

## Orthodox Muslims: The Sunnis

After the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) died, there were differences of opinion about how the Muslims should be led and who should be given the leadership and authority. The Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) agreed that only the Qur'an and Sunnah had the authority to tell the people what to do. They decided, after looking into the Sunnah, that Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) should be their leader – and that he would rule over them according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. So he was the first Caliph. The second Caliph, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) was appointed by Abu Bakr. The third Caliph, 'Uthman Ibn 'Affān (may Allah be pleased with him) was chosen by a committee of six of the major Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who were themselves appointed by 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) before he passed away. The fourth Caliph, 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib (may Allah be pleased with him) was appointed by the major Companions after the assassination of 'Uthmān. 'Ali gave (رضي الله عنه) his pledge of allegiance to the previous three Caliphs and supported them wholeheartedly. He even named his children after them. There are 73 sects amongst the Muslims according to several authentic narrations – only one is recognized as being correct – and they are the ones who follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all). That sect is referred to as *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* (The People of Sunnah and the main body of Companions), *Ahlu-Hadith* (The People of Narrations) and the Salafis (The followers of the Pious Predecessors) – all these names are synonymous with each other.

## The Shi'ah Sect

Decades after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), a minority sect appeared claiming that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had appointed 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib (may Allah be pleased with him) as his successor. They believed that the Companions were wrong in not appointing 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as the first Caliph since 'Ali was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. However, the Companions who were still present when the Shi'ah made their claims rejected their doctrines outright, including 'Ali himself. The beliefs, concepts of leadership and worship amongst the people of Sunnah is very different to the Shi'ah. The term Imām is used amongst the people of Sunnah, however, the term is not connected to sainthood or divinity. It is used to describe any Muslim ruler, Scholar or one who leads the prayer. The people of Sunnah refer to the overall leader as a Caliph (*Khalifah*). A lesser leader is referred to as a King, President, Amīr or Sultān – the people of Sunnah hold these to be legitimate rulers, even if they are sinful or oppressive and rebellion against these Muslim rulers is forbidden according to the authentic Prophetic narrations. Sunni Muslims are commanded not to obey the

rulers if their commands oppose the Qur'an and Sunnah – in such situations, the rulers are advised in private and the people are encouraged to be patient and to supplicate to Allāh to guide the oppressive Muslim leaders.

## Most Of The Shi'ah In The World Today Are The Twelvers (Ithnā 'Ashariyah) Or Rāfiḍah

The largest branch of the Shi'ah is the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* (Twelvers). They are referred to as the *Rāfiḍah* (Rejectors) due to their rejection of the first two Caliphs, Abu Bakr and 'Umar and the other disciples of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Here is a list of the twelve Imams the Shi'ah hold to be divine, to whom they direct worship and make pilgrimage to their shrines.

1. 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib, the Companion and 4th Caliph (d. 40 H).
2. Hasan Ibn 'Ali, grandson of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (d. 61 H).
3. Husayn Ibn 'Ali, grandson of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (d. 69 H).
4. 'Ali Zaynul-'Ābideen son of Husayn (d. 95 H).
5. Muhammad Al-Bāqir (d. 114 H).
6. Ja'far As-Sādiq (d. 148 H).
7. Mūsā Al-Kādhim (d. 183 H).
8. 'Ali Ar-Riḍā (d. 203 H).
9. Muhammad At-Taḳī (d. 220 H).
10. 'Ali Al-Hādī (d. 254 H).
11. Hasan Al-Askari (d. 260 H).
12. Muhammad Al-Mahdi (the Hidden Imām).

The Shi'ah believe that they are guided by the Hidden Imām even today. They believe that by a miracle, the Hidden Imām went into hiding as a child under the earth many centuries ago and that he communicates with the Shi'ite religious clerics. In Iran, Shi'ites pray for the return of the Hidden Imām. Iranian religious leaders are called Ayatollahs and are believed to be spokesmen for the Hidden Imām.

Of course, many of these Imāms are considered by Sunnis to be noble and righteous scholars from the family of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and their love of the Sunnah and the Companions is well-documented. However, the Shi'ah made them into divine infallible leaders who are deserving of being worshipped.

## Some Shi'ah Beliefs As Recorded In Their Own Sources

The differences between *Ahlu-Sunnah* and the *Rāfiḍah Shi'ah* are in the fundamentals of belief and creed (i.e., the *'aqidah*). The Scholars of *Sunnah* and *Hadīth* hold that the Twelvers have polytheistic beliefs that excludes them from Islam. Added to this is their staunch enmity for the Companions (رضي الله عنهم), and the Sunnis as is recorded throughout history till this day, and written clearly in their religious books.

