

Red Shi'ism

Authors(s):

Dr. Ali Shariati [3]

Red Shi'ism

Islam is a religion which makes its appearance in the history of mankind with the 'no' of Muhammad (pbuh&hf), the heir of Abraham, the manifestation of the religion of the Unity of God and the oneness of mankind, a 'no' which beings with the cry of Unity, a cry which Islam reinitiated when confronted by aristocracy and compromise.

Shi'ism is the Islam which distinguishes itself and determines its direction in the history of Islam with the 'no' of the great Ali (as), the heir of Muhammad and the manifestation of the Islam of justice and Truth, a 'no' which he gives to the council for the election of the caliphate in answer to Abdul Rahman, who was the manifestation of Islamic aristocracy and compromise.

This 'no,' up until pre-Safavid times, is recognized to be part of the Shi'ite movement in the history of Islam, an indicator of the social and political role of a group who are the followers of Ali, known for their attachment to the kindness of the family of the Prophet. It is a party based upon the Qur'an and the Traditions, not the Qur'an and the traditions proclaimed by the dynasties of the Omayyids, Abbasids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Mongols and Timurids, but the one proclaimed by the family of Muhammad.

The history of Islam follows a strange path; a path in which hoodlums and ruffians from the Arab, Persian, Turk, Tartar and Mongol dynasties all enjoy the right of the leadership of the Muslim community and the caliphate of the Prophet of Islam, to the exclusion of the family of the Prophet and the rightful Imams of Islam.

And Shi'ism, which begins with a 'no,' a 'no' which opposes the path chosen by history, rebels against history. It rebels against a history which, in the name of the Qur'an, Kings and Caesars, follows the path

of ignorance and in the name of tradition, sacrifices those brought up in the house of the Qur'an and the Traditions!

Shi'ites do not accept the path chosen by history. They negate the leadership which ruled over history and deceived the majority of the people through its succession to the Prophet, and then, supposed support of Islam and fight against paganism. Shi'ites turn their backs on the opulent mosques and magnificent palaces of the caliphs of Islam and turn to the lonely, mud house of Fatima. Shi'ites, who represent the oppressed, justice-seeking class in the caliphate system, find, in this house, whatever and whoever they have been seeking:

Fatima:

the heir of the Prophet, the manifestation of the 'rights of the oppressed' and, at the same time, symbol of the first objection, a strong and clear embodiment of 'the seeking of justice.' In the ruling system, these are the cries and slogans of subject nations and oppressed classes.

'Ali:

the manifestation of a justice which serves the oppressed, a sublime embodiment of the truth who is sacrificed at the altar of anti-human regimes which lie hidden in the layers of the formal religion of the rulers.

Hasan:

the manifestation of the last resistance of the garrison of 'imamate Islam' who confronts the first garrison of 'Islamic Rule.'

Husayn:

bears witness to those who are martyred by the oppression in history, heir of all the leaders of freedom and equality and seekers of justice from Adam to himself, forever, the messenger of martyrdom, the manifestation of the blood revolution.

Zaynab:

bears witness to all of the defenseless prisoners in the system of executioners, the messenger after martyrdom, and the manifestation of the message of revolution!

Shi'ites find their slogans in the embodiment of the tribulations and the hopes of the masses of the oppressed. Aware of the rulers and in rebellion against them, they cry out:

Seek the leadership of Ali and flee from the leadership of cruelty.

Choose imamate and stamp 'cancelled,' 'disbelief' and 'usurpation' upon the forehead of the caliphate.

Choose justice and overthrow the system of paradox and discrimination in ownership. Choose the

principle of awaiting

to protest against the existing conditions, where the ruling government, religious leaders and aristocracy try to show everything to be in accordance with the Will of God, the Divine Law and the satisfaction of God and creatures. Everything, to them, included their conquests, plundering formation of mosques, associations, schools, gifts, trusts, charities and the observance of religious ceremonies and practices.

Choose religious leadership (marjaia) for the centralization of the movement.

Follow imitation (taqlid) to organize energies and bring order, discipline and direction. Choose the vicegerency of the Imam to have a responsible leader.

Give a share of the funds to provide for the socio-political struggle, educational foundations and teaching in a system where all religious funds are collected by the government through force posing as a government of the Law.

Choose mourning for continuing the constant historical struggle of the Shi'ites against usurpation, treachery, cruelty and the sources of fraud, lying and degeneration, and especially for keeping alive in the memories of the martyrs.

Remember A'shura to humiliate the ruling group who call themselves the inheritors of the traditions of the Prophet, for the remembrance of it will prove that they are the inheritors of the killers and murderers of the Prophet's family

It will show that path of action and answer to this recurring question, 'What should be done?' It will help in the decision on the form of the struggle against the rule of tyranny. It will avoid allegiance to cruelty. It will design the unbroken continuity of history.

