

34) The Difference of Opinions and Creeds

One of the issues, which have to be avoided and in relation to which Taqwa has to be exercised, is divergence of opinions and sects. Since Adam was created, all differences, conflicts, wars, bloodletting and disputes have come about as a result of diversity in opinion and sects.

See what the idolatry has done! The idols were Lat, Ozza, Ba'al, Hobal, Zul Khalasah, Nawa', Widd, Fals, Yaquth, Ya'quq, Nasr and the like! Dualism, the concept of the existence of many gods, six-fold gods, god of domestic and white animal, god of fire, god of metals, god of earth, god of waters, god of plants, god of heavenly planets and stars and fire-worshipping!

Different philosophical schools like of skeptics, cynics, stoics, and sophists have emerged. Several creeds like Yoga, Lokayata, Sankhya and Nyaya have come into existence.

Chinese and Japanese faiths, Buddhism and other faiths prevailing in Asia, Europe and Africa have appeared.

Islam and its division into Shiism and Sunnism and their subdivisions into seventy-three sects are also there.

In his book *al-Milal wen-Nihal*, Shahrestani has mentioned fifty-three sects of Sunnism as follows:

- 1- Mo'tazilah
- 2- Wasiliyyah
- 3- Motheiliyyah
- 4- Nidhamiyyah
- 5- Khabtiyyah
- 6- Boshriyyah

- 7- Mo'ammariyyah
- 8- Mardariyyah
- 9- Thumamiyyah
- 10- Hishamiyyah
- 11- Jahidhiyyah
- 12- Khayyatiyyah
- 13- Juba'iyyah
- 14- Bahshamiyyah
- 15- Jabriyyah
- 16- Jahmiyyah
- 17- Najjariyyah
- 18- Dhirariyyah
- 19- Sifatiyyah
- 20- Ash'ariyyah
- 21- Moshabbihah
- 22- Karamiyyah
- 23- Khawarij (Kharijites)
- 24- Azariqah
- 25- Najdat Aathiriyyah
- 26- Bayhasiyyah
- 27- Ajadah
- 28- Saltiyyah
- 29- Hamziyyah
- 30- Khalafiyyah

- 31- Rasheediyyah
- 32- Maymooniiyyah
- 33- Atrafiah
- 34- Jazimiyyah
- 35- Tha'alibah
- 36- Rashediyyah
- 37- Akhnasiyyah
- 38- Shaybaniyyah
- 39- Makrumiyyah
- 40- Ma'loomiyyah
- 41- Majhooliah
- 42- Abadhiyyah
- 43- Hafsiyyah
- 44- Harithiyyah
- 45- Yazeediyyah
- 46- Safariyyah
- 47- Morji'ah
- 48- Yoonusiyyah
- 49- Ubaydiyyah
- 50- Ghassaniyyah
- 51- Tharbaniyyah
- 52- Tomeniyyah
- 53- Salehia

The sects of Shiism are as follows: Kayssaniyyah, Harithiyyah, Bayaniyyah, Razamiyyah, Zaydiyyah,

Jaroodiyyah, Solaimaniyyah, Tabariah, Baqiriyyah, Ja'fariyyah, Fatahiyyah, Shamatiyyah, Mousawiyyah, Isma'eeliyyah, Batiniyyah, Imamiyyah, Nawoosiyyah, Hashimiyyah, Mahdawiyyah and Alawiyyah.

Beyond doubt, the straight path of God is a single path and other schools of thought are misleading.

There is a book entitled, *Elzam al-Nawasb* whose author was non-Muslim, and then, God had guided (to Islam). The late Allamah Hajj Aqa Bozorg Tehrani in his book *al-Tharee'ah* says: "The author of the book is unknown, though the book is attributed to Sayyed ibn Tawoos and others. It is a precious book. The author writes: 'I have studied many religions, but when I came to study Islam, I found it the most comprehensive religion. I realized that the followers of Islam were either Shiite or Sunni.

Studying about their leaders, I found out that the hagiology of Shiite leaders is found in both the Shiite and Sunni books, but I did not find anything about Sunni leaders except in the Sunni books.

