

Angels

Similarities: both Sunni and Shi'a view angels in the same way; they perform duties for God and have no free will. Angels were created before humans. As they have no free will they cannot disobey God or make mistakes. Angels cannot do wrong.

Differences: both Sunni and Shi'a believe in the same angels, but Shi'a believe Jibril brought additional messages to the al-Bayt, the family of Muhammad. In Shi'a belief Jibril visited Ali to encourage him to marry Fatima (Muhammad's daughter), and comforted Fatima after Muhammad died. Fatima in Shi'a tradition is viewed with similar respect and reverence as Mary in the Christian religion.

Prophets

Similarities: this is a key belief for both Sunni and Shi'a, despite difference in wording; *risalah* (Sunni) and *nubuwah* (Shi'a). *Risalah* is Arabic for 'message' ('messengers' are '*rasul*'), while *nubuwah* comes from '*Nabi*', Arabic for 'prophet'. Both words can be used by Sunni and Shi'a. It is believed that prophets have been sent to every community, some are known and many are not. All prophets receive the same message from God; the message of Islam.

Differences: In Shi'a belief prophets are able to commit sins but they choose not to. However in Sunni belief prophets cannot commit major sins because God prevents them, but some could have moments of forgetfulness. For example Shi'a view Adam's actions in the Garden of Eden as the exercise of his free will, given by God. Whereas Sunni believe that Iblis, the tempter, made Adam forget God's command not to touch the fruit.

Kutub

Similarities: for both Sunni and Shi'a the list of revealed books is the same: the scrolls, Injil, Tawrat, Zabur and Qur'an. All books contain the word of God, given to them in their hearts and written in the prophet's languages. The Scrolls, Injil, Tawrat and Zabur are seen as altered from God's direct word by all humans after their revelation. The Qur'an is seen as the only true and unaltered words of God.

Differences: in Sunni Islam the words of the Qur'an are believed to be eternal- they have always existed. For Shi'a the words of the Qur'an were created over time. In Sunni belief the first leader of the Muslim community after Muhammad's death- Abu Bakr- asked Muhammad's scribe to organize the collected recordings of Muhammad's revelations into one, to become the Qur'an. In Shi'a belief Muhammad gave the first complete Qur'an to Ali. Although there are slight differences in Sunni and Shi'a Qur'an, they will read each others'. They might use different interpretations.

Akhirah/ Yawm al-Qiyamah/ Mad'ad/ Adalt

Similarities: both Sunni and Shi'a believe in judgment and the afterlife. When someone dies they lie in a state of waiting, called *bazarkh*. At the End Times, when human time starts to break down and God's time begins, all human souls will be judged. The Day of Judgment is called *Yawm al-Qiyamah* in both traditions. Souls will be judged, and will be sent to paradise, *Jannah*, or hell, *Jahannam*.

Differences: differences occur in beliefs about predestination (*al-Qadr*). Sunni believe that because God is all-powerful nothing can happen without God knowing or allowing it. God exists out of time and knows the past, present and future at once. Therefore God knows if humans will sin or not, before they do. However human actions are freely taken because humans do not know what will happen. Shi'a agree that nothing that can happen that God does not will, but God wills humans to make free choices, so they can choose to obey or disobey God. Their destiny is not fixed when they are born. God will this because God is just (*adalt*).

