

?Who was Ibn Saba

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The mercenary writers whose goal is to split the Muslims allege that a Yemenite Jew from Sana', Abdullah Ibn Saba (also called Ibn al-Sawda), adopted Islam during the reign of the third Caliph 'Uthman. They allege that Ibn Saba, through some doctrines that he spread among Muslims, was a big factor in causing the revolt against 'Uthman.

The following are some of the doctrines attributed to Ibn Saba.

(1). This alleged Jew invented the idea that the Prophet Muhammad would return before the Day of Judgement. He based his allegation on the return of Jesus, saying: "If Jesus is going to come back, Muhammad will also return because he is more important than Jesus."

He also quoted the following verse from the Qur'an to support his allegation: "Certainly the one who revealed the Qur'an to you shall return you." These writers say that the Shi'ite school borrowed from this imaginary Jew the idea that the Prophet would return.

(2). Ibn Saba is the one who propagated the idea that Ali Ibn Abi Talib is the executor and successor of the Messenger of God. He said that there were a thousand prophets before Muhammad, and that each prophet had an executor after him, and that Ali is the executor of the Prophet. Furthermore, Ibn Saba said that the three caliphs who ruled after the Prophet were usurpers of the Islamic rule.

(3). Ibn Saba is the one who instigated the two prominent companions of the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Dharr and Am-mar Ibn Yasir, against 'Uthman. The mercenary writers also allege that this imaginary Jew met Abu Dharr in Damascus, and that he introduced him to the idea of prohibiting treasuring gold and silver. He also said that the revenue from Zakat and land tax belongs to the Muslims rather than to God.

(4). Ibn Saba persuaded the men who participated in killing 'Uthman to start the battle of Basra (at night) between Imam Ali's camp and the camp of the three leaders (A'ishah, Talhah, and Zubayr). He wanted to make each of the two armies accuse the other of starting the battle. Let us discuss each of these allegations in order

The Return of the Prophet Muhammad

The attribution to Ibn Saba of the idea that the Prophet would return is ridiculous. It shows the

ignorance of the mercenary writers who write such allegations. They misunderstand the history of Islam. Had these mercenaries studied Islamic history carefully, they would have known that the first one who declared the idea of the return of the Messenger of God was 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab.

Muslim historians agree that 'Umar stood at the Mosque of the Prophet when the Prophet passed away and said:

"There are hypocrite men who allege that the Messenger of God has died. Certainly the Messenger of God did not die, but he went to his Lord as Moses, son of 'Imran, went to his Lord (for receiving the Heavenly commandments). By God, Muhammad will return as Moses returned, and he shall sever the hands and legs of the men who alleged that the Messenger of Allah has died." (Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, part 2, page 655) We cannot say that 'Umar took this idea from Abdullah Ibn Saba or any other person. Ibn Saba did not even exist at that time, not even in the imagination of Sayf bin 'Umar al-Tamimi, who invented the entire allegation.

The Shi'ite school of thought does not consider the Prophet's return a part of Islamic belief. If any Muslim believes in this, it would only be logical to say that the source of this doctrine is the .second Caliph's speech on the day the Messenger of God died, rather than Ibn Saba

The Doctrine of Ali's Executorship

The dividers of Muslims alleged that Ibn Saba is the one who invented the doctrine of Ali's executorship. Yet history testifies that the Messenger of God himself is the one who declared that Ali would be his executor. Imam Ali reported the following: When the Qur'anic verse: "And warn your closest relatives"

was revealed, the Messenger of God called me and said:

"Ali, certainly Allah commanded me to warn my closest relatives, and I feel the difficulty of this mission. I know that when I confront them with this warning, I will not like their response." The Prophet invited the members of his clan to dine with him on a small amount of food and little milk. There were forty of them. After they ate, the Prophet spoke to them:

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

No one accepted the invitation, and I said: "Messenger of God, I shall be your assistant."

He held my neck and said to them:

"This is my brother, executor, and successor. Listen to him and obey him." They laughed, saying to Abu Talib: He (Muhammad) commanded you to listen to your son and to obey him.

