

**ARE THE PARENTS OF THE PROPHET IN HELL?
TRACING THE HISTORY OF A DEBATE
IN SUNNĪ ISLAM**

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Against the backdrop of Christian devotion to Mary and Joseph, it is astonishing how little value Muslims attach to the parents of the founder of their religion. Whereas in Christianity the parents of Jesus have been elevated to saintly figures with several localities and times dedicated to their veneration, Muslims seem to be indifferent towards the parents of Muḥammad. Compared with the strong reverence Mary and Joseph enjoy among the Christians of many denominations, the religious position of Muhammad's parents Āmina and 'Abdallāh is surprisingly low. The Islamic calendar does not know special days reserved for their veneration, and Islamic tradition has not assigned any special religious title to them, expressing their high rank among Muslims.

The contrast between Christianity and Islam concerning the parents of their founder figures diminishes if we consider the statements of Jesus himself. Jesus seems to have had a much more distanced stance towards his mother, at least if we take the statements transmitted from him as a basis. For instance, he does not address Mary as his mother, but simply as „woman” as in John 2:4 “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” And in Mark 3:31-35 he utters that his true mother is not his biological mother but rather those who “do God's will”. In Luke 11:27 Jesus rejects the beatification of Mary on grounds of her being his mother and states that rather those, who hear the word of God and obey it, should be blessed. It is a well-established fact that the rise of Jesus' parents to saintly figures took place only centuries after his death and was

the result of a complex religio-historical process.¹ In my paper, I will argue that in Islam the Prophet's parents have become the object of a similar elevation process, which admittedly did not promote them to the rank of saints, but at least earned them their rescue from Hell.

The transmitted statements of Muḥammad on his parents

In order to make this elevation process comprehensible, I will start by outlining the statements of the Prophet on his parents as they are transmitted in Islamic tradition. As it is well-known, it was already in his early childhood that the Prophet became a complete orphan. His father 'Abdallāh died before or shortly after his birth,² and the death of his mother Āmina occurred when he was six, in a locality called Abwā' between Mecca and Medina.³ Since both of them had breathed their last before their son started his prophetic call it could be assumed that they had died as unbelievers and therefore were destined for Hell. The Prophet himself seems to have shared this opinion. This is at least suggested by a hadith transmitted on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik and recorded in Muslim's canonical collection, which goes as follows:

"A man said (to the Prophet): 'O Apostle of God, where is my father?' The Prophet answered: 'In Hell'. When the man

1 For the cult of Mary see e.g. Walter Delius: *Geschichte der Marienverehrung*. München 1963 and Marina Warner: *Alone of All her sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*. New York 1967; for the cult of Joseph see e.g. Joseph Seitz: *Die Verehrung des hl. Joseph in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung bis zum Konzil von Trient*. Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1908 and Charlene Villaseñor Black: *Creating the cult of St. Joseph: art and gender in the Spanish empire*. Princeton, NJ : Princeton Univ. Press, 2006.

2 Cf. Uri Rubin: "'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.'" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE. Edited by: Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Brill Online, 2014. Reference. Universitätsbibliothek Bamberg. 12 June 2014
<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/abdallah-b-abd-al-muttalib-COM_23550>

3 Cf. W. Montgomery Watt: Art. "Āmina" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*. Vol. I, 438.

turned away, he called him back and said: ‘Both my father and your father are in Hell (inna abī wa-abāka fi n-nār)’.⁴

Muslim scholars like Abū n-Nağīb as-Suhrawardī took the Prophet’s answer in this situation as a good example for *adab al-lisān* („politeness of the tongue“).⁵ An-Nawawī, in his commentary on the Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, stated on it: „This consolation by sharing the misfortune (*at-tasliya bi-l-iştirāk fi l-muṣība*) is a form of good company (*ḥusn al-‘išra*)”.⁶

But more important than this ethical aspect of the anecdote was the clear-cut logic regarding the unbelievers which could be deduced from the saying of the Prophet. An-Nawawī e.g. summed it up with the following words: “Whoever has died as an unbeliever, is in Hell and does not benefit from his kin relationship to those brought near the throne of God”.⁷ Muhammad’s rigid stance on his pagan father is in line with what is transmitted in the Sīra Literature on his harsh attitude towards his pagan forefathers. If the respective reports mirror historic reality, then it was exactly this point which cost him the protection of his uncle Abū Lahab and eventually led to his emigration from Mecca. The story goes that on the death of his uncle Abū Ṭālib, Abū Lahab became head of the clan Hāšim and at first promised to protect Muḥammad. He withdrew his protection, however, when Abū Ğahl from the clan of Maḥzūm and Ibn Abī Mu‘ayṭ from ‘Abd Šams managed to convince him that Muhammad had spoken disrespectfully of his deceased ancestors like his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and had claimed their being in Hell. The loss of Abū Lahab’s lukewarm protection was of great histori-

4 Muslim ibn al-Ḥağğāğ: *Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-īmān, bāb bayān anna man māta ‘alā l-kufr fa-huwa fi n-nār.*

5 Cf. Abū n-Nağīb ‘Abd al-Qāhir as-Suhrawardī: *Kitāb Ādāb al-murīdīn.* Ed. M. Milson. Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1977, 41.

6 Cf. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-šarḥ an-Nawawī.* Ed. ‘Išām aš-Šabābiṭi u.a. 11 Bde. Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīṭ 1994. vol. 2, 81.

7 Cf. ibidem.

cal significance because it forced Muḥammad to look for allies outside Mecca, first in Ṭā'if and then in Yaṭrib, the later Medina.⁸

Muhammad's harsh judgement on his father seems to have been proverbial. Goldziher refers to a dictum of the Prophet quoted in Abū l-Faraǧ's *Kitāb al-Aǧāni* according to which he not only alleged that his own father and the father of Abraham were in Hell, but also that the virtuous Ḥātim at-Ṭā'ī experienced the same fate.⁹ The message of this report is clear: polytheists, however virtuous they may have been during their lifetime, have no chance evading hellfire.

That the Prophet's parents should not be exempted from this rule, is further confirmed by a cluster of reports revolving around the visit of the Prophet to his mother's tomb in al-Abwā' between Mecca and Medina, which, according to tradition, occurred either in the year 6 AH or after the return from the so-called "farewell pilgrimage" in 10 AH, thus, shortly before the Prophet's own death.¹⁰ According to these reports, some of which have been included in the canonical hadith collections, the Prophet asked his Lord at this occasion for permission to ask his forgiveness for his mother, but was declined this request. Many of these reports claim that it was the very situation of the Prophet's visit to his mother's tomb which also occasioned the revelation of Surah 9:113, with its explicit prohibition of intercession for relatives: "It is not for the Prophet and the believers to ask pardon for the idolators, even though they be near kinsmen, after that it has become clear to them that they will be the inhabitants of Hell." Since the report on Muham-

8 Cf. W. Montgomery Watt: *Muhammad at Mecca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 137f.

9 Cf. Ignaz Goldziher: *Die Zāhiriten. Ihr Lehrsystem und ihre Geschichte. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der muhammadanischen Theologie*. Leipzig: Otto Schulze 1884, 176, n. 1. In the Būlāq edition of 1905 the page referred to by Goldziher (*Kitāb al-Aǧāni*, vol. 16, 106) is significantly missing.

