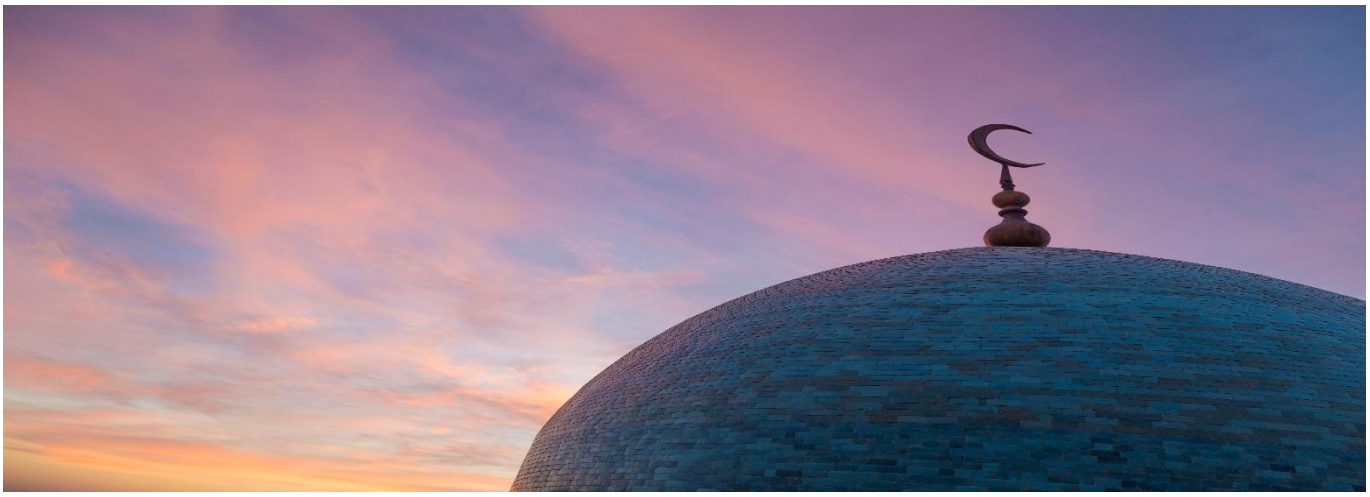
Islam & Christianity: Lesson 11

A History of the Crescent Moon in Islam



It is widely believed that the crescent moon and star is an internationally-recognized symbol of Islam. The symbol is featured on the flags of several Muslim countries and is even part of the official emblem for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Christians have the cross, the Jews have the star of David, and the Muslims have the crescent moon—or so it is thought. The truth, however, is a little more complicated.

Pre-Islamic Symbol

The use of the crescent moon and star as symbols pre-dates Islam by several thousand years. Information on the origins of the symbol is difficult to confirm, but most sources agree that these ancient celestial symbols were used by the peoples of Central Asia and Siberia in their worship of the sun, moon, and sky gods. There are also reports that the crescent moon and star were used to represent the Carthaginian goddess Tanit or the Greek goddess Diana.

The city of Byzantium (later known as Constantinople and Istanbul) adopted the crescent moon as its symbol. According to some evidence, they chose it in honor of the goddess Diana. Other sources indicate that it dates back to a battle in which the Romans defeated the Goths on the first day of a lunar month.

Early Muslim Community

The early Muslim community did not really have an acknowledged symbol. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad Islamic armies and caravans flew simple solid-colored flags (**generally black, green, or white**) for identification purposes. In later

generations, the Muslim leaders continued to use a simple black, white, or green flag with no markings, writing, or symbolism.

Ottoman Empire
It wasn't until the Ottoman Empire that the crescent moon and star became affiliated with the Muslim world. When the Turks conquered Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453 AD, they adopted the city's existing flag and symbol. Legend holds that the founder of the Ottoman Empire, Osman, had a dream in which the crescent moon stretched from one end of the earth to the other. Taking this as a good omen, he chose to keep the crescent and make it the symbol of his dynasty.

There is speculation that the five points on the star represent the five pillars of Islam, but this is pure conjecture. The five points were not standard on the Ottoman flags and are still not standard on flags used in the Muslim world today.

For hundreds of years, the Ottoman Empire ruled over the Muslim world. After centuries of battle with Christian Europe, it is understandable how the symbols of this empire became linked in people's minds with the faith of Islam as a whole. The heritage of the symbols, however, really is based on links to the Ottoman empire, not the faith of Islam itself.

