

REVIEW: REL 276: SUNNI AND SHIITE ISLAM

IDENTIFICATIONS:

(3, 30 points, approx. 12-15 mins)

Provide the literal (where applicable) and contextual meaning of the following terms and their significance for Sunni or/and Shiite Islam or/and their academic study. NOTE: In case of entries that involve more than one term, describe them relationally.

1. Saqifah
2. Rightly guided Caliphs
3. *Zahir-batin*
4. Guidance-Special Guidance
5. *Shura - Nass*
6. Caliphate-Imamate
7. Nusayris/ 'Alawis
8. Zaydis
9. Ismailis
10. *Walayah*
11. "Vision with the Heart"
12. "Voyage of the Light"

SHORT ANSWERS:

(1, 25 points, approximately 10 minutes)

1. At the death of the Prophet, at least three groups emerged as contenders to the office of caliphate, the Muhajirun, the Ansar and 'Ali (and his followers). Discuss the arguments put forth by each contender in support of his claim to succession, and analyze these claims by way of comparison and contrast. (You may simply draw a chart comparing/contrasting the three).
2. Discuss the "Three Methods of Religious Thought" in Islam according to Tabatabai (89ff). How do these three methods relate to one another? What is their significance for Tabatabai, and for our study this semester?
3. List and very briefly describe Imam's special knowledge and powers according to Amir-Moezzi's reading of Imami hadith literature. (You may simply use bullet points to answer this question)
4. Write a short essay on the occultation, return and significance of the twelfth Imam of the Shi'ites. What are the consequences of his occultation and signs of his return?

5. "The succession to Muhammad is clearly the key question in Shi'i Islam and the principal factor separating Shi'is from the Sunni majority. The question is not only who was the successor of Muhammad but also the nature of the role of the successor, for it is on both these points that Shi'is and Sunnis disagree" (Momen, 11). By engaging Sunni and Shi'ite views of history and theology explain the author's statements.

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

(1, 35 points, approx. 25 minutes)

1. Concluding his study about religion and politics in early Islamic history Ayoub argues that "Shi'ism and Sufism may be regarded as the two most important protest movements against the despotic authority, wealth, and worldliness of the rapidly expanding and powerful Muslim empire which followed the death of the Prophet Muhammad" (149). Through a careful reading of Ayoub's narrative of early Islamic history discuss how he arrives at this conclusion.
2. "Imamate as conceived in Shi'i theology is not an institution confined to Islam. From the time of the first prophet Adam, there has been a continuous succession of Imams" (Momen, 147). Drawing from all relevant readings, write a comprehensive essay explaining the twelver Shi'i doctrine of Imamate. Also, how does the Imamate compare to the doctrine of Prophecy on the one hand, and the institution/doctrine of Sunni Caliphate on the other?
3. Write an essay on diversity within Shi'i Islam. Identify major divisions, essential doctrines of each and how these compare to one another. Do you think appreciation of this diversity is important for our study this semester? Why, why not? **OR** Compare and contrast the three major divisions within Shi'ite Islam: Twelvers, Ismailis and the Zaydis.
4. Concluding his study of early Imamism (i.e., twelver Shi'ism), Amir-Moezzi makes certain statements that capture the key claims of his scholarly study. For example, "The Imam-Proof existed before the creatures, he exists with them, and he will exist after them" (125) or that "without an Imam there is no religion" (125), and especially the claim that "every facet of early Imamism studied throughout the course of this work confirms that early Imamism is an esoteric doctrine" (125-126). Through a careful reading of *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism* explain this "esoteric doctrine". What are the controversial aspects of Amir-Moezzi's study?
5. How does Amir-Moezzi's presentation of Early Shi'ism compare to Tabatabai and Haider's presentations of Shi'i Islam?