

## Abdullah Ibn Saba

### Abdullah Ibn Saba (Part I)

Enemies of Islam whose goal were/are to split the Muslims, in their effort to explain the emergence of Shia, claim that the Shia are a sect which was originated by Abdullah Ibn Saba, a Jew who embraced Islam during the reign of Uthman Ibn Affan, the third caliph. They further state that Abdullah Ibn Saba traveled in Muslim cities and towns, from Damascus to Kufa to Egypt, propagating among Muslims that Ali is the Prophet's successor. He provoked Muslims to kill Uthman since he believed Uthman had occupied the seat of Imam Ali. He also made mischief in the armies of Ali and his opponents in the battle of Camel. He was also responsible for all the false ideas of the Shia forward. These mercenary writers believe that Abdullah Ibn Saba is the ORIGIN of Shia; and since he himself was a hypocrite and a falsifier of tales, then all the knowledge and beliefs of the Shia are also false. In fact, Abdullah Ibn Saba is the best scapegoat for all the claims of some Sunnis.

While the existence of a person in the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba in the early history of Islam is seriously under question, what is clear after extensively researching this topic is that even if a poor man with such name ever existed at that time, the stories propagated about this person are legendary, false, fabricated, and fictitious, and there exists no proof for the validity of these stories attached to him. This point will be studied in this discussion, by the willing of Allah.

#### Introduction

The fabricated stories around the character of Abdullah Ibn Saba are the malicious production of one of the disciples of the devil, namely Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi. He was a story teller, lived in the second century after Hijrah, who shaped his stories by some primary facts he found in the documented history of Islam available at that time. Sayf wrote a novel much the same as what Salman Rushdi did in "Satanic Verses" with similar motives, but with the difference that the role of Satan in this case was given to poor Abdullah Ibn Saba.

Sayf Ibn Umar distorted the biographies of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) to please the government of his time, and to distort the history of Shia and to ridicule Islam. Sayf was a staunch advocate of the Umayyads, who were known throughout history to be one of the worst enemies of Ahlul-Bayt, and as such, it was in his best interest to invent such stories to degrade the Shia. In his stories however he followed many other goals one of which was to cleverly elevate the status of his tribe over others by inventing some imaginary companions from his tribe. However many Sunni scholars found numerous unjustifiable heresies in his reports which was not limited to the issue of Abdullah Ibn Saba, and consequently they abandoned his reports, and accuse him as a man of forgery and lies. Yet Sayf's works enjoyed the support of a minority of Sunnis to this date. Here, later on, I give the sayings of several leading Sunni scholars, who all confirmed that Sayf Ibn Umar was an untrustworthy person and his stories are void.

Ideological studies indicate that most of those who hate the Shi'ite school of thought (a lot of whom being the enemies of Islam anyway) justify their enmity on this obvious heresy which they would exploit to backup their attack on Shia. The approach which resembles the one adopted by Sayf Ibn Umar himself.

#### The Origin of The Tale

The tale of Abdullah Ibn Saba is over twelve centuries old. Historians and writers, one after the other recorded it, adding more and more to it. With a glance at the chain of transmitters of this story, you will find the name of Sayf sitting in there. The following historians recorded directly from Sayf:

- (1) Tabari.
- (2) Dhahabi. He has also cited from Tabari(1).
- (3) Ibn Abi Bakir. He has also recorded from Ibn Athir(15), who has recorded from Tabari(1).
- (4) Ibn Asakir.

The following have recorded indirectly from Sayf:

- (5) Nicholson from Tabari(1).
- (6) Encyclopedia of Islam from Tabari(1).
- (7) Van Floton from Tabari(1).
- (8) Wellhauzen from Tabari(1).
- (9) Mirkhand from Tabari(1).
- (10) Ahmad Amin from Tabari(1), and from Wellhauzen(8).
- (11) Farid Wajdi from Tabari(1).
- (12) Hasan Ibrahim from Tabari(1).

- (13) Saeed Afghani from Tabari(1), and from Ibn Abi Bakir(3), Ibn Asakir(4), and Ibn Badran(21).
- (14) Ibn Khaldoon from Tabari(1).
- (15) Ibn Athir from Tabari(1).
- (16) Ibn Kathir from Tabari(1).
- (17) Donaldson from Nicholson(5), and from Encyclopedia(6).
- (18) Ghiath al-Din from Mirkhand(9).
- (19) Abul Fida from Ibn Athir(15).
- (20) Rashid Ridha from Ibn Athir(15).
- (21) Ibn Badran from Ibn Asakir(4).
- (22) Bostani from Ibn Kathir(16).

The above list gives evidence to the fact that the fictitious stories around the character of Abdullah Ibn Saba has been started by Sayf and cited next by Tabari directly from Sayf's book as Tabari mentioned himself (See the chain of narrators of traditions related to Abdullah Ibn Saba, inside the History of Tabari. For instance, see the index of Vol. 15, English version, under the name of Sayf Ibn Umar or Abdullah Ibn Saba). Therefore, Sayf's character and his history should be studied and analyzed with a great care.

**Who Is Sayf?**

Sayf Ibn Umar al-Dhabbi al-Usayyidi al-Tamimi lived in the second century of the Muslim era (8th century AD) and died after the year 170 AH (750 AD). al-Dhabbi said that Sayf died during the rule of Haroon al-Rashid in Baghdad (Iraq). During his life, Sayf wrote the following two books which were available even during the reign of Umayyad:

1. "al-Fotooh wa al-Riddah" which is the history of the period before the death of the Prophet (PBUH&HF) until the third Caliph Uthman resumed office as the ruler of Muslim world.
2. "al-Jamal wa Maseeri Aisha wa Ali" which is the history from the murder of Uthman to the battle of Jamal (the fight that happened between Imam Ali and some companions).

These books are now lost but survived for a number of centuries after Sayf's own lifetime. Based on what we found, the last person who had said that he had possessed Sayf's books was Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH). These two books of Sayf contained more action than truth, some forged stories, and some true events which, intentionally, have been recorded in a ridiculing manner.

Since Sayf spoke about some of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HF) and also invented some companions with strange names, his stories have affected the history of early Islam. Some biographers such as the authors of "Usdul Ghabah", "Isti'ab" and "Isabah" and geographers such as the authors of "Mu'jamul Boldan" and "al-Rawzul mi'tar" have written the life of some companions of the Prophet, and named places which exist only in the books written by Sayf. Because of this, the life and character of Sayf and his credibility should be carefully investigated.

**What Do Sunni Scholars Say About Sayf?**

The following leading Sunni scholars confirm that Sayf Ibn Umar was a well-known liar and untrustworthy:

- (1) al-Hakim (d. 405 AH) wrote: "Sayf is accused of being a heretic. His narrations are abandoned."
- (2) al-Nisa'i (d. 303 AH) wrote: "Sayf's narrations are weak and they should be disregarded because he was unreliable and untrustworthy."
- (3) Yahya Ibn Mueen (d. 233 AH) wrote: "Sayf's narrations are weak and useless."
- (4) Abu Hatam (d. 277 AH) wrote: "Sayf's Hadith is rejected."
- (5) Ibn Abi Hatam (d. 327 AH) wrote: "Scholars have abandoned Sayf's narrations."
- (6) Abu Dawud (d. 316 AH) wrote: "Sayf is nothing. He was a liar. Some of his Hadiths were conveyed and the majority of them are denied."
- (7) Ibn Habbab (d. 354 AH) wrote: "Sayf attributed fabricated traditions to the good reporters. He was accused of being a heretic and a liar."
- (8) Ibn Abd al-Barr (d. 462 AH) mentioned in his writing about al-Qa'qa: "Sayf reported that al-Qa'qa Said: I attended the death of the Prophet Muhammad." Ibn Adb al-Barr continued: "Ibn Abu Hatam said: Sayf is weak. Thus, what was conveyed of the presence of al-Qa'qa at the death of the Prophet is rejected. We mentioned the Sayf's traditions for knowledge only."
- (9) al-Darqutini (d. 385 AH) wrote: "Sayf is weak".
- (10) Firoozabadi (d. 817 AH) in "Towalif" mentioned Sayf and some others by saying: "They are weak."
- (11) Ibn al-Sakan (d. 353 AH) wrote: "Sayf is weak."
- (12) Safi al-Din (d. 923 AH) wrote: "Sayf is considered weak."
- (13) Ibn Udei (d. 365 AH) wrote about Sayf: "He is weak. Some of his narrations are famous yet the majority of his narrations are

disgraceful and not followed."

(14) al-Suyuti (d. 900 AH) wrote: "Sayf's Hadith is weak."

(15) Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH) wrote after mentioning a tradition: "Many reporters of this tradition are weak, and the weakest among them is Sayf."

It is interesting to see that although al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) has quoted from the book of Sayf in his History, he has mentioned in his other book that Sayf as a weak narrator. In "al-Mughni fi al-Dhu'afa" al-Dhahabi wrote:

"Sayf has two books which have been unanimously abandoned by the scholars." (al-Mughni fi al-Dhu'afa', by al-Dhahabi, p292)

The result of the investigation into Sayf's life shows that Sayf was an agnostic and an unreliable story teller. Stories told by him are dubious and are entirely or partly forged. In his stories, he has used names of cities which never existed in the world. Abdullah Ibn Saba are the star of those stories. He also introduced some 150 imaginary companions for the Prophet to fill out the empty characters of his scenarios, by giving them some strange names which are not found in any other documents. Also the timing of the events given by Sayf's narrations contradict the authentic Sunni documents. Sayf has also used imaginary chains of narrators, and reported many miraculous events (like talking cows with human etc...). Some of the defenders of Sayf hold the opinion that eventhough he was known as a weak transmitter and many scholars of Hadith do not trust his reports, it is only in the matter of the Shari'ah (the Law), but not in the matter of historical report!

By that, they want to rely on the "historical" stories of someone who was regarded a liar and "zindeeq"! If the problem of Sayf was just lack of knowledge about Shari'ah (divine law), one could say he can be trusted on other accounts. But the problem with Sayf was that he was a liar, and made lots of forgery by constructing the events, attributed fabricated traditions to good narrators. Then such person becomes questionable for almost everything. As for his historical accounts we will witness in Part V that even Christian historians have confirmed great inconsistencies between his historical report and other sober transmitters. No need to mention Sunni and Shia opinion on the heretical nature of Sayf.

The stories about Abdullah Ibn Saba which do NOT have any source or any chain of transmitters

There are some reports from both Shia and Sunni scholars, historians, and story tellers of ancient cultures who wrote few lines about Abdullah Ibn Saba but did not supply any evidence for their claims, nor did they provide any chain of supportive authorities (isnad) for their reports to be examined.

For instance, their reports start with: "some people say so and so ..." or "some scholars say so and so ..." without mentioning who that scholar was, and where they got it from. It was based on rumor which was propagated by Umayyads (AFTER Sayf's work) which had reached them, and some based on the authors' own creativity. This is inferred when we see these authors have reported some legends which are clearly false and rejected by logic. These reports are provided by those who wrote books about "al-Milal wa Nihal" (stories about civilizations and cultures) or "al-Firaq" (divisions/sects).

Among the Sunnis who mentioned the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba in their stories WITHOUT bringing any source for their claims, are:

- (1) Ali Ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ari (d. 330) in his book "Maqalat al-Islamiyin" (Essays about the People of Islam).
- (2) Abdul-Qahir Ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi (d. 429) in his book "al-Farq Bain al-Firaq" (Differences of the Sects).
- (3) Muhammad Ibn Abdil-Karim al-Shahrastani (d. 548) in his book "al-Milal wan Nihal" (Nations and Cultures).

The above mentioned Sunnis do not give any source or any chain of authority for their story about Abdullah Ibn Saba. They have competed with each other to increase the number of sects in Islam with strange names such as al-Kawusiyah, al-Tayyarah, al-Mamturah, al-Ghrabiyyah, al-Ma'lumiyyah !!, al-Majhuliyyah !!! and so on WITHOUT giving any source or reference for their claims. Living in medieval times, these authors presumed that writing stranger stories and attributing unrealistic events to different Muslim nations will make them more reputable than the other competitors in this area. And by that, they caused a tragic damage to the history of Islam and committed a great crime for what they have falsely attributed to the Muslim nations.

Some of them have provided silly legends and fairy-tales whose falsehood are easy to detect nowadays, though it would have been possible for them to succeed in passing off such stories as history in those times. For instance, al-Shahrastani in his book "al-Milal wan Nihal" has mentioned that there was a group of semi-human creatures in the name of "al-Nas-Naas"

with only half face, one eye, one hand, and one leg. Muslims could talk to these semi-human creatures and they even exchanged poetry!!! Some Muslims even used to go hunting these semi-human creatures and they used to eat them!!! These semi-humans could jump faster than a horse and were ruminant/cud- chewers!!! al-Shahrastani further mentioned that al-Mutawakkil, the Abbasid Caliph, ordered the scientists of his time to investigate about these creatures!!! (See al-Milal wan Nihal, by al-Sharastani)

People at that time did not have the modern tools that would enable them to discover the falsehood these unrealistic stories and fairy-tales, and perhaps they would have preferred more extensive and more strange collections which may have seemed a guarantee of their accuracy, even though they were provided with no reference.

Also by chronological study of the life time of these authors, we can conclude that ALL of them were long after the era of Sayf Ibn Umar, and even after al-Tabari. So it is quite possible that they all got the story of Abdullah Ibn Saba from Sayf. This claim becomes more strong when one observes that none of them mentioned the source of their reports which might be due to the fact that Sayf Ibn Umar's scandal was known to every body by that time and they did not want to discredit their books by mentioning its source. Moreover there exists NO document available related to Abdullah Ibn Saba BEFORE Sayf. The scholars or historians who lived before Sayf Ibn Umar NEVER mentioned the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba in their books. This shows that if Ibn Saba ever existed he was not anything important for the historians before Sayf. This is also another reason to believe that what was propagated around the personality of Abdullah Ibn Saba was initiated by the mass propaganda of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi.

Among the Shia who mentioned the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba but without any information regarding to their source, are the following two historians:

(1) Sa'ad Ibn Abdillah al-Ash'ari al-Qummi (d. 301) in his book "al-Maqalat wal-Firaq" mentioned a report in which there exists the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba. But he did not mention any chain of authorities nor did he mention from whom (or which book) he got the story and what his source was. Moreover al-Ash'ari al-Qummi has narrated many traditions from Sunni authorities. al-Najjashi (d. 450) in his "al-Rijal" said that al-Ash'ari al-Qummi traveled to many places and was well-known for his relation with Sunni historians and heard many stories from them. He wrote many weak reports from what he heard, one of which is a short story about Abdullah Ibn Saba, with no reference.

