

Am I a Follower of Ahl al-Bait?

Part I

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Abstract: As its title denotes, this article deals with the answer of the fundamental question: “Am I a follower of Ahl al-bait, or not?”

To answer this question, the author cites the hadith mentioned in the Tafsir attributed to Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.), in which the characteristics of a true Shia have been introduced. The full text of the hadith has been divided into two parts; in this article, the first part has been presented.

Key words: Ahl al-Bait, hadith, Imam Hasan al-Askari, Shia

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Introduction

*A*mong people who express their love and respect for the household of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.)¹, there are many who count themselves as their Shia (follower) without being aware of the accountability and the risk of such a claim. Being a Shia of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) and his Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.) is certainly an ultimate goal for every believer since Allah has commanded the believers of all generations to follow their example. However, He also required the believers to be truthful in their claims.

The questions that may arise in this issue are as follow: When is one allowed to claim this title? What are the requirements and responsibilities? What is the destiny of the people who love the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bait, and acknowledge their authority and guardianship (*al-Walaya*), but fall short in following them in practical sense? Are such people considered believers? If so, will they be punished? Will they receive the intercession of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.)? If so, when will they receive their intercession?

There is an invaluable narration (*Hadith*) from Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.), the eleventh Imam of the Ahl al-Bait of the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.), answering all the questions. This Hadith includes eleven sayings, in which the Imam quotes some of his ancestors in order, namely, the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.), Lady Fatima, and the first nine Imams on this subject.

¹ The acronym "p.b.u.h & h.f." refers to the phrase "peace be upon him and his family."

The entire text of this Hadith is originally found in the Tafsir¹ attributed to Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.), under a section titled, “The meaning of Shia”, pp. 306-320. It is also narrated in *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, pp. 154-163, Hadith 11. However, many of the sayings inside this Hadith can also be found independently in other well-known books of Hadith attributed to the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) and other Imams (p.b.u.h.). What follows is the English translation of the first part of this precious Hadith along with some explanatory notes and supplementary information from the holy Quran and the sayings of the Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.) in the footnotes. God willing, the rest of this Hadith as well as some concluding remarks will appear in the next issue of this journal.

The Hadith

Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.) narrated:

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The Messenger of Allah said, “O Shia, Be watchful of (your duties toward) Allah! Certainly, you will not miss Paradise even if your ugly deeds slow you down in reaching it.² Hence, compete for its levels!” The Messenger of

¹ The Tafsir of Imam Hasan al-Askari (p.b.u.h.) is a collection of his interpretations concerning very limited parts of the verses of the holy Quran as compiled by two of his students who had a chance to stay in his residence for some years while he was under house-arrest.

² It is a well-known belief in Islam as emphasized by many verses of the holy Quran and explained in detail by the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) and the divinely-appointed Imams (p.b.u.h.) that in the sight of Allah the final destiny of a person who dies as a believer is Paradise, irrespective of the sins he has committed during his life. As we will later see in this Hadith, a believer will be purified from

his sins either by the calamities that befall him in this world, or by the severity of his death, and/or possibly by long but limited punishments in the Hereafter, so that he could be admitted to Paradise after a thorough purification. As stressed at the end of this tradition and in many other well-established traditions, a believer is one who believes in Allah, does not associate anyone with Him in obedience, recognizes the Prophet and all the twelve Imams (p.b.u.h.) as the only medium of approach towards Allah, His unique path, and the exclusive source of divine knowledge for getting all His instructions in terms of belief and practice. A person who does not recognize these facts is either: not guided (*Dhaal*), a disbeliever (*Kafir*) in what Allah commanded, and/or a polytheist (*Mushrik*) in the obedience of Allah, as he admits other methods, ideas, and approaches towards Him. According to the Quran and the traditions, only disbelievers and polytheists will remain in Hell forever and will never be permitted to enter Paradise. Concerning the fate of the disbelievers and polytheists see, for instance, the holy Quran, 4:116, 4:140, 5:72, 2:161-162, 2:217, 3:91, 7:40, 24:39, 47:34. Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) said, "The lowest limit of polytheism is that one originates an opinion (in the domain of religion) and then loves and hates based on it" (*Man La Yahdhuru al-Faqih*, vol. 3, p. 572, Hadith 4955; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 2, p. 304, Hadith 42). Moreover, Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) was once asked, "What are the least specifications by which a servant is categorized as a believer, disbeliever, or unguided (*Dhaal*)?" The Imam (PBUH) replied, "You asked your question, and now reflect on (my) answer! The lowest limit that categorizes a servant as a believer is that Allah, blessed in His (name) and exalted is His (remembrance), introduces Himself to him and he accepts obedience to Him, and He introduces His prophet to him and he accepts obedience to him, and He introduces to him His Imam—who is His proof on His earth and His witness over His creation—and he accepts obedience to him." I asked, "O the Commander of the Believers! Is he a believer even if he is ignorant of everything other than what you described?" He said, "Yes, because if he is commanded (i.e., if a command reaches him) he will obey, and if he is prohibited he will quit. The least thing that makes a servant a disbeliever is that he assumes something that Allah prohibited (in reality) as a thing that Allah has commanded, and sets it as a religious command (without any divine evidence having reached him) and adheres to it. He thinks he serves what Allah has ordered, while, in reality, he serves the Satan. The least thing that categorizes a servant as a *Dhaal* (unguided)

