

The Basic Level

AQEEDAH

CURRICULUM

The Third Semester

AQD 231

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Introduction

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah who guided us to worship Him alone. Peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad (PBUH), his family and companions, and their followers until the Last Day.

This booklet is intended for the students studying the third semester of Aqida at Ayaat Ilm Academy. It consists of two sections. The first section talks about the major Islamic sects, and the second section talks about the major world religions.

In the first section the book talks about the major Islamic sects in terms of their emergence and main beliefs. It also outlines the differences between their beliefs and the beliefs of Ahl As- Sunnah.

In the second section the book talks about the major world religions that are found in Canada. This section aims to give the students an idea about the religions found within their Canadian community.

I hope this booklet benefits the students and allows them to have a clear idea about the different Islamic sects and the main world religions. I ask Allah (SWT) to accept my deeds and forgive my shortcomings.

Fatima Sallam

Jan. 2022

Windsor- ON

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Part I

Sects

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First Section: Islamic Sects

Chapter One: Introduction to Islamic Sects

The meaning of a sect, and the difference between a sect and a Math'hab (Madhab)¹:

Before talking about the different Islamic sects, let's talk about the meaning of a sect and the difference between a sect and a Math'hab (Madhab).

A sect is a group of people that share the same set of religious beliefs or creeds, and oftentimes it separates them from the larger group, making them a closed community.

A Math'hab (Madhab) is a school of thought, and when talking about Islamic Math'habs we mean the schools of thought within Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh).

The main difference between a sect and a Math'hab (Madhab) is that a sect is formed based on differences in religious beliefs (Aqeedah) which are considered fundamentals of religion, while a Math'hab (Madhab) is formed based on a school of thought that is related to Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh). Also, following a sect might lead a person astray and out of the fold of Islam if their beliefs are against the Quran and Sunnah. And this is what the prophet (peace be upon him) means in the following Hadith.

It is confirmed that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The Jews split into seventy-one sects; one will be in Paradise (i.e., those who followed Moses) and seventy will be in the Fire. The Christians split into

¹ This part of the introduction was translated from the book: The Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al-Khatib, Al Quds Open University Publications, Amman- Jordan, 2003, pg. 7-8.





seventy-two sects; seventy-one will be in the Fire and one will be in Paradise (i.e., those who followed Jesus). And by the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, this Ummah (nation) of mine will split into seventy-three sects; one will be in Paradise and seventy-two will be in the Fire. It was asked: “Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?” He (peace be upon him) said: “Al-Jama‘ah (i.e., the group which adheres steadfastly to the way of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his Companions).” And in another narration: “(Those who follow) what I and my Companions are following.”²

The reasons behind the emergence of sects in Islam:

The era of the noble Companions passed while they were all united upon a single methodology which involved acting upon the Quran and the Sunnah in matters of creed and legislation. This was also the case with the students of the Companions (the Successors), who inherited the knowledge of the Companions. However, at the end of the time of the Companions the saying of the Qadariyyah occurred just as the Khawarij and the Shi‘ah also appeared during their time³. These three sects appeared during the reign of Ali bin Abi Taleb (may Allah be pleased with him)⁴.

There are many reasons behind the emergence of sects throughout the Islamic history, they can be summarized into the following points⁵:

² Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith no. 3992.

³ The Islamic Creed and Its History, Shaykh Muhammad Al- Jami, DuSunnah Publication, United Kingdom, 2014, pg. 74- 75.

⁴ The fourth guided Khalifa Ali ibn Abi Taleb, he was the prophet’s cousin and married his daughter Fatima, he was the first youth to embrace Islam after Khadija. He became a Khalifa after the killing of Uthman and had to go through battles against his opposers. He was killed by the Khawarij in the year 40 AH.

⁵ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 9- 23.





1. **The assassination of the third guided Khalifa Uthman ibn Affan⁶:** during the last years of Uthman's reign a group of Muslims opposed his way of ruling and were against him, the conflict led to his assassination. This event resulted in the emergence of political parties that later resulted in the formation of certain sects like the Khawarij and Shi'a.
2. **The role of Abdallah ibn Saba⁷:** Abdallah was a Jew who claimed becoming Muslim, but started plotting against Muslims. He managed to form a group that revolted against the Khalifa (Uthman), and resulted in his assassination. Later he had a role in the battle that occurred between Ali bin Abi Taleb (who accepted the Khilafa after Uthman) and some of the Sahaba that asked Ali to punish the group that assassinated Uthman⁸. Ali had to go through another battle against Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan⁹ (the battle of Siffin), but later both parties agreed to settle their conflict via arbitration (Tahkeem). The Khawarij opposed this and

⁶ The third guided Khalifa Uthman ibn Affan, he was amongst the first people to embrace Islam. He married two of the prophet's daughters. He was rich and generous. He became the third Khalifa in the year 23 AH, and was later killed in the year 35 AH.

⁷ Abdallah ibn Saba' was a Jew from Sana'a (located in Yemen). Sunni historians agree on the fact that he was a hypocrite who plotted against Muslims. He ascribed divine honors to Ali bin Abi Taleb. Thereupon Ali banished him to Madain. After Ali's assassination Abdallah is said to have taught that Ali was not dead but alive, and had never been killed; that a part of the Deity was hidden in him; and that after a certain time he would return to fill the earth with justice. Till then the divine character of Ali was to remain hidden in the imams, who temporarily filled his place.

⁸ The name of this battle was Al Jamal.

⁹ The Sahabi Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan. He embraced Islam on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. He was appointed by the Khalifa Abu Bakr, and later the Khalifa Omar in leading Muslim armies. During the Khilafa of Uthman he was appointed the governor of Sham. After Ali's assassination he became the Khalifa and established the Umayyad Caliphate. He died in the year 60 AH.





considered whoever was part of the arbitration a non Muslim. The Shi'a supported Ali and said that he has the right to be the Imam and Khalifa. Then other sects emerged like the Murji'a who opposed the ideas of the Khawarij.

3. **The translation of Greek Philosophy books:** during the Abbasid Caliphate Muslims started translating the Greek Philosophy books and were fond of the new ideas and philosophies they encountered, and tried to study the Aqeedah matters through the way of the philosophers. This led to the emergence of sects who used theology in establishing their opinions in Aqeedah.
4. **People with different religious backgrounds becoming Muslims:** after the expansion of the Islamic state, many people with different religious backgrounds became Muslims but didn't have the firm beliefs and true understanding of Islamic Aqeedah. They shared their former beliefs and soon became the reason behind merging their distorted thoughts and false beliefs into the Islamic Aqeedah.

Summary:

1. A sect is a group of people that share the same set of religious beliefs or creeds, and oftentimes it separates them from the larger group, making them a closed community.
2. A Math'hab (Madhab) is a school of thought, and when talking about Islamic Math'habs we mean the schools of thought within Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh).
3. The main difference between a sect and a Math'hab (Madhab) is that a sect is formed based on differences in religious beliefs (Aqeedah)





which are considered fundamentals of religion, while a Math'hab (Madhab) is formed based on a school of thought that is related to Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh).

4. There are many reasons behind the emergence of sects in Islam, amongst them are: the assassination of Uthman ibn Affan, the role of Abdallah ibn Saba', the translation of Greek Philosophy books, and the sharing of false beliefs by people who entered Islam with former religious backgrounds.

Questions:

1. What is the definition of: a sect, a math'hab?
2. What is the difference between a sect and a math'hab?
3. What was the role of Abdallah ibn Saba' in the emergence of sects?
4. How did Greek Philosophy have an impact on Islamic Aqeedah?

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Chapter Two: The Khawarij, the Ibadiyyah and the Murji'ah

The Khawarij¹⁰

The Khawarij were the first sect to appear in Islam. They appeared during the Khilafa (rule) of the fourth Khalifa Ali bin Abi Taleb. They were called Khawarij because they rebelled against the legitimate ruler (Ali ibn Abi Taleb), who had been accepted by the people. And scholars mention that whoever rebels against the legitimate ruler is called a 'Khariji'.

They accepted to be called 'Khawarij', but based on explaining their revolution as a way of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

According to scholars, the Khalifa tried to debate and explain to them their wrong understanding of Islam, so he sent Abdallah ibn Abbas who was well known for his knowledge. Abdallah managed to convince some of them, but the rest kept firm on their wrong beliefs. Eventually they were defeated in the battle of An- Nahrawan that occurred between them and the Khalifa.

Their main beliefs:

1. They consider Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Taleb and the companions who participated in the arbitration (Tahkeem) disbelievers.
2. They also consider that not committing major sins is from the fundamentals of the religion and faith.
3. They explicitly claim the disbelief of the one who commits major sins, and that he will dwell forever in the hellfire.
4. They also explicitly claim the obligation of revolting against the ruler based on considering him a disbeliever once he commits a sin. They believe it to be from enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

¹⁰ The Islamic Creed and Its History, Shaykh Muhammad Al- Jami, pg. 75- 84.



Refuting their beliefs:

It is clear that the Khawarij were extreme in their views and they had a shallow understanding of Islam. The Companions were aware of the Khawarij's deviation and tried to lead them back to the correct and true understanding of Islam but they refused. The Companions explained that committing a sin doesn't make a muslim a disbeliever, and that major sins can be forgiven by Allah (SWT), and a believer who committed a major sin will not stay forever in the hellfire, provided they die and meet Allah (SWT) as believers affirming His Oneness even if they have not repented. The Ayaat which mention remaining in the Hellfire apply when the sin is committed based on believing that it's not forbidden, or when a person denies something that is known of the religion by necessity.

The Ibadiyyah¹¹

The Ibadiyyah is a sect that was named after Abdallah ibn Ibad At-Tamimi¹², who lived in the second half of the first Hijri century. He was one of the Khawarij but his views were not as extreme as them. In fact his views are considered relatively close to the views of Ahl As- Sunnah.

The Ibadiyyah were given this name by the scholars although they don't consider Abdallah ibn Ibad their main founder. The Ibadiyyah consider a man named Jabir ibn Zaid Al- Azdy Al- Omani¹³ their main founder and caller for their sect.

¹¹ Translated from the book: The Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al Khatib, pg. 120-128.

¹² Little is known about Abdallah ibn Ibad At- Tamimi. He lived during the era of the Successors.

¹³ Jabir ibn Zaid was born towards the end of the reign of the second Khalifa Omar ibn Al- Khattab (in the year 21 AH). The scholars have different views on him, however the Ibadiyyah consider him the founder of their sect.





After the battle of An- Nahrawan the remaining Khawarij were divided into two groups:

1. A group led by Jabir ibn Zaid who chose not to rebel against the rulers, and weren't extreme in their views.
2. A group led by a man called Nafi' ibn Al- Azraq. This group was extreme, and were defeated by the Umayyads.

The Ibadiyyah had three leaders whom they ascribe founding their sect to:

1. Jabir ibn Zaid: he was one of the successors and a scholar who gained his knowledge from the companions. He is considered the founder of the sect according to the Ibadiyah.
2. Abu Obaida Muslim ibn Abi Kareema: he was born in the year 45 AH. He was known for his asceticism. He became the leader of Ibadiyah after the death of Jabir. His efforts led to the establishment of some Ibadyy states in Morocco and other places.
3. Ar- Rabee ibn Habeeb: He was born between 75- 80 AH. The Ibadiya claim that he was the author of a famous Hadith book named 'Al- Musnad' or 'Al- Jame' As- Sahih'. According to them the book contains the most authentic Ahadeeth from the prophet.

The Ibadiyyah can nowadays be found in Oman, the island of Zanzibar, some places in Libya, some places in Tunisia, and some places in Algeria.

Some of their main beliefs:

1. Iman (belief) has three components: belief in the heart, declaration by the tongue, and actions by the limbs. And here they share the same belief as Ahl As- Sunnah.





2. They believe that Allah (SWT) can't be seen on the day of judgement (by the people of Paradise), like the Mu'tazilah.
3. They claim that the Quran isn't the words of Allah (SWT), but is a creation of Allah (SWT), like the Mu'tazilah.
4. They have two different views on the increase and decrease of Iman:
 - a. Iman increases and decreases based on one's actions, and this is also the same view as Ahl As- Sunnah.
 - b. Iman increases only and doesn't decrease, because claiming that it decreases means that the Aqeedah decreases, and this leads to doubt, and doubt contradicts with Iman.
5. They consider whoever denies whatever is known of the religion by necessity a disbeliever.
6. They believe that Allah (SWT) created our actions and gave us the ability to choose either good or evil, and he showed us the consequences of either choice, and here they share the same belief as Ahl As- Sunnah.
7. They believe that Muslims who committed grave sins and died without repenting to Allah (SWT) will remain in the Hellfire forever.
8. They interpret a lot of the details of the day of judgement, such as the Sirat (bridge) and the Mizan (scale), like the Mu'tazilah.
9. They believe that the intercession of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is of two types:
 - a. The 'Supreme Intercession' which the prophet (PBUH) will make for the entire creation on the day of judgement for Allah (SWT) to commence with the reckoning, and for the believers to enter paradise.





- b. The intercession for the believers to be elevated in their ranks. Therefore, they deny the intercession for the believers who committed grave sins to be let out of the Hellfire.

The Murji'ah¹⁴

Murji'ah comes from the Arabic word *Irjaa'*, which has two meanings: the first is to delay or put off something, and the second is to give hope. Both meanings apply to the sect that holds the name Murji'ah, because the Murji'ah puts off all deeds and actions and isolates these deeds from Iman, also they claim that committing sin doesn't affect Iman. Some scholars say that they were given this name because they claimed that a Muslim who commits a major sin shouldn't be judged or punished in this life, rather he will be judged on the day of judgement.

So the Murji'ah claims that Iman is only belief in the heart, and actions are not part of Iman, and that Iman doesn't get affected by one's actions, nor does it increase or decrease.

The Murji'ah sect emerged early in the Islamic history after the emergence of the Khawarij and the Shia'a and their political conflict over the Khilafa. The scholars mention that this sect initially emerged claiming not to abide by either side by putting off any judgment on either side, but later their views on the meaning of Iman, and the effect of actions on it were established.

The scholars mention a man named Ghaylan Ad- Dimashqi¹⁵ as one of the main founders of this sect. He claimed that Iman is knowing Allah

¹⁴ Translated from the book: The Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 39- 43.

