

Truth Behind The Fiction

[Comments by Doctor Hamid Hafni Dawood, Professor in Arabic Language in Cairo University.](#)

The above article was written by a learned Sunni man, who has broken the barrier of fanaticism and quarrelling for the sake of quarrelling.

The 1300th Birthday of Islam has been celebrated. During this time some of our learned writers have accused Shi'ahs of not having Islamic views. Those writers influenced public opinion against Shi'ahs and created deep gaps between Muslims. In spite of wisdom and learning, the enemies of the Shi'ah followed their self chosen beliefs and partiality, covering the truth, and accusing Shi'ahs of being superstitious etc. Hence Islamic Science suffered much, as Shi'ah views were suppressed.

As a result of these accusations, the loss to Islamic Science was greater than the loss suffered by the Shi'ah themselves because the source of this jurisprudence, though rich and fruitful, was neglected, resulting in limited knowledge.

Alas, in the past our learned men were prejudiced, otherwise we would have benefited from many Shi'ah views. Anyone who wishes to do research in Islamic Jurisprudence must consider Shi'ah sources as well as those of Sunni.

Was not the Shi'ah's leader. al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (d. 148 H.L.), the teacher of two Sunni Imams? i.e. Abu Hanifah al-No'man Bin al-Thabet (d. 150 H.L.) and–Abu ' Abdullah Malik Bin Anas (d. 179 H.L.).

Abu Hanifah said, "Except for the two years No'man would have starved," referring to the two years he had benefited from the knowledge of al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq.

Malik also confessed straight forwardly, that he had not met anyone learned in Islamic Jurisprudence than al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq.

Yet so called learned men, unfortunately disregard the rules for research to suit their own ends. Hence knowledge is not fully disclosed to them, and they create a wider gap between Muslims. Ahmed Ameen was one of those deprived of the light of knowledge, remaining in darkness, even though the candle of Shi'ah was always shining and there was no other light.

History has recorded this stain on the robe of Ahmed Ameen and his friends, who blindly followed one special sect- Madhhab. Of the many mistakes made by him, the biggest is told in the story of 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ. This is one of the tales told in order to accuse Shi'ahs of heresy and foregoing events.

The great contemporary researcher, the Reverend al- Sayyid Murtada al-'Askari, in his book 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ, has proved with substantial evidence, that 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ was fictitious, and it is therefore a greater lie to say he was the founder of Shi'ism.

Al-Sayyid Murtada al-'Askari has been deeply involved in history and has proved from Sunni sources that the enemies of Shi'ah are false.

From the early days of Islam up to the present, stories like those about 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ told by Saif Bin 'Omar, were believed as being from reliable sources, but in this book extensive research has been made concerning these stories. in order to facilitate the finding of the truth about them.

God has decreed that some learned men disclose the truth regardless of the blame they may get. The pioneer in this field is the honorable author of this book, 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 remained unchanged and unaltered for centuries like God's Revelations.

The honorable writer, with much evidence, has stripped the veil or ambiguity from those historical events. and in the best way disclosed the truth, to such an extent that some facts seem frightful. Of course some of them appear to be incredible, for they contradict the beliefs of a lifetime, and our religious legacy — centuries old. But we have to obey the truth no matter how difficult they appear. "The truth is the best to be followed."

To know what it is all about, one has to read this book and scrutinize the events of which there are different opinions; such as:

"The Army of Osama."

"The death of the honored Prophet."

"The story of Saqifa."

All of which have been examined by the author.

When the messenger of God was on his deathbed, some men left the Army of Osama without permission, and went back to Medina with the hope of gaining some privileged office. The author

introduces these people to us. On his deathbed the Prophet wanted to make a will, but some people ignored this wish, and called it the ravings of a dying man. Perhaps they were afraid of the possibility of his introducing al-Imam 'Ali as his successor.

The author discloses the truth about these events. What 'Omar had in his mind to deny the death of the Holy Prophet? Why was he threatening to put to death, those who were spreading the news of the Prophet's death?

