ABDULLAH IBN SABA

**THE MAN, HIS TEACHINGS, AND HIS INFLUENCE
ON THE MODERN TWELVER SHI'EE FAITH**

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

To seekers of truth,

from all the Islamic sects,

in all shapes, sizes, and forms…

Contents

Introduction

The controversy that is the life, the existence, and the effects of Abdullah bin Saba' upon the early years of Islam has become a focal point in polemical circles during the last few generations. Originally, the existence of the man was a point of consensus amongst historians; however, it was in the 18th century when Orientalists noticed a peculiar pattern regarding his reports which caused a break in the consensus. These narrations came from a single source, namely, Sayf bin Omar Al-Tameemi, a historian that is regarded as weak in the eyes of the scholars of Hadith. This discovery led to the publishing of articles and then books on the subject, which ultimately led Shias, like Murtadha Al-`Askari to adopt the view that Ibn Saba' was a figment of Al-Tameemi's imagination.

Not too long after this view spread within Shia circles did we find Sunni scholars like Sulaiman Al-`Awdah responding by simply providing alternative sources, in both Sunni and Shias books, which prove the existence of Ibn Saba'. The irrefutable proofs provided by these Sunnis caused the spawning of a new book on the matter. This new study "Abdullah ibn Saba': *Dirasah wa Tahleel*" by the Shia scholar Ali Aal-Muhsin spread amongst the Shi`ee youth. His arguments were then translated into English in a book called "Abd Allah ibn Saba: Myth Exploded," by Shi'ee apologist Toyib Olawuyi, the book of Ali Aal-Muhsin provides a new outlook on how the narrations about Abdullah bin Saba' should be consumed.

As for Olawuyi, he not only argues that Sunnis have no place accepting the ideologies attributed to Ibn Saba', but suggests that his very existence is questionable, due to the weakness of the chains.

In most cases Olawuyi is correct, which is why it would be a waste of time to respond to most of the narrations that he successfully criticizes. Yet, his refutation falls short due to incorrect implementation of Hadith sciences, a lack of understanding of the historical method, and at times, simple incompetence.

Unlike the vast majority of the works that deal with the historicity of Abdullah bin Saba', we find that "Abd Allah Ibn Saba: Myth Exploded," is not an introductory book in the matter. The author assumes that the reader has some background in the subject, as one can tell from the content of the book from the early chapters.

The author jumps into arguing that Sunnis make twelve claims regarding Ibn Saba'. He lists them as follows:

> 1. He was a descendant of Saba', and belonged to one of the Saba'ee tribes.
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> 2. He was a black Arab with a black slave mother.
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> 3. He was a Jew from Sanain Yemen.
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> 4. He accepted Islam during the khilafah of Uthman b. Affan.
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> 5. He stirred up the public, especially the Egyptians, against Uthman and caused the latter's bloody overthrow.

6. He was the first to claim that Ali, alaihi al-salam, was the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu alaihi wa Alihi.

7. He was the first to proclaim belief in Al-Raja`ah – that is, the return to this world after death by certain dead people.

8. He was the first to publicly criticize or revile Abu Bakr and `Umar.

9. He was popularly called Ibn Al-Sawda' – son of the black mother.

10. Imam Ali was frustrated with him, and abused him by calling him "the black container" and also banished him to Al-Madain.

11. Amir Al-Muminin `Ali b. Abi Talib saw it as legitimate to execute him for reviling Abu Bakr and `Umar, and would have done so had people not talked him out of the decision.

12. `Ali burnt him (i.e. Ibn Saba') and his followers Alive for calling him (i.e. `Ali) Allah.[1]

The author is more or less correct, that Ahl Al-Sunnah do usually make statements like these. The author goes on to claim that all the statements above lack proper proof since the information above can only be found in narrations with weak chains.[2]

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[1] `Abd Allah Ibn Saba (p. VI)
[2] Ibid (p. VI)

Before carrying on, it is important to explain why Ahl Al-Sunna make such claims in the first place. The author did not delve into that matter since, as explained previously, his book is not an introductory piece of text for this very subject. The Sunni objective is to simply taunt the Shias by suggesting that their beliefs have evolved from the false ideologies that were incorrectly attributed to Ahl Al-Bayt.

To make this clearer, we quote two of the earliest and most reliable Shia historians - Al-Hasan bin Musa Al-Nawbakhti and Sa'ad bin `Abdullah Al-Qummi.[3] Together, they describe the formation of the Saba'ee sect (the followers of Ibn Saba'):

> A group of scholars from the companions of Ali (alaihi alsalam) said that Abdullah bin Saba was a Jew, who converted to Islam, and befriended Ali (alaihi alsalam), and he used to say, as a Jew that Yusha' bin Noon is after Musa (alaihi alsalam) with this view, and so he said in Islam after the death of the Prophet (salallahu alaihi wa aalih) about Ali the same (belief). He was the first to say that it is mandatory that Ali (alaihi alsalam) was the Imam, and the first to disassociate from his enemies, and he made *takfeer* of them. It is in this light that those there were against the Shias said: **The origins of *Rafdh* are taken from Judaism.**

In other words, Sunnis do not feel obligated to establish every one of those twelve claims. It is sufficient for Ahl Al-Sunnah to simply establish the existence of the man, who wasn't from Ahl Al-Bayt, that had views that evolved into modern day Shiasm.

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[3] Firaq Al-Shia (p. 32)

Whether or not his mother was black or from Yemeni origins is irrelevant.

To some extent, the Sunnis have already achieved their goals, and we find this clearly in Olawuyi's introduction, for Olawuyi accepts the authenticity of a few narrations that condemn Abdullah bin Saba' which can be found in Shia books. These narrations clearly state that Ibn Saba' saw Ali as a deity and that Ali burned him alive for it. Olawuyi refers to these narrations as authentic.[4]

Soon though, he criticizes Ibn Taymiyah for holding the same view.[5]

In other words, Olawuyi finds it acceptable for Shias to hold the view that Ibn Saba' referred to Ali as a god, while believing that there is not enough binding evidence upon Sunnis to hold the same view about Ibn Saba', and that he should be nothing more than a myth in the eyes of Sunnis.

Therefore, according to Olawuyi, it is incorrect for a Sunni to claim that "the origins of Rafdh are taken from Judaism." Yet, even if Sunnis were to stand down from such a claim, it would still be correct for them to claim that "the origins of Rafdh according to authentic Shia reports, which are binding upon Shias themselves, are taken from Judaism."

