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## **Foreword**

## The Author and the Book

Imam Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, the author of this study, was a reverent scholar and one of the most eminent jurists of our time. He struggled diligently in the way of God; his devotion to Islam was complete to the point of martyrdom, which he finally attained in 1979.

An endless source of learnedness, his genuine gift, he was unrivaled in the study of legal principles and jurisprudence. Imam al Sadr was a rare mind in the area of logic and the logic of inquiry, and sought to renew Islamic thought in the face of contemporary intellectual challenges in philosophy, economy and sociology. By setting forth his theses, observations and positions, he helped to establish firmly the Islamic School. He refurbished theological studies, enriched knowledge of the Qur'an and secured the pillars of a sober scientific method in every subject he took up through his pen.

In the probing study of Shi'ism before us, Imam al-Sadr brought to bear a sedate, scholarly method supported by that impeccable logic for which he is so well known. At every step, he has the depth of a skilled expert who knows from the very outset how to take the reader wherever true logic dictates. He handled this weighty subject with concision in a way unmatched by anyone, thanks to his strength of argument, compactness, evenness and subtlety of expression, to say nothing of the sheer elegance of his presentation.

This, despite the number of points and allusions made. These may be perfectly comprehensible to cultured or attained persons, but less so to those inexperienced in this kind of extended theological inquiry. The allusions are not easily understood by those uninitiated in the area of debate and argumentation, or who have never before had to deal with either Prophetic traditions (*hadi`ths*) or historical events.

In view of the significance of the subject matter, style and treatment, it is regrettable that this study has not received the attention it deserves. Nor has it been properly edited and commented on, for proper guidance through all the evidence invoked. We have yet to be enlightened on its references or the context of its arguments – which should reveal to the reader the soundness of the logic and leave him or

her reassured, in turn, as to the logic of their soundness.

This study was originally written in Baghdad in 1970 AD/1390 AH as a preface to a book by Dr. `Abdullah Fayyad entitled *History of the Imamites and Their Shi'ite Predecessors*, and published in Baghdad by Matba`at As`ad. The first independent edition was published in Cairo in 1977 AD/1397 AH, under the supervision of Mr. Talib al–Husaym al–Rifai. 1 In the same year, but just earlier, it was also published in Beirut by Dar al–Ta`aruf lil–Matbu`at.

These two editions, however, have failed to measure up to their goal, since there was little effort to edit or accurately to determine the text. Neither are the Prophetic traditions expounded nor the texts properly supported, to say nothing of the many printing errors.

Nevertheless, the Cairo edition is provided with Mr. al–Rifais helpful comments; it is also the more precise of the two, having fewer errors. The two editions have different titles – the Cairo going by *Shi'ism, an Authentic Phenomenon Within the Call of Islam,* 2 the Beirut by *A Study Concerning Guardianship.* 3

The result was that there arose a need for this study to be given the attention it rightly deserved in terms of textual editing, exactness and commentary. I have made every effort to determine the precise expressions by benefiting from the editions just mentioned, with a view to the necessary corrections. As to the title, I have heeded the view of the eminent Ayatullah al–Sayyid Mahmud al–Hashimi, who suggested to me that it be *The Emergence of Shi'ism and the Shi'ites*. It was the most appropriate one.

Finally, I have seen it fit to append another scholarly study, adhering to the very same sober method he used, to this solid research by the late Imam al–Sadr. I hope to analyze something to which he pointed without much elaboration, instead relying on its obvious sense on the assumption that it has been related by several transmitters and handed down through many biographical works: namely, the intellectual and moral preparation for Imam `Ali's spiritual leadership (*imamah*) and political succession (*khilafah*) to the Prophet.

## **Concerning the Present Edition**

First of all, only printed copies, together with the preface in the introductory section of Dr. `Abdullah Fayyad's *History of the Imamites and Their Shi'ite Predecessors*, have been available to me. But since the Cairo copy that came out under Mr. Talib al–Husayni al–Rifai's supervision is the better and more accurate one, I have basically relied on it. In order to determine the text and to rectify the errors and whatever seems doubtful, I have referred to the other two editions, that of Beirut and that of Baghdad (the one included in the introduction to Dr. Fayyad's book).

Secondly, I have devised a new layout for the study; it is now divided into an introduction and two chapters. The first chapter is entitled "What is the origin of Shi'ism?" – exactly as the author wished by

way of presentation. I broke it up into three discussions. The first deals with what the title it carries says, "The First Path – Denial," that is, "Neglecting the Succession." This title appears in the Cairo edition. The Second Discussion deals with the path of affirmation, epitomized by the consultative system. The Third Discussion presents the affirmative path, exemplified by the preparation and investiture of whomever was to lead the *Ummah*, or the community. The second chapter is called "How did the *Shiites* become Shiite?" It, too, is divided into three discussions. The first is concerned with the two principal trends that accompanied the development of the *Ummah*; the second with intellectual authority and guidance; and the third with the issue of spiritual and political Shi`ism.

Thirdly, I have consulted those references given by Imam al–Sadr, and have been able to establish the specific texts he relied on. I have, therefore, indicated the volume of the Tradition source left out, along with the page numbers. All told, twenty–three references were given. I have attached the word "Imam" to them, thereby retaining the original text written in the notes and distinguishing them from my own comments.

Fourthly, with respect to those texts which Imam al–Sadr does quote or refer to, I have sought to provide the source, based on the information he gives. I have also made available the references to the ayat of the Qur'an and to the Prophetic *hadiths*.

Fifthly, wherever needed, I have documented the views and ideas evoked by the Imam.

Sixthly, in order to clarify the objects of discussion, or to reinforce through evidence and proof, I have in many cases made the appropriate comments.

I implore God to render pure this work before Him. Praise be to God, Lord of the World.

Editor

Dr. Abd al Jabbar Sharrarah

- 1. By Dar Ahl al-Bayt, Matabi` al-Dajawi, Abidin.
- 2. Al-Tashayyu zahirah tabi'iyyah fi itar al-da'wah al-islamiyyah
- 3. Bahth hawl al-walayah.

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