1. Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Naming ‘Abd Allah B. Saba

Reports and statements in Sunni books mentioning the name “Abd Allah b. Saba” are generally of three types:

1. *Riwayat* with full chains of transmission.

2. *Riwayat* with NO chain of transmission.

3. Unsupported testimonies and submissions of Sunni *‘ulama* who were never eye-witnesses to the events.

Apparently, the last two categories are *mursal* by default, and are therefore *dha’if* evidences. Chainless and unsupported testimonies are not acceptable as proof, especially in crucial matters like this. So, we will naturally confine ourselves only to reports in the books of the Ahl al-Sunnah with chains of narration.

Narration One

Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310 H), in his *Tarikh*, records:

> فيما كتب به إلي السري عن شعيب عن سيف عن عطية عن يزيد الفقعسي قال كان عبدالله بن سبأ يهوديا من أهل صنعاء أمه سوداء فأسلم زمان عثمان ثم تنقل في بلدان المسلمين يحالو ضلالتهم فبدأ بالحجاز ثم البصرة ثم الكوفة ثم الشام فلم يقدر على ما يريد عند أحد من أهل الشأم فأخرجوه حتى أتى مصر فاعتمر فيهم فقال لهم فيما يقول لعجب ممن يزعم أن عيسى يرجع ويكذب بأن محمدا يرجع وقد قال الله عز و جل إن الذي فرض عليك القرآن لرادك إلى معاد فمحمد أحق بالرجوع من عيسى قال فقبل ذلك عنه ووضع لهم الرجعة فتكلموا فيها ثم قال لهم بعد ذلك إنه كان ألف نبي ولكل نبي وصي وكان علي وصي محمد ثم قال محمد خاتم الأنبياء وعلي خاتم الأوصياء ثم قال بعد ذلك من أظلم ممن لم يجز وصية رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ووثب على وصي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وتناول أمر الأمة ثم قال لهم بعد ذلك إن عثمان أخذها بغير حق وهذا وصي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم

Al-Sirri – **Shu'ayb** – **Sayf** – 'Atiyyah – **Yazid al-Faq'asi**:

'Abd Allah b. Saba was a Jew from the people of San'a (the capital of Yemen). His mother was black. He accepted Islam during the rule of 'Uthman. Then he roamed the cities of the Muslims trying to turn them into heretics. He started with the Hijaz (in Saudi Arabia), then Basra (in Iraq), then Kufa (in Iraq), then Syria. But he did not achieve his aim with any of the people of Syria. Rather, they expelled him and he went to Egypt, and he settled among them. Then, he said to them, "It is strange of he who claims that 'Isa will return but rejects that Muhammad will return. Meanwhile, Allah the Almighty has said, 'Verily, He Who has ordained the Qur'an upon you (O Muhammad) will surely bring you back to a place of return' (28:85). As such, Muhammad is more entitled to return than 'Isa." So, it was accepted from him, and he created for them (the doctrine of) *al-raj'ah*, and they spoke about it. Then he said, "Muhammad is the last of the prophets and 'Ali is the last of the designated (immediate) successors (of prophets)." Then he added after that, "Who is more unjust that he who did not fulfil the testamentary will of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and jumped over the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and administered the affairs of the *Ummah*?" Then he said to them, "Verily, 'Uthman unjustly seized it, and this ('Ali) is the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah."[1]

The same report, with very slight variations, is later re-narrated by Imam Ibn Asakir (d. 571 H) as well:

أخبرنا أبو القاسم إسماعيل بن أحمد أنا أحمد بن النقور أنا محمد بن عبد الرحمن بن العباس أنا أبو بكر بن سيف نا السري بن يحيى نا شعيب بن إبراهيم نا سيف بن عمر عن عطية عن يزيد الفقعسي قال كان ابن سبأ يهوديا من أهل صنعاء من أمة سوداء فأسلم زمن عثمان بن عفان ثم تنقل في بلاد المسلمين يحاول ضلالتهم فبدأ بالحجاز ثم بالبصرة ثم الكوفة ثم الشام فلم يقدر على ما يريد عند أحد من أهل الشام فأخرجوه حتى أتى مصر فاعتمر فيهم فقال لهم فيما كان يقول العجب ممن يزعم أن عيسى يرجع ويكذب بأن محمدا يرجع وقد قال الله عز وجل إن الذي فرض عليك القرآن لرادك إلى معاد فمحمد أحق بالرجوع من عيسى قال فقبل ذلك عنه ووضع له الرجعة فتكلموا فيها ثم قال بعد ذلك إنه كان ألف نبي ولكل نبي وصي وكان علي وصي محمد ثم قال محمد خاتم النبيين وعلي خاتم الأوصياء ثم قال بعد ذلك من أظلم ممن لم يجز وصية رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ووثب على وصي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم تناول الأمة ثم قال لهم بعد ذلك إن عثمان قد جمع أموالا أخذها بغير حقها وهذا وصي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

Abu al-Qasim Isma'il b. Ahmad – Ahmad b. al-Nuqur – Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-'Abbas – Abu Bakr b. Sayf – al-Sirri b. Yahya – **Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim** – **Sayf b. 'Umar** – 'Atiyyah – **Yazid al-Faq'asi**:

Ibn Saba was a Jew from the people of San'a (the capital of Yemen), from a black slave-woman. He accepted Islam during the rule of 'Uthman. Then he roamed the cities of the Muslims trying to turn them into heretics. He started with the Hijaz (in Saudi Arabia), then Basra (in Iraq), then Kufa (in Iraq), then Syria. But he did not achieve his aim with any of the people of Syria. Rather, they expelled him and he went to Egypt, and he settled among them. Then, he said to them, "It is strange of he who claims that 'Isa will return but rejects that Muhammad will return. Meanwhile, Allah the Almighty has said, 'Verily, He

Who has ordained the Qur'an upon you (O Muhammad) will surely bring you back to a place of return' (28:85). As such, Muhammad is more entitled to return than 'Isa." So, it was accepted from him, and he created for them (the doctrine of) *al-raj'ah*, and they spoke about it. Then he said, "There were one thousand prophets, and each prophet had a designated successor. And 'Ali was the designated successor of Muhammad." Then he said, "Muhammad is the last of the prophets and 'Ali is the last of the designated (immediate) successors (of prophets)." Then he added after that, "Who is more unjust that he who did not fulfil the testamentary will of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and jumped over the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and administered the *Ummah*?" Then he said to them, "Verily, 'Uthman unjustly embezzled funds, and this ('Ali) is the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah."[2]

This *riwayah* of Yazid al-Faq'asi is the only one – with a chain of narration – throughout all books of the Ahl al-Sunnah that makes the following claims:

1. 'Abd Allah b. Saba, *la'natullah 'alaihi*, had a black slave mother.

2. He accepted Islam during the rule of 'Uthman.

3. He believed that Imam 'Ali, *'alaihi al-salam*, was the designated successor of Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*.

4. He believed in the *'aqidah* called *al-raj'ah*.

So, if the report collapses, all the four points above go down with it. There would be absolutely nothing else to base those assertions upon. Therefore, let us examine the narrators.

