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Salient Features

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful

Now let us begin with the salient features of this faith. My sect, like other sects of Islam, consists of some beliefs and some religious obligations. Its social life is based upon some well-defined ethical patterns. It has fully developed civil as well as criminal laws. All these aspects of religion are based upon the Holy Qur'an (The Book of Almighty Allah) and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet and Imams.

Every religion has a history; its present cannot be separated from its past; and its past influences its present trend of thinking. You will agree with me that it is not possible to deal with all these aspects of Shi'ah Ithna `Ashari sect in one lecture. So, with your permission, I will limit this discussion to the beliefs in particular.

In our terminology the faith is called the `Root' (usul) of the religion, and the religious performances are named the `Branches' (furu') of religion. These terms are very significant because they show the relation between `Faith' and `Deeds,' from our point of view. As no tree can survive without its root, so no prayer can be said to be alive without faith. And, as no tree can bear fruits without branches, so no faith can be of much help without good deeds.

The Roots of our Religion are Five:

1. Tawhid (Unity of God)
2. `Adl (Justice of God)
3. Nubuwwah (Prophethood)
4. Imamah or Imamate (Successorship of the Prophet)
5. Qiyamah (Day of Judgment)

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