Even though the last claim is true, it would be more satisfying to the reader to get the full picture, since the claim that Ibn Saba's views evolved into the Twelver faith is not exclusive to authentic Shia reports, but is also the correct position in the eyes of Ahl Al-Sunnah. However, before even studying the

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[4] Abd Allah Ibn Saba (p. IV)
[5] Ibid (p. XI)

reports, it is important to understand the Saba'ee sect and establish its existence.

 Before carrying on, it is important for readers to be aware that our book, "Abdullah ibn Saba: The man, his teachings, and his Influence on the Modern Twelver Shi'ee Faith" was originally intended as a refutation to Olawuyi's "Abd Allah Ibn Saba: Myth Exploded," however, the first two chapters may be consumed as a standalone work that establishes and discusses the most important matters that revolve around Abdullah bin Saba'.

CHAPTER 1

THE EXISTENCE OF THE SABA'EE SECT

The existence of the Saba'ee sect is something that cannot be argued with, for there is a decent amount of narrations from the *tabi'een* and the *atba'a* that establish direct contact with this sect.

Al-Am`ash (d. 147) used to say, "Beware of these Saba'iyyah, for I lived at a time wherein which the people used to call them: the liars." [6]

Al-Sha`bee (d. 100) said that "I have not met anyone dumber than the Saba'ees."[7]

Qatadah (d. 117), in explanation of Allah's (subhanahu wa ta'ala) condemnation for the misguided people of desires,[8] "If the ones mentioned here are not the Haruriyyah and the Sabaa'iyyah then I do not know who they are." Then he says, "By Allah, (the beliefs of) the Sabaa'iyyah are innovations, which

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[6] Al-Kamil 7/275
[7] Ibid
[8] "As for those whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]." Aal-Imran: 7

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have not been revealed in a Book (of Allah) nor are they from the *sunnah* of a prophet."[9]

Abdullah bin Awn said: I asked Ibraheem al-Nakh`ee (d. 96) about two men from the Sabaa'iyyah which he knew, Al-Mugheerah bin Sa`eed and Aba Abd Al-Raheem," He replied, "Be aware of them for they are liars."[10]

Al-Zuhri (d. 125) said, "I did not see a group of people that are more similar to the Christians than the Sabaa'iyyah."[11] He also said about Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ali that "he used to collect the hadiths of the Sabaa'iyyah."[12]

Interestingly, one does not find the *tabi'een* or the *atba'a* refer to specific *rafidhi* sects as much as the Saba'ees, nor do we find much of a focus in the following centuries on any specific sects except the larger blankets of these smaller sects, like the Zaidis and the *rafidha*, each of which include many smaller divisions. This implies that the Sabaa'iyyah were at one time a rather infamous sect, unlike other smaller offshoots that didn't get much attention. This sect, without a doubt includes a set of beliefs which separates it from other sects. It is there where the works of the scholars of *milal* becomes most useful.

One example is the lengthy explanation of how this sect snowballed into a group of sects that differed in specifics. Abu Al-Hussain Al-Malti (d. 377 AH) stated that the Saba'ees split into four groups:

The first says that Ali did not die and cannot die.

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[9] Al-Ibanah 1/269
[10] Al-Ilal wa Ma'rifat Al-Rijal (p. 144)
[11] Al-Sharee'ah (p. 723)
[12] Al-Ma'rifah wal Tareekh 3/70

The second says that Ali is not dead but is in the clouds.[13]

The third says that he died and will come back before the Day of Judgment and that others from the graves will come with him to fight the anti-Christ and that he will fill the earth with justice.[14]

The fourth group says that the Imam is Muhammad bin Ali and that he is in the mountain of Radhwa and is guarded by a dragon and a lion, and that he will fight the anti-Christ.

Al-Malti furthermore speaks about them in a fashion that indicates their existence during his time, not only is he thorough in the explanation of their beliefs, but in his tone of speech as well.[15]

We find in Abd Al-Qadir Al-Baghdaadi[16] (d. 429 AH) an even clearer tone in which he lists questions to debate the Sabaa'iyyah with. This leaves little doubt that forms of the Saba'ee sect remained until at least the fourth century.

Of course, closed-minded Shi'ee scholars like Murtadha Al-Askari would never find this sufficient to prove that the sect existed. When faced with a plethora of statements about the beliefs of the Sabaa'iyyah from the scholars of *milal*, he responded by saying, "It seems as though they wrote explanations about these sects that detailed their ideologies, and each author wanted to surpass the rest with strange tales

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[13] This view is shared by Ibn Hibban in Al-Majrooheen 2/262. He attributes this view to Mohammad bin Al-Sa'ib Al-Kalbi. In the next chapter, we'll take a closer look at those that held similar views about Ali and his death.

[14] This, the third view, corresponds with the views of the modern Shi'ee.

[15] Al-Tanbeeh (p. 14)

[16] Al-Farq bayna Al-Firaq (p. 214)

that they would explain, and they have committed a felony against Islam that cannot be forgiven for they attributed to the Muslims what wasn't (true)."[17]

This assertion is ridiculous since Murtadha Al-Askari himself has stated that these opinions were recorded by Shia scholars themselves like Al-Kashshi, Al-Nawbakhti (d. 310 AH), and Sa'ad bin Abdullah Al-Qummi (d. 301 AH),[18] and to accuse these men of lying is a position that he would never hold.

Another proof that the Saba'ee sect existed was that we find early hadith scholars referring to certain narrators as Saba'ee. One such example is Ibn Hibban who referred to Jabir Al-Ju'fi (d. 127 AH) as one.[19] If that weren't enough, we have narrators who proclaimed that they were from the Saba'ee sect. Hammam bin Yahya (d. 164 AH) said he heard Mohammed bin Al-Sa'ib Al-Kalbi proclaim this.[20]

Simply put, unless one is going to argue that the scholars above, who lived in different times and locations, formed some sort of conspiracy, which is completely illogical, then it is utterly ridiculous to deny the existence of this sect during the first centuries of Islam.