In the chain of the *riwayah*, there is Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim. Who was he? Was he reliable or not? Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) helps us out here:

> شعيب بن إبراهيم الكوفي :رواية كتب سيف عنه فيه جهالة انتهى .ذكره ابن عدي وقال ليس بالمعروف وله أحاديث واخبار وفيه بعض النكرة وفيها ما فيه تحامل على السلف وفي ثقات ابن حبان شعيب بن إبراهيم من أهل الكوفة يروي عن محمد بن أبان البلخي روى عنه يعقوب بن سفيان فيحتمل ان يكون هو والظاهر أنه غيره

Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim al-Kufi: the narration of the books of Sayf was by him. **There is obscurity concerning him**. Ibn 'Adi mentioned him and said, "**He is unknown**. He narrated *ahadith* and stories, **and there is some repugnancy concerning him**. Among his narrations are those which are prejudiced against the *Salaf*." In *al-Thiqat*, Ibn Hibban said, "Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim, from the people of Kufah. He narrated from Muhammad b. Aban al-Balkhi and Ya'qub b. Sufyan narrated from him". It is possible that he (i.e. the Shu'ayb mentioned by Ibn Hibban) was him (i.e. the Shu'ayb who narrated from Sayf), but what is obvious is that he was not him.[3]

Therefore, Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim is *majhul* (unknown). Ordinarily, we should simply ignore the other narrators in the chain. This singular fact about Shu'ayb itself has torpedoed the entire report. But, there is more!

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) wants us to know about Sayf too:

> سيف بن عمر التميمي الأسيدي :ويقال الضبي الكوفي. صاحب كتاب الفتوح وكتاب الردة ن وغير ذلك. روى عن: جابر الجعفي، وهشام بن عروة، وإسماعيل بن أبي خالد، وعبيد الله بن عمر، وطائفة كثيرة من المجاهيل والإخباريين. روى عنه: النضر بن حماد العتكي، ويعقوب بن إبراهيم الزهري، وشعيب بن إبراهيم الكوفي، وأبو معمر إسماعيل القطعي، وجبارة بن المغلس، وآخرون. قال يحيى بن معين: ضعيف الحديث. وقال أبو حاتم: متروك. بابة الواقدي. وقال أبو داوود: ليس بشيء. وقال ابن حبان: اتهم بالزندقة. وروى عباس عن يحيى قال: سيف بن عمر الضبي يحدث عنه المحاربي، ضعيف. وكذا قال النسائي. وقال الحاكم: سيف بن عمر الضبي أتهم بالزندقة، وهو ساقط في رواية الحديث. وروى ابن حبان بإسناد إنه كان يضع الحديث.

Sayf b. 'Umar al-Tamimi al-Usaydi: He is also called al-Dhabi al-Kufi, author of *Kitab al-Futuh*, *Kitab al-Riddah* and others. He narrated from: Jabir al-Ju'fi, Hisham b. 'Urwah, Isma'il b. Abi Khalid, 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar, and a lot of unknown narrators and storytellers. Those who narrated from him are: al-Nadhar b. Hamad al-'Atki, Ya'qub b. Ibrahim al-Zuhri, Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim al-Kufi, Abu Ma'mar Isma'il al-Qat'i, Jabarah b. al-Muglis, and others. Yahya b. Ma'in said: "**He is *dha'if* in *hadith***". Abu Hatim said, "**He is *matruk* (rejected)**, the same kind with al-Waqidi". Abu Dawud said, "**He is nothing**." Ibn Hibban said, "**He is accused of disbelief**". And 'Abbas narrated that Yahya said, "Sayf b. 'Umar al-Dhabi narrated *ahadith* from al-Muharibi. **He is *dha'if***." Al-Nasai said the same thing. Al-Hakim said, "Sayd b. 'Umar al-Dhabi. **He is accused of disbelief**, and he is a failure as long as *hadith* narration is concerned." Ibn Hibban narrates with a chain that **he used to fabricate *ahadith***.[4]

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also says:

> وأما سيف بن عمر ؛ فمعروف؛ لكنه متهم بالوضع؛ قال الذهبي في "المغني": "له تواليف، متروك باتفاق".

As for Sayf b. 'Umar, he is well-known. However, **he has been accused of fabricating reports**. Al-Dhahabi said in *al-Mughni*: "**He wrote books. He is rejected (*matruk*) by consensus.**"[5]

Elsewhere, the 'Allamah adds:

> قلت: وفي هذا نظر، فإن أكثر الطرق المشار إليها مدارها على سيف بن عمر والواقدي وهما كذابان

I say: There is an error in this, for most of the indicated chains, their pivot is **Sayf b. 'Umar and al-Waqidi, and they both were LIARS**.[6]

Apparently, no one can ever be more unreliable than Sayf!

It is even further interesting that the man who was supposed to have witnessed all of ‘Abd Allah b. Saba’s actions – including all his journeys and experiences in Hijaz, Basra, Kufa, Syria and Egypt – Yazid al-Faq’asi is completely and *absolutely* unknown (*majhul*). It is so bad that he does not even have a single entry in any Sunni book of *rijal*!

With the above, it is crystal clear that the *only* report throughout all Sunni books – which connects one ‘Abd Allah b. Saba with Judaism, Yemen, a black mother, the doctrine of *al-raj’ah*, the *wisayah* (designated succession) of Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, and acceptance of Islam during ‘Uthman’s rule – is absolutely *mawdu’* (fabricated). No report can be more worthless than it is.

Narration Two

So, let us find out if there is an alternative Sunni report which refers explicitly to ‘Abd Allah b. Saba. Through our investigations, we discovered that only six more exist, apart from the *mawdu’* one above. This is one of those six, recorded by Imam Ibn Asakir:

> أخبرنا أبو البركات الأنماطي أنا أبو طاهر أحمد بن الحسن وأبو الفضل أحمد بن الحسن قالا أنا عبد الملك بن محمد بن عبد الله أنا أبو علي بن الصواف نا محمد بن عثمان بن أبي شيبة نا محمد بن العلاء نا أبو بكر بن عياش عن مجالد عن الشعبي قال أول من كذب عبد الله بن سبأ

Abu al-Barakat al-Anmati – Abu Tahir Ahmad b. al-Hasan and Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. al-Hasan – ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah – Abu ‘Ali b. al-Sawaf – **Muhammad b. ‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah** – Muhammad b. al-‘Ala – Abu Bakr b. ‘Ayyash – **Mujalid** – al-Sha’bi:

> The first one to tell a lie was ‘Abd Allah b. Saba.[7]

This chain, however, is *mawdu’* too! Imam al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H) documents under his biography of Muhammad b. ‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah:

> أخبرنا على بن محمد بن الحسين الدقاق قال قرانا على الحسين بن هارون عن أبى العباس بن سعيد قال سمعت عبد الله بن أسامة الكلبي يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب أخذ كتب بن عبدوس الرازي ما زلنا نعرفه بالكذب

> وقال بن سعيد سمعت إبراهيم بن إسحاق الصواف يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب ويسرق حديث الناس ويحيل على أقوام بأشياء ليست من حديثهم

> قال سمعت داود بن يحيى يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب وقد وضع أشياء كثيرة يحيل على أقوام أشياء ما حدثوا بها

قط

وقال سمعت عبد الرحمن بن يوسف بن خراش يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب بين الأمر يزيد في الأسانيد ويوصل ويضع الحديث

وقال سمعت محمد بن عبد الله الحضرمي يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب ما زلنا نعرفه بالكذب مذ هو صبي

... وقال سمعت عبد الله بن احمد بن حنبل يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب

وقال سمعت جعفر بن محمد بن أبى عثمان الطيالسي يقول بن عثمان هذا كذاب يجيء عن قوم بأحاديث ما حدثوا بها قط متى سمع انا عارف به جدا ...

