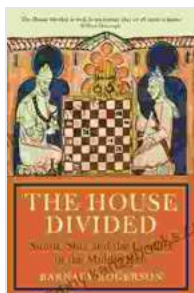


# Sunni Shia And The Conflict In The Middle East: A Comprehensive Guide

The conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims has been a major source of tension in the Middle East for centuries, shaping the region's political, social, and economic landscape. This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Sunni-Shia divide, exploring its historical, theological, and political roots, and examining its impact on the ongoing conflict in the region.



## The House Divided: Sunni, Shia and the Conflict in the Middle East by Barnaby Rogerson

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 8105 KB

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Screen Reader : Supported



## Historical Origins

The roots of the Sunni-Shia division lie in the succession crisis that followed the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE. The majority of Muslims, led by Abu Bakr (Sunnis), believed that the succession should pass to a close companion of Muhammad, while a minority (Shias) believed that it should pass to his cousin and son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib. This power struggle led to a series of battles and Ali's eventual assassination in 661 CE.

The assassination of Ali marked a significant turning point in the history of Islam, as it solidified the Sunni-Shia divide. The Sunnis remained the dominant sect, controlling most of the Islamic empire, while the Shias became a marginalized minority, facing persecution and discrimination.

## **Theological Differences**

In addition to historical factors, the Sunni-Shia divide is also rooted in theological differences. Sunnis believe that the caliph, or leader of the Muslim community, should be chosen by consensus among the elders of the community, while Shias believe that the caliph should be a direct descendant of Muhammad through Ali.

Shias also place great emphasis on the role of the imams, who they believe are the spiritual leaders and guides of the community. The imams are believed to be infallible and have the authority to interpret Islamic law.

## **Political Impact**

The Sunni-Shia divide has had a profound impact on the political landscape of the Middle East. Sunnis have historically held the majority of power in the region, while Shias have been marginalized and discriminated against. This has led to a sense of resentment and anger among Shias, who have often been seen as second-class citizens.

The political divide between Sunnis and Shias has also been exploited by outside powers, who have used it to their advantage. For example, Western powers have often supported Sunni regimes in the Middle East, seeing them as a bulwark against the spread of Shiism. This has further widened the Sunni-Shia divide and contributed to the ongoing conflict in the region.

## The Conflict

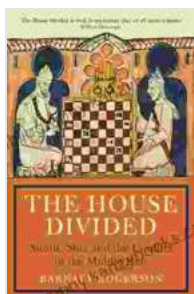
The Sunni-Shia divide has been a major factor in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The conflict has been fueled by a number of factors, including political grievances, economic inequality, and sectarian violence.

The rise of sectarianism in the Middle East has been particularly pronounced in recent years. This has been due in part to the rise of extremist groups, such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, who have used sectarian rhetoric to justify their violence.

In addition, the ongoing conflict in Syria has become increasingly sectarian, with the Assad regime (which is largely Shia) fighting against a rebel coalition that is predominantly Sunni. This has led to widespread sectarian violence and the displacement of millions of people.

The Sunni-Shia divide is a complex and multifaceted issue with a long and bloody history. This article has provided a brief overview of the historical, theological, and political factors that have shaped the divide, and examined its impact on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Understanding the Sunni-Shia divide is essential for understanding the region's complex political landscape and for finding ways to resolve the ongoing conflict.



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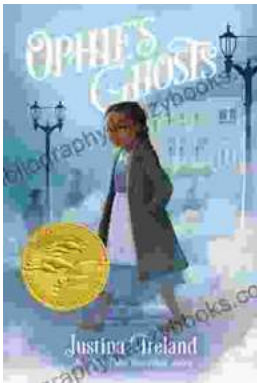
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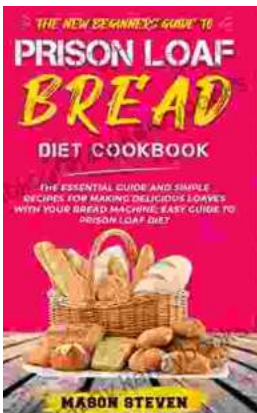
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