

Embassy of The Islamic Republic of Iran

In the name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful

In the last issue of "Al-Rasheed" an article entitled Abdullah Ibn Saba: Founder of Shi'ism was published in which unfortunately some accusations were made against Shi'ism.

The article, the author of which is not known, tries to, through some false accusations made against Shi'a Ulama's, establish that the Jew Abdullah ibn Saba is the founder of Shia'ism, and that Shi'ism is based on Judaism.

While the truth is that the quoted phrase is tampered with in a way which reflects an understanding completely opposite to what the source reads.

Shi'ism, with millions of followers throughout the world, and having a historical background of over 1400 years is based on Quran and Holy Hadiths by our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him). For example to prove the Caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib, Shi'ites have had recourse to some Quranic verses and hadiths of the Holy Prophet. Of course these hadiths, most of which are also accepted by Sunnism, have not been understood by the two denominations in the same way.

It is regrettable that in an era when the Muslims need to more than ever unite against their fierce enemies; especially so amongst the two main schools of thought namely Sunnis and Shia's; such disturbing accusations are spread out; not giving enough time and means to Shia's and their beliefs.

Below I have enlisted a number of books as sources for seekers of truth and followers of scientific and historic debates for their reference:

1. ABDULLAH IBN SABA AND OTHER MYTHS - by Allamah Askari
2. THE ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF SHI'A ISLAM - by S.H.M Jafri)
3. SHI'A - by Allamah Tabatabai
4. Computeric software including BIHAR AL-ANWAR and RIJAL AL-KASHI.

A copy of these books is available in the Embassy's library. I do not know however of the existence of other copies elsewhere in the country.

Those interested are hereby invited to make use of our library to find out for themselves the scientific and logical way in which the said unscientific accusations have been responded.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the following number to arrange for such facilities.

OFFICE TEL: (012) 342 8880/1

FAX NO: (012) 342 4790

M.H. BORJIAN YAZDI

CULTURAL ATTACHE

16 Aug 1999

Jamiatul Ulama Transvaal, replied to this letter as follows:

Mr. M.H. Borjian Yazdi

Cultural Attaché

Iranian Embassy

Pretoria

Sir,

Receipt has been taken of your letter dated 15 August 1999, in which you voiced dissatisfaction with the article Abdullah ibn Saba: The Founder of Shi'ism.

Your concern as the diplomatic representatives of Iran over an article of this nature is understood. Understood too, are the sentiments you express where you say that "it is regrettable that in an era when the Muslims need to more than ever united against their fierce enemies; especially so amongst the two main schools of thought namely Sunnis and Shia's; such disturbing accusations are spread out not giving enough time and means to Shia's and their beliefs."

Sunnism & Shi'ism

However, as much as one would want to gloss over the differences between the Ahl as-Sunnah and the Shi'ah, the fact of the matter is that the differences do exist, and that by their very nature they make each group's claim to the Truth an exclusive one.

It is precisely for this reason that the propagation of Shi'ism has continued unabatedly in Sunni societies, more often than not with funding from, and the sanction of, Iran. To the best of our knowledge your government has never expressed the least reservation over the huge amount of Shi'i propagationist literature flowing to Sunni communities out of Iran, nor about the activities of missionaries actively engaged in the propagation of Shi'ism amongst Sunnis, with financial backing from Iranian foundations.

This has given rise to a situation where the Ahl as-Sunnah have become so alarmed by the rate of proselytising in their communities that calls of people like yourself for "Muslim unity in the face of the fierce enemies of Islam" have come to be seen as a smokescreening device intended to create the diversion under cover of which Shi'i missionaries will penetrate into Sunni societies. If this assertion could once upon a time be dismissed as an unfounded assumption, it has now found a basis for itself in two decades of bitter experience, in South Africa and elsewhere.

It is not intended here to deny you the right to propagate your beliefs, since the constitution of our country upholds freedom of belief. Our intention is to bring it to your notice that when the Shi'ah have opted to exercise their right to propagate their faith, they should not be surprised or express regret at the inevitable consequences.

When Iran declared Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ism the state religion, it set itself up as the champion of Shi'ism. (Incidentally this is also the reason why you, as the cultural attaché of your country, took exception to the article Abdullah ibn Saba: The Founder of Shi'ism.) Therefore it is fully comprehensible to us why Iran will not permit Sunni missionary groups to operate on Iranian soil. But we become completely mystified when we see the double standards of Iran itself sending missionaries, or acquiescing to the funding and sending of missionaries to communities such as ours who are not in a position to defend its faith through political or legal power.

Crux of the issue

This issue does not revolve simply around Ibn Saba. It goes much further than that. It has to do in the first instance with each group's claim to being the true form of Islam, and by logical extension, with the way in which each group accounts for the existence of the other.

The Shi'ah and the Ahl as-Sunnah both claim that their form of Islam is the true one. This assertion is probably beyond contention from either side. The real problem lies in the implication of these respective claims. If "A" lays claim to the truth, it is simultaneously claiming that the claim of "B" is false, and vice versa. We know that this perspective of the relationship between the Ahl as-Sunnah and the Shi'ah is an extremely sensitive one, but it is a question that must be addressed if we are to have an appreciation of all the various dimensions to this issue.