...وقال سمعت محمد بن احمد العدوى يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب

....وقال حدثني محمد بن عبيد بن حماد قال سمعت جعفر بن هذيل يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب

‘Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Daqaq – al-Husayn b. Harun – Abu al-‘Abbas b. Sa’id – ‘Abd Allah b. Usamah al-Kalbi: “**Muhammad b. ‘Uthman is A LIAR**. He took the books of Ibn ‘Abdaws al-Razi. **We have ALWAYS known him as A LIAR**”.

Ibn Sa’d – Ibrahim b. Ishaq al-Sawaf: “**Muhammad b. ‘Uthman is A LIAR**. He steals the *ahadith* of the people and he falsely attributes things to people which are never part of their *ahadith*.”

Ibn Sa’d – Dawud b. Yahya: “**Muhammad b. ‘Uthman is A LIAR. He FABRICATED a lot of things.** He falsely attributes things to people which they never narrate at all.”

Ibn Sa’d – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yusuf b. Kharash: “**Muhammad b. ‘Uthman is a LIAR within the matter**. He falsely adds and connects names to the chains (of narrations) **and he FABRICATES *ahadith***.”

Ibn Sa’d – Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hadhrami: “**Muhammad b. ‘Uthman is A LIAR. We have ALWAYS known him as A LIAR since he was a child**.”

Ibn Sa’d – ‘Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal: “**Muhammad b. ‘Uthman is a LIAR**....

Ibn Sa’d – Ja’far b. Muhammad b. Abi ‘Uthman al-Tayalisi: “**This Ibn ‘Uthman is A LIAR**. He attributes

to people *ahadith* which they never narrated since he started hearing (as a child). **I know him very well**"...

Ibn Sa'd – Muhammad b. Ahmad al-'Adawi: "**Muhammad b. 'Uthman is a LIAR**..."

Ibn Sad – Muhammad b. 'Ubayd b. Hammad – Ja'far b. Huzayl: "**Muhammad b. 'Uthman is A LIAR**...."[8]

We need not comment further about him!

In the chain is another problematic narrator: Mujalid. Imam al-Dhahabi says about him too:

> مجالد بن سعيد الهمداني. مشهور صاحب حديث على لين فيه.
>
> روى عن قيس بن أبي حازم، والشعبي. وعنه يحيى القطان، وأبو أسامة، وجماعة.
>
> قال ابن معين وغيره: لا يحتج به. وقال أحمد: يرفع كثيرا مما لا يرفعه الناس، ليس بشئ. وقال النسائي: ليس بالقوي. وذكر الأشج أنه شيعي. وقال الدارقطني: ضعيف. وقال البخاري: كان يحيى بن سعيد يضعفه، وكان ابن مهدي لا يروى عنه.

Mujalid b. Sa'id al-Hamdani: well-known, a narrator of *hadith*, **with weakness in him**.

He narrated from Qays b. Abi Hazim and al-Sha'bi, and Yahya b. al-Qattan, Abu Usamah and a group narrated from him.

Ibn Ma'in and others said, "**He is not accepted as a *hujjah* (proof).**" Ahmad said, "**He attributes to the Prophet lots of what people do not attribute to him. He is nothing.**" Al-Nasai said, "**He is not strong.**" Al-Ashja' mentioned that he was a Shi'i. Al-Daraqutni said, "***Dha'if***". Al-Bukhari said, "**Yahya b. Sa'id declared him *dha'if*, and Ibn Mahdi did not narrate from him.**"[9]

Apparently, this second narration is extremely *mawdu'* as well! Yet, we constantly see some Sunni brothers proudly quoting it as evidence!

Narration Three

Let us now examine the third existing Sunni report on 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Imam Ibn Asakir documents:

> أنبأنا أبو بكر محمد بن طرخان بن بلتكين بن يجكم أنا أبو الفضائل محمد بن أحمد بن عبد الباقي بن طوق قال قرئ على أبي القاسم عبيد الله بن علي بن عبيد الله الرقي نا أبو أحمد عبيد الله بن محمد بن أبي مسلم أنا أبو عمر

محمد بن عبد الواحد أخبرني الغطافي عن رجاله عن الصادق عن آبائه الطاهرين عن جابر قال لما بويع علي خطب الناس فقام إليه عبد الله بن سبأ فقال له أنت دابة الأرض قال فقال له اتق الله فقال له أنت الملك فقال له اتق الله فقال له أنت خلقت الخلق وبسطت الرزق فأمر بقتله فاجتمعت الرافضة فقالت دعه وأنفه إلى ساباط المدائن فإنك إن قتلته بالمدينة خرجت أصحابه علينا وشيعته فنفاه إلى ساباط المدائن فثم القرامطة والرافضة قال ثم قامت إليه طائفة وهم السبيئة وكانوا أحد عشر رجلا فقال ارجعوا فإني علي بن أبي طالب أبي مشهور وأمي مشهورة وأنا ابن عم محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فقالوا لا نرجع دع داعيك فأحرقهم بالنار وقبروهم في صحراء أحد عشر مشهورة فقال من بقي ممن لم يكشف رأسه منهم علمنا إنه إله واحتجوا بقول ابن عباس لا يعذب بالنار إلا خالقها قال ثعلب وقد عذب بالنار قبل علي أبو بكر الصديق شيخ الإسلام رضي الله عنه وذلك أنه رفع إليه رجل يقال له الفجاءة وقالوا إنه شتم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بعد وفاته فأخرجه إلى الصحراء فأحرقه بالنار قال فقال ابن عباس قد عذب أبو بكر بالنار فاعبدوه أيضا

Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Tarkhan b. Baltakin b. Yahbakum – Abu al-Fadhail Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Baqi b. Tawq – Abu al-Qasim ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Ali b. ‘Ubayd Allah al-Raqi – Abu Ahmad ‘Ubayd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Muslim – Abu ‘Umar Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahid – **al-Ghatafi** – **his men** – al-Sadiq – his pure fathers – Jabir:

When ‘Ali was given the *ba’yah* (oath of allegiance), he addressed the people. Then, ‘Abd Allah b. Saba stood up to him and said, “You are the *Dabbah* from the Earth.” He (‘Ali) said, “Fear Allah.” He (‘Abd Allah b. Saba) said, “You are the King.” He (‘Ali) replied, “Fear Allah.” He (‘Abd Allah b. Saba) told him, “You created the creation and you spread the *rizq* (sustenance)”. Then, he (‘Ali) ordered his execution.

