

**Groups in Islam, and their Demographics**  
©Jay Smith 2005  
Sopron

**MODERN GROUPS WITHIN ISLAM**

- **Al-Tirmidhi Hadith 171**  
(Narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr)
- ***“Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: There will befall my Ummah exactly (all those) evils which befell the people of Isra’il... if the people of Isra’il were fragmented into seventy-two sects my Ummah will be fragmented into seventy-three sects. All of them will be in Hell Fire except one sect...”***  
Transmitted by Tirmidhi.

**Sunnis**

- Known as ‘*ahl as-sunnah wa-l-ijma*’ (People of the ‘custom of the prophet’, and the Consensus)
- 90% of Muslims today
- Recognize the first four Caliphs
- Attribute no religious or political function to descendants of Ali (Muh. son-in-law/cousin)
- Adhere to one of the four schools of Law

**Shi’ites (Shia, Shi’i)**

- **Comprise 10% of Muslim world: 3 major groups:**

**[1] Twelver Imam Shi’ism**

- **Twelvers = 12 Imams in succession to Ali. These Imams hold a spiritual and political pre-eminence and possess miraculous powers & secret knowledge (sinless).**
- **Imams sustain creation, and provide salvation to believers, as an intermediary between God and man, giving more authority than even Muhammad. (official religion of Iran since 1501)**
- **Found also in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Eastern S. Arabia, & Gulf states**

**Doctrinal distinctives**

**i) Imamate**

- *Imamate* hereditary in the House of **Ali (Muhammad’s son-in-law / cousin)**.
- Imams are infallible, impeccable, and created from the Light of God.

**ii) Qur’an**

- *Qur’an* is created. *Mutashabih* (allegorical/implicit) verses have mystical meaning that only the infallible Imams can interpret
- Different order of verses than Sunni Qur’an, *derived from Ali*

### iii) Traditions

- Imparted by Imams. Collations of Mohammad Ibn Yaqaob Abu Jafar Kulaini (d. 939), *Usul al Kafi* and *Forroh al Kafi. Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih*, by Muhammad ibn Babuya (d. 991); *Tahdhib al-Akhkam* and *Al-Istibsar*, by Sheikh Muhammad at-Tusi, Shaykhu't-Ta'ifa (d. 1067).

### iv) Return of the Imam

- Return of the Twelfth Imam as Mahdi.

### Differences between Sunni & Shi'ites

- Shi'ites add 'Aliyyu waliyyu-Llah' ('Ali is the friend of God') to the Shahada
- Pray 3 times and not 5 times a day
- Use open buses for Hajj
- Eat meat slaughtered by non-Muslims
- Accept Mut'ah marriages
- Believe God can change his mind
- Only accept prayers of a moral prayer leader
- Believe the Qur'an was created
- Don't accept the authority of the first 3 caliphs

### [2] Zaydis: Five-Imam Shi'ites ('Fivers')

- **The most moderate of Shi'ites, and closest to Sunnis**
- **Found mostly in Yemen (40% of the population)**
- **They see the Imamite as a function which may or may not be exercised at a particular time by a descendant of the Prophet, and not with the divine powers of the 12ers.**
- **They accept the authority of the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 Caliphs**

### [3] Isma'ilis: Seven Imam Shi'ites

- **Took their name from the 7th Imam, Isma'il, the son of Ja'far as-Sadiq (d. 765), the 6th Imam.**
- **2 Million today, mostly in India and Pakistan, and found in Central Asia, Iran, Syria and East Africa (mainly from India)**
- **Believed to be pre-Islamic, related to Hellenistic pagan Gnosticism, & Manicheism.**

### 'Sevener' doctrinal distinctives

- **i) Imamate -**
- Allah incomprehensible and transcendent. Nizarism not centred on God or Muhammad but on contemporary Imam
- Agha Khan, considered source of divine knowledge, power, truth and wisdom.
- Salvation comes through obedience to him. He is the mediator between God and Man.
- Khojas recognise only four prophets - Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad.

- Imams are superior to prophets. When an Imam is in occultation, *mujtahids* interpret and convey Imami teaching.
- **ii) Qur'an** -
- Allegorical interpretation of *Qur'an* and *Shari'ah*. Khojas view their own books, the *Ginans*, as superior.
- '*The Truths*', theological system of philosophy and science.

### Druze

- 600,000 who live in Lebanon, Syria & Israel.
- Takes its name from Darazi, a Da'ist, who promoted the deification of the 6<sup>th</sup> Imam, al-Hakim.
- Hakim will return as the final Mahdi
- A secret group, whose numbers are believed to have remained constant since 1021 a.d.

