

*"The Sharia prescribes directives for the regulation for the individual as well as collective life. These directives touch every aspect of life as religious rituals, personal character, habits, morals, family life, social and economic affairs, administration, rights and duties of citizens, judicial system, laws of war and peace and international relations.*

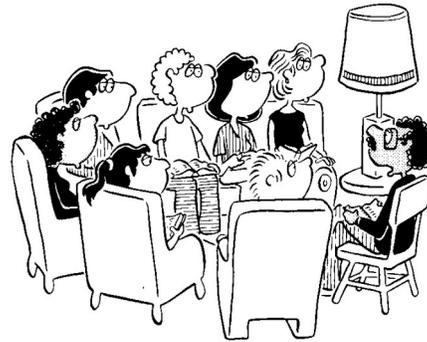


*These directives reveal what is good and bad, and what is beneficial and useful and what is injurious and harmful.*

*The Sharia is a complete system of life and an all-embracing social order.*

*The Muslim thought of a good society is that where Sharia law would be enforced by the state.*

*Hadith were collected on the initiative of the Compilers. Each one of [the hadith] had to be critically examined and accepted by the community before being recognized as an authoritative work." (pp. 20-21, Syllabus, Islamic Civilization, NS 4300.)*



## 5. The Four Major Schools of the Sharia

**a. Hanafite** (HA-nuh-fit) These followers of Imam Abu Hanifa (d. 767) are found in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, China, North Africa, Egypt, and in the Malay Archipelago. Broad-minded without being lax, this school appeals to reason (personal judgment) and a quest for the better. It is

generally tolerant and the largest movement within Islam.

**b. Malikite** (MA-li-kit) Following the tradition of Imam Malik (d. 795), this school appeals to "common utility...the idea of the common good." Arabia, North and West Africa, Upper Egypt and the Sudan is the location.

**c. Shafiite** (sha-FI-it) Al Shafii's (d. 855) thought influenced Indonesia, Southern Arabia, Lower Egypt, parts of Syria, Palestine, Eastern Africa, India and South Africa. Tradition, the consensus of the Muslim community and reasoning by analogy are characteristics of this school.

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

## 6. Western Misperceptions



The Prince of Wales, in a speech entitled "Islam and the West," addressed the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies, 27 Oct 1993. Prince Charles said the following concerning Western perspectives on Sharia.

*"[P]eople...frequently argue that the sharia law of the Islamic world is cruel, barbaric and unjust. Our newspapers, above all, love to peddle those unthinking prejudices.*

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*The truth is, of course, different and always more complex.*

---

*My own understanding is that extremes are rarely practiced. The guiding principles and spirit of Islamic law, taken straight from the Qur'an, are those of equity and compassion. We need to study its actual application before we make judgments...*

*We must distinguish between systems of justice administered with integrity, and systems of justice as we may see them practiced which have been deformed for political reasons into something no longer Islamic. We must bear in mind the sharp debate taking place in the Islamic world itself about the degree to which the application of that law is continually changing and evolving." (NS 3300, pp. 60,61.)*

## 7. Islamic Responses to the West

George Gawrych, art of war in the Middle East instructor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, identifies three broad responses within Islam to Western challenges: secularism, fundamentalism, and modernism.

**a. Secularism** These countries seek to keep Islam separate from politics. Nationalism/secularism is the primary force in modern history. The state imposes no Islamic practice upon society. Religion becomes a matter of private conscience. "Secularists argue that Islam only suffers when rulers or religious institutions use the faith for political ends. Religious leaders should concern themselves with 'saving souls' and upholding society's moral order." (Military Review, Sep 95, p. 35.) Turkey is a modern secular state.

