



The reality about the Prophet's ﷺ parents

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Here, we would like to clarify the confusion that Imam Abu Hanifa considered the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be disbelievers. It is proven that he recanted from this position as Shaykh Mustafa al-Hamami has written in *al-Nuhdat al-Islahiya*. Also, a booklet is ascribed to Mulla 'Ali Qari called *Awwalat al-Mu'taqad Abi Hanifat al-Imam fi Abawi al-Rasul 'alaihi salam* in which there are writings from which we must safeguard ourselves because those words are hurtful to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam and to cause him pain is a major sin.

Muhaddith ibn Abi al-Dunya and ibn Asakir narrate that Durra, the daughter of Abu Lahab, once passed by a man who saw her and said: This girl is the daughter of Abu Lahab, the enemy of Allah. Durra radiyAllahu 'anha replied: Indeed Allah has mentioned my father due to his esteemed lineage whereas He has not mentioned your father due to his ignorance. She then told the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam of this, so the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam delivered a sermon saying:

Do not taunt a Muslim because of a Kafir.

The meaning of this advice is that do not mention the disbelievers in a way that is hurtful to the Muslims and due to which they feel sorrow.

A Muslim must always be respected so much so that even if his close relatives are disbelievers, they must not be talked of in a way that would hurt the Muslim and cause him anger.

When this is the state of ordinary believers, then we must be far more careful regarding the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam that we do not utter words that cause his displeasure. The teachings of Islam and proper reverence would be that those of his family that demised on Kufr, even they should not be mentioned in a manner that would displease the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. Then how can it be allowed for his parents?

ibn Mardawiya narrates from ibn 'Umar, Abu Hurayra and 'Ammar ibn Yasir radiyAllahu 'anhum that when Durra, the daughter of Abu Lahab, migrated from

¹ The original work is at <http://www.razanw.org/modules/sunnibooks/item.php?itemid=112&page=38>

Makkah to Madinah, the ladies said to her: You are the daughter of Abu Lahab about whom Allah has said: May his hands perish.

Durra radiyAllahu 'anha complained about this to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam who said to the people:

Oh people, I do not like that you hurt me due to my family. By Allah, by intercession will reach my close relatives and those who follow them and on the day of judgement, they will attain my intercession.

This hadith is an evidence on this subject. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam rebuked people for mentioning Abu Lahab in the manner that they did and said do not cause me harm due to my relatives.

When the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam showed anger due to Abu Lahab – even though he is definitely died a Kafir – then how angry will the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam be at the person who says similar things about his parents who demised on Fatrah. We will mention this later, Insha' Allah.

It is evident that he will be angrier at the person who disrespects his parents or indicates towards it. The parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam are those blessed people whom Allah bestowed with honour and without doubt, the leader of the universe and purest being was born to them. It is without question that whoever disrespects his parents, he himself is worthy of damnation and to be kept away from the mercy of Allah. Allah says:

Those who malign Allah and His Messenger – Allah has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.²

Now we shall discuss the aforementioned monograph. According to us, it is a great slander against Imam Abu Hanifa to say he believed the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be hellbound for ever and that they will not escape punishment. A bigger slander than this is to entitle the monograph *Awwalat al-Mu'taqad Abi Hanifat al-Imam fi Abawi al-Rasul 'alaihi salam* [the creed of Imam Abu Hanifa regarding the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam that they were Kafir]. If someone argues that at the start of this monograph, Imam 'Ali Qari has written: Imam Abu Hanifa has written in *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*:

والدا رسول الله ماتا على الكفر

When this is present in his book, then how can it be said that attributing this to him is slander?

The answer to this is that in *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, it is not ماتا على الكفر, rather the actual passage is:

² 33:57

The father of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam demised on Fatrah and Abu Talib demised on Kufr.

I myself have seen this passage in an ancient manuscript that is present in the Shaykh al-Islam Library in Madinah. Some people of knowledge informed me that this copy is from the 'Abbasid era. The collection in which this ancient manuscript is present in the library is number 330, whoever wishes to see it can do so. Indeed, he will see the passage in *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* as we have quoted it and it has not been very long since I saw it. It saw it during the Hajj season in 1354 AH and today – at the time of writing – it is 4th Jamadi al-Awwal 1355 AH, meaning, it has been just over 5 months because at the beginning of Dhu'l Hijjah 1354 AH, I was in Madinah. Whoever studies this matter properly will become certain that whatever has been copied in Mulla 'Ali Qari's version contains gross errors.