(2) Hasan Ibn Musa al-Nawbakhti (d. 310) who was a Shia historian who provided in his book "al-Firaq" a report in which is the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba. However he never mentioned from whom he got the report and what his source was.

The above two were the Shia who originally provided some information about the existence of an accursed man in the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba at the time of Imam Ali (AS). Notice that all of them reported these information long after Sayf Ibn Umar and even after al-Tabari wrote his history. Thus they might perhaps got the information from Sayf or those who quoted from him such as al-Tabari. This becomes more probable when we see that they wrote "Some people say so and so..." without giving any documented support (isnad) or the name of those "some people"!

Reports about Abdullah Ibn Saba which were NOT transmitted through Sayf Ibn Umar

We should point out however that there are less than 14 reports available in the collections of Shia and Sunni which mentions the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba, and are supplied with the chain of authorities, but in their chain of authorities the name of Sayf does not exist.

As for the Shia, he was al-Kushshi (or al-Keshshi; also abbreviated as Kash) (d. 369) who wrote his book "Rijal" in 340 AH. In that book he mentioned few traditions in which there exists the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba, from the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt which were quoted below. As we will see, these traditions give a very different picture than those mentioned by Sayf. However, it has been proven for Shia scholars that the book of al-Kushshi (Kash) has a lot of errors, especially in the names and also few errors in quotations. He has reported many weak traditions in his book of al-Rijal, and as a result, his book is not considered a reliable source for Shia. Not to mention that the reports of al-Kushshi (Kash) are not found in any of the major 4-books of tradition for Shia. (For a critical evaluation of his errors, please see al-Rijal by al-Tustari as well as al-Askari.)

Other Shia scholars who mentioned Abdullah Ibn Saba, have quoted al-Kushshi or the two historians mentioned above (i.e., al-Ash'ari al-Qummi and al-Nawbakhti who did not provide any chain of transmitters or any source for their report). Among those who quoted al-Kushshi (Kash) are: Shaikh al-Tusi (d. 460), Ahmad Ibn Tawoos (d. 673), Allama al-Hilli (d. 726), etc.

As for the Sunnis, beside those who quoted from Sayf Ibn Umar whose names were given earlier, there are few reports from Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani which provide the very similar information of what al-Kushshi (Kash) provided (see below).

For these very few Shi'i and Sunni reports, we would like to mention the following points:

1. The story that these few Sunni and Shia traditions provide, are totally different than the heavy narrations propagated by Sayf Ibn Umar. These traditions say that there was a poor man in the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba appeared AT THE TIME OF government of Imam Ali (AS). He claimed that he was a Prophet and Ali was God, and as soon as Imam Ali heard the news, he imprisoned him, and asked him to repent. He did not do so, and thus, Imam Ali ordered to burn him. The traditions confirm that Imam Ali and his descendants cursed this man and disassociated themselves from his claim of deity for Imam Ali (AS). This is all there is about it, provided that these few traditions are genuine in the first place.

2. These few (less than 14) traditions do NOT exist in any authentic book. In fact, there is NO mention of Abdullah Ibn Saba in ANY of the six authentic

Sunni collections (Sihah). Moreover, these few reports were NEVER rated authentic

by Shia or Sunni scholars, and there is a great possibility that a person in the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba never existed in the world, and was the total invention of Sayf Ibn Umar, similar to his invention of 150 imaginary companions for the Prophet (PBUH&HF) which do not exist in any other independent report. Granted that Abdullah Ibn Saba ever existed, Sayf has used his character and attributed many events to him for which there exists NO SIMILAR REPORT by other Sunni narrators. Not only that, but also Sayf's reports clearly contradict other reports by the Sunnis, as we will show in this part and the next parts. Such malicious construction of the events were easy to detect even by the Sunni scholars.

Now, let me give you some of these few traditions which have NOT been reported by Sayf, and compare what Sayf attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba.

As for Shia:

It is attributed to Abu Ja'far (AS) saying:

Abdullah Ibn Saba used to claim being a prophet and claimed that The Commander of Believers, Ali (AS) is God. Allah is Higher than such (claim). This news reached to The Commander of Believers (AS), so he called him and questioned him. But he repeated his claims and said: "You are Him (i.e., God), and it has been revealed to me that you are God and I am a prophet." So The Commander of Believers (AS) said: "How dare you! Satan has made a mockery of you. Repent for what you said. May your mother weep at your death! Quit (your claim)." But he refused, so (Imam Ali) imprisoned him and asked him three times to repent, but he didn't. Thus he burnt him with fire and said: "Satan had taken him into his whim, he used to come to him and to induce these (thoughts) in him." (Rijal, by al-Kushshi)

Moreover it is reported that Imam Ali Ibn Husain (AS) said:

"May the curse of Allah be upon those who tell lies about us. I mentioned Abdullah Ibn Saba and each hair in my body stood up, Allah cursed him. Ali (AS) was, by Allah, a proper servant of Allah, the brother of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF). He did not earn the graciousness/honor from Allah except with the obedience to Allah and His Messenger. And (similarly) the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) did not earn the honor from Allah except with his obedience to Allah."

(Rijal, by al-KuShshi)

It is reported that Abu Abdillah (AS) said:

"We are a family of truthfulness. But we are not safe from a liar telling lies about us to undermine our truth with his lies in front of people. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) was the most truthful among people in what he said (Lahjatan) and the most truthful among all humanity; and Musaylima used to lie on him. The Commander of Believers (AS) was the most truthful one among the creation of Allah after the Messenger of Allah; and the one who used to lie on him, and tried to undermine his truthfulness and claimed lies about Allah, was Abdullah Ibn Saba." (Rijal, by al-Kushshi)

Also:

"As he (Aba Abdillah - Ja'far al-Sadiq) was telling his companions in the subject of Abdullah Ibn Saba and that he claimed in Godness of The Commander of Believers, Ali Ibn Abi Talib. He said: When he claimed that in Ali, he asked him to repent and he refused, so he burnt him with fire." (Rijal, by al-Kushshi)

As for the Sunnis, few reports from Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani which provide the very similar information of what al-Kushshi (Kash) provided. Ibn Hajar

mentioned:

"Abdullah Ibn Saba was one of the extremist (al-Ghulat), dualist/seducer/manichaeist (Zindeeq), and misguided, which is conveyed that Ali burnt him with fire." (Lisan al-Mizan, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, p289)

Then Ibn Hajar continues:

"Ibn Asakir mentioned in his History that his origin (Abdullah Ibn Saba) was from Yemen and that he was a Jew who adopted Islam and traveled in the cities of Muslims and preached them to disobey their rulers, to induce evil amongst them, then he entered Damascus for that purpose.' Then Ibn Asakir mentioned a LONG STORY from the book of al-Futooh of Sayf Ibn Umar, which does not have correct support/authorities (isnad)." (Lisan al-Mizan, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, p289)

Then Ibn Hajar gives a tradition among whose chain of authorities two individuals are missing. In footnote he says that its has been dropped.

This is the tradition:

"Ali ascended the pulpit and said: What is wrong with him? people said: He is denying (or lying upon) Allah and His Messenger." (Lisan al-Mizan, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, p289)

In another tradition, Ibn Hajar reported:

"Ali said to Abdullah Ibn Saba: I have been told that there shall be thirty liars/imposters (who claim prophethood) and you are one of them" (Lisan al-Mizan, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, p290)

He also wrote:

"Ibn Saba and his followers believed in the deity of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and certainly Ali burnt them by fire during his rule."

(Lisan al-Mizan, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, p290)

These Sunni traditions were not rated authentic either. The total of these tradition by both Shia and Sunni (reported by other than Sayf), do not exceed fourteen at most. They will be even less if you remove repetitions. These few Sunnite and Shi'ite traditions convey that:

1. Abdullah Ibn Saba appeared during the Caliphate of Imam Ali (AS), and not during the rule of Uthman as Sayf alleged.
2. Abdullah Ibn Saba did not say that Ali is the successor of Prophet (PBUH&HF) as Sayf claimed. Rather he said Ali (AS) is God.
3. Imam Ali (AS) burnt him along with all other extremists (al-Ghulat). This is while Sayf does not state such a thing.
4. There is no mention of his existence or his playing a role at the time of Uthman. There is no mention of his agitation against Uthman which ended up with assassination of Uthman as Sayf attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba.
5. There is no mention of the role of Abdullah Ibn Saba in the battle of Camel as Sayf attributed to him.
6. These traditions do not indicate that any righteous companions of Prophet followed Abdullah Ibn Saba. This is while Sayf maliciously alleged that some of the most faithful pioneers of Islam such as Abu Darr (RA) and Ammar Yasir (RA) were the students of Abdullah Ibn Saba during the reign of Uthman.

al-Saba'iya and the Multiple personality of Ibn Saba  
Since pre-Islamic times, the term "Saba'iya" used to indicate those related to Saba son of Yashjub, son of Ya'rub, son of Qahtan; synonymous to "Qahtaniya", also used to be known as "Yamaniya" referencing their place of origin, Yemen.

This group of people (i.e., Saba'iya/Qahtaniya/Yamaniya) in contrast to the "Adnaniya", "Nazariya" and "Mudhariya", which used to refer to relation to Mudhar son of Nazar, son of Adnan, from the sons of Ishmael (AS) the son of Abraham (AS). There were some allies for each tribe who were under protection of that tribe, and at times they were referred by the name of that tribe.

In general, Arabs trace their roots to one of these two major tribes. When the two tribes joined in Medina to create what became the first Islamic society led by the Prophet(PBUH&HF) (year 0 AH), those related to Qahtan were named al-Ansar (Helpers) who were the residents of Medina at that time; and those from Adnan and their allies who traveled to Medina and were called al-Muhajireen (Immigrants).

The personality Abdullah bin Wahab al-Saba'i, the first leader of al-Khawarij (the group which opposed Ali (AS) during his rule), was from the first tribe, the Saba'iya or Qhatan above. As the friction increased between the two tribes of Adnan and Qahtan in Medina and Kufa, the Adhanies reportedly used to nickname the Qhantanies by the term Saba'iya. However, this name-calling was purely tribal and ethnical until the appearance of the work of Sayf Ibn Umar (of Adnan) in the beginning of the second century (AH) during the Umayyad rule, in Kufa. Sayf took the advantage of this

purely tribal friction and created the mythical Saba'iya religious entity, with Abdullah Ibn Saba as its leader, altering the meaning of the tribal reference to Qahtan to that of the ill inference attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba's deviant sect.

To come up with the alleged name of the creator of the sect (Abdullah Ibn Saba), Sayf Ibn Umar either transposed the name Abdullah (bin Wahab) al-Saba'i, described above, to Abdullah Ibn Saba as appears from reports by al-Ash'ari, al-Sama'ani and al-Maqrizi; or he created the story and invented the name on his own altogether. Either way, there was no strong proof for the existence to Abdullah Ibn Saba during the time of Uthman and Ali, except as Abdullah bin Wahab al-Saba'i who was the leader of Khawarij, as mentioned earlier.

One also finds that "Saba'i" tag in persons' names, who belong to the tribes of Qahtan, ceased especially in Iraq, the origin of the fairy tale, after that date. This naming convention then continued throughout the second and third century (AH) in the areas of Yemen, Egypt and Spain, where a number of Sunni Hadith narrators (including some of the narrators of the traditions in six Sunni collections) were labeled Saba'i due to their relation to Saba Ibn Yashjub and not Abdullah Ibn Saba the Jew who created disturbance per Sayf's allegations.

Later as the books of the Tabari and others spread the fairy tale across the land, the naming convention of Saba'i was dropped every where. Whence this mention in the books is used to indicate a following to Abdullah Ibn Saba alone, even though they never enjoyed existence outside the covers of those books. The tale evolved over the years to include a multiple of its creator's persona and beliefs. At the same time, while Abdullah Ibn Saba was Ibn al-Sawda' to the inventor of the tale (Sayf), you find them becoming two separate persons around the 5th century, along with the variation in their news (see "al-Farq" by Abdul-Qahir Ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi). We can delimit these variations in the fifth century onwards, in three personalities:

1. Abdullah bin Wahab al-Saba'i, head of the Khawarij, who opposed Imam Ali (AS).
2. Abdullah Ibn Saba who established the Saba'iya clan/group which believes in the deity of Ali. He and his followers were burnt with fire shortly after.
3. Abdullah Ibn Saba, also known as Ibn al-Sawda' to those who reported from Sayf. He was the creator of the Saba'iya clan/group who believed in successorship to Ali, who agitated against Uthman and then they started the war of Jamal (Camel).

The first one existed in reality, and some of the traditions related to Abdullah Ibn Saba actually refers to this man who was the leader of al-Khawarij. For the second person, there are few traditions which was mentioned earlier, yet they were not authenticated by either schools. The third personage, however, was the imagination of Sayf who perhaps invented it based on the original story he heard about the first and the second persons, and then attaching his own story to them.

**Ibn Saba and Shia**

One should distinguish between those Sunnis scholars who reported the story of Abdullah Ibn Saba (either from Sayf's mass production (such as al-Tabari)

or otherwise (such as Ibn Hajar)), and those pseudo-Sunnis who not only reported it, but also declared that Shia are the followers of this fictitious character. It has been proven that those pseudo-scholars (i.e., the second group) who attributed the foundation of Shia to Abdullah Ibn Saba were never Sunnis. They were rather the followers of Sunnah of the House of Abu Sufyan and Marwan. This is clear when one observes their tendencies to these two families when they discuss their history.

When these pseudo-scholars want to talk about Imami Shia, they use the word of al-Saba'iyyah to undermine the devotion of the followers of the Members of the House of Prophet (PBUH&HF) to Islam, in the same way that they undermine the devotion of a group of Muslims who were killed in the reign of Abu Bakr since they followed what the Messenger of Allah ordered them in distributing the Zakat (alms) among their own poor people and thus did not give it to Abu Bakr. Yet these mercenary scholars, when talking about those people, they mix them with the issue of Musaylamah who claimed Prophethood, and attribute these martyrs to him, in order to justify shedding their bloods, plundering their wealth and taking their women. But Allah will soon judge between us and them, for He is the best judge.

