholars in attributing it to dissimulation. Others, through weakening the chain of transmission (*Sanad*) or the text (*Matn*), reject the very issuance and consider the ruling to be fabricated.

It is not the case that scholars have adopted only one approach when dealing with hadith. Rather, they have sometimes expressed several opinions regarding a single narration, resulting in more than

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1 . It can be inferred from the content of some *Mustafīd* hadiths narrated from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt that rejecting a report whose issuance or fabrication is unknown is not permissible. These narrations, numbering more than ten, have been collected in (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, n.d.: 27, 78-120; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 2, 186-189). From the totality of these narrations, it can be understood that if the issuance of a hadith is known, it must be accepted, and if its falsehood is known, it must be rejected. However, otherwise, one cannot simply consider the hadith rejected or accepted. It should be noted, of course, that the impermissibility of rejecting a hadith does not mean that acting upon it is obligatory, but rather that one cannot judge it to be fabricated and deny its content. Instead, one must consider the possibility of its conformity with reality.

one approach from their collective views. At times, they have utilized two or more approaches simultaneously. Therefore, their approach can be considered a combination of two or more perspectives. Accordingly, throughout the research, the name of a scholar is sometimes mentioned under several approaches, and his perspective in resolving an issue within a specific approach is analyzed separately (cf. Mirzaei, 2016 AD/1396 AH).

The narration of "The joining of offspring to fathers" faces challenges in the realm of divine justice and the issue of individual free will and responsibility. Therefore, religious scholars have strived to resolve these challenges by offering various interpretations and analyses, aiming to derive a more accurate meaning that is consistent with Islamic principles from these narrations. Consequently, for the final acceptance of this category of narrations, they have resorted to adopting four approaches: "Explanatory Acceptance," "Interpretive Acceptance," "Attributing to Dissimulation (*Taqīyya*)," and "Rejection."

#### **4.1. Conditional Acceptance Approach**

Scholars have considered the specification and generalization of the attachment of offspring to believers and disbelievers as among the solutions for explaining the apparent meaning and, consequently, overcoming the problem:

##### **4.1.1. Specifying "Joining" to "Children of Believers"**

Most commentators believe that verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr* was revealed in connection with the attachment of the offspring of believers to their fathers in Paradise. There is a narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) to the effect that when a child passes away, his guardianship is entrusted to Lady *Fāṭima Zahrā* (AS), and on the Day of Judgment, he is guided towards his fathers (Qummī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 2, 332). According to many commentators, the joining of offspring to fathers is limited to the children of believers, but there is disagreement as to whether these children are minors or adults.

Some, in their interpretation, include children in a general sense,

encompassing both groups of children and adults. He believes that adults are attached to their fathers because of their adherence to their fathers' faith, and children are attached because of their fathers' faith. However, others, with a different perspective, believe that the concept of "Following in faith" is mentioned in the verse in an absolute sense, and this absoluteness indicates that the intention is for adult children; because minors who have not yet reached the age of responsibility, their faith has not taken shape in a precise and complete sense.

Therefore, the verse includes mature children who are capable of believing, and this does not contradict the fact that young children of believers are also religiously bound to faith. According to Allamah, the verse does not include believing children who die before puberty. In fact, the verse refers to adult children who follow the path of faith of their fathers. If such children have shortcomings in their actions, God will forgive them out of respect for their righteous fathers and elevate them to the high ranks of their fathers (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 9, 251; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 19, 12; Makarem Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 429).

#### 4.1.2. Generalizing "Joining" to "Children of Disbelievers"

Some theologians, interpreting verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr*, consider the attachment of offspring to fathers to be exclusive to the children of believers. At the same time, opinions have been expressed regarding the fate of the children of disbelievers. These views are based on the rational principle of the "Reprehensibility of punishing the non-obligated," according to which, punishing those who are not obligated is considered unjust and reprehensible and does not originate from God. So, some theologians believe that the children of disbelievers will not enter Hell, or they will enter Paradise, or they will reside in *A'rāf*, which is an intermediary between Paradise and Hell (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 14, 232-234; Shubbar, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 2, 418).