Accepted Symbol of Islam?
Based on this history, many Muslims reject the use of the crescent moon as a symbol of Islam. The faith of Islam has historically had no symbol, and many Muslims refuse to accept what they see as essentially an ancient pagan icon. It is certainly not in uniform use among Muslims.

The Flags of Muslim Countries:
What countries fly the Black – Green – White flag?



Syria
Syria's flag shows green, white and black horizontal stripes with three red stars centered on the white band. Updated in December of 2024 after rebel forces seized parts of the country.

Sudan
Sudan's flag (adopted 1970) has red, white and black horizontal bands with a green triangle at the hoist. It features the four pan-Arab colors which symbolize Arab unity: green for fertility, white for peace, black for strength/oil and red for courage. The pan-Arab colors express Arab identity; green traditionally symbolizes Islam and agricultural life in Sudan.

Palestine
Palestine's flag uses pan-Arab black, white and green horizontal stripes with a red triangle at the hoist. Adopted by the PLO in 1964 and widely used as a national emblem, it symbolizes Arab unity and Palestinian national identity.

Libya
Libya's flag, re-adopted in 2011, features horizontal red, black and green stripes with a white crescent and star centered on the black band. The colors are pan-Arab; the crescent and star are Islamic symbols reflecting national identity.

Kuwait
Kuwait's flag has horizontal green, white and red stripes with a black trapezoid at the hoist. Adopted 1961, the pan-Arab colors reflect Arab unity: green for fertility, white for generosity, red for struggle and black for defeat of enemies.

Iraq
Iraq's horizontal red-white-black flag includes green Arabic script reading "Allahu Akbar." Modern versions date from 2004–2008. The pan-Arab colors signify Arab unity and history; green refers to Islam and religious heritage.

Jordan
Jordan's flag uses black, white and green horizontal bands with a red chevron and a white seven-pointed star. Adopted 1928, its colors symbolize Arab dynasties and history; the star represents unity and faith.

What is *Tawriya?* *(tow-ree-yah)*
"Truthfulness"*: because the hidden meaning is technically true, it is considered speaking the truth while allowing the listener to misunderstand or draw a different conclusion. In Islamic jurisprudence and rhetoric, it is sometimes discussed as a way to avoid direct lying while navigating difficult or sensitive situations."*

There are three permissible lies in Islam:
In Islamic tradition, lying is generally considered a major sin.
However, based on authentic Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad), there are three specific circumstances where a degree of deception or untruth is permitted to prevent harm or foster harmony:

1. **In warfare:** Deception is permitted during active combat or to protect oneself from an unjust enemy.

2. **Reconciling people:** It is allowed to exaggerate or bend the truth (e.g., relaying kind words that weren't strictly said) to mend broken relationships and bring peace between disputing parties.

3. **Between spouses:** A husband and wife may speak untruths to one another to express affection, smooth over minor arguments, and maintain harmony in the marriage.

Context & Conditions:
Scholars emphasize that these exemptions are highly specific and do not justify lying for personal gain, fraud, or breaking rightful commitments (such as lying in a court of law). Many scholars recommend using *Tawriya* [pronounced: tow-ree-yah] whenever possible—which means using vague, double-meaning phrasing that is technically true but allows the listener to interpret it differently, thus avoiding a direct lie.

Islam Is Infiltrating Our Military

IFA Staff | June 23, 2026

God, we ask You to protect America's Constitution and Christian values from the deceitful and dangerous ideology that is Islam. We pray against all attempts to infiltrate and subvert our military.

The debate over national security threats is increasingly extending beyond foreign battlefields and into America's own institutions. Recent commentary from activist and journalist Amy Mek has renewed concerns among some conservatives that Islamist organizations may be seeking influence within government agencies, educational institutions, law enforcement, and even the U.S. military.

Supporters of this view argue that America's greatest vulnerabilities may not come from conventional military attacks, but from ideological movements that seek to gain legitimacy and influence from within. They point to past investigations involving the Muslim Brotherhood, concerns about foreign-funded organizations operating in the United States, and ongoing debates about religious accommodations in government service. Critics contend that vigilance is necessary to ensure that loyalty to the Constitution remains paramount for all who serve in positions of public trust.

