

Islam of Abu Talib Part 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A number of historians and hadith recorders reported that Abu Talib died while he was a pagan. Some of them reported the verse ‘ It is not permissible to the Prophet and the believers to ask God to forgive the pagans even if they were akin to them, after it became clear to them that those pagans are from the people of hell .’

Such false commentaries and statements were fabricated as a part of the smear campaign which the Omayyads and their allies waged against Imam ‘Ali (as). By fabricating such traditions they tried these to convince people that Abu Sufyan, father of Muawiyah was better than Abu Talib, father of Imam ‘Ali, claiming that Abu Sufyan died while he was a Muslim and Abu TALib died while he was a pagan.

The recorders of the hadiths and the historians took these hadiths without paying attention to the evidence of their forgery. They did not try to examine these hadiths, yet the date of the revelation of the above mentioned verse testifies that it was not revealed about a matter pertaining to Abu Talib (May Allah be well pleased with him). Now coming to the hadith by itself, let see what the most authenticated book in the eyes of the Sunnis has to say. al-Bukhari in his Sahih writes

Narrated Al Musaiyab: When Abu Talib's death approached, the Prophet (saw) went to him while Abu Jahl and Abdullah bin Abi Umaiyah were present with him. The Prophet (saw) said: ‘ O Uncle, say: None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, so that I may argue for your case with it before Allah. ‘ On that Abu Jahl and Abdullah bin Abi Umaiyah said: ‘ O Abu Talib! Do you want to renounce Abdul Muttalib's religion ? ‘

Then the Prophet (saw) said, ‘ I will keep on asking (Allah for) forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden to do so. ‘ Then there was revealed

It is not fitting for the Prophet and those who believe that they should pray for forgiveness for pagans even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the companions of the fire. (9: 113)

Sahih Bukhari Kitabul Tafseer

Arabic English

Volume 6

Page 158 Tradition no. 197

The above mentioned verse is a part of the Chapter of Baraat (number 9).

A few points on this Chapter

- this is a totally medinite Chapter, with the exception of the last two verses (128 and 129)
- the verse which is the subject of our discussion is Verse 113
- the Chapter of Baarat was revealed during the ninth (9th) year of Hijra.

The chapter speaks of the events that took place during the campaign of Tabuk, which was during the month of Rajab in the ninth Year. The Prophet (saw) had ordered Abu Bakr to announce first part of it during the days of the pilgrimage of that year when he sent him as an ‘ Amir Al Hajj ‘.

Then he sent Imam ‘Ali to take that part from him and announce it, because God commanded him that no one should deliver the revelation other than himself or a man from the members of his House. The chapter speaks of the events that took place during the campaign of Tabouk, which was during the month of Rajab in the ninth Year.

Many Sunni traditionist reported that:

The Messenger of Allah send Abu Bakr to the people of Mecca with the Chapter of al-Bara’ah and when he proceeded, (the Prophet) sent for him and asked him to return the chapter and said: "No one takes it to them except one of my Ahlul-Bayt." and thus he sent ‘Ali for this mission."

Sunni references:

- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v2, p183, v5, pp 275,283
- Musnad of Ahmed Hanbal, v1 pp 3,151, v3, pp 212,283
- Fadha’l al-Sahabah, by Ahmad Hanbal, v2, p562, Tradition #946
- Hakim in his Mustadrak, v 3 p 51
- Al Nisai in his Khasais al Awliyah, p 20
- Fadhail al Khamsah, v 2 p 343
- Siratun Nabi by Shibli Numani, v 2 p 239

Ahmad in his musnad added that Abu Bakr said: The Prophet (saw) had sent me with the chapter of Baarat to the people of Mecca

No pagan should make pilgrimage after this year. No naked shall circumnavigate around the Ancient House. No one shall enter paradise except a Muslim soul. Any pagan community that has been between them and the Messenger of God a peace accord, the accord will end by the end by the end of the specified period (without extension), and God and His Messenger are clear of pagans

Also Shibli Numani in his work on the Seera of the Prophet (saw) writes as follows (p 239 -- > p 240)

Now in the year 9th Hijri, the Kaaba was for the first time, consecrated as the central House of Worship for the followers of Abraham On return from Tabuk the Holy Prophet (saw) sent out a caravan of three hundred muslims from Mecca to Medina to perform the Hajj at Mecca.

Now coming back to the verse of (9: 113), the verse could not mean Abu Talib, because he died in Mecca at least two years before the Hijrah! I now quote Shibli Numani, in his most celebrated work on the Seera of the Prophet, Siratun Nabi (v 1, p 219 and 220)

Death of Khadija and of Abu Talib (10th Year Of Revelation)

On return from the mountain, the Prophet had hardly passed a few days in peace when Abu Talib and Khadija both died. He paid his last visit to Abu Talib when he was dying. Abu Jahl and Abd Allah ibn Ummaya were already there. The Prophet asked Abu Talib to recite the credo of Islam, so that he might bear witness to his faith in the presence of Allah. Abu Jahl and Ibn Umayya expostulated with Abu Taleb and asked if he was going to turn away from the religion of Abd Al Muttalib.

In the end Abu Talib said that he was dying with is belief in the religion of Abd Al Muttalib. Then he turned to the Prophet and said that he would have recited the creed but he feared lest the Quraish should accuse him of fear of death. The Prophet said that he would be praying to Allah for him till He forbade (Bukhari on the Chapter of Funeral. The last sentence has been taken from Muslim and not Bukhari). This is the version of Bukhari and Muslim. Ibn Ishaq says that while dying Abu Talib's lips were in motion. al-Abbas who was till then a nonbeliever, put his ear to his lips and then said to the Prophet that he was reciting the KALIMA the Prophet had wanted of him. (Ibn Hisham, Cairo Edition, p 146).