It is unfortunate that many general Muslims who love the Qur'an and Sunnah and desire good, do not know the heretical beliefs and polytheistic practices of the Shi'ah—while others choose to ignore these fundamental differences in Religion in favour of political expediency. So, here we will mention just some of the beliefs of the Shi'ah, that they themselves have penned in their

reference books:

## 1. Shi'ah Belief Concerning The Twelve Imāms

The Shi'ah ascribe the attributes of God to the twelve Imāms. The foremost Shi'ī cleric, Al-Kulainī stated: **“If the Imāms desire to know something, they come to know it. They know when they will die — and none of them dies unless they choose to do so themselves.”**<sup>1</sup> The book of Al-Kulainī, to the Shi'ah, is the most reliable source-reference — in essence, it is to the Shi'ah what *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* is to *Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*.

The Shi'ah ascribe divinity to these Imāms, worshipping them just as Allāh is worshipped. One of their clerics, Hāshim Al-Bahrānī stated regarding the Twelve Imāms of the *Shi'ah*: **“They know what is in the Heavens and knowledge of what is in the Earth, they have knowledge of what has passed and they have knowledge of what is to come, and they know what happens in the night and the day, and from one hour to the next hour – and they have the knowledge possessed by the Prophets and even more than it.”**<sup>2</sup>

One of their important clerics of this era, 'Abdul-Muhsin Al-Aminī An-Najafī stated: **“Verily the Imāms are the sons of Allāh and from the offspring of 'Ali.”**<sup>3</sup> They also state in their writings and lectures: **“Indeed the Awaited Mahdi (i.e., the twelfth hidden Imām) entered an underground cavity whilst he was only five years old, yet he knows whatever takes place in every atom of the universe.”** To ascribe such attributes to the creation of Allāh is polytheism and disbelief by the consensus of the Muslims. Even our noble Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not ascribe such attributes to himself, rather he referred to himself as Allāh's Messenger and His devoted servant.

## 2. The Shi'ah Belief Regarding The Noble Qur'an

The Rāfiḍah Shi'ah claim that the Qur'an that is with the Muslims is not that which was revealed to Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They claim it has been altered and changed. The vast majority of their clerics and scholars believe the Qur'an has been altered and distorted from the original, as has been mentioned clearly by their cleric, An-Nūrī At-Tabrīsī (d. 1320 H) in his book.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Kulainī stated that the Qur'an that was brought by Angel Jibrīl (عليه السلام) to Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had 17,000 verses. This means that the Qur'an the Rāfiḍah claim was revealed is more than what is with us today because what we have before us

1. *Usūl al-Kāfi* (1/258-260)

2. *Yanābī' ul-Ma'ājjiz wa Usūl ud-Dalā'il* (Chapter 5, p. 35-36)

3. *Al-Ghadīr* (1/214-216).

4. *Fasl ul-Khitāb fi Ithbāt Tahrifi Kitāb il-Arbāb*.



today consists of just over 6,000 verses!<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Shi'ah Belief Concerning The Companions Of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) And His Wives

The belief of the Rāfidah is built on reviling and abusing the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with all of them). They declare all the Companions to be disbelievers with the exception of three (or a few more). The Shi'ah cleric Al-Kulainī states this in his Al-Kāfi: “All the people apostated after the Prophet (ﷺ) except for three, those being: Miqdād ibn Aswad, Abu Dharr al-Ghifārī and Salmān al-Fārisī.”<sup>2</sup>

To revile and accuse the Companions is disbelief by the consensus of the early Muslims. In the Shi'ah book *Miftāh al-jinān* of Abbās Al-Qummī there occurs a supplication of the Shi'ah clerics directed against Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and their two daughters 'Ā'ishah and Hafsa (رضي الله عنهما), both wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Shi'ah consider these as legislated supplications in the morning and the evening, wherein they utter: “O Allah, send peace upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad — and curse the two idols of Quraish, their two magicians, their two false deities, and likewise their slanderous daughters, those who opposed your commands...”<sup>3</sup> They also refer to Abu Bakr and 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) as “Pharoah and Hāmān!”<sup>4</sup> And as, “the two idols..”<sup>5</sup> And as the pre-Islamic pagan idols, “Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzah.”<sup>6</sup>

The Shi'ah clerics are very straightforward in their vile attacks upon the Sahābah. They state clearly that their Awaited Mahdī (the Hidden Imām) will bring to life Abu Bakr and 'Umar and then he will hang them from the branches of a date palm tree, and he will kill them over and over, a thousand times a day.<sup>7</sup> These statements are heretical and constitute unbelief because they oppose the words and commands of Allāh in the Qur'ān regarding the Companions.

