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Preface

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad & his Progeny

This treatise deals with some fundamental issues of the Shi'a Islamic faith. Although not all the chapters were written at the same time, they are inter-related and connected by the theme of imamate and *wilayat* of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt. Chapter 2 was written in 1998, chapter 3 in 1990, chapter 4 in 1997, while the first and last three chapters have been written this year. While revising chapter 3, I have added the section 'The Meaning of *Mawla*' in order to complete the discussion on Ghadir Khumm.

It is hoped that the reader will gain some insight into the Shi'a Islamic point of view on the most fundamental issue that has defined its existence in the past as well as in the present. This book also reflects some issues that are being discussed among some sections of the Shi'a community in North America. Such discussions and debates, at the least, provide the opportunity to further study and clarify the essential beliefs of Shi'a Islam.

May Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala,* bestow upon us the ability to open our hearts to the Divine guidance, and may He lift the veils of academic arrogance and tribal solidarity from our hearts and minds when we see the truth. Amin.

Wa ma tawfiqi illa billah.
Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi
Toronto
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