Allah was asked, “Does anyone from the people who love you and Ali (p.b.u.h.) enter Hell?” He replied, “He who befouls his soul by disobeying Muhammad and Ali (p.b.u.h.), falls into unlawful deeds, wrongs the believing men and women, and violates the decreed customs of the religion, arrives filthy and impure on the Day of Judgment. Muhammad and Ali (p.b.u.h.) shall tell him, “You are impure and are qualified neither for being in the company of your (divinely) chosen masters, nor for hugging the beautiful heavenly maidens, nor for being in the movement place of the close angels. You will not reach what is therein unless you are cleansed from what (you have committed) herein of the sins.”

Therefore, some of those people shall enter the outer level of Hell and shall be punished for some of their sins, while some shall be afflicted with the hardships of the Gathering Place (on the Day of Judgment) for some of their sins. After

is that he does not know the proof of Allah, the mighty and the majestic, who is His witness over His servants, whom Allah has commanded to his obedience and made accepting his guardianship (*Walaya*) obligatory” (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 414, Hadith 1). Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “The lowest limit of the recognition of the Imam is to believe that he is the peer of the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) without the degree of prophethood and he is his inheritor, and obeying him is obeying Allah and obeying His Messenger, and (to believe that one should) submit to him in all matters, return every (religious) issue to him and accept his words, and to believe that the Imam after the Messenger of Allah is Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and after him, al-Hasan, then al-Husain, then Ali Ibn al-Husain, then Muhammad Ibn Ali, then me, then my son Musa, then his son Ali, then his son Muhammad, then his son Ali, then his son Hasan, then his son al-Hujja” (*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 36, p. 407, Hadith 16). This Hadith not only specifies the requirements of faith concerning the right of the Imams, but also requires to know and to acknowledge the names and the lineage of the specific twelve individuals who are exclusively entitled to this position by Allah.

this period, (to rescue each one of them) their masters shall dispatch a chosen one of their Shia who shall pick them up (from Hell) just as a bird picks up the seeds.

As for those who have less and lighter sins, they will be cleansed by the adversities and tyrannies of the rulers and illnesses in their bodies so that they arrive at their graves purified. Among them are some who approach death while still some sins remained for them, and thus, their departure shall become severe and they shall die so much so disgrace that most people around them shall be dispersed and they shall die in disgrace to atone for their sins. They shall be purified when the remaining people leave them after burial.¹

For people who have more grave sins, they shall be cleansed by the calamities on the Day of Judgment, and yet for