But the Rafidhah gathered and said, “Leave him. Instead, banish him to Sabat of al-Madain. If you killed him in Madinah, his companions and followers would rebel against us.” Therefore, he (‘Ali) banished him to Sabat of al-Madain. So, the Qaramitah and the Rafidhah re-grouped (there). Then a group called al-Sabaiyyah rose to him (‘Ali) and they were eleven men. He (‘Ali) said, “Recant, for I am ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. My father was well-known, and so was my mother. And I am the cousin of Muhammad, peace be upon him.” They replied, “We will not recant. Call your caller.” So, he (‘Ali) burnt them with fire, and buried them in eleven well-known deserts. Those who survived, whose heads were not exposed among them, said, “We know that he is Allah.” And they used the words of Ibn ‘Abbas – “None punishes with fire except its Creator” as proof.

Tha’lab said, “But, Abu Bakr, the *shaykh* of Islam, may Allah be pleased with him, had punished with fire before ‘Ali. It was when a man called al-Faja was brought to him, and they accused him of insulting the Prophet, peace be upon him, after his death. Then he (Abu Bakr) took him out into the desert and burnt him with fire. So, Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Abu Bakr also punished with the fire. Therefore, worship him too.”[10]

First and foremost, there is a man called al-Ghatafi in the *sanad*. He is completely unknown amd untraceable. Worse still, he narrated from “his men”, who are also completely unknown and untraceable! As such, the chain is at least doubly *majhul*, and therefore *very dha’if*, on account of these facts alone!

Apart from its severe weakness, the report is also historically inaccurate. It assumes that there were

groups called the Rafidhah, the Qaramita, and the Sabaiyyah during the rule of Amir al-Muminin! That simply is ridiculous. This, for instance, is what Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) has to say about the origin of the Rafidhah:

> لكن لفظ الرافضة إنما ظهر لما رفضوا زيد بن علي بن الحسين في خلافة هشام وقصة زيد بن علي بن الحسين كانت بعد العشرين ومائة سنة إحدى وعشرين أو اثنتين وعشرين ومائة في اواخر خلافة هشام

But the word "Rafidhah" (Rejecters) was first used when they rejected (*rafadhu*) Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn during the *khilafah* of Hisham, and the incident of Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn occurred after 120 H, 121 H or 122 H, during the last days of the *khilafah* of Hisham.[11]

Elsewhere, he reiterates:

> قلت الصحيح أنهم سموا رافضة لما رفضوا زيد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب لما خرج بالكوفة أيام هشام بن عبد الملك وقد ذكر هذا أيضا الاشعري وغيره

I say: the correct opinion is that they were named Rafidhah when they rejected Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, when he rebelled in Kufah during the days of Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik. Al-Ash'ari and others have also mentioned this.[12]

So, the Rafidhah and their name surfaced only almost a century after the death of Imam 'Ali!

Narration Four

At this point, we move to the fourth, explicit Sunni report on 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah submits in his *Minhaj*:

> وروى أبو عاصم خشيش بن أصرم في كتابه ورواه من طريقه أبو عمرو الطلمنكي في كتابه في الأصول قال أبو عاصم حدثنا أحمد بن محمد وعبد الوارث ابن إبراهيم حدثنا السندي بن سليمان الفارسي حدثنى عبد الله بن جعفر الرقى عن عبد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول عن أبيه قال قلت لعامر الشعبي ما ردك عن هؤلاء القوم وقد كنت فيهم رأسا قال رأيتهم يأخذون بأعجاز لا صدور لها ثم قال لي يا مالك لو أردت أن يعطوني رقابهم عبيدا أو يملئوا لي بيتي ذهبا أو يحجوا إلى بيتي هذا على أن أكذب على علي رضي الله عنه لفعلوا ولا والله لا أكذب عليه أبدا يا مالك إني قد درست الأهواء فلم أر فيها أحمق من الخشبية فلو كانوا من الطير لكانوا رخما ولو كانوا من الدواب لكانوا حمرا يا مالك لم يدخلوا في الإسلام رغبة فيه لله ولا رهبة من الله ولكن مقتا من الله عليهم وبغيا منهم على أهل الإسلام يريدون أن يغمصوا دين الإسلام كما غمص بولص بن يوشع ملك اليهود دين النصرانية ولا تجاوز صلاتهم آذانهم قد حرقهم علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه بالنار ونفاهم من البلاد منهم عبد الله بن سبأ يهودي من يهود صنعاء نفاه إلى ساباط وأبو بكر الكروس نفاه إلى الجابية وحرق منهم قوما أتوه فقالوا أنت هو فقال من أنا فقالوا أنت ربنا فأمر بنار

Abu ‘Asim Khashish b. Asrama recorded in his book; and through his route, Abu ‘Amr al-Talmanki documented it in his book on *al-Usul*. Abu ‘Asim said: Ahmad b. Muhammad and ‘Abd al-Warith b. Ibrahim – **al-Sanadi b. Sulayman al-Farisi** – ‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far al-Raqqi – **‘Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal** – his father:

I said to Amir al-Sha’bi, “Why did you leave these people, while you used to be their head?”

He replied, “Their opinions are derived from invalid sources. They lack any basis.” Then he said, “O Malik, If I had demanded that they became my slaves or filled my house with gold, or made *Hajj* to this house of mine, and that in exchange I would lie upon ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, they would have done so. But, by Allah, I will never lie upon him, never! O Malik, I have studied the various sects. However, I have never seen among them any which is more stupid than the Khashabiyyah. If they were from birds, they would have been vultures; and if they had been from animals, they would have been donkeys. O Malik, they did not enter Islam out of hope in it from Allah, nor from fear of Allah. Rather, it was due to the hatred of Allah upon them, and their rebellion upon the people of Islam. They seek to corrupt the religion of Islam as Paul b. Yusha’, king of the Jews, corrupted Christianity. Their *salat* never exceed their *azan*. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had burnt them with fire, and banished them from the towns. Among them was ‘Abd Allah b. Saba the Jew from the Jews of San’a. He banished him to Sabat (of the Madain area). As for Abu Bakr al-Karus, he banished him to al-Jabiyyah. He (also) burnt a group among them who came to him and said, ‘You are Him.’ He asked, ‘Who am I?’ They replied, ‘You are our God.’” So, he ordered for a fire.[13]

In the chain is ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal. Al-Hafiz says about him:

> عبد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول :روى عن أبيه والأعمش .قال احمد والدارقطني متروك وقال أبو داود كذاب وقال مرة يضع الحديث وقال النسائي وغيره ليس بثقة

‘Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal: he narrated from his father and al-A’mash. Ahmad and al-Daraqutni said: “***Matruk*** (**rejected**)”. Abu Dawud said, “**A LIAR**”, and also said, “**he FABRICATED *ahadith***”. Al-Nasai and others said, “**He is NOT trustworthy**.”[14]

‘Allamah al-Albani also states about another chain containing his name:

> قلت: ورجاله ثقات غير عبد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول، وهو كذاب كما قال أبو داود، وقال الدارقطني: متروك، فهو آفة هذا الإسناد

I say: Its narrators are trustworthy except ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal, **AND HE WAS A LIAR**, as stated by Abu Dawud. And al-Daraqutni said, “*Matruk* (rejected)”, and he is the defect in this chain.[15]

As if this was not enough, al-Sanadi b. Sulayman al-Farisi – also in the chain under inspection – is

absolutely *majhul*, with no trace in the Sunni books of *rijal*! We honestly wonder how Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah dared to use such a report as *evidence* to establish points about the Shi'ah.

