

SHIA

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Founder

In the time of Imaam `Ali ibn Abi Taalib, a Yemeni Jewish man outwardly embraced the faith of Islam, but inwardly made plans against Orthodox Muslims. His name through history and his connection with the Shi`a would forever be set in stone. His name of `Abdullah ibn Saba. This man would use his personality to try to convince Imaam `Ali to proclaim himself to have a divine status with Allah, which the Imaam refused. When this took place, Saba took his ideas to the people who followed `Ali. From this constant brainwashing, some began to believe that indeed the Imaam was the Lord Almighty Himself in the flesh and to proclaim it in front of the masjid.

When asked by the Imaam to cease this action, they refused. Imaam `Ali put them all to death for blasphemy but was not able to apprehend Ibn Saba . As his power grew, Ibn Saba was able to influence another group, the Khawaarij, which would be the mother group from which the Shi`a spring from later. Due to the confusion that Ibn Saba caused, Imaam `Ali, the fourth khalifa of Islam, was assassinated by an extremist while on his way to the masjid for the morning prayers. Although dead now, the confusion that `Abdullah ibn Saba caused still lives with us today, in the form of the Shi`a and the beliefs that they inherited from this man.

The Shi`a are a very fractious group composed of millions of people worldwide in need of the pure message of salvation and truth contained in the Qur an and the Sunna. Amongst them there are some 3 main sub categories:

Ghulaah: This branch believes in the divine status of their imaams (particularly `Ali) and at times attributes divinity to some of them. They hold that most of the Sahaaba committed apostasy after the death of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and stole the right of succession from Imaam `Ali. They also have some 18 subdivisions. They are found in Iran, Iraq, the Persian Gulf and parts of the United States.

Zaidiyyah: Those who believe in and follow Imaam Zaid ibn `Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn `Ali ibn Abi Taalib, they firmly believe that the position of leadership can only be in those who are lineally descended from Faatima. They will not accept leadership of anyone else, but they do not curse any of the Sahaaba. Most of them are found in Yemen, parts of Iraq as well as the United States.

NOTE There is one branch of the Zaidiyyah that are not a cult and are from Muslim Orthodoxy, so one must be careful.

Ithnaa `Ashari: The Twelver Shi`a (also known as al-Imaamiyyah), named due to their belief in 12 infallible Imaams, beginning from the fourth Khalifa `Ali ibn Abi Taalib and ending with Muhammad al-`Askari, who is to have disappeared near 1000 years ago in a cave in Samarra. He will appear again at the end of time, bringing with him the lost 1/7th of the Qur an. They are by far the most numerous of the Shi`a factions. Sometimes referred to as the mainstream Shi`a, they are comprised of some 42 sub-groups amongst themselves. They are mainly found in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, the Eastern seaboard of the United

States and isolated areas of the United Kingdom.

Ismaa`ili/Aghaa Khaani: These are also known as the Seveners, they believe succession of Imaams still takes place and their current leader is Agha Khan Karim Hussain IV. The leader is believed to have divinity and be an expression of Allah in some form.

Key beliefs

1. The Lord Almighty is unknowable and will never be seen.
2. The Shi`a, in particular the Imaamiyyah, have a great dependency on logic and rhetoric, with some of them sitting and struggling to study the works of Aristotle and others. Overbearing and almost a sophist attitude of logic underlines the key tenets of Shi`a belief, something that will be demonstrated when one observes how the Shi`a theologians express their beliefs.
3. The Shi`a adopt the creedal understandings and principles of the Mu`tazilah faction, which is not accepted by Muslim Orthodoxy.
4. The doctrine of infallibility of the Imaams of the Shi`a. They are immune and sinless and there is no attribution of any wrong to them.

[This is in direct contradiction with the doctrine of the infallibility of the prophets. It is only they whom Allah has made infallible individually, but the Shi`a have gone one step further and classed their leaders as infallible.]

5. The Shi`a refuse to accept the primacy of Abu Bakr over all the other Sahaaba in terms of his leadership and his legitimacy as a successor to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who himself intimated Abu Bakr's leadership by commanding him to lead the prayer days before his death.
6. Many of the great leaders of the Sahaaba are referred to as apostates, major sinners or usurpers. It is also for this reason that the Shi`a refuse to follow one of the four orthodox interpretative disciplines passed down unbroken. This catastrophic error causes them to make many errors in creed that would normally be avoided.
7. Shi`a theologians perpetually combine the five prayers, making them only three.
8. The Imaams of the Shi`a are held to control the unseen affairs of the universe, so much so that they are believed to have the ability to help as well as harm.

Extent

There are about 165 million Shi`a in the world today, with most of their followers being contained in Iran. Other strong Shi`a locations include Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, India, Pakistan and parts of Central Asia, such as Uzbekistan.