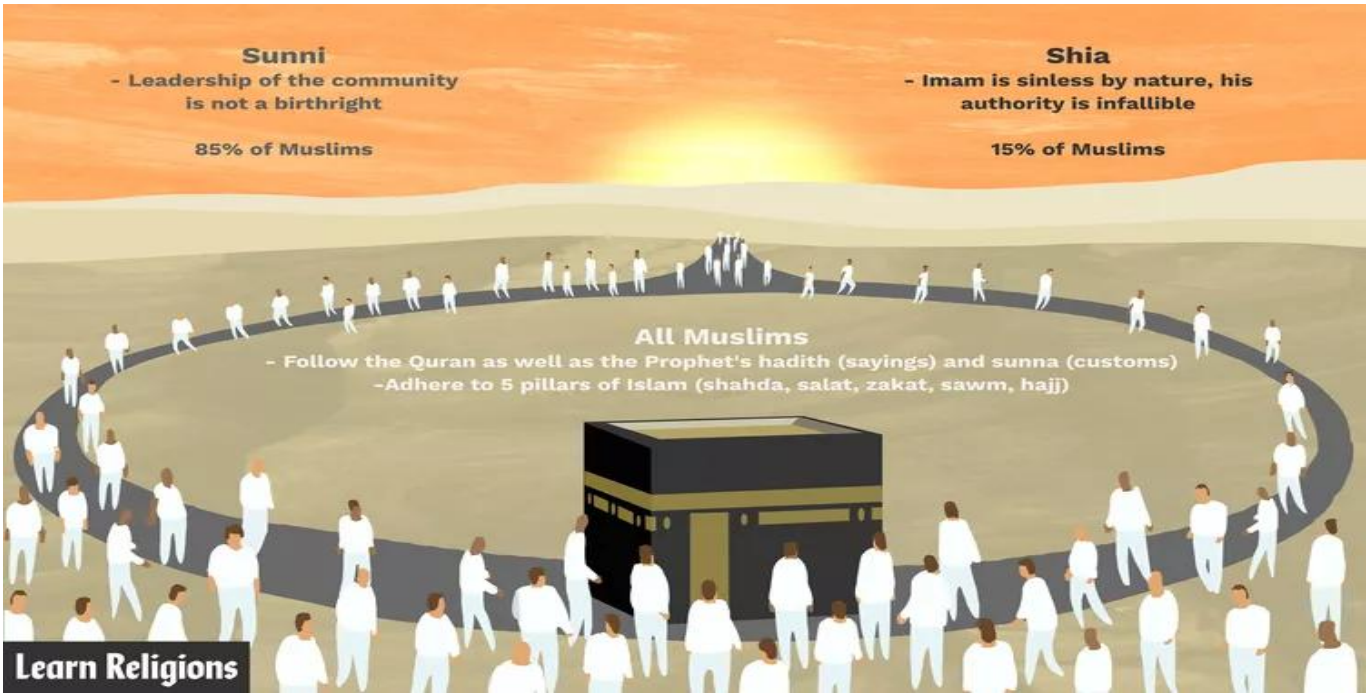
The U.S. military has long relied on rigorous background investigations and security clearances to identify potential threats. Nevertheless, questions periodically arise about whether current vetting procedures are sufficient to identify individuals who may hold extremist sympathies or conflicting allegiances. Those concerns have been amplified in recent years as federal agencies have confronted threats ranging from foreign espionage to domestic extremism. While military leaders stress that service members of all faiths serve honorably, some national security advocates argue that ideological screening deserves renewed attention.

As Mek shows in her post, Islam has been gaining traction in our nation's military. The video attached to her post shows soldiers helping other soldiers convert to Islam, encouraging them to swear allegiance to Allah.

As Mek notes, this is likely part of the greater civilization jihad plan called for by the Muslim Brotherhood. **Muslims are exploiting our tolerance, constitution, and religious freedom in order to enter our military. What comes next? Hijab waivers? Halal meals? Prayer breaks? Will we be forced to rely on a military made up of soldiers more loyal to an anti-Christian, anti-constitutional ideology than the nation they signed up to protect?**

This is another way that America is being conquered without a single shot fired. As intercessors, let's pray against this attempt to subvert the military and American values. Let's pray for the protection of true religious freedom as well as our Christian virtues and values!

What Is the difference between Shia & Sunni Muslims?



Sunni and Shia Muslims share the most fundamental Islamic beliefs and articles of faith and are the two main sub-groups in Islam. They do differ, however, and that separation stemmed initially, not from spiritual distinctions, but political ones. Over the centuries, these political differences have spawned several varying practices and positions that have come to carry spiritual significance.

For example, Sunni Muslims emphasize the authority of the elected caliphs, whereas Shia Muslims hold that leadership should have remained within the Prophet Muhammad's family, specifically with his cousin and son-in-law, Ali. Despite these differences, both groups continue to uphold the core tenets of Islam.