(al-Tabari, al-Ta'rikh, part 2, pages 319-21)

This hadith was reported by Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Mardawayh, and Al-Bayhaqi in his book al-Dala'il. This was also reported by a number of historians including Abu al-Fida and Ibn al-Athir. In addition, Muhammad Hussein Haykal recorded it in his book Hayat Muhammad (first edition). Here we should ask the following question: Imam Ali reported that the Messenger of God is the one who granted him the office of executorship, brotherhood, and successorship. Sayf Ibn 'Umar reported that the idea of the executorship of Ali had come from a Jew called Abdullah Ibn Saba. We should ask the members of the Takfeer University (who call everyone who disagrees with them "Kafir"-unbeliever) the following question: Do you believe Imam Ali's report or Sayf Ibn 'Umar's?

Sayf was accused by prominent Sunnite scholars of weakness, forgery, and heresy. Of course, we should not expect any true Muslim to choose the report of a liar such as Sayf Ibn 'Umar and reject the report of the Imam of the faithfuls, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the brother of the Prophet. The Messenger of God once said to Ali: "Would you not be pleased to be to me like Aaron was to Moses, but there shall be no Prophet after me?" (al-Bukhari in his Sahih reported this through his channel to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, part 6, page 3). Muslim also reported this in his Sahih, part .15, page 176

Hadith Al-Ghadir

Do the mercenary writers who endeavor to spread hostility among Muslims forget that while returning from his farewell pilgrimage, and in the presence of over a hundred thousand pilgrims, the Messenger of God declared: "Do I not have more right over the believers than they have over themselves?"

"They answered:

'Yes, Messenger of God.' "The Prophet held up the hand of Ali and said: 'Whoever I am his Mawla (leader), this Ali is his Mawla. God, love whoever loves him, and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him.' " No Muslim would doubt that the Messenger of God is the leader of all Muslims from all generations.

The Prophet in his statement granted Ali the same position as his when he said that Ali is the leader of everyone who follows the Prophet. This declaration which was reported by about a hundred companions does not just indicate that Ali is the executor of the Prophet, but also indicates that Ali takes the place of the Messenger in the leadership of all Muslims.

However, these mercenaries still allow themselves to say that the belief that Ali was the executor of the Messenger had come through a Jew who declared his Islam during the days of 'Uthman.

The Mercenaries Try To Defame The Two Beloved Companions Of The Prophet, Abu Dharr And Ammar Ibn Yasir The mercenary workers did not even hesitate to attack the outstanding companions, Abu Dharr and Ammar. They said that Abu Dharr and Ammar met the imaginary Jew Ibn Saba, were affected by his propaganda, and thus turned against 'Uthman. They say this while history testifies that Abu Dharr said to 'Uthman in the presence of Ka'b Al-Ahbar:

"Do not be satisfied that people do no harm to others. They should try to assist one another. It could be that the person who pays Zakat should do more. He should assist his neighbors and Muslim brothers and be generous to his relatives." Ka'b Al-Ahbar said:

"Whoever performs his duty would be free of any other additional charitable spending." Abu Dharr immediately took his cane and hit Ka'b on the neck injuring him and said: "Son of a Jewish lady, are you trying to teach us our religion?"

With such a firmness in religion which made Abu Dharr hit and injure Ka'b (who was highly respected by 'Umar and 'Uthman) because he tried to give a verdict in the Islamic religion, it is inconceivable that Abu Dharr would learn from the imaginary Ibn Saba, who never met 'Uthman or any other caliph before him.

The dividers of Muslims do not hesitate to attack Abu Dharr and Ammar by saying that they were affected by Ibn Saba. However, we should not forget that by their attacking two prominent companions, they actually are attacking the Messenger of God who attested to their purity and righteousness. Ibn Majah, in his authentic Sunan, reported that the Messenger of God said: "Certainly Allah commanded me to love four persons and informed me that He loves them."

The companions asked the Prophet:

"Messenger of God, who are these four persons?"