¹⁵ Ghaylan Ad- Dimashqi was originally from Egypt, he was born in Damascus and died there in the year 106 AH.



(SWT) only, and that actions are not part of Iman. He also claimed that a person creates his actions, and that destiny has no effect on his actions.

Their main beliefs:

1. Iman is belief in the heart only; so the declaration by the tongue and the actions by the limbs are not part of Iman.
2. Iman doesn't get affected by committing sins.
3. Iman doesn't increase or decrease.
4. A person who commits a major sin can't be judged or punished in this life and will be judged on the day of judgement. Also, he will not remain in the hellfire forever.

Refuting their beliefs:

The Murji'ah builds their views on the meaning of Iman. According to them Iman is a belief in the heart only. They claim that this is the true meaning of Iman that matches the linguistic meaning. But what they claim clearly goes against the Quran and Sunnah.

In the Quran and Sunnah it is clearly mentioned that the declaration by the tongue and the actions by the limbs are in fact part of Iman. Also, the Quran mentions the increase and decrease of one's Iman based on their actions.

As to their view regarding the muslims who commit major sins: it is mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah the punishment for certain sins, and that committing a sin results in a punishment either in this life or in the hereafter or both.

**Summary:**

1. The Khawarij were the first sect to appear in Islam and were the ones who rebelled against the legitimate ruler (Ali ibn Abi Taleb).
2. The Khawarij were extreme in their views, and they had a shallow understanding of Islam.
3. The Ibadiyyah is a sect that was named after Abdallah ibn Ibad At-Tamimi, who was considered one of the Khawarij but his views were not as extreme as them.
4. The Ibadiyyah have some beliefs that are the same as Ahl As- Sunnah.
5. The Murji'ah sect claims that Iman is only belief in the heart, and actions are not part of Iman, and that Iman doesn't get affected by one's actions, nor does it increase or decrease.

Questions:

1. Why were the Khawarij given that name?
2. What are the main beliefs of the Khawarij?
3. Mention three of the founders of the Ibadi sect.
4. What are the beliefs that the Ibadiyyah has and are the same as Ahl As- Sunnah?
5. Why were the Murji'ah given that name?
6. How can you refute the views of Al Murji'a?

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Chapter Three: The Qadariyyah, the Jabriyyah (Jahmiyyah) and the Mu'tazilah

The Qadariyyah¹⁶

The Qadariyyah is a sect that appeared during the time of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). They negate the Divine Decree (Qadar) and they are the followers of Ma'bad Al- Juhany¹⁷.

Ma'bad Al-Juhani called to the creed of the Qadariyyah for the first time in Basrah at the end of the time of the Companions.

Their main belief:

The Qadariyyah generally rejected that Allah (SWT) has prior knowledge, a book wherein the fate of everything is written as well as the will of Allah (SWT). They even went so far as to explicitly state that Allah (SWT) does not know what fate will take place except after its occurrence, not to mention record it in a book or will it into existence. Rather, the servants initiate their actions themselves, so they do their actions without Allah's knowledge until after the servant has completed the action. They do not consider the actions of the servant to be from what is decreed by Allah (SWT).

¹⁶ The Islamic Creed and Its History, Shaykh Muhammad Al- Jami, pg. 88- 91.

¹⁷ Ma'bad Al- Juhany Al- Basri. He narrated some Ahadeeth. He was the first to talk about Qadar in Basrah. He rebelled against Al- Hajaj and was killed by him.





Refuting their beliefs:

This is a deviant belief and a foreign ideology, because the man who began spreading this creed, Ma'bad Al-Juhani, took it from an unknown person, and then adopted it, and it became a great trial in Basrah and the neighbouring areas because of him.

When the innovation of the Qadariyyah appeared, the Companions and their students rushed to condemn it, warn against it, and to free themselves from it and its people. They also criticized it and made clear to the people the dangers it posed to a person's belief in Allah (SWT), because the belief in the Divine Decree (Qadar) is based upon Islamic monotheism (at- Tawhid), and whoever disbelieves in the Divine Decree (Qadar) has invalidated his monotheism (at- Tawhid).

The Qadariyyah are the opposite of the Jabriyyah who claim the servant is compelled and driven towards his actions of good or evil, and is then rewarded with good or bad which is another deviation. But what is correct, is the middle path between these two extremes. It is what the people of Ahl As- Sunnah are upon; that there is no creator but Allah (SWT). Therefore, the servant and his actions are from the creation of Allah (SWT), and the servant performs actions due to his choice, just as he also abandons them by his own choice, and this is the secret of the responsibilities placed upon the servants by Allah (SWT).

The Jabriyyah (Jahmiyyah)¹⁸

After the time of the Companions, towards the beginning of the second century, the methodology of the Jabriyyah began. As mentioned above they

¹⁸ The Islamic Creed and Its History, Shaykh Muhammad Al- Jami, pg. 92-95.





claim that the servant is compelled and driven towards his actions of good or evil.

The first person to introduce this ideology was Al- Ja'd ibn Dirham, and he was also the first person known to have said: "Allah (SWT) did not take Ibrahim as a friend, and He did not speak directly to Musa". The scholars from the Successors pronounced him a disbeliever because of rejecting the speech of Allah (SWT) and the speech of the Prophet (PBUH), and he was later punished and killed.

However, before Al-Ja'd was killed, Jahm ibn Safwan¹⁹ took this creed from him, promoted it, and called to it until it spread. Therefore this sect is also called the Jahmiyyah, and is ascribed to him.

Because of Jahm, many people began to harbor doubts regarding the Attributes of Allah (SWT).

The trial of the Jahmiyyah is considered the first known trial in the history of the Islamic creed regarding the issue of Allah's (SWT) Names and Attributes, since the trial of the Qadriyyah was only restricted to the issue of predestination without delving into Allah's Attributes.

Their main beliefs:

Other than claiming that the servant is compelled and driven towards his actions of good or evil, Jahm used to negate all of the attributes of Allah (SWT), so he confused the people into thinking that affirming the attributes of Allah (SWT) somehow negates freeing Allah (SWT) of deficiencies, and he propagated doubts regarding them amongst the people.

¹⁹ Jahm ibn Safwan was known for his cleverness and ability to debate, he negated all of the attributes of Allah (SWT), claimed the Quran was created, and that Iman is belief in the heart only.



He used to say: “Affirming the names and attributes for Allah (SWT) means there are many eternal beings and there is no eternal being but Allah (SWT)”.

Refuting their beliefs:

In response to negating Allah’s names and attributes, Allah (SWT) is eternal in His names and attributes, and the names and attributes of Allah (SWT) are inseparable from His essence, and cannot be separated from Him. This is not considered multiple eternal beings. That claim would only be valid if it is said: there are beings other than Allah (SWT), and they are eternal as Allah (SWT) is.

The Mu’tazilah²⁰

The creed of the Mu'tazilah emerged during the time of Al- Hasan Al-Basri²¹, who was a Successor, and a well-known student of the Companions. Wasil ibn Ata²² who was the founder of Mu'tazilah’s creed used to be from those who sat with Al- Hasan in his halaqa (circle of knowledge). However, he differed with him on several issues of creed. So he withdrew himself (in Arabic: i’tazala) from the halaqa in the mosque where Al- Hasan taught. And through his withdrawal from Al- Hasan’s group and choosing different beliefs, he and his followers were given the name Al- Mu’tazilah. However the

²⁰ The Islamic Creed and its History, Sheykh Muhammad Al- Jami, pg. 96-120. Also: Mu'tazilism: An Introduction to Rationality in Islam, Dr. Diwan Taskheer Khan, International Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences (IJEAS) ISSN: 2394-3661, Volume-4, Issue-10, October 2017.

²¹ Al- Hasan Al- Basri was a well known successor and scholar who took his knowledge from the companions, he was known for his asceticism, he lived and died in Basrah in the year 110 AH.

²² Wasil ibn Ata’ is known as the founder of Al- Mu’tazilah, he was born in Basrah in the year 80 AH and died in the year 130 AH.



Mu'tazilah call themselves: Ahl Al- Adl wa At- Tawheed (The People of Justice and Monotheism).

Their main beliefs: The Five Fundamental Principles of the Mu'tazilah

1. Monotheism: The Mu'tazilah's first principle is reserved for At- Tawhid, meaning monotheism. However, the Mu'tazilah have a unique idea about Allah's attributes.

They imply the denial of the divine attributes. So according to this principle, Allah's attributes have no independent meaning. Allah's attributes are the abstract meanings existing and operating within Allah's nature. Therefore, it can be said that Allah (SWT) is the Knower, Hearer, and Seer but not that there are attributes of knowing, hearing, and seeing. Namely, Allah (SWT) knows, hears, and sees with his essence without any attributes. The Mu'tazilah insist that if one accepts the existence of independent attributes, he/she will be forced to accept more eternal beings than one, which is against the Tawhid.

According to this principle the Mu'tazilah interpreted the attributes mentioned in the Quran. Also the Mu'tazilah denied the vision of Allah (SWT) on the day of judgement. The Mu'tazilah hold that vision is not possible without place and direction. As Allah (SWT) is exempt from place and direction, therefore, a vision of Him is impossible in this world and in the hereafter.

The principle of At- Tawhid also brought the position of the Qur'an into light. Since Allah (SWT) had no eternal attributes, the Qur'an emerging from His 'Speaking' was not eternal. But, according to the Mu'tazilah scholars, the Qur'an was created.

2. Justice: This means that Allah (SWT) is just and that He does not oppress His creatures.





Also according to the Mu'tazilah, things are not good or evil because Allah (SWT) declares them to be so. Allah (SWT) makes the distinction between good and evil on account of their being good and evil. Goodness or evil are innate in the essence of things themselves. This very goodness or evil of things is the cause of the commands and prohibitions of the Law.

And based on this principle they decided in favor of free will like the Qadariyyah, and attributed to creatures the power to carry out their own acts. They argued that if humans did not have the power to choose and create their own acts, there would be no point to the rewards and punishments promised by Allah (SWT) to humans in the next life. They claimed that Allah (SWT) was just, and that it was inconceivable that Allah (SWT) would reward or punish humans for acts over which they had no power or control.

3. Promise and threat: This principle according to them means the obligation upon Allah (SWT) to reward the obedient as He promised, and to punish the disobedient as He has threatened.
4. The position between two positions: This means that a person who commits one of the major sins is neither a believer (mu'min), nor a disbeliever (kafir); he is in an intermediary state between belief and disbelief, and if they don't repent, they will stay in the hell fire forever.
5. The enjoining of right and prohibition of wrong: This was the only practical principle that the Mu'tazilah had.

Refuting their beliefs:

1. In regard to their denial of the divine attributes, both the Quran and Sunnah affirm Allah's attributes in a manner that is befitting for Him. All these attributes are of perfection and their opposites are attributes of





deficiency such as ignorance and inability, which do not befit Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT) established these attributes for Himself in the Quran, and in the Sunnah of the prophet (PBUH), in several places. Allah (SWT) has the absolute perfect attributes, and is free from any imperfection or defect. Nothing resembles Him nor similar to Him. If any of His attributes contain words that their apparent meaning would give the impression of resemblance, it is necessary to believe in these attributes without resemblance, divesting, or interpreting them. One should believe in what Allah (SWT) revealed in the Quran without addition or negation and say: (I believe in what Allah (SWT) has said and what His messenger has told us, in the meaning intended by Allah (SWT) and His messenger (PBUH); and Allah (SWT) and His messenger (PBUH) know best).

2. In regard to justice: According to Ahl As- Sunnah things are good or evil because Allah (SWT) declares them to be so. We know the difference between good and evil solely because of Allah's revelation, and not by the exercise of our own reason. Allah (SWT) makes the rules and whatever he decrees is just, yet Allah (SWT) himself is under no obligation.

Belief and disbelief, good and evil, obedience and sins are all by the creation, preordainment, and will of Allah (SWT). He has linked rewards and sins to the deeds of humans. He has left humans to their free will and made punishment and rewards dependent on the use of free will, which is termed kasb (acquisition). Kasb is from humans, and creating it is from Allah (SWT).

3. In regard to promise and threat: According to Ahl As- Sunnah there is nothing obligatory upon Allah (SWT). If something is an obligation this





means it is binding, and who can make anything binding upon Allah (SWT)?

The Mu'tazilah do not distinguish between breaking a promise and delaying a punishment. When Allah (SWT) delays the threat and does not punish the wrongdoer even though He has the ability to do so, this is considered a blessing.

As for the fulfillment of His promise by honouring His allies and supporters in the afterlife, and sometimes in this life; then this is a courtesy and benevolence from Allah (SWT) to His servants.

4. In regard to the position between two positions: This is a theoretical state that does not exist in reality, because there are only two divisions, either disbelief or belief, and there is no middle path between them. Therefore, the one who commits a major sin is a believer whose belief is deficient and should be described as sinful, but still remains within the sphere of belief. It has been authentically narrated from the Prophet that he said: "My intercession is for the people who committed the major sins in my Ummah (nation)."²³.

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²³ Jami' At- Tirmithi, Hadith no. 2435, Hadith grade: Sahih.



**Summary:**

1. The Qadariyyah is a sect that negates the Divine Decree (Qadar).
2. The Jabriyyah is a sect that claims that the servant is compelled and driven towards his actions of good or evil.
3. The Mu'tazilah is a sect that emerged during the time of Al Hasan Al-Basri by Wasil ibn Ata'.
4. The Mu'tazilah believe in five fundamental principles: Monotheism, justice, promise and threat, the position between two positions, and the enjoining of right and prohibition of wrong.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the Qadariyyah and the Jabriyyah?
2. What are the five fundamental principles of the Mu'tazilah?
3. What is the Mu'tazilah's view of Allah's names?
4. What is the meaning of 'the position between two positions'?
5. According to Mu'tazilah, does a person have their own free will?
Explain.

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Chapter Four: Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a

Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a²⁴

The word Sunnah linguistically means: the path or way. After the emergence of sects, it was used by scholars as the opposite of bid'ah (innovation in religion), they used to say: 'such person follows the sunnah' meaning that they follow the actions and practices of prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and later his companions, and the successors. Then the term was used by scholars to describe what remained pure in Aqeedah, away from innovation (bid'ah) and suspicion (shubha).