Furthermore, eulogies found in the Sunni books were few and fake. Besides this, their blameworthy qualities were abundant in the books of both Shiite and Sunnis. I realized that the Shiites were rightful."

Then, he elaborates on Imam Ali (AS) and proves that he is the immediate successor of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He chooses the title "Elzam an-Nawasib" to prove the caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib. At the end of the book, he resorts to the tradition of "The truth is with Ali wherever he is."

All theologians, in their theological books, have proved the right of the caliphate of Ameerul Mo'minin Ali (AS) with strong proofs. The best of them is the book, *Kefayat al-Mowahhideen*, by Noori Tabarsi.

The author of this book has written a treatise entitled, "Debate between Father and Son". Some part of the book reads: "Even if there is no proof to show that Ali was the immediate successor to the Holy Prophet, such praiseworthy qualities of Imam Ali as knowledge, forbearance, courage, bravery, patience, steadfastness, piety, eloquence, generosity, devotion and statesmanship were sufficient to prove his vicegerency. Let alone the fact that God addressed the Holy Prophet when saying, ***"O Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message."***^{[1](#)}

God has also said: ***"This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion."***^{[2](#)}

There are other verses in which the obedience to Ali (AS) is considered the same as the obedience to God and the Holy Prophet (SAW): ***"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you."***^{[3](#)}

In another verse, God has appointed Ali as an authority after Himself and His Messenger: ***"Only Allah is your guardian and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow."***^{[4](#)} Here, the reference is to no one but Imam Ali (AS).

In the successively transmitted traditions of Shiite and Sunni Muslims, we read that the Holy Prophet

(a.s.) has repeatedly announced the appointing of Imam Ali (AS) as his successor: "Surely my successor is Ali ibn Abi Talib and after him my grandson, Hassan and Hossain and following them, the nine Imams from the progeny of Imam Hossain (a.s.), who are the leaders of the believers." "The most knowledgeable among you in judgment is Ali." "You (Ali) are my vicegerent and heir." "I am leaving among you two weighty things; the Book of Allah and my progeny, my household." "You (Ali) are to me as was Aaron to Moses except that there is no prophet after me." "The example of my household is like the example of Noah's ark and Bab Hittah (gate of forgiveness) in the Children of Israel." "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate." "Surely, my vicegerents and successors and the proofs of Allah to people after me are twelve. The first of them is Ali and the last of them is my son, Mahdi." All these quotations can be found in the books, Yanabee' al-Mawaddah by Sheikh Suleiman al-Balkhi, Ethbaat al-Hudaat and other books written by Shiite and Sunni scholars.

Therefore, if one wishes to have social piety, to seek unity and to enjoy purity, he must put aside his bias, open the eyes of his heart, listen with the ears of his heart, put aside Satanic temptations, fight against falsehood, seek assistance from God, not fear crowds of people, observe the truth and not see his own relatives and kin. He must be attracted by the truth and not be by falsehood.

I would like to draw the attention of dear readers to an interesting tradition mentioned by Tabarsi in his book, Dala'il al-Imamah, which conveys both the praiseworthy qualities of the Ahlul Bayt (AS) and the harms of the enmity against them. It is then that the harms of diversity of opinions and sects and the truth of Islam become clear.

Imarah ibn Zeid reports: "When Hisham ibn Abdul Melik ibn Marwan had gone to perform the Hajj, Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (AS) were there to perform the Hajj too. Imam Sadiq (AS) delivered a sermon as follows: "Praise be to Allah who appointed Mohammad as prophet and honored us by his prophethood. Therefore, we are the chosen ones among the people and the selected among His servants. Therefore, happy is one who follows us and wretched is one who is our enemy. Some people say that they love us, but they love our enemies. One who follows and assists them is our enemy. Such a person has not listened to the words of our Lord nor has he acted to them."

(Imam) Abu Abdullah Ja'far ibn Mohammad (as-Sadiq)(AS) said: "Mosaylamah ibn Abdul Melik reported to his brother what he had heard. He did not show any reaction until he went to Sham and we went to Medina. Then, he sent a herald to the governor of Medina, asking him to send my father and me to Sham.