Most Shia hadith scholars, including Shaykh *Kulaynī* and Shaykh *Ṣadūq*, have a different view and rely on a collection of narrations according to which the children of disbelievers will be assigned a



specific test on the Day of Judgment. In this test, a fire will be kindled for them, and they will be commanded to enter the fire. Those who obey this command will be rewarded and enter Paradise, and those who disobey will be punished. This interpretation indicates a test that takes place after death for the children of disbelievers and justifies the view that their accountability will be based on their choice, not solely on their affiliation with disbelieving fathers (Şadūq, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 3, 492; Kulaynī, 1958 AD/1378 AH: 5, 611).

#### **4.2. Interpretive Acceptance Approach**

A group of scholars, while unable to completely reject these narrations, are also unable to accept their literal meaning. Therefore, they have interpreted these narrations from two perspectives: "Interpreting the concept of joining" and "Modifying the concept of pledge (*Rahn*).". This analytical approach helps to resolve the problems rose against the apparent meaning of these narrations.

##### **4.2.1. Interpretation of the Concept of "Joining (*Ilhāq*)"**

Some scholars, in order to arrive at a more accurate and consistent meaning with religious principles, have deviated from the literal meaning of the word "*Ilhāq*" and interpreted it. Their goal in this interpretation is to resolve the apparent inconsistencies of these narrations with other religious knowledge, and as a result, they have tried to provide a more accurate meaning of this concept.

###### **4.2.1.1. Limiting "Joining (*Ilhāq*)" to "Reward and Rank"**

Some scholars, in discussing the affiliation of descendants to their fathers, have concluded that this affiliation does not mean the joining of children to their fathers in reward and rank, but rather takes place more in a collective and social sense (Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 5, 165; Jazāyerī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 2, 388). In other words, children are affiliated to their fathers in terms of status and position, not because the fathers' status is lowered due to the children's shortcomings. Rather, God gives some of the fathers' rewards to the children so that the two groups are equal in terms of reward. This concept is well expressed in the verse "And We did not deprive them

of anything of their deeds," which shows that the children reach the degree and position of their fathers without diminishing their reward. In fact, this status and elevation is given to the children through God's grace and bounty (Kashani, 1956 AD/1336 SH: 9, 55).

Allamah *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, considering the connection between the two phrases "And We did not deprive them of anything of their deeds" and "Every person is pledged for what he has earned," argues that if the joining of children to their fathers means diminishing the good deeds of the fathers, this means that the fathers are somehow pledged for the deeds of the children. Therefore, assuming that no one should be pledged for the deeds of another, it follows that there will be no reduction in the deeds of the fathers for affiliation to the children (*Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, 2014 AD/1394 SH: 19, 12).

Therefore, it can be said that the meaning of "what one earns" (*Mā kasaba*) in the phrase "Every soul is pledged for what it has earned" (*Kullu Imri'in bimā Kasaba Rahīn*) does not include all of a person's actions, but specifically includes their sins. This part of the verse emphasizes that a person is held in pledge for their bad deeds and sins, and will not achieve salvation until they are freed from these sins. Thus, each individual is only responsible for their sins and is not responsible for the sins of others, including their fathers (Dīnawarī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 2, 349; Maydani, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 14, 585; Sadeghi Tehrani, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 27, 359; Marāghī, n.d.: 27, 26).

#### **4.2.2. Joining as a Favor and Kindness**

Some have considered the joining of the offspring of believers to their fathers as a favor and grace from God towards them (Kashani, 1956 AD/1336 SH: 9, 55). Allamah *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* believes that the verse of joining is in the position of bestowing a favor; meaning that God is kind to the believers and attaches them to their children who have believed in following them. This promise signifies divine forgiveness and generosity and gives believing fathers hope that their children will join them on the Day of Judgment. This concept demonstrates the importance of family relationships and the continuation of faith in future generations.

