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Treatises on the Salvation of Abū Ṭālib

[Treatises on the Salvation of Abu Talib (A.S)]

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Alhassanain network does not acknowledges with all contents of this book and we think that Abu Talib (A.S) and Parents of Holy Prophet (P) were mumin [Din e Hanif of Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S)] even before the Bisath of Holy Prophet.

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Abstract

The following article surveys a few treatises regarding the salvation of the Prophet Muḥammad's uncle, Abū Ṭālib b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. circa 619 CE). The controversy concerning Abū Ṭālib's place in the hereafter stems from a wealth of reports condemning him to hell due to his refusal to convert to Islam and others which testify to his lifelong belief in God and the prophethood of Muḥammad. The first group of reports was canonized in the collections of Bukhārī and Muslim, while the second group largely appeared in sīra and Shī'ī ḥadīth literature. Although Shī'ī thinkers have upheld the faith and salvation of Abū Ṭālib from the earliest periods of Islamic history, very few Sunnīs shared this opinion despite transmitting some of the same proof-texts cited in Shī'ī works. According to most Sunnīs, these proof-texts were either inconclusive or insufficient in proving Abū Ṭālib's conversion to Islam or his salvation. However, there is a remarkable shift in the sensibilities of some Sunnīs after the ninth century hijrī (fifteenth century CE). In contrast to early Sunnīs who considered such a possibility to be unlikely or flatly denied it, a few Sunnīs over the past five centuries have joined their Shī'ī co-religionists in their commitment to the salvation of Abū Ṭālib. This article introduces the relevant proof-texts and theological arguments that classical Shī'ī and modern Sunnī writers have utilized to advocate the belief in Abū Ṭālib's salvation.

Keywords

Abū Ṭālib - ḥadīth criticism - Sunnī theology - Shī'ī theology - salvation - Muḥammad al-Barzanjī - Aḥmad Dahlān - Sulaymān al-Azharī - 'Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī - Ibn al-Ma'add - al-Shaykh al-Mufīd - ahl al-bayt

Introduction

The following is a survey of a few treatises from the Islamic intellectual tradition regarding the salvation of the Prophet Muḥammad's uncle, Abū Ṭālib b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. circa 619 CE).¹ Although Shī'ī thinkers have upheld the faith and salvation of Abū Ṭālib from the earliest periods of Islamic history, very few Sunnīs agreed with this opinion despite transmitting some of the same proof-texts cited in Shī'ī works.² According to most Sunnīs, these proof-texts were either inconclusive or insufficient in proving Abū Ṭālib's conversion to Islam or his salvation. However, there is a remarkable shift in the sensibilities of some Sunnīs after the ninth century hijrī (fifteenth century CE). The diffusion of Sufi culture in the seventh and eighth centuries hijrī resulted in the popularity of certain festivals and beliefs across the Muslim world. For example, Sufism encouraged the celebration of the mawlid (Muḥammad's birth), belief in the primordial light of Muḥammad, the salvation of his parents, and the sanctity of his descendants.³ It seems one understudied consequence of Sufi devotion to Muḥammad and his kin was the composition of treatises defending the salvation of Abū Ṭālib in Sunnī circles. In contrast to early Sunnīs who considered such a possibility to be unlikely or flatly denied it, a few Sunnīs since the seventh/thirteenth century have joined their Shī'ī co-religionists in their commitment to the salvation of Abū Ṭālib. The earliest Sunnī to argue in favor of Abū Ṭālib's salvation seems to have been Sa'd al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Ṣāliḥānī (d. 612/1215) in a ḥadīth compilation on the merits of the Prophet's household entitled al-Muṭtabā.⁴ Although his work is lost, it seems that the author relied on ḥadīth that depicted Abū Ṭālib dying as a Muslim and early Hāshimid authorities like Ibn 'Abbās (d. c. 68/687) and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) scolding those who believed otherwise.⁵ The earliest Sunnī to argue for Abū Ṭālib's salvation in an extant book was the well-known Shāfi'ī historian and Ayyūbid prince, Abū l-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. 'Alī (d. 732/1331).⁶ Other prominent Sunnīs who briefly argued the same opinion include the Shāfi'ī scholar Aḥmad b. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Ījī (active 820/1417), the Mālikī jurist Aḥmad b. Yūnus b. Sa'īd (d. 878/1474), the Ḥanafī Muḥammad b. Ṭulūn (d. 953/1547), and three more Shāfi'ī jurists, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 973/1565), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sajīnī (d. 1158/1745) and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Suḥaymī (d. 1178/1765).⁷ Only in the past three hundred years has the salvation of Abū Ṭālib become the subject of a number of monographs in the Sunnī intellectual tradition. Prominent Sunnī thinkers who have argued in favor of Abū Ṭālib's spiritual eminence include Muḥammad al-Barzanjī (d. 1103/1691), Muḥammad Mu'īn b. Muḥammad Amīn al-Tatawī (d. 1161/1748), Sulaymān al-Azharī al-Lādhīqī (active 1165/1752), Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh Mīrghanī (d. c. 1300/1882), Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān (d. 1304 AH/1886), Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Jannūn al-Ṣaghīr (d. 1326/1908), Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Saqqāf (b. 1380/1961), and the Saudi writer Ḥasan b. Farḥān al-Mālikī (b. 1390/1970).⁸ Before considering this modern development in the Sunnī intellectual tradition, the following section briefly summarizes portrayals of Abū Ṭālib in Islamic historiography.

Abū Ṭālib in Islamic Historiography

According to *sīra* and *ḥadīth* literature, Abū Ṭālib b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b.

Hāshim was the paternal uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad who raised him after the death of the latter’s parents and previous guardian, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim. When the Prophet began his mission, Abū Ṭālib was unwavering in his protection of his nephew despite the numerous attempts of the chiefs of the Quraysh to persuade him otherwise.⁹ The preaching of Muḥammad in Mecca coupled with the protection of Abū Ṭālib, chief of the Hāshimids, led the tribe of Quraysh to initiate a persecutory boycott against the clans of Hāshim and its only ally al-Muṭṭalib.¹⁰ The boycott prohibited any clan from conducting any commerce or contracting any marriages with those aligned with the Prophet. The Hāshimids were confined to an area in Mecca known as the *shi‘b* (“ravine”) of Abū Ṭālib for a period of three years and reduced to abject poverty.¹¹ Abū Ṭālib and Muḥammad’s wife Khadīja bt. Khuwaylid died soon after the sanctions against them were lifted. Muḥammad was deeply pained at the loss of his wife and uncle and allegedly referred to the period as the “year of sorrows.”¹² The Prophet and Abū Ṭālib are portrayed in the *ḥadīth* literature as dearly loving one another.¹³ Later theologians who condemn Abū Ṭālib as an unbeliever do not deny Muḥammad’s love for his uncle and in fact cite it as the reason for revelation of the verse, “Indeed thou wilt not guide [all] whom thou lovest.”¹⁴

The controversy concerning Abū Ṭālib’s place in the hereafter stems from a wealth of reports condemning him to hell due to his refusal to convert to Islam and others which testify to his lifelong belief in God and the prophethood of Muḥammad. The first group of reports was canonized in the collections of Bukhārī and Muslim, while the second group largely appeared in *sīra* literature and Shī‘ī *ḥadīth* works.¹⁵ A third group of reports suggests that he converted on his deathbed or that God miraculously resurrected him and he subsequently believed.¹⁶ Medieval historians and *ḥadīth* specialists narrated the conflicting reports, sometimes in the very same work.¹⁷ The third group of reports likely began to circulate as a response to the canonized reports that narrated his rejection of Islam on his deathbed. Reports about Abū Ṭālib’s rejection of Islam possessed polemical value to ‘Abbāsids and likely became popular among the ‘Uthmāniyya who held ‘Alī and his house in contempt.¹⁸

Exegesis explaining the reason for which a number of verses were revealed has played a large role in condemning Abū Ṭālib.¹⁹ The canonization of the *ḥadīth* collections of Bukhārī and Muslim and their inclusion of reports that only placed Abū Ṭālib in hell undoubtedly influenced the later Sunnī community to consider him damned.²⁰ While Shī‘ī scholars possessed an outlook that permitted the dismissal of *ḥadīth* in the *ṣaḥīḥayn* as false without any dilemmas, Sunnī theologians felt obliged to acknowledge their authenticity and used some ingenuity to incorporate them in their defense of the salvation of Abū Ṭālib. These Sunnī authors concluded that Abū Ṭālib would go to hell for a period, but that he would eventually enter paradise. Theologians could thus be grouped into three groups: those who believed Abū Ṭālib was eternally damned, those who

believed he was innocent of any wrongdoing, and those who believed he would be temporarily punished. The works of Sunnī and Shī'ī scholars belonging to the last two categories are reviewed in this article as they both agree on his salvation. I will compare their methods of argumentation and some of their proofs to better understand how they respond to the opposing viewpoint.

The pronouncements of those who condemn Abū Ṭālib have been excluded from this study for two reasons. First, their method of argumentation is straightforward. They cited reports from the two most revered collections of ḥadīth in the Sunnī tradition and utilized their contents to judge the truthvalue of reports recorded in other works. In their opinion, proof-texts regarding Abū Ṭālib's conversion or salvation are insufficient or can be shown to be defective through isnād criticism. Second, the treatises under review cite the major proofs of their opponents before responding with rebuttals. As a result, an investigation of judgments regarding Abū Ṭālib's condemnation would largely be redundant. To my knowledge, complete treatises on Abū Ṭālib's doom do not exist.²¹ However, canonical ḥadīth collections and their commentaries comprehensively discussed the matter.²²

The Salvation of Abū Ṭālib in Sunnism

Before reviewing some of the extant treatises, this section introduces a few scholars in the Sunnī intellectual tradition who have upheld the salvation of Abū Ṭālib. Al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Rasūl al-Barzanjī al-Husaynī

(d. 1103/1691) can be credited for writing the first comprehensive treatise within the Sunnī community defending the salvation of Abū Ṭālib, although two groups of predecessors preceded him. On one hand, there were Sunnī scholars and ḥadīth transmitters who agreed with him, but never wrote a treatise on the matter.²³ On the other, there were scholars who narrated reports concerning the salvation of Abū Ṭālib, but were unsure of the truth of the matter. Both groups obviously cannot be included in the alleged consensus of Sunnī scholars who consider him doomed.²⁴

Although literary evidence suggests a handful of Sunnī scholars upheld the salvation of Abū Ṭālib before al-Barzanjī wrote his text in 1088 AH,²⁵ some have been mistakenly included in such lists. Despite claims to the contrary, it seems that neither al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370), nor Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) argued for the salvation of Abū Ṭālib. Unfortunately, the distinction is rarely made between scholars who only noted the existence of evidence for the salvation of Abū Ṭālib and those who upheld such a belief. For example, Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān and ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī (d. 1392/1972) mention al-Qurṭubī, al-Subkī, al-Suyūṭī, and al-Sha‘rānī (d. 973/1565) as part of a circle of Sunnī scholars in the Sunnī tradition who upheld Abū Ṭālib’s conversion to Islam.²⁶ Al-Sha‘rānī does indeed defend the salvation of Abū Ṭālib in one work, but al-Qurṭubī only mentions the possibility.²⁷ In contrast, al-Subkī and al-Suyūṭī explicitly uphold the view that Abū Ṭālib rejected Islam. The confusion that may have arisen with Subkī is discussed below. A treatise of al-Barzanjī is frequently misattributed to al-Suyūṭī, who despite utilizing similar hermeneutical techniques to “save” the Prophet’s parents in numerous treatises, refrains from employing them for the benefit of Abū Ṭālib.²⁸ Both al-Sha‘rānī and al-Qurṭubī refer to his salvation only in the context of some Sufis who believed that God resurrected Abū Ṭālib in order for him to convert. Those who upheld such a belief drew parallels with Christ’s ability to resurrect the dead and state that such a miracle was fully in accordance with the Prophet’s rank as the greatest prophet.²⁹ They firmly believed that God had resurrected the Prophet’s parents in this way, so that on the Day of Judgment they could be raised as faithful members of the Muslim community.