1. Firstly, it is a lie because it directly contradicts the ancient manuscript as we have just mentioned.
2. Secondly, it contains a misrepresentation because when one reads the sentence after the one from Mulla 'Ali Qari, that is, 'And Abu Talib demised on Kufr'. Then the question is raised, when the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam and Abu Talib all demised on Kufr, then the passage of *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* should have been: **و والدا رسول الله و ابو طالب ماتوا كفارا**. That is, the Kufr of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam and Abu Talib would not have been mentioned separately.

As for our version, it is evident that it points to the Kufr of Abu Talib and there are only two rulings. Hence, the first shows the Iman of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam and the second shows the Kufr of Abu Talib. It is possible that someone may question that the word **كفر** written by Imam 'Ali Qari may have been swapped for the word **فطرة** which is present in the ancient manuscript because there is an obvious similarity between the two words.

Can this alteration be correct so that the ruling for Abu Talib is eradicated and the passage reads: **و والدا رسول الله ماتا على الفطرة و ابو طالب ذلك**.

If this is the case, then we do not know if this alteration is by the author or the publisher but nevertheless, the monograph is rejected because whatever was written in it, after recantation, the author wrote the following two passages in *Sharh Shifa*³:

First passage

Qadi 'Iyad wrote:

At Dhi'l Majaz, Abu Talib said to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam whilst on his ride, I am very thirsty but there is no water. On hearing this, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam dismounted his ride and hit his foot on the ground which caused water to gush forth. He said, uncle, drink this water.

³ This edition of *Sharh Shifa* is in my possession, a copy of which can be obtained – Muhammad Khan Qadri

Commenting on this, Imam ‘Ali Qari quotes from Shaykh Dalhabi that:

It is evident that this incident took place before the announcement of Prophethood. It is from the Irhasat [those miracles that took place before the announcement of Prophethood] but it is not improbable that the event occurred after the declaration of Prophethood, hence, it would be called a Mu’jiza.

Perhaps this is an indication that near the end of his life, there would be a spring of water that would pour forth in ‘Arafat due to the blessings of his feet which would bless Makkah and its surrounding areas.

Abu Talib becoming a Muslim is not proven and as for his parents, there are various opinions regarding them, the most correct of which is that they were Muslims. This is the opinion of leading scholars and Imam Suyuti has written 3 monographs in which he has proven this.⁴

Second passage

At another place, Imam ‘Ali Qari writes:

As for the incident in which the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam made his parents alive, the majority of scholars consider it true and Imam Suyuti has verified it in 3 of his monographs.⁵

Hence, Imam ‘Ali Qari himself has recanted from his earlier position and refuted the monograph. This was the nobility of our earlier scholars that when they erred, they would not delay in recanting. Similarly, when they disobeyed, they would immediately seek pardon from Allah. Whenever a flaw was seen in them, they would seek to perfect it and whenever they stooped below their true position, they would instantly attempt to attain new heights.

This is not the only proof to show that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam are saved. Another proof is that they demised in the era of Fatrah, in which there was no Prophet or Messenger who would explain the necessities from Allah to them. The era of Fatrah was lengthy and they remained in that state. Obviously, this was after the time of Isma’il 'alaihi salam in which no Messenger was sent to them. Hence, they were powerless like the rest of Arabia.

We also wish to ponder upon this saying of Allah:

By the Qur'an, full of wisdom, most surely you are one of the messengers, on a straight path, a revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful, That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless.⁶

The words ‘That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless’ are noteworthy. They explain the reason why people of the time did not

⁴ Sharh Shifa’, 1:601

⁵ Ibid, 1:648

⁶ 36:2-6

practice the necessities and it is because no one told their forefathers about the fear of Allah. This is why they did not know the rights of Allah which must be followed. In this way, their fathers were nurtured by their fathers, that is, not practicing the necessities.

This verse explains the difference between that child that is raised by pious parents and the child that is raised by sinning parents. In the first instance, the child is aware of the religion and follows in his parents' footsteps and in the latter child, this is not the case.

To clarify this fact, the words which Allah delivered to the nation of Maryam 'alaihas salam are sufficient. When they were unaware of her situation, they said to her:

Oh sister of Harun, your father was not a bad man nor was your mother an unchaste woman.⁷

Meaning, it is astonishing that you have committed such an act because your parents did nothing of the sort.