10 Cf. Marco Schöller: *The Living and the Dead in Islam. Studies in Arabic Epitaphs. II Epitaphs in Context*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2004, 17f.

mad's visit to his mother's tomb is counted among the *asbāb an-nuzūl* traditions, it is also discussed in many *tafsīr* works.¹¹

Islamic tradition still knows another Qur'anic verse related to the problem of the Prophet's parents, Surah 2:119, which, in the majoritarian reading by Ḥafṣ 'an 'Aṣim, reads: *innā arsalnā-ka bi-l-ḥaqqi bašīran wa-naḍīran wa-lā tus'alu 'an aṣḥābi l-ğahīm* „We have sent you with the truth, bearing good news and warning. You will not be asked about the inhabitants of Hellfire“. A hadith transmitted on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and reproduced in many Qur'anic commentaries reports that this verse was revealed, when the Prophet once said: *layta ša'rī mā fa'ala abawayya* “Would I only know what fate awaits my parents!” The correlation between the Prophetic wish and the divine answer becomes clear, only if we take the minoritarian reading of the passage by Nāfi' as a basis. In Nāfi's *qirā'a*, which was the predominant one in Medina, the relevant text does not read *lā tus'alu 'an al-ğahīm* in passive formulation, but as a negative imperative, *lā tas'al 'an aṣḥāb al-ğahīm*, which renders the sense of the passage completely different: “Do not ask about the inhabitants of Hellfire!” Thus, according to this reading, the Qur'anic word of Surah 2:119, like that of 9:113, is an exhortation to the prophet not to approach God anymore concerning the fate of his pagan parents, who are definitely doomed to Hell.¹²

11 Cf. the commentaries on Q 9:113 by aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *Ġāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-qur'ān*. 15 vols. 'Ammān: Dār al-A'lām 2002. Vol. 7, 56, and by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Sulṭān al-Qārī: *Anwār al-Qur'ān wa-asrār al-furqān*. Ed. Nāğī as-Suwaid. 5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya 2013. For further works mentioning the connection between Q 9:113 and the story of the prophet's mother, cf. Schöller, 18.

12 Cf. aṭ-Ṭabarī *Ġāmi' al-bayān* ad Q 2:119 and 'Alī al-Qārī: *Adillat al-mu'taqad Abi Ḥanīfa al-a'zam fī abaway ar-rasūl 'alay-hi ṣ-ṣalātu wa-s-salām*. Ed. Mašhūr ibn Ḥasan ibn Salmān. Medina: Maktabat al-ğurabā' al-aṭariyya 1413/1993, 64-69.

Muslim discomfort and the hadith of resurrection

Obviously, some Muslims of later centuries felt uncomfortable with the idea that the parents of the Prophet could be among the residents of Hell. In the tenth century, a hadith clearly intended to “rescue” them from Hell was recorded by the Baghdadi preacher and traditionist Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn Aḥmad Ibn Šāhīn (d. 995) in his *Kitāb Nāsiḥ al-ḥadīṭ wa-mansūḥi-hī*. It appears as a variation of the report on the Prophet’s visit to the tomb of his mother and is transmitted on the authority of ‘Ā’iṣa:

“The Prophet {S} descended to Ḥaḡḡūn (= cemetery of Mecca) in a depressed and sad mood and stayed there as long as God wanted him to do so. Then he came back in cheerful spirits. I asked him: ‘O apostle of God! You descended to Ḥaḡḡūn in a depressed and sad mood and stayed there as long as God wanted you to do so, then you came back in cheerful spirits. (What happened?)’ He said, ‘I asked my Lord - Glorified and Sublime be He – and He brought my mother back to life, and she believed in me. Eventually, God brought her back (to her former condition).’”¹³

The quoted hadith suggests that the Prophet’s mother, during a short second life, became a Muslim and therefore was spared the fate destined for ordinary unbelievers. Ibn Šāhīn has produced this hadith in a book dedicated to the “abrogating and the abrogated in Hadith”. He obviously wanted to suggest that the above-quoted utterance of the Prophet “I asked my Lord that I may beg forgiveness for my mother, but He did not grant me that” was later abrogated by the fact that God resurrected the Prophet’s mother. The section on the issue is concluded by him with this report.

13 Cf. Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn Aḥmad Ibn Šāhīn: *Nāsiḥ al-ḥadīṭi wa-mansūḥi-hū*. Az-Zarqā’/Jordan: Maktabat al-Manār 1408/1988, 489, hadith no. 656.

The long chain of transmission with which Ibn Šāhīn introduces the hadith on Āmina's resurrection (see fig. 1) shows that it was not him who originated this tradition. Rather, it had a prehistory of some 50 to 100 years. Since Ibn Šāhīn mentions as his direct transmitter Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ziyād an-Naqqāš (d. 351/962), we may assume that already an-Naqqāš, a *mufasssir* notorious for using weak traditions,¹⁴ incorporated it into his Qur'an commentary entitled *Šifā' aṣ-ṣudūr*. For coming closer to the origin of this tradition, it helps to look at a slightly different version of it discussed by Ibn al-Ġawzī (d. 597/1200) in his *Kitāb al-Mawḏū'āt*.¹⁵ The chain of transmitters adduced by him differs from that adduced by Ibn Šāhīn, both of them, however, converging in Abū Ġuzya Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā az-Zuhrī, a Medinan traditionist considered by ad-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995) a weak authority who used to forge (*yaḍa'u*) traditions.¹⁶ Abū Ġuzya, therefore, might be at the origin of this tradition. Unfortunately, ad-Dāraquṭnī does not offer any biographical information on him, but since Ibn Šāhīn mentions him as the indirect source of his teacher Abū Bakr an-Naqqāš, we may assume that he lived in Medina at the end of the third/ninth century. In the Islamic West, the Andalusian scholar 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Abdallāh as-Suhaylī (d. 581/1185) disseminated a third version of this hadith, which he says to have found in the papers of his grandfather Abū 'Imrān Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Ḥasan al-Qāḍī, in his commentary on Ibn Hišām's *Sīra*.¹⁷ According to this version, the Prophet did not only resurrect his

14 Cf. al-Ġūraqānī: *al-Abāṭil wa-al-manākīr wa aṣ-ṣiḥāh wa-al-mašāhīr*. 4 vols. Benares: Idārat al-Buḥūt al-Islāmiyah wa-d-da'wa wa-al-iftā' bi-al-Ġāmi'ah al-Salāfiyah 1983, vol. 1, 229.

