

Some false statements

There are some writers in the world who do not care either for the historical facts or for the conditions and environments of life. They mention strange causes for the revolt which the oppressed persons made against Uthman and insist that the events of that time were the result of the will and desire of a particular person who had toured all the Islamic territories and instigated the people to rise against Uthman and his government.

The explanations put forth by these writers will no doubt make you laugh, because their only object is that the persons who were actually responsible for the murder of Uthman should not be censured, or else the people would begin to doubt the very faith of these writers. These writers are like those who try to reverse the direction of the water falling from above. They consider their readers to be simpletons and ignorant.

One of these writers is Sa'id al-Afghani, the author of "*Ayeshah wa al-Siyasah*". He has tried his best to make his readers believe that the events which took place in the Islamic territory leading to the murder of Uthman and thereafter were due to the activities of only one man namely Abdullah bin Saba. ¹ This claim and accusation leads one to the conclusion that the government of Uthman and his minister Marwan was an ideal one and Bani Umayyah and their governors and officers were the standard-bearers of human brotherhood and social justice in Arabia, but unfortunately one single person named Abdullah bin Saba brought all their capabilities and good deeds to nought. He toured all the districts and provinces and instigated the people to rise against the governors and officers who were very pious as well as great reformers. But for this man (Abdullah bin Saba) the people would have led happy and peaceful lives under the auspices of the bounties of Marwan, the justice of Walid and the forbearance of Mu'awiya.

Such a claim amounts to distortion of facts, injustice to the people and an indecent attempt to support certain points of view. It also amounts to misguiding the people in respect of the basic truths on which history is based, because the object of such a futile attempt is that the responsibility for the events of a period, rather many periods, should be placed on the shoulders of one man who roamed about from area to area and the people of all those areas rose against the government owing to his vicious

propaganda and not on account of anything else.

As regards the policies of the government, the deplorable condition of the economic and social system, the refractoriness of those associated with the government, misappropriation of public funds and adoption of dictatorial methods by Bani Umayyah and maltreatment of respectable personalities like Abu Dharr and Ammar Yasir, the author does not attach any importance to them and does not think that these things were the cause of general revolt of the people. According to him all the uproar against Uthman was due to the activities of Abdullah bin Saba who restrained the Muslims from obeying the religious leaders of Islam and created disturbances and dissensions.

What a dangerous mentality it is that important events which were continuous and correlated with one another and had a great bearing on the society and the economic and social system of that time should be explained away by saying that the root-cause of all these things was the conspiracies of one man who according to Sa'id Afghani, roamed about from town to town and sowed the seeds of dissension and mischief in a pure society. And by pure society he evidently means the society which was headed by Marwan bin Hakam.

It deserves notice that Sa'id Afghani attaches such a great importance to Abdullah bin Saba or Ibn al-Sawda in his above mentioned book and he elevates Mu'awiya unconsciously and degrades Abu Dharr, though Mu'awiya was Mu'awiya and Abu Dharr was Abu Dharr. Afghani writes: "Abdullah bin Saba toured the Islamic territories and visited every place. He commenced his nefarious activities in Hijaz and then went to Syria. At that time Syria was ruled by an experienced and far-sighted person namely Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, who sensed the danger immediately and expelled him from there. However, his mischief did cast some effect on him. Ibn Saba assessed the situation and sowed the seeds of mischief. He instigated a distinguished companion of the Prophet to rise against Mu'awiya.

Abu Dharr was a man whose words were believed by the Syrians. Mu'awiya, who was a forbearing person as well as a diplomat, was very much upset. He, therefore, requested Uthman to remove that man from Syria, that distinguished companion was Abu Dharr whose story is well known (***Ayesha wa al-Siyasah***).

What this author purports to say may be summarised thus: During the caliphate of Uthman the people in various provinces were leading very happy and prosperous lives. The province of Syria, in particular, was then governed by a very farsighted and experienced person namely Mu'awiya. As regards the great reformer Abu Dharr he was a nonentity and would have remained so if Abdullah bin Saba had not contacted and awakened him. And when he awakened him he did so to make him create mischief, because, according to the author he (i.e. Abdullah bin Saba) was the source of all troubles and his object in touring the Islamic territories was to create mischief. The result was that Abu Dharr did what Abdullah bin Saba desired i.e. he created mischief, misguided the people and made them rebel against the leaders.

According to the said author the activities of Abu Dharr were dangerous for the Arabs, Islam and history, because he incited the poor to rise against the rich. For this very reason Mu`awiya got fed up with him and he showed kindness to the newly-converted Muslims as well as to history by expelling Abu Dharr from Syria.