It will declare an unceasing struggle between the inheritors of Adam and the inheritors of the devil.

A'shura recalls the teaching of this continuing fact that the present Islam [1972], is a criminal Islam in the dress of 'tradition' and that the real Islam is the hidden Islam, hidden in the red cloak of martyrdom.

And finally, dissimulation creating a clever camouflage for the organization, activities, relations, powers, personalities and plans to protect the powers, persons and groups from being molested by the rulers of the day, and the hard-heartedness of the religious body attached to them, who might either defame the Shi'ite movement through ex-communication and rouse the 'ignorant' masses against them, or, destroy it through persecutions, or weaken it through wholesale murders, imprisonments and deportations, and thus, to create the conditions for the struggle and its continuation, to practice, in detail, the principle of secrecy, and maintain the special conditions of a secret struggle.

We can observe that for over eight centuries (until the Safavid era). Alawite Shi'ism was not just a revolutionary movement in history which opposed all the autocratic and class-conscious regimes of the Omayyid and Abbasid caliphate and the kingship of the Ghaznavids, the Seljuks, the Mongols, the Timurids and the Il Khanids, who had made the government version of the Sunni school their official religion and waged a secret struggle of ideas and action.

Like a revolutionary party, Shi'ism had a well-organized, informed, deep and well-defined ideology, with clear-cut and definite slogans and a disciplined and well-groomed organization. It led the deprived and oppressed masses in their movements for freedom and for the seeking of justice.

It is considered to be the rallying point for the demands, pains and rebellions of the intellectuals seeking to gain their rights and the masses in search of justice.

Because of this, throughout history, as their might grew, the pressures, injustices, usurpations and extortions of the rights of the people and exploitations of the farmers increased. Contrasts became more pronounced through the system of aristocracy, class-inequalities, brain-control, ideological prejudices, the attachment of the theologians to the temporal rulers, the poverty and privation of the masses, and the power and wealth of the rulers.

When this occurred, the Shi'ite front became stronger, the basic slogans of the movement more potent, and the struggle of the Shi'ites more acute and more weighty. It changed from a school of thought, a way of study and religious sectarianism reserved for the intellectuals and the chosen few, to a way of correctly understanding Islam and the culture of the people of the house of the Prophet when confronted by Greek philosophy and oriental Sufism, to a deep-rooted and revolutionary, socio-political movement of the masses, especially the rural masses. It caused greater fright in the autocratic rulers and the hypocritical religious bodies who rule the people in the name of the Sunni sect.

It is for this reason that the pseudo-intellectual and free-thinking rulers, at whose courts the Jews, Christians, Magians and even the materialists enjoy freedom, honor and influence talk with such anger and annoyance of the Shi'ites that a massacre of them all would not quench the thirst of these rulers. They flay them alive, pass iron rods through their eyes, pull out their tongues and burn them alive.

These are all current practices of the day. It reaches the point that the historians, theologians and even philosophers and men of piety of the court considered it to be part of their prayers to make up any false accusations, forgeries and records they could against the Shi'ites!

It is in such circumstances that Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni declares, 'I search the world over for a Shi'ite.' It is his government which sponsors the Sunni theologian decree that marriage of a Muslim with the people of the Book, i.e. Jew, Christian and Zoroastrian is legal, but it is illegal to marry a Shi'ite woman.

With the coming to power of the Seljuks, prejudices and biases become more acute to the world of thought and religion. From the social point of view, the feudal and tutelage system accentuates the degree of the exploitation of the masses, especially the farmers, to an unbearable degree. In order to maintain the policies of the state, floggings and tortures are necessary, resulting in the construction of multiple pyramids of skulls and eyes.

The religious body of the Sunni sect, which had from the beginning become 'the government's Islam,'

becomes a conglomeration of the most debased and prejudiced beliefs and harsh rules. It turns into a tool for the justification of the anti-human ways of rulers. It compromises with the autocratic regimes of the Ghaznavid and Seljuk Turks and the Mongols. It becomes an opiate for the masses, and an instrument for murder to be used against any thought or action that jeopardizes the interest of the strong and harms the landlords and feudal chiefs.

This is what causes Shi'ism, during this period, to appear as the fountainhead of rebellion and the struggle of the downtrodden and oppressed masses, especially among the rural people. It flourished wondrously in multiple facets and directions, moderate or extreme, in the form of various movements of the masses against the powers of the day, like the terrorism of Hasan Sabbah, the communal living of the Qaramateh, the extremist cultural and religious beliefs of the Ghalat, and the rebellion for free-thinking of some of the Sufi sects of the revolutionary and Shi'ite school of thought, against the harsh prejudices and the soulless, petrifying censorship of the theological and legal system attached to the ruling group.

