himself became a Shi'ite ; nor was the progress of the sect checked by the fall of the dynasty and the conquests of Tímúr (1387), who veiled his religious indifference by proclaiming himself an admirer of 'All. Thus the mass of the Persian population remained Shi'ites, and the Tímúrides accommodated themselves to the religious feelings of their subjects. Tímúr’s son, Shúh Rokh, even built and furnished forth the tomb of the imám Riẓá in Meshhed (Meshed). The troublous times that followed and the intervention in Persian affairs of the Sunnite Ak-Koyunlu (see vol. xviii. p. 632 *sq.)* must have been unfavourable to Shi'ite principles; but they gained a final victory through the Safawi dynasty, whose founder, Sháh Ismá'íl (1499-1523), gave the Shi'ite doctrine, in the form in which it is held by the Ithná- 'Ashariya, the position it still has as the state religion of Persia.

The Itliná-'Asharíya, or “Twelvers,” a sect of the moder­ate Shi'ites, have their name from the respect they pay to 'Alí and his eleven immediate heirs through Fáṭima, daughter of the Prophet. Like all Shi'ites, they hold that 'All was designated as his successor by Mohammed,@@1 and unjustly thrust aside by the three actual caliphs, Abúbekr, ;Omar, and 'Othmán. Still more do they hate the Omayyad enemies of 'Ali and his house (see vol. xvi. p. 563). They and the 'Abbásids were usurpers, the true caliphs *de jure* being the imáms—(1) 'Ali; (2) Hasan; (3) Hosain, then his heirs in the direct line—(4) 'Ali II. ; (5) Mohammed al-Báḳir; (6) Ja'far al-Ṣádiḳ; (7) Músá al-Káẓim; (8) 'Alí III. al-Riḍá (in modern pronunciation Riza) ; (9) Mohammed II. al-Jawád; (10)'Ali IV. al-'Askarí ; (11) Hasan II. al-Khamt; (12) Mohammed III. al-Mahdí, who lived in the second half of the 3d century of the Flight (9th century a.d.), and to whom his Shi'ite partisans looked to free them from the 'Abbásid yoke. These hopes failed and he himself disappeared, whence the belief grew that he was concealed in a cave at Samarra and would return at the end of days. Meantime the sovereignty belongs to the other descendants of 'Ali, the Sayyids (lords). In fact the Safawis claimed descent from the seventh imám, and neither the Afghan Nadir Sháh, who overthrew their power, nor the Kajars, who now reign, are regarded as legitimate. The false position which the royal house stands in with the clergy is an important element in the weakness of the crumbling state of Persia.

All other points in which Shi'ites differ from Sunnites depend on their legitimistic opinions, or are accommoda­tions of the rites of Islam to the Persian nationality, or else are petty matters affecting ceremonial. The rejection of the whole Sunnite traditions goes with the repudiation of the caliphs under whose protection these were handed down.@@2 An allegorical and mystical interpretation recon­ciles the words of the Koran with the inordinate respect paid to 'Ali ; the Sunnite doctrine of the uncreated Koran is denied. To the Mohammedan confession “ There is no god but God and Mohammed is His ambassador” they add “ and 'Ali is the vicegerent of God ” *(walí,* properly “confidant”). There are some modifications in detail as to the four main religious duties of Islam,—the pre­scriptions of ritual purity, in particular, being absurdly exaggerated and made the main duty of the faithful. The prayers are almost exactly the same, but to take part in public worship is not obligatory, as there is at present no legitimate imám whose authority can direct the prayer