In contrast, I have not found direct evidence that Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) or his son Tāj al-Dīn believed in the salvation of Abū Ṭālib as some have claimed.³⁰ Rather Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī argues explicitly that Abū Ṭālib was condemned to hell because he never converted.³¹ However, scholars who believed in Abū Ṭālib’s salvation appealed to al-Subkī because he did indeed consider Abū Ṭālib to have believed (kāna mu‘taqidan) in the prophethood of Muḥammad. He cites Abū Ṭālib’s poetry as clear proof that he accepted the prophetic claims of his nephew.³² However, in his theological discussion of what constitutes proper “faith”

(īmān) and the minimum requirements of salvation, a long-standing debate in the theological tradition, al-Subkī comes down on the side of ḥadīth specialists and most Sunnī theologians. He argues that faith in the heart, which Abū Ṭālib seems to have possessed, was not enough for salvation because God required a full conversion, which consisted of pronouncing the testimony of faith (shahāda) and submitting to His legal commandments.³³

He acquiesces that in the view of ‘Abd al-Azīz b. Yaḥyā al-Kinānī al-Makkī (d.c. 240/854) and the circle of Jahm b. Ṣafwān’s (d. 128/746), faith in the heart was sufficient, but that he considered this belief to be incorrect. Al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) makes the same point about the insufficiency of faith in the heart alone in the context of discussing Abū Ṭālib. Al-Qarāfī acknowledges that Abū Ṭālib believed in the prophethood of his nephew manifestly and in his heart (āmāna bi ṣāḥirih wa-bāṭinih).³⁴ Both al-Subkī and al-Qarāfī acquiesce in the arguments of the Sunnī and Shī‘ī authors who claim Abū Ṭālib’s poetry clearly indicate his belief in the prophethood of Muḥammad. Their response is that such faith was not enough for salvation, and they deny any possibility that he had ever secretly converted, citing the authority of canonical ḥadīth that contradict such a claim.

According to Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suhaylī (d. 581/1185) allegedly saw in a book by al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956) that Abū Ṭālib became a Muslim.³⁵ Despite some acceptance as a Shāfi‘ī, the latter was also considered a Shī‘ī,³⁶ so such a discovery in one of his books would not be surprising. However, Ibn Ḥajar’s memory is slightly off: al-Suhaylī had in fact seen that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet’s grandfather, had died a Muslim in al-Mas‘ūdī’s famous extant work of history.³⁷ Nonetheless, al-Suhaylī and Ibn Ḥajar are correct in noting that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s death as a Muslim would also imply Abū Ṭālib’s conversion, since the latter publicly claimed on his deathbed to follow the religion of his father. In any case, the earliest recension of Abū Ṭālib’s conversion in the Sunnī community exists in the sīra of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq (d. 151/767), a text which obviously predates al-Mas‘ūdī’s works by two centuries.³⁸

The texts written by Sunnī authors in this survey are Sadād al-Dīn wa-Sidād al-Dayn fī Najāt al-Abawayn al-Sharifayn (“Correcting Belief and Providing Guidance in Substantiating the Salvation of the Two Noble Parents”) by al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Barzanjī al-Husaynī;³⁹ Bulūgh al-Ma‘ārib bi-Najāt Ābā’ihī wa-‘Ammihī Abī Ṭālib (“Accomplishing the Aims of [proving] the Salvation of his Parents and his uncle Abū Ṭālib”) by al-Sayyid Sulaymān al-Azharī al-Lādhīqī, and Asnā al-Matālib fī Najāt Abī Ṭālib (“The Most Brilliant Demands for the Salvation of Abū Ṭālib”) by al-Sayyid Ahmad Zaynī Daḥlān al-Ḥasanī.⁴⁰ The author of Bulūgh al-Ma‘ārib is not certain, however, internal evidence indicates he was alive in 1165/1752.⁴¹ The manuscript copy held at Princeton University ends without the author identifying himself, but the cover of the copy at the National Library in Cairo names “al-Sayyid Sulaymān al-Azharī al-Lādhīqī” as the author.⁴² The editor of the published edition of Bulūgh al-Ma‘ārib mistakenly identifies the author as Sulaymān b. ‘Umar al-‘Ujaylī, known as al-Jamal, but there is some evidence that this is incorrect.⁴³ The author of

Bulūgh was a Hāshimid who used the surname sayyid and his nisba (al-Lādhiqī) indicates that he was originally from Latakia or became a resident there. On the other hand, al-‘Ujaylī was born in Egypt (in the village of ‘Ujayl) and settled in Cairo.⁴⁴ Manuscripts of al-‘Ujaylī’s works neither include a sayyid surname nor the nisba “al-Lādhiqī.” Al-‘Ujaylī even assumes Abū Ṭālib’s rejection of Islam and punishment in hell to be true in his exegesis of the Qur’ān.⁴⁵ Thus, it is unlikely al-‘Ujaylī is the author of our text.

Additional information about al-Sayyid Sulaymān al-Azharī does not appear in bibliographical catalogues, but one genealogist in Latakia has written about an imam of a large mosque in the city who possessed the same name and was contemporaneous to the composition of Bulūgh.⁴⁶ Al-Sayyid Sulaymān b. Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Ḥusaynī al-Azharī al-Lādhiqī allegedly came from a Moroccan Ḥusaynid family and studied at al-Azhar University. Sulaymān Pasha al-‘Azm (d. 1156/1742) asked him to come to Latakia (circa 1139/1727) in order to become the Imam of the newly constructed, large mosque known until today as al-Jāmi‘ al-Jadīd. Sulaymān al-Azharī also became the marshal of the Hāshimids (naqīb al-ashrāf) of Latakia and the patriarch of a prominent family in the city.⁴⁷ If Sulaymān al-Azharī is our third author then it seems all of the Sunnī authors were descendants of the Prophet who studied with leading Sunnī theologians and jurists and were granted public positions that required them to produce pronouncements.⁴⁸

A thorough bibliographical study of treatises on the salvation of Abū Ṭālib in the Sunnī and Imāmī intellectual traditions was published in 2001 and can be found online.⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the inclusion of a few scholars and lost texts from the medieval period that probably did not uphold Abū Ṭālib’s salvation,⁵⁰ at least eighty texts are listed in defense of the faith and salvation of Abū Ṭālib. The bibliography is a good source for discovering some of the titles that have appeared over the past two centuries in both Sunnī and Imāmī circles.

Abū Ṭālib in the Shī‘ī Tradition

It seems that questions regarding the faith of Abū Ṭālib did not enter Shī‘ī circles until the middle of the second century hijrī. His faith and salvation may have been assumed and uncontested until then. For example, the Umayyadera Kufan text, Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays, makes no reference to debates regarding the salvation of Abū Ṭālib. He appears in the text as a powerful aide to the Prophet who would order his nephew to deliver the revelation from his Lord and diligently defend him from any harm. While this image of Abū Ṭālib also appears in Sunnī sources, it is not contradicted by any indication that he ever repudiated the message of the Prophet in Shī‘ī literature. In fact, the author of Kitāb Sulaym and his audience assume Abū Ṭālib to be a devout Shī‘ī when the Prophet specifically orders him to recognize ‘Alī as his successor, “Oh Abū Ṭālib listen now to your son ‘Alī and obey him. For indeed God has made his rank in proximity to His Prophet that of Aaron onto Moses.”⁵¹ Obviously, such advice would not be given to someone who rejected the prophethood of Muḥammad, Moses or Aaron. Finally, Abū Ṭālib is mentioned as a carrier of the sacred light that was passed on from Adam to ‘Alī.⁵² In Imāmī theology God would not have selected individuals guilty of polytheism or any other major sin to carry divine light in their loins and wombs. Both the ritual impurity and theological corruption of polytheists are generally upheld in Imāmī exegesis of the verse *“Indeed the polytheists are impure”* [Q9:28].⁵³

Al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) included a section on the faith and salvation of Abū Ṭālib in his al-Kāfī that succinctly expresses Shī‘ī sentiments on the matter: Abū Ṭālib and his fathers were believers who witnessed the miracles of God, he hid his faith to protect the Prophet, and his reward for doing so will be magnified in the Hereafter. Al-Kulaynī’s collection is the earliest one to include reports from the ‘Alid Imams that characterize Sunnī ḥadīth about Abū Ṭālib’s punishment in hell as false.⁵⁴ Following al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) also relied upon ḥadīth in which authorities like Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq rejected claims about the unbelief of Abū Ṭālib to make his case.⁵⁵

According to al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058), a number of Shī‘īs penned treatises on the faith of Abū Ṭālib in the fourth century (hijrī). For example, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ammār al-Kūfī (d. 346/958), a prolific ḥadīth transmitter and writer, and Sahl b. Aḥmad (d. 380/990) reportedly wrote treatises entitled Īmān Abī Ṭālib.⁵⁶ Sahl b. Aḥmad lived in Baghdad and upon his death, Sahl’s funeral prayers were led by the author of our earliest extant treatise, the famous Shī‘ī theologian al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022).⁵⁷ Al-Mufīd was one of Twelver Shī‘ism’s most influential polymaths. He flourished in Baghdad under the Būyids and is well known for his rationalism and contributions to various disciplines.⁵⁸ Al-Mufīd narrated ḥadīth from Sahl,⁵⁹ so it is possible that Sahl may have inspired him to write on the subject.⁶⁰ Although other influential Twelver Shī‘ī scholars like al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) transmitted reports about the faith of Abū Ṭālib in their ḥadīth collections,⁶¹ only authors who wrote comprehensive treatises on the subject are surveyed below.

In addition to al-Mufīd’s work, this article analyzes al-Hujja ‘alā al-dhāhib ilā takfīr Abī Ṭālib (“The Unequivocal Evidence Against Those Who

Consider Abū Ṭālib an Unbeliever”) by Fikhār b. Ma‘add al-Mūsawī (d. 630/1232-3) and the unnamed treatise of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Al-Amīnī.⁶² Like al-Azharī, al-Mūsawī was a prominent ‘Alid marshal. He lived in Iraq and was well connected to Shī‘ī legal and ḥadīth circles as his reports on Abū Ṭālib and his various teaching licenses indicate.⁶³ Al-Mūsawī was particularly famous for writing his treatise on Abū Ṭālib even in non-Shī‘ī circles. The Mu‘tazilī Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd praises his work in spite of his own decision to abstain from deciding on the salvation of Abū Ṭālib.⁶⁴ Although he was not a Shī‘ī, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd was staunchly pro-‘Alid. He was exceptional in his readiness to critically engage Shī‘ī literature and would occasionally agree with its authors. On the other hand, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) was an influential Shāfi‘ī jurist and ḥadīth specialist more representative of Sunnī scholarship. He dismissed a Shī‘ī book that argued the case for Abū Ṭālib’s conversion as untrustworthy Shī‘ī myth.⁶⁵ Ibn Ḥajar’s complete rejection of these Shī‘ī reports is not surprising given his credentials as an expert of Sunnī ḥadīth and its criticism. After the second century hijrī, Sunnī ḥadīth specialists generally excluded Zaydī and Imāmī transmitters from their teaching circles due to their differing theologies and legal methodologies that they considered to be incorrect—if not heretical. Consequently, Ibn Ḥajar could not accept any of these reports narrated through Shī‘ī transmitters as authoritative, even if al-Mūsawī’s text cited hundreds of them with complete chains of transmission.