During the time when al-Imam 'Ali and the cousins of the Prophet, his uncle 'Abbas and the elders were washing the corpse of the Prophet, 'Omar and Abu 'Obeydah hurriedly came to Saqifa (a room with a roofed veranda) and demanded the people to give their allegiance to Abu Bakr. Yet if they had waited until the burial of the Prophet was over, 'Ali was the only candidate for the successor of the Prophet, and Bani-Hashim knew not anyone else.

The author, under the three titles previously mentioned, has sifted truth from falsehood, good from bad, until he has reached the obvious reality; and because of his research, the doors of deception and fraud are closed for ever-more to the plotters.

Other subjects in this book show the truth so clearly, that in the very near future, a vast reform in the history of Islam will come about.

I would like to put three questions to the readers before ending my article.

1. Can a close companion of the Prophet make a mistake?
2. Can we criticize his work?
3. Can we say that the respected companion of the

Prophet is a hypocrite or an unbeliever?

The answers to the first two are positive, but the answer to the third is in the negative — not because I am biased and am saying something against logic — no I have a rational reason and a logical one, for unbelief and hypocrisy are from the heart, and no one except God, knows the contents of our hearts and the secrets of people. I am pleased to pay great respect to this book and its honorable author, the very learned researcher Sayyid Murtada Askari. I am also pleased with Mr. Murtada Rizvi Kashmiri (The publisher) who has produced this book in a pleasing form. He has fulfilled his duty, a service to Islam. This responsibility will carry much weight in the revival of true Islamic history.

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Cairo — Egypt

Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawood

Comments By Al-Sheikh Jawad Mughniah – A Shi'ah Scholar

"Everything in this world is changing, except the writings against Shi'ah. To every beginning there is an end, except the accusations against Shi'ah. Every verdict is supported by evidence, except the one against Shi'ah. Why? Are Shi'ahs trouble makers or violent agitators, who only want to disturb people?"

Here is the answer.

In the second century of the Islamic Era (H.L.) lived a man called Saif Bin 'Omar al-Tamimi.

He wrote two books:-

1. al-Fatooh Wal Reddah.
2. al-Jamal Wa Maseeri 'Ayesah Wa 'Ali.

He served two purposes in his two books:-

1. Inventing stories without foundation.
2. Recording events in such a way that truth appeared to be false, and false appeared to be truth.

He invented Companions (Sahabi) for the Prophet such as So'eer, Hazhaz, Ott, Homaiza, etc. He recorded his stories in such a way that they appeared to have been told by the people who met these Sahabies.

Among his fictional heroes is 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ, who was supposed to have related tales about Shi'ah; all stories against Shi'ahs, recorded by all historians originate from Saif.

After Saif, the historians accepted his books as the gospel truth. Tabari was the first historian who relied upon Saif.

Other historians, Ibn Athir and Ibn 'Asaker, among them, followed Tabari blindly.

Saif invented stories and muddled authentic events but the only source of all his stories is his own books 'al-Fatooh' and 'al-Jamal.'

The book 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ proves that the above statement is true and its knowledgeable author's task, is to show the truth as it was, without gilding the lily. Not a single learned man can deny, or doubt, anything which Sayyid Murtada al-'Askari has written because the book is based on logical proofs and no one can deny logic and axioms.

I have discussed 'Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ with many people, but I answered them as previous learned men have done, except that I made it easier for them to understand, that I believed in the existence of

‘Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ. Now, the very learned al-Sayyid Murtada al-‘Askari, has changed the story completely, and proved that ‘Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ is fictitious. I may say that this is the first Arabic book to have examined history scientifically.

The author has done a great service not only for religion, knowledge and Shi‘ahs but for Islam. He has closed the door to those who wanted to disturb Muslim unity, and to those Sunnis who get courage from their false stories. Today their first and only evidence, the stories of Bin Saba and Bin Sauda invented by Saif, have been proved to be false.

Finally, may I point out that this book is to be published

and sold at a low price, in order that all Muslims can know the story. It is to be translated into many languages.

Lebanon,

Muhammad Jawad Mughniah

Comments By Professor James Robinson – D.Litt.,

D.D.Glasgow, U.K.

