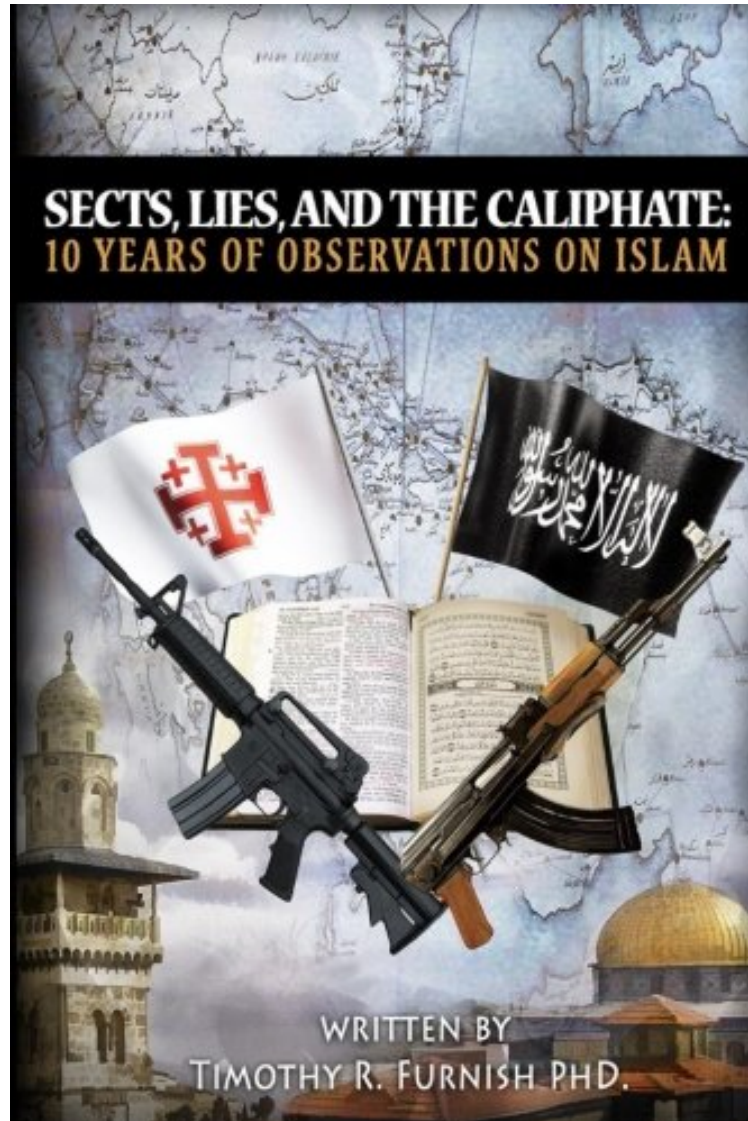


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Sects, Lies, and the Caliphate: Ten Years of Observations on Islam

Timothy R. Furnish PhD

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Timothy R. Furnish PhD : Sects, Lies, and the Caliphate: Ten Years of Observations on Islam before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sects, Lies, and the Caliphate: Ten Years of Observations on Islam:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Analysis and Insights from multi-linguist Islam expert Timothy FurnishBy Ralph Hunt SidwayDr. Furnish's new book is not merely a welcome addition to the study of Islam and its relationship(s) with the world at large, most urgently through the doctrine and practice of jihad, it is a gripping