As is evident the logic of Sa`id Afghani reminds one of the logic of those rulers who declare all truth-loving persons to be rebels and mischief-mongers. Is it not something odd that whereas the old historians should be aware of the reasons of the disturbance, the modern historians should not be able to know it although the sources of information of the latter are much larger. The author of "Ayesha wa al-Siyasah" attributes the revolutionary movement against Uthman to the activities of Abdullah bin Saba, whereas Tabari and the historians of the earlier and the later period explained the events correctly and give their causes which are quite convincing.

While enumerating the causes of the movement Tabari says: "Those persons who did not enjoy precedence in the embracing Islam, nor had any position in Islam, could not be equal to those who embraced Islam at its early stage and enjoyed great dignity and importance. These very early Muslims found fault with the bestowal of large gifts and considered it to be injustice, as their own share used to be very small.

When new converts to Islam or the bedouin Arabs or freed slaves met them they were very much impressed by what they said. The result was that the number of the opponents of Uthman went on increasing. So much so that those who opposed Uthman became larger in number than those who were pleased with him. The result was that the disturbances prevailed".

It is surprising that other contemporary writers have also committed the same mistake. Among others was Ahmad Amin, the author of "*Fajr al-Islam*". He thinks that Abu Dharr Ghifari was a simpleton who was enticed by Abdullah bin Saba into believing in Mazdakite (communist) ideas so that he might prove useful for spoiling the atmosphere of various cities.

And even more surprising is the fact that in order to prove that Abu Dharr was influenced by Mazdakite ideas he has mentioned his (Abu Dharr's) remark which is quoted by Tabari. Abu Dharr is reported to have said, addressing the people of Damascus: "O wealthy people! Sympathise with the poor. Those who hoard gold and silver announce to them a painful chastisement" (*Fajr al-Islam* p. 110).

Ahmad Amin may very well be asked whether sympathetic treatment with the poor by the rich is only a Mazdakite theory and not a pure Islamic injunction and whether Abu Dharr's remark "O wealthy people! Behave sympathetically with the poor" is not closely related with the Quranic verse:

".. Those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in God's way, announce to them a painful chastisement". (9:34)

At another place in *Fajr al-Islam* Ahmad Amin treating Abdullah bin Saba to be the root cause of mischief says: "This man prompted Abu Dharr Ghifari to propagate communism, and he was the ring-

leader of the insurgents who came from different places to attack Uthman. It was he who endeavoured to corrupt the faith of the Muslims. He toured Hijaz, Basra, Kufa, Syria and Egypt extensively. Hence it is possible that he might have acquired the Mazdakite ideas from the Mazdakites of Iraq or Yemen and Abu Dharr too might have liked these ideas and adopted them”.

It is very unfortunate that the author of *Fajr al-Islam* does not ponder as to what new thing appeared in the Islamic beliefs of Abu Dharr. Does Islam itself not announce that the poor enjoy certain rights over the rich and all Muslims are equal and does the Qur'an not say that the foreheads, flanks and backs of those who hoard gold and silver will be branded in the Hell with the same gold and silver? Then what are those Mazdakite ideas in which Abu Dharr began to believe? The fact is that Abu Dharr was fighting against those persons with whom Islam itself fought and promised them the fire of Hell.

The question also arises as to whether Abu Dharr, who was a distinguished companion of the Prophet, foremost among the Shi`ah of Ali, and the fifth person to embrace Islam, did not know himself that all the Muslims were entitled to share the wealth of the nation and not that a few should hoard it. And could he not realize that during the caliphate of Uthman the public property had been appropriated by a few persons and the people were being subjected to tyranny and oppression and as these things are opposed to the teachings of Islam it was the duty of the Muslims to rise against them?

And then the question is: Was Abu Dharr such a simpleton that he had to depend on Abdullah bin Saba to tell him that Uthman was practising nepotism and going the ways of Kaiser and Kisra? Did Abu Dharr and the people come to know only on Abdullah bin Saba telling them that the rulers had gone astray and the people had been deprived of their rights and consequently Abu Dharr and others expressed resentment?

These writers have understood Abdullah bin Saba and Mazdak's creed but they have not understood Abu Dharr and Islam! They have found the rebellious movement of Abdullah bin Saba and his instigating the people to rise against the caliph to be dreadful. But they have not found to be dreadful those acts of Uthman which annoyed the Muslims – acts which annoy all nations during all ages viz. nepotism, favouritism and adopting a discriminating policy.