15 Cf. Ibn al-Ġawzī: *Kitāb al-Mawḏū'āt*. Ed. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān M. 'Uṭmān. 3 vols. Medina: al-Maktaba as-Salāfiyya 1386-88/1966-68, vol. 1, 283f.

16 Cf. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Musallamī: *Mausū'at aqwāl Abī l-Ḥasan ad-Dāraquṭnī*. 2 vols. Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub 2001, 636f.

17 Cf. for as-Suhaylī and his work Maher Jarrar: *Die Prophetenbiographie im islamischen Spanien. Ein Beitrag zur Überlieferungs- und Redaktionsgeschichte*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang 1989, 176-210.

mother, but both his parents who instantly converted to Islam and subsequently were brought to death by him.¹⁸ The chain of transmission of this third version of the hadith converges with the version produced by Ibn al-Ġawzī in the person of Abū Zanād ‘Abdallāh ibn Ḍakwān (d. 130/748), but contains in the middle some unknown authorities. Therefore it is unlikely that its content really goes back to him. More probably, the name of the famous Medinan traditionist has been utilized by the different milieus disseminating this hadith for bestowing it with more authority. The insertion of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 792), the famous jurisconsult of Medina, into the version transmitted by Ibn al-Ġawzī, may also go back to such an effort of enhancing the credibility of this hadith.

Given its forthright contradiction to the Qur’ān, it is no wonder that the tradition on the resurrection of the Prophet’s parents met with some opposition among Muslim scholars. Al-Ḥusayn ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ġūraqānī (d. 543/1148), for instance, classified it as invalid (*bāṭil*) and referred to statements of other traditionists, pointing to the unreliability of its transmitters, including Ibn Šāhīn’s teacher Abū Bakr an-Naqqāš.¹⁹ Ibn al-Ġawzī (d. 1200) incorporated it in his collection of forged traditions and rated it as “without doubt invented” (*mawḍū‘ bi-lā šakk*). Additionally, he cites his own teacher Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Nāšir (d. 1155)²⁰ with the lucid remark that the hadith must be invented, since it is known that the mother of the prophet died in al-Abwā’ and was buried there, rather than in Ḥaḡḡūn.²¹ In the West, it were mainly

18 Cf. ‘Abd ar-Rahmān as-Suhayli: *ar-Rauḍ al-unuf fī tafsīr as-Si-ra an-nabawiyya li-Ibn Hišām*. 4 vols. Ed. Maḡdi Ibn-Manšūr Ibn-Saiyid aš-Šūrī. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyya 1997, vol. 1, 299.

19 Cf. al-Ġūraqānī: *al-Abāṭil wa-al-manākīr wa-š-šihāh wa-al-mašāhīr*. 4 vols. Benares: Idārat al-Buḥūt al-Islāmiyyah wa-d-da’wa wa-al-iftā’ bi-al-Ġāmi’ah al-Salaṭiyyah 1983, vol. 1, 227-229.

20 Cf. for him Stefan Leder: *Ibn al-Ġawzī und seine Kompilation wider die Leidenschaft. Der Traditionalist in gelehrter Überlieferung und originärer Lehre*. Beirut-Wiesbaden: Steiner 1984, 65.

21 Cf. Ibn al-Ġawzī *ibidem*, 284.

scholars adhering to or sympathizing with the Zāhirī madhhab who expressed their objections to it. The Zāhirī philologist Ibn Diḥya al-Kalbī (d. 633/1235), for instance, declared this tradition to be forged and stressed its incompatibility with the Qur'an and consensus, arguing that the Qur'anic statement on the impossibility of repentance for those who died as unbelievers (Q 4:18) is sufficient proof that such a posthumous conversion of the prophet's parents would not have rescued them from damnation.²²

Mālikī and Šāfi'ī scholars, on the other hand, displayed a more sympathetic attitude towards the hadith on the parents' resurrection and its salvific effect. As-Suhaylī, for instance, commented on his version of the hadith by saying: "God is capable of anything, and his mercy (*raḥma*) and power (*qudra*) cannot be disabled by anything. He may freely distinguish his prophet – peace be upon him – with his grace (*faḍl*), and bestow on him his marvels (*karāmāt*), as he wills."²³ Abū 'Abdallāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272), also a Mālikī, who dealt with the tradition in his treatise (*Taḍkīra*) on eschatology, followed the general line of his argument. In rebuttal of Ibn Diḥya's objection, he stated that the efficacy of the prophet's parents' conversion may be deduced from the fact that 'Alī's afternoon prayer which he performed after the prophet had returned the sun for him miraculously²⁴ had been also efficacious.²⁵ The Damascene Šāfi'īte Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), though rejecting the hadith on the parents' resurrection as "very detestable" (*munkar ḡiddan*), nevertheless stressed that its content reflects a reality, since God has the

22 Cf. the quotation in Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kaṭīr: *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-'aẓīm*. 8 vols. Ed. Sāmī ibn Muḥammad as-Salāma. Ar-Riyād: Dār Ṭayba 1418/1997, vol. 4, 223 (ad Q 9:113).

23 As-Suhaylī vol. 1, 299.

24 For Muḥammad's miraculous return of the sun with the purpose of enabling 'Alī to perform his afternoon prayer on time, cf. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Māwardī: *Kitāb A'lām an-nubuwwa*, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Bahīya, 1319/1901, 79.

25 Cf. Abū 'Abdallāh al-Qurṭubī: *at-Taḍkīra fī ahwāl al-mawtā wa-umūr al-āḥira*. 2 vols. Ed. Fawwāz Zamurli. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi 1408/1988, 31.

power to effectuate such miracles.²⁶ A similar position was taken up by the fifteenth-century Syrian Shafi'i traditionist Muḥammad Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn (d. 842/1438), who is quoted by as-Saḥāwī²⁷ in the following verses:

ḥabā Llāhu n-nabiyya mazīda faḍlin
'alā faḍlin wa-kāna bi-hī ra'ūfan

fa-aḥyā umma-hū wa-kadā abā-hu
li-īmānin bi-hī faḍlan munīfan

fa-sallim fa-l-qadīmu bi-dā qadīr
wa-in kāna l-hadītu bi-hī ḍa'īfan

God approved to the prophet favor
over favor and was merciful with him

He resurrected his mother and father,
so that they believed in him, as a special favor

Therefore surrender, for the Eternal may
do so, even if the hadith on it is weak.