Shi'ism makes no secret of the fact that it regards the faith and practice of the Ahl as-Sunnah as the corruption of Islam by the Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa-alihi wasallam) primarily, and the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties secondarily. References to support this contention abound in the books of the Shi'ah, some of which are now quoted here:

God knows what misfortunes Islam has suffered from its inception down to the present at the hands of these evil 'ulama! Abu Hurayra was one of the fuqaha, but God knows what judgements he falsified for Mu'awiyah and others like him, and what damage he inflicted upon Islam. (Ayatullah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, p. 114, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar)

We conclude here that the Shi'ah are the true followers of the Prophetic Sunnah... Whereas the Ahl as-Sunnah have expressly contradicted the Prophetic Sunnah. (Muhammad Tijani Samawi, *The Shi'ah: The Real Followers of the Sunnah* p. 314, Ansariyan Publications, Qum 1995)

It is self evident that the Khulafa ar-Rashidun (except Imam 'Ali) have practised ijtihad with their opinions against the Prophetic Sunnah. (ibid. p. 315)

The religion was exploited for the political needs. Both the Omayyids and the Abbasids deepened and strengthened sectarian and religious prejudices among the Muslims in order to use them for their own purposes. They exaggerated and amplified the idea of seniority of persons other than Ali in the matter of the Caliphate. In these efforts of theirs, they were helped by those Ulema (scholars) who cared much for the worldly positions. The rulers spent money on such scholars who in turn reported fabricated Traditions suitable to the rulers, especially during the Omayyid period, as we have already said. People follow the religion of their kings. They also said what their rulers did. Then came those who were not aware of the real situation. They saw these fabricated traditions and made-to-order injunctions and took them for true ones. They further passed them on in their books. Those who came later found these Traditions in the books attributed to great personalities which made them accept them as true. Thus these traditions got disseminated between the people. Everyone read them, talked about them in their gatherings and discussed them in their classes and schools. In this time passed on and such ideas got currency amongst the common masses so much so that those who knew the truth were swept away by the pressure of public opinion and these false ideas, which it is proper to discuss, took the form of a regular creed. (Hasan ul-Amine, *Shorter Shi'ite Encyclopaedia*, pp. 78-79, Ansariyan Publications, Qum, 1997)

(For further reference, see the books *an-Nass wal-Ijtihad* by 'Abd al-Husayn Sharaf ad-Deen, and *Ma'alim al-Madrasatayn* by Murtada al-'Askari.)

We hope that notice will have been taken here of the fact that the quoted sources were published in Iran within the last five years. If the Shi'ah thus have a freedom of using the printed word for

disseminating their own opinion about the origin of Sunni faith and practice, we are baffled as to why umbrage should be taken when the Ahl as-Sunnah express their honest opinion about the origins of Shi'ism. If Iranian sensors find nothing objectionable in literature such as the quoted sources, why should Sunnis be expected to practice reservation? And, if such inflammatory statements do not give you, the Shi'ah, reason to regret that "in an era when the Muslims need to more than ever unite against their fierce enemies; especially so amongst the two main schools of thought namely Sunnis and Shia's; such disturbing accusations are spread out", why are we, the Ahl as-Sunnah, being told that making accusations like this spells disaster for Muslim unity? Surely the authors of the quoted sources were also not "giving enough time and means to Sunnis and their beliefs".

For as long as the Shi'ah will persist to view Muslim unity as a one-way street in which they alone have the exclusive right to fling the stones and hurl the sticks, it will remain the mirage it presently is.

If, on the other hand, it is argued that these are things that are historically verifiable, we would submit that if the act of verifying the truth is supposed to have a preconceived result, it is a meaningless exercise. On the other hand, if it is going to be a completely objective process, it will inevitably threaten the Muslim unity whose destruction you fear. But let us, for the sake of demonstration, engage in just one such exercise.

Abdullah ibn Saba

Let us discuss, first of all, the historical existence, and thereafter, the role of Ibn Saba, in order to ascertain whether the Sunni position that he was the founder of conventional Shi'ism is based on scientific research, or unfounded accusations.

The existence of Ibn Saba

Murtada al-'Askari's entire argument for denying Ibn Saba's historicity rests upon the fact that Ibn Jarir at-Tabari's *Tarikh*, as the major reference for historical material on Ibn Saba, uses Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tamimi as his sole source for describing the character and exploits of Ibn Saba. He states on page 20:

All historians agree that the story [of Ibn Saba] was told first of all by Saif.

