

Year 7 Pack

June/July 2020

Islam: Beliefs

Name.....



Diversity of Beliefs within Islam

Islam has two main sects: Sunni and Shi'a.



Sunni

Sunni form the majority of the Muslim community. Four successors, called caliphs, were appointed to lead the Muslim community after the death of Muhammad (PBUH) in 632CE: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. These men were chosen in turn and known as the 'four rightly guided caliphs', led the community for the next 24 years.

Sunni Muslims believe in the authority of the Qur'an and Hadiths, interpreted by leading Muslim scholars.

Sunni comes from the word Sunnah, which means 'custom' or 'way'. Sunni believe they are the true followers of the way of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They believe that as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

did not choose his successor, election is the right way. About 90% of all Muslims are Sunni.

Shi'a

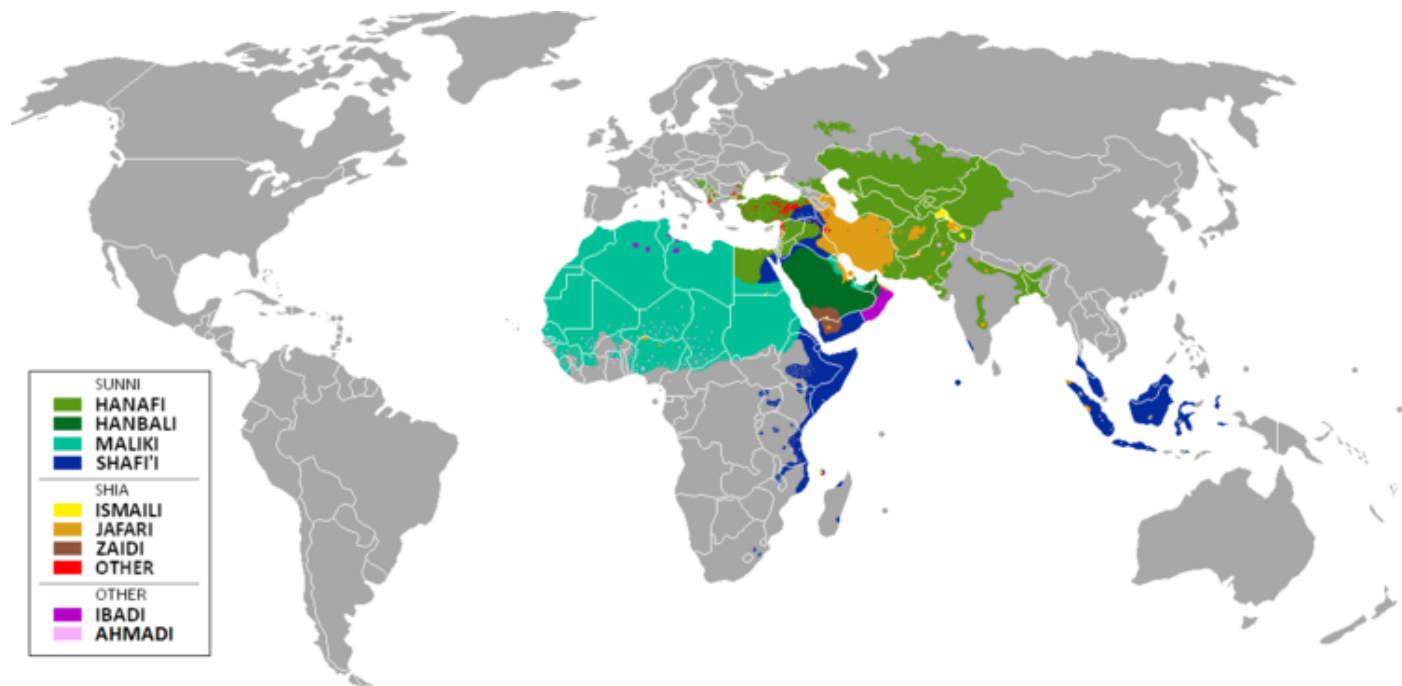
Shi'a is the second largest branch of Islam. Shi'a refer to their chosen leader as the 'imam' and they believe that each imam must be chosen by the previous imam. All Shi'a believe that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) appointed Ali as his successor. They claim the first three caliphs ignored the Prophet's choice, so they are only seen as companions. Shi'a believe the imams have authority from Allah and can interpret the Qur'an and the Laws of Islam. They believe the last imam disappeared or went to the sky without dying. The hidden imam, Mehdi, is present in the world, yet is unseen. He helps those in need and tries to convert all humankind to Islam. They believe he will appear again at the end of the world and establish Allah's kingdom.

