



The Parents of the Prophet ﷺ were Muslim

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Prologue

Love for the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam is the essence of Iman. A decrease in it weakens Iman and an increase strengthens it. Hence, it is an obligation upon every Muslim to hold beliefs that increase this love and affection and this can be done through respect and reverence. The more a person respects and reveres, the greater the mercy of Allah upon him. Also, one must not only respect the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam but also every connecting with him, for example, his family, companions and relatives and in particular his parents.

Some people, due to weakness in faith, revile the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam and say – we seek the refuge of Allah – that they were not believers. To say this is endangering one's Iman. What should have happened due to respect and reverence was to adopt silence on the matter but some people have used this issue to disrespect the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.

Hence, it was necessary to write on the issue in detail to safeguard peoples' Iman. In every era, scholars wrote regarding it, in particular, Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti, who wrote seven monographs on it whose Urdu translations I intend to undertake. Readers are requested to supplicate in this regard.

This paper is a small effort regarding the issue. Perhaps it will be accepted in the blessed court of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.

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¹ The original work can be read at <http://www.razanw.org/modules/sunnibooks/item.php?itemid=112>

There are 4 views regarding the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam:

1. They passed away on the religion of Ibrahim 'alaih salam
2. They passed away as Kafirs [we seek the refuge of Allah]
3. They were amongst the Ahl al-Fatrah
4. They passed away as Ahl al-Fatrah but miraculously, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam made them alive and blessed them with Islam and also his companionship.

From these 4, scholars have refuted the second. The other 3 are accepted by them and whichever view is accepted, there is no detriment in it because in all 3 cases, the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam will be in paradise.

There are numerous verses of the Qur'an and hadiths that prove the Prophets parents were believers. We shall present some of them here.

1. Qur'an - The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam is from a pure progeny

Allah says:

And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful, Who sees you when you stand up. And your movements among those who prostrate themselves before Allah.²

'AbdAllah ibn 'Abbas radiyAllahu 'anhu says in its commentary:

Here, movements refers to passing through the blessed generations of Prophets until he was sent to this nation.³

Another commentary is narrated from 'AbdAllah ibn 'Abbas:

Movements means passing from one pure generation to the other.⁴

Sajidin refers to believers

In the verse, commentators have taken *Sajidin* [those who prostrate] to refer to believers; meaning from Adam and Hawwa 'alaihim assalam to 'AbdAllah and Amina 'alaihim assalam, all wombs and generations the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam was present in were of believers.

It is in *Tafsir Jumal*:

Oh Prophet, whichever believing men and women's wombs and generations you passed through from Adam and Hawwa to 'AbdAllah and Amina, Allah is

² 26:217-219

³ al-Khazin, 5:107

⁴ Masalik al-Hunafa, p.40

watching all of them. All of your ancestors, whether men or women, are believers.⁵

It is in *Sawi 'ala al-Jalalayn*:

Sajidin refers to believing people and the verse means that from Adam to 'AbdAllah, whichever wombs and generation of believers that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam passed through, Allah saw them. This verse proves that all of his ancestors were believers.⁶

Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi writes:

Allah says: Who sees you when you stand up. And your movements among those who prostrate themselves before Allah. This is proof that ancestors of Prophets cannot be deniers of Allah.

2. Qur'an - An oath of the Prophets father

Where the Qur'an has taken an oath of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam, it has also done the same for his father. This oath proves the purity of his lineage. Allah says:

And the begetter and whom he begot.⁷

This verse is an oath regarding all those fathers in whose loins the light of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam passed until it reached his grandfather, 'Abdul Muttalib and from him, 'AbdAllah. From him, it went to Amina radiyAllahu 'anha. Hence, an oath has been taken regarding all those people who were ancestors of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.

