

Vocabulary List: Religion and Internal Middle East Politics

Ayatollah (a-yat-ool-LAH) A mullah who achieves the highest level of leadership in the Shia community through extensive academic study

Bilal (bee-LAHL) An African who called the Prophet Muhammad to prayer

Caliphs (KAY-lifs) Historic leaders who provided religious and civil leadership in Muslim communities from A.D. 632 to the mid-thirteenth century. In practice, kings, sultans, and the ulama took over caliph powers from the ninth century onward.

Dar al-Islam (dahr-ul-is-LAM) The Islamic world...those territories guided by Islamic law

Deputyship An expression of the dominion humankind demonstrates over this world which is fulfilled through religious leaders--the ulama.

Fatwa (FAT-wuh) Formal decisions given on legal, moral, or doctrinal questions. Often the procedures for arriving at this consensus are complex and intricate.

Hadith (hah-DEETH) Traditions of what Muhammad and his companions said and did

Hanbalite (HAHN-buh-leyet) Imam Hanbal (d. 855), from Baghdad, followed a strict interpretation of the Shariah. Strong in present day Arabia, especially Saudi Arabia, Hanbal thought influenced the revivalist ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

Imam (i-MAHM) Leads prayers for the faithful. Also, these leaders may derive authority from their abilities in religious scholarship.

Mahdi (MAH-dee) The 12th imam who allegedly went into hiding. Messianic expectations within Shia thought see this figure returning to earth in the last days.

Marabouts (MAHR-eh-boots) "Friends of God" or popular saints. Locals often see these holy individuals as possessing spiritual/mystical powers and seek out their prayers and blessings. Though condemned in some orthodox Islamic circles, pilgrimages to these living saints or visits to the tombs of their dead still occur.

Muezzin (moo-uh-TH-thin) The crier who calls worshippers to prayer

Mufti (MUF-tee) Scholars in Islamic law

Mujahidun (moo-ja-hid-OON) Present day activists who seek to revive Islamic society

Mullahs (MUL-luhs) Local Shi'ite men of religion

People of the Book Jewish and Christian believers who live under the Dar al-Islam, often enjoying special protection in exchange for unique taxation.

Sharia (sha-REE-ah) Religious law of Islam

Shia (SHEE-uh) Followers who believe Muhammad specified that his cousin and son-in-law Ali would be his successor. The charisma of Muhammad passed on in direct blood lineage through a family dynasty. Religious and political authority rests in imams alone.

Sufi (SOO-fee) Within both Sunni and Shia circles there are branches of mystical/spiritual intensity. This school of thought defines the Sufi mystic orientation. "Like the heart of the body of Islam--invisible from the outside but giving nourishment to the whole organism," so the pietism of this school exerts an influence on all Islam.

Sunna (SOON-nuh) Prophet Muhammad's practice and way of life

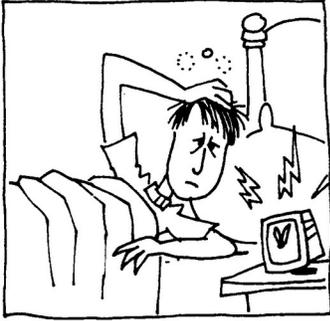
Sunni (SOON-nee) Elders who saw Muhammad's successor as chosen by the community of those who follow the ethical/religious Muslim path. Authority rests in the community, guided by ulama consensus and Islamic law.

Syncretistic Blended, including other beliefs or practices

Twelvers The largest group within Shia Islam. These individuals hold that 12 imams existed on earth. Believing in the necessity and infallibility of the office of Imam, these Shiites regard the imam as the only person in the community with the authority to interpret religion.

Ulama (oo-la-mah) Leadership centers around these learned men who are responsible for interpreting divine law and administering Islamic society. Theology, law, and mysticism are also part of the curriculum for individuals desiring to become part of this select group.