The Prophet said:

"Ali is from them (repeating that three times), Abu Dharr, Salman, and Al-Miqdad." (part 1, page 52, hadith No.149) Al-Tirmidhi, in his authentic Sunan, reported that the Messenger said: "Every prophet was given by God seven righteous companions. I was given fourteen righteous companions." He included in them Ammar and Al-Miqdad. (part 5, page 329, hadith 3877) Al -

Tirmidhi also reported that the Prophet said:

"Heaven has not shaded, nor has the earth carried a truer person than Abu Dharr. He walks on

earth with the immaterialistic attitude of Jesus, son of Mary." (part 5, page 334, hadith 3889)

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

"I was sitting in the house of the Prophet and Ammar asked to see him. The Prophet said 'Welcome the good and the purified.'" Ibn Majah also reported that 'A'ishah reported that the Messenger of God said "Whenever Ammar is given two alternatives, he always chooses the most righteous of the two."

Al-Tirmidhi, in his authentic Sunan, reported that the Messenger of God witnessed Ammar and his two parents tortured in Makkah. The Prophet said to them: "Members of Yasir's family, be patient. Your destination is paradise. (part 5, page 233) Thus, Ammar and his parents were the first people to be declared by the Prophet to be dwellers of Paradise. Here we should say: When a Muslim knows that the Prophet has commended these two important companions so highly, and if he is a believer in the truthfulness of Muhammad, he does not allow himself to insult these two companions. Such an insult discredits the Prophet.

We find that the hostility of Sayf Ibn 'Umar Al-Tamimi, who lived during the second century after the Prophet, and the hostility of his students towards the Shi'ites motivated them to spread cheap propaganda. Sayf knew that attributing the revolt against 'Uthman to the work of Ibn Saba contradicted known historical facts which show that the two companions, Abu Dharr and Ammar, were opposed to 'Uthman 's ever coming to power. Because Sayf knew of their opposition to 'Uthman, he tried to smear their reputations by adding the names of the two prominent companions to the list of students of the imaginary Jew.

If Ibn Saba ever existed he, according to the tale of Sayf Ibn 'Umar, had declared his Islam after 'Uthman came to power. Abu Dharr and Ammar Ibn Yasir, on the other hand, had been opposed to 'Uthman's caliphate before he came to power. The two companions were followers of the

Imam Ali. They were firm believers that he was appointed by the Prophet to be his successor. Since this was their belief before Ibn Saba's existence, Sayf's story about their being influenced by Ibn Saba is unfounded and untrue. Thus, in order to clear the third caliph from all the accusations pertaining to his ill-management of the Islamic treasury, Sayf accused the revoltors of being students of Ibn Saba. He then completed his story by adding the two companions to the class of Ibn Saba's students, intentionally overlooking the fact that the two companions belong to the first successful class of the school of the Prophet Muhammad. They were among the important companions who were honored by the Prophet. In the end, Sayf was led by his untrue story to reject the testimony of the Prophet. By this, Sayf had .disproved his whole tale

Who Is Sayf Ibn 'Umar?

The books that deal with the reporters of hadiths inform us that Sayf was a well-known liar.

Ibn Ma'in (died in 233 AH) said: Sayf is weak.

Abu Hatim (died in 277 AH) said: Sayf's hadith is rejected.

Al-Nisa'i (died in 303 AH) said: Sayf is weak.

Abu Dawud (died in 216 AH) said: Sayf is nothing. Some of his hadiths were conveyed and the majority of them are denied. Ibn Hibban said: Sayf attributed fabricated hadiths to good reporters. He was accused of being a heretic.

Al-Darqutni (died in 385 AH) said: Sayf is weak. Al-Hakim Al-Nisaburi (died in 405 AH) said: Sayf is accused of being a heretic. Ibn Abd Al-Barr (died in 462 AH) said in his writing about Al-Qa'qa': Sayf reported that Al-Qa'qa' said: I attended the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Abd Al-Barr also said: Ibn Abi Hatim said: Sayf is weak. Thus, what was conveyed of the presence of Al-Qa'qa' at the death of the Prophet is rejected.