Such blending of falsehood and truth is not anything new for us when we see in today's world of technology those who see Islam a barrier for their illegitimate interest in the world, accuse Muslims of terrorism, in order to justify shedding their bloods and taking their wealth. To prepare their agenda, they take advantage of some foolish individual(s) who happened to

be Muslim in ID, and who did a violation out of his/their anger. They call devoted Muslims terrorists because a pseudo-Sunni-Muslim blew up the World Trade Center. By that, they follow exactly the footsteps of Sayf Ibn Umar who in turn learnt this great idea from the devil. Moreover, if they could not find any foolish act from Muslims to cover the media at any period, they pay money to emulate it artificially, and attribute it to the Muslims, much the same way that Sayf Ibn Umar shaped the character of Abdullah Ibn Saba (and most probably invented him by picking up his name at the middle of the night). They do this to provide an excuse for their malicious accusations and their attacks to the whole Muslim world, much the same as what Sayf and his disciples did to the House of Prophet (PBUH&HF). According to both Shia and Sunni scholars, Sayf Ibn Umar was one of those who manipulated the truth and made some fake traditions based on some partial truth. Believing in the existence of Ibn Saba does not mean believing in the stories of Sayf who tried to relate him to Shia. The fact is that people like Abdullah Ibn Saba are useless without a story attached to their names. Fake stories around such characters are different than their actual existence. Such a person might be existent while the stories around him might not be.

#### Sayf's Achievements: An Overview

What follows in this article and the next parts of this series is a comparison between Sayf's stories and others. First I give a general view of achievements of Sayf Ibn Umar:

Sayf was paid to write some stories as a relief for the contradictions and disputes happened in the early history of Islam. Those critical disputes were from year 11 AH (demise of Prophet) till 40 AH. Sayf only focused on that period (11-40 AH) and left the rest.

The first dispute he has talked about is the dispute related the dispatch of the army of Usamah and the death of prophet. The Prophet (PBUH&HF), about four days before his death, ordered all Helpers and all Immigrants except Ali to leave Medina, and to go Syria in order to fight with the Romans. But companions disobeyed and complained about the leadership of Usamah (See Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English version, Traditions numbers 5.552, 5.744 and 5.745) and delayed in joining the camp, and finally

returned to Medina, in order to prepare themselves for discussion about successorship as soon as the Messenger of Allah dies. Sayf tried to forge the story to show that there was no delay. Sayf said that after the death of Prophet, when Abu Bakr dispatched the army of Usamah, he said to them: "March on! May God destroy you by murder and plague!"

Sunni references: History of al-Tabari and History of Ibn Asakir, reported from Sayf, Events of Year 11 AH

This is while other narrators never mentioned such a stupid thing from Abu Bakr. Sayf being a heretic, wanted to make a mockery of Islam as a religion, as well as to please the Caliph of his time.

The next thing he has talked, is about the pavilion of Saqifa. Sayf reported that:

"Ali was in his house when he was told that Abu Bakr had sat to receive the oath of allegiance. So He went out immediately wearing his night shirt only, out of dislike that he might be late. Then He gave the oath of allegiance and sat with Abu Bakr, and then sent for his clothes. When (the clothes) were brought to him, he put them and stayed in (Abu Bakr's) assembly."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v9, pp 195-196 reported from Sayf Ibn Umar.

This ridiculous report is in clear contradiction with Sahih al-Bukhari where it has been mentioned that Imam Ali did NOT give the oath to Abu Bakr for the first six month of his reign (Sahih al- Bukhari, Arabic-English version, Tradition 5.546).

Sayf has told seven stories about Saqifa, and has used three imaginary characters as the companions of prophet who played his scenarios in Saqifa, whose names are not mentioned anywhere else except in the work of those who reported from Sayf himself. He named them: Qa'qa, Mubashshir, and Sakhr. His main legend is the malicious stories attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba, by which he had tried to solved the following puzzles:

- Creation of Shia
- Problem of exile of Abu Dhar
- Murder of Uthman
- The War of Jamal (Camel)

Sayf has also maliciously tried to link the forged stories of Abdullah Ibn Saba to the Shia Imam Ali (AS) which shows he did not know too much about Shia, otherwise he would not had attributed some of the beliefs which are not held by the followers of the members of the house of Prophet.



Insha Allah, in the next parts, I will analyze the fictitious story of Abdullah Ibn Saba in comparison with the other Sunni reports. I should mention that al-Askari had a very distinguished achievement. He proved beyond any doubt, in his book named "Abdullah Ibn Saba and Other Myths", that Ibn Saba \_with\_ such achievements never existed, and that he was invented by Sayf Ibn Umar. If there was any Abdullah Ibn Saba at that time, his story was much different than what Sayf manipulated. For brothers and sisters who like to know more about the business of Abdullah Ibn Saba and his fictitious character, I introduce the following two interesting books, in English, which can be ordered immediately:

1- "Abdullah Ibn Saba and Other Myths," (English) by al-Askari, S. M.  
To order, send \$15.00 to:  
al-Khoei Foundation Library,  
89-89 Van Wyck Expressway,  
Jamaica, NY 11435-4123 U.S.A.

Unfortunately only first volume, out of four volumes of this book is available in English which still gives enough information, however the rest are available in Arabic. The second two volumes in Arabic are separately named "One Hundred Fifty Companions".

2- "The Shiites Under Attack," (English) by Chirri, M. J.  
To order, send \$8.00 to:  
Muhammad Javad Chirri,  
The Islamic Center of America,  
15571 Joy Road,  
Detroit, MI 48228 U.S.A.

### Abdullah Ibn Saba (Part II)

After an overview in the previous part, I will Ensha Allah analyze the fictitious story of Abdullah Ibn Saba reported by Sayf, in comparison with the other Sunni reports. First I give a brief tour of the allegations of Sayf Ibn Umar attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba:  
Sayf alleged that a Yemenite Jew, called Abdullah Ibn Saba (also known as Ibn Amutus-Sawda'; son of a black slave), declared his Islam at the time of \* Uthman \*. He willfully associated himself with Muslims and traveled in their cities and towns, from Damascus to Kufa to Egypt, propagating among Muslims that Muhammad (PBUH&HF) will be resurrected like Jesus. He also said Ali is Prophet's executor and was deprived of his divine office by Uthman. He provoked Abu Dhar and Ammar Ibn Yasir to agitate against Uthman and Muawiyah. He provoked Muslims to kill Uthman since he had usurped the seat of Ali. Sayf also alleged that Ibn Saba was the key element in the tragedy of the battle of Camel. Let us now discuss each of the above allegations one by one:

#### The Return of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF)

Sayf alleged Abdullah Ibn Saba was the one who invented the idea that Prophet Muhammad would return before the Day of Judgment. Sayf wrote that Ibn Saba based his allegation on the return of Jesus, saying: If Jesus is going to come back, Muhammad will also return because he is more important than Jesus. He alleged that Ibn Saba also quoted the following verse from the Quran to support his claim:  
"Certainly the one who ordained the Quran to you, shall return you."  
(Quran 28:85)

The attribution to Ibn Saba of the idea that the prophet would return is ridiculous. It shows the ignorance of Sayf and his disciples throughout the history who repeated such allegation. They misunderstood the history of Islam. Had these mercenaries studied the Islamic history carefully, they would have known that the first one who declared the idea of the return of the Messenger of God was Umar Ibn al-Khattab. Muslim historians agree that: Umar stood at the Mosque of the Prophet when the Prophet passed away, and said: "There are hypocrites who allege that the Messenger of God has died. Certainly the Messenger of God did not die, but he went to his Lord, as Moses, son of Imran, went to his Lord (for receiving the heavenly commandments). By God, Muhammad will return as Moses returned, and he shall cut off the hands and legs of those who alleged that the Messenger of Allah has died."

Sunni Reference: al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, by Ibn Hisham, v2, p655

We can not say that Umar took this idea from Abdullah Ibn Saba or any other person. Ibn Saba did not exist at that time, not even in the imagination of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi, who invented the entire allegation. Sayf wrote that Ibn Saba came to Medina and became Muslim during the reign of Uthman, which is far after the death of Prophet. So if any Muslim believes in this, it would only be logical to say that the source of this doctrine is the second Caliph's speech on the day that the Messenger of God died, rather than Ibn Saba. Sunni history does not have any record of such allegation before the speech of Umar on the death of Prophet (PBUH&HF).

### The Doctrine of Ali's Executorship

Sayf further alleged that Ibn Saba is the one who propagated the idea that Ali Ibn Abi Talib is the executor and the successor of the Messenger of God. He said that there were a thousand prophets before Muhammad, each of which had an executor after him, and that Ali is the executor of the Prophet. Furthermore, Sayf alleged that Ibn Saba said that the three caliphs who ruled after the Prophet were usurpers of the Islamic rule. Sayf and his disciples forgot that they mentioned in their fiction that Abdullah Ibn Saba came to Medina and adopted Islam during the reign of Uthman. This is long after the death of the Messenger of Allah. On the other hand, Sunni history testifies that the Messenger of God himself is the one who declared that Ali would be his executor right at the "beginning of his mission". Here is the tradition concerning the first open preach the prophet (PBUH&HF):

Ali (AS) narrated: When the verse: "And warn your closest tribe" was revealed, the Messenger of God called me and said: "Ali, certainly Allah commanded me to warn my closest tribe, and I feel the difficulty of this mission. I know that when I confront them with this warning, I will not like their response." Then Prophet invited the members of his clan to dine with him on a small amount of food and little milk. There were forty of them. After they ate, the Prophet spoke to them:

"O Children of Abdul Muttalib, by God, I do not know of any young man from the Arabs who brought to his people better than I brought to you. I have brought to you the goodness of this world and the Hereafter. The Almighty commanded me to invite you to it. Who among you will assist me on this mission and become my brother, my executor, and my successor?"

No one accepted the invitation, and I said: "O Messenger of God, I shall be your assistant." He held my neck and said to them: "This is my brother, my executor (Wasi), my successor (Caliph) among you. So listen to him and obey him." They laughed, saying to Abu Talib: He (Muhammad) commanded you to listen to your son and to obey him.

#### Sunni References:

- (1) History of Tabari, English version, v6, pp 88-92 (two traditions)
- (2) History of Ibn Athir, v2, p62
- (3) History of Ibn Asakir, v1, p85
- (4) Durr al-Manthur, by al-Suyuti, v5, p97
- (5) al-Sirah al-Halabiyah, v1, p311
- (6) Shawahid al-Tanzil, by al-Hasakani, v1, p371
- (7) Kanz al-Ummal, by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, v15, p15, pp 100-117
- (8) Tafsir al-Khazin, by Ala-ud-Din al-Shafi'i, v3, p371
- (9) Dala'il al-Nabawiyah, by al-Baihaqi, v1, pp 428-430
- (10) al-Mukhtasar, by Abul Fida, v1, pp 116-117
- (11) Life of Muhammad, by Hasan Haykal, p104 (First Edition only. In the second edition the last sentence of Prophet (PBUH) has been removed.)
- (12) Tahdhib al-Athar, v4, pp 62-63.

The above tradition was also reported by important Sunni figures such as Muhammad Ibn Is'haq (who is the most celebrated Sunni historian), Ibn Abi Hatem, and Ibn Mardawayh. It is also recorded by orientalist such as T. Carlyle, E. Gibbon, J. Davenport, and W. Irving.

Here we would like ask the following question: Imam Ali reported that the Messenger of God is the one who granted him the office of executorship, brotherhood, and successorship. Sayf Ibn Umar reported that the idea of the executorship of Ali had came from a Jew called Abdullah Ibn Saba. We should ask the members of the Takfeer University (who call everyone who disagree with them unbeliever) the following question: Do you believe in Imam Ali's report or Sayf Ibn Umar's? Sayf was accused by prominent Sunni scholars of weakness, forgery, and heresy.

Of course, we should not expect any true Muslim to choose the report of a liar such as Sayf Ibn Umar and to reject the report of the Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the Leader of the Faithful, the "brother" of the Prophet (PBUH&HF).

The Messenger of God used to say to Ali:

"Your position to me is like the position of Aaron to Moses, except that there shall be no Prophet after me"

#### Sunni References:

- (1) Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English version, Traditions 5.56 and 5.700
- (2) Sahih Muslim, Arabic, v4, pp 1870-71
- (3) Sunan Ibn Majah, p12
- (4) Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, p174
- (5) al-Khas'is, by al-Nisa'i, pp 15-16
- (6) Mushkil al-Athar, by al-Tahawi, v2, p309

The Prophet (PBUH&HF) thereby meant that as Moses had left behind Aaron to look after his people as his Caliph when he went to receive the Commandments, in the same way he was leaving Ali behind as his deputy to

look after the affairs of Islam after him. Allah said in Quran:

"... And Moses said unto his brother Aaron: Take my place among my community." (Quran 7:142). ^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Notice that "Ukhlu'fni" and "Khalifa" (Caliph) are exactly from the same root.

Do the mercenary writers who endeavor to spread hostility among Muslims forget that while returning from his farewell pilgrimage, and in the presence of over a hundred thousand pilgrims in Ghadir Khum, the Messenger of God declared:

"Do I not have more right over the believers than what they have over themselves?" People cried and answered: "Yes, O' Messenger of God." Then Prophet (PBUH) held up the hand of Ali and said: "Whoever I am his leader, Ali is his leader. O' God, love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him."