Finally, the intellectual, moderate and rich school of the imamate, as the greatest flow of thought and culture, revolts when confronted by the religion and culture of the government.

The awakened call and the possibilities of learning of this school are based upon the twin principles of imamate and justice. It produces the revolutionary cries of A'shura and the aggressive mobilization of the masses against the existing conditions. It invites people to await the hidden Imam who is in occultation. It brings up the critical problems of the 'signs of appearance' and the 'end of time.'

It keeps alive the hope of 'redemption after martyrdom.' It promotes the idea of revenge and revolt, faith in the ultimate downfall of tyrants and the decrees of destiny against the ruling powers who spread justice by the sword. It prepares all of the oppressed and justice-seeking masses who await participation in the revolt.

In some towns like Kashan and Sabzevar, where the Shi'ites are strong, they saddle a white horse on Fridays, and all the people of the town, the protesting, displeased and awaiting Shi'ites, follow the horse out of town, despite the opposition of the government and the ruling religion. They await redemption and freedom from tyranny, and the beginning of a revolt. They discuss questions which cause fear in the ruling group.

During the first half of the eighth century, following the wholesale massacres of Chengiz and Hulaku, when the rule of the Mongols had reduced the Iranian masses to submission, depression, humiliation and weakness, when the revenge of Chengiz was law, when the sword and the hangman were executors of the law, when the Mongol Khans and nomads and the officers and chiefs of Mongol tribes, each ruled as a feudal lord over various regions and estates, and had enslaved the peasants in the most cruel manner, when, in the towns, too, the men of religion were mostly at the service of the Mongol rulers, they called upon the masses to submit in the name of 'the true Sunni religion' to the pseudo-

Muslim rulers who continued to remain prototypes of Chengiz. They circumcised themselves only to please the religious sentiments of the Muslims at the cost of the spread of the culture, faith, morality, society and the very existence of the Muslims!

Some of the religious men, whose piety made them abstain from co-operating with the rulers and tyrants, had crept into the oblivion of piety into the monasteries of the Sufis, thereby becoming indirectly the means by which the path is paved for oppression and the ground prepared for murder. They had left the people defenseless under the floggings of the Mongol executioners and robbers, and the fraudulent men of religion.

It is under these circumstances that a religious preacher starts out in search of the truth in the manner of Salman. He approaches all those with claims to religious faith. First he approaches the pious Bahlul to seek the path of salvation in his school of piety and freedom. There, he sees piety remaining silent against tyranny. What a shame.

What heartlessness and selfishness that a man should be surrounded by the screams of prisoners, the shouts of executioners, the poverty of the hungry, the whips of the cruel over the bodies of the helpless, and, instead of volunteering to defend them, should simply seek his own redemption and try to gain paradise for himself!

He flees from this man in disgust and goes to Semnan to see Rukneddin Emad-od-Dowleh, whose piety and leadership in Sufi practices is well-known. He finds Sufi practices also, like piety, a way of escape from realities and responsibilities, a turning away from the fate of the masses, and an ignoring of cruelty and tyranny. He finds him to be of a delicate heart, tender feelings and a sublime soul. But, how is it that rivers of blood shed by the Mongols in this country, that the decline threatening Islam and the masses of the people, does not in anyway tarnish the peace of his soul and the tenderness of his heart?

He flees from him in hatred, and goes to the Sheikh ul-Islam, Imam Ghiasuddin Habibollah Hamavi in Bahrabad, to gain knowledge of the religious laws and the theology of the true Sunni sects from him and to find his way to the original spring of truth. Here, he sees a theology that discusses and discovers a thousand problems in bathroom etiquette, but a sheer lack of any awareness of the evil destiny facing the nation.

Disgusted by all these robes of piety, and satisfied that they are all the weavers of the clothes of piety to be worn over a body of oppression, with a heart filled with hatred towards the cruel Mongol rulers, reeling under the pain of the evil destiny of the Muslim masses, as a Muslim responsible for the people and knowing the times, and a protestor against the existing system, having lost all faith in the sellers of religion, Sheikh Khalifah choose the Islam of Ali, the school of protest and martyrdom.

In the dress of a simple darvish, he goes to Sabzevar as a lonely stranger, takes up abode in the great mosque of the town, and begins preaching there. [This marks the beginning of the Sarbedaran liberation movement]. He is a preacher who is in revolt against all that teaches people to bow to ignorance and

oppression, a revolt backed by a faith, a school of thought and a red history: Shi'ism.