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[17] Abdullah bin Saba' wa Asateer Ukhra 2/243
[18] Ibid 2/176
[19] Al-Majrooheen 1/245
[20] Al-Majrooheen 2/262

THE BELIEFS OF THE SABA'EE SECT

The Saba'ee sect, like other sects, includes a set of beliefs. Shaykh Sulayman bin Hamad Al-`Awdah states that these include the godhood of Ali, the belief in an incomplete Qur'an, *Raj`ah*, *Wasiyyah*, the cursing of the *Sahabah*, and *Badaa'*.[21] His sources include Ibn Qutaibah, Abu Hasan Al-Ash`ari, Al-Asfara'eeni, Al-Baghdadi, Al-Malti, Al-Shihristani, Ibn Asakir, Ibn Hajar, Al-Kashshi, Al-Razi, and Al-Mamaqani. In most of the cases above, we find an agreement between these scholars for some of the primary beliefs, like *Raj`ah* and the cursing of the *Sahabah*.

It is extremely important for readers to be aware that we are not suggesting that Ibn Saba' created *tashayyu`*, but rather, that some of his ideas evolved into modern Shia ideologies. For instance, we are not suggesting that Shias hold the view that Ali is a god, yet, we believe that the *ghulu* of Ibn Saba' towards Ali evolved into modern Shia beliefs; like that Ali has the ability to give *rizq*, to answer pleas of help, and to control the atoms of the universe.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the scholars of *milal* and *ilm al-hadith*, had direct contact with the Saba'ee sect. With this in mind, it is only rational to believe that this sect has its own ideology that separated itself from other sects. Of course, the

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[21] Abdullah bin Saba' (p. 207)

Saba'ee sect had some similarities with the modern day Twelver Shiasm, and these include:

1- The disassociation from Abi Bakr and Umar – Not surprisingly, we find this clear in narrations that are authentically attributed to Ibn Saba' himself. These will be covered in the following chapter. This opinion is also attributed to the Sabaa'iyyah by early Shia scholars like Al-Nawbakhti and Sa'ad bin Abdullah Al-Ash'ari.[22] Al-Mugheera bin Sa'eed, an infamous Saba'ee according to his contemporaries,[23] was also known for openly cursing Abu Bakr and Omar.[24] Today, we find a direct connection between this practice and Twelver Shias, so to believe that Ibn Saba's attitudes towards the *sahaba* evolved into the modern Shi'ee attitude towards the *sahaba* would not be a stretch at all.

2- The belief in *raja`ah* – Ibn Hibban commented that Muhammad bin Sa'ib Al-Kalbi, was a Saba'ee, and that they held this belief. However, he suggested that the Saba'ees believed that Ali never died, but was living on a cloud.[25] Rushaid Al-Hajri, another Saba'ee,[26] also held the view that Ali came to life after death and was sweating under the blanket that covered his body.[27] Ibn Hibban also states that Jabir Al-Ju`fi also held the belief that Ali would return to life and that he was from the companions of Ibn Saba'.[28] Also, Al-Fasawi narrates that Jabir

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[22] Firaq Al-Shia (p. 32)

[23] Al-Ilal wa Ma'rifat Al-Rijal (p. 144)

[24] Al-Dhua'afa Al-Kabeer 5/474

[25] Al-Majrooheen 2/262 Also refer to the previous chapter and see Al-Maltis list of the different types of Saba'eeyah.

[26] Masa'il Al-Imamah by Al-Nashi' Al-Akbar via `Abdullah bin Saba' by Sulayman Al-`Awdah (p. 221)

[27] Al-Dhua'afa 2/348

[28] Al-Majrooheen 1/245-246

believed that Ali was in a cloud.[29] This opinion is also attributed to the Saba'iyyah by early Shia scholars like Al-Nawbakhti and Sa'ad bin Abdullah Al-Ash`ari.[30] It is very important to be aware that these views from the early Saba'ees are different from the views held by Twelvers. The claim that Ali is alive and in the clouds, or that he is coming back, is specific to him alone, and is not attributed to his eleven descendants. Moreover, the view that the descendants of Ali would return in this life cannot be traced to contemporaries of Ja`far Al-Sadiq, which suggests that such a view did not exist at the time, but was the outcome of the Twelver's natural evolution.

3- *Ghulu* towards Ahl Al-Bait –Ibn Hibban narrated from Mohammad bin Sa'ib Al-Kalbi that he said, "I became sick and forgot everything I memorized, so I went to the Aal (family) of Muhammad (salalahu alaihi wa salam), and they spit in my mouth, which made me remember all that which I had forgotten."[31] Ibn Hibban also narrated from him that he said, "Jibreel used to have the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) write the revelation, and when the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) would enter (to defecate), he (Jibreel) would make Ali write it down."[32] While this second narration may seem too extreme for any modern Shi'ee to adopt, we do find it being attributed to Al-Baqir, the fifth Shia Imam, through an authentic chain.[33]

The *Ghulu* towards Ali in particular was also attributed to the Saba'iyyah by early Shia scholars like Al-Nawbakhti and Sa'ad

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[29] Al-Ma'rifah wal Tareekh 3/59
[30] Firaq Al-Shia (p. 32)
[31] Al-Majrooheen 2/263 Al-Kamil 7/275 Tahtheeb Al-Tahtheeb 3/569
[32] Al-Majrooheen 2/263 Tahtheeb Al-Tahtheeb 3/569
[33] Basa'ir Al-Darajaat (p. 423)

bin Abdullah Al-Ash`ari.[34] Twelvers too have some fanatical extraordinary beliefs about the Ahl Al-Bayt, like the provision of livelihood, the control of the atoms of the universe, and the deliverance of aid to the needy even after their deaths. Due to this, it is fair to say that the Saba'iyyah's *ghulu* did influence the other Shia sects of the future.

4- Incomplete Qur'an – Al-`Adani narrated from Al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiyyah (d. 95) that the Saba'iyyah claimed that nine-tenths of the Qur'an was not revealed by the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam).[35] Even though Twelvers never claimed that the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) withheld parts of the Qur'an, we find a connection between that belief and the belief of Twelvers that parts of the Qur'an are now missing. Refer to works like Mawqif Al-Rafidha min Al-Qur'an by Mamadu Caramberry, Usool Madhhab Al-Shia by Al-Qafari, and Man Yatahim Ulama'a Al-Shia Al-Ithnay Ashariyah bil Tahreef by Abd Al-Rahman Adam.

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[34] Firaq Al-Shia (p. 32)
[35] Al-Iman by Al-Adani via Usool Madhhab Al-Shia 1/260 Sharh Nahj Al-Balagha 2/490.