Some of Sunni References:

- (1) Sahih Tirmidhi, v2, p298, v5, p63
- (2) Sunan Ibn Maja, v1, pp 12,43
- (3) Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, pp 84,118,119,152,330, v4, pp 281,368,370, 372,378, v5, pp 35,347,358,361,366,419 (from 40 chains of narrators!!)
- (4) Fada'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Hanbal, v2, pp 563,572
- (5) al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v2, p129, v3, pp 109-110,116,371
- (6) Khasa'is, by al-Nisa'i, pp 4,21
- (7) Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, p103 (from several transmitters)
- (8) Tafsir al-Kabir, by Fakhr al-Razi, v12, pp 49-50
- (9) al-Durr al-Manthur, by al-Hafiz Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, v3, p19
- (10) Tarikh al-Khulafa, by al-Suyuti, pp 169,173
- (11) al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah, by Ibn Kathir, v3, p213, v5, p208
- (12) Mushkil al-Athar, by al-Tahawi, v2, pp 307-308
- (13) Habib al-Siyar, by Mir Khand, v1, part 3, p144
- (14) Sawaiq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, p26
- (15) al-Isabah, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v2, p509; v1, part1, p319, v2, part1, p57, v3, part1, p29, v4, part 1, pp 14,16,143
- (16) Tabarani, who narrated from companions such as Ibn Umar, Malik Ibn al-Hawirath, Habashi Ibn Junadah, Jari, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, Anas Ibn Malik, Ibn Abbas, Amarah, Buraydah,...
- (17) Tarikh, by al-Khatib Baghdadi, v8, p290
- (18) Hilyatul Awliya', by Abu Nu'aym, v4, p23, v5, pp26-27
- (19) al-Istiab, by Ibn Abd al-Barr, Chapter of word "ayn" (Ali), v2, p462
- (20) Kanzul Ummal, by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, v6, pp 154,397
- (21) al-Mirqat, v5, p568
- (22) al-Riyad al-Nadirah, by al-Muhib al-Tabari, v2, p172
- (23) Dhaka'ir al-Uqba, by al-Muhib al-Tabari, p68
- (24) Fayd al-Qadir, by al-Manawi, v6, p217
- (25) Usdul Ghabah, by Ibn Athir, v4, p114
- (26) Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, by al-Qudoozi al-Hanafi, p297

... And hundreds more...

No Muslim would ever doubt that the Messenger of God is the leader of all Muslims for all generations. The Prophet in his statement granted Ali the same position as his, when he said that Ali is the leader of everyone who follows the Prophet.

This declaration which was narrated by more than one hundred and ten companions and rated authentic (Sahih) and frequent (Mutawatir) by the leading Sunni scholars, not only indicates that Ali is the executor of Messenger, but also indicates that Ali takes the place of the leadership of all Muslims after the Messenger of Allah. However, these mercenaries still allow themselves to say that the belief that Ali was the executor of the Messenger had come from a Jew who declared his Islam during the days of Uthman!!!

Abdullah Ibn Saba has no base on the disputes immediately after the death of prophet related to his successorship, and all relevant claims of Shia is proven to be on the death of the prophet or even before that, not during the reign of Uthman which is far long after prophet's demise. At the very start and immediately after the death of the prophet (PBUH&HF), the Shia of Ali included those companions who were loyal to Imam Ali, such as Ammar Ibn Yasir, Abu-Dhar al-Ghafari, Miqdad, Salman al-Farsi, Ibn Abbas ...etc., all gathered in the house of Fatimah (AS). Even Talha and Zubair were loyal to Imam Ali at the beginning and joint the others in the house of Fatimah. al-Bukhari narrated:

Umar said: "And no doubt after the death of the Prophet we were informed that the Ansar disagreed with us and gathered in the shed of Bani Sa'da. 'Ali and Zubair and whoever was with them, opposed us, while the emigrants gathered with Abu Bakr."

Sunni Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, v8, Tradition #817

Other Sunni traditionists narrated that on the day of Saqifah:

Umar said: "Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Zubair Ibn Awwam and those who were with them separated from us (and gathered) in the house of Fatimah, the daughter of the messenger of Allah."

Sunni References:

- Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, p55
- Sirah al-Nabawiyah, by Ibn Hisham, v4, p309
- History of Tabari (Arabic), v1, p1822
- History of Tabari, English version, v9, p192

Also:

They demanded confirmation of the oath, but Ali and al-Zubair stayed away. al-Zubair drew his sword (from the scabbard), saying, "I will not put it back until the oath of allegiance is rendered to Ali." When this news reached Abu Bakr and Umar, the latter said, "Hit him with a stone and seize the sword." It is stated that Umar rushed (to the door of the House of Fatimah) and brought them forcibly while telling them that they must give their oath of allegiance willingly or unwillingly. Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v9, pp 188-189. Certainly that Jew did not have any role in the division of the companions into two factions right at the death of Prophet since he was non-existent at that time.

Attacking Two of Most Beloved Companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HF) and Their Disciples

Sayf alleged that Ibn Saba is the one who instigated the two prominent companions of the Prophet Muhammad, namely Abu Dhar (RA) and Ammar Ibn Yasir (RA), against Uthman. He said this Jew met Abu Dhar in Damascus, and that he introduced to him the idea of prohibiting treasuring gold and silver. Sayf included the following great companions of prophet and their disciples, among the list of the followers of Ibn Saba:

- (1) Abu Dhar (RA),
- (2) Ammar Ibn Yasir (RA),
- (3) Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr (RA), son of the first Caliph,
- (4) Malik Ashtar (RA).

... and more

To better understand the heresy of Sayf and his allegation, let us quickly review the biography of the above great Muslim pioneers:

(1) Abu Dhar al-Ghafari (Jundub Ibn Jonadah): He is the THIRD person in the list of the four pioneers who first embraced Islam. He was a monotheist even before his conversion. He frankly declared his faith in Islam at Mecca beside the Holy House of God. The infidels of Mecca beat him almost to death but he survived, and on the instruction of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF) he returned to his tribe. After the Battles of Badr and Uhud he came to Medina and stayed with Prophet until the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HF). During the reign of the early Caliphs, Abu Dhar was sent to Damascus where he could not agree with Muawiyah. Later Muawiyah complained about Abu Dhar to Uthman, the third Caliph, and thus Uthman sent Abu Dhar into exile at Rabadha where he later died. Rabadha was known for having the worst climate.

(2) Ammar Ibn Yasir: He was also known as Abuyaqzan. His mother's name was Somayyah. He and his parents were pioneers in embracing Islam, and he was the SEVENTH person to declare his faith. His parents were executed after the torture by the infidels of Mecca, because of their conversion to Islam, but Ammar managed to escape to Medina. Ammar fought on Imam Ali's side in the battle of Jamal (Camel) and later in the war of Siffin where he was killed in the battle field by Muawiyah soldiers, at the age of ninety-three.

(3) Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr: He was adopted by Imam Ali after his father, Abu Bakr, died. Muhammad was one of the commanders of the army of Imam Ali (AS) in the battle of Camel. He was also in the battle of Siffin. Imam Ali appointed him as the governor of Egypt, and he took his office 15/9/37 AH. Later, Muawiyah sent an army under the leadership of Amr Ibn al-Aas to Egypt in the year 38 AH, who fought and captured Muhammad, and then killed him. His body was placed in a belly of a dead donkey and then was brutally burnt. (See al-Istiaab, v1, p235; History of al-Tabari, v4, p79; Ibn Kathir, v3, p180; Ibn Khaldoon, v2, p182)

(4) Malik Ashtar al-Nakha'i: He met the Prophet and was one of the trustworthy disciple of companions (Tabe'in). He was chief of his tribe, and after receiving an injury to one of his eyes in the battle of Yarmuk, he became known as Ashtar. He was the general of the army of Imam Ali in the battle of Siffin and known for his bravery and combating the enemies of Islam. At the age of 38, he was appointed by Imam Ali as the governor of Egypt. But on his way to Egypt, near the Red Sea, he died after eating poisonous honey which had been planned by Muawiyah.

The above were the short bibliographies of some eminent Muslim pioneers. It is regrettable that some historians who reported from Sayf's heresy, allege that they followed a mysterious Jew. The mercenary workers did not even hesitate to attack such outstanding companions. They said that Abu Dhar and Ammar Ibn Yasir met Ibn Saba, were affected by his propaganda, and thus turned against Uthman. However, we should not forget that by their attacking those two prominent companions, they are actually attacking the Messenger of God who attested to their purity and righteousness frequently: The Messenger of God said: "Certainly Allah commanded me to love four persons and informed me that He loves them." The companions asked: "O' Messenger of God, who are those four persons?" The Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: "Ali is from them (repeating that three times), Abu Dhar, Salman al-Farsi, and Miqdad."

Sunni references:

- Sunan Ibn Majah, v1, pp 52-53, Tradition #149
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p130
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v5, p356
- Fada'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p648, Tradition #1103
- Hilyatul Awliya', by Abu Nu'aym, v1, p172

The Messenger of Allah also said:

"Every prophet was given by God seven righteous companions. I was given fourteen righteous companions". He included in them Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husain, Hamza, Ja'far, Ammar Ibn Yasir, Abu Dhar, Miqdad, and Salman.

Sunni references:

- Fada'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, Traditions #109, #277
- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p329, p662
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v1, pp88,148,149 from several chain of narrators
- al-Kabir, by al-Tabarani, v6, p264, p265
- Hilyatul Awliya', by Abu Nu'aym, v1, p128

Also al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, al-Hakim and many others narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Heaven has not shaded, nor has the earth carried a person more straight forward than Abu Dhar. He walks on earth with the immaterialistic attitude of Jesus, the son of Mary."

Sunni reference:

- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p334, Tradition #3889
- Tahdhib al-Athar, v4, pp 158-161
- Musnad Ahmad Hanbal, #6519, #6630, #7078
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p342
- al-Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'd, v4, part 1, pp 167-168
- Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, pp 329-330

Ibn Majah, in his authentic Sunan, narrated that Imam Ali said:

I was sitting in the house of the Prophet and Ammar asked to see him.

Then Prophet said: "Welcome the good and the purified." Ibn Majah

also narrated that Aisha narrated that the Messenger of God said

"Whenever Ammar is given two alternatives, he always chooses the most righteous of the two."

There are much more authentic narrations told by the Prophet (PBUH&HF) about Ammar, such as "Ammar is full of faith." Also Prophet said:

"A band of rebels will kill Ammar."

Sunni references:

- Sahih Muslim, English version, Chapter # MCCV, pp 1508-1509, Traditions #6966-6970 (five traditions).
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p383

Now to see who those rebels were, look at Musnad Ahmad and Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd who narrated:

"In the Battle of Siffin, when the head of Ammar Yasir (RA) was cut off and taken to Muawiyah, two people were arguing over it, each one claimed that he had killed Ammar."

Sunni references:

- Musnad Ahmad (Pub. in Dar al-Maarif, Egypt 1952), Tradition #6538, #6929
- Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'd, v3, p253

Also it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) said:

"Paradise longs for three men, Ali, Ammar and Salman."

Sunni reference: Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p332, Tradition #3884

Moreover al-Tirmidhi narrated:

When the Messenger of God heard that Ammar and his parents were tortured in Mecca, he (PBUH&HF) said: "Members of Yasir's family, be patient. Your destination is paradise."

Sunni Reference: Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p233,

Thus, Ammar and his parents were the first people declared by the Prophet to be dwellers of paradise.

Here we should say: When a Muslim knows that the Prophet has commended

these two important companions (Abu Dhar & Ammar Ibn Yasir) so highly, and if he is a believer in the truthfulness of Muhammad, he does not allow himself to insult these two companions. Such an insult discredits the Prophet. As we just saw, the above authentic traditions in the six Sunni collections claim that Prophet said he has only four or fourteen righteous companions, out of his 1400 companions. Interestingly enough that Abu Dhar and Ammar Ibn Yasir were mentioned among those very few individuals. We find that the hostility of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi, who lived during the second century after the Prophet, and the hostility of his students towards the Shi'ites, motivated them to spread such cheap propaganda. Sayf knew that attributing the revolt against Uthman to the work of Ibn Saba contradicts known historical facts which show that the two companions, Abu Dhar and Ammar, were opposed to Uthman's ever coming to power. Because Sayf knew of their opposition to Uthman, he tried to smear their reputations by adding the names of the two prominent companions to the list of students of that fictitious Jew.

If Ibn Saba ever existed, he had declared his Islam after Uthman was killed. Now let us suppose we accept what Sayf alleged concerning that Abdullah Ibn Saba declared his faith after Uthman came to power. Abu Dhar and Ammar Ibn Yasir, on the other hand, had been opposed to Uthman's caliphate before he came to power. The two companions were followers of the Imam Ali (AS), and they firmly believed that Ali was appointed by the Prophet to be his successor. Since this was their belief before the appearance of Ibn Saba, the story of Sayf about their being influenced by Ibn Saba, is unfounded and untrue.

Thus, in order to clear the third caliph from all accusations pertaining to his ill-management of the Islamic treasury, Sayf accused the revolters being the students of Ibn Saba. He then completed his story by adding the two companions to the class of Ibn Saba's students, intentionally overlooking the fact that the two companions belong to the first successful class of the school of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF). They were among the important companions who were honored by the Prophet. In fact, Sayf was led by his untrue story to reject the testimony of the Prophet. By this, Sayf had disproved his whole tale.

### **Abdullah Ibn Saba (Part III)**

#### **Agitation Against Uthman**

Sayf alleged that the main reason behind the agitation against Uthman was Abdullah Ibn Saba. He provoked Muslims of different towns and provinces such as Basra, Kufa, Syria, and Egypt, to rush to Medina and to kill Uthman since he believed Uthman had occupied the seat of Ali. Sayf also alleged that the companions inside Medina such as Talha and Zubair did not oppose Uthman.

Similar to his other allegations, this allegation of Sayf Ibn Umar about Abdullah Ibn Saba has NOT been reported by any other reporters. No trace of Ibn Saba can be found on the issue of agitation against Uthman, except through Sayf. In fact, other authorities have a totally the opposite story. Should a reader of Islamic history be liberated from his emotion toward or against the third Caliph, he can be assured that the call for a revolt against Uthman did not start in Basra, Kufa, Syria, or Egypt. The weakness of Uthman in handling the affairs of the State caused many companions to oppose him. This naturally resulted in a power struggle among the influential companions in Medina. Sunni historians such as al-Tabari, Ibn Athir, and al-Baladhuri and many others provide traditions (reported by other than Sayf) which confirm that the agitation against the Caliph started right inside Medina by some influential individuals among the companions. These companions were the first who asked the other companions, resided in other cities, to join them in revolt against Uthman. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari reported:

When the people saw what Uthman was doing, the companions of the Prophet in Medina wrote to other companions who were scattered throughout the frontier provinces: "You have gone forth but to struggle in the path of Almighty God, for the sake of Muhammad's religion. In your absence the religion of Muhammad has been corrupted and forsaken. So come back to reestablish Muhammad's religion." Thus, they came from every direction until they killed the Caliph (Uthman).  
Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p184

In fact al-Tabari quoted the above paragraph from Muhammad Ibn Is'haq Ibn Yasar al-Madani who is the most celebrated Sunni Historian and the author of "Sirah Rasool-Allah".

History (reported by other than Sayf) testifies that those influential people who were the key element in agitation against Uthman include Talha, Zubair, Aisha (the mother of believers), Abdurrahman Ibn Ouf, and Amr Ibn al-Aas.