Researchers differ about the causes which led to the murder of Uthman. The most prominent event about which there is difference of opinion between them is the letter written from Madina to Ibn Abi Sarah, the Governor of Egypt, who was directed to kill the governor-designate Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr on his arrival in Egypt. This event has been mentioned in detail earlier.

As regards those who do not consider it to be a true incident it appears necessary to mention the views of one of them namely Dr. Taha Husayn, because he enjoys great respect as a research scholar of the history of Islam and the Arab world. He says thus in the first volume (entitled Uthman) of his book *Al-Fitnatu'l Kubra*:

“Here the story of the letter is related. The traditionists say that when the Egyptians were returning after

having been satisfied with the promises of Uthman they were able to lay their hands on the way on a slave who was carrying a letter to Ibn Abi Sarah. I think this story is fabricated. The greatest proof of this is that the companions of the Prophet contended with the Egyptians on this point and asked them: "When you and the people of Kufa as well as those of Basra were going your respective ways how did the people of Kufa and Basra come to know that you had found such a letter?" To this the Egyptians could not give any reply and they said: "Whatever you may be thinking we do not need this man (Uthman). We shall certainly remove him from his office and appoint a new caliph in his place".

"It cannot be believed that Uthman could deceive the Muslims by removing the Governor of Egypt and replacing him by another and then writing a secret letter to the governor to kill them on their arrival".

"It cannot also be believed that Marwan could dare write a letter purporting to be from Uthman and affix his seal on it and then send it through his slave mounted on his camel".

"The matter is, however, quite simple. Uthman might have promised to accept the demands of the insurgents of Kufa, Basra and Egypt and they believed in him. Later they came to know that he had not fulfilled his promises. They, therefore, became furious and returned with great anger to finish the matter and not to return to their homes until they had removed Uthman from his office or killed him and made some other arrangement for the caliphate. When they reached Madina they found that the companions of the Prophet were ready to fight with them. They, however, refrained from fighting with the companions and returned from Madina deceitfully. When they became sure that the companions had laid their arms aside and were resting in their houses they (the insurgents) returned and assumed the control of Madina without any bloodshed". (*Al-Fitna tu'l-Kubra*, Vol. 1, `Uthman').

It is time that the historical events about which the writers differ deserve to be doubted, especially those events which serve sectarian interests or support any particular creed. This doubt cannot be removed unless history itself provides a conclusive proof or it is analysed and interpreted in a way which by itself serves as a sufficient proof. The incident of the letter in question is no doubt such that it should make Dr. Taha Husayn doubt its authenticity and the reasons for his treating it as doubtful may also be accepted, provided that certain facts which stand in the way of accepting those reasons as sufficient do not exist.

Dr. Taha Husayn says that when the companions of the Prophet asked the people of Kufa and Basra as to how they came to know that the Egyptians had acquired such a letter when each party was going its own way they could not give a reply. This is not, however, something which may make one deny the incident of the letter outright.

According to the narrations as well as the sequence of events it is an established fact that Uthman had appointed Muhammad bin Abi Bakr as the Governor of Egypt and had also sent a party of the Muhajirs and the Ansar with him. Muhammad and his companions had complete reliance on the letter which Uthman had given them and they therefore, left Madina for Egypt. However, before reaching their destination they returned to Madina. Now the question arises as to why those people returned very much

annoyed? And why did they await an opportunity to enter the city without bloodshed? Neither history nor those who deny the existence of any such letter mention any cause for the return of Muhammad and his companions to Madina. Only one cause is mentioned and that is the letter in question.

Furthermore, the Muhajirs and the Ansar who were sent with Muhammad to Egypt to investigate the activities of Ibn Abi Sarah and to make the atmosphere favourable for the governorship of Muhammad were all obedient to Uthman and some of them, if not all, enjoyed the position of Uthman's supporters and associates. How can one imagine that these persons who were the well-wishers of Uthman, could forge a letter signed by him? And if it is said that the letter was not forged by the Muhajirs and the Ansar but it was signed by someone else, then the question arises as to how these people accepted it as having been written by Uthman. And if it is said that no such letter was found then it must also be admitted that Muhammad bin Abi Bakr and his companions did not return to Madina on account of any letter and the story of the letter was fabricated by the enemies of Uthman after his murder.

In that case the question arises as to why Dr. Taha Husayn and other historians and narrators admit the existence of such a letter and say that the companions of the Prophet contended with the insurgents on account of the letter and enquired as to how the people of Kufa and Basra came to know about the Egyptians having located the letter when each of the three parties was going its own way?