Narration Five

A twin report is further documented by Ibn Taymiyyah:

> روى أبو حفص بن شاهين في كتاب اللطيف في السنة حدثنا محمد بن أبي القاسم بن هارون حدثنا أحمد بن الوليد الواسطي حدثني جعفر بن نصير الطوسي الواسطي عن عبد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول عن أبيه قال قال لي الشعبي أحذركم هذه الأهواء المضلة وشرها الرافضة لم يدخلوا في الإسلام رغبة ولا رهبة ولكن مقتا لأهل الإسلام وبغيا عليهم قد حرقهم علي رضي الله عنه بالنار ونفاهم إلى البلدان منهم عبد الله ابن سبأ يهودي من يهود صنعاء نفاه الى ساباط

Abu Hafs b. Shahin recorded in *Kitab al-Latif fi al-Sunnah*: Muhammad b. Abi al-Qasim b. Harun – Ahmad b. al-Walid al-Wasiti – Ja'far b. Nasir al-Tusi al-Wasiti – '**Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal** – his father:

Al-Sha'bi said to me, "I warn you concerning these heretical sects, and the worst of them are the Rafidhah. They do not enter Islam out of hope (in it from Allah), nor from fear (of Allah). Rather, they do so out of hatred of the people of Islam and in rebellion against them. 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had burnt them with fire and banished them to towns. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. Saba, a Jew from the Jews of San'a. He ('Ali) exiled him to Sabat (of al-Madain).[16]

In the chain is 'Abd al-Rahman, who was a liar and *hadith* fabricator. So, the *riwayah* is *mawdhu'*.

Besides, this is what al-Hafiz records about al-Sha'bi:

> قال أبو سعد ابن السمعاني ولد سنة عشرين وقيل سنة ٣١ ومات سنة ١٠٩

Abu Sa'd b. al-Sam'ani said: "He (al-Sha'bi) was born in 20 H, and it is said 31 H, **and he died in 109 H.**[17]

Meanwhile, this is what Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah himself confesses about the term "Rafidhah":

> لكن لفظ الرافضة إنما ظهر لما رفضوا زيد بن علي بن الحسين في خلافة هشام وقصة زيد بن علي بن الحسين كانت بعد العشرين ومائة سنة إحدى وعشرين أو اثنتين وعشرين ومائة في اواخر خلافة هشام

But the word "Rafidhah" (Rejecters) was first used when they rejected (*rafadhu*) Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn during the *khilafah* of Hisham, and the incident of Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn **occurred after 120**

H, 121 H or 122 H, during the last days of the *khilafah* of Hisham.[18]

In simpler words, al-Sh'abi had already died before that word was ever used in human history! How then did he manage to tell 'Abd al-Rahman's father about the Rafidhah from his grave?!

Narration Six

Al-Hafiz gives us the sixth existing explicit Sunni report on 'Abd Allah b. Saba:

> وقال أبو إسحاق الفزاري عن شعبة عن سلمة بن كهيل عن أبي الزعراء عن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفلة دخل على علي في إمارته فقال اني مررت بن بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر يرون انك تضمر لهما مثل ذلك منهم عبد الله بن سبا وكان عبد الله أول من أظهر ذلك فقال علي مالي ولهذا الخبيث الأسود ثم قال معاذ الله أضمر لهما الا الحسن الجميل ثم أرسل إلى عبد الله بن سبا فسيره إلى المدائن وقال لا يساكنني في بلدة ابدا ثم نهض إلى المنبر حتى اجتمع الناس فذكر القصة في ثنائه عليهما بطوله وفي آخره الا ولا يبلغني عن أحد يفضلني عليهما الا جلدته حد المفتري

Abu Ishaq al-Fazari narrated from Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from **Abu al-Za'ra** from Zayd b. Wahb that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon 'Ali during his rule, and said, "I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and 'Umar, claiming that you hold the same views towards them both. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. Saba, and he was the first to manifest that. So, 'Ali said, "What does this evil black man want from me?" Then he said, "I seek Allah's refuge. My opinion of them both (i.e. Abu Bakr and 'Umar) is nothing but good and beautiful." Then he sent a messenger to 'Abd Allah b. Saba and exiled him to al-Madain, and said, "He shall not live in the same town as me ever again". Then he rushed to the pulpit and gathered the people, and delivered a long speech to praise them both (i.e. Abu Bakr and 'Umar). At its end, he said, "Verily, if it reaches me that anyone places me above them both, I will whip him with the whipping of a lying slanderer."[19]

So, who was Abu al-Za'ra? Al-Barqani (d. 425 H) disagrees with a popular choice here, as documented by al-Hafiz:

> وروى البرقاني في اللفظ من طريق شعبة عن سلمه بن كهيل عن أبي الزعراء وعن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفلة دخل على علي في امارته فقال يا أمير المؤمنين اني مررت بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر الحديث. قال البرقاني أبو الزعراء هذا هو حجية بن عدي وليس هو صاحب ابن مسعود ذاك اسمه عبد الله بن هانئ.

Al-Barqani narrated in the text from the route of Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from **Abu al-Za'ra**, and from Zayd b. Wahb that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon 'Ali during his rule, and said, "O Amir al-Muminin! I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and 'Umar." The *hadith*. Al-Barqani said: "**This Abu al-Za'ra was Hujayyah b. 'Adi, and not the companion of Ibn Mas'ud, whose name was 'Abd Allah b. Hani.**"[20]

Al-Barqani has corroboration from Imam Muslim (d. 261 H), who identifies Hujayyah as:

أبو الزعراء أحجية بن عدي الكندي

Abu al-Za'ra Hujayyah b. 'Adi al-Kindi[21]

However, these positions of both al-Barqani and Muslim are of no convincing basis in the eyes of al-Hafiz, who submits elsewhere in the same book that only three people – *excluding* Hujayyah – were actually known as Abu al-Za'ra:

من كنيته أبو الزعراء

أبو الزعراء الأزدي الأكبر، اسمه: عبد الله بن هانئ، تقدم.

أبو الزعراء الجشمي الأصغر، اسمه: عمرو بن عمر، تقدم.

أبو الزعراء الطائي، اسمه: يحيى بن الوليد الكوفي، تقدم.

Those whose *kunya* was Abu al-Za'ra:

1. Abu al-Za'ra al-Azdi al-Akbar: his name was 'Abd Allah b. Hani.

2. Abu al-Za'ra al-Jashmi al-Asghar: his name was 'Amr b. 'Umar.

3. Abu al-Za'ra al-Tai: his name was Yahya b. al-Walid al-Kufi.[22]

In his *Taqrib*, he has equally omitted "Abu al-Za'ra" from the names of Hujayyah[23]. Meanwhile, other major Sunni *rijal* scholars who have also conspicuously omitted "Abu al-Za'ra" from the names of Hujayyah include: Imam Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 H)[24], Imam al-'Ijli (d. 261 H)[25], Imam Ibn Abi Hatim (d. 327 H)[26], Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H)[27], Imam al-Mizzi (d. 742)[28], and Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H)[29].