After Ali's death, Shi'as believed his son, Hasan, should be the next leader, but there was disagreement. Ali himself had been opposed by Muawiya (Uthman's cousin) and Hasan agreed that his family would lead the caliphate only after Muawiya died. Unfortunately, Hasan died and Muawiya made his son, Yazid, the leader. Hasan's brother, Husayn, refused to accept Yazid and war broke out.

Although there are many Shi'a subsects, modern Shi'a Islam has been divided into three main groupings with Twelver Shi'a being the largest and most influential group, and the one this course focuses on.

These differences caused a split amongst the Muslim community, which we still see today. There are some within each Muslim group who believe no government can be accepted if it is not based on the Laws of Islam and the rule of Allah alone.

There is still much hatred between Sunni and Shi'a countries like in Syria where Sunni righters are fighting the Shi'a government. Also we see attacks on shrines and mosques by each group, especially in the Middle East, pointing to a continuing hatred rooted in history.



Questions

1. Who was appointed after Muhammad's (PBUH) death?

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2. Where does Sunni authority come from?

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3. Where does 'Sunnah' come from and what does it mean?

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4. What percentage of all Muslims are Sunni?

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5. What is the second largest branch of Islam?

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6. What do Shi'a Muslims believe?

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7. How many main groupings is modern Shi'a Islam?

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8. What evidence is there of conflict between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims?

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The Six Articles of Faith in Sunni Islam

The Oneness of Allah is the concept of **tawhid** meaning 'oneness, absolute, alone. Surah 112:1-4 says: "He is Allah, the One, Allah is Eternal and Absolute. None is born of Him, He is unborn. There is none like unto Him."

This means that Allah is the creator and sustainer of life. He is beyond any human limitations like age and death because He was not born and cannot die. He has no partners or children and nothing is like him.

Angels do the work of Allah. They deliver revelations via the prophets so that Muslims know what Allah wants them to do. They record the words and actions of each individual person so that they have a book to account for their lives. They receive souls at death. Angels do not have free will like humans and they obey Allah's commands.

Five sources of authority are the books: the Torah of Moses; the Psalms of David; the Gospels; the Scrolls of Abraham; the Qur'an. According to Muslims, the first four books have been lost in their original form or changes. The Qur'an is the only revealed scripture still in its original form. It is the direct Word of Allah as given through Angel Jibril.

Muslims believe in **the supremacy of Allah's will**. Sunni believe that Allah known everything. 'Qadr' means everything is ordered by Allah; nothing is random or by chance. Humans do have free will though, but as Allah knows the past, present and future their choices are already known to Him, but not to them.

Muslims believe that there will be a day (the **Day of Judgement**) when all Muslims and others stand alone in front of Allah, who decides whether they go to heaven or hell based on their deeds. Everyone must answer for themselves and must accept the consequences of their thoughts and actions on earth. Human life acts as a test for the eternal life to come.



Prophets and messengers are chosen by Allah to deliver His message to humankind. Muslims believe that Allah has revealed messages throughout time to guide humanity and that **Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the last (Seal) of the prophets**; he was given the ultimate guidance in the Qur'an. As a result of this, there is no need for any more prophets. "Muhammad (PBUH) is not the father of any of your men, but the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets." (Qur'an 33:40)

Questions

1. What is 'tawhid'?

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2. What is the purpose of angels?

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3. What are the five sources of authority?

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4. Which scripture is still in its original form?

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5. What is 'Qadr'?

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6. What is the belief in the Day of Judgement?

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7. According to Muslims, what is human life?

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8. What is the purpose of prophets and messengers?

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Why are the six articles important?



These six articles underpin religious life for Muslims. They influence all aspect of life. If Muslims believe in the absolute power of Allah, then they will live their lives according to His will. The angels are writing up all thoughts and actions, and people will have to justify them, do this makes Muslims think about how they approach life and the people around them. This shows that life here is a test for the afterlife and dew have a guaranteed place in

paradise because it has to be earned.