The Hanafi opposition against the elevation of the prophet's parents and its breakdown

In the east, opposition against resurrection hadith and the underlying idea of the parents' rescue from Hell, came not only from Ḥanbalīs like Ibn al-Ġawzī, but also from Ḥanafīs. It was already in the late 10th century that a tenet dedicated to this very issue was incorporated into the Hanafī creed *al-Fiqh al-akbar* II.²⁸ It stated that the “the parents of the

26 Cf. Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kaṭīr: *al-Bidāya wa-n-nihāya*. 21 vols. Ed. 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin at-Turkī. Ġīza: Hiḡr li-ṭ-ṭibā'a wa-n-naṣr 1417/1997, vol. 3, 429.

27 Cf. Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Saḥāwī: *al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasana fi bayān kaṭīr min al-aḥādīṭ al-muṣṭahara 'alā l-alsina*. Ed. 'Abdallāh Muḥammad aṣ-Šadiq. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-īlmiyya 2004, 44f.

28 On *Fiqh akbar* II cf. A.J. Wensinck: *The Muslim Creed. Its Genesis and Historical Development*. Cambridge 1932, 188-247.

Apostle of God died as unbelievers” (*wa-wālidā rasūli Llāhi {S} mātā ‘alā l-kufr*). This tenet was of constitutive importance to the Hanafi madhhab, since *Fiqh akbar* II is a creed attributed by Hanafis to Abū Ḥanīfa himself, the founder of their madhhab, even though Montgomery Watt and others have made clear that it did not emerge before the end of the tenth century.²⁹

An anonymous commentator of *Fiqh-akbar* II quoted by the sixteenth century Meccan scholar ‘Alī al-Qārī, explicitly relates this tenet to the hadith circulated by Ibn Šāhīn at the same time. He says: “This is a refutation of those teaching that the Prophet’s parents died as believers and those saying that they died as unbelievers, but that the Prophet invoked God for their sake, whereupon He resurrected them, and they became Muslims and at once died again.”³⁰ The strong opposition of the Ḥanafīs against the pardon of the Prophet’s parents was certainly due to their doctrinal stance on *al-wa’d wa-l-wa’id*, the divine promise and threat, an issue which had been discussed since the late Umayyad period.³¹ Whereas Aš‘arī doctrine concerning this question stressed the freedom of God to pardon every person He wants, even unbelievers, Ḥanafī doctrine in its Māturīdī formulation, being close to the Mu’tazilī stance, precluded the possibility of a *ḥulf al-wa’id*, an infringement of the divine threat set down in the Book.³² It was probably in accordance

29 Cf. W. Montgomery Watt: *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*. Edinburgh 1973, 133 This dating is corroborated by the fact that al-Kalābādī (d. between 380/990 and 384/994) quoted this creed verbally in his *Kitāb at-Ta’arruf li-madhhab ahl at-taṣawwuf*, cf. A.J. Arberry: *Sufism. An account of the Mystics in Islam*. New York: George Allen & Unwin 1950, 69.

30 Cf. ‘Alī ibn Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī: *Adillat Mu’taqad Abī Ḥanīfa al-a’zam fi abaway ar-rasūl*. Ed. Mašhūr ibn Ḥasan ibn Salmān. Medina: Maktabat al-Gurabā’ al-Atariyya 1413/1993, 62.

31 Cf. U. Rudolph: “al-Wa’d wa-l-wa’id in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, vol. xi, pp. 6b-7a and Josef van Ess: *Traditionistische Polemik gegen ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd: zu einem Text des ‘Alī b. ‘Umar ad-Dāraqūṭnī*. Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 1967, Arabic text § 18.

32 Cf. Christian Lange: “Sins, Expiation and Non-Rationality in Ḥanafī and Šāfī’ī Fiqh” in A. Kevin Reinhart and Robert Gleave (ed.): *Islamic Law in theory: studies on jurisprudence*

with this doctrine, that Ḥanafis wanted to withhold posthumous pardoning by God to the parents of the Prophet.

As we learn from Kātib Čelebī, who treats the debate on the prophet's parents in his book *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq*, the gulf lying between Aš'arī and Māturīdī theologians concerning this issue was even broader, because they held different positions on the state of those persons who died before the mission of the Prophet during the so so-called *fatra* period, the interval between prophets. Whereas Aš'arite theologians taught that the people of the *fatra* are excused and not punished, on the evidence of Surah 17:16: "We have not punished a people before sending a prophet to them", Māturīdis and Ḥanafis taught that they are in torment, for, according to their opinion, it had been possible for such people to observe and deduce the unity of the Creator, but they neglected to do so.³³

Some Hanafī Muslims seem to have imagined the abode of the prophet's parents in hell in quite a pictorial way. The early fifteenth century Anatolian scholar Mūsā ibn Hāğğī Ḥusayn al-Izniqī (d. 1434), for instance, describes in his *Kitāb al-Mi'rāğ*, a book on the ascension of Muhammad, how the prophet, after visiting paradise at Gabriel's side, is guided by him through the realms of hell. There, he catches sight of a person burning in fire, who turns out to be his father. Muḥammad wants to rescue his father from hell by interceding for him to God, but he is discouraged to do so by Gabriel, who tells him that his power of intercession is reserved for the Muslim sinners on the day of resurrection.³⁴

in honor of Bernard Weiss. Leiden: Brill 2014, 165f.

33 Cf. Hāğğī Ḥalifa Kātib Čelebī: *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq*. Translated as *The Balance of Truth* with an Introduction and Notes by G.L. Lewis. London: George Allen and Unwin 1957, 67.

34 Cf. the Turkish translation of Izniqī's work by Hikmet Özdemir: *Mi'râc*. Istanbul: Gonca Yayınevi 1986, 140f.

In the course of time, however, Hanafi approval for the tenet formulated in *Fiqh-akbar* II started to dwindle. This was mainly due to the overwhelming influence of the Egyptian scholar Ġalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) and his fatwas.³⁵ As-Suyūṭī, writing at the end of the fifteenth century, launched a full-fledged campaign for the rescue of the prophet's parents. All in all, he composed no less than six treatises on the question: (1) *Masālik al-ḥunafā' fī islām wāliday al-Muṣṭafā*, his longest and most elaborate treatise, (2) *al-Maqāma as-sundusīya fī ḥabar wāliday ḥayr al-barriyya*, (3) *ad-Darağ al-munīfa fī l-abā' aš-šarīfa*; (4) *at-Ta'zīm wa-l-manna fī anna wāliday al-Muṣṭafā fī l-ğanna*, (5) *Našr al-'alamayn al-munīfayn fī ihyā' al-abawayn* and (6) *as-Subul al-ğaliyya fī l-abā' al-'aliyya*.³⁶ In these treatises, as-Suyūṭī listed the objections propounded by the former opponents of the resurrection hadith, such as Ibn Dihya, Ibn al-Ğawzī and the Hanafis and refuted them with counter-arguments.