The concept of *Tanwīn* (Nunation) in the word "*Bi Īmānin*" (with faith) means that this faith may have different degrees. This *Tanwīn* (Nunation), instead of indicating greatness, indicates generalization and breadth. In other words, the faith of the children may be at a lower level than the faith of the fathers and this itself is a reason that shows that if the faith of the children was equal to or higher than the faith of the fathers, there would be no need for such kindness from God. In fact, the verse is stating that God even considers the children of believers who may have less faith than their fathers and gives them value. Considering what has been said, a broader meaning of the word "Faith" can be understood, and it can be considered to include any kind of faith that children may have, whether this faith is real or based on religious rulings. This general understanding of faith demonstrates the flexibility and inclusiveness of divine mercy and indicates that God considers children according to their intentions and efforts (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2014 AD/1394 SH: 19, 12).

#### **4.2.3. Ascription of Joining to the "Knowledge of God"**

Some Sunni scholars believe that humans are born according to a destiny predetermined for them. This means that if it is specified in the Divine Knowledge (what God knows of the future) that a person will ultimately become a Muslim; he is initially born with the "*Fiṭrah*" (meaning a pure nature and inclination towards the knowledge of God). However, if it is specified in the Knowledge of God that a person will ultimately die as an infidel, he is born from the outset with a predisposition towards that destiny, namely disbelief. They also believe that the ruling concerning the children of polytheists is the same as that of their fathers, and they cite a narration from the Prophet (PBUH) to prove their claim, which states: "Allah knows best what they were doing" (Bukhārī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 10, 200; Qushayrī Nīshābūrī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 4, 2049; and...). This means that the children of polytheists are not judged in Paradise or Hell, but their fate is entrusted to the knowledge of God. Therefore, the reference of servants to happiness and misery in the Hereafter was predetermined in the knowledge of God (Abū 'Ubayd, 1976 AD/1396 AH: 2, 22;

Bayhaqī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 350).

#### **4.2.4. Attributing "Joining" to the "World of *Barzakh*"**

Some thinkers believe that the affiliation of children to the place and status of their fathers in the Hereafter does not mean enduring the punishment or rewards of the fathers. That is, the entry of children into the same position as their fathers and mothers in Paradise or Hell does not mean the transfer of punishment or reward from the fathers to them. This affiliation is more related to the intermediate realm (*Barzakh*), in which believing children may benefit from divine mercy and grace.

However, on the Day of Judgment, all people will be subjected to divine testing and will be evaluated based on their deeds (Kulaynī, 1958 AD/1378 AH: 3, 248 - footnote -).

#### **4.2.3. Manipulation of the Concept of "*Rahn*"**

One of the interpretative aspects that scholars believe can solve the problem of this narrative content is the specification and generalization in the word "Pawn" (*Rahn*).

##### **4.2.3.1. Assigning "*Rahn*" to the "People of the Fire"**

In examining the contradiction between the concepts of "*Rahn*" and "*Ilhāq*," some researchers believe that the phrase "*Kullu Imri'in bimā Kasaba Rahīnun*" (every soul is pledged for what it has earned) specifically applies to the people of the Fire (Hell) and disbelievers. This means that while the children of believers are attached to them through the faith and good deeds of their fathers, the children of disbelievers are independent of their fathers' deeds and are evaluated solely based on their own actions. In other words, even if the father of a disbelieving individual is a believer, that individual will not be attached to the father due to their own lack of faith (Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, 2002 AD/1423 AH: 4, 145; Ṭabrisī, 1952 AD/1372 AH: 9, 251).

Support for this claim comes from a verse in Surah *al-Muddaththir* in the Quran, which states: "*Kullu Nafsin bimā Kasabat Rahīnatun-Illā Aṣḥāb al-Yamīn*" (Every soul will be (held) in pledge

for its deeds, except the companions of the Right) (Surah al-Muddaththir: 38 and 39). In this verse, God emphasizes that every individual is dependent on their own actions, except for those who are among the "*Aṣḥāb al-Yamīn*." This distinction indicates that in the divine system, evaluation and judgment of individuals are based on their own actions and are not related to the actions of their fathers or their family circumstances.