¹ Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, "When the sin of a servant increases and nothing (of his good acts) is found to atone for it, Allah afflicts him by sorrows in this world as atonement for it. If not that, Allah makes his body sick to compensate for his sins. Or, He makes the time of his death more difficult to him as expiation. Otherwise, He punishes him in the grave so that he may meet Allah on the Day of Judgment without anything that could witness to any of his sins (i.e., the record of his evil deeds will be wiped out)" (*al-Amali*, al-Saduq, p. 294, Hadith 4; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 78, p. 176, Hadith 15). Moreover, Imam al-Sadiq (PBUH) narrated from the Messenger of Allah that Allah said, "By My might and majesty! I shall not send out from this world a servant on whom I want to have (special) mercy until I take every sin of his and exchange it either with an illness in his body, constrained sustenance, or horror in his worldly life. And if anything still remains of his sins, I shall increase his tension at the time of his death. By My might and majesty! I shall not send out from this world a servant whom I want to punish (forever) until I take every good deed of him and exchange it either with good health in his body, extensive sustenance, or peace and security in his life, and if anything still remains of his good deeds I shall make death easy for him" (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 444, Hadith 3).

worse sins, purification shall be made possible through the outer level of Hell. The latter individuals have the most severe punishment among people who love us. They are not entitled to be called our Shia (our followers), but they may be called our lovers, the supporters of those who adhere to us, and the enemies of our enemies. Certainly, Our Shia are only people who (try their best to) follow us, adopt our traditions, and take after our deeds.¹

A man came to Allah's Messenger (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Someone looks at the women of his neighbor, and if an unlawful relation becomes possible for him, he does not avoid it."

The Messenger of Allah became angry and said, "Bring him to me." Another person said, "O Messenger of Allah! He is one of your Shia who believes in you and Ali as his guardian² and keeps aloof from your enemies." The Messenger

¹ It should be made clear that these series of traditions do not necessarily imply that the Shia are sinless; rather, they want to stress that a Shia is a devoted and observant follower. Hence, one should not claim the honor of "the Shia of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.)" if he/she does not try his/her best to follow their footsteps and if complete obedience to them has not yet become his/her character. In practice, a Shia might have sudden slips, but such mistakes should not represent his/her general behavior that is to hold fast to the examples of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.). Alternatively, one can say, a person is a Shia of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.) as long as he/she strictly follows them, and is not of their Shia during his/her unexpected and momentary arrival in error.

² Guardianship (*al-Walaya*) expresses a bilateral relation between the guardian and the people. Observing *al-Walaya* by people means adhering to the guardian and acknowledging his authority by heart, tongue, and action. On the other hand, the action of *al-Walaya* by the guardian means offering protection from evil, spiritual assistance, care, support, and guidance for his adherents. A divinely appointed guardian guards his adherents against misguidance, spiritual

destruction, wrongdoing, sin, and the wrath and punishment of Allah as much as they adhere to him and his commands. Therefore, both observation and protection are matters of degree. However, the minimum acceptable level of observing *al-Walaya*, which also terms one as a lover of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.) and a believer in the sight of Allah, is acknowledging the authority and the guardianship of the divinely-appointed leaders by heart and by tongue. As discussed in this Hadith, this minimum level only protects one against remaining in Hell forever. On the other hand, its maximum level is full acknowledgment by heart, tongue and action - this terms one as a Shia and an absolute believer, and completely wards off Allah's punishment. A person who has acknowledged Allah's representative has, in effect, acknowledged Allah's authority, and is a true monotheist in obeying Allah. Whoever believes in the divinely-appointed guardians is a believer under the guardianship of Allah, and whoever turns away from them is a disbeliever. It should be emphasized that *al-Walaya* is considered as the greatest pillar of faith, and establishing *al-Walaya* has been the ultimate goal of religion and the fruit of the entire efforts of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.). This fact can be readily verified by the Verse 67 of Chapter 5 of the Holy Quran, which was revealed in *Ghadir Khum* just before the Prophet's official announcement concerning the *Walaya* of Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.): "*O Messenger! Deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord and if you do not, you have not conveyed His message at all, and Allah shall protect you from (evil) people.*" Moreover, Zurara narrated that Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) said, "Islam is established by five things: prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, and *al-Walaya*." I asked, "Which one is superior?" He answered, "*al-Walaya* is superior since it is their passkey and because the guardian is the guide and standard for all these actions... The pinnacle of the religion, its key and its gateway, and the means of the satisfaction of the merciful Lord is obedience to the Imam after his recognition. In fact, Allah, the mighty and the majestic, says, '*Whoever obeys the Apostle, he has indeed obeyed Allah, but for anyone who turns away, we have not sent you as a protector*' (4:80). Even if one establishes worship all his nights, fasts all his days, pays all his wealth for charity, performs pilgrimage all his years, but does not recognize the guardianship of the divinely appointed guardian so as to adhere to him and to act according to his direction, he is not entitled to any reward before Allah and is not of the people of faith" (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 19, Hadith 5).

of Allah replied, “Do not say he is our Shia since this is certainly a slander. Verily, our Shia follows us and obey us in our deeds, and what you mentioned concerning this man is not of our deeds.”