Whereas the Ḥanafī scholar Burhān ad-Dīn al-Ḥalabī (d. 956/1549) still defended the tenet of *Fiqh akbar* II in a short treatise dated 931/1524,³⁷ there were at least three Hanafis during the sixteenth century who changed sides and wrote monographic treatises in which they propagated the idea of the prophet's parents' rescue from hellfire. These were Zayn ad-Dīn al-Fanārī (d. 929/1522), who, before his death, officiated as the Hanafi qāḍī of Aleppo,³⁸ Ibn Kamāl Paša (d. 940/1533), from 932/1526 to 940/1534 *šayḫ al-islām* of the Ottoman Empire,³⁹ and the

35 On the influence as-Suyūṭī exerted on the Ḥanafis concerning this question, cf. al-Qārī *Adillat al-mu'taqad*, 142.

36 Cf. Schöller *ibidem*, 19f.

37 It is preserved on the margin of Ms. Landberg 295, cf. the description in Wilhelm Ahlwardt: *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. Verzeichnisse der arabischen Handschriften*. 10 vols. Berlin 1887-1899. Nr. 10345.

38 For his *Risāla fī abaway an-nabī* cf. Ḥāğğī Ḥalīfa Kātīb Ćelebī: *Kašf az-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn*. Ed. Şerefettin Yaltkaya. 2 Bde. Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası 1941-43, p. 841f.

39 The Berlin manuscript of his treatise *Risāla fī tafsil mā qīla fī abawai ar-rasūl* is now accessible under the following URL:

Damascene scholar and prolific writer Šams ad-Dīn Ibn Ṭulūn (d. 953/1546).⁴⁰ All of these Hanafi scholars opined that the prophet's parents had been resuscitated by their son, had converted to Islam and eventually were admitted to paradise.

The softening of the original Hanafi/Māturīdī stance on the prophet's parents, however, cannot be ascribed to the success of as-Suyūṭī's campaign, as it was also the product of a general change of sensitivities. For many people living in the Ḥanafi sphere, the tenet of the damnation of the prophet's parents to hell was no longer tenable, after the prophet himself had been elevated to a luminous supernatural figure.⁴¹ Some Ḥanafi scholars at that period introduced two new elements into the discussion by referring to the pureness (*tahāra*) of Muḥammad's pedigree and the pre-existent Muḥammadan light (*Nūr Muḥammadī*) which is said to have been transmitted to him through his progenitors. Since the pureness of his pedigree must also have comprised his parents, it would not be inconceivable that they were unbelievers, so they argued.⁴²

As we learn from the *Akbar-nāma* by Abū l-Faḍl 'Allāmī (d. 1011/1602), protest against this doctrine was also formulated in Muslim India. Abū l-Faḍl reports that when in 981/1573 a preacher, having recently arrived from Transoxania, mentioned the unbelief of the Prophet's parents and their retribution in Hell in the presence of the Mughal emperor Akbar, it was the emperor himself who objected to it

<http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN756015871> .

40 For his treatise entitled *Manāhiḡ as-sunna fī kaww abaway an-nabī fī l-ḡann* cf. Schöller *ibidem*, 20.

41 For the historical process leading to the elevation of Muḥammad to a saintly and luminous figure cf. Tilman Nagel: *Allahs Liebling. Ursprung und Erscheinungsformen des Mohammedglaubens*. München: Oldenbourg 2008.

42 This argument was first mentioned by 'Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1606) in his treatise *al-Mawriḍ ar-rawī fī mawliḍ an-nabī* (Ms. Cairo Maḡāmī' 10, f. 238b) and later elaborated by the Bayrāmī sheikh 'Abdī Efendī al-Būsnawī (d. 1054/1644) in his *Maṭāli' an-nūr as-sanī al-munabbi' 'an tahārat nasab an-nabī al-'Arabī*. Ed. Josef Dreher. Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2013, cf. the the introduction by J. Dreher p. xii-xiv.

by saying: „There is no germ of truth in this tradition, for when there has been intercession for so many offenders by this means (sc. the Prophet), how can the father and mother be excluded, and be consigned to everlasting infidelity?“ According to Abū l-Faḍl, the assembly applauded and performed a prostration to confirm this tenet (*‘aqīdat*).⁴³

There were only very few Hanafis who, after the middle of the eleventh/sixteenth century, still defended the original Hanafī tenet of the prophet’s parents’ damnation to hell, the most important among them being the Meccan scholar ‘Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1606), and Meḥmed Qāḍizāde (d. 1635), the intellectual father of the rigorist Kadizadeli movement.⁴⁴ Al-Qārī, a very prolific writer who has authored a large number of treatises and commentaries on classical religious works, was a staunch adherent of the Hanafī Madhhab.⁴⁵ The treatise dedicated by him to the issue was conceived explicitly as a defense of “the great [Imam] Abū Ḥanīfa’s tenet” (*mu’taqad Abī Ḥanīfa al-a’zam*) against the attacks of as-Suyūṭī. Unlike his deceased adversary, he devoted only one monographic treatise to the issue.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, he seems to have attached to it much importance, since he refers to it in many of his other writings. Altogether, I found sixteen cross-references referring to this treatise, scattered over twelve different texts.⁴⁷ His commentary on the *Kitāb as-Šifā’ fi ta’rīf ḥuquq al-Muṣtafa’* by Qāḍī ‘Iyād (d.

43 Cf. Abū l-Faḍl ‘Allāmī: *Akbar-Nāma*. 3 vols. Ed. Āgā Aḥmad ‘Alī and ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm. Calcutta 1877-1886, vol. 3, 74.

44 For Qāḍizāde’s denouncement of those, who held that the Prophet’s parents died as believers, see Madeline Zilfi: *The politics of piety: the Ottoman Ulema in the postclassical age (1600-1800)*. Mineapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica 1988, 136.

45 Cf. on him my article “The Ego of the Mullah: Strategies of Self-Representation in the Works of the Meccan Scholar ‘Alī al-Qārī (d. 1606)” in Ralf Elger und Yavuz Köse (ed.): *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self. Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, Turkish (14th-20th century)*. Wiesbaden 2010, 185-200.

46 Cf. note 30 above.

47 Cf. the list given in the description of the work (no. 38.) in the appendix of my habilitation thesis *Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī. Textproduktion und Gedankenwelt eines mekkanischen Religionsgelehrten der islamischen Jahrtausendwende*. Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, forthcoming.