### **Doctrines**

#### **1) God:**

- Nine levels of heavenly beings emanating from the incomprehensible Deity. Ali, incarnation of the essence of deity. Supreme God manifested Himself seven times. Each incarnation called 'The Essence' or 'Idea' (*ma'na*), manifested as Abel, Seth, Joseph, Joshua, 'Asaf, Peter, and Ali, and eleven Imams.

#### **2) Sin:**

- Souls were originally lights or stars, fell through pride, cast down to human bodies.

#### **3) Reincarnation:**

Seven times for pious Nusairis.

### Sufis

- Believe in the direct knowledge of God
- Use paradigms & concepts derived from Greek and Hindu sources
- Usually grouped into Tariqahs (paths)
- Grouped around a master
- Ali is seen as the fountainhead of esoteric knowledge
- Emphasis on haqiqa, the 'inner Truth'; Ishq (love to God); union with God; Al-Hallaj (d. 922):

#### **Sayings:**

*"I am he whom I love, and he whom I love is I"*

*"We are all two spirits dwelling in one body"*

*"If thou seest me, thou seest Him"*

*"if thou seest Him, thou seest us both".*

- Union is established in the heart - qalb, or spirit - ar-Ruh. Then the Sufi progresses to the 'Way of Knowledge' (marifa) and 'Way of Love' (mahabbah) by a 3 way process:

- (i) Ittiahadiya - union of the active intellect in the soul of Sufi.
- (ii) Ishraqiya - infusion of divine spark in the soul of Sufi.
- (iii) Wusuliya - amalgamation of 'I' and 'Thou'.

### Ahmadiyyahs

#### 1). Prophethood

- Gullam Ahmad (Kashmiri) - Messiah and Mahdi, the Imam of the age. A *buruz* - spiritual manifestation of the Last Prophet, in the spirit and power of Muhammad. Also, a *buruz* or avatar of the Hindu deity Krishna. 'Seal' of the prophets - no new prophet to come with a new Law after him.

#### 2). Jesus:

- Not sinless – Ahmad superior. Jesus did not die on the cross, merely swooned, travelled to Kashmir and died, with tomb in Srinagar. No literal parousia.

#### 3) Antichrist

- 'Pauline' Christianity.

#### 4) Spiritual Jihad

### Wahhabis:

- Founded by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab in the 1700s.
- Fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.
- Follow Ibn Hanbal.
- Believe in following doctrines strictly. Legalists
- Have a strong relationship with the Ibn Saud family.

### Ibadites

- Descended from the Khajirites of 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> c.
- Believes the Qur'an is created
- Follows the Maliki school of law,
- Mostly in Oman

## MUSLIM DEMOGRAPHICS ISLAM IN THE WORLD

### Muslim Population= 1.2- 2.0 billion

= 21.5% World total (43>50%, 24>90%)

- Mideast = 120m
- Africa = 255m
- Asia = 580m
- US = 4.6m
- E. Europe = 20m,
- W. Europe = 16m

**Growth:** 2.5%-3.0% = Muslims  
2.7% = Protestants  
5.0% = Evangelicals!!

### **Islam in Continental EUROPE**

- 8th-9th c. = Iberia,
- 13<sup>th</sup> c. = Mongols,
- 15<sup>th</sup> c. = Ottoman,
- 20th c. = Post-WW2

#### **5) Currently:**

##### **a) Students**

##### **b) Migrant Workers/Citizens:**

former USSR = 11 - 25m  
France = 4.5 - 6m  
Germany = 4m  
Britain = 2.5m  
Yugoslavia = 3.8m  
Italy = 1.9m  
Netherlands = 300,000;  
Spain = 200,000;  
Swiss = 80,000

### **THE AGENDA OF MUSLIMS TODAY**

#### **Da'wah ('to invite')**

#### **Muslim Da'ist Methodologies**

- **3 Primary Agendas: (Using lectures, book tables, debates)**
  - 1) Decline of the West (using media statistics)**
  - 2) Christianity is at fault (due to 7% attendance, and corrupt scriptures)**
  - 3) Islam is the answer: answers for every area (i.e. social, economic, political):**
- **-Cultural mandate (Muhammad Abduh, Khurram Murad, Abd al-Mawdudi)**
- **-Scientific Exegesis (Maurice Bucaille, Dr. Jamal Badawi)**
- **-Pagan Sources of the Bible (Abdul Rahman Green)**
- **-Polemics: the trinity & Sonship of Jesus, authority of scripture (Shabir Ali)**