After taking an oath regarding the begetter, the verse mentions the begot which shows that the whole lineage is part of the oath. Qadi Thana' Allah Pani Patti commentates on the verse:

The word Walid in this verse refers to either Adam and Ibrahim 'alaihim assalam or all forefathers and Walad refers to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.⁸

3. Qur'an – The lineage of the Prophet is better than any other

Allah says:

⁵ al-Jumal, 3:396

⁶ Sawi, 3:287

⁷ 90:3

⁸ al-Tafsir al-Mazhari, 10:464

Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that you should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful.⁹

‘Ali radiyAllahu ‘anhu narrates that once, the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam recited the verse with the word *Anfasikum* instead of *Anfusikum* and said:

I am the purest amongst all of you in lineage and ancestry. From Adam to ‘AbdAllah, none of my forefathers committed any wrongdoing.

In this verse, Allah has certified the fact that all ancestors of the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam were pure. He declared the lineage of the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam to be the best from all children of Adam and that all his generations were free from wrongdoing.

ibn Mardawiya has also narrated this recitation from Anas radiyAllahu ‘anhu.

Hadith

The Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam himself clarified the purity of his lineage in his own words so that no person can dare challenge it.

1. The Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam said:

When Allah began creation, he placed me in the best group thereof. He then created clans and gave me the best clan. When he created families, he gave me the most superior of them. I am the best in terms of my being and family.¹⁰

2. He also said:

Allah sent me from pure loins to pure wombs.

3. ‘AbdAllah ibn ‘Abbas radiyAllahu ‘anhu narrates that some people from the Quraysh once came to my auntie – Safiya bint ‘Abdul Muttalib – and showed pride at their lineage.

Safiya radiyAllahu ‘anha refuted them by saying how can your lineage be the best when we are beloved to Allah, that is, only the lineage of the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam can be the best, not yours. They were angered upon hearing this and said, the lineage of the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam is like a branch of dates growing from rubbish. Safiya radiyAllahu ‘anha told the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam of the incident upon which the Prophet sallAllahu ‘alaihi wasallam:

⁹ 9:128

¹⁰ Tirmidhi, 2:223

Became very angered and ordered Bilal radiyAllahu 'anhu to gather the people. Thereafter, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam ascended the pulpit and asked them:

Oh people, Who am I? The messenger of Allah, they replied. He then asked them to talk about his lineage. They replied by saying you are the grandson of 'Abdul Muttalib and the son of 'AbdAllah. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam then said: What will become of that nation that demeans my lineage. They should know that I am greater than them in terms of lineage.¹¹

The words of *Tirmidhi* are: I am the best in respect of lineage and family.¹²

4. 'Aisha radiyAllahu 'anha narrates that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam once asked Jibril 'alaihi salam about the superiority of his family. So, Jibril 'alaihi salam replied:

I saw the whole world – the east and the west – I did not find one person greater than you and no family greater than Bani Hashim.¹³

The parents of the Prophet becoming alive and accepting Islam

Some narrations show that after demise, the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were made alive and professed belief in the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. This is from the specialities that were granted to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.

Imam Tabrani narrates from 'Aisha radiyAllahu 'anha that during Hajjat al-Wida', the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam went to a graveyard called 'Hujun'. He was in a state of sadness and due to the will of Allah, he remained there. He then became happy and returned to us. I asked, Oh Prophet of Allah, you were sad earlier but have returned happy. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam replied:

I asked Allah about my mother so Allah made her alive for my sake. She professed belief in me and she was then returned to Barzakh.¹⁴

Hafidh Abu Bakr Khatib Baghdadi in *al-Sabiq wa al-Lahiq* and Hafidh 'Umar ibn 'Uthman in *al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh* have narrated this narration of 'Aisha in greater detail in these words:

When the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam came with us at the time of Hajjat al-Wida', he took me with him to the Hujun graveyard. He was extremely sad and