Besides, the *riwayah* transmitted by Hujayyah (which is also often quoted on Ibn Saba) is *very different* from that narrated by "Abu al-Za'ra". Imam Ibn Abi Khaythamah (d. 279 H) reports:

حدثنا محمد بن عباد المكي قال نا سفيان قال نا عبد الجبار بن عباس الهمداني عن سلمة عن حجية بن عدي الكندي :رأيت عليا على المنبر وهو يقول من يعذرني من هذا الحميت الأسود الذي يكذب على الله يعني ابن السوداء

Muhammad b. ‘Abbad – Sufyan – ‘Abd al-Jabbar b. ‘Abbas al-Hamdani – Salamah – **Hujayyah b. ‘Adi al-Kindi**:

I saw ‘Ali upon the pulpit and he was saying, “Who will excuse me of **this evil black CONTAINER**, who tells lies upon Allah?” He meant *Ibn al-Sawda*.[30]

For Allah’s sake, how exactly does the above look like this one:

> وقال أبو إسحاق الفزاري عن شعبة عن سلمة بن كهيل عن أبي الزعراء عن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفلة دخل على علي في إمارته فقال اني مررت بن بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر يرون انك تضمر لهما مثل ذلك منهم عبد الله بن سبا وكان عبد الله أول من أظهر ذلك فقال علي مالي ولهذا الخبيث الأسود ثم قال معاذ الله أضمر لهما الا الحسن الجميل ثم أرسل إلى عبد الله بن سبا فسيره إلى المدائن وقال لا يساكنني في بلدة ابدا ثم نهض إلى المنبر حتى اجتمع الناس فذكر القصة في ثنائه عليهما بطوله وفي آخره الا ولا يبلغني عن أحد يفضلني عليهما الا جلدته حد المفتري

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Where is the similarity? Do they even resemble in any way or by any means? Apparently, there is NOTHING in common between them. Yet, we find some Sunni brothers referring to the first report as evidence that Abu Za’ra in the second is Hujayyah?! In fact, some of them go as fas as claiming that both reports are the same?!! How do these people reason?

So, as we can see, many top Sunni *rijal* scholars contradicted the suggestion that Hujayyah had the nickname “Abu al-Za’ra”. Also, what Salamah narrated from “Abu al-Za’ra” was *fundamentally* different, in all aspects, from what he narrated from Hujayyah. These facts, obviously, sufficiently confirm that the “Abu al-Zar’a” in the *riwayah* of al-Fazari was NOT Hujayyah b. ‘Adi.

In that case, which of the three Abu Za’ras identified by al-Hafiz was the “Abu al-Za’ra” of al-Fazari’s report? Imam al-Mizzi helps us out here. He states about the first of them:

> عبد الله بن هانئ الكندي، الأزدي أبو الزعراء الكوفي الكبير، من بني البداء بن الحارث. وهو خال سلمة بن كهيل.

روى عن: عبد الله بن مسعود، وعمر بن الخطاب. روى عنه: ابن أخته سلمة بن كهيل.

قال البخاري :لا يتابع في حديثه. وقال علي بن المديني :عامة رواية أبي الزعراء، عن عبد الله بن مسعود، ولا أعلم أحدا روى عنه إلا سلمة بن كهيل، واسمه عبد الله بن هانئ .وقال النسائي نحو ذلك....

وأما أبو الزعراء الأكبر هذا. فلا تعرف له رواية، إلا عن ابن مسعود، وعمر بن الخطاب، ولا يعرف له راو، إلا سلمة . بن كهيل، ولم يدركه سفيان بن عيينة، ولا أحد من أقرانه.

وذكره ابن حبان في كتاب " الثقات "روى له الترمذي حديثا، والنسائي آخر.

‘Abd Allah b. Hani al-Kindi, al-Azdi, Abu al-Za’ra al-Kufi al-Kabir, from Banu al-Bada b. al-Harith. He was the uncle of Salamah b. Kuhayl.

He narrated from ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud and ‘Umar b. al-Khattab. **His nephew, Salamah b. Kuhayl, narrated from him**.

Al-Bukhari said, “**He is NOT followed in his *hadith***.” ‘Ali b. al-Madini said, “Most of the reports of Abu al-Za’ra are from ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud. **I do not know anyone who narrated from him except Salamah b. Kuhayl**, and his name was ‘Abd Allah b. Hani.” Al-Nasai said the like of that too....

With regards to this Abu al-Za’ra al-Akbar, **there is NO known narration by him except from Ibn Mas’ud and ‘Umar b. al-Khattab, and there is NO known narrator from him except Salamah b. Kuhayl**. Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah never met him, nor did anyone else among his (i.e. Sufyan’s) contemporaries.

Ibn Hibban mentioned him in *Kitab al-Thiqat*. Al-Tirmidhi narrated a single *hadith* from him, and al-Nasai narrated the other.[31]

Apparently, this is our guy!

Concerning the second Abu al-Za’ra, al-Mizzi also submits:

عمرو بن عمرو، ويقال: ابن عامر ابن مالك بن نضلة الجشمي، أبو الزعراء الكوفي، ابن أخي أبي الأحوص الجشمي.

روى عن: عبيد الله بن عبد الله بن عتبة بن مسعود، وعكرمة مولى ابن عباس، وعمه أبي الأحوص عوف بن مالك بن نضلة الجشمي.

روى عنه: سفيان الثوري وسماه عمرو بن عامر، وسفيان ابن عيينة، وعبيدة بن حميد.

‘Amr b. ‘Amr, and he is also called Ibn ‘Amr, Ibn Malik b. Nadhlah al-Jashmi, Abu al-Za’ra al-Kufi, nephew of Abu al-Ahwas al-Jashmi.

He narrated from ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Utbah b. Mas’ud, ‘Ikrimah freed slave of Ibn ‘Abbas, and his uncle Abu al-Ahwas ‘Awf b. Malik b. Nadhlah al-Jashmi.

Sufyan al-Thawri narrated from him and named him ‘Amr b. ‘Amir. Sufyan Ibn ‘Uyaynah also narrated from him, as well as ‘Ubaydah b. Humayd.[32]

Without doubt, this is *not* the Abu al-Za’ra in the report on ‘Abd Allah b. Saba! Salamah did not narrate from him. The same was the case with the third Abu al-Za’ra:

يحيى بن الوليد بن المسير الطائي ثم السنبسي، أبو الزعراء الكوفي.

روى عن: سعيد بن عمرو بن أشوع، ومحل بن خليفة الطائي.

روى عنه: زيد بن الحباب، وسويد بن عمرو الكلبي، وأبو عاصم الضحاك بن مخلد، و عبد الرحمان بن مهدي، وأبو حميد عصام بن عمرو البغدادي، ويحيى بن المتوكل الباهلي.

Yahya b. al-Walid b. al-Musayyar al-Tai al-Sinbasi, Abu al-Za’ra al-Kufi.

He narrated from Sa’id b. ‘Amr b. Ashwa’ and Muhil b. Khalifah al-Tai.

And the following narrated from him: Zayd b. al-Hubab, Suwayd b. ‘Amr al-Kalbi, Abu ‘Asim al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi, Abu Hamid ‘Isam b. ‘Amr al-Baghdadi, and Yahya b. al-Mutawakil al-Bahili.[33]

Needless to say, “our guy” is only the first of them: ‘Abd Allah b. Hani. Meanwhile, al-Mizzi has confirmed that “there is NO known narration by him except from Ibn Mas’ud and ‘Umar b. al-Khattab.” This reveals an *‘illa* (hidden defect) in all narrations by this Abu al-Za’ra from other than Ibn Mas’ud and ‘Umar. All of them are disconnected and therefore *dha’if*, and so is this particular narration of his from Zayd b. Wahb as well!