## a) Talha

Talha Ibn Ubaydillah was one of the biggest agitator against Uthman and was the one who plotted his murder. He then used that incident for revenge against Ali by starting the first civil war in the history of Islam (i.e., the battle of Camel). I just give few paragraphs from both of al-Tabari and Ibn Athir to prove my point. Here is the first one which is narrated by Ibn Abbas (in some manuscripts it is Ibn Ayyash):

I entered Uthman's presence (During the agitation against Uthman) and talked with him for an hour. He said: "Come Ibn Abbas/Ayyash," and he took me by the hand and had me listen to what the people were saying at his door. We heard some say, "what are you waiting for," while others were saying, "wait, perhaps he will repent." While the two of us were standing there (behind the door and listening), Talha Ibn  
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Ubaydillah passed by and said: "Where is Ibn Udays?" He was told, "He is over there." Ibn Udays came to (Talha) and whispered something with him, and then went back to his associates and said: "Do not let anyone go in (to the house of Uthman) to see this man or leave his house." Uthman said to me: "These are the orders of Talha." He continued, "O God! Protect me from Talha for he has provoked all these people against me. By God, I hope nothing will come of it, and that his own blood will be shed. Talha has abused me unlawfully. I heard the Messenger of God said: 'The blood of a Muslim is lawful in three cases: apostasy, adultery, and the one who kills except in legitimate retaliation for another.' So why should I be killed?"

Ibn Abbas/Ayyash continued: I wanted to leave (the house), but they blocked my path until Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr who was passing by requested them to let me go, and they did so.

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 199-200  
 The Sayf's claim is shattered into pieces when its is compared with any other reports similar to above. The above report gives evidence to the fact that Uthman himself knew companions like Talha were doing all this to him, and not the personage of Abdullah Ibn Saba. Do these mercenaries claim that they understand the situation better than the Caliph Uthman while they were born centuries after the incident? The following report also supports that the murder of Uthman was led by Talha, and the killers came out to inform their leader that they took care of Uthman:

Abzay said: I witnessed the day they went in against Uthman. They entered the house through an opening in the residence of Amr Ibn Hazm. There was a skirmishing and they got in. By God, I have not forgotten that Sudan Ibn Humran came out and I heard him say: "Where is Talha Ibn Ubaydillah? We have killed Ibn Affan!" ^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p200  
 Uthman was besieged in Medina while Imam Ali (AS) was in Khaibar. The Imam (AS) came to Medina and found people gathering at the residence of Talha. Then Imam Ali (AS) went to meet Uthman. Ibn Athir wrote:

Uthman said to Ali: "You owe me my Islamic right and the right of brotherhood and relationship. If I have non of these rights and if I were in pre-Islamic era, it would be still shame for a descendants of Abd Munaf (of whom both Ali and Uthman are descendants) to let a man of Tyme (Talha) rob us of our authority." Ali said to Uthman: "You shall be informed of what I do." Then Ali went to Talha's house. There were a lot of people there. Ali spoke to Talha saying: "Talha, what is this condition in which you have fallen?" Talha replied: "O' Abul Hasan! it is to late!"

Sunni reference: al-Kamil, by Ibn Athir, v3, p84

Tabari also reports the following conversation between Imam Ali and Talha during the siege over Uthman:

Ali said to Talha: "I ask you by Allah to send people away from (attacking) Uthman." Talha replied: "No, by God, not until the Umayyad voluntarily submit to what is right." (Uthman was the head of Umayyad).

Reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p235

Talha even deprived Uthman of water:

Abdurrahman Ibn al-Aswad said: "I constantly saw Ali avoiding (Uthman) and not acting as he formerly had. However, I know that he spoke with Talha when Uthman was under siege, to the effect that water skins should be taken to him. Ali was extremely upset (from Talha) about that until finally water skins were allowed to reach Uthman."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 180-181

To know why Imam Ali (AS) deserted Uthman, see the traditions close to the end of this article.

Furthermore, the historians confirm that those who plotted his killing, did not let the body of Uthman be buried in a Muslim Cemetery, and that he was finally buried in a Jew Cemetery called "Hashsh Kawkab", without

washing and without a shroud. (See History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 246-250). If Jews were doing all that, they wouldn't permit to bury him in their own Cemetery!!! After Muawiyah came to power, he joint that Jew Cemetery to al-Baqi including the land between them. (See History of Tabari, English version, v15, pp 246-250).

#### b) Aisha

Talha was not the only collaborator against Uthman. Sunni history tells us that his cousin, Aisha (the mother of believers), was collaborating and campaigning against Uthman as well. The following paragraph also from the History of al-Tabari shows the cooperation of Aisha with Talha in overthrowing Uthman:

While Ibn Abbas was setting out for Mecca, he found Aisha in al-Sulsul (seven miles south of Medina). Aisha said: "O' Ibn Abbas, I appeal to you by God, to abandon this man (Uthman) and sow doubt about him among the people, for you have been given a sharp tongue. (By the current siege over Uthman) people have shown their understanding, and light is raised to guide them. I have seen Talha has taken the possession of the keys to the public treasuries and storehouses. If he becomes Caliph (after Uthman), he will follow the path of his parental cousin Abu-Bakr." Ibn Abbas said: "O' Mother (of believers), if something happens to that man (i.e., Uthman), people would seek asylum only with our companion (namely, Ali)." Aisha replied: "Be quiet! I have no desire to defy or quarrel with you."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 238-239

Many Sunni historian reported that Once Aisha went to Uthman and asked for her share of inheritance of Prophet (after so many years passed from the death of Prophet). Uthman refrained to give Aisha any money by reminding her that she was one those who testified and encouraged Abu-Bakr to refrain to pay the share of inheritance of Fatimah (AS). So if Fatimah does not have any share of inheritance, then why should she? Aisha became extremely angry at Uthman, and came out saying:

"Kill this old fool (Na'thal), for he is unbeliever."

Sunni references:

- History of Ibn Athir, v3, p206
- Lisan al-Arab, v14, p141
- al-Iqd al-Farid, v4, p290
- Sharh al-Nahj, by Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v16, pp 220-223

As we can see, the main figures in plotting against Uthman are some highly influential individuals, like Talha and Aisha. These Sunni reports are in clear contradiction with the reports related to Abdullah Ibn Saba, which were made up to cover up for those individuals centuries after the incident.

Another Sunni historian, al-Baladhuri, in his history (Ansab al-Ashraf) said that when the situation became extremely grave, Uthman ordered Marwan Ibn al-Hakam and Abdurrahman Ibn Attab Ibn Usayd to try to persuade Aisha to stop campaigning against him. They went to her while she was preparing to leave for pilgrimage, and they told her:

"We pray that you stay in Medina, and that Allah may save this man (Uthman) through you." Aisha said: "I have prepared my means of transportation and vowed to perform the pilgrimage. By God, I shall not honor your request... I wish he (Uthman) was in one of my sacks so that I could carry him. I would then through him into the sea."

Sunni reference: Ansab al-Ashraf, by al-Baladhuri, part 1, v4, p75

Certainly the revolution against Uthman \* started \* in Medina, and not in Basra, Kufa, and Egypt. The prominent people of Medina are the ones who first wrote to those outside Medina and instigated them against Uthman. To say that a Jew, named Ibn Saba, is the one who inspired people to revolt against the Caliph is not logical unless we accept that he was the one who also inspired Aisha, Talha, and Zubair to revolt. But those who speak of Ibn Saba and his role, do not include Aisha and people of her position as the followers of Ibn Saba.

The alleged role of Ibn Saba, in the revolt against Uthman, would also be credible if we were to say that Ibn Saba was the one who persuaded the Caliph to follow a path contrary to the first two Caliphs, and that he was the one who advised Uthman to give Islamic funds to his relatives and appoint them governors of Islamic provinces.

The manner in which Uthman conducted the affairs of the Islamic states gave Aisha, Talha, and Zubair and others, a reason to provoke Muslims against Uthman. However those who attribute the revolution against Uthman to Ibn Saba, do not accept that Ibn Saba was the one who advised Uthman to follow that wrong policy. They are right, because that alleged Jew with such achievements never existed except in the imagination of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi and those who quoted from him. A few (less than 15) traditions (which are not even in any authentic Sunni books nor in any reliable Shia



books) related to Abdullah Ibn Saba narrated by people other than Sayf give a totally different story in compare with Sayf's heavy documentation which is being distributed everywhere. These traditions do NOT mention the presence of Ibn Saba in the revolt against Uthman.

#### c) Amr Ibn al-Aas

It is amazing that such an important role in the revolution against Uthman is attributed to a Jew for whose existence neither Shia nor Sunni have any strong evidence. Yet historians forget the important role which was played by a person well known in Islamic history, namely Amr Ibn al-Aas. He was more intelligent and more clever than any Jew ever existed in that era. Amr had all the reasons to conspire against the Caliph, and he had all the abilities to instigate most of the people of Medina against him.

Amr Ibn al-Aas was one of the most dangerous agitators against Uthman. He was the governor of Egypt during the reign of the second Caliph. However, the third Caliph dismissed him and replaced him with his foster brother, Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sharh. As a result of this, Amr became extremely hostile towards Uthman. He returned to Medina and started a malicious campaign against Uthman, accusing him of many wrong doings. Uthman blamed Amr and spoke to him harshly. This made Amr even more bitter. He used to meet Zubair and Talha and conspire against Uthman. He used to meet pilgrims and inform them of the numerous deviations of Uthman. According to Tabari, when Uthman was besieged, Amr settled in the palace of al-Ajlan and used to ask from people about the situation of Uthman:

...Amr had not left his seat before a second rider passed by. Amr called him out: "How is Uthman doing?" The man replied: "He has been killed." Amr then said: "I am Abu Abdillah. When I scratch an ulcer, I cut it off. (i.e., when I desire an object, I attain it). I have been provoking (people) against him, even the shepherd on the top of mountains with his flock." Then Salamah Ibn Rawh said to him: "You, the Quraishites, have broken a strong tie between yourselves and the Arabs. Why did you do that?" Amr replied: "We wanted to draw the truth out of the pit of falsehood, and to have people be on an equal footing as regards the truth."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 171-172

The divider of Muslims ignored what is well known in the history of Islam which was reported by important Sunni reporters. The revolt against Uthman was as a result of the efforts of prominent personalities in Medina, such as Aisha, Talha, Zubair, Aburrahman Ibn Uuf, and Amr Ibn al-Aas. Instead of attributing the revolution to real people who rebelled against Uthman, the dividers of Muslims refuse to accept the truth or to mention it. They attribute the revolution to a fictitious Jew, relying on the reports of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi, a man who was accused by prominent Sunni scholars to be a man of lies and innovations. They chose to accept Sayf's report in order to cover up for the Caliph, Aisha, Talha, and Zubair.

It is even more amazing that Aisha, Talha, and Zubair, and Muawiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan fought Imam Ali in two wars, unprecedented in the history of Islam, yet non of them accused the followers of Imam Ali to be students of Ibn Saba. Sunni history books and Sunni collections of traditions clearly state that Muawiyah commanded all the Imams of the mosques throughout the Muslim world to CURSE Imam Ali in every Friday prayer. If the fictitious Jew, Ibn Saba, had any small role in the revolt against Uthman, Muawiyah would have made it the main topic of his defamation campaign against the Imam and his supporters. He would have publicized throughout the world that those who killed Uthman were the student of Abdullah Ibn Saba, and that they were ones who brought Ali to power. However neither Muawiyah nor Aisha took this route, because such stories attributed to Ibn Saba was invented by Sayf Ibn Umar who lived in the second century after Hijrah, long after their death.

The murder of Uthman provided a nice scapegoat for those who were fighting over more power, while serving under the government of Uthman. They were mainly his relatives, the Umayyads such as Muawiyah and Marwan, who thoroughly took advantage of Uthman's life as well as his death. The story of Ibn Saba in this regard has served to cover the face of those power-hungry individuals, and yet another way to attack Imam Ali and his true followers.

#### Few Reasons behind the Revolt Against Uthman

The Third Caliph, Uthman, was given the allegiance of the people with the stipulation that he would manage the affairs of the nation according to the book of God and the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH&HF). He was to follow the method of Abu Bakr and Umar, if there was no instruction from the Quran or the Prophet.

It is well-known that the first two caliphs lived simple lives. They did not give members of their clans a preference over other people, nor did they appoint any of their relatives to prominent positions in the State.

Uthman, on the other hand, had his own opinions. He allowed himself to live luxuriously. He put members of his clan (Umayyad) in prominent and strong positions in the State, preferring them over other Muslims, without monitoring their affairs. However, his relatives were not righteous. Perhaps Uthman thought that his preference towards them was in accordance with the Book of God because Quran urges people to be kind to their relatives! This method of handing the affairs of the State did not please many companions. They found it extravagant and extreme.

The Companions criticized the Caliph for the following issues:

1. He brought his uncle, al-Hakam Ibn Abi al-Aas (son of Umayyah, son of Abd Shams), to Medina after the Prophet had exiled him from Medina.

It was reported that al-Hakam used to hide and listen to the words of the Prophet as he spoke secretly to prominent companions, and then circulated what he heard. He used to imitate and ridicule the Prophet in the way he walked. The Prophet one time looked at him while he was being imitated and said: "This way you will be." al-Hakam immediately started shaking and continued that way until he died. It is also reported that:

One day, while sitting with some of his companions, the Messenger of God said, "A cursed man will enter the room." Shortly thereafter, al-Hakam entered. (He was the cursed man.)

Sunni reference: al-Isti'aab, by Yusuf Ibn Abd al-Barr, v1, pp 359-360

2. After bringing him to Medina, Uthman gave his uncle al-Hakam 300,000 Dirhams.

3. He made Marwan, son of al-Hakam, his highest assistant and top advisor, giving him influence equal to his own. Marwan bought a fifth of the revenues of the North Africa for 500,000 Dinars!!! However, he did not pay this amount. The Caliph allowed him to keep the money. This amount was equal to ten million dollars!!!

Imam Ali (AS) frequently reminded Uthman about the danger of Marwan, but in vain. The following conversation between Imam Ali and Uthman testifies this fact. It happened when Uthman was being attacked, and thus he asked Ali for help. Uthman said to Imam Ali:

"You see the trouble caused by this band of dissidents when they came to me today. I know that you enjoy prestige among people and that they will listen to you. I want you to go to them and send them away from me. I do not wish them to come before me, for that would be an insulting act toward me on their part. Let others hear this as well."