### 4. Shi'ah Belief Regarding The People Of Sunnah.

The Rāfidah belief teaches that the wealth of the Sunni is permissible to take and his blood is permissible to spill. It is stated by the Shi'ī scholar, Al-Jazā'irī, “Ahlus-Sunnah are impure and filthy unbelievers by the consensus of the Shi'ah

scholars, and are more evil than the Jews and Christians.”<sup>8</sup>

### 5. The Rāfidah Shi'ah Believe That The Lord They Worship Is Not The Lord That Is Worshipped By Ahlus-Sunnah.

One of the leading Shi'ī scholars, Ni'matullāh Al-Jazā'irī stated: “We are not united with them (i.e. Ahlus-Sunnah) regarding the God that is worshipped, nor regarding the Prophet, nor the Imām — and that is because they (Ahlus-Sunnah) say that their Lord is the one whose Prophet is Muhammad, and his Caliph is Abu Bakr — and we do not recognise such a Lord, nor such a Prophet. Rather we say: Indeed the Lord who made Abu Bakr the Caliph of His Prophet is not our Lord, and such a Prophet is not our Prophet!”<sup>9</sup>

It is possible that there are some ignorant Shi'ah who ascribe themselves to the Shi'ah religion and ideology, or call themselves Ja'farīs or Twelvers and do not know the true beliefs of the sect. So upon them is to recognise the falsehood of the Shi'ah and free themselves from it, and not continue to ascribe themselves to the hateful Shi'ah doctrine. Truly, a religion is known by its sources, and not by its ignorant followers who have not studied. We have quoted here the beliefs of the Shi'ah from the source reference books of the sect that cannot be denied. Individual Shi'ah preachers may try and deny or hide these heretical beliefs but the reality is clear from their clerics and books that are printed and available. The festivals, pilgrimages and rituals that take place at their shrines, alongside their manifest hatred of the Companions and wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) exposes the reality of this misguided sect.

Much more can be said about the deviated beliefs of the Twelvers and the other Shi'ah sects, but it should be sufficient for the reader to note that the Shi'ah clergy and their followers certainly do not have the best interests of the Muslims at heart. A people who revile the closest Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), accuse them of apostasy, curse his noble wives and accuse 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) of fornication, believe they are in Hell forever, while they worship their own leaders, make pilgrimage to their shrines and give them godly attributes, are not people who will ever aid the Sunni [or Islamic] cause. Their outward claims of unity are nothing more than a facade that hides their enmity towards the people of Sunnah and Hadīth.

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8. *Al-Anwār an-Nu'māniyyah* of al-Jazā'irī (2/206-207).

9. *Al-Anwār an-Nu'māniyyah* (2/278-279).

1. *Usūl al-Kāfi* (2/242).

2. See *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, p.6, *Al-Kāfi Kitāb ar-Rawdah*, 12/312,322, with *Sharh Jāmi'* of Māzindarānī.