THE EXISTENCE OF ABDULLAH BIN SABA' THROUGH AUTHENTIC CHAINS

As mentioned in the previous chapter, authentic chains prove the existence of Abdullah bin Saba'. These narrations show that he used to curse Abu Bakr and Omar and these will be studied in this chapter. These narrations were originally weakened by Olawuyi, but upon further inspection, we have found that some of them are indeed authentic.

Examining the Narration of Abi Ishaaq Al-Fazari

The author has done a fine job in criticizing some of the more obvious weak narrations; however, we find some faults in his judgment regarding some others. He quoted:

Abu Ishaq Al-Fazari narrated from Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from Abu Al-Za'raa' from[36] 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[37] 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."[38]

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[36] This should correctly be "and from Zaid bin Wahb" since Abu Al-Za'raa' does not narrate from Zaid bin Wahb this Hadith, but narrates it directly from `Ali as we shall see soon. Another evidence that it is "and from Zaid bin Wahb" is because that is how we find it in the same narration from Al-Barqani as Ibn Hajar recorded in Al-Tahtheeb 1/366.

[37] It is very possible that the words "evil black man" are actually "black container" since there is a similarity in the drawing of both words in the Arabic language. Furthermore, the narration of both Abu Al-Za'raa' and Zaid bin Wahb which we shall examine later refer to Ibn Saba as the black container.

[38] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 16)

The chain is *hasan* since the Hadith is connected and is narrated by trustworthy narrators. However, there is a slight weakness in Abu Al-Za'raa', which makes one refrain from referring to the Hadith as *saheeh*. Olawuyi though, argues that Abu Al-Za'raa' here is not Hujayyah bin Adi, but rather, Abdullah bin Hani'.[39] He arrives at this conclusion upon finding that Ibn Hajar only refers to three people as Abu Al-Za'raa', none of whom is Hujayyah bin Adi Al-Kindi. Yet, this is not sufficient evidence for one to claim that Hujayyah is not Abu Al-Za'raa', for as Olawuyi has quoted, Al-Barqani stated that Hujayyah bin Adi is Abu Al-Za'raa' in this chain.[40]

Al-Barqani, a fourth century scholar, did not make such a claim out of thin air, as suggested by Olawuyi, who commented that he "attempted to play a fast one."[41]

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[39] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 17-20)

[40] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 17)

[41] The accusation of Olawuyi towards Al-Barqani is not only immature, but irrational. Al-Barqani's conclusion is based upon evidence as we have proven. This is not the first time that Olawuyi has baselessly accused a Sunni scholar of distorting facts. On p.31 of his book, Olawuyi weakens a narration rightly so. However, he goes out of his way to accuse Ibn Katheer of doctoring a part of the report. The weak narration Olawuyi quotes from Ibn Katheer's Al-Nihaya is a quote from Abi Ya'la Al-Mawsili, which includes the words, "I heard `Ali saying to `Abd Allah b. Saba…"

Olawuyi interjects with a quote from the printed version of Abu Ya'ala's book, "I heard Ali saying to Abd Allah Al-Saba'ee." Olawuyi suggests that Ibn Kathir tampered with the original narration in order

Furthermore, Al-Barqani is supported by Imam Muslim, who referred to Hujayyah as Abu Al-Za'raa'.[42]

Perhaps the strongest evidence that Abu Za'raa' in this narration is Hujayyah is that we find the name Hujayyah in another source.[43] In this light, it makes absolute sense that

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to attribute some ill deeds to Ibn Saba'. Of course, he is suggesting that Al-Saba'ee and Ibn Saba' are two different people.

Olawuyi cries:

> Our Sunni brothers will never be able to trace what Ibn Kathir has attributed to Abu Ya'la in any of the latter's works or reports! So, despite that the narration is *daif,* Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir still goes ahead to manipulate its text anyway, to force some evidence – albeit invalid – out of it! This is a sign of extreme desperation and obsession from him about the bogeyman, `Abd Allah b. Saba. Of course, his trick works upon people who trust him, and therefore do not bother to crosscheck his references.

However, it was Olawuyi who was impatient and failed to double check the narration before pointing the finger at Ibn Kathir, for we find the name "Abdullah bin Saba' Al-Saba'ee" in Ibn Hajar's version of the narration which comes from the path of Abi Ya'la Al-Mawsili. See Al-Matalib Al-Aliya 4/352. Ibn Hajar states in his introduction 1/4 that he relied on another version of Musnad Abi Ya'la. The version that Ibn Hajar relied upon is currently lost and has not been published.

Olawuyi is urged to avoid making similar careless accusations in the future.

[42] Al-Kuna 1/221
[43] Al-Tareekh Al-Kabeer 3/177

Hujayyah is Abu Al-Za'raa', for there is no reason to doubt both the narration and the opinions of these early scholars.

As for Hujayyah himself, he was referred to as reliable by Al-Bushanji, Ibn Hibban, Al-Ijli, Ibn Khalfoon, and Ibn Al-Qattan.[44] Others, like Abu Hatim and Ibn Sa'ad, criticized him slightly, which is why it is preferable to refer to the chain as *Hasan* instead of *Saheeh*.[45]

Further criticisms towards Olawuyi include that he was either incompetent or dishonest even when referring to Abu Al-Za'raa' as Abdullah bin Hani', since he has left out that he was considered as reliable by Ibn Sa'ad.[46] Olawuyi did mention Tahthib Al-Tahthib in his reference page, which is why it is surprising that he did not mention Ibn Sa'ad's strengthening of this narrator.

Another criticism is that Olawuyi argues that one of the evidences that the Hadith is weak is because the scholars of Ahl Al-Sunnah confirmed that Abdullah bin Hani' "never narrated from anyone other than Ibn Mas'ud and Omar. This is even strengthened by the fact that he has narrated from Zayd in an *'an-'an* manner, without explicitly indicating *tahdith*. For someone in his situation, this brings down his report."[47]

There is much that is wrong with the above statement, for claims like "x has only narrated from y" is based upon the experience of the *rijali* scholar. It is an opinion that is simply based on *ijtihad*. If one stumbles upon another *shaikh*, it does not make the hadith weak, but rather, the above claim is

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[44] Ikmal Tatheeb Al-Kamal 4/10
[45] Tahtheeb Al-Tahtheeb 1/366
[46] Al-Tabaqat 8/291
[47] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 21)

changed into "x has only narrated from y and z." Olawuyi claims that the narration being in *'an-'an* form causes the narration to be rejected in these cases. However, we believe that this is simply the *ijtihad* of Olawuyi himself and that no Sunni scholar ever shared such a view.