A “counter-proof” often deployed by our opponents is this report, quoted by al-Hafiz:

وروى البرقاني في اللفظ من طريق شعبة عن سلمه بن كهيل عن أبي الزعراء وعن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفلة

دخل على علي في امارته فقال يا أمير المؤمنين اني مررت بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر الحديث. قال البرقاني أبو الزعراء هذا هو حجية بن عدي وليس هو صاحب ابن مسعود ذاك اسمه عبد الله بن هانئ.

Al-Barqani narrated in the text from the route of Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl **from Abu al-Za'ra, AND from Zayd b. Wahb** that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon 'Ali during his rule, and said, "O Amir al-Muminin! I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and 'Umar." The *hadith*.[34]

They argue that Salamah narrated from both Abu al-Za'ra *and* Zayd b. Wahb. As such, whether Abu al-Za'ra's report is *dha'if* or not would be inconsequential, as there would be a separate route to establish the *riwayah*. However, al-Barqani (d. 425 H) never met Shu'bah (d. 160 H), and the *sanad* between them is unknown. Therefore, it is impossible to rely upon this report of al-Barqani. Most probably, one of the unknown narrators in the truncated chain muddled up the *isnad*. So, basically, our opponents have no valid objection, and the *riwayah* of Abu al-Za'ra 'Abd Allah b. Hani from Zayd b. Wahb is *dha'if*.

In addition, the *riwayah* is equally, historically inaccurate. The report, for example, is quick to point out that the first ever human being to "mention" Abu Bakr and 'Umar negatively was 'Abd Allah b. Saba. This, however, is untrue! Amir al-Muminin himself had earlier described both Abu Bakr and 'Umar with shocking words. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) quotes 'Umar saying to both Imam 'Ali and 'Abbas:

فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم .... فرأيتماه كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفي أبو بكر وأنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وولي أبا بكر فرأيتماني كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died, **Abu Bakr said: "I am the *wali* of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him."…. So both of you ('Ali and 'Abbas) thought him (i.e. Abu Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, a traitor and dishonest**. And Allah knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly-guided and a follower of the truth. **Abu Bakr died and I became the *wali* of the Messenger of Allah**, peace be upon him, and the *wali* of Abu Bakr. **So both of you thought me to be a liar, sinful, a traitor and dishonest**.[35]

Amir al-Muminin declared both Abu Bakr and 'Umar to be traitors, sinful and dishonest liars! This, of course, was during the lifetimes of both of them, long before 'Abd Allah b. Saba could ever have surfaced.

Besides, what "praise" exactly would Amir al-Muminin have had for Abu Bakr and 'Umar in view of his extremely negative opinions of them? It is simply illogical to assume that Amir al-Muminin would *ever* consider people whom he thought to be "liars, traitors, sinful and dishonest" as better than himself!

What seals the series of fallacies in the report is its last sentence:

“Verily, if it reaches me that anyone places me above them both, I will whip him with the whipping of a lying slanderer.”

Many of the Sahabah, *radhiyallahu ‘anhum*, and Tabi’in actually considered him to be the best of the entire *Ummah* after the Messenger of Allah, and he never condemned or punished them. Imam Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463 H), among others, submits:

> وروى عن سلمان وأبي ذر والمقداد وخباب وجابر وأبى سعيد الخدري وزيد بن الأرقم أن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه أول من أسلم وفضله هؤلاء على غيره

Salman, Abu Dharr, al-Miqdad, Khabab, Jabir, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri and Zayd b. Arqam narrated that ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first to accept Islam, **and they considered him the most superior (among the Sahabah)**.36

Al-Hafiz adds about another Sahabi, Abu al-Tufayl, *radhiyallahu ‘anhu*:

> قال أبو عمر كان يعترف بفضل أبي بكر وعمر لكنه يقدم عليا

Abu ‘Umar said: He accepted the merit of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar **but he considered ‘Ali to be the most superior**.37

Did ‘Ali ever reproach Khabab, Jabir, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, Zayd b. Arqam and Abu al-Tufayl or anyone like them? The answer is a loud “no”!

Narration Seven

Imam Abu Nu’aym al-Isfahani (d. 430 H) in his *al-Hilya* records the last report:

> حدثنا إبراهيم بن محمد ثنا عبد الله ثنا يوسف بن أسباط ثنا محمد بن عبد العزيز التيمي الكوفي عن مغيرة عن أم موسى قالت بلغ عليا أن ابن سبأ يفضله على أبي بكر وعمر فهم علي بقتله فقيل له أتقتل رجلا إنما أجلك وفضلك فقال لا جرم لا يساكنني في بلدة أنا فيها قال عبدالله بن خبيق فحدثت به الهيثم بن جميل فقال لقد نفي ببلد بالمدائن إلى الساعة

Ibrahim b. Muhammad – ‘Abd Allah – **Yusuf b. Asbat** – Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Tamimi al-Kufi – **Mughirah** – **Umm Musa**, who said:

It reached ‘Ali that Ibn Saba was placing him (i.e. ‘Ali) in merits and virtues above Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. So, he decided to kill him. But, it was said to him, “Will you kill a man who only thinks highly of you and considers you superior?” Then, he said, “Surely, he shall not live with me in the same town.”

‘Abd Allah b. Khabiq narrated from al-Haytham b. Jamil who said: “He was permanently exiled to a town in al-Madain.”[38]

Concerning Yusuf b. Asbat, ‘Allamah al-Albani says:

> ويوسف بن أسباط؛ ضعيف أيضاً.

Yusuf b. Asbat is *dha’if* too.[39]

Elsewhere, he comments about a *sanad* containing Yusuf’s name:

> قلت: وهذا سند ضعيف من أجل يوسف بن أسباط قال أبو حاتم: كان رجلا عابدا، دفن كتبه، وهو يغلط كثيرا، وهو رجل صالح، لا يحتج به، كما في " الجرح " (4 / 2 / 418)

I say: **This chain is *dha’if*, due to Yusuf b. Asbat**. Abu Hatim said: “He was a devout worshipper. He buried his books, **and he used to make A LOT of mistakes**, and he was a righteous man. **He is NOT accepted as a *hujjah***” as stated in *al-Jarh* (4/2/418).[40]

Also, Mughirah in the chain is a *mudalis*, and has narrated in an *‘an-‘an* manner. Al-Hafiz submits:

> المغيرة بن مقسم بكسر الميم الضبي مولاهم أبو هشام الكوفي الأعمى ثقة متقن إلا أنه كان يدلس ولا سيما عن إبراهيم

Al-Mughirah b. Miqsam al-Dhabi, their freed slave, Abu Hisham al-Kufi, the Blind: *Thiqah* (trustworthy), precise, **except that he used to do *tadlis***, especially from Ibrahim.[41]

‘Allamah al-Albani too says about him:

> فلا أدري كيف غفل عنها الذهبي وهو نفسه قد أورد المغيرة هذا في "منظومته" في المدلسين؟! وهي معروفة مطبوعة عدة طبعات، وذكره فيهم غيره من الحفاظ المتقدمين والمتأخرين، وأورده خاتمتهم العسقلاني في الطبقة الثالثة منهم الذين أكثروا التدليس، فلم يحتج الأئمة من أحاديثهم إلا بما صرحوا فيه بالسماع

I do not know how al-Dhahabi missed it, while he personally has included this al-Mughirah in his *Manzumah* among the *mudalisin* (i.e. those who do *tadlis*)?! And it is well-known, published several times. Others from the classical and later *hadith* scientists also included him (i.e. al-Mughirah) among them (i.e. *mudalisin*). **The last of them, al-‘Asqalani, included him (i.e. al-Mughirah) in the third *tabaqat* among them, those who did *tadlis* A LOT. Therefore, the Imams do not accept their *ahadith* as *hujjah* except what they explicitly transmit with *sima’***.[42]

The last defect in the *sanad* is Umm Musa, the main narrator herself. Al-Hafiz declares about her:

أم موسى سرية علي قيل اسمها فاختة وقيل حبيبة مقبولة

Umm Musa, mistress of ‘Ali. It is said that her name was Fakhtah or Habibah: *Maqbulah* (i.e. accepted only when seconded).43

While analyzing another *riwayah* of Mughirah from the same Umm Musa, ‘Allamah al-Albani also says:

قلت: وفيه نظر من وجهين:

الأول: أن أم موسى هذه، لم تثبت عدالتها وضبطها. وقد أوردها الذهبي نفسه في "فصل النسوة المجهولات" من "الميزان"، وقال فيها: "تفرد عنها مغيرة بن مقسم. قال الدارقطني: يخرج حديثها اعتباراً". ولذلك لم يوثقها الحافظ في "التقريب" بل قال فيها: "مقبولة". يعني: عند المتابعة....

والآخر: أن المغيرة ـ وهو ابن مقسم الضبي ـ وإن كان ثقة متقناً؛ إلا أنه كان يدلس؛ كما قال الحافظ، وقد عنعنه.

I say: These are two problems with it:

The first: is that this Umm Musa, her *‘adalah* (uprightness) and truthfulness are NOT established. Al-Dhahabi has himself mentioned her in the “Chapter on *Majhulah* (Unknown) Women” in *al-Mizan*, and he said concerning her: “Mughirah b. Miqsam was the only one who narrated from her. Al-Daraqutni said: ‘Her *ahadith* are recorded for support purposes.’” This is why al-Hafiz in *al-Taqrib* did NOT declare her *thiqah* (trustworthy). **Rather, he said concerning her “*maqbulah*”, that is (she is accepted) where she is seconded**.

The other: is that al-Mughirah – and he was Ibn Miqsam al-Dhabi – even though he was *thiqah* (trustworthy), precise, **except that he used to do *tadlis*, as al-Hafiz stated. And he has narrated it in an *‘an-‘an* manner**.44

The bottomline is that the report of Abu Na’im is *dha’if jiddan* (very weak). It has several serious defects in it: Yusuf b. Asbat is *dha’if*; al-Mughirah is a *mudalis* and has narrated in an *‘an-‘an* manner; and Umm Musa is *majhulah* (unknown) or *maqbulah* and has NOT been seconded in her report. Besides, there were many of the Sahabah who considered Amir al-Muminin to have been superior to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar – and he never punished or killed them! This exposes the clear fallacy of the fairytale from Abu Na’im.

As things stand, these are the only seven reports in the Sunni books which mention ‘Abd Allah b. Saba

explicitly, and all of them are both very unreliable and blatantly false.

1. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1407 H), vol. 2, p. 647
2. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 29, pp. 3-4
3. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 3, p. 145, # 517
4. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [Dr. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salam Tadmiri], vol. 11, pp. 161-162, # 4
5. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 11, p. 748, # 5440
6. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 3, pp. 101-102, # 1110
7. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 29, p. 7
8. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah), vol. 3, pp. 45-46, # 979
9. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I'tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, p. 438, # 7070
10. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 29, pp. 9-10
11. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 1, pp. 34-35
12. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 471
13. Ibid, vol. 1, pp. 28-30
14. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 3, p. 427, # 1676
15. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 2, p. 471, # 824
16. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 1, p. 23
17. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 5, p. 59, # 110
18. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 1, pp. 34-35
19. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 3, p. 290, # 1225
20. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 2, p. 190, # 399
21. Muslim b. al-Hajjaj, al-Kuna wa al-Asma (Madinah al-Munawwarah: al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Ahmad al-Qushqari], vol. 1, p. 346, 1249
22. Ibid, vol. 12, p. 90
23. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 192, # 1154
24. Muhammad b. Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir), vol. 6, p. 225

25. Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah b. Salih al-‘Ijli al-Kufi, Ma’rifat al-Thiqat (Madinah: Maktabah al-Dar; 1st edition, 1405 H), vol. 1, p. 288, # 275
26. Abu Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Hatim Muhamamd b. Idris b. al-Munzir al-Tamimi al-Hanzali al-Razi, al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dil (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1371 H), vol. 3, p. 314, # 1400
27. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma’arif al-‘Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1398 H), vol. 4, p. 186
28. Abu al-Hajjaj Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut by Muasassat al-Risalah; 4th edition, 1413 H) [annotator: Dr. Bashar ‘Awad Ma’ruf], vol. 5, p. 485, # 1141
29. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I’tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah; 1st edition, 1382 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 1, p. 466, # 1759; Shams al-Din Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Dhahabi al-Dimashqi, al-Kashif fi Ma’rifat Man Lahu Riwayat fi al-Kutub al-Sittah (Jeddah: Dar al-Qiblah li al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1413 H), vol. 1, p. 315, # 956
30. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Abi Khaythamah Zuhayr b. Harb, Tarikh Ibn Abi Khaythamah (al-Faruq al-Hadithiyyah li al-Taba’ah wa al-Nashr; 1st edition, 1424 H), vol. 3, p. 177, # 4359
31. Abu al-Hajjaj Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut by Muasassat al-Risalah; 4th edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Bashar ‘Awad Ma’ruf], vol. 16, pp. 240-242, # 3627
32. Abu al-Hajjaj Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut by Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1413 H) [annotator: Dr. Bashar ‘Awad Ma’ruf], vol. 22, p. 166, # 4417
33. Ibid, vol. 32, pp. 30-31, # 6942
34. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 2, p. 190, # 399
35. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1376, #1757
36. Abu ‘Umar Yusuf b. ‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Barr b. ‘Asim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti’ab fi Ma’rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, pp. 1090, # 1855
37. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh ‘Adil Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh ‘Ali Muhammad Ma’udh], vol. 7, p. 193, # 10166
38. Abu Na’im Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Isfahani, Hilyah al-Awliya wa Tabaqat al-Asfiya (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; 4th edition, 1405 H), vol. 8, p. 253
39. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdhu’ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 11, p. 118, # 5073
40. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 325, # 175
41. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 208, # 6875
42. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdhu’ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 13, p. 633, # 6289
43. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 673, # 8820
44. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdhu’ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 10, p. 649, # 4945

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