#### 4.2.3.2. Generalizing "Rahn" to "All Individuals and Actions"

Many commentators in the medieval and later centuries have emphasized the generality of the phrase "*Kullu Nafsin bimā Kasabat Rahīnatun*" (every soul is pledged for what it has earned), interpreting its meaning to be that all human beings are imprisoned and held in pledge for their actions. In other words, each individual is directly responsible for their own actions and can only be released from this imprisonment and pledge if their good deeds outweigh and overcome their bad deeds (Māwardī, n.d.: 5, 382; Zamakhsharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 4, 411; Fakhr Rāzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 28, 208; Ālūsī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 14, 33).

In this framework, the process of release from the pledge is achieved through performing good deeds, and if an individual cannot save themselves from this situation and their good deeds do not outweigh their bad deeds, they will be deserving of punishment. This analysis clearly shows that in the ethical and religious system under discussion, the righteous have hope for salvation and deliverance, while the disobedient and evildoers will face the consequences of their actions.

Accordingly, the issue of individual responsibility and its direct impact on human destiny is clearly emphasized.

#### 4.3. The Approach of Attributing to *Taqīyya* (Dissimulation)

The narrations concerning the joining of the children of disbelievers to their fathers face challenges, primarily due to conceptual, ethical, and theological contradictions, such as contradiction with the principle of individual responsibility, conflict with the concept of divine justice,

the impossibility of prior condemnation, and so on. Therefore, some scholars believe that the narration that extends the affiliation of offspring to fathers to include the children of disbelievers was issued under conditions of *Taqīyya*, because it denies justice and contradicts the numerous narrations that indicate God's justice (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 281). However, he does not explain the reason for the possibility of *Taqīyya* or the suitability of this view with the ideas of the Ahl al-Sunnah (Sunnis), to clarify what aspect of *Taqīyya* is relevant here, and merely mentions it as a possibility.

#### **4.4. The Approach of Denial**

Among the mentioned types, only the second type, which speaks of the affiliation and association of the children of both the believers and the disbelievers with their fathers, faces weakening in terms of both its chain of narration (*Sanad*) and its content (*Matn*).

##### **4.4.1. Critique of the *Sanad***

Shaykh *Ṣadūq* narrates the second type of narration in the chapter "The State of Those Who Die from the Children of the Polytheists and the Disbelievers" from the book *Man lā Yaḥduruhul Faqīh*, whose chain of narration is as follows: "*Wahb ibn Wahb* narrated from *Ja'far ibn Muhammad* from his father, who said: Ali (AS) said..." He considers "*Wahb ibn Wahb*" to be weak and a liar, and therefore considers the narration to be weak as well (*Ṣadūq*, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 3, 491).

##### **4.4.2. Critique of the *Matn* (Text)**

Shaykh *Ṣadūq* also criticizes the content of this narration because the punishment of someone who is not obliged is intellectually reprehensible (*ibid.*). This critique only includes the narrations of the second type, which mention the affiliation of the children of disbelievers to their fathers; therefore, the other types are exempt from this view.

#### **5. The Standard View**

Despite the fact that each of the views presented in this discussion is

worthy of consideration and examination, the author believes that the best view regarding the affiliation of the children of disbelievers to their fathers is affiliation following accountability, which the narrations also support.

The best opinion regarding the joining of believing children with their fathers is that of Allamah *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, which states "Joining out of grace and favor" to the believers. In this regard, attention to the context of the verses of Surah *al-Tūr* and its related themes is necessary. The mentioned verse is in the context of expressing the blessings bestowed upon the believers and considers the joining of children to their fathers as a completion of blessings and a continuation of divine mercy.

This joining is, in a way, a sign of the continuity and connection between families in this world and the hereafter; meaning that just as the father of a family is with his wife and children in this world, they will be joined together in the hereafter by the grace of God, the Most Gracious. The Holy Quran, in describing the fate of people of understanding, states: "Gardens of perpetual residence which they will enter, and [also] those who were righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their descendants" (Surah *al-Ra'd*/23); which clearly shows that believers will be gathered in Paradise with their righteous fathers, spouses, and children. The Quran emphasizes this point in another verse: "Our Lord, and admit them to gardens of perpetual residence which You have promised them and whoever was righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring" (Surah *Ghāfir*/8). "Our Lord, admit them to gardens of perpetual residence which You have promised them and whoever was righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring."