In the circumstances the existence of the letter cannot be denied. The question, therefore, remains as to who wrote that letter and engineered a plot to kill Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, the Muhajirs and the Ansar accompanying him, and the opponents of Ibn Abi Sarah?

As mentioned above Dr. Taha Husayn does not believe that Uthman could write such a letter and deceive the Muslims. This view of Dr. Taha Husayn is correct. Uthman could not practise such a deception. It is however, a fact that Uthman was of a very mild nature. This very mildness occasionally made him surrender to the wishes of Bani Umayyah and deceit and cunningness of Bani Umayyah is too well known. We learn from the life history of Uthman that at a certain time he issued some orders, later withdrew them, expressed regret for having issued them, and began weeping.

The treatment meted out by Uthman to Abu Dharr is a clear example of the way in which Bani Umayyah prevailed upon him to do things opposed to justice and good conscience and then he had to express regret. He subjected Abu Dharr to extreme humiliation and torture and then did his best to reconcile him. Soon afterwards, however, he got annoyed with Abu Dharr again and banished him as a result of which he and the members of his family died of starvation.

Another such instance was the insult to which Uthman subjected the distinguished companion of the Prophet namely Abdullah ibn Mas`ud. In compliance with his orders a man picked up Abdullah and threw him on the ground as a result of which his bones got broken. He also stopped his stipend. Soon afterwards, however, he felt ashamed and apologized to Abdullah.

Uthman's biography also shows that he asked Ali to leave Madina and then sent messengers asking him

to return. This happened many times. So much so that Ali had to say: "Uthman wants to make me a camel which carries water so that I may continue to come and go. He asked me to leave Madina and then called me back. Now he again wants me to go away from here".

Uthman gives general licence to Abdullah Ibn Abi Sarah to deal with the people of Egypt as he liked. Ibn Abi Sarah subjects the Egyptians to severe oppression. The Egyptians come to Madina and complain to Uthman. Uthman addresses them. He praises them, expresses regret, and repents for the past deeds. So much so that he begins to weep and promises that he would replace Ibn Abi Sarah by a governor of their choice. Then he returns to his palace where he meets Marwan. Marwan makes him go back on his word and he does not keep any promise made to the Egyptians!

For Uthman the matter of Abu Dharr and Ibn Mas`ud was not easier than that of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr or the Egyptians. The admonitions made by both of them to his kinsmen were more painful to him than the Egyptian's attack once on the capital of Madina and once on the Governor of Egypt. When he could misbehave with Abu Dharr and Ibn Mas`ud to comply with the wishes of his own kinsmen, Muhammad and Egyptians were evidently of no consequence in his eyes.

Furthermore, it is an established fact that Muhammad bin Abi Bakr was an opponent of Uthman's politics whereas Ibn Abi Sarah was one of his confidants and liked very much his policies and methods of Government. In the light of these facts it is possible that Uthman might have regretted the appointment of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr instead of Ibn Abi Sarah as well as the promises made by him with the Egyptians and might have decided to go back upon his word under the pressure of Marwan and other Umayyads.

By mentioning the incident of the letter we do not mean to support those who claim that the letter was written by Uthman himself. What we mean to say is that Uthman had such a mild nature that Marwan and the descendants of Hakam who were all in all in Uthman's administration could prevail upon him and dupe him very easily to achieve their own ends. Hence if it cannot be accepted that Uthman could deceive the Muslims it can very well be accepted that Marwan could exert pressure on Uthman to get things done according to his desire.

Now we turn to Dr. Taha Husayn once again. He thinks that for two reasons which we have mentioned earlier the story of the letter is fabricated and baseless. Then he advances another reason in support of his claim which, in our opinion, is very weak. He says. "It is not something rational and acceptable that Marwan might dare to write a letter as if it was written by Uthman, affix his seal thereon, and send it through his (Uthman's) slave".

We say in reply that it is not surprising that Marwan should have taken such a step. What surprises us is that Dr. Taha Husayn considers Marwan's action to be beyond reason. He holds this view notwithstanding the fact that it was the same Marwan who considered himself to be the master and the people to be his servants and slaves, whom he could allow to live or put to death at his own free will.

Now we should like to comment on Dr. Taha's view that these narrations do not stand to reason. There are narrations which tell that the letter was written by Marwan and the entire plot was the outcome of his policies and methods of administration, because he was the de facto ruler of the Islamic territories.