Al-Amīnī was a leading cleric of Iranian descent who studied and lived most of his life in Iraq, but traveled the Muslim world compiling his encyclopedia al-Ghadīr.⁶⁶ The eleven volumes of the unfinished encyclopedia are a testament to his outstanding scholarship. Al-Amīnī carefully scoured the Sunnī intellectual tradition (exegesis, poetry, ḥadīth, history, etc.) to document all attestations of the Prophet’s words regarding ‘Alī after his final pilgrimage at a pool (ghadīr) named al-khummm. The encyclopedia turns into a dialectical study of proof-texts in the Sunnī heritage that uphold various tenets of Shī‘ī law, theology and history. Undoubtedly, al-Amīnī had read the criticisms of Sunnī ḥadīth specialists like Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, who claimed that Shī‘ī beliefs were either unsubstantiated through acceptable chains of transmission or worse had no basis at all.⁶⁷ Al-Amīnī methodically engaged them by limiting himself mostly to Sunnī sources and using the tools of Sunnī ḥadīth criticism to authenticate reports that were in his favor and dismiss others that were not.⁶⁸ The wide breadth and polemical value of his work should not be understated. Al-Amīnī’s chapter on the faith of Abū Ṭālib is the third and most recent Shī‘ī text in this study.

Pro-‘Alid Sentiment in the Texts

The theologians arguing for the salvation of Abū Ṭālib, regardless of their sectarian affiliations, seem to be largely inspired by pro-‘Alid sentiments and an allegiance to the belief in the flawless character of the Prophet. Pro-‘Alid sentiment among non-Shī‘īs can be identified through their deep reverence for the Household (ahl al-bayt) and (occasionally) the belief in their succession to the Prophet in spiritual authority.⁶⁹

Citing the Qur’ān (Q58:22) as a proof-text, the pro-‘Alid authors in this study argue that it does not befit the Prophet to share a loving relationship with individuals destined for hell.⁷⁰ The Prophet was simply too committed to God to blemish his allegiance to Him with love for someone who rejected the faith.⁷¹ Second, they argue that it does not befit the Prophet and his famous offspring to possess unbelieving ancestors. All of the authors agree that the Prophet and his Household descended from an unbroken chain of monotheists that extended back to the Biblical Adam. The belief in the prophetic light of Muḥammad descending through the loins of his ancestors is an evident motif in explanations of this belief.⁷² Scholars who do not ascribe faith to Muḥammad’s ancestors only acquiesce that none of them engaged in illicit sexual acts due to ḥadīth that they deem reliable in this regard.⁷³ Finally, all of the authors are personally invested in the salvation of Muḥammad’s Household either due to their own descent from the Prophet or the legitimacy it gives to the theological beliefs of Sufism and Shī‘ism.⁷⁴

The Prophet's Parents

Hadīth in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim explicitly condemn the Prophet's parents and Abū Ṭālib to hell.⁷⁵ Scholars who extend salvation to the Prophet's parents, but not to Abū Ṭālib, usually cite the ḥadīth of the ṣaḥīḥayn as the principal obstruction.⁷⁶ There is a problem, however, in rejecting reports about the damnation of the Prophet's parents and accepting those about Abū Ṭālib. For example, al-Suyūṭī and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854) and Ibrāhīm al-Bayjūrī (1276/1860) fall within this category.⁷⁷ They accept that God will deal compassionately with people to whom no prophet appeared and also accept evidence that the Prophet's grandfather and parents were actually monotheists.⁷⁸ However, the damnation of Abū Ṭālib is predicated upon the assumption that he wished to remain upon the religion of his fathers, which the reports identify as the polytheism of the chiefs of Quraysh.⁷⁹ A logical inconsistency emerges in the belief that the Prophet's ancestors were monotheists, while Abū Ṭālib was a polytheist due to an allegiance to those same ancestors. With reference to the salvation of the Prophet's parents and Abū Ṭālib, theologians have held one of three opinions; all are doomed, only Abū Ṭālib is doomed, or none are doomed. The authors of the texts under review belonged to the last category and in two cases, the surviving treatise on Abū Ṭālib directly followed one regarding the salvation of Muḥammad's parents. This article surveys six representative treatises, three Shī'ī and three Sunnī.

The Proof-Texts

Some of the verses and reports that are cited in these treatises will be summarized and numbered here to acquaint the reader with the material and for easy reference throughout the rest of the paper. For the reports, I have only given a general description of the contents and cited the different recensions that fit the appropriate category.

Verse 1 (V1) Qur'ān, 28:56, *“indeed you cannot guide whomever you desire [to guide], but it is God who guides the one who wishes [for guidance] . . .”*⁸⁰

(V2) Qur'ān, 9:113, *“It is not fitting that the Prophet and those who believe should seek forgiveness for polytheists, though they may be close kin, after it is clarified to them that they are destined for jahīm.”*⁸¹

(V3) Qur'ān, 9:114, *“And Abraham prayed for his father’s forgiveness only due to a promise he had made to him. Yet when it became evident to him that he was an enemy of God, he disassociated himself from him . . .”*

Report 1 (R1) Abū Ṭālib is on his deathbed and in the presence of the polytheists of Quraysh. He refuses the Prophet’s request to pronounce the shahāda.⁸²

(R1S) There are reports through Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab that specifically mention the revelation of V2 and then V1 after the death of Abū Ṭālib. Most who believe in the damnation of Abū Ṭālib cite (R1S) reports as unequivocal evidence since they appear in the ṣaḥīḥayn.⁸³

(R2) Abū Ṭālib is on his deathbed and in the presence of his brother ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib begins moving his lips. ‘Abbas moves nearer to him and hears him reciting the shahāda to himself. ‘Abbas is consistently portrayed in each recension as the only one who hears the statement. He informs the Prophet after the event by swearing, “by God, he said the words which you commanded him to recite.”⁸⁴

(R3) The Prophet is asked if Abū Ṭālib’s kinship and good deeds in service of the Prophet will benefit him in the hereafter. The Prophet responds that his uncle will be brought from the depths of hell to its highest level, where only his feet will touch the fire.⁸⁵

(R4) The Prophet is asked if he wishes anything for Abū Ṭālib after the latter’s death and he says, “I hope for him all that is good.”⁸⁶

(R4I) One of the twelve Imams extols the great hidden faith of Abū Ṭālib or specifically denies the authenticity of R3 (that he will reside at the highest level of hell) in a Shī‘ī ḥadīth.⁸⁷

(R5) Three individuals are spared from the fire or in some recensions, guaranteed intercession; Muḥammad’s father, mother, and Abū Ṭālib.⁸⁸

(R6) The Prophet orders ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to administer Abū Ṭālib’s last rites and burial.⁸⁹ He also orders ‘Alī to maintain ritual purity throughout the entire procedure.⁹⁰

(R7) Muslims witness the Prophet asking God to forgive Abū Ṭālib. This prompts the community to begin praying for the wellbeing of their polytheist ancestors and the revelation of V2 and in some recensions V3.⁹¹

(R8) When the elders of Quraysh agreed to the boycott of the clans of Hāshim and Muṭṭalib, they signed a covenant and placed it inside the Ka‘ba for its sanctification and safe-keeping. During the boycott, the Prophet

received revelation that the parchment describing the conditions of the boycott had been eaten by insects except for the words “In Your Name, O God.” When the Prophet informs Abū Ṭālib of this revelation, he has no doubt in the Prophet’s words and succeeds in using the information to end the boycott. He goes to the chiefs and publicly challenges them to end the boycott if the parchment is in the condition that Muḥammad described. They agree to the challenge and remove the parchment from the Ka’ba to find it eaten away except for the name of God. It is shortly after this incident that the boycott comes to an end.⁹²

(R9) Abū Ṭālib states his final will to the clan of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and informs them that they will be guided as long as they follow Muḥammad.⁹³

Argumentation in the Shī'ī Treatises

The Shī'ī texts share a number of similarities. First, unlike the Sunnī texts they do not consider any R3 recensions to be authentic and do not attempt to incorporate them into their views of Abū Ṭālib. Instead they rely on R4I's, in which an Imam expressly characterizes such reports as false. For example, the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-247/846-861) asks Imam 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Hādī (d. 254/868):

O Abū 'l-Ḥasan! Have not people narrated that when all of mankind is judged to enter heaven or hell, Abū Ṭālib will wear sandals made of flames that will fry his brains? He will be stopped, unable to enter heaven due to his unbelief and [unable to] enter hell for taking custody and care of the Messenger of God, preventing Quraysh [from harming] him, and keeping his mission secret until it became public.

Abū l-Ḥasan says to him, "Woe to you! If the faith of Abū Ṭālib were placed on a scale and the faith of all men were put on another, the faith of Abū Ṭālib would outweigh them all."⁹⁴

Al-Mūsawī and al-Amīnī wrote long and comprehensive monographs, while al-Mufīd wrote a treatise that was comparatively much shorter.⁹⁵ The Shī'ī texts employ a number of proofs to establish the faith of Abū Ṭālib. Wilāya is an important concept in Shī'ism.⁹⁶ Those who recognize the wilāya of the Prophet's Household are portrayed as believers. Similarly, the loyalty of Abū Ṭālib was a manifestation of his recognition of the wilāya of God and His Prophet. He expressed his partisanship through loving and aiding the Prophet as well as sacrificing his clan, children, and self. Detractors claim Abū Ṭālib's loyalty to the Prophet was only motivated by tribalism. Al-Mufīd responds by stating that the vast amount of poetry attributed to Abū Ṭālib explicitly mentions his faith in God and the prophethood of his nephew Muḥammad.⁹⁷ Al-Amīnī argues in this regard that the customary protection of clan members would not have led Abū Ṭālib to encourage his sons to convert or worship with Muḥammad as some reports indicate.⁹⁸ Third, the method by which one proves Abū Ṭālib's unbelief could be used to dismiss the faith of many Muslims of the first century. According to al-Mufīd, it is much easier to declare the first three caliphs unbelievers. He writes,

If [faith] cannot be established for Abū Ṭālib despite his admission of it in his prose and poetry which . . . narrators of sīra and history transmit in addition to his obvious aid of the Prophet and the sacrifice of his children, family, wealth and self for him, public declaration of believing him, and urging others to follow him, then it would be more appropriate and reasonable not to confirm the faith of those other individuals we mentioned (Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, whose virtuous deeds have also been related, but are contested). The manifestation of their [faith through deeds] and the prominence [of such deeds] cannot be compared to [the deeds of] Abū Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him . . . this is in addition to their delay in aiding him, their betrayal of him, their fleeing [in war], and that which is not concealed from the intelligent person who learns history and scrutinizes the past.⁹⁹

The point behind his polemically charged analogy deserves some consideration; if Muslims have no qualms in declaring someone an unbeliever despite various sources documenting words and actions of his that show otherwise, how can one prove the faith of any contemporary of the Prophet? Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266) argues that the normative practice of historians is to validate the conversion of a person to Islam by the most meager of evidence, yet despite the clearest and strongest evidence it is remarkable that Muslims refuse to corroborate the Islam of Abū Ṭālib.¹⁰⁰ The authors mention R6 that ends with a cryptic statement of the Prophet “By God I shall intercede for my uncle with an intercession that will surprise all of creation.”¹⁰¹ Shī‘ī claim that ‘Alī’s administration of the final rites on his father and the Prophet’s good words regarding him belie his alleged death as an unbeliever.¹⁰²

Al-Mūsawī and al-Amīnī utilize the Sunnī intellectual tradition to establish the faith of Abū Ṭālib through his words and actions. For example, Abū Ṭālib allegedly writes to the Najāshī, the king of Ethiopia, asking him to treat the Muslims well and praising Muḥammad as someone who “came with guidance just as [Moses and Jesus once] did.”¹⁰³ Abū Ṭālib articulates his faith in poetry after the incident in R8, which includes the words, “Did you not know that we discovered Muḥammad to be a messenger like Moses?”¹⁰⁴ Al-Amīnī and al-Mūsawī include numerous other incidents and examples in which Abū Ṭālib describes Muḥammad as a prophet and praises his religion.¹⁰⁵ Al-Amīnī gathers a number of narrations in which ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the father of Abū Ṭālib, declares his faith in monotheism and the prophethood of Muḥammad to refute interlocutors who argued that Abū Ṭālib’s wish to follow the faith of his father was unbelief.¹⁰⁶ The Sunnī treatises similarly transmit reports about the piety and salvation of Abū Ṭālib’s father, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.¹⁰⁷ These writers obviously felt that if ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s monotheistic faith could be proven, then the basis for which Abū Ṭālib was considered a polytheist was effectively discredited.