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Moreover, the Commander of the Believers (p.b.u.h.), the leader of the pious, the king (*Ya'sub*)¹ of the religion, the chief of the prosperous, and the executor of the will of the holy Messenger was told, “A certain individual has been excessive to his soul by committing deadly sins, though he is among your Shia!”

The Commander of the Believers (p.b.u.h.) replied, “Verily, (by claiming so) one lie or two has just been recorded for you. If this person wrongs himself by committing sins and yet he loves us and hates our enemies, then you have committed a lie because he is only our lover, and not our Shia. Similarly, if he loves our friends and hates our enemies and is not careless about committing any sin, it is a slander from you as he is not

¹ According to the lexicon *Lisan al-Arab* (vol. 1, p. 599), “*Ya'sub*” originally means the chief of honeybees around which other bees gather, and to which they are loyal. In several traditions, the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) titled Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) in different occasions as “*Ya'sub* of the faith”, “*Ya'sub* of the believers”, and “*Ya'sub* of the religion”. It means the king, master, chief, support, shelter, resort, and the elder of the believers and the maintainer of the religion and faith. For instance, Abu Dhar narrated: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying to Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.), “O Ali! You are the first who believed and acknowledged me, and the first who shall meet me on the Day of Judgment. You are the greatest truthful (*Siddiq al-Akbar*) and the perfect distinguisher (*al-Faruq*) who distinguishes between the truth and void. You are the resort (*Ya'sub*) of the believers, and wealth is the resort (*Ya'sub*) of the disbelievers (*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 38, p. 213, Hadith 17).

unrestrained as you said. On the other hand, if he feels free in committing sins¹ and does not love us or does not hate our enemies, then you have committed a two-fold lie.”

¹ A believer believes that what Allah has prohibited should be avoided and that Allah has decreed a specific punishment for each sin. If he is tempted by Satan and commits a sin in the state of negligence, faith will return to him as soon as he becomes mindful and regrets his misconduct. However, if one persists in committing a sin, his heart will gradually reject the truth. In other words, indulging in a sin leads one to disbelief the signs of Allah. . We read in the Quran: *“The outcome of those who persisted in committing evil deeds was that they denied the signs of Allah and held them up to ridicule.”* (30:10) According to the traditions, a person who does not regret the sin that he has committed—even if he has committed it only once—is considered an insistent sinner, and a disbeliever in Allah’s view. This is because he does not believe in the punishment that Allah decreed for that specific sin in the Hereafter, and does not care to commits that sin again in the future. Believing in the penalty of the Hereafter makes one distressed and regretful for his sin, which is the essence of repentance. All other requirements mentioned for repentance are for its perfection, and it is regret that obliges one to comply with them. Regret is a voluntary internal reaction of a believer to his sin by which he guards his heart against decline and maintains his faith. A believer is always repentant while a disbeliever does not feel sorry before Allah for his misconducts. Ibn Abi Umair narrated: I heard Imam Musa Ibn Ja’far (p.b.u.h.) saying, “Allah does not keep anyone in the Fire (of Hell) forever except the people of disbelief, denial, misguidance and polytheism... No believer commits a sin except that his action offends him and he becomes regretful. Verily, the holy Prophet said, ‘Regret is enough for the repentance.’ He (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) also said, ‘He who is delighted by his good deed and is saddened by his evil deed is a believer.’ On the other hand, he who does not regret the sin that he has committed is not a believer and is not entitled to intercession as he is unjust. And Allah states, *‘For the unjust there is neither a protecting friend nor an intercessor whose intercession is accepted.’* (40:18)” I asked, “O son of the Messenger of Allah! How come he not a believer if he does not feel regretful for the evil deed he has done?” He replied, “O Aba Ahmad! No one commits a great sin knowing that he will be soon chastised for

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In another case, a man said to his wife, "Go to Fatima, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, and ask her whether or not I am of their Shia." She went to her and asked her about it. Lady Fatima replied, "Tell him if he acts upon what we have commanded and restrains from what we have prohibited, then he is of our Shia, otherwise, he is not." She came back and informed her husband of the reply. He cried saying, "Woe onto me! Who then will release me from the sins and errors? This way, I will be in Hell Fire forever because people who are not their Shia will be in the everlasting Fire." Her wife came back and reported to Lady Fatima what her husband has said.