The word Jama'a is linguistically derived from the word Ijtima', which is the opposite of separation. And when the word is used along with Sunnah in the term 'Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a' it means the people who adhere to the Sunnah of the prophet and unite upon it, whether in matters of Aqeedah or Fiqh. It includes the companions, the successors and whoever followed their way of understanding and practicing Islam.

This term was first used after the emergence of sects, to differentiate between Ahl As- Sunnah and the people who innovated in religion and came up with foreign beliefs. Initially the term was used by the scholars of Hadith, who started collecting the Ahadeeth of the prophet (PBUH), and distinguishing between what is authentic and what is fabricated.

Amongst Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a are two distinct groups: Al-Ash'ariyyah, and Al- Maturidiyyah.

²⁴ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 44- 45.





Al- Ash'ariyyah²⁵

Al- Ash'ariyyah (or Al- Asha'irah) is one of the Aqeedah sects within Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a. It is named after Abu Al- Hasan Al- Ash'ari, who was born in Basrah in the year 260 AH. He was a student of Abu Ali A- Juba'i²⁶, the leader of Al- Mu'tazilah sect in Basrah at that time, then he disagreed with his beliefs and soon declared his repentance from the Mu'tazili beliefs.

Al- Ash'ariyyah sect emerged after the emergence of Al- Mu'tazilah. During the Abbasid Caliphate the Mu'tazilah were supported by the Caliphs Al- Ma'moon, Al- Mu'tasim and Al- Wathiq. Their beliefs were imposed on the scholars of Hadith and Fiqh, especially the belief of the creation of the Quran. The scholars who opposed their beliefs were imprisoned and it was a great trial. However, this didn't last long because the Caliph Al- Mutawakkil no longer supported them, and he freed whoever was in prison. Then a group of scholars took it upon themselves to refute the beliefs of Al Mu'tazilah, amongst them were Abu Hasan Al- Ash'ari who was in Basrah, and Abu Mansour Al- Maturidy who was in Samarkand.

Abu Al- Hasan Al- Ash'ari (as mentioned above) was a former Mu'tazili student, but he later disagreed with their beliefs and started following the beliefs of the scholars of Hadith and Fiqh (Ahl As- Sunnah). He left the Mu'tazili sect and wrote his famous book in Aqeedah: Al- Ibana fi Usool Ad- Diyanah²⁷, where he mentioned his new beliefs and refuted the beliefs of Al-

²⁵ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 45- 48.

²⁶ Abu Ali Muhamad ibn Abdul Wahhab Al- Juba'i was born in Juba in the year 235 AH, he was one of the leaders of Mu'tazilah and the author of many books that explain their beliefs. He died in the year 303 AH in Basrah.

²⁷ Means: "The Elucidation of Islam's foundation"



Mu'tazilah. Later many of his students spread and expanded on his beliefs, and the school of Ash'ariyah or Asha'irah was established, focusing on the science of theology when understanding and explaining Aqeedah.

To conclude, there are two major schools of thought within Ahl As-Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a:

1. The school of the Salaf (the scholars of Hadith and Sunnah), which begins with Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and reaches its peak at the time of Imam Ibn Taymiyah.
2. The school of the Khalaf, which includes the Ash'ariyyah and Al-Maturidiyyah.

The main beliefs of Al- Ash'ariyyah:

1. Al- Ash'ari affirmed all of Allah's (SWT) attributes that were mentioned in the Quran and the Sunnah, stating that they are attributes that befit Allah (SWT), and doesn't resemble the attributes of the creations who share the same name of attributes. So for example: Allah's (SWT) hearing, seeing, and speech is not like the seeing, hearing and speech of His creations.
2. The Ash'ariyyah believe that Allah (SWT) has eternal attributes that exist in Him, and that affirming these eternal attributes will not lead to multiplicity and plurality, because the attributes are not self-contained (that is, they do not have an independent external existence), nor are they separated from the Self.
3. As for the vision of Allah (SWT), Al- Ash'ari affirmed the vision of Allah (SWT) unlike the Mu'tazilah.
4. As for the words mentioned in the Quran and Hadith, and may show resemblance, such as the word 'hand', Al- Ash'ari said: His hand is a

hand that befits His Generous Essence, and it is not like ours, rather, his hand is a hand of an attribute, like hearing and sight.

5. As for human actions, Al- Ash'ari's opinion is that Allah (SWT) creates the action for the servant and creates in him the ability to issue that action, so the servant is the acquirer of the action, but he did not create it or cause it.
6. As for the person who commits a major sin, Al- Ash'ari states that he is under Allah's (SWT) will, if He wills, He will forgive him and grant him paradise, or He will punish him before that.
7. As for the prophets's (PBUH) intercession on the Day of Resurrection, it will include the people who committed sins from his Ummah and were eligible for punishment.

Al- Maturidiyyah²⁸

Al- Maturidiyyah sect was named after Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud, who was known as Abu Mansour Al- Maturidi. He was born in Samarkand, and studied the Hanafi Math'hab, and wrote books in numerous fields such as Fiqh, Usul (foundations of Fiqh) and theology. He died in the year 322 AH.

This sect emerged around the time of the emergence of Al- Ash'ariyyah sect, when the struggle between Al- Mu'tazilah and the Scholars of Hadith occurred in the matter of the creation of the Quran. Scholars mention that Abu Hanifa's opinions in Aqeedah were the origins of Al- Maturidi's beliefs.

²⁸ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 49- 53.



The main beliefs of Al- Maturidiyyah

Both Abu Mansur Al -Maturidi and Abu Al- Hasan Al- Ash'ari lived during the same time and had the same opponent; the Mu'tazilah. In their refutation against the beliefs of the Mu'tazilah, they both had close opinions but were not exactly the same. They were trying to prove the beliefs mentioned in the Quran using reasoning and logical proofs, but Al- Maturidi gave the intellect more power than Al- Ash'ari, for example: knowing Allah (SWT) is obligatory by Shari'a according to Al- Ash'ari, while Al- Maturidi (following the school of Abu Hanifa) considers it to be comprehended by the intellect. Another example: Al- Ash'ariyyah don't consider things having subjective goddess in them that an intellect can comprehend without following the Lawgiver (that is Allah (SWT)), while Al- Maturidiyyah affirm that things have subjective goddess in them that an intellect can comprehend by itself.

Based on that, we can say that the intellect has a great value in the Maturidiyyah approach, without excess or extravagance, while the Ash'ariyyah adhere to what's transmitted in the Quran and Sunnah and support it with the intellect. A researcher may conclude that the Ash'ariyyah stand in line between the Mu'tazilah and the people of Fiqh and Hadith, while the Maturidiyyah stand in line between the Mu'tazilah and the Ash'ariyyah.

Some of the main beliefs of Al- Maturidiyyah:

1. Al- Maturidi believes that knowing Allah (SWT) can be reached through the intellect, for Allah (SWT) has commanded people to ponder upon His creations in order to reach belief in Allah (SWT) and knowledge of Him, but although the mind can be independent in knowing Allah (SWT), it is not independent in knowing the Shari'ah (Islamic rulings). This is also the opinion of Abu Hanifa.






2. As for human actions, Al- Maturidi believes that they are the creation of Allah (SWT), acquired by man. Allah (SWT) created the ability within a servant to acquire an action, and the servant used this ability that's been created in him.
3. As for Allah's (SWT) attributes, Al- Maturidi affirmed the attributes and said that they are different from the attributes of created beings. Regarding Allah's (SWT) speech and whether the Quran is created or not, Al- Maturidi said that the speech of Allah (SWT) is not created, but our recitation of the Quran is created, because it's part of our actions, and our actions are created.
4. Al- Maturidi affirms Allah's (SWT) transcendence. As for the verses that contain these descriptions (the face, the hand, and the eye) he affirms them without Allah (SWT) being in need of them.
5. Al- Maturidi affirms the vision of Allah (SWT) on the day of Judgement, without delving into the manner of this vision, because the explanation of it is as Allah (SWT) wills and knows.
6. Al- Maturidi's opinion regarding the believer who commits a major sin is that they will not be punished in the hellfire forever, even if he hasn't repented.

Summary:

1. Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a means the people who adhere to the Sunnah of the prophet and unite upon it, whether in matters of Aqeedah or Fiqh. It includes the companions, the successors and whoever followed their way of understanding and practicing Islam.
2. There are two major schools of thought within Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a:



- 
- a. The school of the Salaf (the scholars of Hadith and Sunnah) begins with Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and reaches its peak at the time of Imam Ibn Taymiyah.
 - b. The school of the Khalaf, which includes the Ash'ariyyah and Al-Maturidiyyah.
3. Al- Ash'ariyyah (or Al- Asha'irah) is a sect that was named after Abu Al- Hasan Al- Ash'ari.
 4. Al- Maturidiyyah sect was named after Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud, who was known as Abu Mansour Al- Maturidi.
 5. Both Abu Mansur Al -Maturidi and Abu Al- Hasan Al- Ash'ari lived during the same time and had the same opponent; the Mu'tazilah. In their refutation against the beliefs of the Mu'tazilah, they both had close opinions but were not exactly the same.

Questions:

1. Who are 'Ahl As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a'?
2. What are the main schools of thought within Ah As- Sunnah Wa Al- Jama'a?
3. What are the main beliefs of Al- Ash'ariyyah?
4. What are the main beliefs of Al- Maturidiyyah?



Chapter Five: The Shi'a (Zaidiyyah and Imamiyyah)

Introduction²⁹

The word Shi'a linguistically means: the people, the companions, the followers, and the helpers. And when it's said 'The Shi'a of a man' it means: his followers and supporters, and any group of people who unite regarding a certain matter are called Shi'a.

Technically the word Shi'a is used when referring to the people who supported Ali ibn Abi Taleb, and preferred him over the rest of the companions.

In another definition the Shi'a are those who supported Ali, and said that the Imamate and Caliphate should be ascribed to him and to his sons only, because they were divinely appointed.

So, Shi'ism is based on believing that Ali ibn Abi Talib and his sons are more deserving of the Caliphate, and that Ali was more deserving of it than Abu Bakr, Omar and Uthman -may Allah swt be pleased with them all-, and that prophet Muhammad (PBUH) entrusted Ali with it, and every Imam entrusted it to whoever came after him.

The emergence of Shi'a

There is more than one opinion in regard to when Shi'ism started:

1. The opinion of Shi'a: the Shi'a claim that Shi'ism started at the time of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They mention a fabricated incident where the prophet (PBUH) gathered the men of Bani Hashem (his family) and asked them: Who will support me and be my brother, my

²⁹ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 141-146.





heir, my minister, and my successor? And no one answered him except Ali ibn Abi Taleb, so the prophet (PBUH) said to him: “You are my brother, my heir, my minister and my successor”. This claim isn’t mentioned in any of the reliable books, even the books of history.

2. The second opinion: according to Ibn Khaldun and the Orientalists, Shi’ism started after the death of prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
3. The third opinion: Shi’ism started during the last years of Uthman’s Caliphate when Abdullah ibn Saba’ started gathering people and plotting to rebel against Uthman. This opinion considers Abdullah ibn Saba’ and his followers as the starters of Shi’ism when they claimed that Ali is more worthy of the Caliphate.
4. The fourth opinion: Shi’ism started after the battle of Karbala’a when Al- Hussein ibn Ali³⁰ was killed.
5. The fifth opinion: Shi’ism started towards the end of the first century after Hijra, when the theory that Ali and his sons were divinely appointed appeared. This opinion is supported by the fact that Shi’a books mention this theory in narratives that go back to Ja’afar As- Sadiq³¹ (who died in the year 148 AH) and his father.

³⁰ Al- Hussein ibn Ali is the grandson of prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the son of Ali and Fatima. He was born in the year 4 AH, and was killed in the battle of Karbala’a in the year 61 AH. He is the third Imam among the twelve Imams according to the Imamiyyah.

³¹ Imam Ja’afar As- Sadiq is the son of Muhammad, son of Ali, son of Al- Hussein, son of Ali ibn Abi Taleb. He was nicknamed As- Sadiq (the trustworthy) He was born in Madinah in the year 80 AH. He is the sixth Imam according to the Imamiyyah. The Fiqh of Imamiyyah is ascribed to him.





The reasons behind the emergence of Shi'a:

The historians have different opinions in regard to the reasons behind the emergence of Shi'a. Below are some of the reasons based on the different places the Shi'a sects emerged in:

1. The emergence of Shi'a in Iraq was because Ali ibn Ali Taleb resided there during his Caliphate and the people there became fond of him. Also, Iraq was a place where many civilizations and philosophies met, and this led to the appearance of different philosophical ideologies found within Shi'ism.
2. The emergence of Shi'a in Persia was because some of the Persians weren't sincere in embracing Islam, and they only became Muslims with the intention of causing mischief and separation amongst the Muslim Ummah. Also, some Persians believed that Ali is more worthy of the Caliphate and that the Caliphate should be hereditary.

The Zaidiyyah³²

The Zaidiyyah is one of the Shi'a sects. They are the followers of Imam Zaid³³ ibn Ali ibn Al- Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Taleb (May Allah SWT be pleased with them). They said the Imamate should be given to the sons of Fatima³⁴ (may Allah SWT be pleased with her) and it shouldn't be given to anyone else.

³² Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 147- 154.

³³ Imam Zaid ibn Ali ibn Al- Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Taleb was born in Medina in the year 66 AH and was killed in the year 122 AH.

³⁴ Fatima Az- Zahra' is the daughter of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his wife Khadija bint Khuwailid. She is the wife of Ali ibn Abi Taleb, and the mother of Al- Hasan and Al- Hussein. She was born 5 years before the prophethood of her father, and died shortly after the prophet's death.





During the Caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Taleb - may Allah SWT be pleased with him- the Shi'a were only one sect (group). They supported him and believed that he was worthy of the Caliphate after the death of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They remained one sect until the death of Al- Hussein ibn Ali. It was at this point when the separation began. The Shi'a disagreed over who should become the Imam (or Caliph). The first group claimed that the Imam is divinely appointed, and that the Imama passes from father to son in the sons of Ali ibn Abi Taleb and the descendants of his son Al- Hussein ibn Ali. This group is called the Imamiyyah or Ithna Ashariyyah. The second group said that the Imam isn't divinely appointed, but should be elected from the sons of Ali ibn Abi Taleb and their descendants. This group is called the Zaidiyyah, and they were named after their Imam Zaid ibn Ali ibn Al- Hussein ibn Abi Taleb.