Regardless, the chain is reliable since Abu Al-Za'raa' is Hujayyah Al-Kindi, as mentioned previously.

Olawuyi, aware of deficiencies of his chain criticism, moves on to criticize the text itself. He argues:

> 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.[48]

Olawuyi quotes:

> 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

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[48] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 21)

Bakr. So both of you thought me to be a liar,
sinful, a traitor and dishonest.[49]

There would be no confusion in this matter had Olawuyi
included the context of the report. The report starts off with Al-
Abbas referring to `Ali as a sinful, lying, treacherous, and
dishonest person, due to their disagreement over their rights
over Fadak.[50] Omar, in his wisdom, used the very words that Al-
Abbas used, to describe himself and Abu Bakr, in order to
suggest that it is unfair to use such a description in cases of
these types of disagreements, and that if Ali fits this description,
then it fits him and Abu Bakr as well, since they have differed
with Al-Abbas and Ali in how Fadak should be used.

Olawuyi continues by arguing that the report contradicts reality
since it includes the following by Ali:

> "Verily, if it reaches me that anyone places me
> above them both, I will whip him with the
> whipping of a lying slanderer."[51]

Olawuyi concludes that this proves that the report is a
fabrication since Ali did not "reproach" companions that
preferred him over Abi Bakr and Omar. Olawuyi quotes Ibn Abd
Al-Bar who said, "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)." Olawuyi then quotes Ibn Hajar, who quoted Ibn Abd

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[49] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 22)
[50] Saheeh Muslim (p. 832)
[51] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 22)

Al-Barr, who included Abu Al-Tufail as one of those that preferred Ali over Abi Bakr and Omar.[52]

We agree with Olawuyi in his view that Ali did not reproach those companions, but we have a different understanding of why this is the case.

The threat by Ali itself can be either seen as a literal one or one that is not to be taken at face value. In the case of the latter, one can understand it as a threat by Ali in order to simply caution people by prohibiting them from preferring him over the *Shaikhain*. While in the case of the former, there lacks sufficient evidence that any of the above men preferred Ali over the *Shaikhain*. Olawuyi previously urged readers that:

> Chainless and unsupported testimonies are not acceptable as proof, especially in crucial matters like this. So, we naturally confine ourselves only to reports in the books of the Ahl Al-Sunnah with chains of narrations."[53]

As we can see above, Olawuyi failed to provide chains for any of the claims regarding those companions that supposedly preferred Ali over Abi Bakr and Omar.

Olawuyi not only needs to provide chains, but also needs to provide evidence that these claims of preference by those companions reached Ali, and that they uttered these words during his life when he was a Caliph. As we see from the narration, Ali said, "If it reaches me…."

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[52] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 22-23)
[53] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 1)

We also know for a fact that some of the examples that Olawuyi provided are very flawed since a number of these men, namely Salman (d. 33 AH), Al-Miqdad (d. 33 AH), and Abi Dharr (d. 32 AH), all died before Ali became a caliph and made this statement.

Two Narrations by Ibn Abi Khaithama

Ibn Abi Khaithama collects two narrations that furthermore prove the existence of `Abdullah bin Saba and his hatred towards Abu Bakr and Omar. He narrates:

> - Amr bin Marzooq narrated to us, he said: Shu'ba told us, from Salama bin Kuhail from Zaid bin Wahb, he said: Ali said: What do I have to do with this black container? He meant: Abdullah bin Saba' and he used to attack Abi Bakr and Umar. This is what Salama said, from Zaid bin Wahb.

> - Muhammad bin Abbad Al-Makki said: Sufyan narrated to us, he said: Abd Al-Jabbar bin Abbas Al-Hamadani narrated to us, from Salama, from Hujayyah Al-Kindi, he said: I saw Ali on the pulpit saying: Who will excuse me from this black container that lies upon Allah! He meant: Ibn Al-Sawda'.[54]

The narrations are both reliable. The reliability of Hujayyah has been previously discussed and the rest of the chain contains only *hasan* and strong narrators.

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[54] Al-Tareekh Al-Kabeer 3/177

Olawuyi does reject the first narration though because it comes through the path of Amr bin Marzooq. He quoted criticisms like:

> Ali b. Al-Madini, he used to say, "Reject his aHadith"! Al-Qawariri also said, "Yahya b. Sa'id was not pleased with Amr b. Marzuq". Al-Saji said, "Abu Al-Walid used to criticize him". Both Ibn Ammar and Al-Ijli said, "He is nothing". And al-Daraqutni said, "He hallucinated A LOT".[55]

Olawuyi would have been fairer by quoting Ibn Hajar's other work Tahtheeb Al-Tahtheeb which includes only the greatest praise and defense for Amr bin Marzooq. Abu Hatim declares, "We did not write from any of the companions of Shu'ba who was better in hadith than Amr bin Marzooq." Ahmad said, "We searched for what was said about him and we found no basis in it." Sulayman bin Harb said, "He had (hadiths) which they didn't have, so they envied him." [56]

The latter two quotes offer a defense for the case of Amr bin Marzooq. Nur Al-Deen Itr[57], a contemporary hadith scholar, explains that one of the reasons in which the criticism of a narrator is accepted is if "those that strengthen him don't express why the criticism is inaccurate." As one observes from the two quotes above, the criticism has been rejected, explained, and refuted. In light of this, Amr bin Marzooq is surely considered to be reliable. This opinion is shared by Amr Abd Al-Mun'im Saleem when weighing the opinions for and

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[55] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 44-45)
[56] Tahtheeb Al-Tahtheeb 3/303
[57] Manhaj Al-Naqd fi Uloom Al-Hadith (p. 100)

against Amr bin Marzooq.[58] Perhaps the least that one can say is that Amr bin Marzooq is *hasan* in his Hadith.

Another objectionable issue with Olawuyi's quote is his translation of the term "*awhaam*." A *wahm* is a term that refers to any error in hadith, while translating it into the term "hallucination" greatly exaggerates Al-Daraqutni's criticism.

In conclusion, both narrations are established as evidences in the eyes of Ahl Al-Sunnah.