Al-Mūsawī and al-Amīnī would like Muslims to consider Abū Ṭālib a Companion of the Prophet, so they gather and cite ḥadīth in which Abū Ṭālib is a narrator in the chain of transmission.¹⁰⁸ According to Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, ‘Alī would order others to perform the pilgrimage on behalf of Abū Ṭālib and repeated this request in his last testament.¹⁰⁹ According to some scholars it is unbelief to harbor malice against Abū Ṭālib.¹¹⁰ Al-Amīnī and al-Mūsawī narrate numerous Shī‘ī ḥadīth extolling the faith of Abū Ṭālib, for example, ‘Alī allegedly states, “my father . . . was a believing Muslim who hid his faith out of fear for what Quraysh would do to the Hāshimids.”¹¹¹

Al-Amīnī finally turns his attention to discrediting recensions of R1S through five arguments. First, he argues the sole source of R1S is Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab (d. ca. 94/712-13), who is unreliable in information concerning ‘Alī and his family because he harbored animosity toward them.¹¹²

In Islamic historiography, Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab is portrayed as a student of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās and a Muslim who believed that another uncle of the Prophet, ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, was the most meritorious Muslim

after Muḥammad and his heir.¹¹³ Whether or not Ibn al-Musayyab truly believed this about ‘Abbās, or conversely, if he actually narrated reports about the damnation of Abū Ṭālib, is not particularly important. However, the ‘Abbāsids in the second century hijrī were particularly keen on legitimizing their rule and R1S reports from Ibn al-Musayyab became authoritative proof-texts in discrediting their ‘Alid rivals.¹¹⁴ First, in a society that believed virtue and vice was inherited from one’s ancestors, Abū Ṭālib’s death as a pagan was viewed as a dishonorable stain on the purity and social capital of Ḥasanids and Ḥusaynids.¹¹⁵ The ‘Abbāsids argued that ‘Abbās, as a paternal uncle, was the closest male relative to the Prophet and thus inherited authority directly from him.¹¹⁶ The ‘Alids, on the other hand, were one step further removed, since they claimed descent from a cousin (‘Alī) and a woman (Fāṭima), both of whom, could not claim to be heirs to such authority in the presence of a paternal uncle.¹¹⁷ Both Goldziher and Donner have noted the great incentive the ‘Abbāsids and their partisans possessed in circulating R1S reports that effectively discredited the ancestor of their rivals as a hell-bound polytheist.¹¹⁸

R1 and R1S reports narrate that the revelation of V1, V2, and V3 occurred soon after the death and burial of Abū Ṭālib. As a second argument, al-Amīnī presents proof-texts that indicate V2 and V3 were revealed at least eight years after the death of Abū Ṭālib.¹¹⁹ Al-Amīnī concludes that it would be unlikely that both verses were responses to the death of Abū Ṭālib given the large time gap. Third, many other verses of the Qur’ān forbid the Prophet and the community to love the enemies of God,¹²⁰ so narratives that portray V1 and V2 as necessary correctives to the Prophet’s behavior seem redundant and out of place. Fourth, the wording of V2 is not actually a negative-imperative, but subject-predicate. The verse implies the community may have had the misconception that it was permissible for the Prophet or Muslims in general to seek forgiveness for polytheists.¹²¹ Rather than commanding the Prophet to desist from any deeds, al-Amīnī argues that V2 simply clarified to the community that it did not befit them to believe the Prophet prayed for polytheists. On that account, al-Amīnī argues that the Prophet was not guilty of any misconduct needing rectification. Finally, al-Amīnī cites other possible reports that explain the reason for revelation of V2 to be unrelated to Abū Ṭālib as likelier alternatives.¹²² After previously problematizing the reliability of R1S reports in the ṣaḥīḥayn, al-Amīnī argues recensions of R1 are through unreliable narrators or mursal.¹²³ For example, the allegedly eyewitness accounts of Abū Hurayra can be discredited because at the time of Abū Ṭālib’s death he was a non-Muslim living in Yemen. Al-Amīnī adds, “the *tadlīs* of Abū Hurayra is well known, he claims to have witnessed an event or the wording of the ḥadīth indicates it although [historically] he was nowhere near it.”¹²⁴

Al-Amīnī makes one last theological argument that our Sunnī authors similarly pose; numerous ḥadīth state that the Prophet will only be allowed to intercede for monotheists on the Day of Judgment. Verses in the Qur’ān consistently warn readers that unbelievers will not have access to any intercession on the Day of Judgment. The connotation of R3 is that an unbeliever shall benefit from the intercession of Muḥammad. According to

these authors, this is clearly contradictory to the manifest meaning of those verses. Both parties are incapable of participating in such an event (Muḥammad interceding for an unbeliever or an unbeliever benefiting from intercession). Al-Amīnī concludes that R3 narratives must be fabricated.

Argumentation in the Sunnī Treatises

In the course of his book, al-Barzanjī utilizes Ash‘arī doctrines, linguistics, second-order interpretations of proof texts, reports with ḍa‘īf (unreliable) chains of transmission, exegesis, and rational proofs such as analogy to make his case. His book attempts to decisively prove the salvation of the Prophet’s parents, all of his ancestors, and in the final chapter, his uncle, Abū Ṭālib. Al-Azhari’s Bulūgh is a very short abridgment of al-Barzanjī’s book while Daḥlān’s Asnā is primarily a treatise that quotes and supplements al-Barzanjī’s final chapter. What follows is a survey of the major arguments Sunnī authors utilized in their works.

First, in response to R1, the authors wish to dismantle the popular belief that faith in God is through public declarations of faith or its pronouncement through the tongue. They appeal to the authority of influential Sunnī scholars who (allegedly) believed that īmān is affirmation (taṣdīq) in the heart of all that Muḥammad preached to be true.¹²⁵ They acknowledge that many throughout history have affirmed the truth of the shahādatayn,¹²⁶ but refused to convert due to obstinacy. Their affirmation in the heart does not benefit them, however, those who could not convert due to a valid reason will have their faith benefit them in the Hereafter.¹²⁷ In this regard, it is permissible to keep from outwardly identifying with Islam due to fear of an oppressor who may inflict unbearable pain or death upon the person, one of his children, or his relatives.¹²⁸ According to al-Barzanjī, al-Azhari, and Daḥlān there is no doubt that Abū Ṭālib was forced into this position, as the person whom he struggled to protect from the assaults of Quraysh was none other than the Prophet. To facilitate his continued protection of the Prophet, Abū Ṭālib had to maintain his position as a chief of Quraysh, which would have been impossible with a public conversion.¹²⁹ Quraysh would continue to respect his position as the Hāshimid chief as long as they believed he had not converted, and his protection of the Prophet was a duty he could not relinquish due to Arab custom.¹³⁰ They also mention Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥalīmī’s (d. 403/1012) belief that one did not have to recite the shahādatayn as it is commonly worded, rather faith is established for a person if he expresses his faith in monotheism and the divine inspiration of Muḥammad in other ways.¹³¹ Abū Ṭālib’s life and poetry is then presented as clear proof of his belief in the shahādatayn. After completing this section defining faith al-Barzanjī writes:

*If this is all accepted then the reports are mutāwatir regarding how Abū Ṭālib used to love the Prophet, aid him, take precautions for him, help him in conveying the message, affirm what he would say as truth, order his sons like Ja‘far and ‘Alī to follow him and help him, praise him in poetry, [and] testify to the truth of his religion.*¹³²

Verses of poetry like:

*Have you not learned that we have found Muḥammad a Messenger in the similitude of Moses? This has been verified in Scripture (lit. books) . . .*¹³³

*And I have learned that the religion of Muḥammad is the best religion for mankind . . .*¹³⁴

*And He Derived his name from His Own to exalt him, For the Possessor of the Throne is Maḥmūd and this is Muḥammad.*¹³⁵

The authors narrate a number of incidents from the life of Abū Ṭālib in which they believe his words and actions testify to his belief. As for his actions, authors cite his efforts to end the boycott (R8) by trusting a prophecy of Muḥammad and a final will attributed to him in which he advises the listeners to follow, aid and care for the Prophet (R9).¹³⁶ Abū Ṭālib is portrayed as participating in events in which the Prophet performs miracles and even depending on him.¹³⁷ In one case, Abū Ṭālib becomes ill, asks the Prophet to pray to God for his health, and is subsequently cured.¹³⁸ Abū Ṭālib testifies that Muḥammad was the bright light that caused mankind to prostrate in a dream ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib once experienced. In his sermon at the marriage of Muḥammad and Khadīja, Abū Ṭālib praises God as the One who honored them with descent from Abraham and Ishmael.¹³⁹ Al-Barzanjī reiterates in a number of places that it is highly unlikely that Abū Ṭālib would experience such events (i.e. miracles) in his lifetime or order others to follow the Prophet and remain an unbeliever himself.¹⁴⁰ Instances in which Abū Ṭālib publicly expressed reluctance to convert are viewed as examples of him intentionally hiding his faith in front of members of Quraysh.¹⁴¹ Daḥlān similarly characterizes proof-texts in which Abū Ṭālib proclaims his devotion to the “milla of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib” as dissimulation.¹⁴² Unlike the salvation of Abū Ṭālib, a larger number of Sunnī scholars accept the belief that the Prophet’s ancestors were monotheists, including his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.¹⁴³ Thus, al-Barzanjī, al-Azharī and Daḥlān considered Abū Ṭālib’s commitment to following his ancestors as an expression of monotheism and an instance of doublespeak.¹⁴⁴