read, propelled by Furnish's wit and his ability to interweave contemporary events with historical parallels and precedents. Furnish writes like a true historian, crafting narratives which explore the subject matter and unfold it before the reader in a way which imparts not mere knowledge but understanding, whether it is the Islamic State's hierarchy of goals and targets, Islam's troubling relationship towards Christianity, the Ottoman Empire and democracy, or the several other chapter topics which comprise this volume. In his preface, Dr. Furnish categorizes 'Sects' as a "user-friendly, popular work for non-experts on Islam, and not a reference or text book." While this may be objectively true, within my first few minutes of loading 'Sects' on my iPad, I was using the Kindle search function to reference everything from Pew research on Muslim support for sharia and ISIS, to the Islamic view of the crucifixion of Jesus. The latter search yielded an incredibly rich discussion by Dr. Furnish of the variety of ways in which different Islamic sects have approached, denied or sought to understand the crucifixion. As with so many aspects of Islam, there is not a monolithic stance on the issue; in spite of the apparent directness of the Qur'an denying the historical reality of Jesus' death on the cross, different Muslim sects and scholars have understood the issue in multiple historical, spiritual and semantic ways. This is a prime example of where Dr. Furnish's experience with the Ismaili and other sects greatly deepens the reader's understanding of issues which are typically given only a quick sketch. This brings up another point I think deserves mention. I have been following Dr. Furnish's work for a few years now, and recently attended a presentation he did on Islamic vs. Christian Eschatology. I knew of his credentials as being more than comfortable with the Islamic source texts in their original Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages, but I was surprised to learn that he had been invited to present a paper on Mahdism in Iran a few years back. You can get a sense of his breadth and depth in the vast subject of Islam from his bio, which includes much more than I have mentioned. The point being that Timothy Furnish is a trustworthy voice with the integrity of a classical historian. When it comes to policy discussions, in fact, you will find him equally patient in presenting (and critiquing) the positions of neocons and Republicans as liberals and Democrats. Having been "embedded" in the Islamic world for a time, and certainly being at home in its dominant languages and cultures, Dr. Furnish writes not only with confidence about Islam, but with respect, even while advocating for tough, clear-headed policies based on the reality on the ground and the realities in the cultural and theological realms. I have also purchased the companion book, *Ten Years' Captivation with the Mahdi's Camps: Essays on Muslim Eschatology, 2005-2015*, and can tell you it is quite a journey over the coming weeks. In our times it is reassuring to have a guide and fellow traveler such as Dr. Furnish to shed some much needed light on a challenging path. BTW, I love the bio photo with the sabre! It resonates with his avowed love for the Lord of the Rings, and the swashbuckling spirit that peeks out in his writing at times. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Great Read By Lori Gordon I have followed Dr. Furnish's work for several years through his website and many appearances on various radio and television programs, learning so much along the way. When this book was released, I just had to purchase it and while I don't often write reviews, I felt I must after reading the one naysayer who accused Dr. Furnish of "lumping all Muslims together." Clearly, he did not read the book, perhaps not even the cover - the first word of the title being "Sects," in the plural! The book is well organized, user friendly, and extremely readable for such an in-depth treatment of what is for most of us, a somewhat unfamiliar topic. Dr. Furnish explains the differences and similarities of Islamic sects and explores their origins and relevance today. I am not much of a history buff, but he manages to make it interesting and I found myself quite absorbed. I love how he weaves the history in with modern day references - and, believe it or not, with a very funny sense of humor! I am going to recommend this book to several of my friends who are just now becoming aware of Islam because of world events, something I would suggest to everyone. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Important resource for understanding Islamic terrorism By Shiela Shinholster Excellent information contained in this book on gaining a deeper understanding of Islamic terrorism. Dr. Furnish pulls from various sources to give information and insight into the who, what, and why regarding the Islamic violence against the West. I appreciate Dr. Furnish's book as he is able to go to the original source materials and read in the original language (Arabic), and as a historian he is able to give context to the information as well. This results in a deep and factual presentation of the issues at hand. For a highly complex issue such as Islamic terrorism, you have to dig deep and I consider this book to be an important resource for those striving to understand the issues that face our world today.

Most in the West are loathe to admit that it needs but one foe to breed a war, not two, and that substantial sectors of the Islamic world have indeed declared jihad against any and all enemies, most particularly the Christian world. The world's second-largest religion is dominated by three elements which must be understood to make sense of this clash of civilizations currently raging. First, Islam is comprised of dozens of sects, not merely Sunnis and Shi'is; and this sectarianism drives many major conflicts. To name but the most obvious: Sunni Saudis v. Twelver Shi'i Iranians; Sunni Yemenis v. their Fiver Shi'i (Zaydi) countrymen; the Islamic States Sunnis v. al-Asads Alawis and Iraqis Twelver Shi'is; and across the Islamic world writ large, Salafi Sunnis v. the mystical Sufis of many orders. Second, both major sects of Islam allow Muslims, in effect, to lie to non-Muslims, under a doctrine known as *kitman* or *taqiyya*. This makes it rather difficult not only to vet Muslim refugees for terrorists in their midst, but to trust a nation-state like the Islamic Republic of Iran in the diplomatic realm. Finally, many if not most modern Muslims both jihadist

and peacefulness for the return of the caliphate, or one-man rule of the Islamic community. Should a more viable contender than ISIS's leader ever claim that position, it could prove a great boon, or a massive headache, for the rest of the world. The author holds a PhD in Islamic, African, and World history from The Ohio State University. He is a US Army veteran who served in the 101st Airborne Division as an Arabic interrogator, and afterwards worked as a college professor and consultant to US Special Operations Command. His other books are *Holiest Wars: Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads and Osama bin Ladin* (2005) and the complementary volume to this work: *Ten Years Captivation with the Mahdis Camps: Essays on Muslim Eschatology, 2005-2015* (2015).