He then gives a list of 22 historians, all of whom have relied, directly or indirectly, upon the information supplied by Sayf, and remarks:

The above list gives evidence to the fact that the story of 'Abdullah Bin Saba' has been started by Saif and cited primarily from Tabari. (Murtada al-'Askari, 'Abdullah ibn Saba and Other Myths, Part One, p. 21, second edition, published by A Group of Muslim Brothers, Tehran 1981)

This is exactly the Achilles' heel of al-'Askari's research. He has—intentionally or unintentionally—displayed myopic scholarship by asserting that Sayf ibn 'Umar is the only source for the existence of Ibn Saba. A mere look at the biography of Sayf in Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani's *Lisan al-Mizan* (vol. 4 p. 22 of the edition published by Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, and edited by Muhammad 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Mar'ashli) would have revealed to him just how erroneous his assertion is. The sources from which Ibn Hajar has drawn, such as the 70 volume *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asakir, and the *Musnad* by Abu Ya'la al-Mawsili have been published, and by means of their chains of narration that pass through authorities other than Sayf ibn 'Umar, eloquently testify to the intellectual deception practiced by al-'Askari. (See Ibn 'Asakir, *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq* vol. 29 pp. 3-10, where he has filled seven pages with information on Ibn Saba.)

Al-'Askari did in fact make mention of the history of Ibn 'Asakir in his survey of the historical sources that mention Ibn Saba. However, in his eagerness to create the (false) perception that all the historical threads link up to Sayf ibn 'Umar, he committed the deception of singling out one of the twelve independent accounts as being derived by Ibn 'Asakir through Sayf, and making as if the remaining 11 reports do not exist. (See 'Abdullah ibn Saba and Other Myths, p. 47) The fact is that 10 of the remaining 11 reports pass through authorities other than Sayf, but that is a fact that al-'Askari conveniently chose to overlook.

The term "intellectual deception" might seem a bit too harsh a description for a researcher who was probably not informed about that wealth of information. But it appears very justified when it is considered that the existence of Ibn Saba is attested to in the legacy of the Shi'ah themselves, and by the Imams of the Shi'ah themselves. If it could be pleaded that al-'Askari was ignorant of the historical information documented by Ibn 'Asakir and others, there is no way that same plea could ever be accepted in terms of the legacy of the Shi'ah. After all, a learned researcher who spent so much time and effort fine-combing the voluminous works of history is definitely expected to encompass the contents of his own legacy first.

In his survey of historical works, which he purports to be exhaustive, not a single mention has been made of the literature of the Shi'ah. Not a single classical Shi'i source features on the chart he gives on page 50. The fact is that the existence of Ibn Saba is attested to in almost every Shi'i biographical work. Dr. Sa'di al-Hashimi in his book *Ibn Saba: Haqiqah La Khayal* (pp. 25-28, Maktabat ad-Dar, Madina 1406) has listed over 20 Shi'i sources that testify to the existence of Ibn Saba. We might mention by way of example just one of those works. Incidentally the book happens to be one of the books contained in the list you mentioned in your letter. The only difference is that your copy is computerised, while ours is a printed book. The book we refer to is *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal*, which is Abu Ja'far at-Tusi's recension of Abu 'Amr al-Kashshi's 4th century biographical dictionary of Shi'i hadith narrators. In this book the entry for Ibn Saba spans a full two pages (323-324), and consists of five separate reports, their numbers running from 170 to 174. Below we give you a list of the Imams with whom these five reports originate:

170: Imam Muhammad al-Baqir

171: Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq

172: Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq

173: Imam Zayn al-'Abidin

174: Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq

(See *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal*, pp. 323-324, ed. as-Sayyid Mahdi ar-Rijali, published by Mu'assasat Al al-Bayt, Qum, 1404)

The reporters of these narrations are all of the Shi'ah. Therefore, if we were to apply al-'Askari's hypothesis to these reports documented by al-Kashshi, we would have to conclude that Sayf ibn 'Umar even succeeded in pulling wool over the eyes of these venerable Imams by making them believe that 'Abdullah ibn Saba, who is supposed to be a figment of his own imagination, actually existed. I think you will agree that such a conclusion is highly absurd. It wouldn't take a genius to figure that the source of that absurdity is al-'Askari's hypothesis, "that the story of 'Abdullah Bin Saba' has been started by Saif and cited primarily from Tabari".

Another book you have listed is *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* by S.H.M. Jafri. Please be informed that Jafri does not make any definitive conclusions about Ibn Saba. His words are:

Whether 'Abd Allah bin Saba, to whom the history of the ghulat is traced, was a real personality or not, the name as-Saba'iyya is often used to describe the ghulat in Kufa who believed in the supernatural character of 'Ali. (Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, p. 300, Ansariyan Publications, Qum)

We have thus far had one Shi'i writer—al-'Askari—who completely denies the historicity of Ibn Saba, and another—Jafri—who is undecided. We will add a citation from the work of a third contemporary Shi'i writer who categorically affirms the existence of Ibn Saba. Shaykh Muhammad Husayn az-Zayn al-'Amili writes in his book *ash-Shi'ah fit-Tarikh*:

However it may be, Ibn Saba definitely existed and manifested ghuluww (extremism), even though some people doubt his existence and made him out to be an imaginary character created by personal interests. As for us, on grounds of the latest research we have no doubt concerning his existence and his extremism... Yes, Ibn Saba exhibited extremism in his religion. This innovation of his seeped into the thinking of a group that was by no means small, and that group was named after him. (Muhammad Husayn az-Zayn, *ash-Shi'ah fit-Tarikh*, p. 213, Dar al-Athar, Beirut, 1979)

Here we have three different positions on the existence of Ibn Saba. All three belong to Shi'i writers. Two of them are listed by you as "sources for seekers of truth and followers of scientific and historic debates". Do we have the freedom of choosing the one which seems most likely to be the truth, or is the selection of the true opinion the prerogative of the Shi'ah?

