

## Just One Question:

### The Difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims

Feb 4, 2007



Articles & Testimony

**Q:**

What's the simplest way to remember the difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims?

**A:** Sunni is a longer word than Shia -- there are more Sunnis than Shias. Most ShIAs live in IrAn. IrAq also has a ShIA majority (as does BahrAIn). Mostly SUNni SaUdI Arabia considers itself the leader of the Muslim world.

The Sunni/Shia split ocured after the death of the Prophet Muhammed in 632. His son-in-law Ali wanted to be the new leader of Islam but was defeated. His supporters were "Shia Ali", the followers of Ali.

-- Simon Henderson, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. ❖

National Journal

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Simon Henderson

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