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Islamic Theological Sects: A textbook

Morteza Maddahi

**Translated by:
Mohammad Reza Peysepar**

Publisher's Forward

To begin and execute a research is like walking in the path of development and evolvement. When the seeds of the “questions” are planted, in the soil of the mind of the researcher, this phase initiates, and its end is culminated when the result and the outcome of knowledge and wisdom is gained.

Evidently, this end is a new chapter in itself, for growth, and announces beforehand this good news to humans. For the result of all those mental efforts will not only bring the blooming and flowering of talent and all kinds of Blessings to humans, but it also makes the mind of the researcher to ponder and shape new, more questions.

This will produce a great collection of growing plants and flowers for the seeking mind... Those “questions” are in fact, the seeds, which according to the necessities of Time and the strength of the researchers will grow and bloom by themselves. They will make Culture and Civilization to move forward.

In like manner, the increasing rate of transferring oneself from one place to another place and the decrease of the distances will make those seeds travel miles and miles, to faraway places, in order to install them inside the curious mind of other seekers. This will bring an amazing diversity and a novelty for another civilization...

It is true then, that the presence of knowledge and a good, capable management will help this project to develop itself and one has to admit indeed, that it has always played an important role...

Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center, because of its global mission, and its special position among the Religious Schools and the colorful human diversity that it has developed inside itself, sees it as a moral duty to procure all the appropriate conditions for any research works, and takes its role in this matter, most seriously. To procure all kinds of necessary grounds, with an excellent management of all the existing possibilities and talents, and to care and protect all its researchers in religious fields; these are the most crucial responsibilities of the Department of Research in this International center.

We dearly hope that by being attentive to all these autonomous scientific movements, and by fortifying all the existing motives, we shall be able to witness the blooming of the Religious Culture in every part of this wide world!

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Publication and Translation Center**

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Introduction

Science of Islamic sects is an old and long-lasting science, which was developed since early Islamic period, and continued to be the focus of Muslim scholars. Dynamic and lasting nature of this science has linked it closely to the religious and cultural living of Muslim community. Although the existing literature reveals some sort of prejudice and criticism against this science and incorrect judgments have sometimes represented quite an unreal picture of opposite intellectual trends, no historian or researcher on the history of Islamic thought can claim to have no need to this science.

Exploring the ideas and attitudes of various sects is also important from another perspective. One cannot avoid wisdom, review and analysis of theories and opinions when intellectual and ideological issues are discussed; though it is obvious that any expert review and comment requires true understanding of opinions in the field and their detailed comparison to each other. Science of religions and sects can give us insight into different ideological attitudes.

More importantly, science of Islamic sects even helps us with understanding some parts of religious texts; it sometimes removes ambiguities in Islamic traditions and sometimes clarifies concepts. Shia and Sunni traditions have repeatedly named various sects or reported and reviewed their thoughts. Ahl al-Bayt [AS] have considered the opponents' thoughts while expressing divine teachings, and distinguished the religious facts from human beliefs. From the time of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS) that, the Shia Imams found an opportunity to express religious facts, Muslim community was full of strange beliefs and different sects had taken different paths in interpreting the Quranic concepts. Thus, it was necessary in such situation to recount wrong ideas in order to reveal the truth.

This book is a summary and compilation of several books including "An introduction to Islamic sects and religions" by Dr. Berenjkar, "Islamic theological sects" by Rabbani Golpaygani, "History of Muslim sects" by Hossein Saberi, and "Sunni and Shi'a sects" by Mahdi Farmaniyan.