

# **Study Guide for “Lesson on Islam and the Occult”**

To be used along with the video of the same name on [www.ChristianfromMuslim.com](http://www.ChristianfromMuslim.com)

## **Program Summary and Notes:**

**Quick Summary:** In the discipleship of a new believer in Christ, it is always good to address the occult. Occultic practices should be recognized and left behind as the new believer walks from darkness into light. This is especially true with believers from a Muslim background, because occultic practices are extremely common in the Islamic World.

## **Occultic Practices in the Muslim World**

### **Folk Islam**

Despite the fact that pure Islam is against occultic practices like amulets, spells, reading of coffee grounds, superstitions, and astrology, these are common in most Islamic cultures. Sometimes they are called, “Folk Islam.” But more than just country folk follow these practices. Almost everyone does to some degree. So, sooner or later a Christian working with Muslims, or Muslim background believer themselves, will need to confront these practices.

### **The Evil Eye**

It is curious that the contemporary book *Islamic Fatawa Regarding Women*, from Darussalam publishers in Saudi Arabia, warns against the evils of using a fortune teller, psychic, or astrologer, amulets, or seeking the dead. Yet it also says,

*“A disbeliever like any other may afflict with the evil eye for the evil eye is factual.”*

Such a statement would appear to open doors for superstitions and amulets like the evil eye beads – those blue, black, and white beads so common in Muslim lands and Greece – and if we include the “eye of Horus” even Egypt.

The Bible agrees with Islam in warning against people who claim supernatural powers or practices,

*“Do not practice divination or seek omens...Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord.”* Leviticus 19:26,31 (NIV)

Christianity does however recognize the kind of demonic power that the evil eye cult implies. It can be scary. However, even if they seem insignificant, all practices that draw protection or power from a spiritual source other than God, should be rejected by Christians. We fight evil power with spiritual weapons from God. (see below)

### **Rev. Houssney and Dr. Cynthia Discuss Islam and the Occult**

In the video lesson, guest Georges Houssney and Dr. C discuss especially common occultic practices of Muslims and former Muslim Christians. Since the Bible renounces such practices, they comment on ways to recognize and combat them.

## **The Power of the Words**

Verses of the Qur'an can be used as a talisman, or lucky charm, by Muslims. Some roll up verses and wear them in jewelry, or inscribe them on a surface for protection. Most schools of Islamic thought reject using the Qur'an itself as an amulet.

You may see the word *Allah* in Arabic as a necklace on Muslim women. To our understanding there is controversy if this is acceptable. Most Muslim leaders will allow this, especially in the West; but the strictest will likely also consider it a talisman.

Since the words of the Qur'an in Arabic are felt to have power, we can see how Muslims could be attracted to this sort of talisman. Elsewhere we explain that the very words of the Qur'an are believed to have power when recited in Arabic (see *Lesson on The Bible and The Qur'an*). Muslims believe they receive points for these, the amount depending on the time of year and excellence of their pronunciation. This helps gain credit for the reciter at the Day of Judgment.

In contrast, with the Bible the power is with the message. As long as it is clearly translated, the message is the same in any language. The Word of God is sharp and powerful (Hebrews 4:12).

## **Other Occultic Practices in the Muslim World**

Tea and coffee are popular drinks with Muslims, perhaps because Islam forbids alcohol. Practices like reading patterns in the tea leaves and coffee grounds left in cups after these drinks are finished, is extremely common, especially with women. Dr. C has experienced the discomfort of having to decline graciously made offers to do this for her.

Because the occult is so pervasive in the Muslim world, it is difficult for former Muslims who are now Christians to recognize and eliminate it from their life style. They may still be reading astrologic forecasts without thinking that it is a habit which must now be discarded.

Curses may sound medieval to Christians, or like something they would encounter mainly working with Satanists. But curses and charms are part of the daily occultic practices of folk Islam. Huda has shared with Dr. C that she has had several curses placed on her by jealous women.

Charms are popular for a variety of causes, like protection, infertility or health. Dr. C has even had to decline a love charm for one of her family members offered by a Christian from Muslim background.

Perhaps related to curses is poisoning. That is definitely be an unlucky charm! 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary Lilia Trotter described it as a common method Muslims used to punish, even kill, her converts to Christianity. Their team tried protect their new believers from being poisoned by relatives. Others have found the same thing. New believers from Muslim backgrounds and their disciplers should be aware of this possibility. We have also had a case of suspected poisoning of a new convert.

## **The Qur'an's Spell**

In the video lesson, Huda explains to Dr. Cynthia how the Qur'an is whispered over Muslim babies. She feels it is like a spell that controls the lives of those living under it.

