SEQUENCE

- Introductions
- What do we know about Islam?
- Diversity Amongst Muslims
- Break
- Communities of Interpretation

INTRODUCTIONS

- Teaching Islam - Khan Academy Case Study
- Religious Literacy
PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS LITERACY

- Knowing the basic tenets of a religious tradition
- Accepting that no religion is a monolith
- Acknowledging diversity of expression in that tradition
- Understanding the way text functions, and the interpretations of the text
- Relating the ways in which the understanding of text to the ways in which religion is lived
- Recognizing that culture and religion interact and define one another

WHEN WE REJECT THE SINGLE STORY, WHEN WE REALIZE THAT THERE IS never A SINGLE STORY ABOUT ANY PLACE, WE REGAIN A KIND OF PARADISE.

-CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

REFLECTIONS

DIVERSITY AMONGST MUSLIMS
Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.

The idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization (the present civilization, which is the only one that matters; all previous civilizations are simply “contributions” to our own) and are therefore civilization’s guardians and defenders.

JAMES BALDWIN
From “Stranger in the Village,” in Notes of a Natve Son

My thesis in this book has been that the canonical, orthodox coverage of Islam that we find in the academy, in the government, and in the media is all interrelated and has been more diffused, has seemed more persuasive and influential, in the West than any other “coverage” or interpretation. The success of this coverage can be attributed to the political influence of those people and institutions producing it rather than necessarily to truth or accuracy. I have also argued that this coverage has served purposes only tangentially related to actual knowledge of Islam itself. The result has been the triumph not just of a particular knowledge of Islam but rather of a particular interpretation which, however, has neither been unchallenged nor impervious to the kinds of questions asked by unorthodox, inquiring minds.

Edward Said, Covering Islam, p. 161

But the focus of many modern Protestant denominations on the Bible has led to the expectation that one can understand everything of importance of the other religious traditions if one knows what is said in the their scriptures. This concept of scripturalism is tempting, but it is a fallacy. It assumes that all scriptural verses are equally worthy, that there is no debate about their meaning, and that there as been no change over the centuries in the understanding of particular verses. It also assumes that every member of a particular religious group is equally certain to follow every prescription found in the holy book (or books). Can one predict the behavior of a Christian simply by taking a verse out of the Bible and assuming that it has a controlling influence over that person?

Edward Said, Covering Islam, p. 161
You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.
18:22
You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the Lord.
19:28
COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION

MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

POST-PROPHETIC AUTHORITY
PROPHET MUHAMMAD

- Political Authority
- Religious/Spiritual Authority

THREE COMMUNITIES

- Shi‘ah
  - Political and religious authority
  - Only inheritable
  - Through the line of Ali and Fatima
- Sunni
  - Only political authority

SUFIS

- Religious authority
  - not necessarily interested in political
  - believe that Ali is the first Sufi
  - close parallels with the Shi‘ah about Ali’s special status

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?
WOMAN WITHOUT HER MAN IS NOTHING.

WOMAN, WITHOUT HER, MAN IS NOTHING.

WOMAN, WITHOUT HER MAN, IS NOTHING.

SHI'ISM
SHI’ISM AS MOVEMENT

- Theological Movement
- Political Movement
- Legal Movement

TYPES OF SHI’AH

REFLECTIONS
FIGURES

- Husayn - Muhammad's Grandson
- Zaynab - Muhammad's Granddaughter, Husayn's Sister
- Ali Asghar - Husayn's infant son
- Zayn al-Abidin - Husayn's son, survivor of Karbala
- Yazid - The Villain

OUTLINE OF THE STORY

- Succession issues
- Caliph and Imam
- Ali's position
- Siffin
- Mu'awiyah and Husayn
- Yazid

THE DAYS OF MUHARRAM

- 1st Muharram
- 10th Muharram - Ashura
MOSES AND PHARAOH

ZAYNAB IBN ALI

O Yazid! Do you think that we have become humble and
despicable owing to the martyrdom of our people and our own
captivity? Do you think that by killing the godly persons you have
become great and respectable and the Almighty looks at you with
special grace and kindness? You have, however, forgotten what
Allah says: The disbelievers must not think that our respite is for
their good We only give them time to let them increase their
sins. For them there will be a humiliating torment. (Quran 3:178)

LIFE AFTER KARBALA

O Believers! When the world remembers the Martyr of Karbala, It
writhes and sheds tears of blood.
O Husain! O Husain! O Husain! O Husain!
O Husain! O Husain! O Husain! O Husain!

Husain is the king, Husain is the emperor,
Husain is religion and Husain is the refuge for religion
He sacrificed his head but did not give his hand [in allegiance to]
Yazid
Truly, the basis of “la ilaha” is Husain
Although in prostration he let his head be cut off Still he sounded the
drum of God’s name
O Husain! O Husain! O Husain! O Husain!
O Husain! O Husain! O Husain! O Husain!

Tr: Syed Akbar Hyder
LIFE OUTSIDE KARBALA

REFLECTIONS