Ibn Hajar (died in 850 AH) said: Sayf's hadith is weak. Al-Suyuti (died in 900 AH) said after conveying a hadith: "Many reporters of this hadith are weak and the weakest among them is Sayf." (Sayyid Murtada Al-Askari, Abdullah Ibn Saba, pages 27-28)

I should mention that Al-Askari had a very distinguished achievement. He proved beyond any doubt, in his book Abdullah Ibn Saba, that Ibn Saba never existed, and that he was invented by Sayf Ibn 'Umar.

Was Ibn Saba the Organizer of the Revolt Against 'Uthman in Basra, Kufa, and Egypt? Should a reader of Islamic history be liberated from his emotions towards or against the Third Caliph, he can be assured that the call for a revolt against the Caliph did not start in Basra, Kufa, Syria, or Egypt.

The agitation against the Caliph started in Madinah by prominent and influential individuals. The most prominent among them were 'A'ishah, the mother of believers, Talhah, Zubayr, Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf, Amr Ibn al-As, and Ammar Ibn Yasir. The Third Caliph, 'Uthman, was given the allegiance of the people with the stipulation that he would manage the affairs of the nation according to the Book of God and the teachings of the Prophet. He was to follow the method of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, if there was no instruction from the Qur'an or the Prophet.

It is well-known that the first two caliphs lived very simple lives. They did not give members of their clans a preference over other people, nor did they appoint any of their relatives to prominent positions in the State. 'Uthman, on the other hand, had his own opinions. He allowed himself to live luxuriously. He put members of his clan in prominent and strong positions in the State, preferring them over other Muslims. However, his relatives were not righteous

'Uthman thought that his preference towards them was in accordance with the Book of God because the Qur'an urges people to be kind to their relatives. This method of handling the affairs of the State did not please many companions. They found it extravagant and extreme.

They criticized the Caliph for the following things:

(1). He brought his uncle Al-Hakam Ibn Al-As, (son of Umayyah, son of Abd Shams), to Madinah after the Prophet had exiled him from Madinah. It was reported that Al-Hakam used to hide and listen to the words of the Prophet as he spoke secretly to prominent companions and circulated what he heard. He used to imitate and ridicule the Prophet in the way he walked. The Prophet one time looked at him while he was being imitated and said: "This way you will be." Al-Hakam started immediately shaking and continued that way until he died. One day, while sitting with some of his companions, the Messenger of God said, "A cursed man will enter the room." Shortly thereafter, Al-Hakam entered. He was the cursed man. (Yusuf Ibn Abd

Al-Barr, Al-Isti'ab, part one, pages 359-360)

(2). After bringing him to Madinah, 'Uthman gave his uncle Al-Hakam 300,000 dirhams.

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

(4). The Caliph appointed his foster brother Abdullah Ibn Sa'd governor of Egypt. At that time, Egypt was the largest province in the Muslim State. Ibn Sa'd had declared his Islam and moved from Makkah to Madinah. The Prophet enlisted him as a recorder of the revelation. However,

Ibn Sa'd then deserted the faith and returned to Makkah. He used to say: "I shall reveal equal to what God revealed to Muhammad." When Makkah was conquered, the Prophet ordered the Muslims to kill Ibn Sa'd. He was to be killed even if he was found tying himself to the cloth of the Ka'bah. Ibn Sa'd hid himself at the house of 'Uthman. When the situation calmed down, 'Uthman brought Ibn Sa'd to the Prophet and informed him that he had put Ibn Sa'd under his protection. The Prophet remained silent for a long while, hoping that one of those present would kill Ibn Sa'd before he honored 'Uthman's request. The companions, however, did not understand what the Prophet meant by his long silence. Since no one moved to kill Ibn Sa'd, the Prophet approved the protection of 'Uthman.