When we reached Sham, he did not give us permission to go to the court of Hisham (the Umayyad caliph). After three days, we were given permission to go to the court. We found him sitting on his royal throne and armed courtiers were standing in front of him. The noblemen of his tribe were shooting their arrows at the mark they had put opposite to them. At this time, Hisham said to my father: "Try shooting with the noblemen of your tribe." By saying these words, he intended to dishonor my father. He thought that my father was not able to shoot arrows and was in need of consolation.

My father said: “Well, I have grown old. You would better exempt from it.” Hisham said: “By God Who has honored us with His religion and His Messenger, I will not exempt you.”

Referring to one of the Sheikhs of the Umayyads , he said: “Give your bow to him!”

Taking the bow and one arrow from him, my father put the arrow in the bowstring, drew and hit the target. He did the same successively with nine arrows. Sign of anger could be seen on Hisham’s face. He could not but say: “O Abu Ja’far! You have done well. You are the best archer among the Arabs and non-Arabs! Why did you say you had grown old?”

Regretting for what he had asked, Hisham was about to order the killing of my father. He had lowered his head while my father and I were standing before him.

As our standing lasted long, I could see the sign of anger in my father’s face, for whenever he got angry, he would give an abrupt look at the sky. Seeing this state of my father, Hisham called: ‘O Mohammad! Come up!

My father went up and I followed him too. Hisham hugged my father, making him sit on his right side and then hugged me, making me sit on his left side. Turning to my father, Hisham said: ‘The tribe of Quraish should take pride over the Arabs and the non-Arabs for having you among them. But tell me who has taught you the art of archery and how long it took you to learn it?’

My father said: ‘As you know, archery is prevailing among the people in Medina. I learnt it in my childhood and then gave it up. As Ameerul Mo’minin has asked me, I took the bow and shot the arrows.’

Hisham said: ‘I have not seen such archer since I have known myself. I do not think there is anyone on the earth with such a skill. Is Ja’far too as good as you are?’

My father said: ‘We are the heirs of the religion that God has described as the following: ***“This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.”***⁵ The earth is never emptied of one of us who are perfect when others are imperfect.’

Imam Baqir (AS) says: ‘Hearing this from my father, Hisham’s right eye transformed. He was red with anger. He lowered his head, kept silent for a moment and asked my father: ‘Are our ancestors, the sons of Abd Manaf, and yours not the same?’

My father said: ‘It is so, but God Almighty, be highly praised, has made us exclusive with His own knowledge and not others.’

Hisham said: ‘Has God Almighty not sent Mohammad from the tree of Abd Manaf to all people? How have you inherited what others have been deprived of? This is while the Messenger of Allah has been ordained for all people and that is the words of Allah: ***“And there is nothing concealed in the heaven and the earth but it is in a clear book.”***⁶ How is it that you are the heir of that knowledge when there is

no prophet after Mohammad and you are not a prophet either?’

My father said: ‘It is according to the words of Allah to the Messenger: **“Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it.”**⁷ What the Messenger of Allah (SAW) revealed was for all people and what he did not reveal, was exclusively for us. It is for the same reason that he talked privately with his brother Ali and not with his other companions. On this basis, God sent down the Holy Quran: **“... and that the retaining ear might retain it.”**⁸

Addressing his companions, the Messenger of Allah (a.s.) said: ‘I asked God to make it be your ear, O Ali.’ It is for the same reason that in Kufa, Ali ibn Abi Talib said: ‘The Messenger of Allah taught me a thousand gates of knowledge, from each one of which a thousand other gates open. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) taught him the hidden things making it exclusive to him. In the same way that God made his knowledge exclusive to His most honorable one of His people, His Messenger too made Ali exclusive with the hidden secrets and taught him what no one of his tribe knew. It was in this way that we inherited the hidden secrets.’

Hisham ibn Abdul Melik said: ‘Ali claimed to know the unseen whereas God had not made anyone aware of His invisible knowledge. How can he claim such a thing?’ My father said: ‘God, be highly praised, sent down a book to His Messenger, in which He has explained everything that has been, is or will be until the Day of Judgment: **“We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything”**,⁹ and **“and a guidance and an admonition to those who guard (against evil)”**,¹⁰ and **“...and We have recorded everything in a clear register.”**¹¹ and **“We have not neglected anything in the Book.”**¹² and **“And there is nothing concealed in the heaven and the earth but it is in a clear book.”**¹³

God revealed to His Messenger not to leave anything of the hidden secrets unsaid unless he would make Ali familiar with them, to order Ali alone to collect the Holy Quran after him, and to enshroud and bury him.

