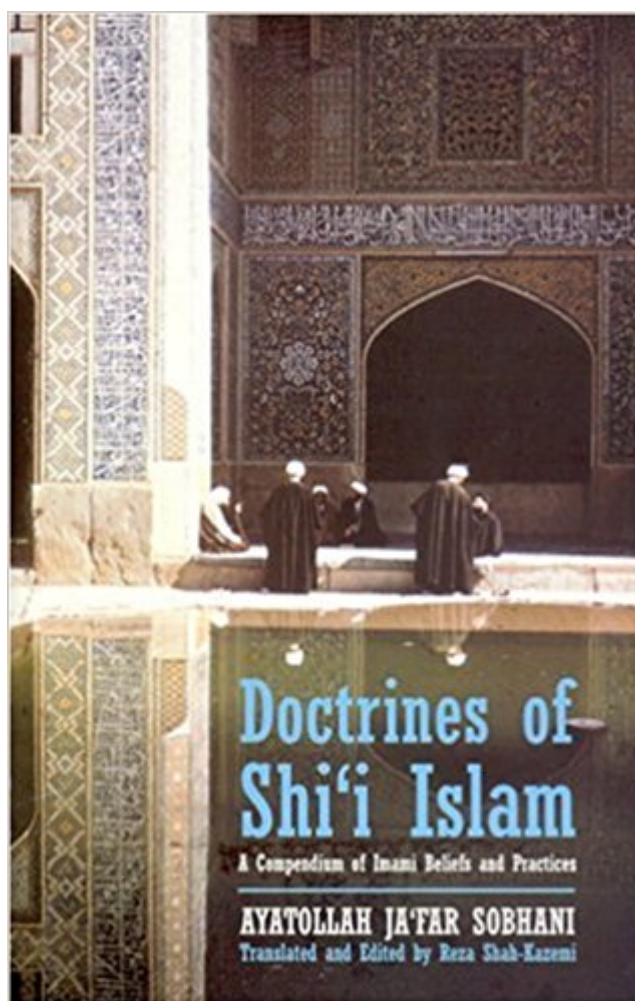


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Doctrines Of Shi'i Islam: A Compendium Of Imami Beliefs And Practices



Synopsis

This wide-ranging, comprehensive overview of the main theological and jurisprudential tenets of Shi'i Islam deals with such issues as the nature of being and the problem of evil. The range of themes covered, its precise style, and the means by which traditional Shi'i beliefs and practices are substantiated render this book both informative and original. It offers a valuable insight into mainstream ideological thinking within the official religious establishment in Iran today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani is a senior member of the Council of Mujtahids of the Howza Seminary and Director of the Imam Sadiq Institute, both in Iran.

This book is absolutely fantastic, and I have to give credit not only to the author, but to the translator and editor as well. This book is straight forward and eloquent. It covers a great deal of ground in very well organized and very succinctly articulated articles. I strongly recommend anyone interested in learning about the Shi'a school of Islam to take this book as their first. If you have any background on the subject matter (specifically the Shi'a school), you may find yourself looking for more. Ayatollah Sobhani does an excellent job in providing excellent notes on each section, and the book is excellently sourced. Having read this, I feel that I have opened the door to years of learning and study. This book is great for someone who knows a little about Islam in general, and less about Shi'a belief and practice. It also is very helpful in dispelling some of the misconceptions that exist

about the Shi'a. One thing that is important to mention, and I was initially concerned about this: the book was published jointly with the institute of Isma'ili Studies in London. Without engaging in polemics, I was concerned that there would be an Isma'ili slant to it, but there was not. This book stuck to the Ithna Ashari (sometimes known as Twelver or the Ja'fari school of fiqh).

Some 150 topics from the Shi'i perspective are discussed in the English language: Man existence, Islam recognizes "free will", destiny, oneness of Allah (Tawhid), divine attributes (Sifat), wisdom (hikma), divine justice ('adl), divine measure (qadar), miracles of prophets, prophet inerrancy (Isma), "the mystery of the perpetuity of the Islamic Sharia is hidden in two things", the Twelve Imams, the Occultation and Manifestation of the Twelfth Imam (how to notice), why not telling the truth to non-Muslims is okay: dissimulation (Taqiyya) (pg.150), change of destiny (Bada), the "Return" of Muslims after the appearance of the Mahdi (Raja), preserving sacred monuments, mourning of religious leaders is okay, jurisprudential reasoning (ijtihad), the one-fifth tax (Khums), don't fold your hands during prayer, and much more. Each topic or "article" is discussed on about 1 page. The author is: Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani (born 1930 C.E.), a senior member of the Council of Mujtahids in the Seminary of Qom, and director of the Imam Sadiq Institute in Iran. Besides just being a book of his own opinions, various hadith are referred to. While the author does have some "give and take" in discussing the subjects, there is no real "Westernized" critical analysis of the topics.

If you want to know what shi'ites believe from a scholar of shi'ism himself, please do read the book. Most of the books available in the market about shi'ism is only a view by other people as to what shi'ites believe rather than what shi'ites actually believe. Added Later: This book is not an analytical study of the beliefs of the Shiites. This is a compendium of beliefs of Twelver Shiites - there is some information about the major "source" or the reason of a particular belief or doctrine. The source may be the Qur'an or saying of the Prophet Muhammad. If one has a little background of the "sources" then he can derive the rationale behind a particular belief. Also, there is some comparison with Sunni beliefs which makes this book very interesting. The bottom line is that this book is the one of the most reliable and "non-hostile" source of Shiite beliefs in very simple terms without making it too difficult or boring.

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