Zaid was chosen as an Imam and over 15 thousand men from Kufa pledged allegiance to him. He then revolted against the governor of Iraq, and when the fighting continued, the Shi'a asked him about his opinion of Abu Bakr and Omar. When he refused to say anything but good about them, and explained that he revolted against the Umayyads, most of the Shi'a left his army and only 200 remained with him until they were all killed. Zaid said to the ones who left him: "You rejected me", and they are the same group who were called the Imamiyyah (also the Ithna Ashariyyah or the Ja'fariyyah). The Zaidis continued to revolt during the Abbasid Caliphate. They managed to establish a state for them in Yemen, and the majority of them reside there to this day.



**Their main beliefs:**

1. The Imamate: The Zaidiyyah sets special conditions for the person chosen to be an Imam. According to them, the Imamate comes through two different ways: the first is by appointment, and the second is by nomination or election. Appointment means that the Imam should exclusively be from Ahl Al- Bayt (the extended family of the prophet PBUH). Nomination or election means that the Imam who meets the special conditions is chosen from the sons of Al- Hasan or Al- Hussein. The Zaidiyyah accept the Imamate of someone who is less competent while there is someone that is better than him, which contradicts what the Imamiyyah believes. One of the first beliefs that Zaid changed was that the Imamate is not hereditary. He also believed that there was no evidence that Ali was divinely appointed as the first Caliph, and that choosing Abu Bakr and then Omar was for the benefit of the Muslims. Also he didn't believe in the infallibility of the Imams, nor their holiness.
2. Taqiyya: according to the Shi'a (Imamiyyah) Taqiyya means to conceal the truth and the belief in it, and to stop calling for it, especially in front of the violators. Zaid refused the concept of Taqiyya and required that an Imam should call for his beliefs and not hide them.
3. The Zaidiyyah agrees on matters of belief with the Mu'tazilah. Some scholars mention that Zaid was a student of Wasil ibn Ata', but the Zaidis deny this and say that having the same principles of belief doesn't necessarily mean that Zaid took them from Wasil.





The Imamiyyah³⁵

The Imamiyyah is a Shi'a sect that was named after the Imam, because they paid so much attention to the concept of Imamate, and a lot of their beliefs are related to it. They believe that Ali ibn Abi Taleb was worthy of the Caliphate after the death of prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and that he was divinely appointed, so are his sons (from his wife Fatima). They also believe that Abu Bakr, Omar and Uthman (may Allah SWT be pleased with them all) were violators and unjust in taking the Caliphate, and one should disavow from them.

The Imamiyyah is also called the Ithna Ashariyyah (Twelvers) because they considered that the Imamate is found in 12 Imams after the death of prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and they are all divinely appointed. These Twelve Imams start with Ali ibn Abi Taleb, and then his son Al- Hasan, then his son Al- Hussein, and then it runs in the sons of Al- Hussein. Also they are called Al- Ja'fariyyah after the Imam Ja'far As- Sadiq, because they follow his Math'hab in Fiqh.

According to Ahl As- Sunnah they are called Ar- Rafidah (the rejectors), because they rejected Zaid when he revolted against the Umayyads, refused to fight next to him after he spoke good of Abu Bakr and Omar.

This sect is well known for their belief in the Imamate and that the Imams are divinely appointed. According to historians this belief came into existence during the Abbasid Caliphate, specifically during the life of their sixth Imam Ja'far As- Sadiq.

³⁵ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 155- 168.



This sect is found in Iran, south of Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, south of Lebanon, Bahrain, and east of Saudi Arabia.

Their main beliefs:

1. The Imamate: this is their main belief, and they pay much attention to it. They believe that the Imam is divinely appointed, has a higher rank than other people, and is infallible. Some of their resources³⁶ exaggerate in their beliefs to the point where they mention that revelation can be sent down to the Imams, but not all their scholars agree on this.
2. The Mahdi and his return: the Shi'a call their twelfth Imam (Muhammad ibn Hasan Al- Askary) the Mahdi. They believe that he entered a basement in Samarra' (a city in Iraq) and disappeared after his father's death. They also believe that he will return to take revenge from his enemies and the ones who disobeyed the Imams and wronged them. This return represents the victory of the Imams against the ones who denied the rights of Ahl Al- Bayt.
3. Taqiyya: this is one of their main beliefs that they adhere to. It's when someone conceals what they believe in and shows something that's contradictory to it. They believe they can use it when dealing with their opponents. They also use it to explain the events of history. They claim that Ali ibn Abi Taleb remained silent after Abu Bakr, Omar and Uthman were each chosen to be the Caliph because he did Taqiyya.
4. Their stance on the Quran and the Companions: Some of the Shi'a scholars adopted false beliefs regarding the Quran, the Sunnah and

³⁶ Like the book of Usul Al- Kafi, written by Al- Kulaini, and is considered an authentic book of Hadith according to them (just like Sahih Al- Bukhari according to Ahl As- Sunnah).

the companions. What led them to this is their extreme beliefs and views on the Imamate. They claimed that the Quran was distorted or incomplete, and they denied the Sunnah of the prophet based on their belief that the companions lied in transmitting the Quran and Sunnah. These claims are found in their books, although some of their scholars deny it. The Shi'a accepted the Hadith that was transmitted through Ahl Al- Bayt or the companions that supported them. They also considered the sayings of the Imams in the same rank of the sayings of the prophet (PBUH).

Refuting their beliefs:

When looking at the beliefs of the Imamiyyah we see that they have moved away from the correct path of the Quran and Sunnah. Their doctrine of Imamate has no proof from the Quran or Sunnah, and whatever attributes they have given to their Imams (like their infallibility) also has no basis from the Quran or Sunnah. Their doctrine of the return of the Mahdi does not adhere to the Sunnah of Allah (SWT) in His creation. As for their belief in Taqiyya, it contradicts with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, and it is a form of lying and hypocrisy. Their stance on the companions contradicts what is mentioned in the Quran about them.

Summary:

1. The word Shi'a is used when referring to the people who supported Ali ibn Abi Taleb and preferred him over the rest of the companions.
2. There is more than one opinion in regard to when Shi'ism started. Also, the historians have different opinions about the reasons behind the emergence of Shi'a.



3. The Zaidiyyah is one of the Shi'a sects. They are the followers of Imam Zaid ibn Ali ibn Al- Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Taleb.
4. The Imamiyyah is a Shi'a sect that was named after the Imam, because they paid so much attention to the concept of Imamate, and a lot of their beliefs are related to it.
5. Each Shi'a sect has their own view on the Imamate, the Taqiyya and other issues.

Questions:

1. What is the linguistic and technical meaning of the word Shi'a?
2. When did Shi'ism start?
3. What is the difference between the Zaidiyyah and Imamiyyah in regards to: the Imamate, the Taqiyya.
4. What are the main beliefs of the Imamiyyah?

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Chapter Six: The Shi'a Extremists (The Isma'iliyyah, The Duruz, and The Nusairiyyah)

The Isma'iliyyah³⁷

The Isma'iliyyah is one of the Shi'a sects. It took its foundations from the Shi'a. After the death of Ja'far As- Sadiq the Shi'a split into two groups. The first group said that the Imamate should be given to Musa Al- Kathim³⁸ (the son of Ja'far As- Sadiq) and his sons, and was named the Imamiyyah Ithna Ashariyyah. The second group said that the Imamate should be given to Ismail³⁹ (the oldest son of Ja'far As- Sadiq), but he died during the life of his father, so the Imamate was given to his son Muhammad ibn Ismail. This group was named Al- Isma'iliyyah.

Many narrations mention that Ja'far As- Sadiq wasn't pleased with his older son Ismail, and that Ismail wasn't a fit for Imamate. Ismail was a friend of Abu Al- Khattab Al- Asadi⁴⁰, who claimed the divinity of Ja'far As- Sadiq and that he was his messenger, which made Ja'far disavow him. Muhammad ibn Ismail had a strong connection to a man called Maimoon Al- Qaddah⁴¹, one of the founders of Batiniyyah. Muhammad left Medina and moved to Iran

³⁷ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 185- 203.

³⁸ Musa Al- Kathim is the son of Ja'far As- Sadiq, he was born in the year 128 AH, and died in the year 183 AH, he is considered the 7th Imam according to the Imamiyyah.

³⁹ Ismail is the son of Ja'far As- Sadiq, He was born in the year 110 AH and died during his father's life in the year 138 AH.

⁴⁰ His name is Muhammad, he was a friend of Ja'far As- Sadiq and later claimed his divinity. He established a Shi'a group called the Khattabiyyah which no longer exists.

⁴¹ Maimoon Al- Qaddah used to be a slave to Ja'far As- Sadiq. He founded the Batiniyyah math'hab which believes that the Quran has an inner (hidden) meaning, and an apparent meaning. Also it calls for hiding one's beliefs.

and was never heard of. Maimoon then claimed he was a son of Muhammad and he took it upon himself to call for the Ismai'liyyah sect. His son Abdallah took over after him and organized the sect. He travelled between different cities and finally resided in Homs in Syria.

Their beliefs:

1. The Ismailis negate all the attributes of Allah SWT whom they call the first creator. According to them the first creator created from his light the first intellect, who then created all the existing things.
2. The Ismailis believe that the first intellect sent the revelation to the prophets.
3. The Ismailis deny the day of Judgement, the resurrection, the heaven and the hellfire. They believe in reincarnation, and that based on one's actions in life their soul is reborn either as a human, an animal, a plant or an inanimate being. They interpreted the day of Judgement and whatever occurs in it.
4. The Ismailis practice Taqiyya just like the other Shi'a sects. They claim that Ja'far As- Sadiq was the first to call for Taqiyya and order his followers to practice it.
5. The Ismailis use esoteric interpretation when dealing with the verses of the Quran. They claim that the Quran has an inner meaning and an apparent (external) one.



Their sects and political influence:

The Ismailis had many sects that emerged and had a political influence. Some sects managed to establish a state. Two of their major sects were:

1. The Qaramita: They were founded by Hamdan Al- Ash'ath⁴², who was nicknamed Qurmut. He went to Al- Kufa and showed asceticism so people gathered around him, then he revolted against the Abbasid Caliphate in the third century AH. They also managed to rule Bahrain. Their state ruled for two centuries before being defeated by the Salajiq.
2. The Fatimid: This title was known in North Africa, where the Ismailis managed to establish a state by Ubaid Allah ibn Al- Hussein Al- Mahdi⁴³, and call it the Fatimiyyah State during the third century AH.

Refuting their beliefs:

It is clear that the beliefs of the Ismailiyyah go against the Quran and Sunnah. They are far away from the teachings of Islam. They are considered one of the Batiniyyah sects that aims to destroy Islam.

⁴² Hamdan Al- Ash'ath established the State of Qaramita. The Qaramita revolted against the Abbasid Caliphate and had many battles with them. They killed the pilgrims and stole the black stone from Ka'ba and took it to Bahrain. They then returned it after being threatened by the Fatimid Caliphate.

⁴³ Ubaid Allah ibn Al- Hussein Al- Mahdi,



The Duruz⁴⁴

The Duruz is one of the Batiniyyah sects that split from the Ismailis during the Fatimid era. It called for the divinity of Al- Hakim bi Amri Allah Al- Fatimi⁴⁵. It took its name from one of their founders: Muhammad ibn Ismail Ad- Durzi⁴⁶.

This sect is found in Lebanon, south of Syria, and North Palestine.

As mentioned before, this sect emerged during the Fatimid era when Al Hakim bi Amri Allah Al- Fatimi was chosen to be the Caliphate in the year 386 AH. The call for his divinity started in the year 408 AH by three Ismailis: Hamza ibn Ali Az- Zawzani⁴⁷, Muhammd ibn Ismail Ad- Durzi, and Al- Hasan ibn Haidara Al- Firghani⁴⁸.

When Al- Hakim announced his divinity, the people refused to accept this and revolted against him, this upset the Ismaili authorities and they assassinated him. The founders of the Duruz then announced that he was not killed but rather disappeared or ascended to heaven and will be back.

⁴⁴ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 206- 218.

⁴⁵ Al- Hakim bi Amri Allah Al- Fatimi was appointed as a Caliph at the age of 11. He was from the Ismailis but later claimed his divinity and was killed by one of his family members.

⁴⁶ Muhammd ibn Ismail Ad- Durzi was the first to announce the beliefs of the Duruz although he was not the first to establish them. He ran away to Syria after the assassination of Al- Hakim and called for his beliefs there. He was killed in the year 411 AH.

⁴⁷ Hamza ibn Ali Az- Zawzani is considered the real founder of the Duruz. He was born in the year 375 AH. He called for the divinity of Al- Hakim but did not show this creed, and was angry when Muhammd Ad- Durzi announced it. He ran away after the assassination of Al- Hakim. He died in the year 430 AH.

⁴⁸ Al- Hasan ibn Haidara Al- Firghani appeared after Hamza Az- Zawzani and called for the same beliefs. Little is known about him.

**Their beliefs:**

1. Their main belief is the divinity of Al- Hakim. They believe that he is the human manifestation of God. They believe that he disappeared and will be back before the last day when he will rule the world.
2. The Duruz deny all prophets and accuse them of ignorance, because they called for the Oneness of Allah SWT and did not know Al- Hakim.
3. The Duruz believe in reincarnation. The last day according to them is when the cycle of reincarnation ends, and Al- Hakim appears in his human form. Reward and punishment is done through reincarnation. The reward or punishment is done when a person is reborn in a higher or lower rank in religion. They also believe that when a person dies from their sect he is reborn into it again, therefore they don't accept any new member into their sect.
4. The Duruz practice Taqiyya and are considered one of the Batiniyyah sects. They also use esoteric interpretation.
5. The Duruz believe in seven pillars that are totally different than the pillars of Islam.
6. The Duruz community is split into two groups: the 'Uqqal' (the knowers), and the 'Juhhal' (the ignorant). Only the Uqqal participate fully in their religious services, and have access to the secret teachings of the scripture.
7. The Duruze have 111 holy messages known as the Messages of Wisdom or the Book of Wisdom.

Refuting their believes:

It is clear that their belief in Al- Hakim being the human manifestation of God is considered Kufr according to Islam. Also, all their other beliefs contradict the Quran and Sunnah.