Ali said: "On what grounds shall I send them away?"

Uthman replied: "On the grounds that I shall carry out what you have counseled me to do and you thought right, and I will not deviate from your direction." Then Ali said: "In fact I have spoken to you time after time, and you and I discussed such matters at length.

All this is the doing of Marwan Ibn al-Hakam, Saeed Ibn al-Aas, Ibn Amir, and Muawiyah. You have listened to them and defied me." Uthman said: "then I shall defy them and listen to you."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p173

Then Imam Ali spoke to people and asked them to go away from Uthman, and thus many of them retreated. Then Imam came to Uthman and informed him that people are gone, and said:

"Make a statement which the people will testify that they have heard from you, and God will be witness as to whether or not you desire to repent in your heart."

Thus, Uthman went out and preached the sermon in which he laid before the people his heartfelt desire to repent, and said: "By God, O people, if any one of you has blamed (me), he has not done anything that is unknown to me. I have done nothing unknowingly. But my soul has raised vain hopes within me and lied to me, and my virtue has slipped away from me. ...I ask God's forgiveness for what I have done and I turn to him. A man like me yearns to repent."

Then people had pity on him, and some among them wept. Saeed Ibn Zayd stood up before him (Uthman) and said: "O commander of faithful, (from now on) no one comes to you who does not support you. Fear God, in your soul fear God, and fulfill what you have said!"

When Uthman descended (from the pulpit), he found Marwan Ibn al-Hakam and Seed Ibn al-Aas, and a few other Umayyad at his house. Marwan said:

"Should I speak (to people) or remain silent?" Uthman's wife said:

"Nay! Be silent, for they will kill him of sin. He has made a public statement from which he can not rightfully withdraw." Marwan said:

"What does this have to do with you?"

Then Marwan said to Uthman: "To persist in an error for which you must seek God's forgiveness is better than to repent because you are afraid. If you so will, you may seek repentance without acknowledging error." Uthman said: "Go out and speak to them, for I am ashamed to do so."

So Marwan went (to people) and said: "Why have you gathered here like looters? ... You have come to snatch our power (Mulk; kingship) from us. Go! By God, if you mean us (any harm), you will encounter something distasteful from us, and you will not praise the result of your opinions. Return to your homes, for by God we are not men to be robbed of our possessions."

People informed Ali of the news. Then Ali came to Uthman and said: "Surely you have satisfied Marwan (again), but he is satisfied with you only if you deviate from your religion and reason, like a camel carrying a litter that is led around at will. By God, Marwan is devoid of sense in regard to his religion and his soul. I swear by God, I think he will bring you in and then not send you out again. After this visit, I will not come again to chide you. You have destroyed your own honor and you have been robbed of your authority." When Ali departed, Uthman's wife told him: "I have heard that Ali said to you that he will never return to you, and that you have obeyed Marwan (again), who leads you wherever he wishes." Uthman said: "What shall I do?" She responded: "You should fear God alone, who has no partner, and you should adhere to the practice of your two predecessors (Abu Bakr and Umar). For if you obey Marwan, he will kill you. Marwan enjoys no prestige among the people, and inspires neither awe nor love. People have only abandoned you due to Marwan's position (in your councils). Send to Ali, then, and trust in his honesty and uprightness. He is related to you and he is not a man whom people disobey." So Uthman sent to Ali, but he refused to come, saying: "I told him I would not return."

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 176-179

On the death of Uthman, Imam Ali (AS) said:

By God! I have persisted in defending him (Uthman) until I was filled with shame. But Marwan, Muawiyah, Abdullah Ibn Amir, and Sa'd Ibn al-Aas have dealt with him as you witnessed. When I gave him sincere counsel and directed him to send them away, he became suspicious of me, until what you now see has happened.

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, p198

Marwan and his descendants were the basis for some of the most serious charges of corruption and nepotism levied against Uthman. Marwan, of course, ultimately seized the Caliphate and ascended the throne in year 64/684, and was the lineal ancestor of all succeeding Umayyad kings in Damascus as well as the Amirs of Cordoba till after 756 AD.

4. The Caliph appointed his foster brother, Abdullah Ibn Sa'd, as the governor of Egypt. At that time, Egypt was the largest province in the Muslim State. Ibn Sa'd had declared his Islam and moved from Mecca to Medina. The Prophet listed him as a recorder of the revelation. However, Ibn Sa'd then deserted the faith and returned to Mecca. He used to say: "I shall reveal equal to what God revealed to Muhammad."

When Mecca was conquered, the Prophet ordered the Muslims to kill Ibn Sa'd. He was to be killed even if he was found tying himself to the cloth of the Ka'aba. Ibn Sa'd hid himself at the house of Uthman. When the situation calmed down, Uthman brought Ibn Sa'd to the Prophet and informed him that he had put Ibn Sa'd under his protection. The Prophet remained silent for a long while, hoping that one of those who were present, would kill Ibn Sa'd before he honors Uthman's request. The companions, however, did not understand what the Prophet meant by his long silence. Since no one moved to kill Ibn Sa'd, the Prophet approved the protection of Uthman.

5. The Caliph Uthman appointed Walid Ibn Aqabah (one of his Umayyad relatives) as the governor of Kufa after dismissing the previous governor, the famous companion of Prophet, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas. Sa'd was a famous marksman known for combating the enemies of Islam in the Battle of Uhud. On the other hand, the behavior of Walid during the time of the Prophet was not honorable. Quran discredited him and called him a transgressor. For instance, the Messenger sent him to Bani al-Mustalaq to collect their Zakat. Walid witnessed from a distance that Mustalaqites coming toward him on their horses. He became frightened due to a previous hostility between the Mustalaqites and him. He returned to the Messenger of God and informed him that the Mustalaqites wanted to kill him. This was not true. However, Walid's information infuriated the Muslims of Medina, and they wanted to attack the Mustalaqites. At this time, the following revelation came down: "O you who believe, if a transgressor comes to you with news, try to verify it, lest you inflict damage on people unwittingly; then you may consequently regret your hasty action."

Walid continued in his non-Islamic way for the rest of his life. He used to drink wine and several witnesses testified to the Caliph that they had witnessed Walid drunk while leading a congregational prayer!!! Upon the testimony of good witnesses, Walid was lashed eighty times and was

dismissed by the Caliph. The Caliph was expected to replace this transgressor with a good companion of the Prophet but, instead, he replaced Walid with Saeed Ibn al-Aas, another member of his Umayyad relatives! The following dialog between Imam Ali (AS) and Uthman, is also written in the History of al-Tabari which gives more insight to the situation of Uthman long before his murder:

People gathered and talked to Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Thus Ali went to Uthman and said:

People came to me, and they have spoken to me about you. ... Remember God! You will be not awarded your sight after you become blind, by God!, nor you are being instructed after you were in ignorance. Verily the Path is manifest and clear, and the signs of true religion are standing upright.

Know, Uthman, that the best servant in the eyes of God, is a JUST IMAM (leader), one who has been guided to the way, and who himself gives the right guidance (to people), for he upholds the true Sunnah and destroys rejected innovations. By God, every thing is clear. Sound and true Sunnah stands clearly, as do blameworthy innovations. The WORST IMAM in the eyes of God, is a tyrannical leader, the one who has gone astray himself, and by whom others are led astray, for he destroys a true Sunnah and revives a rejected innovation.

Verily I heard the messenger of Allah saying: 'In The Day of Resurrection, the tyrannical leader will be brought while he will have no helper and no advocate, so that he will be cast to the Hell, and he will be turning about in Hell as the mill turns, and he then will plunge into the fiery flood of Hell.'

I tell you (Uthman), to be aware of God and His sudden assault and His retaliation, for His punishment is harsh and painful indeed.

I tell you to beware lest you be the murdered leader of this community. Indeed it is said that a leader will be killed in this community, and its bloody strife will be loosed upon it until the day of rising (of Imam Mahdi), and its affairs will become hopelessly entangled. It will leave people as sects, and they will not see the truth due to the great height of falsehood. They will toss therein like waves and wander in confusion.

Then Uthman replied:

By God, I knew that (people) would be saying what you have said. But by God, if you were in my place, I would not have blame you nor left you in the lurch nor shamed you nor behaved unfairly. If I have favored my relatives, and appointed them as governors, some of them are those whom Umar used to appoint. I appeal you by God, O Ali, do you know that al-Mughirah Ibn Shubah is not there? Ali said: Yes.

Then Uthman said: Do you know that Umar made him a governor? Ali said: Yes. Then Uthman said: So why do you blame me for having appointed him Amir, simply because he is my relative?

Then Ali said:

I would tell you that every one appointed by Umar, was kept under close inspection by him, and Umar would trample on his ear. If Umar would hear a single word concerning him, he would flog him and punish him with the utmost severity. But you do not do that. You have been weak and easygoing with your relatives. Uthman said: They are your relatives as well. Ali replied: By my life, they are closely related to me, but merit is found in other people.

Then Uthman said:

Do you know that Umar was the one who kept Muawiyah in the office throughout his entire reign, and I have only done the same.

Then Ali said:

I ask you by Allah, do you know that Muawiyah was more afraid of Umar than was Umar's own slave, Yarfa? Uthman said: Yes. Ali continued: Now it has been reached to the point that Muawiyah makes decisions on the issues without consulting you, and you know it. Muawiyah says to people "This is Uthman's command", and you hear of this, but you do not denounce him.

Then Ali left Uthman, and Uthman went out on his heels. Then Uthman ascended the pulpit and said:

By God, you have surely blamed me for things like those you accepted from Umar. But he trampled you underfoot, smote you with his hand, and subdued you by his tongue, and thus you submitted to him whether you liked it or not. But I have been lenient with you. I let you step on my shoulders while I restrained my hand and tongue, and therefore you have been rude toward me. By God, I am stronger in the number of relatives, and have allies closer at hand, and possess more supporters. I have appointed your peers over you. But you have attributed to me a nature that I do not possess. Restrain your tongue

from slandering your rulers... By God! I have achieved no less than my predecessors or those about whom you have not disagreed. There is a surplus wealth, so why should I not do as I wish with the surplus? Otherwise why did I become leader?

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 141-144

#### Abdullah Ibn Saba (Part IV)

Who Started The Battle of Camel?

The battle of Camel (Jamal) was the first war declared against Imam Ali (AS) in Basra in year 36/656 after people appointed Ali as their leader of the Muslim community. It was called so, because Aisha, one of the leaders of the opposition group was riding a camel. The other leaders among the opposition were Talha and Zubair who were two well-known companions of the messenger of Allah. This war is also known in the history as the battle of Basra. The result was shedding the blood of more than ten thousand Muslims. The circulators of false accusation against the Followers of the Members of the House of the Prophet quote from Sayf that the followers of Ibn Saba started the battle of Basra at night just before the negotiations between Imam Ali and his three opponents (Aisha, Talha, and Zubair) were about to succeed. They started the battle at night by attacking the two armies simultaneously in order to make them plunge into battle. Ibn Saba wanted to make each of the two armies accuse the other of starting the battle. This would abort the peaceful efforts whose stipulations were supposed to include the punishment of Uthman's killers.

This allegation is in contradiction with many clear historical facts, of which the following events were recorded by the Sunni historians and traditionists:

1. al-Sha'bi (Amir Ibn Sharahil al-shi-abi) reported the following:

The right side of the army of the Commander of Believers (Ali) attacked the left side of Basra's army. They fought each other and people resorted to Aisha and most of them were from Dhubbah and al-Azd tribes. The Battle started after sunrise and continued

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until afternoon. The Basrites were defeated and a man from the tribe of al-Azd said: 'Come back and attack.' Muhammad (Ibn al-Hanafiya), son of Ali, hit him with his sword and severed his hand. The man shouted: 'Azdites, run away.' When the Azdites were overwhelmed by the army of the Ali, the Azdites shouted: 'We belong to the religion of Ali Ibn Abi Talib.'

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, Arabic version, Events of year 36 AH v4, p312. (The English version of this part is not yet published at the time of writing of this article)

The above report gives evidence to the fact that the fight did NOT start during the night as the inventor of Ibn Saba claimed. Rather it started AFTER the sunrise. This collapses the whole alleged conspiracy of simultaneous attack to both armies during the night.

2. Qatadah reported the following:

When the two armies faced each other, Zubair appeared on his horse while he was well armed. People said to Ali, 'This is Zubair.' Upon that Ali said: 'Zubair is the more expected of the two to remember God, if he is reminded.' Talha also came to face Ali. When Ali faced them, he said: 'Certainly you have prepared arms, horses, and men. Did you prepare an excuse for the Day of Judgment when you meet your Lord? Fear God and do not be like the lady who unravels her weaving after she had woven it strongly. Was I not your brother and you used to believe in the sanctity of my blood? Did anything happen to make it legal for you to shed my blood?' Talha said: 'You have instigated people against Uthman.'

Imam Ali replied, quoting from the Quran: 'On that day (the day of judgment), Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that, indeed, Allah is the Manifest Truth.(Quran 24:25).' Then Ali continued: 'Talha, you are fighting for the blood of Uthman? May God curse those who killed Uthman. Zubair, do you remember the day when you passed by with the Messenger of God at Banu Ghunam and he looked at me and smiled? I smiled back at him and you said to him: 'Ibn Abu Talib is always conceited. 'The Messenger of God said to you: 'He is not conceited, and you shall fight him unjustly.'

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Zubair said: 'By God, this is true. Had I remembered that, I would not have made this journey. By God, I shall never fight you.' Then Zubair left and informed Aisha and his son Abdullah that he took an oath to never fight Ali. His son counseled him to fight against Ali and pay atonement (Kaffaarah) for breaking his oath. Zubair agreed and made his atonement by freeing his slave Mak'hul.

**Sunni references:**

- History of al-Tabari, Arabic version, Events of year 36 AH, v4, pp501-502
- History of Ibn al-Athir, v3, p240
- al-Isti'ab, Ibn Abd al-Barr, v2, p515
- Usdul Ghabah, v2, p252
- al-Isabah, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v2, p557

This event clearly tells us that Talha and Zubair confronted Imam Ali (AS) BEFORE the start of the battle, and the confrontation was in the day time rather than at night. Otherwise, people could not have seen the confrontation or heard the conversation between the Imam and his opponents and recognize each other in the Helmet (metal head-cover). We are sure that there was no electricity for light, nor was there any voice amplifier to make conversations heard.