The role of Ibn Saba

Now, having dealt with the problem of Ibn Saba's existence, we may move on to discuss his role in the historical development of Shi'ism.

Ibn Saba is held responsible for the introduction of many phenomena which later developed into hallmark aspects of Shi'ism. The Shi'ah (or at least those of them who accept his existence, like Shaykh Muhammad Husayn az-Zayn al-'Amili) admit that he exhibited extremist tendencies. In the *Tarikh* of Ibn 'Asakir he is on record as having

vilified Abu Bakr and 'Umar (Ibn 'Asakir vol. 29 pp. 8,9)

believed the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa-alihi wasallam) to have imparted to 'Ali special knowledge which was not known to anyone but him. (Ibn 'Asakir vol. 29 p. 9)

believed 'Ali to have been the *Dabbat al-Ard*, the creator and the giver of sustenance (Ibn 'Asakir vol. 29 p. 9)

The first two of these beliefs are common features of Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ism, while the third one with its extremist overtones is more reminiscent of the Ghulat. We have already seen what Jafri has written about Ibn Saba's role in the origin of the Ghulat. That particular aspect of Ibn Saba's role finds further corroboration in the Shi'i biographical literature. Al-Kashshi, for example, reports the following

Hisham ibn Salim reports that Abu 'Abdillah (Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq) told his companions the story of Ibn Saba, and his claims of divinity for Amir al-Mu'minin. He said: When he made those claims Amir al-Muminin asked him to repent. He refused to repent, so Amir al-Mu'minin burnt him fire. (*Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal*, vol. 1 p. 323)

Extremist tendencies like these were originally introduced by Ibn Saba. Before him no one, not even the little group of Sahabah like Abu Dharr and Salman al-Farisi, whom the Shi'ah look upon as the early Shi'ah, ever made such claims, neither did any one of them ever speak ill of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. This too, was invented by Ibn Saba.

Extremism did not die with the death of Ibn Saba. It persisted, and the centre of its activities, as Jafri tells us in *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'ah Islam* (p. 300), was the city of Kufa. Here we stand before an interesting observation that was brought to light by Jafri. He writes:

There is another important point that must be discussed here briefly. A considerable number of traditions are to be found, especially in the earliest Shi'i collection of hadith, *Al-Kafi*, which describe the Imams as supernatural human beings. What was the origin of these traditions, and to what extent are the Imams themselves responsible for them? These traditions are reported, as indeed are all Shi'i traditions, on the authority of one of the Imams, in this case from *Al-Baqir* and *Ja'far*. But were these Imams really the authors of such traditions, which describe their supernatural character? The first thing which must be noted in this connection is that while *Al-Baqir* and *Ja'far* themselves lived in Medina, most of their followers lived in Kufa. This fact brings us to a crucial problem. Kufa had long been a centre of ghulat speculations and activities. Whether 'Abd Allah bin Saba, to whom the history of the ghulat is traced, was a real personality or not, the name *as-Saba'iyya* is often used to describe the ghulat in Kufa who believed in the supernatural character of 'Ali. According to the heresiographers, Ibn Saba was the first to preach the doctrine of *waqf* (refusal to recognise the death of 'Ali) and the first to condemn the first two caliphs in addition to 'Uthman. (Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, p. 300, Ansariyan Publications, Qum)

This same Kufa, which was the hotbed of Shi'i activities and ghulat tendencies, was also the home of the most prolific narrators of the hadith which the Shi'ah ascribe to the Imams, and which are documented in their hadith compendiums such as *al-Kafi*, *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* and *al-Istibsar*. Since it is upon this corpus of narrated material that the entire edifice of Shi'ism rests, it would be of interest to see what kind of people were these men on whose authority it is narrated from the Imams.

Some of the most prolific narrators of the Shi'ah are:

- Zurarah ibn A`yan
- Muhammad ibn Muslim at-Ta'ifi
- Abu Basir Layth ibn al-Bakhtari al-Muradi
- al-Mufaddal ibn 'Umar al-Ju'fi

All four of these men were from Kufah. Let us take a closer look at these men:

- Zurarah ibn A`yan

Sayyid Bahr al-'Ulum states that the family of A`yan, of which Zurarah was a scion, was the largest Shi'i family of Kufa. (*Rijal as-Sayyid Bahr al-'Ulum*, a.k.a *al-Fawa'id ar-Rijaliyyah*, vol. 1 p. 222)

Zurarah has always posed a problem in Shi'ism, because while is on the one hand regarded as the most prolific narrator from the Imams *al-Baqir* and *as-Sadiq*, the Imams are also recorded as having cursed and excommunicated him. The Shi'ah attempt to reconcile these two contradictory attitudes through the dubious and completely unconvincing explanation of *taqiyyah* by the Imams.