Lady Fatima replied, "Tell him it is not so. Our Shia are of the chosen ones in Paradise. People who love us, love those

that except that he regrets for what he has committed, and once he regrets he is repentant and becomes entitled to intercession. On the other hand, if he does not regret it, he is considered insistent (*Musir*) in sin, and a person who insists (on evil) shall not be forgiven because he does not believe in the penalty of what he has committed. Had he believed in that punishment he would have surely regretted. Indeed, the Prophet (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) said, "No great sin shall remain (great) with asking for forgiveness (*Istighfar*) and no small sin shall remain (small) with insistence (*Israr*). As for the saying of Allah, 'They do not intercede except for whom He is well-pleased,' (21:28) it means they do not intercede except for whom Allah is pleased with his religion. And the religion is confession to the recompense for the good and evil deeds. He whose faith is pleased by Allah regrets for the sins he has committed due to recognizing its consequence on the Day of Judgment" (*al-Tawhid*, p. 407, Hadith 6; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 8, p. 351, Hadith 1). Hence, one should always view his sins great and should constantly keep himself in the state of regret and repentance, because once he becomes careless about his sins, overlooks them, and considers them small, he becomes a disbeliever with a record replete with greater sins. On the other hand, so long as he remains regretful and asks for forgiveness, his record remains cleared.

who love us, and are hostile to those who are hostile to us, and submit to our authority by their hearts and their tongues, are not considered our Shia if they disobey our commandments and prohibitions in other issues. Nonetheless, they will be in Paradise after they are chastened and cleansed from their sins by afflictions and calamities (in this world), by various hardships of the Day of Judgment, or by torment in the upper layer of Hell until we rescue them from it due to our love and transfer them to our presence (in Paradise).¹

¹ Imam al-Jawad (p.b.u.h.) narrated from his ancestors that the Commander of the Believers, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (p.b.u.h.) was asked, "Describe death to us." He ((p.b.u.h.)) replied, "The one who dies shall face one of these three cases: He shall receive either the glad tidings of everlasting blessings, or the tidings of endless punishment, or else, he shall remain in the state of grief and horror and his situation will not be clear to him as he does not know to which group he belongs. The adherent of our *Walaya* who was obedient to our commands shall receive the glad tidings of perpetual bliss. In contrast, our enemy (that is a person) who opposed us is the one who shall receive the news of everlasting punishment. On the other hand, a person whose situation is unclear for him is a believer (in our *Walaya*) who has acted extravagantly against his soul. He shall receive terrifying and unclear news, but Allah shall not equate him with our enemies and shall release him from Fire by our intercession. Thus, do (good), obey (Allah's commandments), do not (just) lean on (our intercession), and never belittle the punishment of Allah, the mighty and the majestic, for among those who wrong their souls are some who shall not reach our intercession except after 300,000 years of punishment. (*Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, p. 288, Hadith 2, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 153, Hadith 9). Moreover, Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, "... The intercession of Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.) and our intercession wipe off your sins, O Shia, but do not return to the sins nor lean on our intercession, for by Allah, one who takes this route shall not receive our intercession until after the pain of punishment strikes him and after he perceives the dreadfulness of Hell (*al-Kafi*, vol. 5, p. 469, Hadith 9).

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In addition, a man said to Imam al-Hasan Ibn Ali (p.b.u.h.), “I am one of your Shia!” He replied, “O Servant of Allah! If you are obedient to us concerning our commandments and our prohibitions, then you are telling the truth. However, if this is not the case, then do not increase your sins by claiming such a noble status that you do not deserve. Do not say, “I am one of your Shia.” Say instead, “I am among those who adhere to your guardianship, love you, and am hostile to your enemies.”¹ (In this case,) you are (still) in a good state and towards a good ending.”