It is interesting to note that the verses of the Quran include not only the children but also the believing spouses in this joining: "Enter Paradise, you and your spouses, delighted" (Surah *al-Zukhruf*/70); which clearly states that believers and their spouses will enter Paradise in utmost joy. In fact, being with believing spouses and children is enjoyable not only for fathers but also for families. If they have shared each other's sorrows in this world, they should also share in the joys of

the hereafter.

In a narration from Ibn Abbas regarding the verse of joining, it is stated: "When a man enters Paradise, he asks about his fathers, his wife, and his children. It is said that they have not reached your rank and deeds. He says: "O! Lord, I have worked for myself and for them.' Then it is commanded to join them with him." (Ṭabarānī, n.d.: 11, 349)

When a person enters Paradise, they inquire about their fathers, spouse, and children, and are informed that these relatives have not attained the same rank or status. The person then requests that they be joined with them. This narration indicates that the joining of families in Paradise is out of God's grace and favor towards His believing servants. The author of the Tafsir Nemooneh also emphasizes that verses of the Quran explicitly state that fathers, spouses, and righteous children of those in Paradise will enter as well. This is to complete God's blessings upon them, so that they feel no deficiency in their life in Paradise. In Paradise, which is a new and perfect abode, everything is renewed, and this renewal leads to a revival of love and intimacy among the believers. Although only fathers, children, and spouses are mentioned in the verses, this concept actually includes all relatives, because the presence of children and fathers without sisters, brothers, and other relatives cannot be complete. Whenever someone is destined for Paradise, their righteous father will also join them, and since the righteous father is in Paradise, all his children will join him, and as a result, the brothers will also join each other (Makarem Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 10, 195).

It is important to note that this companionship and association are conditional upon individual merit. It is not the case that every father and child, or every husband and wife, will automatically be together in Paradise. This is because on the Day of Judgment, lineage and kinship will have no effect, "So there will be no kinship among them that Day" (Surah al-Mu'minūn/101); rather, each person is held in pledge for what they have earned: "Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained"



(Surah al-Muddaththir/38). Therefore, the entry of relatives to be with one another is only due to their individual worthiness and merit (Qara'ati, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 4, 347).

Generally, a family in Paradise is one in which there is solidarity and intimacy among its members in the path of truth. Therefore, this joining is not solely based on kinship, but its characteristic is that righteous people of a community gather together and are counted among the righteous side by side. Therefore, their enjoyment of the blessings of Paradise depends on this gathering and solidarity, because living in the best places will not be pleasant without the presence of family.

### **Conclusion**

In interpreting the issue of the offspring joining their fathers on the Day of Judgment, with regard to verse 21 of Surah *al-Ṭūr* and related narrations, it has become clear that this discussion is one of the complex and challenging topics in the field of Islamic exegesis and theology. The present research demonstrates that the concept of the offspring joining their fathers, especially in the case of believers, not only expresses divine grace and favor towards righteous servants, but also signifies the continuity and perpetuation of family relationships in the afterlife. Scholars, relying on various interpretive and hadith approaches, including "Conditional Acceptance," "Interpretive Acceptance," "Attributing it to Dissimulation (Taqīyya)," and the "Denial Approach," have strived to explain this issue within the framework of divine justice and religious principles. The majority believe that the joining is not related to the decrease or increase of the fathers' deeds, but rather a sign of family connection and divine reward for believers who will have their children and spouses with them in Paradise.

Scholars, emphasizing the principle that "Every person is pledged for what he has earned," believe that no one is punished or rewarded for the actions of another; on the other hand, it is also clear that the faith and righteous deeds of fathers can be effective in the destiny of

their children, but this effect is conditional upon the children's faith-based eligibility. Therefore, the joining is only for believers, and the children of disbelievers are judged solely based on their own actions. Consequently, the principle of individual responsibility is fully preserved, and the children of disbelievers will not be punished for the actions of their fathers.

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