**b. Fundamentalism** These followers believe in absolute religious and political unity. *"Everything must be under Islamic Law's rule, as it was in Muhammad's time in Medina.*



*All state institutions must be clearly and unequivocally Islamic, including the armed forces. Wars must be conducted for ideological and cultural, not national, ends." (MR, p. 35.) Saudi Arabia and Iran could be classified in this movement.*

**c. Modernism** This is the middle ground between the above extremes. While not following a rigid separation of religion and politics, modernists also do not fuse them together. The legal system balances Islamic and natural law. *"Patriotism and nationalism sometimes appear to hold greater sway than Islamic ideology. Egypt and Jordan are modernist states." (MR, p. 36.)*

**8. Islamic and Southeast Asian Politics** In their discussion entitled The Political Impact of Islam in Southeast Asia, chief investigator Dr. Donald Weatherbee enumerated the following three trends of thought in describing Islam's political impact on the countries of Southeast Asia.

**a. Radical Fundamentalists** These extremists often look beyond the actual meaning of the Qur'an and interpret it for political purposes. Islam becomes "politicized."

Radical fundamentalist advocates take the sharia as an uncompromisable whole. It cannot be adjusted to meet political contingencies or change with the times.

The struggle between Islam and the non-Islamic state is a total, all encompassing one. Fundamentalism's influence is far out of proportion to its number of actual adherents.



**b. Traditionalist** This trend of thought makes accommodation to political realities. Though trying to project Sharia influence on increasingly larger societal circles, traditionalists nonetheless realize that they often live in secularist states.

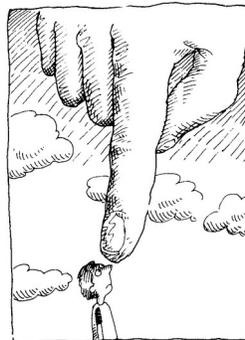
**c. Reformist** These practitioners would adjust the sharia to the complexities of modernity, shaping Islam to suit the modern world.

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*"Reformist Islam seeks to accommodate science, technology, the demands of an industrializing economy, etc.--all of the appurtenances of a modern society--by going back to the source in an original fashion.*

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*Reformist Islam seeks to meet the challenge of modernization in all its dimensions, unlike traditionalist Islam increasingly confined to the Mosque and religion narrowly defined. The major social-base of reformist Islam is in the urban centered Muslim entrepreneurial class." (p. 6)*



"Vow to do your best."

## Vocabulary List: Religion and East Asian Politics

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

**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.

**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 Sharia. Strong in present day Arabia, especially Saudi Arabia, Hanbal thought influenced the revivalist ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

**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

**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.

**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.

## Review Quiz: Religion and East Asian Politics



**Part 1--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. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ mystics and pietists can be found in both Sunni and Shia Islamic circles.
  - a. Sufi
  - b. Mufti
  - c. Ulama
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 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?
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ elders see Muhammad's successors as being chosen by the community who follow the ethical/religious path.
  - a. Shia
  - b. Sunni

c. "Twelvers"

## Unit 6: Religion and East Asian Politics

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6. \_\_\_\_\_ What approximate percentage of the Muslim world follows the Sunni branch?

- a. 35%
- b. 50%
- c. 85%

7. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ elders believe successors to Muhammad must follow from a direct blood lineage from the Prophet himself.

- a. Sunni
- b. Shia
- c. Marabout

8. \_\_\_\_\_ The Shia school of thought makes up what approximate percentage of Islam as a whole?

- a. 5%
- b. 30%
- c. 15%

9. \_\_\_\_\_ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mission-oriented Sufi orders and Muslim traders brought Islam to

- a. Spain.
- b. Egypt.
- c. the Indian subcontinent.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ 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

11. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ lead the Islamic masses in prayers and preach in mosques.

- a. Muezzin
- b. Imam
- c. Fatwa



## Unit 6: Religion and East Asian Politics

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12. \_\_\_\_\_ 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

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Saudi Arabia and Iran could be classified as \_\_\_\_\_ religious/political states.

- a. secularist
- b. fundamentalist
- c. modernist

14. \_\_\_\_\_ Egypt and \_\_\_\_\_ are modernist, Islamic states.

- a. Iraq
- b. Libya
- c. Jordan

15. \_\_\_\_\_ In classic Buddhist practice, what was the unwritten policy between governments and the sangha?

- a. Kings protected the sangha receiving formal and informal support from them in return.
- b. The sangha often raised a prophetic voice against the government.
- c. Kings ignored the sangha.