The Nusairiyyah⁴⁹

The Nusairiyyah is one of the Batiniyyah sects. It was named after its' founder Muhammad ibn Nusair An- Namiri⁵⁰ who lived during the third century AH. He was one of the Shi'a extremists who claimed divinity to Ali ibn Abi Taleb. The Nusairis also believe in reincarnation and esoteric interpretation.

Nowadays the Nusairis reside in Latakia in Syria, south of Turkey, and north of Lebanon. The French called this sect the 'Alawiyyah' or the 'Alawiyeen' when they occupied Syria. The Nusairis liked this new name because it acts as a disguise to their history as a deviated sect, and makes them closer to the Shi'a.

Their beliefs:

1. Their main belief is the divinity of Ali ibn Abi Taleb (may Allah SWT be pleased with him). They claim that he is God and they form a trinity from him, the prophet PBUH, and Salman Al- Farisi. They also believe that God manifested in a human form since the beginning of creation, and the last manifestation was in Ali.
2. They believe in the prophets Adam, Nooh, Ibrahim, Musa, Issa and Muhammad (peace be upon them).
3. They believe in reincarnation, and that reward or punishment is done through it.
4. They practice Taqiyya.

⁴⁹ Translated from the book: Islamic Sects, Dr. Muhammad Al- Khatib, pg. 221- 229.

⁵⁰ Muhammad ibn Nusair An- Namiri used to be from the Imamiyyah sect, then he had a conflict with them. He left and founded his group. He died in the year 260 AH.





5. They consider wine a holy drink and consume it during their religious ceremonies.
6. They have books that contain their beliefs and are read during their religious ceremonies.

Their political influence:

Historians say that since the twelfth century the history of the Nusairis has been a series of clashes and wars between them and the Ismailis. It was also noticeable that they cooperated with the Crusades and other enemies against the Muslims.

In modern history the Nusairis cooperated with the French when they occupied Syria and were promised an independent state. They now form the ruling authority in Syria.

Refuting their beliefs:

It is clear that their belief in the divinity of Ali and the trinity is considered Kufr according to Islam. Also, all their other beliefs contradict the Quran and Sunnah.

Summary:

1. The Isma'iliyyah, the Duruz and the Nusairiyyah are amongst the Batiniyyah sects.
2. The Isma'iliyyah, the Duruz and the Nusairiyyah share some beliefs like the reincarnation, the Taqiyya and the erosetic interpretation.
3. The Ismai'liyyah is an extreme Shi'i sect that called for the Imamate of Ismail ibn Ja'far.
4. The Duruz is a sect that believes in the divinity of Al- Hakim bi Amr Allah Al- Fatimi.

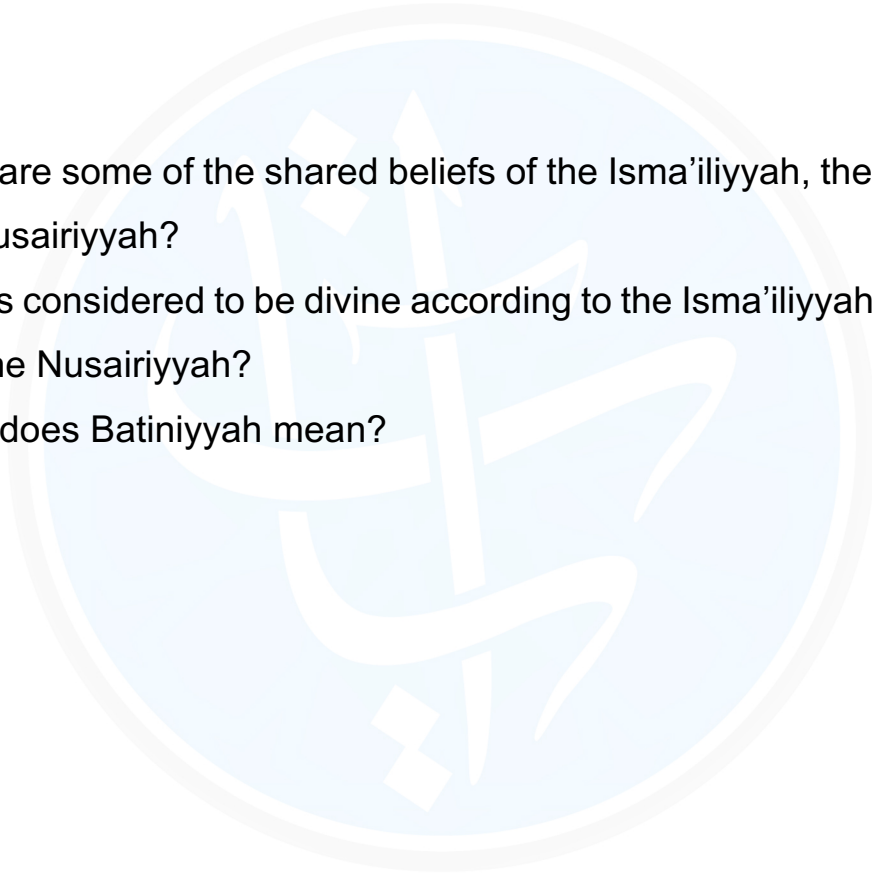




5. The Nusairiyyah is a sect that believes in the divinity of Ali ibn Abi Taleb.
6. The beliefs of the Isma'iliyyah, the Duruz and the Nusairiyyah are clearly against Islam and are considered Kufr.

Questions:

1. What are some of the shared beliefs of the Isma'iliyyah, the Duruz and the Nusairiyyah?
2. Who is considered to be divine according to the Isma'iliyyah, the Duruz and the Nusairiyyah?
3. What does Batiniyyah mean?



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AQEEDAH

CURRICULUM

Part II

Religions

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Second Section: World Religions⁵¹

Chapter One: Zoroastrianism⁵²

Zoroastrianism is a religion that emerged in Persia during the 600 century BCE. It was founded by a man named Zoroaster. Before the emergence of this religion, the Persians believed in and worshiped many Gods. It was a ploytheistic community where people made statues of their Gods and worshiped them in shrines. There were priests who were considered intercessors between the Gods and the people. They widely practiced black magic.

Main beliefs:

1. Zoroastrians believe in the existence of the God of Good, who is the Creator, and they call him Ahura Mazda. They say that he is the God of Light and Sky. They also believe in the God of Evil, whom they call Ahraman. He is the God of Darkness, but he has a lower status than Ahura Mazda. They believe that there is a battle between Ahura Mazda (the God of Light or the God of Good) and Ahraman (the God of

⁵¹ This section of the book is summarized and translated from 3 different books:

1. Encyclopedia of Religions, written by a group of authors, Dar An- Nafais publishers, Beirut, Lebanon, first publication, 1422 H, 2001.
2. History of Religions, Prof. Muhammad Khalifa Hasan, Dar Athaqafa Al- Arabiya publishers, 2002.
3. Religions Comparison, Dr. Muhamad Nabil Al- Omary and Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Al- Haj, a publication of Al- Quds Open University, Amman, Jordan, 2010.

⁵² Translated from: Encyclopedia of Religions, pg. 279- 281 and pg. 283. History of Religions, pg. 154- 167. Religions Comparison, pg. 125- 138.



Darkness or the God of Evil). In the end, Ahura Mazda will win the battle.

2. The duty of the believer is to support the God of Light, for that reason the fire took a main part in their worship. The houses of fire (temples) are their centers of worship and sanctification. According to them the Light is sacred. The sacred fire is lit by a priest in a stove made from stone. It is lit day and night. The worshippers enter the temple after taking a bath and taking off their shoes. They offer the priest incense and money, and he gives them some ashes.
3. Zoroastrians believe that Zoroaster was a prophet. Some historians consider him a prophet because he went through experiences that were similar to what the prophets had, and he believed in some religious facts that he claimed were revealed to him. He was originally a priest, a religious chanter, and a person who had visions and dreams. The historians disputed over his name, his father's name and the date of his appearance. There were many legendary stories about his birth.
4. The sacred book for the Zoroastrians is the Avestan Scriptures. They are the teachings of Zoroaster, transmitted in the form of hymns. Each hymn is called Gatha, which means singing or chanting. It is likely that there are 17 hymns. These hymns were written in Persian in the book called Avesta (which means the original text in Persian) in the 5th century CE. After this there were commentaries made on the Avesta, and the Avesta with its commentaries was called the Zend Avesta.
5. Zoroastrians believe in the last day, and according to them the world has a definite ending when Ahura Mazda will win the battle against Ahraman.
6. Zoroastrianism is a closed religion, and it does not accept any new members to join. A person is considered a Zoroastrian if both of his



parents were Zoroastrians. Their places of worship do not have a significant shape that distinguish them from the outside.

7. There are multiple sects within Zoroastrianism. They all meet in their belief of the eternal battle between the Gods of Good and Evil, or Light and Darkness.

The position of Islam regarding Zoroastrianism:

The Quran used the name “Magi” when mentioning Zoroastrianism. In Surat Al Haj in Ayah 17, Allah SWT says: “Indeed, the believers, Jews, Sabians, Christians, Magi, and the polytheists—Allah will judge between them ‘all’ on Judgment Day. Surely Allah is a Witness over all things”⁵³.

The Muslim scholars considered the state of the Zoroastrians as the state of the people of the book in terms of taking Jizyah (tax paid by non-Muslims to the Islamic state) from them. It is not allowed for Muslims to marry from them or eat their slaughtered animals.

Zoroastrians are considered a religious minority. The followers of this religion are mainly found in Iran and India. Also, they have a presence in Europe and North America.

⁵³ TMQ, Surat Al Hajj, Chapter 22:17. The Clear Quran.

**Summary:**

1. Zoroastrianism was founded by Zoroaster in Persia.
2. Zoroastrians believe in the God of Good, also known as the God of Light and call him Ahura Mazda. They also believe in the God of Evil, also known as the God of Darkness, and they call him Ahraman.
3. There is a battle between the two Gods. In the end, Ahura Mazda (the God of Good and Light) will win.
4. Zoroastrians believe that light is sacred, and the fire takes an important part in their worship.

Questions:

1. What are the main beliefs of Zoroastrianism?
2. Could this religion be considered a monotheistic religion?
3. What is the position of Islam regarding Zoroastrianism?

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Chapter Two: Hinduism⁵⁴

Hinduism is the religion of the vast majority of Indians. However, the term “Hinduism” was not used by the Indians (who did not put a specific name for their religion). Also, the word “Indian” was not used by the Aryans who developed the beliefs of Hinduism. The word “Hinduism” is of Persian origin. Since the Persian invasion of Sindh, the word “Sindu” (which is the Sanskrit name for the Indus River) has been pronounced as “Hindu”. This pronunciation has spread, and other derivatives have been derived from it, such as “Hinduism”.

The term “Hinduism” was expanded to include the religion, the civilization, the customs and the traditions that arose on the banks of the Indus River.

Hinduism cannot be confined to a specific person, and its origins cannot be traced back to one founder or even a group of founders. It is a developed religion that contains a set of norms, customs, traditions and conditions that the Indian people had during the different stages of history, and it had undergone major reforms and changes.

It can be said that the basis of “Hinduism” beliefs are the beliefs of the Aryans whose origin is not agreed upon between Historians (some claim they migrated from Europe while others claim they are from Asia). The Aryans mixed with the Persians and knew about their beliefs and took from them. They invaded India and took control of the land in the fifteenth century BCE.

⁵⁴ Translated from: Encyclopedia of Religions, pg. 485- 487. History of Religions, pg. 58- 74. Religions Comparison, pg. 85- 105.





Their main beliefs:

1. Hindus believe in many deities. They believe in the Hindu Trinity which consists of three deities: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Brahma is the creator of the universe and is not widely worshiped as Shiva and Vishnu. Vishnu is the preserver of the universe and he is a loving and forgiving figure who brings salvation. Shiva is the destroyer and the restorer of the universe. There are many other deities they believe in and each has their own speciality.
2. Hindus believe in pantheism. They claim that Brahma and the soul (which they call the Atman) is one thing, and that the creator and his creations are one thing. According to them Brahma is nothing but the sum of souls and forces scattered throughout the universe.
3. Karma: Hindus believe in Karma which means everyone is held accountable for their actions whether good or bad. They believe that through reincarnation a person is either rewarded or punished. If a person did good actions in his past life he will be reborn in a higher status in the next life, but if he did bad actions he will be reborn in a lower status.
4. Life after death: Hindus do not believe in heaven or hell. They believe in reincarnation which means that the soul enters another body after death. The soul (known as Atman) continues to move in the cycle of rebirths until it reaches a level of purification and unites with the universal soul (Brahma). The body is burned after death to unite with the soul. The soul in its new life does not remember its old life. According to them, reincarnation means the continuous rebirths of the soul because it either has desires from the materialistic world that has not been fulfilled or has sins as a result of its relations with others. It can be reincarnated to a human being or an animal. Reincarnation





continues until the soul is reckoned and purified from its sins, then it can be united with the supreme soul and survive the cycle of rebirths. This means that the soul is immortal and does not perish.

5. The salvation of the soul: the salvation of the soul from the cycle of rebirths has different methods in Hinduism, amongst them are:

- Dhyana: which means contemplation and meditation, so that the person reaches a state where he realizes within himself the divine soul.
- Yoga: a practice that has several forms in which a person controls their breathing, meditates and disciplines himself. It is based on blocking the activities of the mind, the distractions from the outer world, the imagination, the desires, and the emotions. It aims to purify a person from their sins and free them from the distractions of life.

6. Prophethood and sacred books: Hindus do not believe in prophethood or prophets. They have several sacred books. Their oldest sacred books are called the Vedas. The four Vedas are a collection of writings about various topics including the history and heritage of India. They were transmitted orally before being written in Sanskrit by the priests. The four Vedas include: The Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda, and the Atharva Veda.

The official and recognized book of laws according to Hindus is called Manu Smriti or the laws of Manu. It is a set of legislation that regulates relations between individuals from social, economic and legal aspects. Hindus believe that the laws were revealed by Brahma to Manu (the divine father of the human race). It is not known when this book was written.





There are other sacred books that include stories, legends, philosophies, Hindu creeds and laws.