The lesson includes reality video of the call to prayer in Turkey. Being loudly broadcast from mosques across Muslim countries five times a day – from before dawn until bedtime – you can see a sense in

which the Qur'an does have a hypnotic and controlling effect among those it touches. Huda expresses regret that the Qur'an was spoken over her from her birth onward until she left the Middle East.

As a child, she was afraid to even touch the Bible a friend gave to her. As an adult, when she started reading the Bible, she found God very clearly speaking. Huda says she feels like she came out of a cage when she left Islam and its spell. This echoes what former Muslim Ayan Hirsi Ali wrote in her book *Infidel*.

*Psychological conditioning is very powerful... They are like prisoners suffering from Stockholm Syndrome...comparable to slaves...who prefer the certainty of their existence in slavery to a freedom that they perceive as treacherous.*

In contrast, Dr. C encourages reading the Bible. It is not a hypnotic spell. Its words comfort us. It is a light to our path. As we allow its words to abide in us, we bring forth spiritual fruit.

### **A Christian's Weapons against Evil**

Helpful advice:

*Don't try to get from anything or anyone what you can only get from God.*

Life is difficult. We certainly understand the need for supernatural assistance – sometimes just to make it through the day. But Christians should take our burdens and fears to God, and rely on his supernatural power to assist us.

We cannot force God to do what we want; but we can rely on him to do what is best in our situation. Many times, we see him supernaturally intervene. Other times, he simply gives us power to endure the difficulties, or to see the deeper reasons for what is happening. (1 Peter 5:7, Joshua 1:9, Ephesians 1:19,20, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 10:13)

### **The Armor of God**

*“Finally, let the Lord make you strong. Depend on his mighty power. **Put on all of God's armor**, then you can remain strong against the devil's evil plans. Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world.*

*So put on all of God's armor. Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything. And after you have done everything you can you will still be standing.*

*So remain strong in the faith. Put the belt of truth around your waist. Put the armor of godliness on your chest. Wear on your feet what will prepare you to tell the good news of peace. Also, pick up the shield of faith. With it you can put out all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Put on the helmet of salvation. And take the sword of the Holy Spirit. The sword is God's word. At all times pray by the power of the Spirit.”*

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIRV)

With these weapons, we can defend ourselves from evil. Remember, we are not to fight evil with evil. We are to overcome it with good. Here is one of Dr. C's favorite verses:

*“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”* Romans 12:21 (NIV)

## Are all Muslims Arabs?

Because Islam originated in the Arab world, it is most often associated with Arabs. However, Arabs now represent a minority of Muslims worldwide. Indonesia has the largest number, followed by India. Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan are other non-Arab Islamic countries.



## Turkish Travelogue

To give you the flavor of a part of the Muslim world, one where you can choose from an abundance of “evil eye” accessories in tourist shops, the video lesson concludes with a **5-minute Travel Segment of Turkey**. Dr. Cynthia narrates a quick trip for you, from the Christian perspective. Watch for significant sights and events from around Istanbul and Asia Minor.

Turkey, now a Muslim country, was one of the first to receive the gospel, through the Apostle Paul. It became one of the earliest Christian regions, until conquered by Islam. Many locations from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible can be seen there.

At the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Istanbul has been a hub of human activity for thousands of years. Perhaps you know that the Emperor Constantine made Constantinople, now Istanbul, the new capital of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire? And with his conversion to Christianity, it became a major Christian city.

Although Constantine made Christianity a legal religion of the Roman Empire, contrary to popular opinion he did not invent Christian doctrine. All the points of the gospel and of Jesus’ deity were laid out long before Constantine’s conversion, or the church councils he called. (See also *Lesson on Why Believe the Bible*.) And remember also, the Old Testament prophecies were so clear about Jesus, that they were the Bible the early church used, before the New Testament was written.

Hagia Sophia Cathedral in Istanbul, enjoyed nearly a thousand years of glory as a major church of the Christian World. It was once earth’s largest building. But with the fall of Constantinople to Islam in 1453 AD, it became a mosque. For a Christian visiting it now, seeing the large medallions of Islamic calligraphy bolted onto the walls of this spectacular church can be a heart-rending experience. Some even cry. But here and there, glorious golden mosaics survived the conversion to mosque, and from them, Jesus peeks out, depicted in his golden glory.

Christian church building attacks have become more common across the world. They are now happening in Europe as well as the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. In some countries they have become routine. To say this is terrible is an understatement. But thank God, the Bible tells us that God does not need a beautiful church to be worshipped in.

