The twelfth imām Maḥommed is said to have vanished and to be in hiding, but will be restored by God to his people, when it pleases Him. The creed of this party was introduced into Persia in 1502, when the Safãwids conquered the country, and still remains its official creed. The shah is thus only the temporary substitute for the hidden imäm; and authoritative decisions in religious matters are pronounced by *Mujtahids, i.e.* theologians *who* can form their own opinions and require obedience to their decisions.

Other points in which Shiites 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 all the Sunnite books of tradition goes with the repudiation of the caliphs under whose protection these were handed down. The Shiites, however, have their own collections of traditions. An allegorical and mystical interpretation reconciles the words of the Koran with the inordinate respect paid to 'Alī; the Sunnite doctrine of the uncreated Koran is denied. To the Mahom­medan confession “There is no god but God and Mahomet is His ambassador ” they add “ and 'Alī is the viceregent of God ” *(walī,* properly “ confidant ”). There are some modifications in detail as to the four main religious duties of Islam—the pre- scriptions of ritual purity, in particular, being 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 imām whose authority can direct the prayer of the congregation. Pilgrimage to Mecca may be per- formed by a hired substitute, or its place can be taken by a visit to the tombs of Shiite saints, *e.g.* that of ’All at Nejef, of Hosain at Kerbelā, of Reẓā at Meshed, or of the “ unstained Fāṭima ” at Ḳum (Fāṭima-i-ma’aṣūm, daughter of Mūsā, the 7th imam). The Shiites are much the most zealous of Moslems in the worship of saints (real or supposed descendants of 'Alī) 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 Shiites have devised many religious feasts. Of these the great sacrificial feast (*'īd-i-* *Qurbān;* Turkish *Qurbān Bairām)* is also Sunnite; the first ten days of the month Moḥarram are dedicated to the mourning for the death of Ḥosain at Kerbelā (*q.v.*), which is celebrated by passion-plays *(ta'ziya),* while the universal joy of the Nauroz, or the New Year of the Old Persian calendar, receives a Mahommedan sanction by the tradition that on this day the prophet

conferred the caliphate on 'Alī.

While they naturally reject the four Sunnite schools of jurisprudence, the Shiites 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 '*ālim.* The course at the *madrasa (medresse)* 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

Kerbelā. The scholar discharged from his studies becomes first a simple mollah, *i.e.* local judge and notary. A small place has one such judge, larger towns a college of judges under a head called the *sheikh ul-Islām.* The place of the Sunnite muftis is filled by certain of the *imām-jum'a, i.e.* presidents of the chief mosques in the leading towns, who in respect of this function bear the title of *imām mujtahid.* This is a dignity con- ferred by the tacit consent of people and clergy, and is held at one time only by a very few distinguished men. In Persia, the cadi (ḳāẓi) is an inferior judge who acts for the sheikh u ’l-Islām in special cases, and a mufti is a solicitor acting under the judge to prepare cases for court.

Under the Safawids; when the clergy had great influence, they had at their head the ṣ*adru 's-ṣodūr,* who administered all pious foundations and was the highest judicial authority. But so great a power was found dangerous; ’Abbās the Great (1586- 1628) abstained from filling up a vacancy which occurred in it, and, though Shãh Safi (1628-1641) restored the office, he placed it in commission. Nadir Shãh abolished it in his attempt to get rid of the Shiite hierarchy (1736), and since then it has not been restored. Yet the imam-jum'a of Isfāhān, the old Safawi capital, is tacitly regarded as representative of the invisible imam of the house of 'Alī, who is the true head of the church. Various vain attempts were made in the 19th century to subordinate the authority of the clergy to the government. Outside the clergy the greatest influence in religious matters is that exercised by the dervishes *(q.υ.).* As it was long necessary to profess orthodoxy for fear of the Arabs, it came to be an estab­lished Shiite doctrine that it is lawful to deny one’s faith in case of danger. This “ caution ” *(taqīya)* or “ concealment ” *(ketmān)* has become a second nature with the Persians. Another mis- chievous thing is the permission of temporary marriages— marriages for a few hours on a money payment. This legitimized harlotry *(mot'a)* is forbidden by the Sunna, but the Shiites allow it, and the mollahs adjust the contract and share the women’s profits. There is still mental life and vigour among the Shiites, as appears among the sects, which, allowance being made for “ taqīya,” play no inconsiderable part. The Akhbārīs (traditionalists), who adopt a semi philosophical way of explaining away the plainest doctrines (such as the resurrection of the flesh) on the authority of false traditions of 'Alī, are not so much a sect as a school of theology within the same pale as the orthodox Shia or Mujtahids. A real dissenting sect, however, is the Sheikhīs, of whose doctrines we have but imperfect and discrepant accounts. Representatives of the old extreme Shiites, who held 'Alī for a divine incarnation, are found all over Persia in the 'Alī-IIāhī or 'Alī-Allāhī sect (“ 'Alī deifiers ”). Finally, in the 19th century arose the remarkable attempt at reform known as Bābiism *(q.v.).*

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SHIKAR, the Hindostani term for sport, in the sense of shooting and hunting. The word is in universal use by Anglo-Indians for the pursuit of large game, such as tiger-shooting and pig­sticking. The shikari is either the native expert, who marks the game for the sportsman, or else the European sportsman himself.

SHIKARPUR, a town of British India, in the Sukkur district of Sind, Bombay. It is situated about 18 m. from the right bank of the Indus, with a station on the North-Western railway, 23 m. N.W. of Sukkur. Pop. (1901) 49,491. Shikarpur has always been an important place as commanding the trade route through the Bolan Pass, and its merchants have dealings with many towns in Central Asia. It has a large market and manufactures of carpets, cotton cloth and pottery. Shikarpur was formerly the headquarters of a district of the same name. In 1901 two sub- divisions of this district were detached to form the new district of Larkana, and the two other subdivisions were then constituted the district of Sukkur.