What Do Sunni and Shia Muslims Believe?

The division between Shia and Sunni dates back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632. This event raised the question of who was to take over the leadership of the Muslim nation.

Sunnism is the largest and most orthodox branch of Islam.
The word *Sunn,* in Arabic, comes from a word meaning "one who follows the traditions of the Prophet."

Sunni Muslims agree with many of the Prophet's companions at the time of his death: that the new leader should be elected from among those capable of the job.
For example, following Prophet Muhammad's death, his close friend and adviser, Abu Bakr, became the first Caliph (successor or deputy of the Prophet) of the Islamic nation. On the other hand, some Muslims believe that leadership should have stayed within the Prophet's family, among those specifically appointed by him, or among Imams appointed by God Himself.

Shia Muslims believe that following the Prophet Muhammad's death, leadership should have passed directly to his cousin and son-in-law, Ali bin Abu Talib.
Throughout history, Shia Muslims have not recognized the authority of elected Muslim leaders, choosing instead to follow a line of Imams they believe have been appointed by the Prophet Muhammad or God Himself.

The word *Shia* in Arabic means a group or supportive party of people. The commonly known term is shortened from the historical *Shia't-Ali*, or "the Party of Ali." This group is also known as Shiites or followers of *Ahl al-Bayt* or "People of the Household" (of the Prophet).

Within the Sunni and Shia branches, you can also find many sects. For example, in Saudi Arabia, Sunni Wahhabism is a prevalent and puritanical faction. Similarly, in Shiitism, the Druze are a somewhat eclectic sect residing in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel.

Where Do Sunni and Shia Muslims Live?
Sunni Muslims make up an 85% majority of Muslims all over the world. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are predominantly Sunni.

Shia Muslims can be found in Iran and Iraq. Large Shiite minority communities are also in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Lebanon.
It is in areas of the world where Sunni and Shiite populations live near each other that conflict can arise.

Coexistence in Iraq and Lebanon, for example, is often difficult. The religious differences are so embedded in the culture that intolerance often leads to violence.

Differences in Religious Practice
Stemming from the initial question of political leadership, some aspects of spiritual life now differ between the two Muslim groups. This includes rituals of prayer and marriage.

In this sense, many people compare the two groups with Catholics and Protestants. Fundamentally, they share some common beliefs but practice in different manners. It is important to remember that despite these differences in opinion and practice, Shia and Sunni Muslims share the main articles of Islamic belief and are considered by most to be brethren in faith. In fact, most Muslims do not distinguish themselves by claiming membership in any particular group, but prefer, simply, to call themselves "Muslims."

Religious Leadership
Shia Muslims believe that the Imam is sinless by nature and that his authority is infallible because it comes directly from God. Therefore, Shia Muslims often venerate the Imams as saints. They perform pilgrimages to their tombs and shrines in the hopes of divine intercession. This well-defined clerical hierarchy can play a role in governmental matters as well. Iran is a good example in which the Imam, and not the state, is the ultimate authority.

Sunni Muslims counter that there is no basis in Islam for a hereditary privileged class of spiritual leaders, and certainly no basis for the veneration or intercession of saints. They contend that leadership of the community is not a birthright, but rather a trust that is earned and may be given or taken away by the people.

Religious Texts and Practices
Sunni and **Shia** Muslims follow the Quran as well as the Prophet's *hadith* (sayings) and *sunna* (customs). These are fundamental practices in the Islamic faith. They also adhere to the five pillars of Islam: *shahada, salat, zakat, sawm,* and *hajj*.

Shia Muslims tend to feel animosity toward some of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. This is based on their positions and actions during the early years of discord about leadership in the community. Many of these companions (Abu Bakr, Umar ibn Al Khattab, and Aisha, for example) have narrated traditions about the Prophet's life and spiritual practice. Shia Muslims reject these traditions and do not

base any of their religious practices on the testimony of these individuals. This naturally gives rise to some differences in religious practice between the two groups. These differences touch all detailed aspects of religious life: prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and more.

How Are Sunni and Shia Muslims Different?

1. Sunni and Shia Muslims share core Islamic beliefs, but their division stems largely from political disagreements over leadership after Prophet Muhammad's death and led to differing practices and spiritual positions.
2. Sunni Muslims support elected leadership as exemplified by Abu Bakr, while Shia Muslims believe leadership should have remained within the Prophet Muhammad's family, specifically with his cousin and son-in-law, Ali.
3. Although Sunni Muslims form the majority worldwide, significant Shia populations in countries like Iran and Iraq are examples of regional concentrations.