In this connection it is necessary to keep some points in view.

Firstly all the narrations unitedly say that a deputation headed by Ali waited on Uthman. It included Ammar, Talha, Zubayr and Sa'd bin Abi Waqas. Ali held the letter in question in his hand. He also took with him the slave and the camel. He had a talk with Uthman about the letter and then the companions came to know that the letter had been written by Marwan. They then asked Uthman to call Marwan before them so that they might question him. Uthman did not agree to this and the companions went away very much annoyed. We have already quoted this narration at length in the foregoing pages.

Secondly Marwan's opinion about Uthman's caliphate must also be kept in view. In this connection the question arises whether, in his eyes Uthman was a caliph like Abu Bakr and Umar or an Umayyad through whom Bani Umayyah were to regain the power and authority which had been destroyed by Islam.

Marwan was a perfect model of Umayyad opportunism. According to him the Caliphate had nothing to do with the fact that Uthman was a Qurayshite, a Muhajir, a companion of the Prophet and a believer in his Prophethood. Rather he only considered Uthman to be a member of the Umayyad family.

According to Marwan the caliphate was not something which meant a just government based on the principles of public welfare and which was expected to follow the **Sunnah** of the Prophet and the conduct of the previous caliphs. It was a kingship which slipped away from the hands of Abu Bakr and Umar because they did not nominate their children as their successors. It was, however, incumbent upon Uthman, who was an Umayyad, not to repeat this mistake so that the people might imagine that the caliphate belonged to Bani Umayyah only.

It was therefore necessary for Uthman that he should behave towards the people in the same manner in which a careful monarch behaves towards his subjects. If Uthman was not able to rule in this way there was Marwan to guide him. The sentences uttered by Marwan while addressing the insurgents which have been reproduced earlier, depict a true picture of his mentality. He had said: "Why have you people gathered here? Do you want to snatch our kingdom?"

During those days the caliphate was in fact the kingdom of Marwan. The subjects were not entitled to raise their voice and claim their sustenance and freedom from the king. Marwan was a king belonging to the Umayyad Family and people were his slaves.

How could a person, who viewed the caliph and the caliphate in the manner explained above and issued orders according to that conception, be expected to tolerate that the people should put up their demands before the government of his relative Uthman (which was as good as Marwan's own government) and

the king should surrender before their wishes and dismiss the governor who was an important member of the Umayyad regime and appoint in his place Muhammad bin Abi Bakr who was an opponent of Uthman's government and a staunch supporter of Imam Ali?

We cannot also ignore the fact that it was the insurgents and the companions of the Prophet who were annoyed with Uthman and had recommended the name of Muhammad for appointment as governor and Marwan had not been consulted in the matter. Of course, Marwan could not tolerate that his authority should be violated in this manner.

When Marwan's views about the caliphate are known it becomes evident that he could not ignore the superiority which had returned once again to the Umayyad Family. And when it is realized that instead of considering Uthman to be the caliph of the Muslims, Marwan treated him to be member of the Umayyad Family and a representative of Umayyad Government it should not be difficult to understand that he could be presumptuous vis-a-vis Uthman. However, if he was presumptuous he was so from our view-point. So far as Marwan himself was concerned he was only acting for protection of his rights.

Dr. Taha Husayn's saying that Marwan could not dare write a letter in the name of Uthman and affix his seal on it, does not stand to reason. History tells us of many instances in which he showed presumption and boldness. For example, he suggested to Uthman to kill those companions of the Prophet who criticized his government (viz. Ali, Ammar, Abu Dharr etc).

He suggested to Uthman that he should not give a chance to Ibn Mas`ud to turn Syria against him as he had already made the people of Kufa his opponents. Uthman readily accepted his suggestion. He tried to obstruct Ali, his sons, and Aqil and Abbas from saying good bye to Abu Dharr, and did not desist from doing so until Ali struck his animal of riding and was about to strike him also.

He was presumptuous on very delicate occasions. He abused and turned out of the capital members of various deputations which had come from other places. Uthman heard and saw what he did but said nothing. He openly suggested to Uthman to kill Ammar.

