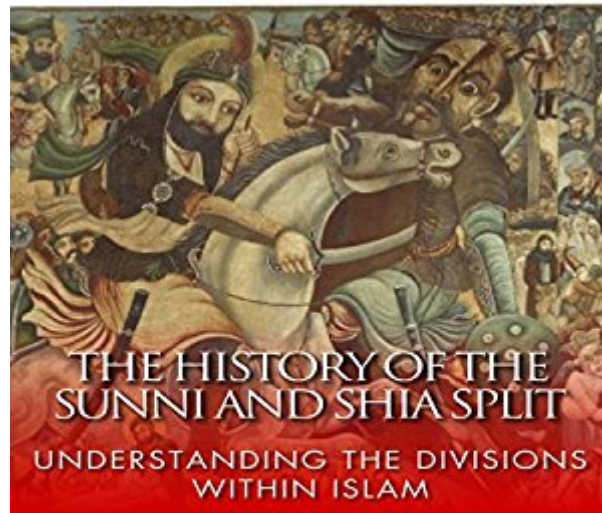


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The History Of The Sunni And Shia Split: Understanding The Divisions Within Islam



by
CHARLES RIVER EDITORS



Synopsis

"Our followers are of three kinds, one who follows us but depends on others, one who is like a glass involved in his own reflections, but the best are those who are like gold, the more they suffer the more they shine." - Muhammad al-Baqir

Different branches of the same religion are the exception more than the rule, and they have had a profound impact upon history. The schism between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches influenced relationships between nations across Europe, and religious intolerance based on different Christian faiths led to persecution and outright violence across the continent for centuries. The Protestant Reformation split Christianity further, and the results culminated in the incredibly destructive 30 Years' War in the 17th century. Today, the most important religious split is between the Sunnis and the Shias (Shiites) within Islam. Unlike divisions in other faiths - between Conservative and Orthodox Jews or Catholic and Protestant Christians - the split between the Sunnis and Shia has existed almost as long as the faith itself, and it quickly emerged out of tensions created by the political crisis after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. In a sense, what are now two different forms of Islam essentially started as political factions within the unified body of Muslim believers. Over the past few centuries, Christians have mostly been able to live alongside their co-religionists, but the split between the Sunnis and Shias is still so pronounced that many adherents of each branch view each other with disdain if not as outright apostates or non-believers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I found that I learned more about the differences in belief between Sunni and Shia Muslims from this short synopsis than anything else I've read. The book provides extensive footnotes so that one can determine the source of the various statements in this book. The bibliography list is long and provides one with multiple sources to learn about Shia and/or Sunni Muslims.

Needs a glossary of Arabic terms. Would also benefit from charts showing the relationships between members of the Prophet's family.

This 55-page booklet does a great job in explaining how the split came between the two major factions comprising the Muslims. Ironically, just hours ago, I was in a discussion with a co-worker trying to explain to him the difference. I doubt any other book can so quickly and succinctly explain what *The History of the Sunni and Shia Split: Understanding the Divisions Within Islam* is a must read for anyone moving to the Middle East, and is a good introduction for anybody interested in international political science. It also is a worthwhile read for anybody interested in the effect of religion on politics.

A very well-written, articulate and informative book. If you truly want to understand the fundamental reasons of the split between these two Muslim groups, read this. It not only takes both side's claims into consideration but also approaches this delicate issue with a sense of neutrality and logic without losing focus on the fact that most of what happened is presented in the form stories, and stories after all, are just stories. It's really hard to tell which side is more truthful. Good read overall.

Today, as the world stands on the verge of international religious war. This is a very important and informative book I suggest to everyone who is interested in trying to understand these turbulent times.

As an outsider to Islam, it is difficult to understand the divide that exists between the Sunni and Shia. This work simplifies the historical differences in an understanding way for one looking to better understand a centuries old feud.

This is a short but factual work, and if one is willing to wade through all the ibn's and ali's, very informative. The roots of the Sunni/Shia/Wahabbi/Sufi rift are traced all the way back to Mohammad's tent. A night well spent reading this.

This book provides one of the clearest explanations of the Islamic situation today, albeit still confusing. The divide of religious beliefs following a truly enlightened being due to personal ego based greed and want of power and control closely mimics the evolution of Christianity.

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