Regarding the wealth of narrations which Zurarah reports, we are informed by al-Kashshi that had it not been for Zurarah, the ahadith of al-Baqir would have been lost. (Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal vol. 1 p. 345) Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khu'i has counted 2094 of his narrations in the four books, all of them from the Imams al-Baqir and as-Sadiq, (al-Khu'i, Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith vol. 7 p. 249)

On the other hand, al-Kashshi records that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq cursed Zurarah. The following quotation is but one of several places where his cursing of Zurarah is on record:

By Allah, he has ascribed lies to me! By Allah, he has ascribed lies to me! By Allah, he has ascribed lies to me! May Allah curse Zurarah! May Allah curse Zurarah! May Allah curse Zurarah! (Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal, vol. 1 p. 361)

Despite Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's cursing of Zurarah, he is still accepted by the Shi'ah as the most prolific and reliable authority for the ahadith of the Imams. He hails from Kufa, the centre of the successors of Ibn Saba; he is cursed by the Imam as Ibn Saba was cursed by Sayyiduna 'Ali; and yet he is respected as a trustworthy and reliable narrator of the ahadith which form the basis of Shi'ism!

- Muhammad ibn Muslim

Muhammad ibn Muslim is another Kufan narrator whose credentials as a narrator are extremely suspect, but who is accepted by the Shi'ah as a reliable narrator all the same. This Muhammad ibn Muslim, who claims to have heard 30 000 ahadith from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, and a further 16 000 from his son Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (See Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal vol. 1 p. 391) is also recorded by al-Kashshi to have been cursed by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (vol. 1 p. 394) just as Ibn Saba was cursed by his great-grandfather!

- Abu Basir al-Muradi

In Abu Basir we have another very prolific Kufan narrator whose character fails to convince anyone of his trustworthiness. He, together with Zurarah, is regarded of those who preserved the legacy of the Imams al-Baqir and as-Sadiq. He is one of a very select group of narrators about whom it is said that "there is consensus amongst the Shi'ah to accept what is authentically narrated from them." (See al-Mamaqani, Miqbas al-Hidayah vol. 2 p. 171)

However, Mir Damad in his annotations to Rijal al-Kashshi notes that the Shi'i hadith critic Abul Husayn ibn al-Ghada'iri said of him:

Abu 'Abdillah (Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq) used to get annoyed and upset with his presence, and his companions are in disagreement amongst themselves about him. I (Ibn al-Ghada'iri) believe that he was cursed on account of (matters pertaining to) his religion, not his narrations. To me he is a trustworthy narrator. (Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal, vol. 1 p. 397. See also al-Ardabili, Jami' ar-Ruwat vol. 3 p. 43)

Again we have here a most prolific Kufan narrator who was cursed by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq just like Ibn Saba was cursed by Sayyiduna 'Ali!

- al-Mufaddal ibn 'Umar

Here we have another Kufan narrator who is regarded by eminent Shi'i hadith critics as a reliable transmitter of the Imams' hadith. Al-Ardabili in *Jami' ar-Ruwat* (vol. 2 p. 258) records that Shaykh Mufid mentioned al-Mufaddal as belonging to the "inner circle, reliable and pious Fuqaha" of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's followers. Abu Ja'far at-Tusi too, is quoted as having mentioned al-Mufaddal amongst the mamduhin (praiseworthy).

But Imam Ja'far is recorded by al-Kashshi to have addressed by calling him, "You Kafir! You Mushrik!" (See *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal* vol. 2 p. 612) Another lengthier narration of al-Kashshi runs as follows:

'Abdullah ibn Miskan says: Hujr ibn Za'idah and 'Amir ibn Judha'ah al-Azdi came to Abu 'Abdillah [Imam Ja'far] and told him: "May we be ransomed for you! Mufaddal says that you [the Imams] determine the sustenance of the people." He [Imam Ja'far said]: "By Allah, no one besides Allah determines our sustenance. One day I needed food for my family. I was under difficult circumstances and thought hard about it, until I managed to secure food for them. Only then did I feel content. May Allah curse him and disown him." They asked: "Do you curse and disown him?" He replied: "Yes, so you too, curse him and disown him. May Allah and His messenger disown him." (*Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal* vol. 2 p. 614)

The above narration clearly identifies al-Mufaddal with the heresy originally introduced by Ibn Saba. In the biography of Ibn Saba given in al-Kashshi's *Rijal*, Imam al-Baqir is reported to have stated that Ibn Saba claimed himself to be a prophet, and 'Ali to be Allah (See *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal* vol. 1 p. 323). If we return to al-Mufaddal's biography in the same book we find the following:

Al-Kashshi says: The extremist Tayyarah mention in some of their books on the authority of al-Mufaddal that he said: "Seventy prophets were killed with Abu Isma'il, meaning Abul Khattab, each one of whom had seen and announced his prophethood."

