

# Islam of Abu Talib Part 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

It would be interesting if we analyze the verses that some Sunni commentators have alleged to have revealed for the disbelief of Abu Talib (ra). The first one is:

***And they prohibit (others) from it and go far away from it, and they only bring destruction upon their own souls while they do not perceive it. Surah 6- The Cattle (An'aam) - Verse 26***

– Tabari relates from Sufiyan Soori who relates it from Habeeb ibn Abu Sabit who narrated it from somebody saying that Ibn Abbas said ‘that this verse came down for Abu Talib, because he used to protect Muhammad from the Kufar but he never recited the Kalima.’

Sunni references

- Tabaqat of Ibne Sa'ad, v 2 p 105
- History of Tabari, v 7 p 100
- Tafseer Ibn Katheer, v 2 p 127
- Tafseer Kashaf, v 1 p 448
- Tafseer Qurtubi, v 6 p 406
- ... and many many more

Now let us see for ourselves if the ideology behind the above interpretation is correct or not, so that we would have no doubts in our minds. Further scrutiny of the above interpretation would lead us to believe that it is nothing but a futile effort to discredit Abu Talib:

– The verse talks about living people, since the verse mentions that ‘people who prevent others from doing it and neither do it’. Of course a dead person can't think of preventing others from a course of action, and they have to be living to do so. This convinces us to believe that this verse can't be for Abu Talib.

The chain of narrators terminates after Habeeb ibn Abu Sabit and Sufyan doesn't mention who narrated it from Habeeb ibn Abu Sabit, and all he says that he (Habeeb) narrated it from some one who heard it from Ibn Abbas. This criterion is not acceptable according to the standards of hadeeth, since the chain of narrators is incomplete, therefore this hadeeth is unacceptable.

But for argument sake if we still accept the chain of narrators, and the fact that Habeeb ibn Abu Sabit is the only person who narrates it, the books of Rijal testify to the fact that we can't accept this tradition, for the following reasons

In the eyes of Ibn Habban, Habeeb is a 'deceiver', and Aqeeli Ibn Aun has 'avoided' Habeeb since Habeeb has copied hadeeths from Ata'a which are 'absolutely unacceptable'.

Qita'an says that Habeeb's hadeeths other than Ata'a are also unacceptable and are not safe from being fake. Abu Dawood quotes from Ajri that the hadeeths narrated by Habeeb from Ibn Zamrah are not correct. Ibn Khazeema comments that Habeeb is a 'deceiver'

Sunni reference

- Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v 2 p 179

Therefore the tradition narrated by Habeeb is his personal innovation, and after reading the views of so many Rijal experts how can we accept his hadeeth?

But this shouldn't stop us from further investigating the issue, and if we accept the fact that Habeeb can be trusted, let us look at Sufyan who is the last narrator in the chain of the tradition against Abu Talib. We still have to declare this hadeeth void, because, al-Dhahabi writes about him that

"Sufyan narrations are lies"

Sunni reference

- Mizan al-Itidal, by al-Dhahabi, v 1 p 396

I find it very difficult to believe that despite the fact the commentators who have written down the traditions are respectable personalities, they have copied it down from cheap people such as above, without any hesitation.

Despite all these weak traditions that have been narrated by weak narrators, we find hadeeths related by Ibn Abbas that are genuine and state the opposite of what we find in the hadeeth mentioned above. Let see what they have to offer

Tabari states that the above verse came down for all the mushrikeen who used to stay away from the Prophet and used to advise others to stay away from him (the Prophet).

Sunni reference

- Tafseer Tabari, v 7 p 109
- Tafseer Durre Manthoor, v 3 p 8

The fact is that Abu Talib never advised others to stay away from Prophet (S). Even many of those who accused him for not uttering Shahadah, confess that he helped the Holy Prophet (S) during those days of tribulations of the young Islam with all his means. Also he raised the Prophet when he was child, and then accepted that Imam ‘Ali (as) to be raised by Prophet. He, in fact, was Muslim from the begining, but was ordered by Prophet to practice Taqiyya (to conceal his belief) so that he could play as a mediator between Prophet and chiefs of unbelievers in Mecca (like Abu Sufyan).

Also it is important to note that we do NOT believe that the parents of Prophets and Imams were necessarily perfect (Infallible). However we believe that their parents and all their forefathers were righteous and believers and monotheist during their entire life.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia/islam-abu-talib-part-1#comment-0>