In agreement with the Shī‘ī treatises, they mention that Abū Ṭālib was a Companion who narrated ḥadīth¹⁴⁵ and intercession only encompasses believers on the Day of Judgment.¹⁴⁶ Unlike the Shī‘ī treatises that have the option of dismissing ḥadīth of the ṣaḥīḥayn as false, al-Barzanjī and the other Sunnī writers are obliged to accept the ḥadīth of those canonical collections as true. To my knowledge, the only Sunnī authors to reject the authenticity of R1 and R1s reports, despite their presence in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim are the contemporary pro-‘Alid Sunnī thinkers Ḥasan al-Saqqāf and Ḥasan b. Farḥān al-Mālikī.¹⁴⁷ Both scholars have become infamous for their opposition to Wahhābism, rejection of some canonical ḥadīth through the use of dialectical arguments, condemnation of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān and the Umayyads, and staunch partisanship to the Prophet’s Household without converting to Shī‘ism. Al-Saqqāf and al-Mālikī are willing to reject the prevailing canonical culture (and infallibility) imbued upon ḥadīth in the ṣaḥīḥayn for largely the same reasons that other twentieth-century Muslims have criticized ḥadīth.¹⁴⁸

Rather than reject such reports, the other Sunnī authors artfully reinterpret R3 to substantiate the faith of Abū Ṭālib. First, they conclude that Abū Ṭālib must be a believer since it is his faith that gives him access to Muḥammad’s intercession. Second, Abū Ṭālib’s placement in the highest level of hell is a testament to his faith, as it is a level reserved only for disobedient believers. Third, according to the Qur’ān, unbelievers have no decrease or interruption in their punishment.¹⁴⁹ Fourth, they are confined to

the depths of hell and will never leave those confines. Thus, reports of Abū Ṭālib exiting the depths of hell and his punishment decreasing only testify to his faith.¹⁵⁰ Fifth, if according to R3 the Prophet said, “Abū Ṭālib is the least punished of the people of the fire,” then no individual, believer or unbeliever, may receive a lesser punishment than him. The existence of any individual receiving lesser punishment would entail a contradiction in the words of the Prophet.¹⁵¹ According to al-Barzanjī, ahl al-nār must be differentiated from mukhallad al-nār, the former includes believers who will be burned for a limited period, while the latter group describes those who are destined to stay in hell forever. “Those who will experience the fire,” even for a moment, is thus al-Barzanjī’s reading of ahl al-nār. According to al-Barzanjī, if Abū Ṭālib’s punishment is located on the highest level of hell, then it cannot be for unbelief, but due to some disobedience or obligation he did not fulfill.¹⁵²

As for the apparent contradiction between R1 and R2, al-Barzanjī explains that the incident of R2 abrogates and occurs after R1.¹⁵³ Abū Ṭālib refused to say the testimony of faith in R1 and R1S in front of the chiefs of Quraysh to keep those individuals from harming the Prophet after his death. However, after the Prophet leaves Abū Ṭālib’s bedside, those individuals are appeased and leave as well. It is only after the unbelievers have left that Abū Ṭālib silently utters the shahāda as R2 describes.

Al-Barzanjī explains that if recensions of R7 are compared, it appears that the reports in the ṣaḥīḥayn condemning Abū Ṭālib are abridged versions of longer narratives that exist elsewhere. He compares two types of reports related to the reason for revelation of V2; narrations that allude to the Prophet’s prayer for Abū Ṭālib and others which only cite a group of Companions who began praying for their dead polytheist relatives.¹⁵⁴ Given that recensions that condemn Abū Ṭālib appear in the ṣaḥīḥayn, he obliges himself to accept them as authentic. Al-Barzanjī then relies on a famous principle of ḥadīth specialists, namely to harmonize the recensions so that they do not contradict each other. He asserts that when the Prophet prayed for Abū Ṭālib, his followers, including some of the narrators of R7, mistakenly believed Abū Ṭālib had died without faith. This error prompted a group of Companions to begin praying for the salvation of their polytheist relatives and the narrators to believe that the stimulus for revelation of the verse was the Prophet’s prayer for Abū Ṭālib.¹⁵⁵ However, due to the long number of years between Abū Ṭālib’s death and the revelation of the verse as well as V2’s use of the word jaḥīm, which according to al-Barzanjī signifies the sixth level of hell, V2 must be speaking of the dead relatives of others and not the Prophet’s uncle.¹⁵⁶ Al-Barzanjī cites reports that support a combination of both narratives.¹⁵⁷ Daḥlān agrees with al-Barzanjī’s assessment and argues that sometimes narrators of ḥadīth mistakenly add statements to a report or change its wording so that it reflects their own thinking, even in canonical collections.¹⁵⁸ Daḥlan’s readiness to criticize the wording of some canonical ḥadīth reflects the tension some Shāfi‘is felt in upholding the canonical culture of the ṣaḥīḥayn while disagreeing with some of their reports. Two other well-known examples are some Shāfi‘ī

responses to ḥadīth condemning the parents of the Prophet and others commanding Muslims to recite the basmala silently or not at all in prayer.¹⁵⁹

Various recensions mention that the Prophet prayed for mercy upon an unidentified uncle destined for hell. Al-Barzanjī suggests that the unnamed uncle was in fact Abū Lahab, the infamous uncle of the Prophet who disassociated from him.¹⁶⁰ Al-Barzanjī hypothesizes that a few transmitters inadvertently added Abū Ṭālib's name to R7 reports, believing him to be the intended uncle. However, al-Saqqāf argues that anti-Ṭālibid polemicists maliciously cited Abū Ṭālib as the person for whom the Prophet could not offer prayers.¹⁶¹ Al-Saqqāf is especially skeptical of certain phrases that are added to the end of reports as a means to discredit the faith of Abū Ṭālib, although the entire message and theme suggests the opposite. For example, al-Saqqāf rejects the adjectives used to disparage the faith of Abū Ṭālib in R6 reports that include those of Nājiya b. Ka'b whom he considers to have been an 'Uthmānī who despised Hāshimids. Indeed there are a few R6 recensions that do not include Nājiya, and in which Abū Ṭālib is described neither as "misguided" nor as a polytheist.¹⁶² It is possible that later transmitters either mistakenly or deliberately inserted the name of Abū Ṭālib to a set of R7 exegetical reports as al-Barzanjī and al-Saqqāf suppose. Generally, exegesis of the Qur'ān was used to infer Abū Ṭālib's damnation where the proof-texts had been vague about the character or context.

Upon the death of Abū Ṭālib, his oldest son, 'Aqīl, became the proprietor of all his property to the exclusion of the two sons who had publicly converted, Ja'far and 'Alī. Those who condemn Abū Ṭālib state this fact as evidence of him dying as an unbeliever.¹⁶³ Al-Barzanjī argues that the normative practice of making a will was still in place and the promulgation of inheritance laws had not yet occurred. Thus, it was Abū Ṭālib's prerogative to will his property to his eldest son, whom he had apparently favored over others throughout his life. Second, 'Alī was still considered young and in the care of the Prophet, while Ja'far was living in Abyssinia, thus neither were eligible to succeed him as landowners.¹⁶⁴

Daḥlān lists the pronouncements of Sunnī jurists who believed hatred for Abū Ṭālib was unbelief because it amounted to causing pain to the Prophet.

One jurist ruled that speaking ill of Abū Ṭālib was painful to the Prophet and his descendants.¹⁶⁵ This legal opinion seems to indicate that descendants of the Prophet (and by default Abū Ṭālib) were emotionally invested in the salvation of Abū Ṭālib and that even in Sunnī communities where Abū Ṭālib's damnation was never questioned, Muslims were commanded to revere him.

Conclusions

The controversy concerning Abū Ṭālib's place in the hereafter stems from a wealth of reports condemning him to hell in Sunnī canonical ḥadīth collections and evidence to the contrary that appeared in sīra and Shī'ī ḥadīth literature. Although Shī'ī thinkers have upheld the faith and salvation of Abū Ṭālib from the earliest periods of Islamic history, very few Sunnīs shared this opinion despite transmitting some of the same proof-texts. Since the ninth/fifteenth century, however, a growing number of Sunnī authors have joined their Shī'ī co-religionists in their commitment to belief in the salvation of Abū Ṭālib.

It appears that some circles always considered Abū Ṭālib to have been a Muslim. Both the absence of an Imāmī rebuttal to the notion of Abū Ṭālib's damnation in the K. Sulaym and the abundance of poetry attributed to him expressing faith as a Muslim suggest this. Abū Ṭālib appears in the K. Sulaym as a believer and a pure inheritor of sacred light. Likewise, in a hitherto ignored report transmitted on the authority of al-Wāqidī and al-Madā'inī, Abū Ṭālib is mentioned as a Muslim in passing. 'Āmir b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ witnesses a heated exchange between Mu'āwiya and a rebel exiled to Syria during the period of 'Uthmān's caliphate. Mu'āwiya eloquently defends his right to govern due to his expertise in administration, but he does not deny the criticism of his interlocutor who argues that there was someone else in the community with a better footing in the Islamic tradition than Mu'āwiya and whose father possessed a better footing in Islam than Abū Sufyān. The pro-Alid interlocutor, Ṣa'ṣa'a b. Ṣawḥān, is manifestly referring to 'Alī and Abū Ṭālib.¹⁶⁶

Notes

* The author would like to thank Michael Cook, Hassan Ansari and an anonymous reader for their comments which substantively improved the quality of this article. In 2013, this research was also presented at the annual conferences of the American Academy of Religion and Middle East Studies Association.

1 W. Montgomery Watt writes “*Khaḍīdja* is said to have died three days after Abū Ṭālib in the year 619 CE (sc. three years before the *Hidjra*).” See EI2, s.v. “*Khaḍīdja*” (W. Montgomery Watt).

2 For a brief introduction to Abū Ṭālib’s opposing images, see Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, pp. 149-55. Shī’ī proof-texts and arguments are discussed below. For representative Sunnī responses to Shī’ī arguments about the faith of Abū Ṭālib, see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Iṣāba*, vol. 7, pp. 199-203; al-Ṣāliḥī, *Subul*, vol. 2, pp. 428-32.

3 EI2, s.v. “*Nūr Muḥammadī*” (L. Massignon); Ho, *Graves of Tarim*; Katz, *Birth of the Prophet Muhammad*; Morimoto, *Sayyids and Sharifs*; Rubin, “*Pre-Existence*”; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*.

4 For relevant excerpts from this text, see al-Ījī, *Faḍā’il*, pp. 146-48.

5 Ibid. The motif of early ‘Alids rebuking those who doubted the faith of Abū Ṭālib appeared in many Shī’ī ḥadīth collections, see al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, vol. 1, pp. 447-49. See also al-Amīnī, *Ghadīr*, vol. 7, pp. 380, 386-401.

6 EI2, s.v. “*Abū l-Fidā’*” (H.A.R. Gibb); *Abū l-Fidā’*, *Mukhtaṣar*, vol. 1, p. 120.

7 Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 104; al-Ījī, *Faḍā’il*, pp. 146-48; al-Sha’rānī, *Mukhtaṣar*, p. 7; al-Suhaymī, *Mazīd*, ff. 314a-b. For the opinions of Aḥmad b. Yūnus and Ibn Ṭulūn, see Ibn Ṭulūn, “*al-Rawḍ*”.

8 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005); Daḥlān, *Asnā* (2007); al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (2001); al-Mālikī, “*Sīrat al-Imām ‘Alī*”. For the works of al-Tatawī, al-Jannūn al-Ṣaghīr, and others see al-Muntafikī, “*Mu’jam*”.

9 For examples, see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh*, vol. 66, pp. 314-21; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, vol. 3, pp. 55f. For a general sketch of Abū Ṭālib’s portrayal in *sīra* literature, see also EI3, s.v. “*Abū Ṭālib*” (U. Rubin).

10 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, vol. 2, pp. 139f.; Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, pp. 208-10.