To know what is the right thing to do, Muslims have the teachings of the prophets, along with the examples of the lives of the prophets, such as Muhammad (PBUH) and Ibrahim, and the ultimate guide in the Qur'an. If they are to live according to how Allah wants, then paradise is on offer to them. Muslims know that they can easily follow the wrong path and that they have to make the right choices with the free will they have been given. Allah knows our actions before we even think about what we do.

Question:

Explain in detail the importance of the Six Articles of Faith in Islam.

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The Five Roots of Usual ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

Usual as-Din means 'the foundations of the faith'. These are the principles underpinning Shi'a belief, and from them come the Ten Obligatory Acts. The Twelver Shi'a (the largest group within Shi'a Islam) who follow this, are encouraged to be able to explain them; what they mean, why they are the five key roots to belief and to understand how they link to their own religious practice in all its elements. Of the five roots, tawhid, prophethood and resurrection are key to all Muslim belief. To be a Muslim means to accept them completely and without question. If a Muslim rejects the other two (imamate and justice) – then they are still Muslim, just not a Shi'a Muslim.

Tawhid – 'oneness'

This means the same as in Sunni beliefs, that Allah is One. Allah is the Almighty and unique in his Oneness. Shi'a use Qur'an Surah 112 to explain why they believe Allah is One. Allah cannot be associated with anything as 'none is like Him'; to do so is to commit the greatest sin, called 'shirk'. This means 'association' in Arabic and

therefore nothing can be compared to Allah. Allah is the creator of all, pre-existent, beyond time and space and beyond all human understanding.



Justice of Allah – Adalat

Alla is 'The Just' and 'The Wise' which means He does no wrong. The Shi'a believe they need to be aware there is good and evil in everything, but that Allah commands them to do good. Surah 16.19 says, "Indeed Allah commands them to do justice." Humans will be held responsible for their actions, good and bad. Allah acts with a purpose that humans cannot understand. Sometimes justice can be hard to see but the Shi'a should try to understand as much as they can.

Nubuwwah – Prophethood

Shi'as believe that Allah sent messengers to guide people to the right path and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the last of them. The 'right path' means a peaceful way of life, lived in total submission to Allah. Prophets deliver the messages to spread the religion. The imam protects the messages so that

people do not forget and leave the faith in the absence of prophets.



Al-Ma'ad – Resurrection

The Shi'a believe that there will be a Day of Judgement (Yawm al-Qiyyamah). Every Muslim and non-Muslim will be judged by Allah. Humans will be physically resurrected to stand to be judged and they will be asked to account for the words and actions of their lives on earth. The events of this day are described in both the Qur'an and Hadith.

Imamate – Leadership



Some believe that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that twelve imams from his own tribe (the Quraysh) would succeed him as leaders. Shi'as believe that the first eleven led the community, some were killed, but that the twelfth disappeared after his father's death. This imam will appear again when Allah decides at the end of time. Currently he is alive and in hiding. All imams are seen as infallible (can do no wrong) and must be obeyed. They are protectors of the faith, ensuring that the teachings do not become corrupted or spoiled.

How the five roots influence a Muslim's life:

- Belief in Allah as One governs a Muslim's life
- Following Allah's path means doing the right thing
- Prophethood means that a Muslim is not alone in life. Guidance is there throughout history and in the present in the Qur'an.
- The imamate is important to Muslims as without the prophets, we need leaders as we might go off track when living in the modern world
- They know that the Day of Judgement will happen – they cannot hide from Allah and so need to do the best they can in terms of intentions. This life is short in comparison to the next.
- Belief in justice means that Muslims have faith that Allah always has a purpose and his actions are based on wisdom.

Questions

1. What does 'Usul as-Din' mean?

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2. What is 'Tawhid'?

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3. What is 'Adalat'?

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4. What is 'Nubuwwah'?

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5. What do Muslims believe about resurrection?

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6. What do Muslims believe about leadership?

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7. Explain how the five roots influence a Muslim's life.