(5). The Caliph 'Uthman appointed Al-Walid Ibn 'Uqbah (one of his Umayyad relatives), governor of Kufa after dismissing the previous governor, the famous companion Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas. Sa'd was a famous marksman known for combating enemies of Islam in front of the Prophet at the Battle of Uhud. The Prophet prayed for him saying:

"Lord, I ask Thee to make his arrow accurate as I ask Thee to respond to his prayer." Walid's past during the time of the Prophet was not honorable. The Qur'an discredited him and called him a transgressor. For instance, the Messenger sent him to Banu Al-Mustalaq to collect their Zakat. Walid witnessed from a distance the Mustalaqites coming toward him on their horses. He became frightened due to a previous hostility between the Mustalaqites and him. He returned to the Messenger of God and informed him that the Mustalaqites wanted to kill him. This was not true. However, Walid's information infuriated the Medinite Muslims, and they

wanted to attack the Mustalaqites. At this time, the following revelation came down:

"Oh you believe, if a transgressor comes to you with news, try to verify it, lest you inflict damage on people unwittingly; then you may consequently regret your hasty action. (ch. 49, v.6)

Walid continued in his non-Islamic way for the rest of his life. He used to drink wine and several witnesses testified to the Caliph that they had witnessed Walid drunk while leading a congregational prayer. Upon the testimony of good witnesses, Walid was lashed eighty times and was dismissed by the Caliph. The Caliph was expected to replace this transgressor with a good companion of the Prophet but, instead, he replaced Walid with Sa'id Ibn al-As, one of his Umayyad relatives.

The Companions of Madinah Wrote To the Companions outside Madinah Al -Tabari reported that when people witnessed what 'Uthman had done, the companions living in Madinah wrote to the companions living in other provinces: "You have left Madinah to endeavor in the way of God and promote the religion of Muhammad. The religion of Muhammad has been corrupted. Come back and straighten the religion of Muhammad." The companions came from every (province and killed the Caliph. (Al-Tabari, al-Ta'rikh, part 4, page 367

Talhah

Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah was one of the biggest agitators against 'Uthman. It is reported that Imam Ali said to Talhah: "I ask you in the name of Allah to deter people from attacking 'Uthman." Talhah retorted: "No, by God, until the Umayyad returns to the people their rights." 'Uthman was the head of the Umayyads. (Al-Tabari, page 405) 'Uthman was besieged in Madinah while Imam Ali was in Khaybar. The Imam came to Madinah and found people gathering at the residence of Talhah, one of the influential people in Madinah. 'Uthman came to Imam Ali and said:

"You owe me my Islamic right and the right of brotherhood and relationship. If I have none of these rights and if I were in the pre-Islamic era, it would still be a shame for a descendant of

Abd-Manaf (of whom both Ali and 'Uthman are descendants) to let a man of Taym (Talhah) rob us of our authority."

Imam Ali said to 'Uthman:

"You shall be informed of what I do." The Imam went to Talhah's house. There were a lot of people there. Imam Ali spoke to Talhah saying: "Talhah, what is this predicament in which you have fallen?" Talhah said:

"Abu al-Hasan, it is too late." The Imam went to the treasury and ordered people to open it. Unable to find the key, he broke the door and distributed some of the money among the people. People then deserted Talhah. 'Uthman was very pleased. Talhah came to 'Uthman and said: "Amir Al-Mu'minin, I tried to do something but Allah prevented me from doing it." 'Uthman said: "By God, you did not come as repentor; you came only because you were defeated. May God punish you for your intention." (Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil, part 3, page 84).

Al-Tabari reported in his history that when 'Uthman was besieged, Ibn Abbas came to see him. 'Uthman said: "Ibn Abbas, come with me." He made him listen to some of the conversations among the besiegers outside the house. They witnessed Talhah pass and ask the people: "Where is Ibn 'Udays (the leader of the Egyptian revoltors)?" Ibn 'Udays came and conferred secretly with Talhah. Ibn 'Udays then returned to his group and said: "Do not let anyone enter or leave 'Uthman's house." 'Uthman said to Ibn Abbas: "This is an order from Talhah. God, I ask Thee to take care of Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah. He instigated these people against me. By God, I hope his share of the caliphate is zero and that (his blood is shed)." (Al-Tabari, part 4, page 379)