544/1149) alone, contains five cross-references to his treatise on the prophet's parents.⁴⁸ Placing cross-references in a commentary on a classical work intended to expound the high rank of the prophet and widely read by his adversaries,⁴⁹ seems to have been a deliberate strategy by al-Qārī to advertise his defence of Abū Ḥanīfa's tenet. It was this very strategy of using his commentary on Qādi 'Iyād's work as a camouflaged advertisement panel for his defense, which later earned him a very angry comment by the Shāfi'ī scholar Muḥammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasūl al-Barzanġī (d. 1103/1691). It was so noticeable that it also became part of the short biographical entry on al-Qārī in al-Muḥibbī's biographical lexicon of the eleventh Islamic century.⁵⁰ With his defense of the erstwhile Hanafi position on the issue, al-Qārī elicited a whole flood of refutations,⁵¹ some of which were also composed by Hanafi authors.⁵² Since declaring the prophet's parents unbelievers was deemed blasphemous by Shāfi'ī scholars in the Hiġāz, some of them, writing in the late seventeenth century, even prohibited the reading of al-Qārī's works.⁵³

48 *Šarḥ aš-Šifā fi ta'rif huqūq al-Muṣṭafā*. 2 vols. Istanbul: Dār aṭ-Ṭibā'a al-ʿāmirā 1264/1848, vol. 1, 95, 344, 372, vol. 2, 683, 695.

49 For the paramount importance of al-Qādi 'Iyād's book within the development of the Islamic veneration of the prophet see Tor Andrae: *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde*. Stockholm: Norstedt & Söner 1918, 60.

50 Cf. Muḥammad al-Amin ibn Faḍl Allāh al-Muḥibbī: *Ḥulāṣat al-aṭar fi a'yān al-qarn al-ḥādī 'ašar*. 4 vols. Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-wahbiyya 1284/1867, v. iii, 186.

51 Cf. the list in Schöller 19 (nos. 10-15), which, however, has to be supplemented by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rasūl al-Barzanġī's *Sadād ad-dīn wa-sidād ad-dāin fi iḥbāt an-naġāh wa-d-daraġāt li-l-wālidain* (ed. 'Abbās Aḥmad Ṣaqr al-Ḥusainī. Cairo: Dār Ġawāmi' al-kalim 2005). Al-Barzanġī's treatise contains in his second part, starting with p. 199, a word-for-word refutation of al-Qārī's text.

52 Cf. for instance the *Risālat al-Surūr fi haqq wālidayhi 'alayhi al-salām* by Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Sāġaqlizāda al-Mar'ašī (d. 1150/1737), a manuscript of which is preserved at the Houghton Library of Harvard University (MS Arab 313, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn:3:FHCL.HOUGH:3745924>). At the end of this treatise Sāġaqlizāda directly refers to al-Qārī by saying: "How strange is it that 'Alī al-Qārī composed a treatise and took pains in it [to prove] that his parents are in hell. In that treatise, he produced texts in rhymed prose causing aversion to the one who looks into it [...] Perhaps coldness affected his head so that he lost his mind" (folio 7v, l. 13-15, folio 8, l. 10-11).

53 Cf. 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Ḥusayn al-'Išāmī: *Samṭ an-nuġūm al-awālī fi anbā' al-awā'il wa-*

Interpolations and taboos

One of the most astonishing features of the early modern debate on the prophet's parents is the frequent resort to means of interpolation on the part of the defenders of the prophet's parents. The predestinated object of such interpolations was the disputed Hanafi creed itself. As we learn from a remark by al-Qārī in his commentary to *al-Fiqh al-akbar II*, there were already in his period some Hanafis who desired to erase the problematic passage from the text. Al-Qārī rejects such wishes by bringing them into relation with Shī'ī doubts about the authenticity of the Qur'an.⁵⁴ Later Hanafi scholars like al-Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī (d. 1791) and al-Kawṭarī, who advocated the resurrectionist position, developed the theory that the original formulation of the Hanafi tenet must have been corrupted. They proposed that in its original form, the *Fiqh akbar* read: *wa-wālidā rasūli Llāhi {S} mā mātā 'alā l-kufr* ("the parents of the Apostle of God died as unbelievers") and that the copyist left the negation particle *mā* out, because he considered it a dittography.⁵⁵ The general discomfort of the Hanafis with a tenet which had become increasingly obnoxious, is visible also in the manuscripts of *al-Fiqh al-akbar II* and its commentaries. In several of them, the relevant passage has been crossed out, deleted or pasted over with paper slips.⁵⁶ In the end, the at-

t-tawāli. Ed. 'Ādil A. 'Abd al-Mawḡūd and 'Alī M. Mu'awwaḍ. 4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya 1998, vol. 4, 402.

54 Cf. 'Alī ibn Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī: *Minah ar-rawḍ al-azhar fi sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar*. Ed. W. S. Gāwḡī Beirut: Dār al-Bašā'ir al-Islāmiyya 1419/1998, 310f.

55 Cf. the remarks by the Egyptian Ṣūfī Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Qūṣī in his text *Mašīr abawai an-nabī sallā Llāhu 'alai-hi wa-sallam*, published on his website and filed on archive.org at the following address

<http://web.archive.org/web/20140724151137/http://www.ahbab.net/index.php/mhmd/rawhaniyah/605-walidayh1.html>.

56 By way of example, I may refer to the Ms. 30a of the library of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft in Halle containing al-Qārī's commentary on al-Fiqh al-akbar and exhibiting the mentioned interpolations on fol. 98b. The original text of the tenet is stroken through by the copyist and annotated on the margin with a remark not only criticizing al-Qārī, but also offering a substitute for the original text: *wa-wālidā rasūli Llāhi {S} mātā 'alā zamāni l-ḡahli wa-Abū Ṭālibin 'ammu-hū māta kāfiran wa-*

tempts to adapt the authoritative dogmatic text to the altered beliefs have been quiet successful. In most of the later manuscripts and the modern print editions of *al-Fiqh al-akbar II* the tenet on the unbelief of the prophet's parents has been eliminated altogether.⁵⁷ In the print editions of al-Qārī's commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar II* of 1905 (Maṭba'at at-Taḡaddum) and 1955 (Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī) his explanations on the tenet concerned have also been deleted.