The Qur'an negates any type of punishment for Ahl al-Fatrah thusly:

We never punish until we have sent a messenger.⁸

Allah says that He does not punish His people for missing any fundamental or supplementary belief until He sends a Messenger to them. When people who live a long time after a Prophet's era and the laws that this Prophet brought are altered and no new Prophet is sent to them, there is no punishment upon them. If Allah were to punish them without sending a Messenger to them, then He would be punishing them even though they have committed no crime. Our Lord is the most just Who does not punish anyone unjustly.

The parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam lived in an age in which there was neither a Shari'ah that was unaltered nor a Messenger. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam announced his Prophethood a long time after their demise. His father passed away whilst the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam was in his mothers womb and his mother passed away when he was only four years of age or even less than that. Hence, they are both free from the punishment of hell as is the case with all other people from the era of Fatrah. The majority of scholars hold this view.

If someone questions that hadiths exist which mention punishment for some people of Ahl al-Fatrah and the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam may be of these people. The answer to this is that all these hadiths are Khabar Wahid [lone reported] and Akhbar Ahad cannot be compared to the Qur'an.

If you are adamant that there is still a conflict, then this apparent conflict can be rectified because these hadiths are specific to the people that named in them. Hence,

⁷ 19:28

⁸ 17:15

any sort of analogy cannot be drawn. Moreover, it is impermissible to analogise using such evidences.

It is possible that someone questions that there are hadiths which make it apparent that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam did not believe. We answer that whatever is mentioned in such hadiths happened before Allah made them alive again and they believed in the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. They were granted this life and there is no room for doubt in it and it is the opinion of the majority of scholars as has been expounded by Imam 'Ali Qari.

If it is said that after this event of becoming alive, the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam became believers, this is supported by verses of the Qur'an too which mention that they are saved. Hence, there is no contradiction between the verses and hadiths because firstly, these hadiths are Ahad and secondly, they are from before the event of them becoming alive. Also, leading scholars have commented upon them after which, one is not comfortable with using them as evidence. And why would we when Imam Suyuti alone has written 3 monographs on this issue as mentioned by Imam 'Ali Qari himself.

Questions may also be raised regarding Imam 'Ali Qari's recantation. What proof is there of this and what was his final position which can be relied upon? If this monograph is latter, then he recanted from what he wrote in *Sharh Shifa'* about the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam being saved and if the exposition in *Sharh Shifa'* is latter, then this shows his recantation from opining that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were disbelievers. Hence, we shall clarify this matter here.

Our stance is that whatever Imam 'Ali Qari wrote in *Sharh Shifa'* is his final position and this is clear. However, if his monograph is considered to be his final position, then the situation is made very difficult. The thing that makes this issue simple is that in *Sharh Shifa'*, he has expounded that the opinion that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were Muslim is agreed upon by leading scholars and this is opinion of the majority. If Imam 'Ali Qari recanted from this passage [and wrote his monograph afterwards], then he has opposed the majority of scholars, hence, what worth does the monograph hold that goes against the majority? In such a case, Imam 'Ali Qari is on one side and the majority of scholars on the other and it will also necessitate that he recanted from the truth and said something whose incorrectness is clear.

When we have proven that Imam Abu Hanifa believed the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam demised on Fatrah, then the passage of Imam 'Ali Qari is automatically refuted because compared to Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam 'Ali Qari holds no rank.

Secondly, whatever Imam 'Ali Qari has written is due to the altered passage of Imam Abu Hanifa and this was his strongest proof. We have already proven that these words have no basis, rather they have been altered.

Imam Alusi is amongst the relied upon scholars of the past. He writes in his *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani* under the verse 'And your movements among those who prostrate

themselves before Allah' [26:219] that believing the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be Muslim is the opinion of numerous scholars of Ahlu's Sunnah. He also writes:

I fear Kufr for that person who holds the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be Kafir. Mulla 'Ali Qari opposes us in this matter.

Indeed, Allah made his Prophet a mercy for the worlds. He is also a mercy for his two uncles, Abu Talib and Abu Lahab, who saw him with their eyes, heard his invitation but still remained on Kufr.

We know from the hadiths that they will both receive a reduction in punishment due to their closeness to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. It is in the hadith that Allah reduced the punishment for Abu Talib forever whereas for his uncle, Abu Lahab, Allah has reduced punishment at certain times. By Allah, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam is a mercy even for the disbelievers who openly called him a liar. Allah says:

But Allah was not going to punish them while you were among them.⁹

Then how can he not be a mercy upon his parents who demised on the religion of Fatrah as is the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifa and the majority of scholars?

⁹ 8:33