¹¹ Masalik al-Hunafa with reference to Musnad Bazzar, p.132

¹² al-Tirmidhi, 2:223

¹³ Mishkat al-Masabih, p.511

¹⁴ Nur al-Huda with reference to Majma' al-Awsat, p.42

asked me to wait so I did so leaning against the camel chair. A long time later, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam returned and he was exceptionally joyful and smiling. I said: You had left here sorrowful and I too cried after hearing you cry. Now you are particularly happy. Why? The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam replied: I had gone to see the grave of my mother and asked Allah to make her alive. So, Allah made her alive and she professed belief in me and then went back.¹⁵

Clarification of a misconception

If a question is asked that the verses and hadiths presented earlier prove that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were monotheists before they demised, whereas the narration above shows that they were not Muslims before but were made alive and then became Muslims.

The answer to this is that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were most definitely Muslims before. They were not made alive and to accept Islam because they were not Muslims, rather, the reason was so that they could attain the rank of companionship [sahabiyat].

Imam 'Abdul 'Aziz Parharwi writes:

These narrations are reconciled because they were not made alive to accept Islam. Rather, it was to show their reverence and to cause a further increase in their rank.¹⁶

The abovementioned verses and hadiths clearly prove that none of the ancestors of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were infidels or polytheists because Allah said about infidels and polytheists: Truly the Pagans are unclean [9:28], hence declaring their impurity. If the ancestors of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were unbelievers, then how can the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam declare them all to be pure?

Sayings of the Scholars

It is important to present the views of relied upon scholars so that it becomes clear that one should consider the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam as Muslims.

1. Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi writes regarding the mentioned verse:

This verse proves that all the ancestors of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were Muslims.¹⁷

2. Imam ibn Hajar Makki writes:

¹⁵ al-Sabiq wa al-Lahiq, p.377

¹⁶ al-Nibras, p.527

¹⁷ Tafsir al-Kabir

All the fathers and mothers of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam up to Adam and Hawwa are Muslims, not Kafirs. This is because Kafirs are impure, not clean [and the Qur'an and hadiths have declared his ancestors to be pure].¹⁸

3. Imam Qurtubi writes about the specialities of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam:

Being made alive and declaring their Islam is impossible neither rationally nor in the Shari'ah because at many places, the Qur'an has talked of making the dead alive. Such as the murdered man from Bani Isra'il becoming alive and informing of his murderer. 'Isa 'alahis salam too made the dead alive miraculously and also the hadiths mention our Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam giving life to the dead on numerous occasions. When all this is proven, then the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam being made alive and embracing Iman should be accepted. Moreover, this is a miracle of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.¹⁹

4. Imam Zarqani offers some advice:

Oh Muslim, when someone asks you about the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam, then reply that they are from the people of paradise.²⁰

5. Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti has written 7 different works on this topic in which he has proven that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam are people of paradise. His books include:

1. Masalik al-Hunafa fi Walidi al-Mustafa
2. al-Duruj al-Manifa fi al-Aba' al-Sharifa
3. al-Maqal al-Sundusiya fi al-Nisbat al-Mustafawiya
4. al-Ta'dhim wa al-Mannah fi An Abawi RasulAllah fi al-Jannah
5. Nashr al-'Alamin al-Manifin fi Ihya' al-Abawayn al-Sharifayn
6. al-Subul al-Jaliyah fi al-Aba' al-'Aliyah
7. al-Fawa'id al-Kaminah fi Iman al-Sayyidah Amina

6. Imam Shami writes:

It is in the hadith that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam embraced Iman miraculously. Relied upon scholars such Imam Qurtubi and Hafidh Nasir al-Din Dimashqi have graded the hadith as

¹⁸ Afdal al-Qura

¹⁹ al-Tadhkirah, 1:25

²⁰ Zarqani 'ala al-Mawahib, 1:186

Sahih. All this happened miraculously to show the honour of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.²¹

7. Imam ibn Nujaym writes:

It is permissible to send damnation upon every dead person but because the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam professed Islam after being made alive; hence, it is not allowed upon them.²²

8. Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi was asked about a person who says the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam are in hell. The Qadi replied:

Such a person is damned according to the verse: 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 [33:57]. There can be nothing more maligning than saying that someone’s parents are in the fire.²³

9. Imam Alusi writes in the commentary of ‘And your movements among those who prostrate themselves before Allah’ [26:219]:

Most leading Sunni scholars have used this verse to prove the Iman of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. Alas for Mulla ‘Ali Qari. I fear about that person who believes his parents to be Kafirs because he himself may become Kafir.²⁴

10. Imam Nasir al-Din ibn al-Munir Maliki writes in his *al-Muqtafa fi Sharaf al-Mustafa*:

It is in the hadith that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam prayed to Allah and his parents became alive and believed in him. They both affirmed and returned in the state of Iman.²⁵

11. Imam Dayarbakri has stated this is the opinion of most of the scholars of the nation. He writes:

It is the opinion of most scholars and leaders that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam will be saved in the hereafter and if there is an opinion apart from this, these people know it better.²⁶

²¹ Fatawa Shami, 1:298

²² al-Ashbah wa al-Nadha’ir, p.453

²³ Ruh al-Ma’ani

²⁴ Ibid, 2:442

²⁵ Nashr al-‘Alamin, p.57

²⁶ Tarikh al-Khamis, p.301

12. Shaykh ‘Abdul Haq Dihlawi has written on the issue extensively. He writes:

The issue of the Islam of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam was veiled from the earlier scholars and became apparent to the latter scholars. However, the latter scholars proved their Islam using evidences. Not only this, they proved the Islam of all fathers and mothers until Adam 'alaihissalam. This was concealed from the earlier scholars and Allah made it apparent upon the latter scholars and Allah chooses whom He wills for His mercy and grants from His grace what He wills.²⁷

13. Sayyid Mehr ‘Ali Shah was asked about the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam thusly:

Question: Did the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam demise on Islam or not? If not, then which Messengers religion were they on?

Sayyid Mehr ‘Ali proved their Iman by writing:

Answer: There are 3 ways to prove their Islam. Firstly, that they were on the religion on Ibrahim 'alaihissalam. Secondly, they were in the age of Fatrah and not the age of Prophethood, that is, they did not receive any invitation from a Prophet. Thirdly, Allah made them alive due to the supplication of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. Hence, it is narrated in the hadith that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam asked Allah: Oh Allah, make my parents alive and ennoble them with Islam. Allah accepted this supplication and made them alive and ennobled them with Islam. This hadith has been declared weak by the earlier scholars but the latter research scholars have authenticated and praised the hadith in various ways. We also know that the hadith came after those that were narrated by earlier hadith scholars. Hence, this knowledge was mostly hidden from them but Allah made it apparent to the latter scholars. Allah chooses whom He wills for His mercy and grace.²⁸

Clarification of certain misconceptions

There are some questions raised by detractors regarding this issue.

Objection: The First

It is in Sahih Muslim that a person asked the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam:

²⁷ Ashi'at al-Lum'at, 1:717-718

²⁸ Fatawa Mehriya, p.12

Oh Prophet of Allah, where is my father? The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam replied: In hell. When he returned, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said: My father and your father are in hell.

Answer: The hadith scholars have answered this in various ways. We shall mention a few of these:

1. In this narration, the reporter Hammad has narrated the meaning and not the exact words because the same narration has been reported by Mu'ammār and other narrators but these words are not mentioned. Even though Mu'ammār is more reliable than Hammad.

Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti answers by writing:

Not all narrators agree on the words 'my father and your father are in hell'. Only Hammad has narrated these words and Imam Muslim has reported these words from Hammad only. The same narration is reported from Mu'ammār but these words are not therein. Rather, in their place, the words, 'Whenever you pass the grave of a polytheist, give him tidings of the fire'. There is no mention of the father of Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam even though this narration is far more reliable than the previous one. Mu'ammār has a far stronger memory than Hammad and clear proof of this is the fact that many people have challenged his memory. Many hadiths narrated by him are Munkar and hadith scholars have explained that his adopted son altered his books and when Hammad narrated from them, he would be doubtful. As for Mu'ammār, none of these things affect him. There is neither a question over his memory nor any Munkar narrations from him.²⁹

Meaning, these words are not in the narration of Mu'ammār, rather, other words are present in their place and they are: 'Whenever you pass the grave of a polytheist, give him tidings of the fire'.

Also, the narration of Mu'ammār is supported by the narration of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas radiyAllahu 'anhu that is reported in Musnad Bazzar, Tabrani, Bayhaqi and ibn Majah through different chains. The narration is:

A man came to the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam and said: Oh Prophet of Allah, my father used to enjoin relations, where is he now? The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said: In the fire. He asked: Oh Prophet of Allah, where is your father? The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam replied: Whenever you pass the grave of a polytheist, give him tidings of the fire.

In the narration of ibn Majah, it says that the man accepted Islam and thereafter, he used to say: If only I had not asked this question to the Prophet sallAllahu

²⁹ Masalik al-Hunafa, p.146

'alaihi wasallam because now I am burdened with this responsibility that whenever I pass the grave of a Kafir, I must inform him of hell.

Meaning, if I had not asked the question, I would not have to pass every Kafirs grave and utter these words. But, now that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam has spoken them, hence, it is binding upon me that whenever I pass one of their graves, I must say the words to comply with the order of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam.

2. Here, أَبٌ does not refer to 'AbdAllah but Abu Lahab and others who were the uncles of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam because the word father can refer to a fathers younger brothers too. This is why the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam used the word أَبٌ . In the Qur'an and hadith, the word أَبٌ is used for a fathers younger brothers.

Allah says:

When he said to his sons: What will you serve after me? They said: We will serve your god and the god of your fathers, Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq, one Allah only, and to Him do we submit.³⁰

Here, Isma'il has been called أَبٌ . Imam Razi points towards this:

They referred to Isma'il as أَبٌ even though he was their father's younger brother.³¹

It is narrated in *Tirmidhi* from Abu Hurayra radiyAllahu 'anhu that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said:

A father's younger brother is like a father.

At another place, he referred to his father's younger brother, 'Abbas radiyAllahu 'anhu thusly:

Return my father ['Abbas] to me.³²

The word أَبٌ in the narration of Sahih Muslim must be interpreted to mean father's younger brother due to the following reasons:

1. The Qur'an and Sunnah have deemed all forefathers of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be pure. If his father is believed to be a

³⁰ 2:133

³¹ Tafsir al-Kabir, 24:174

³² Ibid.

Kafir [we seek Allah's refuge], then this is opposing these verses and hadiths.

2. The word **اب** must mean father's younger brother because the father of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam passed away before his birth. It was not necessary for him to have faith in the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam. Hence, why would he be punished? The Qur'an has decided: We never punish until we have sent a messenger [17:15]. According to this Qur'anic principle, not even the lowest believer can deem the father of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be in hell, never mind the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam himself saying this.

Objection: The Second

It is in Sahih Muslim that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said:

I asked my Lord for permission to seek forgiveness for my mother and my Lord did not grant it.

Permission for supplicating is only for a deceased Muslim, not a Kafir. If his mother was a believer, there was no reason to seek permission and if it was sought, it would have been granted. Seeking permission and it not being granted proves that his mother was not a believer.