11 Shī’b usually describes a mountain path. The Hāshimids possessed a well named Badhar near the mountain of Khandama. According to Yāqūt, the path leading to Khandama was previously known as the shī’b of Abū Yūsuf and considered the property of ‘Abd al-Muttalib b. Hāshim. He divided the land amongst his children and Abū Ṭālib received a share. The homes of the Hāshimid clan were presumably in this area. See Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, vol. 1, p. 361; vol. 3, p. 347.

12 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 13, p. 112; al-Maqrīzī, *Imtā’*, vol. 1, p. 45; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma’ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 53. The earliest reference I could find for the phrase ‘ām al-ḥuzn, was the citation of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) of Ya’qūb b. Sufyān al-Fasawī’s (d. 277/890) *Kitāb al-Ma’rifa wa l-ta’rīkh*. Unfortunately, extant copies do not include al-Fasawī’s historical narrative of the first Islamic century. However, fragments from the recension of the philologist ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja’far b. Durustawayhi (d. 347/958) are scattered throughout different works, see Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 150.

13 Abū Ṭālib is narrated to have loved him more than his own children, see Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 119. The Prophet’s love and respect for Abū Ṭālib led him to magnify his love for ‘Aqīl, see al-Hākim, *Mustadrak*, vol. 3, p. 576; al-Ṣadūq, *‘Ilal*, vol. 1, p. 134. As a proof that Abū Ṭālib was a believer, al-Amīnī argues that Muḥammad would not care for an unbeliever’s love of other things and people, see al-Amīnī, *Ghadīr*, vol. 7, p. 386.

14 Qur’ān, 28:56, a verse that is discussed below.

15 See R1-R8 (reports 1-8) below.

16 For his resurrection and conversion see Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 104; al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), ff. 12a; al-Sha’rānī, *Mukhtaṣar*, p. 7.

17 The various types of reports are discussed below. For an example of a text that includes reports that testify to his faith and his conversion as well as his refusal to convert, see al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, vol. 1, pp. 89, 161; vol. 2, pp. 29, 187f., 312-14 (for his faith), 346, 349 (for his conversion), vol. 2, pp. 163, 341-350 (for his unbelief).

18 A thorough analysis of ḥadīth transmitters who apparently circulated reports about the damnation of Abū Ṭālib is left for future research, although the work of F. Donner and H. al-Saqqāf on this subject is briefly discussed below.

19 See Verses 1, 2, 3, discussed below.

20 Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/922), Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and many others have all cited ḥadīth in the ṣaḥīḥayn as the source of their belief in the damnation of Abū Ṭālib, see al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 236-37, 272-73; al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, vol. 2, pp. 163, 341-50; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb*, vol. 1, p. 39; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath*, vol. 7, p. 148; idem, *Iṣāba*, vol. 7, pp. 199-203; Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, vol. 11, p. 210; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, p. 406; Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj*, vol. 4, pp. 350-53; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 16, p. 157; al-Suyūṭī, *Masālik*, pp. 35, 81, 82; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 11, p. 57; vol. 20, pp. 112-14. However, before the rise of the canonical collections, proto-Sunnī scholars active in the second century also assumed Abū Ṭālib’s rejection of Islam. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 211/827) and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) cited ḥadīth about Abū Ṭālib’s punishment in hell, see ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī, *Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 41; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 50, 55. Al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) lists rulings that are predicated upon Abū Ṭālib dying as an unbeliever, see al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol. 1, p. 303; vol. 4, p. 75. The Medinese jurist Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) cites a report that states ‘Alī did not inherit from his father in a section on the impermissibility of inheritance between relatives of different faiths, see Mālik, *Muwattā’*, vol. 2, p. 519.

21 Perhaps Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s biographical entry on Abū Ṭālib is an exception, see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Iṣāba*, vol. 7, pp. 199-203.

22 For example, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 433; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 247; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath*, vol. 7, p. 148; Muslim, *al-Jāmi’*, vol. 1, p. 40; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan*, vol. 4, p. 90; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 11, pp. 57f.

23 For example, the scholars mentioned above (fn. 4-7) explained the reasons for which they upheld Abū Ṭālib’s salvation in only a few sentences. However, al-Barzanjī devoted dozens of pages to fully responding to the arguments of his interlocutors.

24 Some apparently claimed such a consensus, see Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 105.

25 See the colophon, al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 488.

26 Al-Amīnī, *Ghadīr*, vol. 7, p. 370; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 112.

27 Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) narrates that he heard “Abū Ṭālib was also raised and he believed in him (Muḥammad)- but God knows best.” See al-Qurṭubī, *Tadhkira*, p. 140. Al-Sha‘rānī narrates that God wished to honor the Prophet by raising Abū Ṭālib back to life, who then converted, see al-Sha‘rānī, *Mukhtaṣar*, p. 7.

28 I would like to thank Ḥasan al-Saqqāf for discovering that the manuscript attributed to al-Suyūṭī actually belonged to al-Barzanjī, see Daḥlān, *Asnā* (2007), p. 27 (for his assessment). In cases where I have relied upon al-Saqqāf’s 2007 edition of *Asnā al-maṭālib*, I have noted its publication year, otherwise, I refer to the 1999 edition.

29 Al-Suyūṭī, *Masālik*, pp. 85-87; al-Qurṭubī, *Tadhkira*, pp. 140-42.

30 Al-Suḥaymī, who believed in the salvation of Abū Ṭālib, claims al-Qurṭubī and al-Subkī considered reports about Abū Ṭālib’s conversion to be correct, see al-Suḥaymī, *Mazīd*, f. 314a. Mīrghanī and Daḥlān, on the authority of al-Suḥaymī, included al-Subkī in their list of Sunnī scholars who affirmed Abū Ṭālib’s salvation, see Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), pp. 104, 112.

31 Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, pp. 87-91.

32 Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, pp. 87-91.

33 All of the writers in this study disagree with al-Subkī and argue that the poetry of Abū Ṭālib is sufficient proof not only of faith in the heart, but of his conversion, see the section below, *Sunnī Treatises*.

34 Al-Qarāfī, *Sharḥ*, p. 163. In his view, Abū Ṭālib was not a Muslim because he rejected the legal commandments of the Prophet.

35 Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath*, vol. 7, p. 149; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (2007), p. 26.

36 Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Faraj*, p. 126. On the other hand, “al-Subkī and Ibn Taghrībardī follow al-Dhahabī in seeing him only as a Mu‘tazilī,” see EI2, s.v. “al-Mas‘ūdī” (Ch. Pellat).

37 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 36a; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 344; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, vol. 2, pp. 108f.; al-Suhaylī, *Rawḍ*, pp. 170f.

38 Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, vol. 4, pp. 222f.

39 For biographical entries on al-Barzanjī, see al-Amīnī, *Ghadīr*, vol. 1, p. 141; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. 6, pp. 203f.; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 25-28.

40 Al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. 1, pp. 129f.

41 The author writes that he was saddened by the prevalent belief in the damnation of Abū Ṭālib, until “God aided me in 1165 with the Mukhtaṣar Tadhkirat al-Qurṭubī by the saintly guide ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī,” see al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 3b. Al-Azharī writes that he found al-Barzanjī's work later that year (f. 4a).

42 The colophon has al-Sayyid Sulaymān al-Azharī without the nisba “al-Lādhīqī,” al-Azharī, *Bulūgh*, p. 29 (for a reproduction of the colophon). One copy of the manuscript is in the ḥadīth section of the Taymuriyya collection of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya in Cairo (no. 333). The catalogue information mentions that Sulaymān al-Lādhīqī al-Azharī was listed on the cover, see also al-Munajjid, *Mu'jam*, p. 51. The other copy is in Princeton University's Rare Books section, no. 2845y.

43 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (2001), pp. 26f.

44 Al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. 3, p. 131.

45 Al-Jamal, *Hāshiya*, vol. 2, pp. 337f.; vol. 3, p. 374.

46 Al-Ṣūfī al-Ḥusaynī, “al-‘Ā'ilāt”.

47 A descendant of Sulaymān, Muḥammad Sa'īd b. Khālīd b. Khalīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān al-Azharī (d. 1318/1900) also held the office of naqīb al-ashrāf and was the imam of a mosque in the city. Muḥammad Sa'īd wrote a history of the city, which would obviously include additional information about his family. One source states that the al-Azharī al-Lādhīqī family library includes over two thousand manuscripts and books. For information regarding Muḥammad Sa'īd, see Bayṭār, *Lādhīqiyya*, vol. 1, p. 213. According to another historian, Muḥammad Sa'īd, his father Khālīd, and their ancestor Sulaymān all studied at al-Azhar University and became marshals of the ashraf of Latākia, see al-Ṣūfī al-Ḥusaynī, “al-‘Ā'ilāt”.

48 Sulaymān was responsible for governing the affairs and disputes of Hāshimids in his jurisdiction as the naqīb al-ashraf and perhaps for many of Latakia's residents as Imam of the central mosque there. Al-Barzanjī was the leading Shāfi'ī mufti of Medina, while Zaynī Daḥlān became the leading mufti of Mecca, both esteemed positions in the Sunnī community. For al-Azharī, Barzanjī and Daḥlān respectively, see *Ibid.*; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 27; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, vol. 3, pp. 129f.

49 Al-Muntafikī, “Mu'jam”.

50 For example al-Suyūṭī is included in the list when he in fact believed in Abū Ṭālib's punishment in hell, see the previous section.

51 Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī, p. 313.

52 Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī, p. 377.

53 Al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vol. 5, pp. 37f.; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān*, vol. 5, pp. 200f.

54 Al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, vol. 1, pp. 447-49.

55 Al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 712.

56 For these two authors, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, p. 95; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 75. On the other hand, Sahl b. Aḥmad was a secretive individual who only began displaying his [knowledge and belief in] Shī'ism at the end of his life, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, p. 186. The works of these two authors are no longer extant.

57 In addition to his Īmān Abī Ṭālib, al-Mufīd argues in favor of Abū Ṭālib's status as a faithful Muslim elsewhere, see al-Mufīd, *Fuṣūl*, pp. 282-86. The decision of the compiler of al-Fuṣūl al-mukhtāra, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), to include al-Mufīd's assessment of the faith of Abū Ṭālib reflects his own support for his teacher's views.

58 See McDermott, *Theology*.

59 Al-Mufīd, *Ḥikāyāt*, p. 85.

60 Perhaps al-Mufīd is referring to Sahl in his introduction when he writes, “May God lengthen the life of the exalted teacher and preserve honor and support for him . . .” al-Mufīd, *Īmān*, p. 17. If this is the case, then it is possible that al-Najāshī's sources mistook this book dedicated to Sahl for one authored by him. Both of their books share the simple title Īmān Abī Ṭālib (“The Faith of Abū Ṭālib”). Sahl has no other books attributed to him

and al-Najāshī never found the alleged work despite the relative proximity between the authors both geographically and temporally. The absence of any fragments of Sahl's alleged work prohibits one from ascertaining whether or not it was actually the one al-Mufīd had written at his behest.

61 Al-Ṭūsī, al-Amālī, pp. 265f., 567. Unlike many of his Imāmī peers, al-Ṭūsī seems to rely upon R2 reports, which hinted at Abū Ṭālib's deathbed conversion rather than a lifelong commitment to dissimulation, see below, "The Proof-texts". Nonetheless, al-Ṭūsī notes that there is a consensus among Imāmīs that Abū Ṭālib died a Muslim, see al-Ṭūsī, al-Tibyān, vol. 8, p. 164.

62 Al-Amīnī's treatise is from his encyclopedia al-Ghadīr, see al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 330-409; vol. 8, pp. 3-29.