7. Hindus perform their rituals in their homes. They do not require special places to hold their ritual.
8. Hindus sanctify the Ganges River (a river that originates in the Himalayas and flows into the Bay of Bengal). They make pilgrimage to it annually to cleanse themselves by bathing in its water. They also throw the ashes of the cremated bodies in it.
9. Hindus consider the cow sacred. They refrain from eating its meat but they consume its milk.
10. The caste system: The Hindu society is divided into four categories known as castes. People are born into each caste according to the karma they have accumulated in their previous lives, and they cannot change their caste during their lives. The four castes are:
 - Brahmins: They consist of the priests and the religious teachers. Their duty is to perform the rituals and sacrifices and teach them to the Hindus.
 - Kshatriyas: They consist of the warriors and the rulers. Their duty is to work in the government and the military.
 - Vaishyas: They consist of the merchants and the farmers. Their duty is to manage wealth and trading.
 - Sudras: They consist of the servants and the laborers. Their duty is to serve other castes.



**Summary:**

1. Hinduism is the religion of the vast majority of Indians.
2. The term “Hinduism” was expanded to include the religion, the civilization, the customs and the traditions that arose on the banks of the Indus River.
3. Hindus believe in many deities. They believe in the Hindu Trinity which consists of three deities: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.
4. Hindus believe in pantheism, Karma and reincarnation.
5. Hindus don't believe in prophethood.
6. Hindus have various sacred books. The oldest are the Vedas.
7. The Hindu society is categorized into castes. Hindus are strict with their caste system.

Questions:

1. What is the origin of the word Hinduism?
2. What does the term Hinduism include in its meaning?
3. What does the Hindu Trinity consist of?
4. What is the relation between Karma and reincarnation?
5. Mention two of the Hindu sacred books.
6. What is the caste system?

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Chapter Three: Buddhism⁵⁵

Buddhism is considered a religious and philosophical reform movement of Hinduism. It emerged as an opposition to Hinduism, and later developed into a religion independent of Hinduism. Therefore, it is an Indian religion that originated in India, but later spread outside the borders of India. The majority of its followers are found in Japan, China, Burma, Tibet, Korea, Nepal and other regions of the far east, though the religion still has its followers in India.

Buddhism emerged in India between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE to oppose Hinduism that was common at the time. It became the official religion in India for a long period of time until the differences between its followers began to widen, and the Buddhists divided into two main sects. After a thousand and two hundred years, Hindus had worked to eliminate Buddhism in India and even made Buddha one of the Hindu gods. In the seventh century CE, control returned to the Hindus, and they did not allow Buddhists to have any influence in India, so Buddhism eventually had few followers there located behind the Himalayas.

Buddhism was named after its founder the Buddha. The word “Buddha” in its origin means “the enlightened or the knowledgeable”. Buddha was a title given to an Indian prince who was expected to become a king after his father, but he chose a life other than what his father had prepared for him. His original name is Gautama Siddhartha, and he was born in the year 564 BCE near the Himalayas, to an Indian family of the Kshatriya caste

⁵⁵ Translated from: Encyclopedia of Religions, pg. 148- 150. History of Religions, pg. 76- 93. Religions Comparison, pg. 108- 124.





(the caste of kings, rulers and warriors). His mother died after his birth and his aunt raised him. Many stories and legends circulated around his birth, and it was said that many signs occurred upon his birth too.

The prince grew up in comfort and luxury in his father's palace. He was not allowed to witness the pain and suffering of people living outside the palace. He got married at the age of twenty, and had a son. Then he was allowed to roam outside the palace. During his wandering, he saw a sick patient in pain, an old man whose back was bent, a person whose body lost weight from starvation, and a funeral in which people were buried. These scenes of pain shocked him, and he began to think about the way of salvation. So, he left the palace and his family and wandered in the forests of the Himalayas. He chose to live a harsh life with the Hindu monks in order to search for the truth. He lived a life of thinking, contemplation and searching for the truth; the truth that helps man get rid of pain and suffering.

One day while Gautama was meditating under a fig tree he had a state of mind in which he had obtained the wisdom he was seeking, and then he became the Buddha, i.e. enlightened. His followers attributed divinity to him, an attribute that he did not claim for himself.

Buddha did not care about the subject of theology, nor did he set up a system of rituals. Rather, he set a philosophical system concerned with morals and adopting behaviors that lead to salvation. Later, his followers considered that salvation is achieved when a person reaches purity then unites with the Savior Buddha.

After his experience, Buddha decided to spread his thought, which was well received by all castes. At first he had five followers who were considered his first disciples, then he had many students. He continued his preaching for forty years until he reached the age of eighty, and died in the year 483 BCE. Two centuries after his death, his followers split into two major sects:





1. The Mahayana doctrine: also called the doctrine of the North. They claimed the divinity of Buddha. This doctrine was influenced by Hinduism and took from it the idea of reincarnation.
2. The Hinayana doctrine: also called the doctrine of the South. The followers of this doctrine consider Buddha a moral teacher who reached the highest degree of spiritual purity and came with a true law.

Main beliefs:

1. Researchers believe that Buddhism in itself is not a pure religion, and it does not have the character of other religions. Rather, it is an ethical and educational system that aims to rid the soul of evils and sins and purify it. However, this religion later became a rational intellectual doctrine based on philosophical theories and was divided into two major groups.
2. Buddha established Buddhism based on his own spiritual experience, on this matter he said that the truth is not known by theories, but by walking on its path. Therefore, he did not talk about God, nor did he occupy himself with proving or denying His existence. He believed that the salvation of man depends on himself, not on God! He rebuked his companions and forbade them from engaging in divine issues. But since the belief in God is innate in man, and neglecting this belief creates disturbance in his psyche, his followers tried to get rid of this predicament. Some of them said that the Spirit of God had settled in Buddha and considered him a god. Others turned to worshipping some of the various Hindu deities while following the teachings of Buddha, so Buddhism was mixed with Hinduism.

Based on that, there were many Buddhist opinions regarding the belief in God adopted by various groups:





- a. A group believed in the oneness of God, and that He created a limited number of souls, then left the creation with the laws established in the world.
- b. Another group believed that God sent to the world the souls and enabled them to know good from evil, and for this reason, God does not send messengers.
- c. Another group believed that God chooses a human that has perfected himself through worship and denying his desires, and this chosen person replaces God in showing satisfaction or anger with people according to their deeds, and thus people follow and gather around him.

These different opinions indicate that a dispute arose between the followers of Buddha regarding the belief in God. As for him, he did not claim prophecy, nor did he discuss the subject and attributes of God, but these topics were not among his main concerns.

In summary, Buddhism does not say that there is a Creator. This does not mean that it is a religion of atheism, nor is it a religion of faith. Rather, it is not a religion as much as it is a system of morals, a method of liberation from pain and an attempt to rid the soul of its torment.

It is noticeable that the followers of Buddha forgot the teachings which Buddha dedicated himself to and began to idolize Buddha himself and talk about him as a god. They made sacrifices to him and created statues for him in temples.

3. Reincarnation: Buddhists believe in reincarnation like Hindus, which means the repetition of birth or the wandering of the soul, and the return of the soul after leaving one body to another body.





4. Sacred Books: Buddha did not write anything during his life. He delivered his teachings orally. His students collected his sayings during the years following his death through his contemporaries and their narrators and wrote them in the Pali language. They were considered sacred books and were translated into different languages.

The sacred books include three main books called the Three Baskets:

1. The Basket of Beliefs that includes an accurate description of the rules of asceticism and monasticism, and the clarification of each rule with various explanations and interpretations of the Buddhist faith.
2. The Basket of Proverbs that has the sermons and commandments of Buddha to his followers.
3. The Basket of laws that includes the explanations, clarifications, and comments of the first basket of the Buddhist belief. This book is known for being lengthy, complex, and full of philosophical views.

These books are called the "Three Baskets of Wisdom". They are among the largest in the legal heritage of any religion. Buddhists do not claim that their scriptures were revealed, but rather attribute them to Buddha.

5. Buddhism's view of castes: Buddha called for the abolition of the caste system, which was known in Hinduism. Hindus followed it strictly, and it resulted in dividing people into groups that did not mix together. Buddha called for monasticism in which human beings are equal in their rights and duties. Therefore, Buddhism is considered a revolution against Hinduism in its caste system. However, the practical reality in





Buddhism is not what Buddha called for. The caste system has continued in Buddhism and Hinduism altogether.

6. According to Buddhist thought, a person goes through two stages on his way to purification:

First: The Nibana stage, which is the stage in which the body is washed from all dirt and other impurities.

Second: The Nirvana stage, which is the state of extreme purification, and it is the maximum that a person works to reach. For Buddhists, nirvana meant merging with God to get rid of the repetition of birth, but this was when they believed in the existence of god. When they denied the existence of God, Nirvana meant the state in which the individual reaches the highest level of spiritual purity, and by this he is saved from the repetitive birth.

A person reaches this stage through the Noble Eightfold Path or the application of the eight principles, which are - in short -: 1. Right view, 2. Right thought, 3. Right Speech, 4. Right Conduct, 5. Right Livelihood, 6. Right Effort, 7. Right Mindfulness, 8. Right Concentration.

7. Ethics has a great value in Buddhism, as mentioned before Buddhism as a whole is a philosophical and ethical doctrine more than it is a religion. Amongst the most important morals are: compassion, non-abuse, and love.

Summary:

1. Buddhism is considered a religious and philosophical reform movement of Hinduism. It emerged as an opposition to Hinduism, and later developed into a religion independent of Hinduism.





2. Buddhism was named after its founder the Buddha. The word “Buddha” in its origin means “the enlightened or the knowledgeable”.
3. Buddha established Buddhism based on his own spiritual experience. He did not talk about God, nor did he occupy himself with proving or denying His existence.
4. The followers of Buddha disputed over the belief in God.
5. Buddhists believe in reincarnation like Hindus.
6. Buddha called for the abolition of the caste system, which was known in Hinduism.
7. The sacred books to Buddhists are three main books called the Three Baskets.
8. Buddhists do not claim that their scriptures were revealed, but rather attribute them to Buddha.
9. According to Buddhist thought, a person goes through two stages on his way to purification: The Nibana stage and the Nirvana stage.
10. The Nirvana stage is reached through the Noble Eightfold Path or the application of the eight principles.

Questions:

1. What is the link between Hinduism and Buddhism?
2. Who was the Buddha?
3. What is the view of Buddhism regarding the belief in God?
4. What are the sacred books of Buddhists?
5. How is the Nirvana stage reached?
6. What are the two major sects in Buddhism?





Chapter Four: Judaism⁵⁶

Judaism is considered to be the oldest of the three divine religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The word is used today to refer to the religion of the Jews. In the Arabic language the word “Judaism” is referred to as “Al- Yahudiyyah”. The scholars have different opinions in regard to the original meaning of this word and the linguistic root it was derived from. Some say it was derived from the Arabic root “hawada” which means repentance. Others say that it is attributed to “Yahuda” (Judah) who was the fourth son of prophet Yaqub (Jacob) (PBUH).

Throughout history, the Jews gave themselves many names such as: the Hebrews, the children of Israel, the Samaritans and the Mosaic, but they prefer to be called the children of Israel, although this name was originally limited to the descendants of prophet Yaqub ibn Ishaq (Isaac) ibn Ibrahim (may Allah SWT be pleased with them). The word “Israel” means strong in the Hebrew language, and it was given to prophet Yaqub. The Jews claim in the Torah that Yaqub had a fight with God, and he struck him down, and therefore he was given the name “Israel” (God is exalted above what they say).

The truth is that the children of Israel who are the actual descendants of prophet Yaqub (PBUH) form a small percentage of the Jews. The majority of Jews today are descendants of people who converted to Judaism during the Middle Ages and were refused to be recognized by the Rabbis back then. When Zionism was established, it recognized these Jews in order to use

⁵⁶ Translated from: Encyclopedia of Religions, pg. 504- 505. History of Religions, pg.178- 201. Religions Comparison, pg. 155- 238.





them in establishing the Jewish community on what they call the “Promised Land” (Palestine).

Judaism is originally a monotheistic religion that was revealed to the prophets of the children of Israel. It called for the Oneness of Allah (SWT), and it followed the path of prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) who migrated from Iraq to Palestine, which was occupied by the Canaanites. Prophet Ibrahim married Sarah and she gave birth to his son prophet Ishaq. Prophet Ishaq had a son named prophet Yaqub (May Allah SWT be pleased with them). Prophet Yaqub was nicknamed Israel, and he had twelve sons who each formed a tribe (mentioned in the Quran as Al- Asbat; meaning the offspring of the twelve sons of Yaqub). However, this monotheistic prophetic approach did not remain constant in the history of Judaism, as the Jews were not monotheistic during all their eras, and they did not always adopt monotheism.

It is hard to clearly present the different stages that Judaism had throughout history simply because we do not have a clear idea regarding certain times in the history of Judaism. It developed to become an ethnic religion for the Jews. According to some contemporary historians, Judaism went through three stages before the emergence of prophet Essa (PBUH):

1. The stage of migrating to Palestine: this stage (as they claim) began when prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) migrated from Ur (a city in ancient Mesopotamia, and currently in Iraq) along with the believers from the Chaldeans and other tribes who joined his call to the land of Palestine. His stay there was not long but rather a passing trip, and he did not find a great response to his call from the residents of Palestine (the Canaanites), so he travelled to Egypt. The Torah mentions his return to Palestine and the death and burial of his wife Sarah there.





We know that prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) had nothing to do with the Jewish history, because Judaism began after him during the era of prophets Ishaq and Yaqub (peace be upon them).

During this stage the children of Israel remained steadfast on monotheism, following the path of their fathers prophets Yaqub and Ishaq (may Allah SWT be pleased with them)⁵⁷.

It is noticeable that the children of Israel did not have a great influence on the pagan people surrounding them, and perhaps this was a reason added to the drought and famine that afflicted the region and pushed them to migrate from Palestine to Egypt.

2. The stage of migrating to Egypt: This stage began when the brothers of prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (PBUH) travelled to Egypt to search for food after the years of famine that struck the region. They found Yusuf and brought their father Yaqoub from Palestine along with all his sons⁵⁸. This trip was during the era of the Hyksos who invaded Egypt around the beginning of the 16th century BCE. The children of Israel lived in Egypt a prosperous life that did not last long. After the Pharaohs expelled the Hyksos, they looked suspiciously at the children of Israel. When the Nineteenth family and its king Ramses the second ruled, the hostile feeling towards the children of Israel appeared. The Quran mentioned this tense relationship between the children of Israel and the Pharaohs, which was based on the fact that the Pharaohs are the masters and that the children of Israel are the slaves. The children of Israel suffered from the Pharaohs, who decided to stop the proliferation of the children of Israel by killing the male newborns from them. They

⁵⁷ This was mentioned in the Quran in Surah Al- Baqarah: 132- 133.