(Please do bear in mind that all the references cited in the above para are "NOT "my addition, and "NEITHER "are the block letters my addition, they have been rendered by Shibli Numani himself)

Then Shibli Numani further writes

But from a traditionist's point of view this report of Al Bukhari is not worthy taking as reliable because the last narrator is Musaiyyab who embraced Islam after the fall of Mecca, and was not himself present at the time of Abu Talib's death. It is on this account that al Aini in his commentary has remarked that this

tradition is MURSAL (Al Aini, Chapter Janaiz or Funeral, VOL IV, p 200).

Also he writes on page 221

Abu Talib made great sacrifices for the Prophet none can deny that. He would even sacrifice his own children for his sake. For his sake he had exposed himself to the odium of the whole country, and for his sake he had passed years in state of siege, suffering starvation as an exile, unprovided with food or drink. Will all this love, sacrifice and devotion go unrewarded ?

– asking God to forgive a deceased usually takes place at the time of the uneral prayer. The wording of the verse ‘ It is not permissible to the Prophet and the believers to ask God to forgive the pagans ‘ , indicates that the Prophet was with other believers (in a congregational prayer) when he asked forgiveness for the pagans.

– as a matter of fact, the funeral prayer was not instituted before the Hijrah (migration to Medina). The first prayer offered by the Messenger for a deceased was his prayer for Al Bura Ibn Maarour. it is likely that this verse was revealed after the Prophet offered a funeral prayer for one of the hypocrites who used to pretend Islam and conceal paganism. It is very likely that the verse was revealed when the Holy Prophet (saw) offered a funeral prayer for Abdullah bin Obai bin Salool who died during the ninth year and who was well noted in his hypocrisy, his hatred towards the Messenger of Allah and his adversary to the faith of Islam. About him and his followers, the Chapter of Al Munafiqoon (the Hypocrites) was revealed before that time. Had historians and hadith recorders thought with some depth and logic, they would not have committed this terrible historical error!

Here is another hadeeth from Sahih Bukhari that mentions the event similar to the previous hadeeth

Narrated Al Musaiyab: When Abu Talib was on his death bed, Allah’s Apostle came to him and found Abi Umaiya bin Al Mughira. Allah’s Apostle said: ‘ O uncle! say: None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, a sentence with which I will defend you before Allah. ‘

On that Abu Jahl and Abdullah bin Abi Umaiya said to Abu Talib: ‘ Will now you leave the religion of Abdul Mutallaib ? ‘ Allah’s apostle kept on inviting him to say that sentence while the other two kept on repeating their sentence before him till Abu Talib said as a last thing then he said to them , ‘ I am on the religion of Abdul Muttalib ‘ and refused to say: None has the right to be worshipped except Allah. On that Allah’s Apostle said: ‘ By Allah I will keep on asking Allah’s forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden (by Allah) to do so. So Allah revealed It is not fitting for the Prophet and those who believe that they should invoke (Allah) for forgiveness for pagans (9: 113) And then Allah revealed especially about Abu Talib:

Verily! You (O, Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He will (28:56)

Sahih Bukhari Kitabul Tafseer

Arabic English

Volume 6 page 278 -> 279

Tradition no. 295

Readers will be surprised to know that the two hadeeths cited above, prove that the two verses descended one after the other. But this is contrary to another hadeeth that Bukhari cites in his Sahih, and it proves that Surah Baarat was among the last revealed chapters. Here is the hadith

Narrated Al Bara: The last Sura that was revealed was Bara'a ...

Sahih Bukhari Kitabul Tafseer

Arabic English

Volume 6

Page 101 Tradition 129

Other Sunni references that affirm to the fact that Sura Baarat was among the last revealed chapters and a Medanite Sura, please refer to

- Tafseer Kashshaf, v 2 p 49
- Tafseer Qurtubi, v 8 p 273
- Tafseer Itqan, v 1 p 18
- Tafseer Showkani, v 3 p 316

But where is the fault in the Hadeeths? The verse cited from Surah Qasas, was revealed at least ten (10) years before Surah Baarat, and that it was revealed in Mecca, where as Surah Baarat was revealed in Medina. Please think about it, and you shall find out that in a futile effort to discredit Abu Talib and declare him as an unbeliever, the order of the revelation of the Qur'an was not taken into consideration. Just imagine the time gap in between the revelation of the two chapters, and the matter will be very clear.

Also history tells us that Al Musaiyab

- disliked Imam 'Ali
- refused to say the funeral prayers for the grandson of Imam 'Ali, and the son of Imam Hussain, Imam Zainul Abidin

Sunni Reference

- Sharah of Ibn al Hadid, v 1 p 370

One could conclude that this fabrication was done to simply elevate Umayyad over Hashimites. Also I

came across a very ashtonishing commentary, by the most revered Sunni commentator, Fakr ar Din Al Razi in his Tafseer, with reference to Surah Qasas (28:56). He has mentioned this verse about Abu Talib, “not “because of his personal opinion; because of the opinion of some other scholars ‘. Surprisingly, he admits, that this verse could not be associated with Abu Talib’s beliefs ...

Reference: Tafseer Kabir, v 25 p 3 (Fakhr ar Din al Razi)

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia-ahlul-bayt-dilp-team/islam-abu-talib-part-2>