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Did the Shi'ite Muslims Borrow Some Jewish Teachings?

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-Nabawiyah*, 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 Mecca. 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 revolters 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.

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