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Shia Islam: Some Historical Roots of the Contemporary Dynamics

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Historically, the Shia tend to portray themselves as the oppressed and disenfranchised few among all Muslims. This self-identity is indeed rooted in not only a historical tradition but also a particular kind of time-consciousness in which a number of momentous events in early Islam are interpreted from the vantage point of the present. Such a consciousness toward the sociocultural heritage shaped around the

motif referred to as *Maktab i Ahl al-Bayt* (the School of the Prophet's Household) has become the analytical and practical framework for much of contemporary dynamics in different societies with significant Shia populations, either as majorities (in countries including Iran and Iraq) or as minorities (in states such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and even Nigeria). The present lecture aims to review some key historical roots of contemporary dynamics undertaken or stimulated by Shia activists and communities.

Zur Person: Rasool Akbari is currently a PhD Candidate in Religions and Mysticism at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran. For his bi-nationally supervised PhD thesis, he is an invited researcher at ZeKK (*the Centre for Comparative Theology and Cultural Studies*), Paderborn University of Germany. His research has been focused on ambivalent dimensions of religion in contemporary society, where he is mainly interested in ethnographic peace research, multi-religious space, digital religion, religious change in migration, political Islam, Shiism, and religion in contemporary Iran.