Since the conversation and the confrontation took place before the start of the battle, it is clear that the report of Sayf about the battle starting during the dark night and unpredictably, is a sheer lie.

**3. al-Dhabbi narrated:**

We were in the camp of Ali on the day of Battle of Camel, where Ali sent for Talha to talk to him (before the beginning of war). Talha came forward, and Ali told him: I adjure you by Allah! Didn't you hear the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) when he said: `Whoever I am his MAWLA, this Ali is his MAWLA. O God, love whoever loves him, and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him?'" Talha replied: "Yes." Ali said: "Then why do you want to fight me?"

**Sunni references:**

- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, pp 169,371
- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, on the authority of Ilyas al-Dhabbi
- Muruj al-Dhahab, by al-Mas'udi, v4, p321
- Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, p107

**4. Yahya Ibn Sa'id narrated:**

Marwan Ibn al-Hakam who was in the ranks of Talha, saw Talha is retreating (when his army was being defeated in the battlefield). Since he and all Umayyad recognized him and al-Zubair as the murderers of Uthman, he shot an arrow at him and severely wounded him. He then said to Aban, the son of Uthman, that: "I have spared you from one of your father's murderers." Talha was taken to a ruined house in Basra where he died.

**Sunni references:**

- Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'ad, v3, part 1, p159
- al-Isabah, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, v3, pp 532-533
- History of Ibn al-Athir, v3, p244
- Usdul Ghabah, v3, pp 87-88
- al-Isti'ab, Ibn Abd al-Barr, v2, p766
- History of Ibn al-Kathir, v7, p248
- A similar report is given in al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, pp 169,371

**5. al-Zuhri, another important Sunni narrator who is famous for his dislike of Ahlul-Bayt, reported the following dialogue of Imam Ali with Zubair and Talha before the battle:**

"Ali said: 'Zubair, do you fight me for the blood of Uthman after you killed him? May God give the most hostile to Uthman among us the

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consequence which that very person dislikes.' He said to Talha: 'Talha, you have brought the wife of the Messenger of God (Aisha) to use her for war and hid your wife at your house (in Medina)! Did you not give me your allegiance?' Talha said: 'I gave you the allegiance while the sword was on my neck.'

(At this point, Ali tried to invite them to peace, leaving them no excuse.) Ali addressed his own army saying: 'Who among you will display this Quran and what is in it to the opposing army with the understanding that if he loses one of his hand he will hold the Quran with his other hand...?' A youth from Kufa said: 'I will take the mission.' Ali went through his army offering them the mission. Only that youth accepted it. Then Ali said to him: 'Exhibit this Quran and say to them: It is between you and us from its beginning to its end. Remember God, and spare your blood and our blood.'

As the youth called upon them to resort to the Quran and surrender to its judgment, the Basrites army attacked and killed him. At this time, Ali said to his army: 'Now the fight has become legal.' The battle then started.

**Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, Arabic version, Events of year 36 AH v4, p905**

All these reports and the similar ones clearly indicate that the battle started in the day time rather than at night as Sayf Ibn Umar alleged. The breaking war was not abrupt since the two armies met and talked to each

other just before the start of battle. Had the confrontation between Imam Ali and Talha and Zubair taken place at night, the final call of Imam Ali would have had no benefit because the two armies would not have been able to witness it or hear their conversation. Also, the confrontation between the carrier of the Holy Quran and the Basrites would have been useless. None of the opposing soldiers could have seen the Quran in the hands of the young man at night.

Furthermore, the alleged agreement between the Imam and the three rebellious leaders, to punish the individuals who murdered Uthman, would be logical only if the three leaders were serious in seeking punishment for the killers. But the three leaders (Aisha, Talha, and Zubair) were the main agitators who provoked people to kill the Third Caliph. As we see in the above tradition, Imam Ali clearly stated that Zubair was among those who killed Uthman.

Had the revolters elected Talha or Zubair instead of Imam Ali (AS) as Caliph, they would have given the killers of Uthman the biggest prize. Certainly the leaders did not seek revenge for the blood of Uthman, for they themselves were behind the plot. They only pretended to do that as a means of destroying the Imam's caliphate.

Imam Ali said in the battle of Camel:

"Truth and falsehood can not be identified by the virtue of people.

First understand the truth, you will then realize who is adhering to it." (Nahjul Balaghah, by Imam Ali)

Short Summary of Comparing reports on the Character of Abdullah Ibn Saba  
 Story of Abdullah Ibn Saba based Story of Abdullah Ibn Saba based on the reports provided by Sayf on the reports whose chain of Ibn Umar and those who quoted him authorities do not include Sayf  
 1) Sayf provided a mass of 1) The number of these reports information and a huge number of which have the chain of narrators lengthy and verbose reports for do not exceed 14. And they are very which there exists no similar short.

report by the sober traditionists.

2) These and all other reports 2) These few traditions were NOT of Sayf were rejected since he rated authentic by Shia or Sunni was accused of forgery, heresy, scholars, and thus, the existence inquisition and manichaeism by of a person in the name of Abdullah the leading Sunni scholars. Ibn Saba remains under question.

3) Abdullah Ibn Saba appeared when 3) Abdullah Ibn Saba appeared when Uthman came to power. Imam Ali (AS) came to power.

4) Ibn Saba claimed that Prophet 4) Nothing was reported about Ibn Muhammad will return like Jesus Saba in this regard. Other Sunni before the day of judgment. He reports claim that Umar was the claimed that Prophet Muhammad has first who claimed the return of not died. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF) and that he did not die.

5) Abdullah Ibn Saba claimed that 5) Abdullah Ibn Saba claimed that Ali is the successor of Prophet. he is a prophet and Ali is God.

6) Ibn Saba claimed that Uthman 6) Nothing was reported about Ibn should be overthrown because he has Saba in this regard. Other Sunni occupied the seat of Ali. Ibn Saba reports claim that Talha, Zubair, was the main agitator in revolt Aisha, and Amr Ibn al-Aas were the against Uthman. The agitation did main agitators against Uthman. They not start from Medina, and Talha started the campaign in Medina and and Zubair did not oppose Uthman. then invited others to join them.

7) Ibn Saba instigated the battle 7) Nothing was reported about Ibn of Camel at night in order to Saba in this regard. Yet other plunge the two armies into battle. Sunni reports say that the battle started after sunrise and after the final speech of Imam Ali to the rebellions when the two armies faced and met each other.

8) Some of the pioneers of Islam 8) No report about the relation of among the companions of Prophet any companions of Prophet with such as Abu Dar and Ammar Ibn Yasir Abdullah Ibn Saba. Other authentic were the students of this Jew. Sunni traditions indicate that Abu Dar and Ammar were among the best companions and the most beloved ones to the Prophet (PBUH&HF).

### **Abdullah Ibn Saba (Part V)**

The Opinion of the Historians

I have already provided the opinion of 15 famous Sunni scholars about the weakness of the reports of Sayf Ibn Umar in of this article.

Beside them, many Sunni historians have also denied the existence of Abdullah Ibn Saba and and/or the forged stories attributed to him. Among them are Dr. Taha Husain, who has analyzed these stories and rejected them. He wrote in "al-Fitnah al-Kubra" that:

In my opinion, those who have tried to emphasize on the story of Abdullah Ibn Saba, have committed a crime in the history and hurt themselves too. The first thing that is observed is that in the important collections the name of Ibn Saba does not appear when they discuss the agitation against Uthman. Ibn Sa'd does not mention the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba when he discusses the Caliphate of Uthman and the revolt against him. Also the book by al-Baladhuri, "Ansab al-Ashraf", which I think the most important and the most detailed book about the revolt against Uthman, the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba has never been mentioned. It appears that al-Tabari was the first who reported the story of Ibn Saba from Sayf, and then other historians quoted al-Tabari in this regard.

In his other book "Ali wa Banuh", he also mentioned:

The story of Ibn Saba is nothing but myth, and is the invention of some historians, since it contradicts other historical documents. ... The fact is that the friction between Shia and Sunni have had many shapes, and each group was advocating itself and denouncing the other by any means possible. This requires a historian to be much more cautious when analyzing the controversial reports related to seditions and revolts.

In

, we briefly mentioned the masterpiece of Allamah al-Askari which was released in 1955 AD. Before that time, no analytical research had been done on the character of Abdullah Ibn Saba to investigate if he really existed in physical world and/or if the stories around this man had any single truth in it. Although Sayf's heresy was well-known for a number of centuries, no research had been done about the origin of the tale of Abdullah Ibn Saba. In his research, al-Askari proved that Sayf's narration attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba and many other things are sheer lie since they contradict ALL other Sunni documents in content, timing of the events, names of cities and companions, imaginary chain of narrators, and miraculous records by Sayf (like talking cows with humans and so on). If there was any Abdullah Ibn Saba at that time, his story was much different than what Sayf manipulated.

Here is the response of a Sunni learned man, Dr. Hamid Dawud, the professor of Cairo University, after reading al-Askari's book (I just give only a part of his letter):

The 1300th birthday of Islam has been celebrated. During this time, some of our learned writers have accused Shia of having un-Islamic views. Those writers influenced public opinion against Shia and created big gaps between Muslims. In spite of wisdom and learning, the enemies of Shia followed their own chosen beliefs and partiality, covering the truth, and accusing the Shia of being superstitious etc. Hence Islamic science suffered much, as Shia views were suppressed. As a result of these accusations, the loss to Islamic science was greater than the loss suffered by Shia themselves, because the source of this jurisprudence, though rich and fruitful, was neglected, resulting in limited knowledge. Also, in the past, our learned men were prejudiced, otherwise we would have benefited from many Shia views. Anyone who wishes to do research in Islamic Jurisprudence must consider Shia sources as well as those of Sunni.

Was not the Shia leader, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (d. 148 AH), the teacher of two Sunni Imams? i.e., Abu Hanifa al-Nu'man (d. 150 AH), and Malik Ibn Anas (d. 179 AH). Imam Abu Hanifa said: "Except for the two years Nu'man would have starved," referring to the two years he had benefited from the knowledge of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq. Imam Malik also confessed straightforwardly that he had not met anyone learned in Islamic Jurisprudence better than Imam Jafar al-Sadiq.

Yet, some of our so-called learned men, unfortunately disregard the rules for research to suit their own ends. Hence knowledge is not fully disclosed to them and thus they create a wider gap between Muslims. Ahmed Amin is one of those deprived of the light of knowledge, remaining in darkness. History has recorded this stain on the robe of Ahmed Amin and his friends, who blindly followed one special Madhab. Of many mistakes made by him, the biggest is told in the story of Abdullah Ibn Saba. This is one of the tales told in order to accuse Shia of heresy and foregoing events.

The great contemporary researcher, al-Askari, in his book, has proved with substantial evidence, that Abdullah Ibn Saba was fictitious, and it is therefore a greater lie to say that he was the founder of



**Shi'ism.**

God has decreed that some learned men disclose the truth regardless of blame they may get. The pioneer in this subject is this man who has made the Sunni learned men of research revise the history book of Tabari (History of Nations and Kings), and to sift out the authentic stories from the false. The stories which have been preserved as God's revelations.

The honorable writer, with much evidence, has stripped the veil or ambiguity from those historical events, and disclosed the truth, to some extent that some facts seem frightful. But we have to obey the truth no matter how difficult they appear. The truth is the best to be followed.

Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawud

Oct. 12, 1961

Cairo, Egypt.

We just heard from a Sunni Muslim. Now let us see what a third party has to say about Sayf and his character, Abdullah Ibn Saba. The following is the comment of Dr. R. Stephen Humpherys, from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, who has translated the Vol. 15 of the History of al-Tabari into English. This comment is written in the foreword of Vol. 15 of the History of al-Tabari. (again, I just give some parts of it. Please refer to Vol. 15 for details):

For events in Iraq and Arabia (the real key to the crises of Uthman's caliphate) Tabari relies chiefly on Muhammad Ibn Umar al- Waqidi (d. 823) and the MYSTERIOUS SAYF IBN UMAR. Both of these authorities raise real problems ... It is Sayf Ibn Umar who is most troubling, however. Tabari shows a unique fondness for him, in two senses. First, SAYF IS THE SOURCE MOST HEAVILY USED BY TABARI for the whole period from the Riddah wars to the battle of Siffin (11-37 AH). Second, no one beside Tabari appears to use Sayf at all. There is no obvious way to explain Tabari's preference. It is certainly not explained by the formal characteristics of Sayf's narratives, for he relies on informants who are usually OBSCURE and often very recent. likewise, he makes heavy use of the collective report, which blends together in unspecified ways the accounts of several transmitters.

I would suggest that Sayf appealed to Tabari for two reasons. First, Sayf presents a "Sunday school" interpretation of Uthman's caliphate. In his presentation, one sees a profound unity and harmony within the core community of Muslims, a unity and harmony founded on strict fidelity to the legacy of Muhammad. It is unthinkable that men such as those portrayed by Sayf could have been moved by worldly ambition and greed. On the contrary, in Sayf's presentation most conflicts are illusory, a reflection of malicious misinterpretations by later commentators. Where real conflicts did arise among sincere Muslims, they were instigated by outsiders like the notorious Abdullah Ibn Saba, a converted Jew from Yemen.

On this level, at least, Sayf's version of events is obviously a very naive one, and no doubt Tabari perceived that as clearly as we do. Even so, it served a very useful function for Tabari: By making Sayf's reports the visible frame work of his narrative, he could slip in the much less flattering interpretations of early Islamic history presented by his other sources. Ordinary readers would dismiss this dissident testimony as irrelevant, and only few critical readers would catch his hint and pursue the issues raised by such secondary accounts. In this way, Tabari could say what needed to be said while avoiding accusations of sectarianism. Accusations of this kind were of course no small matter in view of the enormous social and religious tensions in Baghdad during the late 9th and early 10th centuries.

Reference: History of al-Tabari, v15, pp xv-xvii

Also in the foreword of Volume 11 of the English version of the History of al-Tabari, the translator writes:

Although Tabari scrupulously cited his sources and can be shown to have often quoted from them almost verbatim, these source themselves can be traced with certainty only to an earlier stage in the collection of Islamic history, represented by the writers Ibn Is'haq (d. 151/767), Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 204/819), al-Waqidi (d. 207/822), and Sayf Ibn Umar (d. ~170/786). From the first three, all of whom are cited in this volume, there are works extant that enable us to assess their tendencies to some extent, as well as to verify their use of their own sources. For an assessment of the value of their transmission, the reader is referred to the relevant articles in the Encyclopedia of Islam and other secondary literature.