Aishah'

Talhah was not the only collaborator against 'Uthman. His cousin, 'A'ishah, was collaborating and campaigning against 'Uthman as well. She was hopeful that Talhah would be the successor to 'Uthman. She said to Ibn Abbas while both were performing the pilgrimage: "Ibn Abbas, you are endowed with an effective tongue. I ask you in the name of God not to try to scatter people away from Talhah by putting doubt in their minds. The situation of 'Uthman has become obvious. People have come from many locations for something big that is about to happen. I know that Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah has acquired the keys of the treasury houses. If Talhah succeeds 'Uthman, he will follow the path of his cousin Abu Bakr . . ." (Al-Tabari, page 407)

Al-Baladhuri in his history (Ansab Al-Ashraf) said that when the situation became extremely grave, 'Uthman ordered Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam and Abdul Rahman Ibn Attab Ibn Asid to try to

dissuade 'A'ishah from campaigning against him. They went to her while she was preparing to leave for pilgrimage and said:

"We pray that you stay in Madinah and that Allah may through you save this man ('Uthman)."

'A'ishah said:

"I have prepared my means of transportation and vowed to perform the pilgrimage. By God, I shall not honor your request." Marwan and Ibn Attab stood up and Marwan said: "Bishr built the fire to stir up the people against me; and when the fire became large he left the scene."

'A'ishah said:

"Marwan, I wish that he ('Uthman) was in one of my sacks, and that I could carry him. I would then throw him into the sea." (Al-Baladhuri, part 1 of Vol.4, page 75) Certainly the revolution against the Third Caliph started in Madinah, not in Basra, Kufa, or Egypt. The prominent people of Madinah are the ones who wrote to those outside of Madinah and instigated them against 'Uthman. To say that a Jew named Ibn Saba is the one who inspired people to revolt against the Caliph is not logical unless we say he is the one who inspired 'A'ishah, Talhah, and Zubayr to revolt.

But those who speak of Ibn Saba and his role do not include 'A'ishah and the people of her position as followers of Ibn Saba. The alleged role of Ibn Saba, in the revolt against 'Uthman, would also be credible if we were to say that Ibn Saba was the one who persuaded the Caliph to follow a path contrary to that of the first two Caliphs, and that he was the one who advised 'Uthman to give Islamic funds to his relatives and appoint them governors of Islamic provinces. The manner in which 'Uthman conducted the affairs of the Islamic State gave 'A'ishah, along with Talhah, Zubayr, and others, reason to instigate the Muslims against 'Uthman. However, those who attribute the revolution against 'Uthman to Ibn Saba do not accept that Ibn Saba was the one who advised 'Uthman to follow that wrong policy.

They are correct, because that alleged Jew never existed except in the imagination of Sayf Ibn 'Umar Al-Tamimi. It is amazing that such an important role in the revolution against 'Uthman is attributed to a man whose existence has no evidence. Yet historians forget the important role which was played by a person well known in Islamic history, namely: Amr Ibn Al-As. He was more intelligent and more clever than any Jew that ever existed in that era. Amr had all the reasons to conspire against the Caliph and he had all the abilities to instigate most of the Medinite personalities against him.

Amr Ibn Al-As

Amr Ibn Al-As was one of the most dangerous agitators against 'Uthman. He was the governor of Egypt during the reign of the second Caliph. However, the Third Caliph dismissed him and

replaced him with his foster brother Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abi Sarh. Amr became extremely hostile towards 'Uthman. He returned to Madinah and started a malicious campaign against the Third Caliph, accusing him of many wrong doings. 'Uthman blamed Amr and spoke to him harshly. This made Amr even more bitter. He used to meet Zubayr and Talhah and conspire against 'Uthman.

