

Sunni islam

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Sunnis Several years after Muhammad's death, the various factions of the Islamic faith were formed. Many of Muhammad's relatives and companions were involved in the power struggle, and the war finally stabilized when Mu'awiyya, the governor of Syria, took control of the Caliphate. This marked the rise of the Umayyad dynasty which ruled Islam for quite some time. Although the Qur'an ordains that the division of Muslims into different sections is forbidden, three sects of Islam developed and emerged at the conclusion of the Islamic Civil War.

These include the Sunni, Shiite, Ahmadiyya and Karijite. Of these four, the Sunni denomination is by far the largest, comprising of 90% of the world Muslim population, with Shi'a comprising of the second largest percentage. The literal translation of the word Sunni is "habit" or usual practice. My assumption is that the habit or practice refers to the actions of Muhammad. So anyone claiming to follow the Sunnah, which are the actions of Muhammad and can show that they believe the Hadith, which are narrations of the actions of Muhammad, can consider him or herself to be a Sunni Muslim.

People of Sunni orientation believe that Muhammad had never chosen a successor before his death and therefore nobody can really properly succeed him or become the succeeding leader of the Caliphate other than his closest companions, or Shahaba. Sunnis believe that only the the first four caliphs should be regarded as the properly led caliphs. They include Abu Bakr, Umar al-Khattab, Uthman Affan, and Ali Talib. Actually why there has not been one widely known caliph since 1923 for the entire Islamic religion is due to the fact that Islam is divided into these three sections mentioned earlier.

Although Sunnis accept hadith narrated by the first four caliphs, they regard one collection of hadith to be the most authentic. This is called the Sahih al Bukhari. The literal translation of sahih is “ authentic”. The Sunni branch of Islam has four legal schools of thought or madh'hab, through which Sunnis practice religious jurisprudence, or religious philosophy. There was only one madh-hab during the time of the “ rightly-guided” Caliphs but after the beginning of the Umayyad dynasty, things changed. The Umayyad caliphs did not have the same religious authority as the previous ones.

After the Umayyad Dynasty, there was the Abbasid Dynasty. In comparison to the Umayyads, they were more supportive of Islamic law. The crystallization of four major Sunni madh'hab of Islamic fiqh came about by the third century of Hijra. These four include the Hanafi, which was founded by Abu Hanifah and is the dominant school of Muslims in the United Kingdom and Germany, and also followed by Muslims in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan. The Maliki school, founded by a Hanifa's eldest student named Malik ibn Anas and is the dominant school of Muslims in Morocco, Algeria, Libiya, Nigeria, Sudan Bahrain, UAE and Kuwait.

The Shafi'i school founded by a student of Malik named Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i and is the dominant school of Muslims in Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Kenya, Somalia, Kenya Tanzania, Jordan, India, Syria and Lebanon. The Hanbali school founded by a student of al-Shafi'i named Ahmad bin Hanbal, and is the dominant school of Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula, to name the most predominant ones. The followers of these four schools follow the same basic beliefs but differ from one another in terms of practice and execution of rituals, and in interpretation of Shari'a.

So rather than again dividing themselves up into different schools of law, Sunnis rather prefer to just combine and call themselves all Sunnis. The religious text of Islam, the Qur'an was compiled by Muhammad's closest companions and regarded as authentic by all Muslims. There are many aspects of daily life, however that are not mentioned in the Qur'an but they were observed and passed down through generations. These oral accounts are called hadith. Sunnis regard only certain collections of hadith to be authentic and those are compiled by six specific recorders named Bukhari, Muslim, Nasa'i, Dawud, Tirmidhi, and Majah.

The history of the Sunni-Shia conflict originates in the split that occurred when Muhammad died in the 632 which led to a dispute over who should succeed him as caliph of the Islamic community. This led to the battle of Siffin. For a long time, Sunni Islam was differentiated from Shi'i Islam by its adherence to the Caliph as the leader of the Muslims. However, Sunni and Shi'i Islam are the same in that they share important taught principles: the wholeness of God, the belief in the revelations of Muhammad, and the belief in resurrection on the Day of Judgment.

Even though the main split in Islamic practice is between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, there are several disagreements within the Sunni community. Almost like how Americans have different views, there are some liberal and more secular movements in Sunni Islam that say that Shari'a is interpreted on an individual basis, and that reject any fatwa or religious edict by religious Muslim authority figures. There are also several movements in Sunni Islam, which reject and sometimes persecute liberal Muslims for attempting to compromise certain Muslim traditions.