



Origins of Shi'a

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Islam is a deen that passed through 124,000 Prophets, it came bit by bit. Imagine a jigsaw. Each Prophet brought a piece of the puzzle, starting with Hadhrath Adam (as) until the final piece of the puzzle came in to the hand of Hadhrath Muhammad (saws). This role of Prophet hood was explained beautifully by the Prophet (saws) himself: **"My relation to the long chain of Prophets can be understood by the parable of a Palace. The Palace was most beautifully built. Everything was complete therein except the place for one brick. I have filled in that place and now the Palace has been completed"**.

[Towards understanding Islam by Sayyid Abu'l Ala Maudoodi, page 49 Editors footnote quoting Sahih Bukhari and Muslim (Islamic Foundation publishers)]

During the lifetime of the companions, the Holy Prophet (s) was the Practical Guide to the inner and outer meanings of the Qur'an. With his death, did this type of guidance end? Clearly the need for guidance would have been much more necessary for future generations that had never benefited from the Prophet (s)'s company.

Some people assert that the companions fulfilled this role of guidance. This contention is not supported by hadith, for the Prophet (s) had warned the companions not to become kaffirs by killing each other.[Sahih Bukhari V 9 # 198 - 200]. He (s) also said that afflictions would fall on to their homes in the same way that rain drops fall(1) and that some would become apostates after him(2) with the majority perishing in the fire(3). [(1). Sahih al Bukhari V 9 #182 (2). Sahih al Bukhari V8 # 586 (3). Sahih al Bukhari V 8 # 587]

In the same way that a Doctor after identifying a condition prescribes medication for his patient, the Prophet (s) had likewise told the companions where they should turn to for guidance. During his farewell sermon at Arafat he (s) declared **"I am leaving you two weighty things, if you follow them you will never go astray, they are the Qur'an and my Ahlul'bayt"**. [Sahih Tirmidhi, v5, page 662-663]

The sermon was announced to the Companions, thus proving that even they were liable of going astray if they turned away from these two sources. Those muslims, that have clung to these two sources as an eternal form of guidance are called the 'Shi'a' (partisans), defined by the Sunni scholar Ibn Manzur, as **"those people who love what the Prophet's Progeny loves, and they are loyal to such Progeny"**. [Lisan al-'Arab, by Ibn Manzur, vol. 8, p189]

We consider the Ahl'ulbayt as the designated guides appointed by Allah (swt). While past Khalifas were in positions of power, they did not inherit the knowledge, position and wisdom of the Holy Prophet, who specifically told the companions that Hadhrath Ali (as) had inherited

the Qur'an and Sunnah from him. [Riyadh al Nadira, by Mohibbudin al Tabari, Vol 3 p 123]

The inheritance of religious guidance passed through 12 designated Imams from Ahl'ulbayt, there are numerous hadith where the Prophet (s) declared that Islam would remain intact until the passing of 12 khalifas. [Mishkat al Masabih: (Vol 4 p 576), Hadith 5]

This fact is strengthened further by the hadith recorded by the recognized Sunni scholar Al-Juwayni in which the Prophet said that he would have **12 successors** the first being **Imam Ali**, the last being **Imam Mahdi**. [Fara'id al-Simtayn, pg 160]

As for the Shi'a of the Ahl'ul bayt, numerous Sunni scholars have recorded hadith in which the Prophet (s) had said that the group that Allah (swt) describes as **"the best of the creatures"** (Qur'an 98:7)" are Ali and his Shi'a and that they will enter paradise. [Tafsir Durre Manthur commentary of verse 98:7 Volume 6 page 379]

If the Prophet (s) said the best of creations are Hadhrath Ali (as) and his Shi'a, then in the same way that this verse is applicable until the end of the world, Ali (as)'s Shi'a will likewise exist to provide a practical commentary to it. The Ahl'ul Sunnah believe that 70,000 Muslims will enter paradise without answering any questions and Anas bin Malik, narrates that the Prophet (s) said that the 70,000 were Ali and his [Shi'a Manaqib Ali al Murtaza, page 184 by al Maghazli (An ancient Shafi scholar)]

The Shi'a have despite centuries of persecution and false propaganda maintained their affiliation with the Imams from the Ahl'ul bayt clinging to the **"two weighty things"** - seeking solace in the guarantee of the Holy Prophet (s): **"Recognition of the family of Muhammad is freedom from the Fire. Love of the family of Muhammad is crossing over the Sirat. Friendship for the family of Muhammad is safety from the fire"**. [Ash-Shifa, page 142 by Qadi Iyad, (d.544 Hijri) English translation by Ayesha Bewley, Madinah Press 1991.]

With such a clear hadith it is little surprise that the Prophet (s) declared: **"O Ali four people will enter heaven first of all. Me, you, Hasan, Hussain and your descendents will follow us and our wives will follow our descendents and our Shi'a will be to the left and right of us"**. [al Sawaiqh al Muhriqa page 159, by Ahmad ibn Hajr al Makki ,Cairo edition]

These hadith need to be pondered over carefully.

Remember, the Prophet (s) said in a well known hadith that Muslims would be divided in to **73 sects** of which **only one** would attain paradise, one hopes that this article has been able to shed light on which group that is.