The Messenger of Allah told his companions that it was forbidden for them and his household except Ali to look at his private parts, for Ali was from him and he was from Ali. Whatever was (lawful) for him was (lawful) for Ali, and whatever was against Ali, would be against him. It was Ali who would fulfill his mission and would keep his promises.

Addressing his companions, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib is fighting for the exegesis of the Quran as I was fighting for its revelation. The perfect exegesis of the Quran is only with Ali and with no one else.’

It was for the same reason that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said to his companions: ‘The most knowledgeable in judgment is Ali.’ Umar ibn al-Khattab used to say: ‘If Ali was not there, Umar would perish.’”

At this moment, Hisham thought for a while and after a long pause said: 'Ask what you need.' Imam Baqir (AS) said: 'I left my family while they were in fear.' Hisham said: 'May Allah keep them safe from fear with your going back!'

My father hugged him, prayed for him and said goodbye to him. I too did what my father did. Then, we went out. Opposite to his court, there was an open field on one side of which people were sitting. My father asked: 'Who are those people?' The doorkeeper of Hisham said: 'They are priests and monks and one who will come soon is a scholar who holds a gathering once a year for people to come and ask their religious questions.'

My father wrapped his head with a piece of cloth and I did the same. He moved towards and sat near them. I sat behind my father. This news reached Hisham. He ordered his agents to attend the gathering and inform him of what my father would do. A group of Muslims circle round my father.

The Christian scholar, who had fastened a yellow silk ribbon around his head, came in. All the priests and monks rose up for him. They greeted him until he reached the chief seat of the gathering. He looked at all those who were present, and then asked: 'Are you from us or from the mercified nation?' My father said: 'From this mercified nation.' He asked: 'Are you from their scholars or from their unlearned ones?' My father said: 'I am not from their unlearned ones.' Being shaken up and anxious, he said: 'I am going to ask you a question.' My father said: 'Ask your question!' He said: 'How do you claim that the dwellers of Paradise eat and drink, but they do not urinate or defecate? What proof do you have for that from this world?' My father said: 'Our proof is invisible and cannot be denied is foetus in the mother's womb. A foetus eats, but does not defecate.'

The Christian scholar became more anxious and said: 'Why did you not say you were one of their scholars?' My father answered: 'I said I was not from their unlearned ones.' In the meantime, Hisham's agents were closely watching the scene.

The Christian scholar said to my father: 'I am going to ask you another question.' My father said: 'Ask your question!' He said: 'How do you claim that the fruits of Paradise are always fresh and whatever the inhabitants eat from them, they are not diminished. What proof do you have for this claim?'

My father said: 'The proof is our Quran which is always fresh. It is something imperishable with all Muslims.'

The Christian scholar became very upset, saying: 'You did not say you were one of their scholars.' My father said: 'And not from their unlearned ones.' Then, the Christian scholar said: 'I will now ask you a question (as if it was very important).' My father said: 'Ask your question!' He said: 'Tell me about an hour which is neither the hour of night nor the hour of day.'

My father said: 'It is an hour between the dawn and the sunrise during which a sick person calms down, one who has a pain goes to sleep and an unconscious one comes to consciousness. God has set it as a

delight for the people of delight and people of deed in the hereafter, a clear proof and a veil for unbelievers and those who do not worship.’

The Christian scholar gave a loud cry and said: ‘There is one more question. By God, I will ask you a question that you cannot answer.’ My father said: ‘Ask your question. I know that you will break your oath!’ He said: ‘Tell me about infants who were born on the same day and died on the same day. One of them lived as long as a hundred and fifty years and the other one lived for fifty years.’