Olawuyi though, seeks to criticize the text in order to strengthen his argument. He argues:

> First and foremost, it is *mudraj* (interpolated). We have already seen the version of the *Athar* transmitted by Muhammad b. Ja'far from Shu'bah from Salamah from Zayd. It does not contain the last phrase above, indentifying the "black container" explicitly as Abd Allah b. Saba, and explaining his lies upon Allah and His Messenger as his attacks on Abu Bakr and Umar! Therefore, neither Shu'bah nor any of the earlier transmitters in the chains was the source of that addition. Rather, it must have been either Amr bin Marzuq or any of the later sub-narrators. This means that the "explanation" was an interpolation into the *riwayah* of Zayd, by someone who was NOT an eye-witness to the event, by someone who was disconnected from the incident by at least one century! Even Shu'bah and Salamah – who are much earlier in the *sanad* – were not eye-

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[58] Tahreer Ahwal Al-Ruwat (p. 377)

witnesses either. As such, even their own "identifications" and "explanations" too would have been rejected.[59]

The explanation of the "black container" as Ibn Saba is clearly an interpolation by a narrator, and this is clear from the text. However, Olawuyi is incorrect in assuming that the explanation of the text must be from a late narrator. From the quote that he provided, there are no reasons to assume that these words came from anyone other than Zaid bin Wahb. Zaid, the eye-witness of the event, is not explaining language or a matter of jurisprudence, but rather, he is explaining an ambiguous event. It is only logical to hold the view that he is explaining the context of Ali's words to his student Salama.

However, Olawuyi claims that this cannot be the case since another chain that leads up to Zaid does not include the interpolation. Yet, no evidence suggests this and the existence of a separate chain without an interpolation does not mean that it must have come from a narrator that is exclusive to only one of the chains. [60]

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[59] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 44)

[60] For example, Ibn Juraij and others narrate from Al-Zuhri from Salim that "Ibn Omar used to walk in front of funerals and that the Messenger (salalahu alaihi wa salam), Abu Bakr, Omar, and Uthman, walked in front of them." Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi in Al-Fasl lilwasl Al-Mudraj fi Al-Naql 1/330-337 argued that this is actually an interpolation by Al-Zuhri and that the correct narration is, "Ibn Omar used to walk in front of funerals." Al-Zuhri then said, "The Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) Abu Bakr, Omar, and Uthman, walked in front of them." Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi argued that the interpolation

As for the second narration, the narration of Abu Al-Za'raa' Hujayyah Al-Kindi, we find that the "black container" is referred to as Ibn Al-Sawda'. Unless Ali was fond of referring to different people as "black containers," it is safe to assume that this is referring to a single event and that Ibn Al-Sawda' is Abdullah bin Saba', the "black container."

Fictional Characters in Historical Texts

Olawuyi through his book quotes several narrations that establish the existence of Ibn Saba'. He rightfully weakens most of them and correctly pinpoints the flaw in each chain. Even though he has failed with some of the narrations, as we have proven above, it is important to bring light to the irrationality of his methodology.

To suggest that Ibn Saba' did not exist is not simply a baseless claim, but rather, it opens the doors to doubt the existence of thousands, if not millions, of historical personalities. All historians know that eye witness accounts represent a small fraction of what has reached us from recorded history. To simply suggest that everything that has been recorded was in actuality a fabrication unless it reaches us through a connected chain is a claim that was never made by any historian. Historians, skeptical of what has arrived to them from the past, look at the layers of information and attempt to filter out truth from falsehood based upon the evidences at hand. Even when a

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is to be attributed to Al-Zuhri in the first scenario even though his name can be found in both narrations. This goes against Olawuyi's suggestion that the interpolation must be from a narrator that can only be found in one of the two reports.

historian casts doubt on a specific event, it does not mean that they will dismiss those that were mentioned in the event as fictitious characters. Are we, due to Olawuyi's conservative interpretation of the historical method to dismiss all the names of past kings that are recorded in the Old Testament due to the disconnected nature of the sources? Perhaps Olawuyi would like to dismiss the thousands of names in the book of Rijal Al-Tusi as fictional Shia narrators, since they cannot be found in authentic hadith chains? Surely, this goes against rational thought and will only lead to historical suicide.

If one were to describe a historical character as fictional, there needs to be solid evidence that suggests this. A good example from Shia sources is the case of the infamous narrator Omara bin Zaid. When Abdullah bin Mohammad Al-Balawi was asked about his teacher Omara, he replied, "He is a man that came down from the heavens, narrated to me, then returned."[61] Ibn Al-Ghadha'iri, after mentioning that nobody has heard from Omara except for Abdullah bin Mohammad Al-Balawi, he comments, "Our companions say that it is a name for a nobody."[62]

When the objective student of history compares this to the example of Abdullah bin Saba', it becomes beyond obvious that the two instances are miles apart when it comes to the evidences that suggests the existence of each of the two men.

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[61] Rijal Al-Najashi (p. 303)
[62] Al-Rijal (p. 78)

Responding to Olawuyi's Fallacies about the supposed Khilafah of Ahl Al-Bayt

In order to deter the opinion of Muslims from the view that Ibn Saba' was the first person to claim that Ali is the caliph of the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam), Olawuyi provides two narrations that suggest that this was established in authentic hadiths.

Firstly, the view that Ali was given the *wasiyyah* is not simply one that is held by Sunnis, but by Shias as well. Refer to the opinion of Al-Nawbakhti and Sa'ad bin Abdullah Al-Ash'ari in the preface of this book.

Olawuyi though provides narrations that suggest the opposite:

> The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to Ali: "You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that you are not a

prophet. And you are my *khalifah* over every believer after me."[63]

This, the narration of Abu Balj, while appearing to be strong, includes a hidden defect. We find that Ahmad questioned the narration of Amr bin Maymoon from Ibn Abbas, perhaps since the former is much older than him. Then Ibn Rajab adds that Abd Al-Ghani Al-Hafith believed that Abu Balj made a mistake in the narration and meant to say Maymoon Abu Abdullah[64] when he said Amr bin Maymoon. Ibn Rajab sees this opinion as a valid one. [65]

It is also likely that Abu Balj confused the names of Amr bin Maymoon and Maymoon Abu Abdullah since Abu Balj himself has been seen as weak by some major hadith scholars like Al-Bukhari and Al-Sa'di.[66]

The second narration provided by Olawuyi states that:

> I am leaving behind over you two *khalifahs*; the Book of Allah – a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Font.[67]

The above narration is weak because of Al-Qassim bin Hasaan[68] who is an unknown narrator that narrates *munkar* traditions.