¹ As can be seen in these series of traditions, whenever love for Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.) is mentioned, enmity against their enemies is also stressed. When one really loves a faithful and sees that another person shows hostility to his friend due to his faith, it is naturally expected that he opposes and dislike his friend's enemy; otherwise, it implies that such love is not real, and is merely a show due to hypocrisy. Hence, hating is not an independent issue, and is a natural resultant of true love. Having true love alone for Allah rationally implies being hostile to His enemies. This purely rational reality is also testified by the holy Quran: “*You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, but love those who opposed Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred...*” (58:22). Moreover, Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said, “Whoever loves a disbeliever has indeed hated Allah, and whoever hates a disbeliever (for the sake of Allah) has indeed loved Allah.” Then, He continued, “The friend of an enemy of Allah is an enemy of Allah” (*al-Amali*, al-Saduq, p. 605, Hadith 8; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 66, p. 237, Hadith 3). Imam Baqir (p.b.u.h.) said, “Is religion anything other than love and hate?” (*Tafsir*, Furat al-Kufi, p. 428, Hadith 567; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 65, p. 63, Hadith 114). One important thing, however, is the correct assignment of love and hate to the type of person and the type of action. According to the traditions, one should love believers but hate their wrong actions, and should hate disbelievers but love their good actions. Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) said, “Certainly, Allah may love a servant but hate his action, and may hate a servant but love his action”

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Similarly, someone said to Imam al-Husain Ibn Ali (p.b.u.h.), “O Son of the Messenger of Allah! I am one of your Shia!” He said, “Be mindful of Allah and do not claim what Allah considers a lie and a sin. Certainly, our Shia are people whose hearts are free from every dishonesty, fraud, and corruption.¹ Say, however, I am of the people who acknowledge your authority and love you.”

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Furthermore, someone said to Imam Ali Ibn al-Husain (p.b.u.h.), “O Son of the Messenger of Allah! I am one of your most sincere Shia!” He told him, “O Servant of Allah! If you are like Abraham about whom Allah said, ‘*and verily of his (i.e., Ali’s) Shia was Abraham when he sought nearness to his Lord with a submissive heart*’ (37:83-84), and if your heart is like his, then you are among our Shia. However, if your

(*al-Amali*, al-Saduq, p. 411, Hadith 71; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 46, p. 234, Hadith 1). A quite similar saying is reported from Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) (cf. *Nahj al-Balagha*, p. 215, Sermon 154, titled “on the virtues of Ahl al-Bait (p.b.u.h.)”).

¹ Imam al-Kadhim (p.b.u.h.) said, “Certainly, a Shia of Ali (p.b.u.h.) is one whose actions confirm his words” (*al-Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 228, Hadith 290). Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) said, “By Allah! Our Shia are only those who are watchful of (their duties toward) Allah and obey Him. They are only known by humility and submission (before Allah), fulfillment of trust, abundant remembrance of Allah, fasting, prayer, kindness to parents, care for the poor, indebted and orphans in their neighborhood, truthfulness, recitation and adherence to the Quran, forbearance from speaking about people except in goodness, and that they are the trustees of their tribes in their properties” (*Tuhaf al-Uqul*, p. 295; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 75, p. 175).

heart does not resemble his heart which was pure from any deception and ill-will (against the believers), then you can only be counted as a people who love us. Otherwise, if you persist on this wrong claim knowing that it is a lie, you will be afflicted with paralysis or leprosy that will not leave you until death as an atonement for this lie.”

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And in the presence of Imam al-Baqir (p.b.u.h.) a man was arguing with another one saying, “Do not show off to me because I am one of the Shia of the family of Muhammad (p.b.u.h. & h.f.).” At that time, Imam al-Baqir said, “You do not have any preference over him by the Lord of Ka’ba, while he was cheated by your lie! O Servant of Allah! Tell me which one of these two pleases you more: When you spend your money on yourself or when you spend it on your brothers in faith?” He replied, “When I spend it on myself.” He said, “Then, you are not among our Shia, because we enjoy more when we spend it on our brothers. Hence, say, “we are of people who love you and hope for salvation by means of your love.”

To be continued...