He used to meet the pilgrims and inform them of the numerous deviations of 'Uthman. When 'Uthman was besieged, Amr left Madinah and went to Palestine. He rested in an area called Al-Saba. He dwelt in a palace called Al-Ajlan. He would repeatedly say "I wonder what news is coming about 'Uthman." While he was at his palace accompanied by his two sons Muhammad and Abdullah, along with Salamah Ibn Zayd Al-Juthami, a traveler passed by. Amr called him and the following conversation took place:

Q. Where did you come from?

A. From Madinah.

Q. What is 'Uthman doing?

A. I left him heavily besieged. As soon as Amr finished his conversation with the traveler, another traveler appeared. Amr asked:

Q. What is 'Uthman doing?

A. He was killed. Amr retorted saying: "I am Abu Abdullah. When I scratch an ulcer, I cut it. I used to campaign against him vehemently. I even instigated the shepherds at the top of the mountains to revolt against him." Salamah Ibn Zayd Al-Juthami said:

"You, the Qurayshites, have broken a strong door between yourselves and the Arabs. Why did you do this?" Amr answered: "We wanted to bring the truth out of the falsehood." (Al-Tabari, part 4, pages 356-57) The dividers of Muslims ignored what is well-known in the history of Islam and which was reported by a host of good reporters. The revolution against 'Uthman was a result of the efforts of prominent personalities in Madinah, such as 'A'ishah, Talhah, Zubayr, Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf, and Amr Ibn Al-As.

Instead of attributing the revolution to real people who rebelled against 'Uthman and brought about the revolution, the dividers of the Muslims refuse to accept the truth or mention it. They attribute the revolution to an imaginary Jew, relying on the report of Sayf Ibn 'Umar Al-Tamimi, a man who was accused by prominent Sunni scholars to be a man of lies and deviations. They chose to accept Sayf's report in order to cover up for the Caliph, 'A'ishah, Talhah, and Zubayr. It is even more amazing that 'A'ishah, Talhah, Zubayr, and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan fought the Imam in two wars, unprecedented in the history of Islam. They were the most zealous to smear the reputation of Imam Ali and his followers. Yet the opponents of Imam Ali did not accuse his

supporters of being students of Ibn Saba.

History clearly states that Mu'awiyah commanded all the Imams of the mosques throughout the Muslim World to curse Imam Ali at every Friday prayer. If the imaginary Ibn Saba had any small role in the revolution against 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah would have made it the main topic of his defamation campaign against the Imam and his supporters. He would have publicized throughout the Muslim World that those who killed 'Uthman were students of Ibn Saba and that they were the ones who brought Ali to power. However, neither Mu'awiyah nor 'A'ishah took this route because Ibn Saba's story was invented by Sayf Ibn 'Umar Al-Tamimi who lived in the second Hijra century after their death.

Who Started The Battle Of Basra?

The circulators of false accusations against the followers of the members of the House of the Prophet say that the followers of Ibn Saba started the battle of Basra at night just before the negotiations between Imam Ali and his three opponents ('A'ishah, Talhah, and Zubayr) were about to succeed. They started the battle at night by attacking the two armies simultaneously in order to make them plunge into battle. This would abort the peaceful efforts whose stipulations were supposed to include the punishment of 'Uthman's killers. This allegation is opposed to many clear historical facts of which the following events were recorded by Al-Tabari in his history (part 4).

(1). Al-Shi'abi reported the following: "The right side of Amir Al-Mu'mineen 's army attacked the left side of Basra's army. They fought each other and people resorted to 'A'ishah and most of them were from Dabba and Al-Azd tribes." "The Battle started after sunrise and continued until afternoon. This means that the fight did not start during the night as the inventors of Ibn Saba claim.

The Basrites were defeated and a man from the tribe of Al-Azd said: 'Come back and attack.' Muhammad, son of Imam Ali (Ibn Al-Hanafiyya), hit him with his sword and severed his hand. The man shouted: 'Azdites, run away.' When the Azdites were overwhelmed by the army of the Imam, the Azdites shouted: 'We belong to the religion of Ali Ibn Abi Talib.' " (Al- Tabari, page 312) (2). The report of Qatadah said:

"When the two armies faced each other, Zubayr appeared on his horse while he was well armed. People said to the Imam, ' This is Zubayr.' The Imam said: Zubayr is the more expected of the two to remember God, if he is reminded." Talhah also came to face the Imam. When Imam Ali faced them, he said: "Certainly you have prepared arms, horses, and men. Did you prepare an excuse for the Day of Judgement when you meet your

Lord? Fear God and do not be like the lady who unravels her weaving after she had woven it strongly. Was I not your brother and you used to believe in the sanctity of my blood? Did anything happen to make it legal for you to shed my blood?"

