

There are five main sects in the Shi'a School. Each of these consists of many. Shahrastani has outlined this in the contents list of his famous book 'Al-Milal wal-Nahl'. The five main sects are, Kaysaniya, Zaydiya, Imamiya, Ghaliya and Isma'iliya.

### **Kaysaniya**

A shi'te group, who maintained that after the martyrdom of Hussein (RU), the Imam was another son of Ali, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya (RU) (d. 81/700)

### **Zaydiya**

The 'fiver' Shi'a. They followed Zayd ibn Ali (RU) , the grandson of Hussein (RU) . They say that any of the Ahl al-Bayt can be Imam. They are Mu'tazilite (rational) in doctrine and rather puritanical. Sufism is forbidden by them.

### **Imamiya**

The 'twelver' Shi'as. They believe that after the Prophet (SAWS), twelve Imams have come and they had the same authority of legislation as the Prophet had himself. The majority of the Shi'as we find today are Imamiya.

### **Ghaliya**

They are very extreme in regards to their beliefs about the Imam. Sometimes they exaggerate and raise the status of a particular Imam to that of God and sometimes they degrade the status of God and bring him down to the level of the Imam. (Al-Milal wal-Nahl p.140 v.1, Shahrastani, Beirut, 2000)

### **Isma'iliya**

The 'sevener' Shi'as, the followers of Ismail (RU) , son of Ja'far as-Sadiq (RU) (d. 148/765). Many of their doctrines were influenced by those of the Manicheans. They assert that Ismail (RU) completed the cycle of seven Imams after which the era of the hidden Imams began, and these Imams send out emissaries. They believe that if the Imam is not manifest (qa'im), then his emissary or proof (hujja) must be manifest. Shahrastani writes, " The 'Ismailiya' differ from the 'Musawiya' and the 'twelvers' by proving the Imamate of 'Ismail(RU) ' who was the oldest son of Ja'far as-Sadiq(RU) " (Al-Milal wal-Nahl p.155 v.1, Shahrastani, Beirut, 2000)

The Sunni's believe that the Prophet Mohammad (SAWS) did not appoint a

successor. The companions of the Prophet later made this appointment in a huge gathering that consisted of major figures from amongst them. If the appointment of Ali (RU) was made by the Prophet (SAWS) himself in his lifetime then this would have been known by the companions and they wouldn't have done such a thing to seize this from him for they were very pious people who have been praised time and time again in the Quran.

Not only do Shi'as believe in Ali (RU) to be the rightful successor to the leadership, but also an Imam of the people. An Imam in the Shi'a school of thought holds a great significance and a great status. The Imamate doctrine forms the core of Shi'ite theology. Anyone who doesn't have faith in the Imamate is not a Muslim according to the Shi'as.

### **Taqiyyah**

**(Dissimulation)**

Tabatabai has defined Taqiyya saying: Our aim is to discuss that kind of Taqiyya in which a man hides his religion or certain of his religious practices in situations that would cause definite or probable danger as a result of the actions of those who are opposed to his religion or particular religious practices. (Shia), Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, p. 223. published in Qum, Iran )

Even according to the Sunni School there are some situations in which a man is allowed to hide his faith in order to save him from getting killed. This is under the verse of the Holy Qur'an, 'Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah (SWT), utters unbelief, except under compulsion, His heart remaining firm in faith.' (Surah 16, verse 106).

However, the Sunnis refer to this as 'Ikraah' (compulsion) and not 'Taqiyya'. This doctrine of Taqiyya is a part of the Shi'a faith and is very wide in the Shi'a School. It may be practiced quite frequently, whereas, according to the Sunnis to hide one's faith or to utter words of disbelief while the heart is firm and strong on Islam is only acceptable in situations where if not practiced then there will be fear of getting killed. The conditions to practice this act are found in numerous Sunni books.

After allowing Taqiyya, this makes it lawful for a man to even lie or to indulge in prohibited acts at times.

None of the Imams ever claimed Imamate. Shi'as believe that they were practicing Taqiyya. This is a far-fetched claim.

**Tabarra - (To free or to exempt)**

This is one of the practices adopted by the Shi'ites in relations to the

Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) Abu Bakr (RU), Omar(RU) and Osman (RU) and many more. They believe that all these great people were merely there for power and nothing else and after the death of the Prophet (SAWS) they renounced Islam. (Astaghfirullahi). For this reason the Shi'as exempt and free themselves from them.

The Shi'as like to slander the rightly guided Caliphs that preceded Ali (RU) and also they slander Aisha (RA) the wife of the Prophet (SAWS) with all sorts of abuses (Lahaula wala quwwata illah billah).

### **Mut'ah ( Temporary marriage)**

According to Shi'as this is not only lawful but also recommended that a man can marry a woman with the intention of divorcing her after a period of time which could even be a couple of days. According to the Sunnis, this is totally unacceptable.

Tabatabai has tried to justify this by saying that even people in permanent marriages sometimes fall into illegitimate sexual relations. So for this reason the way out is that we make this legal for him by making the contract marriage permissible. People may ask, what is the difference between this and prostitution? Also, from his statement we come to know that this is permissible according to Shi'as so that one can satisfy his desires for a short time whereas Allah (SWT) states in the Qur'an after mentioning those women who are not allowed to be married by a man, that apart from these women you are allowed to marry with the condition that you seek them with your wealth in honest wedlock, not debauchery. From this we come to know that temporary marriage is strictly disliked because there is no intention of honest wedlock. Instead, it is only temporary satisfaction.

### **Other differences**

Also, there is a difference of interpreting the Qur'an between the two schools. According to the Shi'as there is an inward meaning of each verse and each verse has an allegorical interpretation that is known by the Imams. Sunnis believe that there are some verses that have a deeper meaning that may oppose the outward meaning but the whole Qur'an is not of this kind.

There are also differences between the two in accepting the authenticity of the Prophetic Traditions. Both have their own collection of Traditions.

There is also a difference in proclaiming the faith. Sunnis do it by saying, "there is no god but Allah (SWT) and Muhammad (SAWS) is the messenger of Allah." Shi'as add on a couple of sentences saying, "Ali is the friend and

companion of Allah, Caliph of Rasoolullah (SAWS) with out without  
detachment or severance.”

There are also differences in rituals as well. According to the Shi'as five daily prayers are performed at three times whereas according to the Sunnis, all five are performed at there prescribed times. Also, according to the Sunnis, the Friday prayer holds great importance whereas the Shi'as believe that the twelfth Imam has the right of the Friday prayer.