⁵⁸ This story was mentioned in the Quran in Surah Yousef.





found their salvation through the exodus of prophet Musa (PBUH) with them from Egypt, which was considered the land of humiliation and slavery.

3. The stage of exodus, wandering in the desert and returning to Palestine: This stage began with the exodus of the children of Israel with prophet Musa (PBUH) from Egypt. The mission of Musa was based on two main issues:

1. The call to worship Allah (SWT) alone and prove the falsehood of Pharaoh's claim of divinity.

2. Free the children of Israel from slavery. The children of Israel gathered around their Prophet Musa (PBUH) in this issue and dealt with him more as a political leader than a messenger from Allah (SWT). Therefore, they quickly turned against him after going out to the Sinai desert and encountering fatigue and hardship there. The Quran relates to us the severe suffering of prophet Musa (PBUH) with his people and his patience with them⁵⁹.

Prophet Musa (PBUH) went with his people to Palestine, which was occupied at the time by its original inhabitants. They stood against the children of Israel and refused to let them into their land. The attempt to enter it meant war between the children of Israel and the original inhabitants. The children of Israel refused to go to war, despite the temptation of victory and conquest from their prophet. After their refusal to enter it, they were punished by wandering in the desert for forty years.

Prophets Musa and Haroon (peace be upon them) died during the period of wandering. Some researchers mention that those who

⁵⁹ This was mentioned in Surah Al- Araf: 160.






were contemporary with prophet Musa (PBUH) all perished in the desert, except two of them managed to enter Palestine, one of whom was Yushu' (Joshua) bin Nun, who took over the leadership of the children of Israel after prophet Musa (PBUH). Yushu's goal was to enter the Holy Land and was finally able to enter the city of Jericho. The children of Israel controlled the area of the interior hills without the coast, and their authority did not extend to include all the land of Palestine. Within this stage lies an important period in the history of the Jews; the period of ruling Palestine. This period witnessed three eras:

1. The era of the Judges: during this era the rulers were judges from the priests elected by the people, and the foundation for Jewish life was laid. The Jews began to transition from their nomadic life to a civilised one, but this social change did not mean political stability as the indigenous people of Palestine were not satisfied with the Jewish occupation of their land.
2. The era of the kings: this era began after corruption spread amongst the judges. The first king was Talut (mentioned in the Torah as Saul). One of his men, Dawood (David), managed to kill Jalut (mentioned in the Torah as Goliath), the leader of the Palestinians. And with this began an important era in the era of the kings; which is the era of the king and prophet Dawood (David) and his son the king and prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) (peace be upon them). This era is considered the golden age of the Jews in Palestine, as their state expanded to include the majority of the lands of Palestine, and they formed a kingdom in which its capital was initially the city of Hebron. After seven years, Dawood





managed to overtake Jerusalem from its original inhabitants and make it the capital of his kingdom, but he did not build a temple there. The Torah states that the Jews could not expel the inhabitants of Palestine during this period, so they lived amongst them, intermarried with them, and even worshiped their gods. Prophet Dawood (PBUH) ruled for forty years, during which he was unable to unite his kingdom. He tried to maintain the tribal cohesion of the tribes of the children of Israel, as each tribe had a specific territory, in addition to entering Jerusalem and bringing the Ark of the Covenant there to make it a religious center. Despite all this, there was no real merger between the northern and southern tribes. After his death, he was succeeded by his son prophet Sulaiman (PBUH) who expanded his kingdom. The Jews claim that he built the temple, and they mention its description and details of its construction in the Torah, but the excavations in the area do not indicate that at all, as there is no trace of it till this day. This era ended with the death of prophet Sulaiman (PBUH). After his death, his kingdom was divided into the kingdoms of Judah (the northern one, with its capital in Jerusalem) and Israel (the southern one, with its capital in Nablus).

3. The era of division and demise: after the death of prophet Sulaiman, the Pharaohs invaded the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and the invasion of the neighboring countries continued until the two kingdoms fell. The end of the Jewish presence in Palestine was at the hands of



Nebuchadnezzar the second, King of Babylon, who occupied Palestine and captivated most of the population to Babylon.

The Jews entered a new stage in their history, which is the stage of the Babylonian captivity and the diaspora. The Jews in exile were able to form a community of their own and preserve their religious rituals. A deep spiritual movement emerged, in which the idea of Christ the Savior was renewed. During the period of captivity, the Jews longed for the glory they used to have during the short period of their ruling in Palestine and establishing their kingdom. The Jews succeeded in linking this longing with religion. The priests turned their attention to studying the law in an organized study and established a Jewish religious school in Babylon. There were two religious trends amongst the Jews in Babylon during the preparation for their return: a trend that was secular and accepting their fate in exile, and the other had a priestly character more related to nationalism. Judaism interacted between the two trends. Based on their captivity and diaspora the Jews (especially the Zionist movement) built glories and hope for the return to what they call the “Promised Land”.

The Babylonian captivity of the Jews ended during the reign of Cyrus the Persian who seized Babylon. He issued orders to return the Jews to Palestine and allow them to rebuild their alleged temple, but the Jews could not establish a state in Palestine and were only one of the many communities that were subject to Persian rule.



Then they fell under the rule of Greece for a period of time. Then came the Roman era. The Jews lived under the Roman Empire a quiet life where the Jewish groups were able to exercise their role in supervising the Jewish community. It was during this time prophet Essa (PBUH) appeared from the heart of the Jewish community, and his message was a correction of the deviation that had occurred among the Jews. The Jews resisted his call and considered it a danger to the privileges that were given to them by the Romans. They sought the help of the Romans in order to resist his call, eliminate him, and even plotted to kill him.

Their main beliefs:

1. Monotheism: There is no doubt that the original creed of the children of Israel was believing in the oneness of God, and this creed was brought by their honorable messengers (peace be upon them). However, the Jews did not settle on monotheism, rather they were turning to paganism and imitating the neighboring pagan nations in their worship. The Quran mentions the repeated attempts of prophet Musa (PBUH) to confirm monotheism for the children of Israel.

Although we find in the current Torah (despite its distortion) texts that declare monotheism and forbid idols, its concept of this one God is distorted. We find that human actions are attributed to Him such as eating, drinking and wrestling. Also, it was portrayed that He regrets, cries and suffers (may Allah SWT be greatly exalted above what they say).



It appears from the sacred texts of the Jews that they were not unanimous in determining the name of the God they worship. Among the names of God, they have:

1. Eloah: which means God in Hebrew.
2. Elohim: which means God in plural form.
3. Adonai: which means Sir in the Semitic languages.
4. YHWH (Yahweh): according to them it is the name of the God of the Jews.

During their long history, the Jews worshiped multiple gods in addition to the one God whose name they did not agree on, and they were influenced by the people around them, where they worshiped their gods.

2. Sacred books: They are originally one book, the Torah, which is the book that was revealed to prophet Musa (PBUH) . However, the Jews added to it the history of their kings, prophets, chants, proverbs, and so on. The book that included the Torah and what was added to it is the so-called Old Testament. Then the Jews saw that the Torah and what was added to it were not sufficient for their perceptions, so they decided to add another book; the Talmud, which focused on the theory of Jewish racial superiority, the national religion, and the development of a set of daily laws on which the Jewish community is based.

The Old Testament does not have an original copy that goes back to the first sources from which it was taken. There is nothing available from the era of prophet Musa (PBUH), nor anything from the era of other prophets of the children of Israel. It was collected over the span of different ages, and in different forms. Currently there are three different copies that exist, and each is different from the other. The Old Testament is sacred to Jews and Christians, but its content is not





agreed upon among the Jewish sects, as well as among the Christian churches.

The Old Testament is divided into three sections: the Torah, the Books of the Prophets, and the Writings. The Torah is a Hebrew word meaning Sharia or Law. The Jews do not claim that it is the original Torah; the Torah of Musa (PBUH), but rather they admit that it was lost and that God Almighty inspired it to someone else (they call him Ezra al-Warraq) who rewrote it.

The Talmud is a Hebrew word that means study or learning. It is a book that teaches the religion of the Jews and was written by Jewish rabbis. It was first passed on through oral narrations, until it was collected, and commentaries were added to it. The Talmud was not mentioned in the Quran. It was originally written to attack Christianity, and it contained insults to prophet Essa, (PBUH) and even to Allah (SWT).

3. Prophethood: The Quran mentions that the children of Israel had the most prophets sent to any nation. The Quran speaks of these prophets as being part of the procession of the honorable messengers and prophets whom Allah (SWT) sent to call mankind to the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and to worship Him alone.

However, the picture that the Old Testament presents about the prophets is different from the bright one presented in the Quran. The Old Testament mentions in more than one place that there are true prophets and false prophets! Even the true prophets are not presented in a dignified manner worthy of those whom Allah (SWT) chose for prophethood.

The concept of prophethood is not clear in the Old Testament, as there is a confusion between the terms seer, prophet, and man of





God; which one indicates the prophet and when they were first used. Also, the Torah assigned various duties to the prophets, including that they are mediators between people and God, and it did not differentiate between them and the priests in the temples.

4. The Messiah: The Jews believe in the idea of the Messiah; the Savior. “Messiah” is a Hebrew word that means the anointed one. They believe that God will send the Messiah, who will be a great king and will establish an eternal kingdom over the entire universe. It seems that the idea of the Messiah had been associated with the mindset of the Jews since the Babylonian captivity, as they were waiting for someone to save them from the humiliation and persecution they encountered. When prophet Essa (PBUH) was sent his followers saw in him the Messiah. The Jews rejected that, accused him of lying, and conspired to kill him.
5. The Last Day: The Jews were divided on the issue of the Last Day into two groups: a group that acknowledged the afterlife, and a group that did not recognize it.

Summary:

1. Judaism is considered to be the oldest of the three divine religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2. In the Arabic language the word “Judaism” is referred to as “Al-Yahudiyyah”. Some say it was derived from the Arabic root “hawada” which means repentance. Others say that it is attributed to “Yahuda” (Judah) who was the fourth son of prophet Yaqub (Jacob) (PBUH).
3. Judaism is originally a monotheistic religion that was revealed to the prophets of the children of Israel.





4. According to some contemporary historians, Judaism went through three stages before the emergence of prophet Essa (PBUH).
5. Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) had nothing to do with the Jewish history, because Judaism began after him during the era of prophets Ishaq and Yaqub (peace be upon them).
6. The mission of Musa was based on two main issues:
 1. The call to worship Allah (SWT) alone and prove the falsehood of Pharaoh's claim of divinity.
 2. Free the children of Israel from slavery.
7. The original creed of the children of Israel was believing in the oneness of God. However, the Jews did not settle on monotheism, rather they were turning to paganism and imitating the neighboring pagan nations in their worship.
8. The Jews are not unanimous in determining the name of the God they worship. Among the names of God they have: Eloah, Elohim, Adonai, and YHWH (Yahweh).
9. The Jews sacred books are the Old Testament and the Talmud.
10. The Jews believe in the idea of the Messiah; the Savior.
11. The Jews were divided on the issue of the Last Day into two groups: a group that acknowledged the afterlife, and a group that did not recognize it.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of Judaism?
2. Are the Jews today the actual descendants of the children of Israel?
3. What are the three stages that Judaism went through before the emergence of prophet Essa (PBUH)?
4. What was the mission of prophet Musa (PBUH)?





5. Were the Jews monotheistic during all their stages? Explain your answer.
6. What are the names of God mentioned in the Torah?
7. What are the sacred books in Judaism?
8. Who is the Messiah according to the Jews?



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Chapter Five: Christianity⁶⁰

Christianity is the religion that prophet Essa (Jesus of Nazareth) (PBUH), son of Mariam (Mary) brought to the Children of Israel two thousand years ago, and then turned by Paul⁶¹ into a world religion. Christianity is considered the largest religion in the world in terms of the number of its followers.

The Quran uses the term “Nasara” (plural of Nasrani) when referring to Christians. The word “Nasara” is either derived from the Arabic verb “nasara” which means to support⁶², or is derived from Al- Nasira (the city of Nazareth, located in Palestine, where Essa lived).

However, the name Al- Masihiyyah (in Arabic) was also used to refer to the followers of Al- Masih (the Messiah) Essa (PBUH). But this term was not used in the Quran.

Christians today belong to three churches:

1. The Roman Catholic Church, centered in Rome and the Vatican.
2. The Eastern Orthodox Church, whose headquarters are Constantinople and Alexandria, and it represents the Copts, the Abyssinians, the Armenians, the Church of Antioch, Turkey, Russia and Serbia.
3. The Protestant Church. It does not have a specific center.

⁶⁰ Translated from: Religions Comparison, pg. 294- 328.

⁶¹ A Christian saint of Jewish origin . He did not see or meet Prophet Essa (PBUH), rather, he was one of the Jewish rabbis who hated the followers of Essa. He embraced Christianity with the aim of corrupting it after claiming his vision of Essa ordering him to become Christian. Many of the distorted Christian beliefs were attributed to him.

⁶² Based on Ayah 14 in Surah As- Saf: (O you who have believed, be supporters of Allah, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allah?" The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allah.")



These churches agree on the idea of the Trinity, and the original sin that led to crucifixion and redemption, with their differences in determining the nature of Essa (Jesus the Christ) (PBUH).

Prophet Essa (PBUH) was born a Jew, and grew up in a Jewish environment that was not isolated from its external surroundings, but was rather influenced by it. The Jews deviated from the teachings of prophet Musa (PBUH) and the Torah, therefore Allah (SWT) sent a new message to address the deviation of the Jews and lead them back to Him. Prophet Essa (PBUH) was born in the city of Bethlehem in Palestine, which was then part of the Roman Empire.

Christianity began in a region called Galilee, located in the northern part of Palestine. The people of this province were concerned with religious matters, as they were waiting for the Savior who would restore the kingdom of the Jews. The clergy in the Jewish community were divided into two classes: the servers of the temple who took care of organizing the worship, and the religious scholars who analyzed the sacred books.

