

## This is the true Islam

This was the title that I chose for the lecture I gave two years ago in the mosque of my Sunni brothers in the city of San Francisco, California, the United States of America. That day, there was a great crowd of men and women from different nations and countries – people from Africa, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Egypt attended the lecture and most of them left satisfied after a free and purposeful debate.

An academic Egyptian, who had recently received his doctorate, objected to me during the debate saying, “How could Shiism be the true Islam, whereas the well-known thing is that the Sunni are the group with Salvation on the Day of Resurrection as the ones who kept to the Qur’an and the Sunna altogether, while the other sects were in deviation?”

Very calmly, I answered him and directed my speech to all present in attendance, saying, “O brothers, I loyally swear that if I found one group from the Sunni or other than them practicing their religion according to a creed ascribed to Abu Bakr – I would say: Well blessed! Abu Bakr was a great companion and he was one of the first Muslims. He accompanied the Messenger of Allah (S), was the second of the two in the cave, and was the first of the (four) orthodox caliphs. I would be satisfied with that and be one of that sect.

And if I found a group of the Sunni practicing their religion according to a creed ascribed to Umar ibn al-Khattab, I would say: Well blessed! Our master Umar was a great companion. He was the Farouq, who differentiated between the truth and falsehood, by whom Allah had strengthened Islam. He was from the first Muslims, and he was the second orthodox caliph. Then, I would be satisfied and would follow this group.

And if I found a group of the Sunni or any other than them practicing their religion according to a creed ascribed to Uthman ibn Affan, I would say: Well blessed! Our master Uthman was from the first companions, and he was one of the two lights of whom angels felt shy. He was the third of the orthodox caliphs, and it was he who had gathered the Qur’an (in one written book). Then, I would be satisfied and follow this creed.

However, I did not find any group of the Sunni, nor from other than them claiming that they followed a

creed belonging to one of these three caliphs or any one of the first companions. On the other hand, I found one group practicing their religion according to a creed ascribed to Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), and this group is the Twelver Shia.

The other sects of Muslims follow Abu Haneefah, Malik, ash-Shafi'ee, or Ahmed ibn Hanbal. These scholars, in spite of their high positions, great knowledge, and piety – had never accompanied the Messenger of Allah (S) for even one day, nor had they seen him at all. They all lived after the great sedition that spread over them from its darkness and they all had been affected by its bad effects.<sup>1</sup>

And if we divested Imam Ali (a.s.) of everything and did not acknowledge any preference or virtue as due to him, even then he would always remain the great companion and the first Muslim who spent all his life beside the Messenger of Allah (S). So I adjure you all by Allah, that if you gave up fanaticism and emotion, made reason your judge in order to please your Lord before anything else and then to please your conscience, whom would you choose to follow and obey?"

Most of them cried out, "Imam Ali (a.s.) is the worthiest to be followed..."

I said, "What if I added to these reasons the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (S) that have been mentioned by the Sunni in their books of Hadith (Sahihs and Musnads), like the following ones:

*I am the City of knowledge and Ali is its gate.*

*Of whomever I am a guardian; here Ali is to be his guardian.*

*Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali. It turns with him wherever he turns.*

*Ali to me is as Aaron was to Moses.*

*Ali explains to my nation what they shall disagree on after me.*

*Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali; they shall not separate until they come to me at the Pond in Paradise.*

If Muslims know these facts after having acknowledged their reasons to follow Imam Ali (a.s.) just for his companionship with the Prophet (S), then no doubt shall remain that the true Islam is the Islam adopted by the Twelver Shia who are also called *Refusers (rawafidh)* because they refuse to follow anyone else other than Imam Ali (a.s.)."

After having given answers to the questions and discussing calmly through the scientific, historical research, many in attendance came to me – congratulated me and kissed me, and praised Allah, the Almighty for the guidance. They asked me to give them all my books and to lead them to some books of the Shia.

From among these people was the imam who managed the mosque. He was crying while I was talking

to him about the tragedy of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). He was an Egyptian physician who loved the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) too much. He said to me, “Be delighted my brother! I did not think that you would convince us so easily. I was warned about you by some fanatic persons who did not like you, but by the grace of Allah and by your influential and truthful speech, you could affect their hearts...yes by Allah!”

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1. Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah* (p. 411), shows the cause of the difference between the first companions and the imams (of the Sunni) who came later by saying, “The new events are not covered by the (religious) texts, and for what is not clear in texts, it is required to turn to other (texts) when there is similarity between them (events). And all these things cause disagreement which necessarily takes place.”

It is clear that there came widespread dispersal of the companions and the second generation that came after them in different countries and towns. Some of them were appointed as judges or were in charge of giving fatwas. It led to differences in their theories and *ijtihad* (personal reasoning in giving a certain fatwa on a certain event). These differences arose depending on the situation of the country they lived in and the personality of the jurist himself when facing different questions. As a result, two schools came to light for them.

First, the School of Opinion that was famous among the Iraqis. The most prominent one of this school were Abu Haneefah an-Nu'man ibn al-Munthir in Kufa and his disciples and adherents. This school had some characteristics. One, they used branchings and then violated them – even the imaginary and abstract things. Therefore, they would often say, “what do you think if it was so”, then they asked about a contradictory situation, and then derived a ruling for that situation. Then, they turned the question over and over – upside down considering all its possible aspects, until they were called by the scholars of Hadith as *Ara'aytiyyun* (in Arabic, ‘...do you think...’ is ‘a ra’ayta’). Secondly, they narrated and trusted in a few traditions and only according to certain conditions. So, only a few traditions were accepted by them, some of which were so excessive in nature, that it was thought not to depend on Prophet’s traditions at all. Their argument in this was that they suspected the narrators of Hadith and there was much doubting in traditions about narrators.

Second was the School of Hadith whose characteristics were – one, they very much disliked to ask about situations because the source for them was Hadith, which was limited. They disliked giving personal opinion (on these matters). They disliked being asked about an event except when it had actually happened. They often criticized the Iraqis for their discussion of possible situations. Secondly, they depended on all traditions, even the weak ones. They were not strict about the conditions for accepting traditions and they preferred this to the giving of one’s opinion. Refer to *Fajr (dawn) of al-Islam* by Ahmed Amin, p.243.

The disagreement and dispute between the two schools was so strong that they abused, reviled, and accused each other of impiety and disbelief. In fact, some of them fabricated false traditions. It was narrated from Abu Bakr and Umar that they approved and reproved the acting according to Hadith.

The same was narrated from ibn Mas’ud. Some scholars overexerted themselves to reconcile the contradictory sayings of the disputing schools. Therefore, the truth and honesty was not observed and Allah the Almighty was not feared. For more details, refer to the book *Know the Truth*, p. 96–98, and *Fear Allah*, p. 67–72, by the author of this book.

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