Interpolations were also used to bowdlerize other works by al-Qārī. In several manuscripts and print editions of them, passages containing cross-references to his treatise on the unbelief of the prophet's parents have been eliminated or distorted. In the Berlin manuscript containing al-Qārī's commentary on Abū n-Naḡīb as-Suhrawardī's *Ādāb al-murīdīn*, a cross-reference to this treatise has been erased, together with some of the surrounding text.⁵⁸ Another striking example is the collective cross-reference placed at the beginning of al-Qārī's treatise on the status of the Shī'īs, in which al-Qārī does not only refer to his treatise dedicated to the issue, but also to a number of other works, in which he dealt with the relevant Hanafī tenet.⁵⁹ Whereas the manuscripts Berlin Landberg 295 and Cairo Maḡāmū' 10 have preserved the text of this cross-reference,⁶⁰ the Istanbul manuscript Ms. Damat İbrahim Paşa 298 has suppressed it.⁶¹ For a third example, we may refer to the Cairo edition of 1901 of al-Qārī's commentary on the *Şifā'*, in which the cross-references to his own treatise have been replaced with references to as-

kalāmu l-imāmi ḥaqqun wa-baina l-ḡumlataini farqun 'azīm wa-waqa'a 'Alīyu l-Qārī fī ḥādā l-maidāni fī ḍalālin 'azīm.

57 A.J. Wensinck, who offers an English translation of *al-Fiqh al-akbar II* in his *The Muslim Creed. Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Univ. Press 1932, 188-197) mentions the tenet on the prophet's parents only in a footnote on p. 197, because in most of the texts used by him it was lacking.

58 Cf. Ms. Berlin 299, fol. 76a.

59 Cf. Franke: *The Ego of the Mullah* 194 and al-Qārī: *Šamm al-'awāriḍ fī ḍamm ar-Rawāfiḍ*, Ms. Cairo Maḡmū' 10, fol. 127b-148. The relevant passage is on fol. 127b-128a.

60 Cf. Ms. Berlin Landberg 295, fol. 615a-b, Cairo Maḡmū' 10, fol. 127b-128a.

61 Cf. Ms. Damat İbrahim Paşa 298, fol. 295a-b.

Suyūṭī's resurrectionist treatises.⁶² Based on this, many Hanafi scholars of today claim that al-Qārī has abstained at the end of his life from his earlier offensive position.⁶³

Another object of such bowdlerizing tendencies within the Hanafi madhhab was Kātib Çelebi's treatise *Mīzān al-ḥaqq fī ihtiyār al-aḥaqq*, which, in its original version, includes a chapter on the prophet's parents, in which the author criticized his contemporaries for making the issue a taboo.⁶⁴ In the end, it was this very chapter which itself became a taboo. In the print editions of his book published in the nineteenth century, the eighth chapter, containing his discussion of the problem, was dropped.⁶⁵

Sufis, Salafis and Aš'aris: the contemporary return of the debate

Until recently, I thought that with the general adoption of the idea of the rescue of the prophet's parents from hell by the Hanafi madhhab, the process of their elevation came to a conclusion. I had to realize, however, that this was a misconception, since in the last years something has happened which has gone beyond this point. In July 2010, Sufis of the Egyptian 'Azmiyya order celebrated the birthday (*mawlid*) of the prophet's mother Āmina bint Wahb in a festivity attended by three thousand people, some of them representatives of the religious establishment of al-Azhar. Reports on the event, underlining its historical

62 Cf. 'Alī al-Qārī: *Šarḥ aš-Šifā'*. 2 vols. Istanbul 1901, reprinted Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmīya 1983, vol. 1, 601 and 648.

63 Cf. the remarks by W. S. Gāwġi in his edition of al-Qārī's commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar II*, 18f and 310f.

64 Cf. Florian Zemmin: *Islamische Verantwortungsethik im 17. Jahrhundert. Ein weberianisches Verständnis der Handlungsvorstellungen Kātib Çelebi's*. Hamburg: EB-Verl. 2011, 88.

65 Cf. Zemmin, 35.

importance and accompanied by photographs of the celebration, have been circulated in the internet.⁶⁶

The dauntlessness with which the Egyptian Sufis have raised the prophet's parents to quasi saintly figures is astonishing, given the fact that there are still Muslims today considering them unbelievers. It was already in the 1930s that Salafis of Saudi-Arabia rediscovered al-Qārī's treatise on the prophet's parents and published it for the first time in print, at the Meccan branch of Muḥibb ad-Dīn al-Ḥaṭīb's Salafīya press in Mecca.⁶⁷ A second annotated print edition of this treatise was published in Medina in 1993 by the Jordanian Salafī sheikh Mašhūr ibn Ḥasan ibn Salmān, with an introduction praising al-Qārī's unswerving truthfulness (*ṣidq*).⁶⁸ In 2003, the journal of the Meccan Umm al-Qurā University published an article in which the old position of the prophet's parents being damned to hell was reasserted.⁶⁹ From the authors and circumstances of these publications, it becomes obvious that the Salafis nowadays have replaced the Ṣāhirīs and Ḥanafīs as the staunchest and most prominent opponents of the prophet's parents' salvation. It is also they, whom the Egyptian Sufis celebrating Āmina's birthday name as their main foes.⁷⁰

66 Cf. the report of 8 July 2010 in the web based news forum *al-Yaum as-sābi'*, filed on archive.org at the following address:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20140725160344/http://www1.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=251184>.

67 Cf. Ḥalīl Ibrāhīm Qūtlāy: *al-Imām 'Alī al-Qārī wa-aṭaru-hū fī 'ilm al-ḥadīth*. Beirut: Dār al-Bašā'ir al-Islāmiya 1987, 120. For the Meccan branch of Muḥibb ad-Dīn al-Ḥaṭīb's Maṭba'a Salafīya cf. Henri Lauzière: "The Construction of Salafīyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the perspective of conceptual history" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010), 369-389, here 383.

68 Cf. note 12 above. For Mašhūr ibn Ḥasan ibn Salmān's role within the Jordanian Salafī movement cf. Quintan Wiktorowicz: "The Salafī Movement of Jordan" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000), 219-240, here 230.

69 Cf. Amīn Muḥammad Salām al-Manāsīya: "Taḥqīq al-qaul fī abawai ar-rasūl {S}" in *Maḡallat Kullīyat aš-šarī'a wa-l-'ulūm wa-l-luḡa* 15 (Gumādā l-ūla 1324), 233-254.

70 Cf. the report on the event mentioned in note 66 above.

Celebrating Āmina's birthday appears less spectacular, however, if we consider the recent developments of the debate on the prophet's parents on Egyptian soil. In 2007, the Dār al-Iftā', the Egyptian State Mufti's administration, issued a fatwa stating that "the doctrine of the salvation of the parents of the Chosen One" (*al-qaṭl bi-nağāt abaway al-Muṣṭafā*) is the official position of the Dār al-Iftā', and that whoever claims that the prophet's parents do not form part of the community of believers commits a sin.⁷¹ Given the Aṣ'arī orientation of the Egyptian State Mufti's administration,⁷² its assertion of the parent's salvation comes not as a surprise.