It is the fourth writer extensively quoted by al-Tabari, SAYF IBN UMAR, with whom we are mainly concerned here. As his work survives

principally in the transmission of al-Tabari and those who took from him and IS FOUND NOWHERE IN INDEPENDENT FORM, he has unfortunately been rather ignored in modern criticism. Yet it is Sayf's lengthy reports that fill most of the pages of this and several other volumes. The historical evaluation of this volume therefore depends to a large extent on our assessment of the nature of Sayf's reports and al-Tabari's use of them, and it is to these problems that we must turn our attention.

Abu Abdillah Sayf Ibn Umar al-Usayyidi al-Tamimi was a Kufan traditionist who died in the reign of Harun al-Rashid (170-93/786-809). Other than the possibility that he was accused of MANICHAEISM (Zandaqah) in the inquisition (Mihnah) that began under al-Mahdi in 166/783 and continued into the time of al-Rashid, nothing is known of his life, except what can be determined from his tradition. (On Mihnah itself, see History of al-Tabari, v3, pp 517, 522, 548-551, 604, 645; and the book called "Zindiqs" by Vajda, pp 173-229. On accusations against Sayf, see Majruheen, by Ibn Hibban, v1, pp 345-346; Mizan, by al-Dhahabi, v2, pp 255-256; Tahdhib, by Ibn Hajar, v4, p296). As he is alleged to have transmitted from at least nine traditionists who died in 140-146/757-763, and even from two who died in 126-128/744-746, he may have been elderly when he died. This is also suggested by the possibility that Abu Mikhnaf, who died considerably earlier than Sayf in 157/774, may have quoted from him. Sayf's work was originally recorded in two books which are now lost but survived for a number of centuries after Sayf's own lifetime. They made an enormous impact on the Islamic historical tradition, especially because al-Tabari chose to rely mainly on them for the events of 11-36/632-656, a period that spanned the reigns of the first three caliphs and included all the early conquests of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Iran. Although al-Tabari also quoted other sources in this volume, as we have indicated, the overwhelming bulk of his material for this

period is from Sayf. In deed, it is also probable, though not certain, that he has reproduced the vast majority of Sayf's work. Sayf is only rarely cited by other writers independently of al-Tabari.^^^^^^^^^^^^^^ Generally, Sayf's description of the conquests transmitted in this and other volumes of al-Tabari emphasizes the heroism of the Muslim warriors, the hardships they endured, and the toughness of their opponents, features that seem plausible enough and are also found in other conquest narratives beside those of Sayf. However, Sayf's narratives differ in the extent to which he introduces traditions not found elsewhere, often reporting them from transmitters not otherwise known. These UNIQUE narratives frequently contain fantastic or legendary motifs to an extent far greater than is found in the versions of other historians. Although the fantastic and tendentious nature of Sayf's reports has often been noted, for example, by Julius Wellhausen (see skizzen, pp 3-7), the exact value of his corpus as a primary source has never been assessed in detail.

...Although he hailed from Kufa, the crucible of early Shi'ism, Sayf belonged to a completely anti-Shi'i undercurrent, representing the Kufan faction that had earlier opposed the rebellions of al-Husain Ibn Ali and Zayd Ibn Ali. (This is also indicated by his quotation from sources who were involved in the killing of al-Husain. See for instance v11, pp 204, 206, 216, 222)...

The egregious tendentiousness of Sayf's corpus comes out most plainly in other volumes of al-Tabari, in such episodes as Saqifah Bani Sa'idah (Tabari, v1, pp 1844-50), the burial of Uthman (3049-50), and the tale of ABDULLAH IBN SABA (2858-59,2922,2928,2942-44,2954,3027, 3163-65,3180). In each of these instances, other versions that do not confirm Sayf's own are available for comparison and reveal the impudence of his daring constructions.

... Beside exaggerating the roles of certain Companions in the early conquests, Sayf also embellished his work with the exploits of other, IMAGINARY COMPANIONS and with heroes whom he invented, especially to represent his own tribal group. The most outstanding of these fabrications is al-Qa'qa Ibn Amr, a hero and alleged Companion of the Prophet, who is, not surprisingly, said to be a member of Sayf's own subtribe, the Usayyidi (in this volume, pp 8,24,36,40,42-43,45,48,60-63,65,90,95,166,168). His being an Usayyidi suggests that his fabrication is owing to Sayf himself and not to any of Sayf's alleged sources, as none of the latter is identified as an Usayyidi. In addition, many other persons supposedly belonging to the Tamim tribal group appear to be fabrication, some of them having stereotypical names that suggest almost playful invention, like "Wrap, the son of Skirt", "Spring Herbage, the son of Rain, the son of Snow", and "Sea,

the son of Euphrates". The reader will find dozens of persons who are named only in Sayf's traditions recorded in this volume. ...

Beside having FABRICATED many of the personages who appear in his transmissions, it also appear that Sayf FABRICATED the names of many, perhaps most, of his alleged authorities. ...

Frequently it seems that these invented "authorities" served as intermediate links between Sayf and earlier genuine traditionists whose authority Sayf wished to use to bolster his own inventions. This assessment of Sayf in no way undermines the authority of other early Muslim writers whose works may have an entirely different character, just as the Late Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus is in no way affected by the fraud of the *Historia Augusta*. On the contrary, it is greatly to the credit of the medieval Sunni Muslims who assessed the quality of traditions in the *Rijal* books that they unanimously rejected Sayf's authority in the most absolute way possible. They did so despite the fact that his traditions could have been used to back their emerging Sunni consensus on early Islamic history. This suggests that their condemnation of Sayf's traditions was motivated by a concern for the truth, rather than by a wish to gain advantage in the partisan arena of the time. They realized that his transmissions were exaggerated and fraudulent, and they said so. In fact, the condemnation of Sayf by the medieval Muslim Ulama ought to serve as a reminder to modern scholars that ancient and medieval texts were not always dictated by the prevailing political or religious climate and that the search for truth had its place in earlier times as well as in our own. ...

In describing the conquests generally al-Tabari scarcely deviated from Sayf's reports. This brings us to the second attraction that Sayf may have had for al-Tabari: **DETAIL**. Sayf's transmissions are almost always far more verbose than parallel reports of more sober traditionists. This characteristic probably not only made them preferable to al-Tabari but may have seemed a guarantee of their accuracy. Living in medieval times, al-Tabari did not, in the majority of instances, have available to him the modern tools that would have enabled him to discover Sayf's tendentiousness. And, after all, Sayf's reports have continued to receive the approbation of a minority of scholars even up to the present.

Reference: *History of al-Tabari*, v11, pp xv-xxix

Also Professor James Robinson, (D.Litt., D.D.Glasgow, U.K.) wrote: I would like to make a remark about Tabari who had no hesitation in quoting from Sayf. His history is not a historical work in the manner of modern writing, for his main purpose seems to have been to record all the information in his possession without necessarily expressing an opinion on its value. One is, therefore, prepared to find that some of his material is less reliable than others. So, perhaps we can excuse him for using a method not approved nowadays. He has at least provided a mass of information. It remains for acute scholars to distinguish between the genuine and the false.

It is shown that Sayf often quotes men who are unknown. This raises the question why none of them should have been quoted by other transmitters, and leads one further to suggest that Sayf has invented them. This serious accusation is a reasonable assumption by comparing Sayf with others.

It is pointed out that Sayf has stories miraculous of happenings which are difficult to believe, such as desert sands becoming water for Muslim armies, seas becoming sand, cattle speaking and informing the Muslim army where they were hidden, etc. In Sayf's time it was possible for him to succeed in passing off such stories as history, but nowadays the critical student naturally finds such stories quite impossible. Effective arguments are also used to show how Sayf's information about Ibn Saba and the Saba'iyya is quite unreliable. Sayf who lived in the first quarter of the second century belonged to Tamim, one of the Mudar tribes who live in Kufa. This helps one to study his tendencies and the influences leading to this legends. There is discussion of Zindeeq and of Manichaeism. Party spirit is said to have continued from the Prophet's time, till that of the Abbasids. Sayf upholds the northern tribes, inventing heroes, poets praising the tribe's heroes, companions of the Prophet from Tamim, wars and battles which had no reality, millions killed and large numbers of prisoners with the purpose glorifying the heroes he invented, Poems attributed to imaginary heroes were in praise of Mudar, then Tamim, then Ibn Amr, the subtribe to which Sayf traced his origin. Sayf mentioned men of Mudar as leaders of battles which were led by men of other tribes, his fictitious leaders sometimes being real people, sometimes names

produced by his imagination. It is argued that the falseness of his information was partly to upset the faith of many and partly to give non-Muslims a wrong conception. He was so skillful in his forgeries that they were accepted as genuine history.

There is a big difference between a Hadith work, such as Sahih al-Bukhari, and a history work such as the History al-Tabari. al-Bukhari was selective toward the traditions and might have recorded 1/10 of traditions that was conveyed to him, since he dropped all traditions which might have been weak in his point of view. However al-Tabari, though he was selective in his other works, but for his History he recorded 9/10 of what he had heard, and this is due to the nature of historical documentations which are not necessarily as accurate as the Hadith collections.

As a result, al-Bukhari did NOT transmit EVEN ONE SINGLE TRADITION about Abdullah Ibn Saba in his nine-volume Sahih. But historians who favored heavy documentations more than the authenticity of narrators, recorded heavily about Abdullah Ibn Saba through Sayf.

The Shia historians are not exempt from the above reasoning. They have also recorded most of the things they have got. This includes those reports that they were not sure about. The final research by Shia related to Abdullah Ibn Saba was released only in 1955 AD, and it was not so clear before that time that the stories related to Abdullah Ibn Saba have been the total manipulation of Sayf with political motives. The two Shia historian who mentioned the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba, lived 10 centuries before the publication extensive research about Abdullah Ibn Saba. A person is called expert in the history of Islam, if s/he has read all the early history books. As a matter of fact, many early history books were written by the Sunni authors under the direct fund of Umayyad and later Abbasid rulers. A Shia historian does not ban Sunni sources, and consequently his work is affected, one way or another, by previous works. This is clear when one observes that the two Shia historians who mentioned the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba, did not give any chain of transmitters for their report meaning that they got it from rumor the mouth people which the result of Sayf's mass propaganda.

As for those few traditions which have the chain of narrators (independent of Sayf), they provide a much different story which do not support any of the allegations of Sayf. These traditions picture an accursed man whom Ahlul-Bayt have declared their innocence from what he attributed to Imam Ali (declaring Ali as God). The Shia, their Imams and their scholars declare the curse of Allah to that man (if ever existed) he was lost, misguided and cursed. There is nothing in common between us and his name except our curse on him and all other extremists who believed in deity of Ahlul-Bayt.

The followers of Ahlul Bayt never claimed that Ali is God, nor did they claim the rest of 12 Imams are God. This, in fact, shows that those who gave life to the stories attributed to Abdullah Ibn Saba had hatred toward Shia, and tried to misrepresent the Followers of the Members of the House of Prophet. If Shia were the followers of that mysterious Jew, they should have believed in deity of Ali and should also respect their mentor Abdullah Ibn Saba, instead of cursing him!

If Abdullah Ibn Saba is such an influential and important figure for the Shia, how come they NEVER quote him like they do with the Imams of Ahlul Bayt? Surely, if Abdullah Ibn Saba was their Master Teacher, they must quote him and be proud to do so? A religious student always quotes his teacher, why then would the Shia be any different? Why should they curse him instead? If one answers that the reason that the Shia do not quote from him is that he was a Jew who converted to Islam, then I would ask him what was the religion of the companions before converting to Islam? Was not Abu Huraira a Jew who killed a Muslim before converting to Islam? Was not that he converted to Islam just 2 years before the death Prophet? Then why do the bulk of traditions in the Sunni collections come from him? while the traditions reported by Imam Ali (who was the first male who embraced Islam) in the Sunni collections is less than 1% of what is reported by Abu Huraira? This is a sign for those who reflect.

Moreover, it is a custom of Shia that they celebrate the birthday of Prophet and 12 Imams and Lady Fatimah, peace be upon them all. They also mourn in the memory of their martyrdom. Why then they do not hold the same practice for Abdullah Ibn Saba if he was their master?

Besides, are the Shia so stupid and ignorant that after 1400 years, they have never figured out that their belief and faith are based on fabricated traditions and tales going back to Abdullah Ibn Saba? I doubt, then, how the Shia, if they were indeed so stupid as to believe a so-called hypocrite Jew in their theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, history, and interpretations of the Quran, have survived to this day? Surely if the knowledge of the Shia was based on such a shaky foundation as Abdullah Ibn

Saba, they would have perished a long time ago. It is more interesting when we see the Imams of the majority of the Sunnis were the students of the Imams of Shia (Imam Muhammad Baqir and Imam Ja'far Sadiq, peace be upon them). Then one would say the Sunni schools got the basics of their Fiqh from Shia, which means the Sunnis along with Shia were the followers of the very same person, the mysterious Abdullah Ibn Saba! Who is left then? Perhaps the followers of Muhammad Ibn Abdil Wahhab!

Moreover, if Abdullah Ibn Saba did in fact exist with such stories that Sayf attributed to him, then there is 150 years between his birth and the publication of the story of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi. During those 150 years, there lived an innumerable number of scholars, scribes, historians, and philosophers who contributed many books. Why didn't any of them EVER mention the name of Abdullah Ibn Saba? Surely, if he was such an influential figure for the Shia, you can bet that the Sunnis would have known him before Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi! The fact that he was NEVER mentioned in ANY book before the book of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi is enough to cast doubt on the entire story attributed to him and even his existence. Can you believe that in the 150 years or so between the so-called birth of Abdullah Ibn Saba and the publication of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi, no book ever mentioned Abdullah Ibn Saba? Yet some people still claim he with such stories existed!

More strange thing is that even in the next 160 years after the publication of Sayf Ibn Umar al-Tamimi not too many people knew the story of Abdullah Ibn Saba. It wasn't wide-spread until the story of Ibn Saba extensively showed up in the History of al-Tabari (160 years after Sayf's publication), and it was at that time when some mercenaries started giving it weight as a means of defense against Shia.

Now, what do these mercenaries have to offer? NOTHING!!! They still cling to their own-made version of history, thereby contradicting themselves and the above proofs as well as the documented Sunni history, simply to defend their ignorant statements about the Shia.

Wassalam.