

## The Difference between a Sunni Muslim and a Shiite Muslim

**The two major sects of Islam are the Sunni sect and the Shiite sect.**

**Sunnis:** called because they follow the Sunna of the Prophet Mohammad. Sunna means his sayings or doings

**Shiites:** called because they are followers or supporters of Ali ibin abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, so they are called Shi'at Ali, the partisans or followers of Ali.

You can tell if a person is a Sunni or Shiite based on names, appearances, differences in prayers, places or prayers, and certain special rituals and celebrations

<b>NAMES</b>	
Muslims around the world use some common names to give to their children, such as Mohammad (after the prophet) or Ahmad, which is derived from the name Mohammad. There are some names that determines almost for sure whether a person is a Sunni or Shiite	
<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Shiite</b>
Omar, Othman for men	Ali, Hassan, Hussein and Zahra for men Zahraa used for daughters

<b>APPEARANCE</b>	
There are several, distinct differences between the men.	
<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Shiite</b>
<u><b>MEN</b></u>	<u><b>MEN</b></u>
Men who shave their heads and moustaches and wear a small cap on their heads are religious people. Those who have a higher rank (sheikh) wear a turban of a long piece of fabric wrapped around a small, red cap.	<p>Shiite clerks may have a black turban around their head, which tells if he is from the bloodline of the prophet and is called a Sayyid. If a clerk wears a white turban then he is NOT from the same bloodline as of the prophet.</p> <p>Secular Shiites are mainly affected by the Persian style. More than 60% of the Shiite Muslims live in Iran. They wear no tie, a shirt with no color. Some grow small beards or trim it without shaving.</p> <p>Many Shiite youths have tattoos on their arms, such as names of Ali Hussein, the prophet's son, or the sword of Ali (Thu alfiqar – the sword with a split head). Some wear necklaces with a sword charm.</p>

## APPEARANCE

As for the women, it is sometimes hard to tell the difference because of the fanaticism in the implementation of the Islamic rules. In certain cases a woman's dress code is the same

<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Shiite</b>
<b><u>WOMEN</u></b>	<b><u>WOMEN</u></b>
<p><b>Saudi Arabia</b> is a Sunni Muslim country – women are forced to wear a “<b>shador</b>” which is a black dress that covers the whole body from top to toes.</p> <p><b>Malaysia</b> is a Moderate Sunni Muslim country – women tend to wear a veil that covers the head, neck and ears. They wear long pants and shirts not to reveal their beauties. They can also wear long dresses that do not reveal any flesh.</p>	<p><b>Iran</b> is a Shiite Muslim country – Women are also forced to wear a shador whether they like it or not.</p> <p><b>Lebanon</b> is a Moderate Shiite Muslim country – here the women dress in the same way as Sunnis but then they try to differentiate themselves by wearing their veils in a different way, they often put a pin on the left hand side of the veil.</p>



### DIFFERENCE IN PRAYERS

Muslims, both Sunni and Shiite kneel, bend and touch their foreheads to the ground when praying. Islam favors men over women and according to the Quran; women are not equal to men so they must pray at home. Men and Women are not even allowed to mix together in public places or schools on any occasion. Shiites are minutes behind Sunnis. The same carries over during the month of Ramadan (fasting). Sunnis break their fasts at different times and end Ramadan (the 'Id) a day or two apart

<b>SUNNI</b>	<b>SHIITE</b>
<p>When they pray, Sunnis keep their arms one folded over the other just below the rib cage. Sunnis pray in mosques, which have domes and minarets.</p>	<p>Shiites keep their arms down and touch their heads to a small stone called "turba", which comes from the holy city of Najaf. Shiites pray in Husseiniya (no domes or minarets) which is similar to a mosque and community center and a place where they share condolences during the memory of Hussein's death, son of Ali.</p>



### RITUALS

BOTH SHARE SIMILAR HOLIDAYS – THE BIRTH OF THEIR PROPHET AND EZRA DAY. THE SHIITES HAVE THE ASHURA DAY. THIS IS WHEN THEY COMMEMORATE THE KILLING OF HUSSEIN, THE SON OF ALI, BY SUNNI MUSLIMS. ASHURA DAY IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE TWO SECTS STILL HAVE HATRED FOR EACH OTHER.

<b>SUNNI</b>	<b>SHIITE</b>
<p>Sunnis give their condolences for ten days in Husseiniya (derived from Hussein)  Sunnis see the rituals of the Shiites during this time as unpleasant and uncivilized.</p>	<p>Shiites also give their condolences for ten days in Husseiniya. For ten days, Shiite men dress all in black and do not shave their beards. Secular women wear no make-up or perfume, and if they have a veil, it must be black. On the tenth day, they march through the streets and beat their chests in mourning. Some whip themselves while others hit their heads until they bleed.</p>