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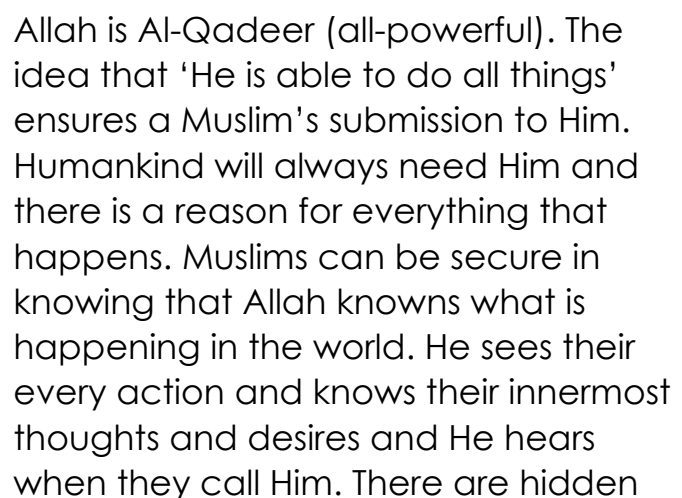
The Nature of Allah – Oneness and Omnipotence

Oneness (tawhid)

from Allah, so it is wrong to be arrogant. Forgiving it. Allah has absolute compassion, so no reason. Muslims should not question this. Humans cannot obstruct Allah or indeed any thought and intention. Anything that is a hindrance.

to His qualities, then they commit the sin that Jesus could not have been the Son of God's qualities (which also means that belief in the Trinity divides Christianity and

in tawhid. Having total faith, humility cannot be jealous of what does not and know everything happens for a reason. To Him, they will be courageous and confident.



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Questions

1. Give five things that Muslims believe about God/Allah:

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2. What should Muslims not question?

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3. What is the sin of shirk?

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4. What is a positive of believing in tawhid?

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5. What is the idea that Allah is all-powerful?

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6. What can Muslims be secure in the knowledge of?

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7. What does Allah see?

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The Nature of Allah – Immanence and Transcendence

Immanence

“We are closer to human than his jugular vein” (50:16)

“And He is with you wherever you may be.” (57:4)

These quotes from the Qur'an show Allah is vital to human existence. If the jugular vein is cut, humans die, so trying to live without Allah is worse than death.

Allah knows humans so well that, for example, He knows what someone will say even before they say it.

Muslims believe Allah must be in this world to help and guide, to give people the purpose and ability to live this life. This is what immanence means; that Allah is very active in the world.



THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

Transcendence

“No vision can grasp Him...He is above all comprehension.” (6:103)

“Nothing there is like him.” (42:11)

He is outside this world, outside everything that He created. Allah is outside time, whereas humans are subject to time. Allah has no beginning or end, so He cannot be part of time. Allah is beyond human understanding, limitless and therefore He is not part of this world.

Transcendence is being separate to the world, beyond it, which allows Allah to control and act in the world, but not be affected by it.

The Nature of Allah – Beneficence and Mercy

In Islam, Allah is known as the Beneficent (Al-Rahman) and the Merciful (Al-Rahim), so Allah is kind, compassionate and forgiving. Allah shows these by being just and fair.

In the Qur'an, Allah is referred to 57 times as Beneficent and over 160 times as the Merciful. In daily prayer the names are recited seventeen times. So how is Allah beneficent and merciful in a world full of suffering and evil?

1. He sent prophets as guides to the right path, so He is compassionate and humans have free will to follow His path
2. The mercy of Allah is reflected in the rules within the Qur'an
3. Making mistakes is part of being human, but Allah always forgives those who repent. Out of mercy Allah forgives and even repeated sin is forgiven. Muslims have the chance to make up for bad deeds.
4. Allah's mercy allows humans to exist, to live, to love and to care. Muslims are never alone. Allah's compassion surrounds them and mercy helps them deal with being humans.
5. Suffering clearly exists, but it is a test of faith to see how humans respond even where it seems beyond comprehension.
6. Humans should focus on the good (charity, loving kindness, family, togetherness, selflessness) of which there is much. They should not think only of the bad, for example, war, crime, poverty, disease.



Questions

1. What is 'immanence'?

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2. Give a quote to support the view that Allah is immanent.

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3. What is 'transcendent'?

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4. Give a quote to support the view that Allah is transcendent.

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5. How many times is Allah referred to as being 'Beneficent'?

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6. Give three examples of Allah's beneficence:

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