My father said: ‘They are Uzair and Uzairah. They were born on the same day. They reached the age of maturity. Being twenty-five, Uzair passed by a cemetery. He was riding on his ass. He asked himself: ‘How will God raise the dead when their bones are decayed?’ When Uzair, whom God had chosen and guided, said such words, God was angry with him, and He hence made him die for a hundred years. Then He raised him to life. When Uzair went back to his home, he did not even recognize his own brother Uzairah. He sent for his son and grandson who had grown old while he himself was a young man of twenty-five.

They asked: ‘Are you a man of heaven or the earth?’ Uzair said to his brother: ‘I am Uzair! God was angry with me because of what I had said, though He had chosen and guided me. So, he made me die and then raised me to life to make me certain that He has power over everything. This is the food, drink and the ass with which I left you. They are as they were before so that you will believe in God with certainty.’ Uzair lived for another twenty-five years with them and God made him and his brother die on the same day.

The scholar, and all the other Christians, rose up while addressing the people: ‘You have brought here someone more knowledgeable than me so as to disgrace me! Muslims should know that they have a person who has a comprehensive knowledge about our religion and the knowledge that he has we do not have. By God, I will speak no more with you nor will I sit here!’

All people left, but my father sat in his place. I was with him too.

The news reached Hisham. We returned home. Hisham sent us a prize and ordered us not to stay there, but to go back to Medina. Since the news had spread among people, Hisham sent a book to the city of Madyan, reading: “The two magicians, sons of Abu Torab, Mohammad ibn Ali and Ja’far ibn Mohammad, whom I summoned to Sham, have converted to Christianity, and hence they are apostates. Whoever greets them, sells anything to them, or shakes hand with them is sentenced to death.”

When we arrived in the city of Madyan, people closed the doors before us, cursed us and cursed Ali ibn Abi Talib. They did not sell food to us.

My father spoke to them softly, saying: ‘Fear Allah, and do not err! We are not so as what you have been falsely told, nor as what you are saying about us. Treat us as you treat the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians!’ They said to us: ‘You are worse than the Jews, the Christians and the

Zoroastrians, for they pay poll tax (Jizyah), but you do not pay it.’

My father said: ‘Open the doors and charge us with poll tax as you charge them.’ They said: ‘We will not open the doors until you starve to death on your horses, and your horses will starve to death under your feet.’

My father advised them, but it was useless. He went up the mountain. Reaching the top, he put his fingers into his ears and loudly cried: **“And to Madyan, their brother, Shu’aib...”**¹⁴ until he reached this verse: **“What remains with Allah is better for you if you are believers.”**¹⁵

Then, the Imam said: ‘By God! We are the remainder of Allah on His earth.’

God sent a black wind which made the voice of my father be heard by women, men, and children who went up to the roofs to watch my father. An old man from Madyan, who had come up to the roof, loudly said: ‘Fear Allah, O people of Madyan!’

They all felt fear. So, they opened the doors and received us. This news reached Hisham. The following day, we moved towards Medina. Hisham wrote to the governor of Madyan to kill the old man who had asked people to help us. He had also written a letter to the governor of Medina to have my father poisoned, but before he did it, Hisham had died.”¹⁶

Truly, social piety requires every individual to refrain from creating division in society. A society would never be corrupt if Taqwa would be followed and people walk in the straight path. Even if there was a little difference among people, the divine rule of “make peace between brethren” could be a solution; **“The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you.”**¹⁷

Were it not for divergence of ideologies and sects, there would be no wars, conflicts, bloodlettings, poverty, sanctions, insecurity, high prices, hoarding, despotism, opportunism, and individual and social deprivations.

¹. Qur’an, 5:67.

². Qur’an, 5:3.

³. Qur’an, 4:59.

⁴. Qur’an, 5:55.

⁵. Qur’an, 5:3.

⁶. Qur’an, 27:75.

⁷. Qur’an, 75:16.

⁸. Qur’an, 69:12.

⁹. Qur’an, 16:89.

¹⁰. Qur’an, 3:138.

¹¹. Qur’an, 36:12

¹². Qur’an, 6:38.

¹³. Qur’an, 27:75.

¹⁴. Qur’an, 11:84.

[15.](#) Qur'an, 11:86.

[16.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 181, 189.

[17.](#) Qur'an, 49:10.

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