Answer: The Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam seeking permission and not being granted it is an earlier incident whereas the incident of making his parents alive and blessing them with Iman happened after. This is supported by the fact that the narrations which mention his parents being made alive state that this happened at the time of Hajjat al-Wida'. This is why the hadith scholars have said that the narrations of his parents being made alive are abrogators [nasikh] and other narrations are abrogated [mansukh]. We shall quote a few hadith scholars and see how they reconciled these reports:

1. Imam Qurtubi writes:

All praise to Allah, there is no contradiction in these reports because the parents becoming alive happened after the refusal of seeking forgiveness. A clear proof of this is the narration of 'Aisha radiyAllahu 'anha which mentions the parents being made alive happened at the time of Hajjat al-Wida'.³³

2. Imam Qurtubi quotes Imam ibn Shahin thusly:

Imam ibn Shahin has stated that the narration of 'Aisha [being made alive and accepting Islam] is the abrogator of other narrations.³⁴

³³ al-Tadhkirah, 1:24

³⁴ Ibid.

3. Imam Zarqani has ended all confusion through a brilliant line of reasoning which he himself refers to as ‘very exquisite’:

Both narrations [your father any my father and seeking permission from my Lord] can be reconciled by saying that his parents believed in Allah but did not have detailed belief in Qiyamah, Prophethood and other aspects of the Shari’ah even though belief in things such as the hereafter are essential. It is noteworthy that their becoming alive occurred at the time of Hajjat al-Wida’ when the Shari’ah became complete and it was announced in the Qur’an: This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion [5:3]. Hence, Allah made them alive at such a time when the Shari’ah was complete so that they would have Iman on all its constituents in detail. This explanation is very exquisite.³⁵

4. Imam Shami says the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were Muslim and reconciles the two narrations thusly:

The narration of Sahih Muslim in which the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam said: I sought permission from Allah to seek forgiveness for my mother and it was not granted and the other narration that a man asked the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam where his father was, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam replied: My father and your father are in the fire. Both these narrations cannot be proof against the Iman of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam because their becoming alive and believing in him happened after these events and it occurred during Hajjat al-Wida’.³⁶

5. Imam Isma’il Haqqi writes:

What has been mentioned in the narration that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam sought permission to seek forgiveness but it was not granted. This occurred before his parents became alive because being made alive happened at the time of Hajjat al-Wida’ and it is possible that Allah did not grant the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam this privilege then but granted it at the time of the Hajjat al-Wida’.³⁷

6. Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti writes:

³⁵ Zarqani, 1:176

³⁶ Fatawa Shami

³⁷ Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, 1:147

The narrations about his parents being in the fire are all abrogated, or because they were made alive to accept Islam, or because Ahl al-Fatrah are not given punishment.³⁸

These excerpts from the hadith scholars and exegetes show that those narrations that negate the Iman of the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam are from earlier on and those that prove their Iman are from later. Hence, all narrations that negate their Iman are abrogated and correct position will be to believe them to be Muslims.

Some scholars gave another answer that seeking forgiveness for someone who is not a Prophet or Messenger may signify that that person is a sinner and since the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were from Ahl al-Fatrah, it was enough for them to believe in monotheism. The Shari'ah and its rulings were not present due to which someone could be deemed a sinner, therefore, not being granted permission to seek forgiveness proves that they were not sinners.

Imam Sayyid Ahmad Sa'id Kazmi offers the same explanation by writing:

Not being granted permission to seek forgiveness for his mother does not prove her disbelief, we seek Allah's refuge. Rather, it points towards her being free from sin because seeking forgiveness for other than a Messenger indicates them being a sinner, but, because the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam were from the days of Fatrah, it was enough for their salvation to believe in monotheism. There were no ruling of Shari'ah due to which someone could be deemed a sinner. Hence, permission to seek forgiveness was denied so that the notion of them being sinners would not arise.³⁹

Objection: The Third

Imam Abu Hanifa believed that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam passed away on Kufr. He has elucidated this in his *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* wherein he writes: ماتا على الكفر meaning they both demised on Kufr.

Answer: Scholars have given various answers to this some of which we will present:

1. These words have been added to *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* because relied upon version do that contain them.