of the congregation. Pilgrimage to Mecca, to which the Sunnite indwellers of 'Iráḳ and Arabia oppose difficulties, though since the reign of 'Abd al-Mejíd it is officially thrown open to all, may be performed by a hired substi­tute,@@3 or its place can be taken by a visit to the tombs of Shi'ite saints, *e.g.,* that of 'Ali at Nejef, of Hosain at Ker- belá, of Riẓá at Meshhed, or of the “ unstained Fátima ” at Kum (Fâtima-i-ma’aṣúm, daughter of Músá, the 7th imám). The Shi'ites are much the most zealous of Moslems in the worship of saints (real or supposed descendants of 'Alí) and in pilgrimages to their graves, and they have a characteristic eagerness to be buried in those holy places. The Persians have an hereditary love for pomps and festivi­ties, and so the Shi'ites have devised many religious feasts. Of these the great sacrificial feast *('íid-i-Ḳurbán* ; Turkish *Ḳurbán Bairám)* is also Sunnite ; the first ten days of the month Moḥarram are dedicated to the mourning for the death of Hosain at Kerbelá (vol. xvi. p. 568), which is cele­brated by passion-plays *(ta'zíya ;* see vol. xviii. p. 660), while the universal joy of the Nauroz, or the New Year of the Old Persian calendar, receives a Mohammedan sanc­tion by the tradition that on this day the Prophet conferred the caliphate on 'Alí.@@4

While they naturally reject the four Sunnite schools of jurisprudence, the Shi'ites also derive all law from the Koran, and their trained clergy (mollahs) are the only class that can give legitimate legal responses. The training of the mollah resembles that of the Sunnite 'álim. The course at the madrasa embraces grammar, with some rhetoric and prosody, logic, dogmatic, Koran exegesis, tradition, and jurisprudence, and finally some arithmetic and algebra. The best madrasa is at Kerbelâ.@@5 But the best students of Kerbelá are no match even for the Sunnite disciples of Bokhârâ.@@6 The scholar discharged from his studies becomes first a simple mollah, *i.e.,* local judge and notary.@@7 A small place has one such judge, larger towns a college of judges under a head called the *sheikhu 'l-Islám.* The place of the Sunnite muftis is filled by certain of the *imám-juma, i.e.,* presidents of the chief mosques in the leading towns, who in respect of this function bear the title of *imám mujtehid.* This is a dignity conferred by the tacit consent of people and clergy, and is held at one time only by a very few dis­tinguished men. At the beginning of the 19th century there were but five mujtehids in Persia; now (1887) they seem to be more numerous. In Persia the cadi *(ḳáẓi)* is an inferior judge who acts for the sheikhu l'-Islám in special cases, and a mufti is a solicitor acting under the judge to prepare cases for court.

Under the Safawis, when the clergy had great influence, they had at their head the *ṣadru 'ṣṣodúr,* who administered all pious foundations and was the highest judicial authority. But so great a power was found dangerous ; 'Abbás the Great (1586-1628) abstained from filling up a vacancy which occurred in it, and, though Sháh Sefí (1628-1641) restored the office, he placed it in commission. Nádir Sháh abolished it in his attempt to get rid of the Shi'ite hierarchy (1736), and since then it has not been restored. Yet the imám-jum'a of Ispáhán, the old Safawi capital, is tacitly regarded as representative of the invisible imám of the house of 'Ali, who is the true head of the church. Various vain attempts have been made in the 19th century to subordinate the authority of the clergy to the Government. These attempts had the sympathy of the better classes,

@@@1 To make this credible divers passages of the Koran have been changed from the received readings, and ultimately a special súra was forged out of Koran phrases. See Nöldeke, *Gesch. des Qorαηs,* p. 220 *sq.*

@@@2 But the comparison of Shi'ites with Protestants is futile. Shi'ites have their own tradition *(ḥadís)* referred to 'Alí, which is grossly dis­torted,—indeed a tissue of lies.

@@@3 This the Sunnites also allow under certain conditions.

@@@4 Without this sanction the Nauroz was celebrated even at court

under the 'Abbasids. It is the only feast still celebrated by the poor as well as the rich.

@@@5 On Turkish soil ; but the Shi'ite foundations there are tolerated.

@@@6 Polak, *Persien,* Leipsic, 1865, i. 290.

@@@7 No contract, especially no contract of marriage, is valid unless made before a mollah. An ordinary inferior judge is called *darúgha.*