The contemporary debate on the prophet's parents between Salafis on the one side and Aṣ'arīs and Sufis on the other resembles its historical precedents in many ways. It involves, however, also some new issues, such as the celebration of Āmina's birthday. Another contentious point is her "newly discovered" tomb at the Saudi village al-Ḥurayba, identified with the former locality of al-Abwā. Shortly after its "discovery" in 1998, it was levelled to the ground by bulldozers and doused with gasoline by order of the Saudi ministry of religious affairs.⁷³ When in July 2010 the Egyptian Sufis of the 'Azmiyya concluded their celebration of Āmina's birthday, they attacked the Saudi government for the demolition of her grave and for prohibiting visitation to it.⁷⁴

71 Cf. the document *Bayān anna abaway an-nabī {S} nāğiyān* published 19.09.2007 by the Egyptian Dār al-iftā', filed on archive.org at the following address: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140725200633/http://www.dar-alifta.gov.eg/ViewFatwa.aspx?ID=2623>.

72 Cf. 'Ali Gornaa: *Responding from the Tradition: One Hundred Contemporary Fatwas by the Grand Mufti of Egypt*. Louisville: Fons Vitae. 2011, 137f.

73 Cf. Ḍāḥī Ḥasan: *Zilāl qātima fawqa Makka* in BBC Arabic.com 19.04.2006 filed on archive.org at the following address: https://web.archive.org/web/20090715182042/http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/press/newsid_4921000/4921374.stm.

74 Cf. the report on the event mentioned in note 66 above.

Conclusion

In my introduction, I drew parallels between the elevation of the prophet's parents and the process of elevation of Jesus' parents in Christianity, both of which, of course, started from quite different premises. Drawing parallels between these processes amounts to the assumption that there are general mechanisms which can become operative in different religions. For the Islamicist, however, it might be more interesting to look at the dogmatic background of this general change of attitude by Muslims towards the Prophet's parents. What were the religious currents setting the course for this change? Kātib Čelebī identified the Šāfi'īs and Aš'arīs as the fiercest defenders of the doctrine of the parents' salvation from Hell, and held that their opinion had only later been adopted by the Ḥanafites.⁷⁵ This suggests that the Aš'arī doctrine which stresses the freedom of God to pardon everybody, even unbelievers, formed the dogmatic basis on which the idea of the Prophet's parent's salvation from Hell could grow.

But Kātib Čelebī, like al-Qārī before him, also detected some Shi'i influence on this idea. They referred to the fact that Imamī Shi'īs show much respect for the Prophet's parents, as they form part of the immaculate pedigree of the Prophet and his descendants.⁷⁶ This brings up the question whether the salvation of the Prophet's parents from Hell might be originally a Shi'i idea, which only later was adopted by an increasing number of Sunni scholars. If this were the case, then it would form a parallel to the long-lasting process leading eventually to the incorporation of the Prophet's birthday into the Islamic festival calendar. As Nico Kaptein and Marion Holmes Katz have shown, the celebration

75 Cf. Kātib Čelebī: *The Balance of Truth*. Translated with an introduction and notes by G.L.Lewis. London: George Allen and Unwin 1957, 67f.

76 For al-Qārī and Abū Ḥayyān al-Garnāṭī cf. al-Qārī *Adillat al-mu'taqad*, 112f, for Kātib Čelebī cf. *The Balance of Truth*, 69.

of the Prophet's *mawlid* was a Shi'i invention which was only adopted by Sunnis thereafter, eventually becoming a festival celebrated throughout almost the entire Islamic world.⁷⁷ The origin of the resurrection hadith still remains obscure, but it is striking that Shi'i versions of it also exist which mention not only the conversion of the prophet's parents to Islam, but also their proclamation of loyalty to 'Alī as his successor.⁷⁸ In conclusion, it is not altogether impossible that, similar to the *mawlid*, the salvation of the Prophet's parents from Hell is also a concept that originates in Shi'i milieus.

77 Cf. N.J.G. Kaptein: *Muhammad's Birthday Festival. Early History in the Central Muslim Lands and Development in the Muslim West until the 10th/16th Century*. Leiden u.a.: Brill 1993, and Marion Holmes Katz: *The birth of the prophet Muhammad: devotional piety in Sunni Islam*. London 2009.

78 Cf. Mohammad Rihan: *Politics and Culture of an Umayyad Tribe: Conflict and Factionalism in the Early Islamic Period*. Tauris, London, 2014, 151.

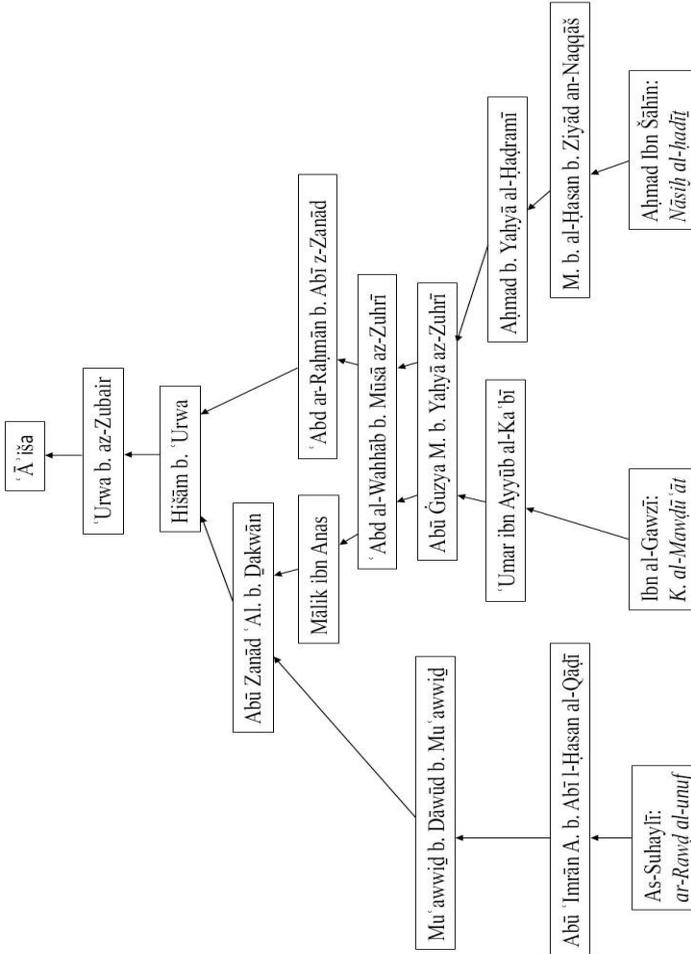


Figure 1: Stemma of the Resurrection hadith.