63 Al-Amīn, A'yān al-Shī'a, vol. 8, pp. 393f.

64 Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ, vol. 14, p. 83.

65 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Iṣāba, vol. 7, pp. 198-203.

66 Encyclopaedia Iranica, London 1982-, art. "Amīnī, Shaikh 'Abd-Al-Ḥosayn" (H. Algar); "al-'Allāma al-Amīnī wa-Mawsū'at al-Ghadīr" al-Mishkāṭ. Web. http://www.al-meshkah.com/maaref_detail.php?id=4234. (accessed Sep. 25 2013).

67 Ibn Ḥazm, Fiṣal, vol. 4, p. 116; Ibn Taymiyya, Minhāj, vol. 7, pp. 320f., 354f.; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Iṣāba, vol. 7, pp. 198-203.

68 Al-Amīnī's Shī'ī sensibilities lead him to cite and authenticate reports that later Sunnī ḥadīth specialists would reject as unreliable despite their appearance in the work of a Sunnī scholar. Nonetheless, the citation of such texts is important for Al-Amīnī because the original transmitters of such reports, if not the compiler, believed such reports to be true. By identifying early (apparently non-Imāmī) Muslims who validated Shī'ī beliefs, al-Amīnī refutes the more extreme claims of his interlocutors that no proof-texts ever existed in (proto-) Sunnī circles of learning.

69 For example, see al-Naṣībī, Maṭālib, pp. 28-31. For a survey of the spectrum of pro-'Alid sentiment, see also Husayn, Memory, chs 1-2.

70 "You will not find a people who [truly] believe in God and the Last Day and [at the same time] love a person who contends against God and His Messenger even though they be their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or [others of] their kindred . . ."

71 Does the case of Abū Lahab represent a contradiction of this principle? It seems the Prophet and his uncle mutually disassociated from each other and thus it poses no contradiction. The Prophet's uncle Abū Lahab b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib is portrayed in the literature as siding with the chiefs of Quraysh and severing his familial ties during the infamous boycott against his clan. The Qur'ān's unequivocal condemnation of him in Sūra 111 would suggest that the Prophet similarly disavowed any relationship with him. Abū Lahab's rejection of the Prophet and public disassociation from his clan thus conveniently removes him from Muḥammad's circle of relatives and associates. If the case of Abū Lahab posed theological problems to those who believed Muḥammad's kin to be generally saved from Hell, it remains a topic for further investigation. The Muslim community may have learned that kinship never saved the relatives of other prophets guilty of kufr through accounts in the Qur'ān, for example, in the case of an unbelieving son (Qur'ān, 11:42-47) and spouses (Qur'ān, 66:10). Uri Rubin discovered that Abū Lahab's mother was previously married to a man from the tribe of Liḥyān and he is ridiculed for not actually descending from the loins of Hāshim in some poetry. If this is true, it may help explain Abū Lahab's disassociation from the clan of Hāshim, see Rubin, "Abū Lahab and Sura CXI," pp. 14f. Perhaps Abū Lahab's entrance into the Hāshimid clan would then fall under the category of mā kasaba (Qur'ān, 111:2).

72 See EI2, s.v. "Nūr Muḥammadī" (L. Massignon). The reports that describe the transmission of the prophetic light from the loins of Adam to Muḥammad note that the light was transferred from 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to 'Abd Allāh and Abū Ṭālib. Thus, neither Abū Lahab nor the Prophet's other uncles seem to have shared in this divine grace and their paganism is not seen as contradictory to these reports.

73 Ibn Kathīr cites the relevant ḥadīth in the ṣaḥīḥayn that suggest this meaning, see Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, vol. 2, pp. 314f.

74 In Shī'ism, the infallibility and immaculateness of the prophets and imams is predicated upon their birth from individuals who were not unbelievers. The light imagery

used to describe the Prophet and his chain of spiritual successors pervades Sufi hagiographies.

75 Al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, vol. 4, p. 247; Muslim, Jāmi‘, vol. 1, pp. 40, 133; vol. 3, p. 65.

76 For example, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī states that he hopes all of the Prophet’s Household and ancestors enter Heaven, which includes his parents and grandfather. Abū Ṭālib, however, is doomed because he lived during the period of revelation and did not convert. Ibn Ḥajar is sure of this because the reports appear in the collection of Muslim, see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Iṣāba, vol. 7, pp. 201-3.

77 Al-Ālūsī, Rūḥ, vol. 19, pp. 137f.; Bayjūrī, Ḥāshiya, pp. 68-70; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Minah, pp. 100-4; al-Suyūfī, Masālik, pp. 39-85.

78 Al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2006), pp. 29f., 86f. One could believe in the salvation of the Prophet’s parents even if one considered them pagans. A number of Sunnīs argued that their deaths before the appearance of any prophet warranted their salvation, while others believed the Prophet’s parents were resurrected by God and became Muslims before being laid to rest again. In both cases the dilemma of believing in Abū Ṭālib’s allegiance to paganism and subsequent punishment, while maintaining the salvation of the Prophet’s pagan ancestors would not arise.

79 Although one report identifies Abū Ṭālib’s ancestral religion as monotheism (ḥanīfiyya), see Ibn ‘Asākir, Ta’rīkh, vol. 66, pp. 328f.; al-Tha‘labī, Kashf, vol. 5, pp. 99f.; al-Wāḥidī, Asbāb al-nuzūl, p. 178.

80 All translations are my own.

81 I have not translated jahīm as hell because some of the later Sunnī theologians will later discuss its relevance in polemics regarding Abū Ṭālib.

82 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 433; al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, vol. 4, p. 247; Muslim, Jāmi‘, vol. 1, p. 40; al-Nasā’ī, Sunan, vol. 4, p. 90; al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol. 11, pp. 57f. Various reports have Abū Ṭālib cite different reasons for his refusal, see al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2005), pp. 390-92.

83 I have named these reports 1S, because their common link is Sa‘īd and they appear in the ṣaḥīḥayn, see al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, vol. 4, p. 247; Muslim, Jāmi‘, vol. 1, p. 40.

84 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 370f.; al-Bayhaqī, Sunan, vol. 2, p. 346; Ibn ‘Asākir, Ta’rīkh, vol. 66, p. 331; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Iṣāba, vol. 7, p. 198; Ibn Ishāq, Sīra, vol. 4, p. 223; al-Ṭūsī, al-Amālī, pp. 265f.

85 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, vol. 1, pp. 206, 207, 210; vol. 3, pp. 9, 50, 55; al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, vol. 4, p. 247; vol. 7, pp. 121, 203; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 54; Muslim, Jāmi‘, vol. 1, p. 135.

86 Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 1, pp. 124f. See also al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 373f. (where further references are listed).

87 Ibid., 7:380, 386-401 (for forty ḥadīth narrated through the Household regarding the merits of Abū Ṭālib).

88 The fourth is sometimes “a brother from pre-Islamic times” or “the house which helped you.” One report lists six who are saved. For different recensions, see Ibid., vol. 7, p. 378; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 57; al-Ya‘qūbī, Ta’rīkh, vol. 2, p. 36.

89 Ibn Ma‘add al-Mūsawī, Īmān Abī Ṭālib, p. 265; al-Mufīd, Īmān, pp. 25f. For all the medieval sources, see al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 3, p. 372.

90 Al-Bayhaqī, Sunan, vol. 2, pp. 304f.; Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntazam, vol. 3, p. 10; Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 1, p. 124.

91 Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 8, pp. 10-15.

92 Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 40f.

93 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 367 (the author cites al-Bayhaqī, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, and others); Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 39-41; Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 1, p. 123.

94 Al-Baḥrānī, Madīna al-Ma‘ājiz, vol. 7, p. 535. The different recensions disagree on the identity of the Imam who makes this statement. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (al-Bāqir), ‘Alī b. Muḥammad (al-Hādī), and Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq are all named as the source. Hāshim al-Baḥrānī (d. 1107/1695-6 or 1109/1697-8), who cites his own copy of al-Hidāya al-Kubrā, written by al-Ḥusayn b. Ḥamdān al-Khaṣībī (d. 334/945-6), includes the full narration, names al-Mutawakkil as the interlocutor, and secures the anecdote as one from the life of ‘Alī al-Hādī. The published edition of al-Hidāya al-Kubrā cites a different conversation between al-Mutawakkil and al-Hādī, see al-Khaṣībī, Hidāya, p. 322. On the other hand, al-Majlisī

and al-Amīnī quote Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd and attribute the ḥadīth to Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir. However, in his text, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd actually writes “‘Alī b. Muḥammad” not Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, in agreement with al-Khaṣībī’s text, as al-Baḥrānī quotes it. See al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 380; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ, vol. 14, p. 68; al-Majlisī, Biḥār, vol. 35, p. 156. For a similar recension attributed to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, see al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 390; al-Majlisī, Biḥār, vol. 35, p. 112.

95 Manuscript copies of al-Mūsawī’s treatise are more than one hundred twenty pages in length, while al-Mufīd’s treatise is only nine pages. Excluding the annotations, al-Amīnī’s published text also exceeds one hundred pages.

96 For a monograph study, see Dakake, Charismatic Community.

97 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 331-42; al-Mufīd, Īmān, p. 19. A number of Sunnīs partially concede this point, see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Iṣāba, vol. 7, p. 200; al-Qarāfī, Sharḥ, p. 163; al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 1, pp. 87f. However, according to most of them, Abū Ṭālib’s faith was not accompanied by a formal conversion and therefore insufficient.

98 Al-Amīnī transmits accounts from Sunnī texts in which Abū Ṭālib tells his son ‘Alī that he will only find khayr in following the Prophet. In one report, ‘Alī seeks his advice regarding the issue of conversion and he states, “O my son, you know that Muḥammad is the trusted man of God: go to him and follow him, you will be guided and succeed.” al-Amīnī also cites non-Shī‘ī authorities regarding another occasion in which Abū Ṭālib tells Ja‘far to join ‘Alī and Muḥammad in prayer, see al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 355-57; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 36.

99 Al-Mufīd, Īmān, p. 20.

100 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 385; Ibn Tāwūs, Tarā‘if, p. 307. Al-Amīnī similarly argues that if only a fraction of Abū Ṭālib’s poetry were gathered for any other companion of Muḥammad, s/he would be celebrated, but in the case of Abū Ṭālib such evidence is ignored, al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 372.

101 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 386; Ibn Ma‘add, Īmān Abī Ṭālib, p. 265; al-Mufīd, Īmān, pp. 25f. The phrase seems to acknowledge the prevailing opinion that Abū Ṭālib is an inhabitant of hell, hence, the surprise on the Day of Judgment when mankind witnesses his salvation.

102 Al-Mufīd, Īmān, p. 26.

103 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 331.

104 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 332.; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ, vol. 3, p. 313.

105 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 331-42, 355; Ibn Ma‘add, Īmān Abī Ṭālib, pp. 201, 241, 258, 284. Cf. Abū l-Fidā’, Ta‘rīkh, 1:120; al-Bayhaqī, Dalā‘il, vol. 2, p. 188; al-Dhahabī, Ta‘rīkh, vol. 1, p. 150; Ibn Ishāq, Sīra, vol. 4, p. 204; al-Tha‘labī, Tafsīr, vol. 4, pp. 141f.; al-Wāḥidī, Asbāb al-nuzūl, p. 144. Al-Amīnī and al-Mūsawī cite a number of Sunnī sources that transmit Abū Ṭālib’s poetry in praise of Muḥammad as a prophet. However, in Sunnī sources, such praise usually (but not always) ends with a final line in which Abū Ṭālib explains that he is still unwilling to convert. Daḥlān considers those final lines to either have been an example of dissimulation or interpolation from later Muslims who believed Abū Ṭālib to have never been a Muslim, Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 47.