Dear Sayyid Murtada al-‘Askari,

It was in the middle of last August that I received from you the copies of your two works, ‘Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ wa- Asatir ukhra ,and Khamsun wa-mi'at Sahabi mukhtalq, al- Qism al-awwal. At the time I wrote to you to say that I am now aged and not in perfect health, therefore I would need time to study these books.

It has taken me even longer than I had imagined; but I have read the books twice with great interest, and although I should have like to write at some length, I feel I must write to express my admiration of the methods adopted and the careful scholarship shown in the two books. At my age I cannot look forward with confidence to being able to write and so I feel I must delay no longer in case I find I am unable to write.

In the first book I liked the detailed account of the conventional story of ‘Abdullah Bin Sabaؓ and the Sabaiyya, followed by a valuable discussion of writers (ancient and modern) in East and West and the sources on which they depended. The table on p.57 is very helpful in showing the main sources of information about Saif and his traditions and how later writers depended on one or other of these.

Then comes a list of a number of authorities who expressed opinions on the worth of Saif's traditions, from Abu Dawud (d. 275 — the text wrongly says 316) to Ibn Hajar (d. 852). As they all speak critically, using such words and "weak," "his traditions are abandoned," "Worthless," "liar," "suspected of being Zindiq," etc., they agree in asserting the unreliability, or even falseness of the traditions.

This is an overwhelming argument. In studying the opinions of authorities on different traditionists, I have noted that all do not agree. But here there is no disagreement which makes one wonder why later writers have been so ready to accept Saif's material.

But I should like to make a remark about Tabari who has no hesitation in quoting Saif. 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 like yourself to distinguish between the genuine and the false.

In discussing a number of topics mentioned by Saif, the argument is conducted in a very effective manner, first giving Saif's account and then comparing it with accounts given by others. This careful comparison deals both with the material and the sanad, and it is shown that Saif 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 Saif has invented them. This serious accusation is a reasonable assumption by comparing Saif with others.

It is pointed out that Saif 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 Saif'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 Saif's information about Ibn Saba and the Saba'iyya is quite unreliable.

The author suggests that some orientalists have based their studies on Saif's information, matters such as the huge number of people killed in the early Muslim wars, the idea that an unknown Jew, Ibn Saba⁹, could have been the influence to lead astray companions of the Prophet from their faith, and have been the leading influence in stirring up the people to revolt against 'Uthman and cause his murder, and stir up the fighting engaged in by 'Ali with Talha and al-Zubayr.

This may be true of some, but it has not been true of all. This is apparent from the articles on 'Abdullah Bin Saba⁹ in the first and second editions of the Encyclopedia of Islam. Saif spends much time manufacturing heroes from Tamim, the tribe to which Saif traced his genealogy, but Sir William Muir long ago told how Tamim had to submit to the forces of the early Caliphate at the time of what is called the Apostasy.

Sir Thomas Arnold may also be noted as drawing attention to the fact that the early conquests were not

so much for the purpose of spreading the faith as for extending the sphere of Muslim rule.

In the second book attention is drawn to the fact that Saif 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 these legends. There is discussion of Zindiq and of Manichaeism. Party spirit is said to have continued from the Prophet's time, till that of the 'Abbasids.'

Saif 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 B. 'Amr, the subtribe to which Saif traced his origin.

Saif mentioned men of Mudar as leaders of battles which were led by men of other tribes, his fictitious leaders some-times 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 skilful in his forgeries that they were accepted as genuine history.

This is a brief summary of some of the wrongs of which Saif was guilty. The aim part of the book goes into details about twenty three men, giving examples of Saif's material and showing how he differed from genuine authorities not only in material but also in sanad by using names of non-existing people.

The work is done with great detail presenting overwhelming argument against Saif's reliability in spite of the notable writers who include information in their writings. Two of Saif's books are discussed showing that they are as unreliable as other material later authors have quoted from him.

This is a most penetrating study undertaken with keen perception and a high quality of criticism. I am very grateful for having had the opportunity of spending quite a considerable time in studying the arguments which appeal to me as fully convincing, and I am sure that all who study these books with an open mind will readily appreciate the force of the arguments.

With many thanks for sending me these books, and

apologize for having, on account of age and other infirmities, been so long in replying.

Yours sincerely,

James Robinson

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