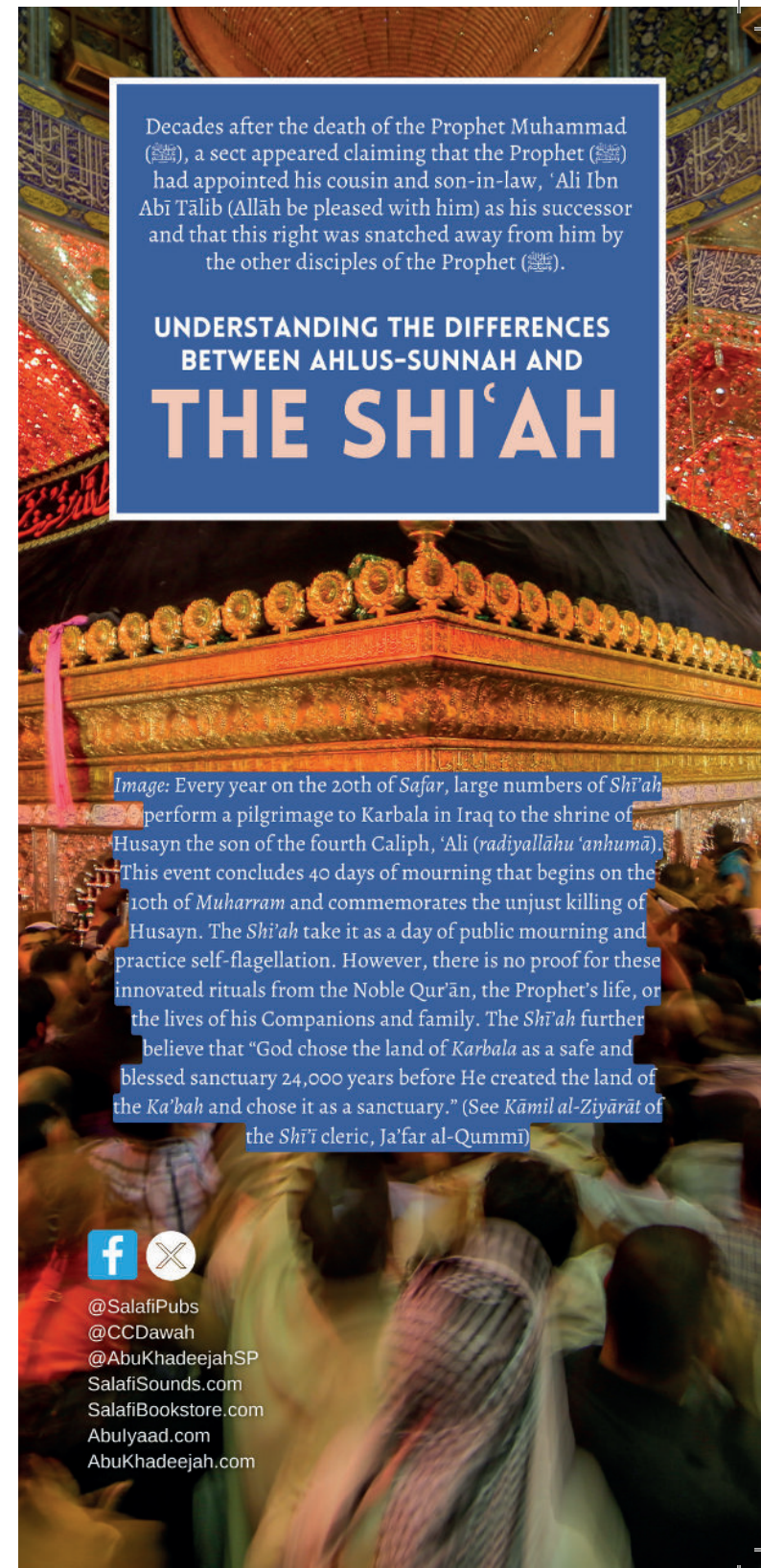
3. *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, p. 114.

4. See *Qurat ul-'Ayn* of al-Kāshānī, p. 432-433.

5. See *Tafseer al-'Ayāshī*, 2/116, and *Bihār al-Anwār*, p. 58,67.

6. *Ikmāl ad-Dīn* of Ibn Bābawāih al-Qummī, p. 246, and *Muqaddimat ul-Burhān* of Abul-Hasan al-'Āmalī, p. 294.

7. See *Ēqādh min al-Huj'ah bi Tafsīr al-Burhān 'alar-Ruj'ah* of Hurr Al-'Āmalī, p. 287.



Decades after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), a sect appeared claiming that the Prophet (ﷺ) had appointed his cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali Ibn Abī Tālib (Allāh be pleased with him) as his successor and that this right was snatched away from him by the other disciples of the Prophet (ﷺ).

## UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AHLUS-SUNNAH AND THE SHI'AH

Image: Every year on the 20th of Safar, large numbers of Shi'ah perform a pilgrimage to Karbala in Iraq to the shrine of Husayn the son of the fourth Caliph, 'Ali (radiyallāhu 'anhumā). This event concludes 40 days of mourning that begins on the 10th of Muharram and commemorates the unjust killing of Husayn. The Shi'ah take it as a day of public mourning and practice self-flagellation. However, there is no proof for these innovated rituals from the Noble Qur'ān, the Prophet's life, or the lives of his Companions and family. The Shi'ah further believe that “God chose the land of Karbala as a safe and blessed sanctuary 24,000 years before He created the land of the Ka'bah and chose it as a sanctuary.” (See *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* of the Shi'ī cleric, Ja'far al-Qummī)



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