106 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 346; vol. 8, p. 17.

107 Al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2005), pp. 145, 200-6, 241, 243, 344, 384, 400-402. He quotes the relevant medieval sources.

108 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 368; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 33; Ibn Ma‘add, Īmān Abī Ṭālib, pp. 133-37. Although Ibn Ḥajar did not consider Abū Ṭālib a believer, he includes a ḥadīth from him, see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Iṣāba, vol. 7, p. 198.

109 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 380; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ, vol. 14, p. 68.

110 Al-Amīnī cites a few Sunnī authorities, see al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, pp. 380f. See also Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 102, 106, 108 (for additional Sunnī scholars who believed as such).

111 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 7, p. 388; Ibn Ma‘add, Īmān Abī Ṭālib, pp. 122, 363.

112 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 8, p. 9. Shī‘ī biographical sources, however, do not entirely portray Sa‘īd as anti-Hāshimid. Some have recognized the existence of contradictory evidence regarding Sa‘īd’s pro-‘Alid and anti-‘Alid tendencies. Some reports even portray him as a student of the fourth Twelver Imam, ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, see

Ardabīlī al-Gharawī al-Ḥa'irī, Jāmi', vol. 1, pp. 362f; al-Ṭūsī, Rijāl al-Kashshī, vol. 1, pp. 332-35.

113 Al-Dhabībī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 3, p. 378; Ibn 'Asākir, Ta'rīkh, vol. 26, p. 374; See also al-Mamdūh, Ghāyat al-tabjīl, p. 95.

114 For more on 'Abbāsīd propaganda, see El-Hibri, Parable and Politics, pp. 17-23; Haider, "The wasiyya".

115 Goldziher, Muslim Studies, vol 1, pp. 45-47 (for the inheritance of virtue and vice). For the social capital of Ḥasanids and Ḥusaynids, see Morimoto, Sayyids and Sharifs.

116 For 'Abbāsīd claims to the right of uncle (ḥaqq al-'umūma), see De Gifis, Theory, pp. 99, 168.

117 In this context, polemicists utilized family law to argue in the realms of election law and political theory. A sole surviving daughter does in fact inherit from a deceased father in Islamic law, but Sunnī scholarship made an exception in the case of Fāṭima due to ḥadīth that stated that prophets left no inheritance. For a comparative study of Sunnī and Shī'ī laws of inheritance, see Coulson, Succession, pp. 33-38, 114-34. For the case of Fāṭima, see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Fath, vol. 6, pp. 139-41; vol. 12, p. 3. See also Madelung, Succession, pp. 50f.; al-Ṣadr, Fadak, pp. 159-62.

118 Goldziher, Muslim Studies, vol. 2, p. 105; Donner, "Death," pp. 237f.

119 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 8, p. 10.

120 For example, al-Amīnī mentions Q3:28, Q4:139, Q4:144, Q9:23, and Q58:22.

121 The Sunnī authors ultimately argue upon these lines, see their responses below.

122 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 8, pp. 10-15. He cites a report that appears in: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad, vol. 1, pp. 99, 130f.; al-Ḥākim, Mustadrak, vol. 2, p. 335; al-Nasā'ī, Sunan, vol. 4, p. 91; al-Tirmidhī, Sunan, vol. 4, pp. 344f.

123 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 8, p. 20. Generally, mursal chains are not utilized as unequivocal evidence in legal argumentation, see EI2, s.v. "Mursal" (G. Juynboll). Al-Amīnī, however, criticizes individuals that are usually held in high esteem by Sunnī ḥadīth specialists, like Abū Hurayra, Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab and Sufyān al-Thawrī. For Sufyān, see al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 8, pp. 23f.

124 Al-Amīnī, Ghadīr, vol. 8, pp. 23f. For a critique of the trustworthiness of Abū Hurayra's ḥadīth, see Abū Rayya, Aḍwā', pp. 194-224.

125 Al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2005), pp. 350-55; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 19 n. 1, 22, 23. The writers (including the editor of Asnā, Ṣāliḥ al-Wardānī) cite Aḥmad b. al-Rāwandī (d. ca 3rd/9th century), al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl al-Bajalī (d. 282/895), al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933), Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935), al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), Abū Ishāq al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 418/1027), Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Ibrāhīm al-Safāqīsī (d. 742/1342), 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355), Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690) and the "more authentic" opinion of Abū Hanīfa. Sunnī scholars with a stricter definition of faith would obviously find the claim contentious that many of the scholars al-Barzanjī lists agreed with him. However, al-Barzanjī seems to have faithfully transmitted the opinions of these authorities from previous texts or directly from them, see Ibn Taymiyya, Majmū', vol. 7, pp. 119f., 543-45, 582-86; al-Ījī, Mawāqif, vol. 3, pp. 527-42; al-Ījī and others, al-Mawāqif . . . bi-sharḥihi, vol. 8, pp. 322-24; al-Shahrastānī, Milal, vol. 1, p. 101. Ḥadīth to the same effect are also mentioned, see Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 24.

126 Lit. "the two testimonies" [of faith], i.e. that there is no deity but God and Muḥammad is his Messenger.

127 Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 20, 21.

128 Al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2005), p. 355; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 21. They cite the Qur'ān 16:106 as a proof-text: "Anyone who, after accepting faith in God, utters unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith . . ."

129 Of course, Shī'ī theologians argued along these lines centuries before, see al-Ṣadūq, Kamāl al-dīn, p. 174. See also Kohlberg, "Taqiyya," pp. 364f.

130 Al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2006), pp. 314f.; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 22.

131 In some cases it is enough for one to say, "I believe in God" or "Aḥmad is a prophet." See al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2005), p. 355; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 26. For the full quotation of al-Ḥalīmī, see al-Nawawī, Rawḍa, vol. 7, pp. 302-4.

132 Al-Barzanjī, Sadād al-dīn (2005), p. 355; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 29.

133 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 356; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 29. A verse similar to it is also found in a multitude of sources, including Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, vol. 2, p. 138; al-Amīnī, *Ghadīr*, vol. 7, p. 391; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 449; al-Mufīd, *Īmān*, p. 33.

134 Abū l-Fidā', *Ta'rikh*, vol. 1, p. 120; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 356; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 29; al-Sam'ānī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 46; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 88; al-Amīnī cites a dozen sources within the Sunnī intellectual tradition, see also al-Amīnī, *Ghadīr*, vol. 7, p. 334.

135 Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 46.

136 In some reports the audience is his children, the clan of Hāshim, or the tribe of Quraysh, see al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 52b; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 40f., 111.

137 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 384. In addition to curing Abū Ṭālib of an illness, the Prophet is the source of food multiplication and rain in a time of drought, see Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 37f.

138 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2006), p. 306; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 34.

139 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 384 (the report about the dream is summarized); Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 31, 34f.

140 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), ff. 39b, 50a, 52b; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 384ff; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 34, 36.

141 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 391f.; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 50.

142 Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 61.

143 Al-Suyūfī, *Masālik*, pp. 145-58. Since no prophet came to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Ibn Ḥajar hopes for his salvation, even if it appears he was not a monotheist, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba*, vol. 7, p. 201.

144 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), p. 37a; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 345f.; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 61.

145 It would be illogical for an unbeliever to narrate numerous ḥadīth about the revelation and teachings of the Prophet as Abū Ṭālib narrates them, see al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 49a; Daḥlān, Asnā al-maṭālib, p. 33. Al-Amīnī's discussion was previously noted.

146 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), ff. 40b, 47a-b; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 54. In fact, according to al-Barzanjī, the only proof of those who believe intercession may encompass unbelievers is the "unbelief" of Abū Ṭālib. He issues a challenge to those who believe in such a theological principle to offer other proofs, see Daḥlān, Asnā al-maṭālib, p. 71.

147 Daḥlān, Asnā (2007), pp. 14-25; al-Mālikī, "Sīrat al-Imām 'Alī".

148 Al-Saqqāf is a student of the al-Ghumārī family of Mālikī jurists and ḥadīth specialists from Morocco. In spite of their contempt for Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and the hegemonic culture of Saudi-backed Salafism (or Wahhābism), the al-Ghumārī family and their students essentially utilize a similar methodology of ḥadīth criticism in order to defend their own pro-'Alid and pro-Sufi proclivities. Both factions rely upon the Sunnī biographical tradition to discredit the authority of ḥadīth that disagree with their theological and legal views and authenticate those that agree with their sensibilities. Although ḥadīth in the ṣaḥīḥayn are largely accepted as authoritative, both Salafīs and their pro-'Alid detractors have criticized the contents of a number of reports in those collections. Although trained by Salafī thinkers in Riyadh, Ḥasan al-Mālikī is an idiosyncratic thinker, with pro-'Alid and pluralist sentiments. He believes that al-Bukhārī's compilation contains reports that are not authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) since they promote predeterminism, anti-'Alid sentiment, anthropomorphism and contradict the Qur'ān, see Brown, *Rethinking*; Brown, *Canonization*, p. 326ff.; Idem, "Even If It's Not True"; idem, *Hadith*; Husayn, "Contempt"; al-Mālikī, "Fī 'l-Bukhārī". For al-Saqqāf's views on ḥadīth, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Daf'*, pp. 114-37; al-Saqqāf, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, pp. 26-45.

149 Q2:162, Q3:88, Q35:36, 43:74-75, al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 40a; Daḥlān, Asnā (2007), pp. 23f.

150 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 357; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), pp. 54f.

151 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 359ff; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 55.

152 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 361; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 59.

153 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 55b; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 391f.; Daḥlān, Asnā (1999), p. 61.

154 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 365f.; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), pp. 72f. al-Barzanjī quotes at least a dozen sources from ‘Alī stating that the reason for the revelation of V2 was the prayer of Companions for their dead relatives.

155 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 365f. Al-Amīnī also argued this point, see the previous discussion of R1S in his treatise. Al-Barzanjī also notes that it is unlikely Abū Ṭālib’s death prompted the revelation of V2 since a period of approximately twelve years separated the two incidents, see al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 45b; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 367; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 75.

156 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), f. 40a; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 355. Ibn Ḥajar also notes this chronological problem, see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath*, vol. 8, p. 390.

157 In these reports the Muslims witness the Prophet praying for Abū Ṭālib and cite it as a precedent to begin praying for their own relatives, whereupon the verse is revealed expressly to stop their actions, not those of the Prophet, see al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 366f.; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 75.

158 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 379; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), pp. 79f. Daḥlān dismisses the alleged statement of the Prophet “Your father and mine are in the fire” as the statement of a mistaken narrator despite its appearance in the collection of Muslim.

159 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2006), pp. 71-76.

160 Al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), pp. 376-79.

161 Daḥlān, *Asnā* (2007), pp. 15-25.

162 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 1, pp. 103, 129f.; al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, vol. 1, p. 304; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (2007), p. 84 n. 87.

163 Due to the prohibition of unbelievers and Muslims inheriting from each other in the legal tradition.

164 Al-Azharī, *Bulūgh* (MS Princeton), ff. 42b-43a; al-Barzanjī, *Sadād al-dīn* (2005), p. 363; Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), p. 93.

165 Daḥlān, *Asnā* (1999), pp. 92, 106.

166 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 143; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, vol. 3, p. 366. For a recension through Madā’inī, see Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, vol. 2, pp. 131f.

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