Review Quiz: Religion and Internal Middle East Politics



Part 1--Matching Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

1. _____ Bilal
this _____ Mahdi
through
ulama.
 3. _____ Dar al-Islam
 4. _____ Deputyship
 5. _____ Hanbalite
 6. _____ People of the
Book
 7. _____ Twelvers
 8. _____ Imam
the
 9. _____ Fatwa
 10. _____ Kathib
academic
 11. _____ Caliphs
 12. _____ Ayatollah
- in
632 to
century. In
sultans, and the
- A. An expression of the dominion
humankind demonstrates over
world which is fulfilled
religious leaders--the
 - B. Jewish and Christian believers who
live under the Dar al-Islam, often
enjoying special protection in
exchange for taxation.
 - C. The largest group within Shia Islam.
Believing in the necessity and
infallibility of the office of Imam,
these Shiites regard the Imam as the
only person in the community with
authority to interpret religion.
 - D. A mullah who achieves the highest
level of leadership in the Shia
community through extensive
study.
 - E. An African who called the Prophet
Muhammad to prayer.
 - F. Historic leaders who provided
religious and civil oversight
Muslim communities from A.D.
the mid-thirteenth
practice, kings,
ulama took over

their powers from the
onward.

ninth century

Unit 6: Religion and Internal Middle East Politics

- territories
- G. The Islamic world...those
guided by Islamic law.
- H. Formal decisions given on legal,
moral or doctrinal questions.
- I. Imam Hanbal (d. 855), from Baghdad,
followed a strict
the Shariah.
Arabia,
Hanbal
- interpretation of
Strong in present day
especially Saudi Arabia,
thought influenced the
revivalist ibn Abd al-Wahhab.
- J. Leads prayers for the faithful.
- K. Describes one who performs
preacherly duties.
- L. The 12th imam who allegedly went
into hiding. Messianic
within Shia thought see
returning to earth in the last days.
- expectations
this figure
-

Part 2--Matching Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.



1. _____ Ulama
 2. _____ Mullahs
 3. _____ Muezzin
 4. _____ Marabouts
 5. _____ Shia
- A. "Friends of God" or popular saints.
 - B. The crier who calls worshippers to prayer
 - C. Scholars in Islamic law
 - D. Present day activists who seek to revive Islamic society

Unit 6: Religion and Internal Middle East Politics

6. _____ Mufti E. Local Shi'ite men of religion
7. _____ Mujahidun F. Religious law of Islam

Unit 6: Religion and Internal Middle East Politics

8. _____ Hadith
9. _____ Sufi
son-in-law successor. The
passed on in
10. _____ Sharia
11. _____ Syncretistic
12. _____ Sunni
13. _____ Sunna
- school of
mystic
- those
ethical/religious
- for
society
- G. Followers who believe Muhammad specified that his cousin and law Ali would be his charisma of Muhammad
- direct blood lineage through a family dynasty.
- H. Traditions of what Muhammad and his companions said and did
- I. Within both Sunni and Shia circles there are branches of mystical/spiritual intensity. This thought defines this orientation.
- J. Prophet Muhammad's practice and way of life.
- K. Elders who saw Muhammad's successor as chosen by the community of who follow the Muslim path.
- L. Blended, including other beliefs or practices
- M. Leadership centers around these learned men who are responsible interpreting divine law and administering Islamic
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Part 3--Multiple Choice Place the letter of the most correct response in the blank provided.

1. _____ Shia Islam is practiced in
 - A. Sub-Sahara Africa.
 - B. Iran, south Iraq, parts of Lebanon and in smaller elements of Islam elsewhere.
 - C. Southeast Asia.

2. _____ Within Shia Islam, religious and political authority rests with the _____ alone.
 - A. imams
 - B. premiers
 - C. kings

3. _____ "Twelvers" are the largest _____ school of thought. They believe 12 infallible imams existed on earth.
 - A. Sunni
 - B. Shia
 - C. Hanafite

4. _____ _____ mystics and pietists can be found in both Sunni and Shia Islamic circles.
 - A. Sufi
 - B. Mufti
 - C. Ulama

5. _____ Response to what question led to the establishment of Sunni and Shia schools of thought within Islam?
 - A. How literally do we interpret the Qur'an?
 - B. Who leads at the death of Muhammad?
 - C. When does the month of Ramadan occur?

6. _____ elders see Muhammad's successors as being chosen by the community who follow the ethical/religious path.
- A. Shia
 - B. Sunni
 - C. "Twelvers"
7. _____ What approximate percentage of the Muslim world follows the Sunni branch?
- A. 35%
 - B. 50%
 - C. 85%
8. _____ elders believe successors to Muhammad must follow from a direct blood lineage from the Prophet himself.
- A. Sunni
 - B. Shia
 - C. Marabout
9. _____ The Shia school of thought makes up what approximate percentage of Islam as a whole?
- A. 5%
 - B. 30%
 - C. 15%
10. _____ In the 12th and 13th centuries, mission-oriented Sufi orders and Muslim traders brought Islam to
- A. Spain.
 - B. Egypt.
 - C. the Indian subcontinent.
11. _____ Within Shia Islam a/an _____ is a man of religion, known for his extensive academic study, who is looked upon as achieving the highest level of scholarship.
- A. imam
 - B. mujahidun
 - C. ayatollah

12. _____ lead the Islamic masses in prayers and preach in mosques.

