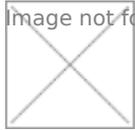


Core Curriculum

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8 Islamic Relationships, Sects and Conflicts

8.1

Misconceptions about Shi'ism

In this lesson, we cover a variety of misconceptions, these include:

1. Shias believe the Qur'an is distorted.
2. Shias believe Imam Ali (as) is God and they worship him.
3. Shias worship rocks in their prayers
4. Shias believe Sunnis are non-Muslims
5. Shias don't believe in Zakat
6. Shias believe that the Angel Jibril (as) made a mistake as he was supposed to give revelation and prophethood to Imam Ali (as) and not the Prophet Muhammad (s).
7. Shias believe that the 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (aj), has been hiding in a cave for over a thousand years and when the time is right, he will come out of the cave and conquer the world.

8.2

Major Sects of Islam

N/A

8.3

Islam and Religious Conflicts

N/A

8.4

Islam and Rights

In Islam, the fundamental denominator of human relations are rights, duties and responsibilities. The word for “right” in Islam is called haqq (pl. huquq). Incidentally, the premodern Islamic word for duties and responsibilities is also haqq.

What this tells us is that both go hand in hand, in other words, rights don’t exist in a vacuum, any right that is accorded to a person also comes with a series of responsibilities. For example, in Islam, a child has the right to be nurtured by his or her parents, however, this child also has the responsibility of obeying his or her parents.

As such, haqq is dualistic in nature.

Haqq is not only the denominator of all of our relations, but it is also the denominator of all of our sins. Any sin in Islam goes against a certain kind of haqq. For example, one has a responsibility in ensuring one’s own salvation by keeping one’s faith and spiritual heart clean. This means that one should avoid doing things that will harm one’s self, both physically, mentally as well as spiritually.

Our community also has a right to live in a clean spiritual environment that is devoid of spiritual polluters. Therefore, committing the sins of adultery, for example, are infringements upon the rights of a community. This is because sins like adultery break down families, ruin the lives of children, and set precedents that if repeated enough times, become normalized in the eyes of people.

Haqq is also a responsibility that humans must have towards God. Above all, the greatest responsibility of humanity is to be grateful to Allah for it is He who has given us life and the opportunity for eternal joy and bliss in return for a few acts of obedience.

8.5

Sunnism and Shi’ism, beginnings and historical developments.

There are many ways to define what Sunnism and Shi'ism are. In the case of Shi'ism, the sect solidified over two centuries as various successive Imams worked to create a self-contained and systematic Islamic school of thought. The foundation that the Imams laid down were to be further codified by later Twelver Shia scholars.

What is understood as Shi'ism is a school which sees select members of the Prophet's (s) family, starting with Imam Ali (as), as his only legitimate and divinely appointed successors. As successors, they were the only infallible source for divine guidance and Islam's interpretation.

Sunnism is a variegated tradition with many different, competing narratives of itself. If there is one thing that unites Sunnis today, it is the belief in the legitimacy of the first four caliphs, namely Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Imam Ali (as). It is the belief that these four caliphs and companions of the Prophet (s) were righteous and sources of Islamic guidance and knowledge.

Sunnis also believe that the majority, if not all the companions of the Prophet (s), as well as his wives, were righteous servants of God and authentic sources for transmitting and teaching knowledge about Islam.

What we call Sunnism today went through two major phases in history. The first phase is called proto-Sunnism, and the other is Sunnism which consolidated in the 11th century as an off-shoot of the Ahl al-Hadith movement.

To learn more, please tune into the full version this lesson.