In many other matters also Marwan was much more presumptuous. He spoke impudently to Na`ela, Uthman's wife, in the presence of her husband, but Uthman kept silent. This incident was as follows:

Na`ela was a wise woman. She disliked Marwan's policies very much and repeatedly suggested to her husband to act on the advice of Ali. When Uthman delivered a speech before the representatives of Egypt, Basra and Kufa he promised them to accede to their demands and then returned to his house, Marwan said to him: "O Commander of the Faithful: "Should I speak or keep quiet?" Thereupon Uthman's wife said: "You better keep quiet. I swear by God that you people will kill Uthman and make his children orphans. It is not proper that Uthman should go back on and violate the promises made by him". Marwan said to her: "What have you to do with these matters. By God, your father who is now dead did not know how to perform ablution correctly".

Evidently when Marwan could speak in such an impudent manner to the caliph's wife in his presence one should not be surprised on his having written a letter with the name of the caliph without his knowledge.

During the period of Uthman's caliphate also people knew how Marwan misbehaved towards him and how presumptuous he was in dealing with the caliph. The people did not conceal his presumptuousness but reprimanded him and also warned Uthman against him. Even then Uthman did not disregard the suggestions made by Marwan. Representing the views of the public Imam Ali had said to Uthman: "You will be pleased with Marwan and he will be satisfied with you only when he deprives you of your faith and reason and drives you to any place he likes like a tame and weak camel".

Marwan's presumptuousness also encouraged others to misbehave towards Uthman. We have already narrated in the foregoing pages the story of Jabalah ibn Umrah Sa`edi. It was the presumptuousness of Marwan which encouraged Jabalah to tell Uthman: "I swear by God that I shall put this chain round your neck unless you turn away your wicked kinsmen from around you".

Dr. Taha Husayn may well be asked whether this presumptuousness of Jabalah is more against reason or that of Marwan who wrote a letter as if it was written by Uthman when he was a favourite son-in-law of Uthman and enjoyed great influence on him!

1. In the book entitled "Abdullah bin Saba" (in three volumes) written recently by an erudite scholar namely Allama Murtaza al-Askari (which has fortunately been translated into Urdu, English and Persian as well) justice has been done to the subject in a very competent manner and the veil has been removed from the ambiguous face of this mythical person who has been the real hero of the concocted stories written against the Shia during the span of the last thirteen centuries.

In this book Allama al-Askari has, as a true researcher adopted a correct method for showing the real face of this mythical personality. He has commenced his study with the well-known documents like Kamil Ibn Athir, Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Tarikh Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Asakir and Zahabi and has endeavoured to find out the source of this story. After complete research and study he has found that it is now more than a thousand years that the historians have quoted the story of Abdullah bin Saba and his activities from a person named Saif bin Umar. Many of them like Tabari have quoted from directly and other writers of recent, past and present have quoted this story from Tabari and other historians mentioned above.

Thereafter he has directed his research to the identification of Saif bin Umar because all talks about Abdullah bin Saba culminate in him. As a result of this research he has introduced Saif bin Umar to us in the following terms in the light of clear documentary proof.

He was a person who died after 170 A.H. and handed down two books namely "al-Futuh-wal-Raddah" and "al-Jamal-wa-Masiru Ayesha-wa Ali".

The study of the particulars of Saif in books on biographies and of what has been written about him by scholars from 3rd century upto 10th century Hijira shows that he was a forger, a writer of mythical stories and a coiner of Hadith who was sometimes referred to as "Saif bin Umar Zindiq" (Atheist or Dualist) as well.

Study of his two books also confirms the fact that he possessed those qualities, because most of his narrations do not tally with any historical documents and have a perfect air of fiction.

All the documentary evidence collected in this behalf goes to show that Saif bin Umar created a number figures and it is also not improbable that he was commissioned to do so. One of these fictitious figures is this very Abdullah bin Saba.

In this manner we find with the deepest regret that this man (Abdullah bin Saba) who has, for more than one thousand years, served as a pretext for propaganda against the Shia and has been introduced as a Jew and the founder of Shi'ite Islam has had in fact no real existence and was the creation of the brain of a forger and a visionary person named Saif bin

Umar!

We invite the enlightened conscience of the Muslim sages for arbitration and ask: Is it proper that a religion whose root has been watered by the purest sources of inspiration viz. the Family of the holy Prophet should be subjected to such calumnies and unholy remarks may be passed against it on the authority of fictitious stories without any research or study? Is this the justice to which the holy Qur'an invites us to adhere? And is this the meaning of the commandment which we have been given regarding acceptance of statements?

“O faithful! Whenever a sinner or a libertine brings you a news, verify it, lest you may subject a community to adversity on account of ignorance and repent thereafter.” (Sura al-Hujurat:6)

Further details on the subject may be a reference made to Allama Murtaza Askari's masterpiece research work “Abdullah bin Saba”.

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