Slowly, the deprived masses begin to understand, to find their way, and, as a result, to become a threatening power. The official pseudo-clergy start their usual game of spreading rumors and then issuing religious decrees, and at last, calling for official slaughter.

'This Sheikh discusses worldly affairs in the mosque.'

'This Sheikh does guess work in the mosque and defiles the house of God.'

'This Sheikh confuses the religion of the people.'

The pseudo-clergy try to turn the people against him, and prepare the ground for his downfall. They help the Mongol ruler take his life.

They write to the Mongol ruler saying that the Sheikh had strayed from the true Sunni Religion, and was not prepared to repent and retract in spite of their best efforts. They say he was propagating worldly ideas in the mosque, and spreading the work of the protesters (Shi'ites)! They continue, 'His behaviour calls for death and it is up to Sultan Saied to rid the religion of the pestilence.'

The spreading of rumors and instigating people against him increases but the Sheikh's call to understanding, faith and salvation, continues to attract the hearts of the deprived and suffering rural masses more and more to him. Until early one morning, when his admirers go as usual to see him, they see his dead body in the mosque.

After the Sheikh's assassination, his disciple, Sheikh Hasan Juri, continues his job. He gives an immediate call to arms, organizes his disciples and goes underground. He starts roaming the towns and sowing the seeds of understanding and revolt where ever he goes on the basis of Shi'ism.

The minds of the people are prepared. The hearts of the enslaved masses are throbbing for revolt under the curtain of secrecy. One spark is sufficient. A nephew of the ruler enters the village of Baashteen, as he normally does, a village about thirty-six kilometers south of Sabzevar. With his followers he enters the house of Abdul Razzaq, one of the pious and honourable villagers who is still reeling under the devastating influence of the religious propaganda of the ruler.

The retinue asks the villagers for food and are duly served. Then they ask for wine! For the villagers who are Muslims and Shi'ites, who have been deeply influenced by the words of Sheikh Khalifah, the bringing of wine, and that, too, under compulsion for such rascals, is too much. However, they serve it!

The guests become intoxicated! They ask for women! This was the beginning of the explosion, very simple and speedy! The host goes to the people and calling the Shi'ite masses, exclaims that the Mongol ruler is asking for their women. What is their reply? They say, 'We are prepared to die rather than be so defiled! Our women for the enemy shall be our swords.'

The result is obvious. The masses have made up their minds. They kill the whole group in one lot. As they know that there is no turning back, as they know that they have already chosen death, they stop wavering. The choice of death gives them such energy that their single village revolts against that blood-thirsty regime and is successful.

The villagers overrun the town, fighting against the Mongol army and the decrees of the pseudo-clergy of the religion of the state. They are victorious. Their cry:

Salvation and Justice!

The uprooting of the power of the ruling Mongols and the influence of the priests of religion of the rulers and the big land-holdings of the ruling class.

The victims of the ignorance of the pseudo-clergy and the prisoners of the oppression of the Mongols continue joining the ranks of the rebels. Sabzevar becomes a center of power, like a fire that spreads through dry brush, the Shi'ite revolutionary guides, who enjoy the backing of the rural warriors and champions of the masses, and the ideology of Sheikh Khalifah and Sheikh Hasan and their kind of informed, righteous and missionary type of men of learning, engulf the whole of Khorasan and northern Iran and even inflame the south.

And, for the first time, a revolutionary movement based on Alawite Shi'ism, against foreign domination, internal deceit, the power of the feudal lords and large capitalists, arises in arms for the salvation of the enslaved nation and the deprived masses, led by peasants seven hundred years ago, under the banner of justice and the culture of martyrdom .

And this is the last revolutionary wave of Alawite Shi'ism, Red Shi'ism, which has continued for seven hundred years as the flame of the spirit of revolution, freedom-seeking, justice, leaning towards the people and fighting relentlessly against oppression, ignorance and poverty.

A century later came the Safavids and Shi'ism departed from the great mosque of the masses to become a next door neighbor to the Palace of 'Ali Qapu in the Royal Mosque. Red Shi'ism changes to Black Shi'ism. The religion of Martyrdom changes to the religion of Mourning.

Topic Tags:

Oppression of Shi'ite [4]

Islamic Caliphate [5]

Taqiyah [6]

Category:

General [7]

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/articles/red-shiism-ali-shariati>

Links

- [1] <https://www.al-islam.org/user/login?destination=node/14926%23comment-form>
- [2] <https://www.al-islam.org/user/register?destination=node/14926%23comment-form>
- [3] <https://www.al-islam.org/person/dr-ali-shariati>
- [4] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/oppresion-shiite>
- [5] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/islamic-caliphate>
- [6] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/taqqiyah>
- [7] <https://www.al-islam.org/library/general-history-politics>