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[63] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 46)
[64] Maymoon was weakened by several major scholars of hadith with severe criticism. See Tahtheeb Al-Tahtheeb 4/199-200.
[65] Sharh Ilal Al-Tirmithi (p. 493)
[66] Al-Kamil 9/80
[67] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 48)
[68] Mizan Al-I'itidal 5/448

Olawuyi then provides other narrations about *Al-Thaqalain* in order to suggest that there is some sort of connection between these narrations and *wasiyyah*. Olawuyi comments that "this hadith too grants and limits the *khilafah* to Ali and his offspring through Sayyidah Fatima."[69] However, Olawuyi does not provide any basis for this chosen definition, nor does it correspond to known definitions of the term *ahl al-bayt*.[70]

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[69] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 49)

[70] The term *ahl al-bayt* has more than one definition in the Arabic language. The meaning of the term ranges from close relatives, to wives, to children. These are all possible interpretations. Refer to *Ahl Al-Bayt bain Al-Madrisatain* by Sh. Mohammed Salim Al-Khidr (p. 35) Olawuyi's interpretation suggests that it is a term that is used for the descendents of a single cousin of a man. This goes against all dictionary definitions of the term, but this is the nature of Olawuyi who bases his understanding of narrations upon preconceptions.

Responding to Olawuyi's Fallacies about the Raja'ah

Refuting General Evidences of Raja'ah from Sunni Texts

Regarding the matter of Raja'ah, Olawuyi provides a detailed explanation of the term and specific examples using the Qur'an. Verses 55-56, 243, and 259 from Al-Baqara, are used by him to suggest that there have been exceptions in which Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) brought the dead back to life. Olawuyi correctly states that, "These are all instances of people "returning" from *Barzakh* into this world through resurrection. They are all instances of Raja'ah."[71]

Even though there is a consensus by Muslims regarding this, the Shi'ee view extends this belief to the twelve Shia Imams and their followers, meaning that they will be brought back to life. This belief is referred to by Shias as *raja'ah*, and Ahl Al-Sunnah reject it due to the lack of evidence that such a matter would ever occur.

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[71] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 52)

Olawuyi provides vague verses from the Qur'an that state that "you will not find any change in the *sunnah* of Allah" along with a narration that says that "everything that occurred to the offspring of Isra'el will occur to my *Ummah*,"[72] in order to suggest that there are textual evidences that suggest that *raja'ah* may occur.

It is obvious to the objective reader that there is nothing conclusive to be gathered from these vague texts to suggest *raja'ah*. From the context of the narration, one understands that the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) was referring to calamities and punishments, for the examples given in the narration include incest in public and the formation of religious sects. Olawuyi is not fooling anyone in suggesting that this is conclusive evidence that *raja'ah* will occur in the *Ummah* of Mohammad (salalahu alaihi wa salam).

Olawuyi, realizing that there is no basis for *raja'ah* in Sunni texts, attempts to find evidences in the words of the *sahaba*. He begins by quoting the narration of the Prophet's (salalahu alaihi wa salam) death. It was devastating news for all believers and many were in a state of disbelief and confusion, which caused some Sahabah, such as Omar bin Al-Khattab to go as far as to deny the death of the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) and to threaten to punish anyone who suggested that such a thing happened.

Olawuyi then quotes Omar, who said, "Allah will RESURRECT him and he will cut the hands and legs of some men."[73]

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[72] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 53-54)
[73] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 55)

However, this is problematic since the narration quoted by Olawuyi suggests that Omar rejected the death of the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) in the first place. Olawuyi's understanding of the narration creates a contradiction since no resurrection can occur to someone who never died.

Olawuyi's confusion began with his understanding of the word *yab'athu*, which he translated as "resurrects." The root word *ba'atha* means "to send," and is to be understood according to the context. For example Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) said, "Then We sent after them Moses with Our signs."[74] The word "sent" is used here for *ba'atha* since the context cannot accept the term "resurrect."

The correct translation would be Omar claiming that Allah will "send him and he will cut the hands and legs of some men."

Carrying on, the situation remained as such until Abu Bakr came and recited that "Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]?"[75]

Omar commented, "By Allah, it is in that moment when I heard Abu Bakr recite it, I felt as if I was dying and my feet would no longer support my body, then I fell to the floor when I heard it and knew that the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) had died."[76] It was after Omar heard the recitation that he finally accepted that the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) was dead.

To compare the immediate reaction of Omar to the teachings of Ibn Saba' is not fair. Omar's view was a mistake, which he

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[74] Al-A'araf : 103
[75] Aal-Imran : 144
[76] Saheeh Al-Bukhari (p. 757)

admitted in the shortest period of time. It was not an article of faith, nor was it an ideology that he passed to followers. So to compare it to the widespread influence of Ibn Saba's understanding of *raja'ah,* which was explained in the second chapters, is simply preposterous.

Refuting Evidences of Ali's Raja'ah

In the first set of narrations provided by Olawuyi, we are provided with several narrations about Thu Al-Qarnain from the narration of Abi Al-Tufail from Ali. The narrations by Ali suggest that Thu Al-Qarnain was a good man, but not a prophet, though sent by Allah. Some of the narrations suggest that he was killed and brought back to life. Ali also suggests that amongst the Muslims is someone who is like him.[77]

Olawuyi concludes:

> Ali will come back, and will be fatally hit again on his death [sic]. He will die a second time, on the surface of the earth. Dhu Al-Qarnayn was revived once more after the second death, and our *mawla*, Ali b. Abi Talib, will still "return" after his own second death as well.[78]

Unfortunately for Olawuyi, these narrations that are attributed to Ali are not to be taken as evidence to suggest the resurrection of Thu Al-Qarnain for these narrations are not

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[77] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 57- 64)
[78] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 64)

attributed to the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam). Unlike Shia Islam, it is only the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) that is infallible when it comes to relating of events about past nations.