Imam Tahtawi writes in *Hashiya Durr al-Mukhtar*:

It is in *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* that the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam demised on Kufr. This is an accusation and slander against

³⁸ al-Ta'dhim wa al-Mannah, p.47

³⁹ Maqalat Kazmi, 1:64

Imam Abu Hanifa because relied upon versions of this book do not contain these words.⁴⁰

2. The actual words are *ما ماتا على الكفر* and not *ماتا على الكفر*. One *ما* was mistakenly left out which created confusion and proof of this is that older version of *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* contain the word *ما* .

Imam Murtada Zabidi writes in this regard in his *al-Intifad li Walidi al-Nabi al-Mukhtar* that I saw these words when I studied *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* with my teacher Shaykh Ahmad bin Mustafa al-Halabi who commented on them by writing:

When the copyist saw the word *ما* twice, he thought that one of them was extra. Hence, he did not write one of them. Therefore, an incorrect version was published.⁴¹

The Shaykh has used the context of the passage in *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* to prove that this is indeed a mistake by the copyist. He writes:

The context proves that there should be a *ما* here because if the ruling for his uncle, Abu Talib, was the same as that for his parents, then the ruling for all three individuals would have been given in one sentence. The reason for writing two sentences was to show that the ruling differs.⁴²

After including this discussion in his paper *al-Imam 'Ali Qari*, Shaykh Ibrahim Qawtlani writes about two ancient manuscripts that he saw in Egypt which contain the word *ما* :

All praise to Allah, I saw two ancient manuscripts of *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* in Egypt which both contain the word *ما* . From this, we can judge that Mulla 'Ali Qari had an incorrect version of *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* in which the word *ما* was not present.

When research scholars have clarified that one *ما* was left out accidentally, then to use this passage as proof is not acceptable. The Shaykh also explains that in Maktaba Shaykh al-Islam in Madina, he saw a manuscript of *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* from the 'Abbasid era which does not contain any of this passage. Rather, these words are in its place:

The father of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam demised on Fatrah and Abu Talib demised on Kufr.⁴³

⁴⁰ Hashiya Durr al-Mukhtar

⁴¹ al-Imam 'Ali al-Qari wa Atharahu fi al-Hadith, p.119

⁴² Ibid, p.110

⁴³ Ibid.

Objection: The Fourth

Imam ‘Ali Qari believed the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam to be disbelievers. He has written a book on this topic.

Answer: Indeed, Imam ‘Ali Qari has written a book on the subject but scholars have disliked this. Moreover, even Imam ‘Ali Qari himself retracted from this position near the end of his life. The commentator of Nibras, Imam Barkhurdar, writes:

Mulla ‘Ali Qari erred on this issue and he slipped but it is narrated in *al-Qawl al-Mustahsan* that he retracted from this stance, meaning he repented for it.⁴⁴

The actual belief of Imam ‘Ali Qari

Shaykh Mustafa al-Humami writes that the writing of Imam ‘Ali Qari in *Sharh Shifa’* proves that he recanted from his previous stance. The two passages from *Sharh Shifa’* are:

1. At one place, 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.

Commenting on this, Imam ‘Ali Qari writes:

The Imam of Abu Talib is not proven but regarding the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam, there are various opinions but the preferred one is that they were Muslims. The leading scholars of Islam are agreed on this.⁴⁵

2. At another place, Imam ‘Ali Qari writes on this issue thusly:

Scholars have written about the parents of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alaihi wasallam being made alive and accepting Islam. This is the preferred position and the majority of scholars are of this opinion. Imam Suyuti has written numerous monographs on this subject.⁴⁶

Bear in mind, *Sharh Shifa’* is amongst the final works of Imam ‘Ali Qari. This version of *Sharh Shifa’* was published in 1316 AH in Istanbul and I possess a copy.

⁴⁴ Hashiya Nibras, p.526

⁴⁵ *Sharh Shifa’*, 1:601

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 1:648