The Jews suffered from the oppression of the Romans during the four centuries preceding the birth of prophet Essa (PBUH), so they were contemplating the coming of the Messiah, by whom the nation of Israel would restore the glory of the days of Prophet Dawood (PBUH). Despite the hope in the Messiah the Savior, when prophet Essa (PBUH) announced his call, he did not find a good response from the Jews. Rather, the majority resisted his call and plotted with the Romans against him.

Christianity remained a simple and clear religion limited to the Jewish community during the life of prophet Essa (PBUH). He called the Jews to worship God alone, stop the state of materialism that spread amongst them, and practice humility and asceticism. He also stood against the deviations





that were practiced by the Jewish rabbis who legislated what Allah (SWT) did not authorize.

Prophet Essa (PBUH) directed his call to the people whom he was sent to, which indicates that he was specifically sent to the Jews, but this did not remain the case with Christianity. The course of Christianity was changed and it transformed from a religion sent to the Jews to a global one. This change was made by a man named Paul. He introduced many rituals to suit the Roman and Greek environment. These rituals include the concept of purification and the concept of sacrifice. The concept of purification is done through baptism; which has become a ritual and a sign of embracing Christianity. Also, The Lord's sacrifice of Himself for the sake of human sins to be removed is expressed through the ritual of sharing a meal together (sharing bread and wine during communion).

Paul's additions to Christianity can be summarized in the following points:

1. He carried Christianity and spread it outside the Jewish community, and that led him to change some of the Jewish practices that were disapproved by the pagans, such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and the prohibition of consuming pork. He abolished circumcision, moved the weekly feast to Sunday to coincide with the day of the sun celebrated by the pagans, and permitted eating pork.
2. He changed Christianity from the Jewish simplicity to the complexities of Greek thought.
3. The doctrine of the original sin; which means that every human being is born sinful or guilty because he is considered a descendant of Adam (PBUH) who committed the first sin by eating from the forbidden tree. Therefore, God sacrificed and



sent his only son to the world to atone for the sin of the people by dying on the cross (Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above what they claim).

In order to convince the pagans who lived within the Roman Empire to convert to Christianity, Paul was able to introduce beliefs that had nothing to do with it. As a result of that, Christianity changed from a religion that calls for the Oneness of Allah (SWT) to a religion that calls for Trinity, the original sin, and redemption.

Main beliefs:

It is known that Christians today, regardless of their churches, believe in three principles: the Trinity, the crucifixion and redemption, and the judgment owned by Essa (PBUH). Below is a brief description of each:

1. The Trinity: The Trinity is the belief in three different Gods; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It started with the idea of the divinity of prophet Essa (PBUH) which was initiated by Paul. Christians believe that there is a part of divinity in him because he is the son of God, so there are the two Gods; the Father and the Son, each with his own attributes, and this is what the Nicaean Council (held in 325 CE) came up with. Then the First Council of Constantinople (held in 381 CE) added the Holy Spirit.

The three Christian churches believe in the Trinity despite their differences in determining the nature of “Christ the Son”; is he the same as the “Father” with only a divine nature as the Orthodox Church believes, and that he is one in three? Or does he have two natures (divine and human) as the Catholic Church believes, and that he is three in one?



The Quran responded to both parties. In response to the ones who claim that prophet Essa (PBUH) has one nature, and that he is one in three, the Quran says: (Those who say, “Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary,” have certainly fallen into disbelief)⁶³.

In response to the ones who claim that prophet Essa (PBUH) has two natures, and that he is three in one, the Quran says: (Those who say, “Allah is one in a Trinity,” have certainly fallen into disbelief. There is only One God)⁶⁴.

It should be noted that the Christians themselves do not understand the doctrine of the Trinity and cannot digest it, because it is a philosophical doctrine that cannot be accepted by reasoning. The Trinity was a pagan doctrine prior to Christianity.

Some researchers believe that the Jews had a hand in transforming the Christian belief from monotheism to the Trinity with the aim of corrupting the call of Prophet Essa (PBUH) who exposed their corruption and their deviation from the teachings of the Torah. Hence, Paul's heresy came to transform Christianity from a religion sent for the Children of Israel to a global one, as well as distorting it to include pagan beliefs such as the doctrine of the Trinity.

Despite all the distortions that occurred to the Old and New Testaments, the reality of monotheism is still present in many texts in both Testaments.

⁶³ TMQ, Surat Al- Maidah, Chapter 5:72. The Clear Quran.

⁶⁴ TMQ, Surat Al- Maidah, Chapter 5:73. The Clear Quran.





2. Crucifixion and redemption: This doctrine is related to the idea of inherited sin (or the original sin) in Greek philosophy and some other pagan Indian philosophies. Christians believe that when Adam (PBUH) disobeyed his Lord and ate from the forbidden tree, he committed a sin that was not forgiven, and it continued to pass through his children, generation after generation.

The Quran has made it clear that this belief is false, and that it contradicts the simplest rules of divine justice. Adam (PBUH) repented, and Allah (SWT) accepted his repentance and forgave him: (Then Adam was inspired with words 'of prayer' by his Lord, so He accepted his repentance)⁶⁵.

In summary, the idea of redemption is that God, due to His love and mercy for His servants, wanted to save them from the original sin through sacrificing His son, so He sent Him to redeem them through being crucified (Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above what they claim).

3. Judgment owned by Essa (PBUH): Christians believe that the father gave the authority of judging people to the son (Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above what they claim). They believe that after Essa (PBUH) died and ascended to heaven, he sat next to the father on his chair, ready to receive the people on the Day of Resurrection to condemn them for what they had done.

This doctrine was built on an originally false belief, which is the belief in the divinity of Essa (PBUH). Reward and punishment on the last day should only be ascribed to Allah (SWT), but the

⁶⁵ TMQ, Surah Al- Baqarah, Chapter 2: 37. The Clear Quran.





Christians have gone astray in determining the nature of Essa (PBUH) and ascribed to him false attributes and actions.

4. The sources of belief in Christianity are the Old Testament, the New Testament, and church councils. Their sacred book (the Bible) includes the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament contains the Torah, the Books of the Prophets that include the history of the Children of Israel, and the Writings. The churches differ on the number of books included in the Old Testament, and on the issue of the authenticity and recognition of some of the books.

As for the New Testament, it includes the four Gospels (written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), Paul's letters, and letters attributed to some of prophet Essa's disciples. It can be described as a recording written after the life of prophet Essa (PBUH) by some of his disciples and their students who came after them. No one can claim that these gospels or any one of them is the gospel that Allah (SWT) revealed to prophet Essa (PBUH).

Historians differed about when these gospels were written. The original copies (which were written either in Aramaic or Greek) do not exist, in addition to that we do not know who translated them into Latin. The Gospel of John was adopted later and is the only one that explicitly mentions the divinity of prophet Essa (PBUH). Many historians and researchers question this gospel.

There are gospels that were not approved by the Christians because they contradict the Council of Nicaea (which will be mentioned later) including the Gospel of (Barnabas), who was





one of the disciples of Essa (PBUH). The reason for not adopting it was his denial of the crucifixion and the divinity of Essa (PBUH). Also, his mention of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

A large number of Christian beliefs were adopted by the church councils. A church council is a gathering held by the Church for the clergy to look into and discuss issues related to belief or legislation. The differences that arose during these councils are what led to the division of the church into eastern and western. It must be pointed out that the institution of the Church did not originally exist at the time of prophet Essa (PBUH) or his disciples.

An example of these councils is the Council of Nicaea, which was held in the year 325 CE to discuss the nature of Essa (PBUH). It was held under the auspices of Emperor Constantine, who had recently converted to Christianity, and was keen at the time for uniting the Roman Empire under one religion. He chose to adopt the opinion of those who claim the divinity of Essa (PBUH) to go in line with the paganism of the majority of his people.

Likewise, the First Council of Constantinople, held in the year 381 CE, is also an important council. Because it was complementary to the Council of Nicaea, which recognized the divinity of Essa (PBUH) and that he was the Son of God, but it did not discuss the Holy Spirit. The Council of Constantinople recognized the divinity of the Holy Spirit to complete the Christian Trinity.



**Summary:**

1. Christianity is the religion that prophet Essa (Jesus of Nazareth) (PBUH), son of Mariam (Mary) brought to the Children of Israel two thousand years ago, and then turned by Paul into a world religion.
2. Christians today belong to three churches: the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Protestant Church.
3. These churches agree on the idea of the Trinity, and the original sin that led to crucifixion and redemption, with their differences in determining the nature of Essa (Jesus the Christ) (PBUH).
4. Christianity remained a simple and clear religion limited to the Jewish community during the life of prophet Essa (PBUH).
5. The course of Christianity was changed and it transformed from a religion sent to the Jews to a global one. This change was made by a man named Paul.
6. The Trinity is the belief in three different Gods; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
7. Christians believe that God, due to His love and mercy for His servants, wanted to save them from the original sin through sacrificing His son, so He sent Him to redeem them through being crucified (Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above what they claim).
8. Christians claim that God (the father) gave the authority of judging people to his son.
9. The sources of beliefs in Christianity are the Old Testament, the New Testament, and church councils.
10. The Bible includes the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the Torah, the Books of the Prophets that include the history of the Children of Israel, and the Writings.





11. The New Testament includes the four Gospels (written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), Paul's letters, and letters attributed to some of prophet Essa's disciples.
12. A large number of Christian beliefs were adopted by the church councils. A church council is a gathering held by the Church for the clergy to look into and discuss issues related to belief or legislation.

Questions:

1. What is the term used by the Quran for Christianity? What does it mean?
2. Is Christianity a global religion? Explain your answer.
3. What was Paul's role in Christianity?
4. What is the meaning of Trinity?
5. What's the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches in terms of believing in the Trinity?
6. What is the belief of Crucifixion and redemption based on?
7. What are the sources of the Christian beliefs?

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Chapter Six: Sikhism⁶⁶

The word Sikhism comes from the root Sikh; a Sanskrit word that means a student or a follower. Sikhism is considered one of the most recent religions. It originated in northern India in the Punjab region. It was influenced by Hinduism and Islam.

The founder of this religion is a man named Nanak, born in the year 1469 CE. He grew up as a Hindu in the midst of an Islamic environment. From the beginning, Nanak suggested that he did not see any difference between Allah (SWT) whom the Muslims believe in, and Vishnu who is considered the preserver God for Hindus. Nanak refused the worship of idols and statues in Hinduism, as well as the caste system. He wanted to learn about Islam, but the Muslims where he lived used to worship saints and consider their graves sacred, similar to what the Hindus do with their idols, so he did not find much difference between the two sects, and was not successful in meeting someone who would teach him the true Islam. Then he met a man named “Sayyed Hasan Darwish” who was a Sufi and believed in pantheism. He learned from him that all religions are true; because all idols are considered manifestations of the truth, and whoever worships them is worshipping Allah (Glorified and Highly Exalted is He above what they claim). Nanak was impressed by this and began calling for his new religion and adopted the slogan: “There is neither Hindu nor Muslim”.

⁶⁶ Translated from: Encyclopedia of Religions, pg. 308- 309. And: Foundations of Sects, Religions and Schools of Thought, Sheikh Sifr Al- Hawali, pg. 111- 113. And: Letters in Religions, sects and Math’hab, Muhammad Al- Hamad, pg. 59- 68.





The Sikhs remained a Sufi group until one of the grandchildren of Nanak came and turned them into an organized war group, and changed the name from Sikh to “Singh” (which means lion), but their old name remained the most famous one, and since then they have lived in constant wars with Hindus and Muslims.

Nanak was called the Guru, meaning the teacher, and he began spreading his religion in 1500 CE. He called for three main principles:

1. Taking the path of austerity and hardship.
2. Practicing charity and righteousness to others.
3. Meditating, which provides people with spiritual nourishment.

Guru Nanak was succeeded by nine gurus. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh created the “Khalsa” in 1699 CE; a special Sikh community that adheres to the five ks. After the tenth guru, the Sikhs ended the line of human gurus, and sought guidance from their holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib.

The main home for the Sikhs is the Indian section of Punjab. They only spread outside it under British colonialism, which recruited many of them into its army.

Main beliefs:

The Sikhs have beliefs and worships some of which are similar to Hinduism, and some of which are similar to Islam, but they wanted to be distinguished from others, even in the way they dress. Among their most important beliefs:

1. The belief in one God, the Creator of the universe, and the denial of idolatry.
2. The belief that the guru mediates between God and his creation.
3. The belief in the holy book and they call it “Guru Granth Sahib.” It contains chants or hymns that were collected by the fifth guru and was



first called the “Adi Granth”. Then the hymns of the rest of the gurus were added to it and it became the “Guru Grant Sahib.” It also contains texts written by Hindus, and other texts attributed to Muslim writers.

4. The belief in reincarnation like the Hindus.
5. Performing pilgrimage to the golden temple in "Amritsar".
6. Sikhs have what is known as the Five Ks:
 1. Kesh: Which means uncut hair. The Sikh who belong to the Khalsa must leave the hair of the head and beard untouched. It is a way of standing out.
 2. Kangha: The comb used to comb their hair and beard.
 3. Kasha: The short pants, similar to military shorts, and this is linked to the resistance movement that they led against their opponents.
 4. Kara: The steel bracelet worn on the right wrist.
 5. Kirpan: The small sword which is related to the military movement created by the tenth guru.

Summary:

1. Sikhism is considered one of the most recent religions. It originated in northern India in the Punjab region. It was founded by Nanak.
2. Sikhs believe in One God and refuse worshipping idols.
3. Sikhism has beliefs similar to Hinduism.

Questions:

1. What does the word Sikh mean?
2. What are the five Ks?
3. What are the main beliefs of Sikhism?



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THIS BOOK

This book discusses some of the Islamic Creed topics mentioned in the book titled “Al-Aqeedah At-Tahawiyya” by Imam Abu Ja’afa At-Tahawi. It mentions the actual text of “Al-Aqeedah At-Tahawiyya” along with a summarised explanation. The main source used to write this book was: “Al-Aqida Al-Tahawiyya - Arabic Text with English Translation and Commentary” by Fahim Hoosen. This book is beneficial for the students who have basic knowledge of Aqeedah (Islamic Creed), and it serves as a foundation for upcoming more in-depth studies of Aqeedah.

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