[They also say] that he said: Twelve of us were admitted to the presence of Abu 'Abdillah [Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq]. Abu 'Abdillah started greeting each one of us, calling each of us by the name of a prophet. To some he said, "Peace be upon you, O Nuh." To some he said, "Peace be upon you, O Ibrahim," To last one he greeted he said, "Peace be upon you, O Yunus." Then he said, "Do not distinguish between the Prophets." (*Ikhtiyar Ma'rifat ar-Rijal* vol. 2 p. 614)

This Mufaddal, whom al-Kashshi says was of the extremist Khattabiyyah sect, the followers of Abul Khattab, whose beliefs derived directly from Ibn Saba himself—this Mufaddal is exonerated by contemporary Shi'i scholars such as Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Mamaqani, and Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khu'i as a most reliable and trustworthy transmitter of the knowledge of the Imams. Al-Mamaqani gives a lengthy explanation about what exactly constitutes ghuluww (See *Tanqih al-Maqal* vol. 3 p. 240 and *Miqbas al-Hidayah* vol. 2 p. 397) and concludes that the kind of things on account of which al-Mufaddal was labelled as a ghali has since become of the undeniable tenets (daririyat) of Shi'ism.

Conclusion

We have used the above three narrators merely as a specimen of the men upon whose narrations the edifice of Shi'ism rests. We consistently find disturbing points of resemblance between them and Ibn Saba. They are cursed by the Imams just as Ibn Saba was cursed by Sayyiduna 'Ali. Some of them held beliefs that are identical to Ibn Saba's innovations. They hail from Kufa, which Jafri tells us was the stronghold of the Saba'iyyah.

Thus, after we have proven the historical existence of Ibn Saba, this investigation into the men responsible for the narration, or creation, of the hadith legacy of the Shi'ah leads us to the unequivocal conclusion that what exists today as Shi'ism, and specifically Twelver Shi'ism, contains a substantial chunk of the original heresy of Ibn Saba. We therefore feel that we have quite convincing reasons to look upon 'Abdullah ibn Saba as the Founder of Shi'ism.

If this conclusion fails to find favour in Shi'i circles, that cannot be helped. Just as the concern of the Shi'ah for Muslim unity in the face of the vicious enemies of Islam has never constituted an impediment for them to state exactly how and what they perceive the faith and practice of the Ahl as-Sunnah to be, similarly, we feel that it is only fair if the Ahl as-Sunnah too, can exercise the right to publish their viewpoint on the origin of Shi'ism, without anyone, and least of all the Shi'ah, demanding from them to consider the danger that poses to Muslim unity.

If the state of Iran and its diplomatic representatives in South Africa are sincere in their concern for Muslim unity, we suggest that they take a very serious look at the extent to which Shi'ism is being propagated in South Africa, as well as the provenance of the funding that supports those missions. Only when you have proven your sincerity for the cause of Islam by removing that essential stumbling block would we feel that your protest against the publication of an article like Abdullah ibn Saba: the Founder of Shi'ism deserves something more than a decisive dismissal.

Yours in the Service of Islam

(Signed)

NB: We have copies of all the books you listed except Bihar al-Anwar. It would be greatly appreciated if the embassy could arrange for us to have a copy of Bihar since it is such an invaluable source of reference.

Distortion of Deen in the Name of Ijtihâd and Renewal of Islâm

Islâm is the only religion which Allâh has prescribed for everyone and only on Islâm has Allâh based success of the hereafter. Allâh Ta'âla in Surah Al-Imran says:

"verily, according to Allâh, the only true religion is Islam."

In another place Allâh states:

"and whosoever seeks any religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him and he will be from amongst the ruined ones in the hereafter."

Islâm is complete. The Qur'ân, the fountain head of Islâm is protected till the last day. Allâh has promised to protect it. It is an everlasting miracle.

The laws of Islâm are uniform forever. There is no room for any amendments in them. Since Islâm is a divine religion, not man made, therefore there is no room for any individual or party to change a harâm to halâl or vice versa. The laws of Islâm will not change by an individual or party making any amendments to them. Instead, that individual or party will become Kâfir.

Since two or three years the enemies began efforts to change Islam. For this task they use only so called Muslims, i.e.. false claimants of Islam. Those who have not studied Qur'ân and Hadith, neither learnt Islâm from pious and sincere Muslims, nor have they enjoyed the company of the true supporters of Islam. These are the ones who are caught in the trap of the Jews and Christians and raise voices to change the laws of Islam. These are the people who do not differentiate between divine and man- made religions. Those who have made up their own religions, if they make amends to it, it suites them. It is understood if man amends things he has made it on his own, but there is no room for amendments to the book which Allâh revealed and to the religion sent for His servants, who's details He mentioned by means of the last prophet.

Whoever would like to make amendments to Islam, why should he attribute himself to Islam. He is not a Muslim, therefore he should attribute himself to another religion. The religion of Islâm will not change by anyone making amendments to it. It is incumbent upon the servants of Allâh to execute only those Islamic laws which have been narrated continuously from the first era. Allâh has not given anybody the authority to make amendments to Islam.

People have made changes to Islâm under the following names: i.e.. Ijtihâd, Renewal of Islam, Rectification of the worldly and economical conditions of the people. Some have insurance halâl. Some have made bank interest halâl. Some have made photographs halâl. Remember, no halâl will become harâm and vice versa by the changing of these modernists (who have forgotten Allah).

