

# Shi'ism, The Creed Of Love

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## Infallibility of the Prophets (Part I)

One of the greatest marks of distinction of Shi'ism over other sects is that its-foundation and its bedrock is love. Right from the time of the Prophet who laid the basis of this sect there has been the whispering of love; when we hear from the words of the Prophet the sentence:

*Aliyyun wa shi'atuhu humu 'l-fa'izun.*

"Ali and his party (Shi`ah) will be the triumphant ones." [1]

We see that there was a group around `Ali who were devoted to him, extremely fond of him and most affectionately drawn towards him. Thus Shi'ism is the religion of love and devotion: taking 'Ali as one's friend is the way of love. The element of love has completely penetrated Shi'ism, and the history of Shi'ism is joined in name with a chain of entirely unknown people, devoted, full of love and self-sacrificing.

Although `Ali administered the Divine punishments to some, dealt with them with lashes and occasionally cut the hand of someone off in accordance with what is laid down by the Divine Law, they did not turn away from him and their love for him did not diminish in the slightest. He himself said:

If I strike the nose of a believer with this sword of mine so that he will become my enemy, it will not create hostility and if I pour the (riches of the) whole world on the head of a hypocrite so that he may like me, he will never like me; because this has been decreed and laid down by the tongue of the Prophet when he said: "O `Ali, the believer will never be your enemy and the hypocrite will never love you!" [2]

`Ali is the standard and criterion for assaying human natures and temperaments: he who has a sound nature and a pure temperament will never take offence at 'Ali, even though his sword may come down on his head, while he who has a diseased nature will never show any attachment to him, even if he does him great favours, for 'Ali is nothing but the embodiment of truth.

There was a friend of Amir al-mu'minin, a good and believing man, who unfortunately fell into error, and who had to be punished. Amir al-mu'minin cut off the fingers of his right hand. The man took hold of his cut hand, with the blood dripping from it, with his left hand, and went away. Ibn al-Kawwa', a seditious Kharijite, wanted to take advantage of this course of events for his own party and against `Ali, so he came up to the man with an air of utter compassion

and said: "Who cut your hand off?"

"The chief of the Prophet's successors", he said, "the leader of the untainted ones at the Resurrection, the most righteous among the believers, `Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Imam of right guidance, cut off the fingers of my right hand . . . the first to reach the Gardens of Felicity, the hero of the brave, the avenger against the promoters of ignorance, the giver of zakat . . . the leader on the right and perfect path, the speaker of what is true and appropriate, the champion of Mecca, the steadfast exceller. " "Poor you!" said Ibn al-Kawwa', "He cut off your hand, and you extol him thus! "

"Why should I not extol him", he said, "now that his friendship is mixed with flesh and blood? I swear by God that he did not cut off my hand except with a right that God has established." [3] This love and affection which we see in such a way in the history of `Ali and his companions, .makes us turn to the topic of love and its results

#### **Notes:**

[1]. In ad-Durru 'l-manthur, under the seventh verse of surah al-Bayyinah (90), Jalalu'd-Din as-Suyuti narrates from Ibn `Asakir that Jabir ibn `Abdillah al-Ansari said that he was in the presence of the Prophet when 'Ali also came in to him. The Prophet said: "I swear by He in Whose hand is my life that this man and his followers (Shi'ah) will be saved on the Day of Resurrection." al-Manawi relates this in two traditions in Kunuzu 'l-haqa'iq, and al-Haythami in Majma'uz 'zawa'id and Ibn Hajar in as-Sawa'iqu 'l-muhriqah relates the same substantial meaning in different forms.

[2]. Nahju 'l-balaghah, Saying no.42

[3]. Biharul 'l-anwar, vo1.40, pp.281 - 2 (new ed.) ; and Fakhru'd Din ar-Razi, at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir, .(" . . .under verse 9, surah al-Kahf ("Or dost thou think