It is very possible that Ali may have received this information from another source and this is the logical opinion since the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) when asked about Thu Al-Qarnain said, "I don't know if Thu Al-Qarnain was a prophet or not." The hadith is authentic.[79]

Contemporary scholar Mana'a Al-Qattan points out that it was not uncommon for the companions to narrate what they have heard from Bani Isra'eel regarding past nations as long as it had nothing to do with ideology or rulings.[80] Furthermore, it is not out of the ordinary for Ali to narrate from Bani Isra'eel since this is not prohibited by the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam).[81]

Furthermore, even for a Shi`ee this isn't sufficient evidence of the resurrection of Ali. An authentic narration in Al-Kafi states that:

> Humran bin A`ayan said: I asked Abu Abdillah (*alaihi alsalam*), "What is the position of the scholars (Imams)?" He (*alaihi alsalam*) said: "Like Thu Al-Qarnayn, the companion of Sulaiman, and the companion of Musa."

This is also repeated in the fifth and sixth narrations in this same chapter:

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[79] Al-Mustadrak 1/49, 3/824, 4/1380
[80] Mabahith fi Uloom Al-Qur'an (p. 365)
[81] Saheeh Al-Bukhari (p. 582)

> Burayd asked abu Ja`far (*alaihi alsalam*), "What is your rank and who do you resemble from past nations?" He (*alaihi alsalam*) said: "The companion of Musa and Thu Al-Qarnayn were scholars and not prophets." [82]

In summary, even from a Shi`ee perspective, Ali could be just stating that, "Thu Al-Qarnayn was an Imam appointed by God, and among you is one like him." Not that he will be killed twice and revived twice, but rather, that he is an Imam as Thu Al-Qarnayn was.

In another narration which Olawuyi uses as supporting evidence, the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) says to Ali, "O' Ali there is a treasure for you in paradise and you shall be its Thu Al-Qarnayn."[83]

Olawuyi then quotes Sh. Shoaib Al-Arna'ut, who classified the hadith as *hasan li-ghairih*.[84] However, upon further inspection, we find that Sh. Shoaib's alternative chain is from the narration of Buraida, which does not even mention Thu Al-Qarnain.[85] In other words, the supporting evidence is not sufficient and all that is left is this chain alone.

It is needless to say that the narration is weak due to Salama bin Abi Al-Tufail since he is *majhool*,[86] and due to the *tadlees* of Ibn Ishaaq.[87]

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[82] Al-Kafi 1/160
[83] `Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 65)
[84] Abd Allah bin Saba (p. 66)
[85] Al-Musnad 2/464
[86] Mizan Al-I'itidal 3/272
[87] Ta'reef Ahl Al-Taqdees (p. 132)

Conclusion

History cannot simply be rewritten overnight. The established fact of the existence of Abdullah bin Saba' and his sect are undeniable to every truth seeker. The people of the *ummah* are indeed blessed to have such a rich history, one that has been documented by both the "winners" and "losers", whoever they may be. However, to simply deny that Abdullah bin Saba' and his sect existed is a crime, not only to the historical method, but to reason as well.

Olawuyi, like the Shias of the past, has at least admitted that Abdullah bin Saba' did exist and was accused of *ghulu* towards Ali bin Abi Talib, so we had no problem with him there.[88]

However, to play a game by suggesting that this has not been established in the works of Ahl Al-Sunnah is senseless. To simply suggest that all the people that mentioned Abdullah bin Saba' (through authentic chains), his sect, their beliefs, have conspired or should be disregarded, contradicts the academic standards that Olawuyi intended to hold in his preface.

Through academic study, we have concluded that Abdullah bin Saba' did exist and so did his sects, and that his teachings can be linked to the evolved beliefs that are held by Twelver Shias today.

Praise be to Allah, the most gracious, most merciful.

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[88] See introduction.

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Glossary

'an-'an: A vague method of narrating traditions that does not include using clear terms like, "I heard" or "I was told."

Atba'a: Linguistically, it means followers. However, it is often used to refer to the generation that preceded the *tabi'een*.

Athar: A narration that is attributed to anyone other than the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam).

Al-Thaqalain: Two weighty things. The narrations of Al-Thaqalain often refer to the Qur'an and Ahl Al-Bayt.

Awhaam: In the context of hadith sciences, it refers to mistakes in narrating traditions.

Ba'atha: To send.

Bada'a: The concept that Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) is not omniscient.

Barzakh: A barrier between this life and the next.

Daif: Weak.

Ghulu: An adjective describing those that exaggerate. For our purposes, it refers to those that exaggerate the merits of Ahl Al-Bayt.

Hadith: Prophetic traditions. According to Shias, the umbrella is widened to include the traditions of the Twelve Imams.

Hasan: Literally, it means "good". In the context of hadith sciences, it refers to narrations that are stronger than "weak" traditions, but aren't quite "authentic" due to the slight weakness of a narrator or two.

Hasan li-ghairihi: A "weak" hadith that is strengthened by another "weak" hadith.

Ijtihad: Independent reasoning.

Ilm al-hadith: The science of hadith.

Khilafah: Successorship.

Majhool: Anonymous.

Mawla: Depending on context, the term refers to servants, masters, or allies.

Milal: Sects, faiths, and cults.

Mudraj: The inclusion of a narrators own words within a narration.

Munkar: A rejected tradition. When a man is referred to *munkar al-hadith*, it means that his narrations are rejected.

Rafdh: An extreme form of *tashayyu* that includes disassociation and the cursing of Abu Bakr and Omar.

Raja'ah: The belief in life after death in the current world. For our purposes, it refers to the belief that the Twelve Imams and

their followers will be brought to life in this world in order to take revenge on those that oppressed them.

Rijali scholar: A scholar that specializes in the biographies of hadith narrators.

Riwayah: A tradition.

Rizq: Livelihood.

Sahaba: Companion. Usually it refers to the companions of the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam).

Saheeh: Authentic.

Sanad: Chain of narrators.

Shaikh: Old men and/or teachers.

Shaikhain: Two *shaikhs*. Depending on context, it refers to either Abu Bakr and Omar or Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim.

Sunnah: Tradition.

Tabi'een: The generation that followed the *sahaba.*

Tadlees: The act of narrating from one's *shaikh* what one has not heard directly from him.

Tahdith: The act of narrating.

Takfeer: To claim that one is outside the fold of Islam.

Ummah: The nation (of Mohammad).

Wasiyyah: A testament or a will. In the context of Sunni/Shia polemics, it is a term used to refer to the will of the Prophet (salalahu alaihi wa salam) to appoint Ali as his caliph.

Yab'athu: To send.