Some say there should be equality between men and women, whereas there are the following differences between them:

- 1) Allâh has not created them equally.
- 2) Both of them are not equal in body strength.
- 3) Two women's evidence equal one man. The Qur'ân says:

and the hadith indicates that women's intelligence is less than man.

4) A woman's share is of that of a man in inheritance. Allâh states:

6) The man has been made the bread winner and the woman is commanded to sit at home. Allâh states regarding the men:

7) The woman is commanded to stand in the last line in salât.

8) The man is the father and the woman is the mother. Naturally there is a difference between them. Despite the clarification of the Qur'ân in the above conditions, how can men and women be equal. If anyone makes such laws wherein men and women are equal, these will be self-proposed laws which will have no link to Islam.

Some people say, certain women are very intelligent and certain women are the head of a certain country. We should understand that by a few women being intelligent and a few men being stupid, the general rule will not change. Laws are passed on majority. The woman that the head of a state, firstly, they are not supposed to be made the head. They appear in front of men without the veil and commit a lot of evil.

In Pakistan a woman has been made the head, since then there is no peace. Murder and bloodshed is the order of the day. Some quote the British system, that there a woman is the head. Firstly they are Kâfirs. If they were Muslims they would definitely not do this.

Some quote the country of Sheba. Everyone knows that she was a Kâfirah. It is clearly mentioned in Surah Naml that she used to worship the sun. What contact did she have with Islam. When she accepted Islam, then Hazrat Sulaiman (A.S) began ruling her country.

Secondly we should remember that the British have a parliamentary system. Whatever is passed in the parliament, the queen is forced to endorse it. This is "rule" in reality. This is loyalty to the parliament. That parliament is such that if after a law has been passed, if the public does not obey it, that law is changed and the queen has to endorse both.

A few months ago, a black American woman was called to South Africa. She was taught Arabic and taught to speak out against Islam. Many ignorant people and some so-called learned men joined her after listening to her modern talks. They used to endorse whatever she said. They encouraged her so much that they made her speak against Islâm on a Friday on the mimbar (pulpit).

One of the things attributed to her is that there is a need to revise the Qur'ân (may Allâh save us). This woman and her followers have forgotten that one's own book is revised. No one has the right to revise the book revealed by Allâh. There is an art of criticising. The people who trained this woman and sent her thought the Qur'ân to be like their bible. They forgot that this is Allah's book. Who gave the right to revise this book and to whom was the right given.

Another thing that has been attributed to her is that until now men were writing commentary's of the Qur'ân therefore women's rights were shown less and they were deprived of equality (being equal to men). Now women should write commentary's of the Qur'ân and prove their rights. It is clear from this statement of hers that women do not have the same status as men, otherwise by now they would have written commentary's of the Qur'ân. Now they are being investigated. A woman is made to speak against Islâm of the principles of the Atheists. Men have always remained the heroes of this false task and the women were always used.

Unification of Religions

While there may be accommodation in Shari'ah for co-operation between religious groups on common issues, protagonists of the inter-faith movement have now gone a step further. There has been a call for the unification of all religions, building mosques, temples, churches and synagogues in one compound, and even the printing of scriptures such as the Qur'ân and the Bible in one book.

Before giving a verdict on this new 'unified' religion, it is essential to know a few of the standing fundamentals of Islâm:

One of the fundamentals of Faith in Islâm is that there is no true religion on the earth except Islâm, and that it is the Final religion which abrogated all previous religions. Therefore, no other religion remains on earth by which Allâh can be worshipped except Islâm. says, "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islâm, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." [3:85].

One of the fundamentals of faith that the Qur'ân is the last Book that was revealed by the Cherisher of the Worlds. It abrogated all the Books revealed by Allâh before it, and as such no other Book has been left by which Allâh can be worshipped except the Qur'ân. Allâh, The Most High, says, "And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (the Qur'ân) in truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it, and trustworthy in highness and a witness over it (old scriptures). So judge between them by what Allâh has revealed, and follow not their vain desires." [5:48]

The Torah and the Bible were abrogated by the Qur'ân, and that they were changed by means of additions or deletions by their followers, as Allâh says, "So because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard. They change the words from their (right) places and have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. And you will not cease to discover deceit in them, except a few of them." [5:13]

Accordingly, even whatever is considered as correct in these Books, has been abrogated by Islâm. The remaining parts are altered. This is proved by the following incident. The Prophet (SAW) got angry when he saw 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab holding a sheet containing some verses from the Torah and he said to him, "O 'Umar! Are you in doubt? Have I not brought (the Message) as clear as white? If my brother Musa had been alive, he would have followed me."

Another fundamental of Faith in Islâm is that our Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (SAW) is the seal of all the prophets and messengers. Allâh says, "Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allâh and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allâh is Ever All-Aware of everthing." [33:40] As such, no other messenger is left to be followed except Muhammad (SAW).