16. \_\_\_\_\_ One consequence of Taoist influence on politics was

- a. rulers concerned themselves with the prominent, impressive members of their communities.
- b. rulers concerned themselves with the lowly, poorer members of their communities.
- c. environmental concerns were top priority.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ Classic Taoist governmental ideals sought influence by

- a. bribes and schemes of personal favors.
- b. aggressive, direct, up-front persuasion.
- c. indirection, nuance and suggestion.



## Unit 6: Religion and East Asian Politics

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18. \_\_\_\_\_ Confucian political thought
- sought out transcending values found in Chinese custom and practice.
  - advocated a policy of political detachment.
  - threw aside all Taoist understanding.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ In Confucian thought--poetry, history, communication and philosophy have
- nothing to do with political activity.
  - are outside the parameters of politics.
  - are intricately interconnected to political activity.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ What is an example of syncretism in belief?
- The blending of Taoist and Confucian thought when applied to Chinese politics.
  - Islam's five pillars.
  - Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism.
- 

### Part 2--True/False

Place a T or F in the blank provided.



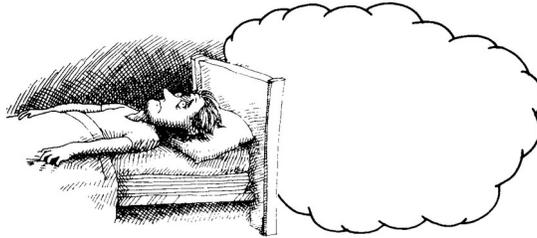
- \_\_\_\_\_ Political expressions of Islam present a monolithic whole, being the same throughout countries of the Middle East.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Islam practice and thought in SE Asia often includes elements of other belief systems within its way of life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Islam is a religion of lay people without a priesthood. All members enjoy equal religious status before God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Throughout Islamic history, many ulama have led their people against external invasions and internal tyranny.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ The relationship between Islam and political life is straightforward and simple.

## Unit 6: Religion and East Asian Politics

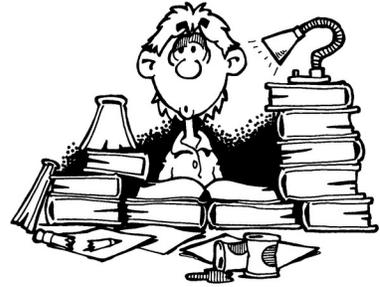
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6. \_\_\_\_\_ Within Islam, the entire world is a spiritual reality, permeated by religion.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The Sharia applies only to personal ethics and spiritual concerns.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Each one of the hadith underwent a critical examination by the scholarly Islamic community before being recognized as authoritative.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ In southeast Asia, government leaders routinely overlook the impact of Buddhism upon their societies.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Confucian thought sees some areas of life as distinctly political, while others are well outside the boundaries of political responsibility.



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

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## Resources for Further Study

In addition to bibliographies listed in Units 7 (U.S. Relations), 8 (Fundamentalisms) and 12 (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.

Bernstein, Richard, "From a Chinese Prison, Thoughtful Defiance," (New York Times, 12 May 1997), p. B1.

Review of The Courage to Stand Alone--Letter from Prison and Other Writings by Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Grinter, Lawrence, Realities of Revolutionary Violence in Southeast Asia--Challenges and Responses, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1990).

Reuters, "104 Are Held in Malaysia After East Timor Meeting," (New York Times, 9 Nov 1997), p. A.

Sciolino, Elaine, "The Many Faces of Islamic Law," (New York Times, 27 Oct 1996), p. E4.

A helpful, succinct explanation of the variety expressed by Sharia throughout the Middle East. An excellent overview of the subject.

Tyler, Patrick, "Catholic in China: Back to the Underground," (New York Times, 1997), p. A1.

Tyler, Patrick, "Chinese Muslims Recount Their Days of Terror," (New York Times, 10 Nov 1996), p. A3.



"Books are an important part of any...leader's professional development...I tell people that history strengthens me...read to relax, to learn, and to expand your horizons."  
(General Gordon R. Sullivan)