

Sunni and Shī‘ah Perspectives on Islām

نظرة أهل السنة والشيعة إلى الإسلام

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FOREWORD

The religious beliefs and practices of Shī'ahs distinguish and separate them from the entire Muslim *ummah*. The Shī'ahs have specific beliefs about the attributes of Allāh, the attributes of Allāh's messengers, the position and mission of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), and the authenticity of the Qur'ān. They even have their own unique moral codes. Unfortunately, because of their clannish nature and secretive doctrines, very few people have proper knowledge of their beliefs and practices.

Since its inception Shī'ism has been shrouded in mystery. The initial preaching and propagation of Shī'ism was done only through word of mouth. None of the twelve Shī'ah *imāms* left any documentary evidence of their teachings. It is strange that the Shī'ahs claim to follow Ja'farī *fiqh* when, in fact, Imām Ja'far (may Allāh be pleased with him) did not leave any evidence of having compiled *fiqh* rulings. And later, when the Shī'ahs did start writing about their beliefs, such writings were meant only for Shī'ahs – Sunnis¹ had no access to them. In these writings, sayings attributed to the twelve *imāms* are classified as "*ḥadīth*," thus eliminating any differentiation between them and the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Contrary to universal teachings of monotheistic religion, the Shī'ah doctrine of *taqiyyah*² teaches its followers to conceal their faith and to hide their beliefs. The following two so-called "*ḥadīths*," said to have been narrated by the sixth Shī'ah *imām*, Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, clearly elaborate this point:

"One who exposes something from our religion is like one who intentionally kills us."³

¹Throughout this book the term "Sunni" has been used in reference to the majority of Muslims, who follow the *sunnah* (way) of the Prophet (ﷺ) as conveyed by his *ṣaḥābah* (companions).

²i.e., caution, prudence or dissimulation.

³*Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, p. 88.