- A. Muezzin
- B. Imam
- C. Fatwa

13. _____ or "friends of God" enjoy a status similar to that of a popular saint. Pilgrimages to their graves may occur in some Islamic circles.

- A. Marabouts
- B. Caliphs
- C. Shariah

14. _____ Saudi Arabia and Iran could be classified as _____ religious/political states.

- A. secularist
- B. fundamentalist
- C. modernist

15. _____ Egypt and _____ are modernist, Islamic states.

- A. Iraq
- B. Libya
- C. Jordan

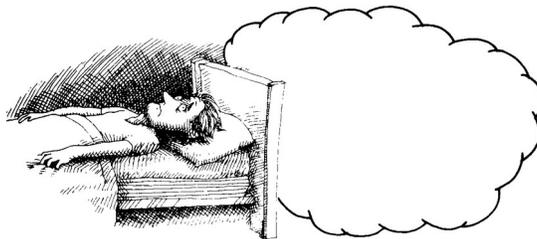
Part 4--True/False Place a T or F in the blank provided.



- 1. _____ Political expressions of Islam present a monolithic whole, being the same throughout countries of the Middle East.
- 2. _____ Islam practice and thought in SE Asia often includes elements of other belief systems within its way of life.

Unit 6: Religion and Internal Middle East Politics

3. _____ The Qur'an refers to the practice of 'People of the Book' over fifty times.
4. _____ At times throughout history, Islam--Judaism--Christianity experienced long periods of harmony due to the "People of the Book" recognition.
5. _____ Islam is a religion of lay people without a priesthood. All members enjoy equal religious status before God.
6. _____ Throughout Islamic history, many ulama have led their people against external invasions and internal tyranny.
7. _____ A mullah is a local Shiite man of religion.
8. _____ Many Sunni practitioners believe the Shariah was codified and closed by the end of the ninth century.
9. _____ Within Shia Islam, the religious law is always open to fresh reformulation.
10. _____ Throughout their history, "Twelvers" within Shia Islam have often hid their belief and practice from others.
11. _____ The relationship between Islam and political life is straightforward and simple.
12. _____ Within Islam, the entire world is a spiritual reality, permeated by religion.
13. _____ The Sharia applies only to personal ethics and spiritual concerns.
14. _____ Each one of the hadith underwent a critical examination by the scholarly Islamic community before being recognized as authoritative.



"Dream...think...become."

Sources Used in Religion and Internal Middle East Politics

- Arkoun, Muhammad, Rethinking Islam, Robert D. Lee, ed., (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994).
- Charles, Prince of Wales, "Islam and the West," (IQRA, Feb/Mar 1994), pp. 18-20.
- Jomier, Jacques, How To Understand Islam, (New York: Crossroad, 1991).
- Kibble, David G., "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism," (Military Review, Vol LXXV, Sep-Oct 1995, No. 5), pp. 40-45.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, "Islam," Our Religions, ed., Arvind Sharma, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).
- Osman, Fathi, "Most Commonly Used Islamic Terms," (NS 3300, Supplementary Texts, Dr. Kamil Said), p. 42.
- Pagonis, William G., Moving Mountains, (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School, 1992).
- Said, Kamil, Syllabus, Islamic Civilization, (NS 4300), pp. 20-21.
- Smith, Jonathan, ed., The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

Resources for Further Study

In addition to bibliographies listed in Units 8 (Fundamentalisms) and 13 (Country Studies), see the following:

Berkey, Jonathan, "What Connects Kabul to Los Angeles?," (New York Times, Letter to the Editor, 3 OCT 1996), p. A14. A thought-provoking letter treating the diversity found within Sharia throughout the world.

Moyers, Bill, The Arab World, Conversations on Arab History, Religion and Culture, (Public Affairs T.V., Mystic Fire Video, Inc., Cooper Station, New York, 1990). Parts Three (Image of God) and Five (Arabs and the West) of this five part PBS series are especially helpful in treating religion and internal Middle East politics.

Sciolino, Elaine, "The Many Faces of Islamic Law," (New York Times, 27 Oct 1996), page E4. A helpful, succinct explanation of the variety expressed by Sharia throughout the Middle East. An excellent overview of the subject.



"Vow to do your best."