If any of Allâh's Prophets and Messengers had been alive, they too along with their followers would have followed Muhammad (SAW). Allâh says, "And (Remember) when Allâh took the Covenant of the Prophets saying 'Take whatever I gave you from the Book and Hikmah and afterwards there will come to you a messenger (Muhammad) confirming what is with you. You must then believe in him and help him.' Allâh said: 'Do you agree (to it) and will you take up My covenant (which I conclude with you)?' They said, 'We agree'. He said, 'Then bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses (for this).' [3:81]

Another fundamental of Islâm is that any Jew or Christian who does not embrace Islâm should be considered and designated as an unbeliever (Kafir), and such people will be the people of the Fire in accordance to Allâh's saying: "Those who disbelieve from among the people of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians) and among al-Mushrikun (Polytheists), we are not going to leave (their disbelief) until there came to them clear evidence." [98:1]

Adulterating the fundamentals of Islâmic Faith to serve the call (for the unification of religions) is but a devious call. It aims at mixing the Truth with Falsehood, destroying Islâm, demolishing its foundations and bringing all Muslims to clear apostasy (Riddah). This can be seen in the saying of Allâh, "And they will never cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion (Islâmic Monotheism) if they can." [2:217]. Allâh Says, "They wish that you reject faith, as they have rejected (Faith), and thus that you will become equal (like one another)." [4:89]

The inevitable consequence of such evil calls are:

The cancellation of differences between Islâm and Kufr, Truth and Falsehood, and complete negation of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.

Breaking of barriers of alienation between Muslims and Unbelievers so that no loyalty nor Jihad nor struggle for the sake of elevating Allâh's Word on Allâh's earth may take place. Allâh, The Most High, commands: "And fight against the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolators, disbelievers in the oneness of Allâh) collectively, as they fight against you collectively. But know that Allâh is with the pious." [9:36]

If such a call (unification) emanates from a Muslim, it would be considered explicit Riddah [apostasy] from Islâm. This call annuls what was proved by the Qur'ân as true, and denies that the Qur'ân has abrogated all the books that preceded it, and also negates that Islâm had abrogated all the previous religions. Based on this, the call for unification is rejected according to Shari'ah and is strictly prohibited by all evidences of Islâm in the Qur'ân, and the Sunnah.

Based on the aforesaid:

It is not permissible for any Muslim who believes in Allâh as the Rabb, in Islâm as the religion, and Muhammad (SAW) as a Prophet, to call for this abominable belief, or encourage others to join it.

It is prohibited for any Muslim to print the Torah and the Bible even independently. So how could it be permissible to print them with the Qur'ân in one book? This is but a combination of the Truth with the altered or abrogated books.

It is prohibited for any Muslim to respond to the call for building a mosque, a church, and a temple in one complex, as this would imply a confession that there are religions by which Allâh can be worshipped, besides Islâm. This would also involve a denial that Islâm is the purest of all the other religions. It would also imply a serious admission that religions are three and that people on earth may adopt whatever they wish of them, equally, and that Islâm has not superseded the religions that preceded it.

Undoubtedly, approving, believing, or accepting this call is considered Kufr (disbelief) and explicit error as it plainly contradicts the Qur'ân. It would also imply an agreement that the alterations done by the Jews and Christians are from Allâh. Moreover, it is not permissible to call churches 'Allâh's houses' as the Christians do not perform a correct worship that is accepted by Allâh, and it is a kind of worship not based on Islâm. Allâh says, "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islâm, it will never be accepted of him, and in the hereafter he will be one of the losers." [3:85]

Calling the Kuffâr and the People of the Book to Islâm is incumbent upon all Muslims. However, sometimes results are not achieved except through kind words and sound arguments. It should, nonetheless, be done on condition so as to not compromise any of the rules of Islâm, so that they might either be convinced of Islâm and embrace it, or reject it and die after a clear warning is given to them. Allâh says, "Say (O Muhammad) 'O People of the Scripture! Come to a word that is Just between us and you, that we worship none but Allâh, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords, besides Allâh. Then if they turn away, say, 'I bear witness that we are Muslims.'" [3:64]

Fataawa On Attending Places Of Fitna And On Music

Q. Is it permissible for us to go to Sun City for a holiday without partaking in gambling? TV

A. It is NOT permissible to go to Sun City even though one does not gamble. The environment and evils of that place demands that we do not even think of going there. Besides gambling, many other evils are committed by going there, such as:-

Showing support for the activities taking place there merely by going there.

Wastage of money (entrance fees, petrol money, etc.).

Wastage of time.

Not prohibiting people from committing evil.

Looking at strange women.

Talking to them.

Increasing the numbers of evil-doers.

Inevitably being negligent from the remembrance of Allah Ta'aala.

Most likely missing Salaat.

If you really ponder, then you will point out many other evils too. Visiting Sun City even though one does not gamble there is like 'visiting' Jahannam whilst you are a resident in Jannah, would you do so? Remember, the wrath and anger of Allah Ta'aala upon evil being committed cannot be imagined, especially in a place like Sun City. Any time the punishment of Allah Ta'aala could descend. Would a Mu'min like to die in that place? A person will be resurrected in the manner he died! May Allah Ta'aala save us from an evil death and may he take us with Imaan, whilst doing good deeds. Aameen.

Q.1 What is ruling concerning music and the listening thereof?

A.1 Any form of involvement in music, whether by subtle participation or direct involvement therein is totally HARĀM AND FORBIDDEN in Shariah.