

some basic facts of ISLAM

SACRED TEXTS:

- ** the Qur'an (also spelled "Koran") is the most sacred text, as it is considered to be the literal word of God as revealed to Muhammad. It is the highest authority in both religious and legal matters, and is believed by Muslims to be a flawless record of the angel Gabriel's revelations to Muhammad from 610 until his death in 632 AD.
- ** the Hadith is a secondary text that records sayings of Muhammad and his followers. The word "Hadith" means "narrative" or "report" in Arabic. The book is a record of the words and deeds of Muhammad, his family, and his companions. Although not regarded as the spoken Word of God like the Qur'an, Hadith is an important source of doctrine, law, and practice.

Both texts are also important historical documents (especially the Qur'an), which tell the story of the origins of the Islamic faith. Together these two texts form the basis for all Islamic theology, practice and sharia (Islamic law).

- ** Sharia (means "way" or "path") is the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islam. Sharia deals with all aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business law, contract law, sexuality, and social issues. This is not a strictly codified, uniform set of laws, but more like a system of several laws, based on the Qur'an, Hadith, and centuries of debate, interpretation and precedent.

Sharia law is divided into two main sections:

- I. The acts of worship, called the 5 pillars of Islam:
 - Affirmation (Shahadah): there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is his messenger
 - Prayers (Salat): five times a day
 - Fasts (Sawm during Ramadan)
 - Charities (Zakat)
 - Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)
- II. Human interaction, which includes: financial transactions; endowments; laws of inheritance; marriage/divorce/child custody; foods and drinks; penal punishments; warfare and peace; judicial matters (including witnesses and forms of evidence)

ONE ISLAM, THREE SETS OF MUSLIMS:

****Medina Muslims** - the most problematic group. . . the fundamentalists who believe and live by the strict letter of their creed. They envision a regime based on sharia and argue for an Islam largely or completely unchanged from its original seventh-century version. They see the forcible imposition of sharia as their religious duty. They aim not just to obey Muhammad's teaching, but also to emulate his warlike conduct after his move to Medina. Even if they themselves do not engage in violence, they do not hesitate to condone it. Their numbers are estimated to be only 3 percent of well over 1.6 billion Muslims across the globe, but these 48 million grow in numbers daily by preaching jihad and glorifying death through martyrdom for their faith.

****Mecca Muslims** - the clear majority throughout the Muslim world, who are loyal to the core creed and worship devoutly, but are not inclined to practice violence. They attend religious services every day and abide by religious rules in what they eat and wear. These believers live in an uneasy tension with modernity and largely view the developing world (particularly the West and its vast influences) as corrosive to Muslim values and beliefs. Their response is often to withdraw into self-enclosed enclaves (called cocooning), a practice whereby Muslims attempt to wall off outside influences, permitting only an Islamic education for their children and disengaging from the wider non-Muslim community.

****Modifying Muslims** - a very small number of people born into Islam who have sought to think critically about their faith and remain deeply engaged in the debate about Islam's future. These are reformed believers who deal with ostracism, rejection, death threats or face death itself. Within this group are clerics who have come to realize that their religion must change if its followers are not to be condemned to an interminable cycle of political violence, and who attempt to modify, adapt, and reinterpret Islamic practice in order to make religious discourse more human. So far their efforts have been diffuse and individual.

resource for this page

Hirsi Ali, Ayaan: Heretic; HarperCollins Publishers; 2015; from Introduction pp. 1-28

List of words I may use during the presentation:

- **Sunnis** : 85 to 90% of Muslims in world, they agreed that the most capable be the successor of the Prophet
- **Shiites**: 10 to 15% believe that succession should be based on bloodlines; otherwise they have the same 5 pillars.
- **Alawits**: Offshoot of the Shiites (or Shiia)- The ASSASD family is Alawit
- **Sharia**: fundamental body of Islamic canonical law
- **Bath Party**: Secular Pan Arab political party promoting laicization of state institutions and laws
- **Moukhabarate**: Secret police
- **Jihad**: struggle, Holy war against infedels
- **Jiziah**: tax imposed on Christians who live among Muslims
- **Hezbollah**: Party of God, Lebanese Shiit Party with a militia helping the Syrian Regime
- **Antioch**: Named the "Cradle of Christianity" Very important antic city in Syria/ now "Antakya" in Turkey
- **Filioque**: Dogma of double procession, occasion of the Great Schism
- **Salafit**: Predecessor, ancestor. Literalist, strict puritan Islam
- **Wahhabism**: more strict of Salafism (in Saudi Arabia)
- **Da'esh**: Jihadist group applying the Salafism

Official figures published by the Custody of
the Holy Land

Regarding the war in **Syria**

- 4 years of war
- 6,500,000 displaced people
- More than 2,500,000 of them out of the country: in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey and few in Egypt
- 1,600,000 children without schooling
- 220.000 persons killed

The war is still on, and no one sees the end of the tunnel.

Figures about the population of Syria and Iraq:

Syria

- The total population is 23 millions
- The Sunnis represent 70% of the population (16 million) (Arab, Kurds & Turkmen)
- The Allawit 12% (2,760,000)
- The Christians 10% (2,300,000)
- The Druze 5% (1,150,000)
- Shia, Ismaili, Yazidi (some few individuals Jew) (750.000)

Iraq

- The total population is 31.7 millions
- The Shiite represent 60 to 65% (almost 20 millions)
- The Sunnis 32% (10 millions)
- The Christians 3% (1 million)
- The Yazidi 2% (630.000)
- Mandaеians 0.1% (320.000)
- Shabak 0.1% (35.000)
- Baha'ї 3% (950.000)
- Ahl-e-Haqq 0.8% (25.000)