Talhah said:

"You have instigated people against 'Uthman," Imam Ali retorted, quoting from the Qur'an: "On the Day of Judgement, Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that He (Allah) is the Manifest truth." The Imam continued:

"Talhah, you are fighting for the blood of 'Uthman? May God curse those who killed 'Uthman.

"Zubayr, do you remember the day when you passed by with the Messenger of God at Banu Ghunam and he looked at me and smiled? I smiled back at him and you said to him:

'Ibn Abi Talib is always conceited.' The Messenger of God said to you: 'He is not conceited, and you shall fight him unjustly.'" Zubayr retorted:

"By God, this is true. Had I remembered that, I would not have made this journey. By God, I shall never fight you." Zubayr left and informed 'A'ishah and his son Abdullah that he took an oath never to fight Imam Ali. His son counseled him to fight the Imam and pay atonement. Zubayr agreed and made his atonement by freeing his slave Makhul. (Al-Tabari, pages 501-502)

This event tells us that Talhah and Zubayr confronted the Imam before the start of the battle, and the confrontation was in the day time rather than at night. Otherwise, people could not have seen the confrontation or heard the conversation between the Imam and his opponents. We are sure that there was no electricity for light, nor was there any voice amplifier to make conversations heard. Since the conversation and the confrontation took place before the start of the battle, it is clear that the report of Sayf about the battle starting during the dark night is a sheer lie.

(3). Al-Zuhri reported that Imam Ali had a dialogue with Zubayr and Talhah before the battle. He said that the Imam said: "Zubayr, do you fight me for the blood of 'Uthman after you killed him? (by his instigation) May God give the most hostile to 'Uthman among us the consequence which he dislikes.

He said to Talhah:

'Talhah, you have brought the wife of the Messenger of God ('A'ishah) to use her for war and hid your wife at your house (in Madinah)! Did you not give me your allegiance?'" Talhah said: "I gave you the allegiance while the sword was on my neck." At this point, the Imam tried to invite them to peace, leaving them no excuse. He addressed his army saying: "Who among you will display this Qur'an and what is in it to the opposing army with the understanding that if he

loses his hand he will hold the Qur'an with his other hand...?"

A youth from Kufa said: "I will take the mission."

The Imam went through his army offering them the mission. Only the youth accepted it. The

Imam said to him:

"Exhibit this Qur'an and say to them: 'It is between you and us from its beginning to its end. Remember God, and spare your blood and our blood.'" As the youth called upon them to resort to the Qur'an and surrender to its judgement, the Basrites attacked and killed him. At this time, Imam Ali said to his army "Now the fight has become legal." The battle started. (Al-Tabari, page 905)

All these reports clearly indicate that the battle started in the day time rather than at night, as Sayf Ibn 'Umar has alleged. Had the confrontation between Imam Ali and Talhah and Zubayr taken place at night, it would have had no benefit because the two armies would not have been able to witness it or hear their conversation.

Also, the confrontation between the carrier of the Holy Qur'an and the Basrites would have been useless. None of the opposing soldiers could have seen the Qur'an in the hands of the young man at night. Furthermore, the alleged agreement between the Imam and the three leaders, to punish the ones who shared in 'Uthman's murder, would be logical only if the three leaders were serious in seeking punishment for the killers.

But the three leaders were the main agitators who induced people to kill the Third Caliph. Had the revolt been elected Talhah or Zubayr instead of the Imam as Caliph, they would have given the killers of 'Uthman the biggest prize. Certainly the leaders did not seek revenge for the blood .of 'Uthman. They only pretended to do that as a means of destroying the Imam's caliphate