*“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and **does not live in temples made by human hands**. And he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.*

*From one man he made all nations that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this **so that they seek him** and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not very far from every one of us.” Acts 17:24-27*

In the travelogue, Dr. C also shows us Ephesus and other sites traditionally associated with the Bible or early Christians. With such a rich Christian heritage, it is sad to see how Turkey came under the spiritual domination of Islam.

However, we are now seeing Muslim Turks coming out of Islam and back to Jesus. Please pray that the Turkish people will return to their Christian roots, and that the Holy Spirit will breathe new life into its ancient foundations.

*“They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated.” Isaiah 61:4*

### **Bible Messages to Turkey**

Some of the Old Testament, and a significant part of the New Testament are about, or written to people who lived in what is now Turkey. Here is a sample of them:

#### **On God**

*There is ... one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

#### **On Equality**

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.*

#### **Salvation by Grace**

*By grace you have been saved, through faith – and that not of yourselves.  
It is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*

#### **How to Live**

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience,  
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

*Know this love that surpasses knowledge –  
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God.*

#### **Keeping the Faith**

*Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel  
other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned.*

### **The First Sermon in Turkey**

*‘Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent... We tell you the good news. What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus...from the dead, never to see decay...Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is preached to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law.’ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord...The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.*

Acts 13:26-49

## An Invitation

In the last book of the Bible, Jesus gave a message to the church in Laodicea, a town near the modern city of Pamukkale. It compares our heart to a door.

*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.  
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in.* Revelation 3:20

Is your heart open to Jesus today?  
Have you accepted him as your own Savior?  
Is he living in you, giving you love, peace and joy, and guiding all day long?

### References:

Scriptures (NIV unless otherwise stated)

II Corinthians 5:17  
Leviticus 19:26, 31  
I Peter 5:7  
Ephesians 1:19,20  
Romans 8:28  
I Corinthians 10:13  
Romans 12:21  
Psalm 119:195  
Hebrews 4:12  
Isaiah 61:4  
Ephesians 6:10-18 & 4:6, & 2:8,9 & 3:18,19  
Galatians 1:8 & 3:28 & 5:22,23  
Acts 13:26-49 & 17:24-27  
Revelation 3:20

### Definitions of terms used:

*Jinn* – demons converted to Islam (related to “genies”)  
*Tafsir* – commentary, especially Qur’anic  
*Abraj* – horoscope  
*Shouwajad* – occultic practices like witchcraft  
*Al Hasad* – the “evil eye,” often seen as a blue glass bead  
*Thawab* - power

Note: the photograph of the Qur’an used in this video lesson is of the *Topkapi Codex* – an early Qur’anic manuscript in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.

### Study Questions:

(Note to study leaders: This episode gives us much food for thought and discussion. You may select only a few of the below questions for discussion, or cover them in more than one session.)

1. The discussion between Houssney and Dr. Cynthia brings to light occultic practices that our Muslim friends have, which might not be obvious in short acquaintance.

- If you are from a Muslim background, reflect on what occultic practices you might have come across in life.
- Are any affecting you now?
  - If so, are they ones you are involved in, or
  - ones around you?
- If you are Christian, have you found occultic practices in your Muslim associates?
  - if so, which?
  - What about in yourself or associates?

2. Huda says the Qur'an is like a spell:

- What do you think she means by that?
- How does it affect someone to be exposed to certain ways of thinking over and over?
  - Can you name Muslim behaviors which are difficult for the West to comprehend, but which become understandable in light of the effect of the Qur'an's spell?

3. Do you think we in the West could be brainwashed?

- Name three concepts which have been repeatedly presented to the West over the last generation, or decade, in order to make them accepted.
- Can you see ways in which this has changed our societies?

4. If you are a Christian, do you think being under this constant exposure to Islamic discipline and doctrine would mold you into a good Muslim or cause you to rebel?

- a. What if you did not know anything else?
- b. If you are Muslim, how did this exposure affect you?

5. Can and should Christians be "brainwashed?"

- If so, what might that mean? (see Colossians 2:8 and Romans 12:2)
- Are there ways in which Christians should allow their scriptures to affect them? (see Colossians 3:16)
- How is the Christian sort of brainwashing similar and different to that of Islam?
- Can you name other regimes which brainwash their people?

6. Can you imagine what it would be like to be obligated to pray not only at set times in daylight hours, but to routinely pray late and to rise before dawn to pray and recite the Qur'an?

- How would this affect your sleep?
- How would this affect your work?
- How might it affect the productivity of Muslim nations?

7. Some popular Western films and stories revolve around the concept of rescuing someone who is captured physically, or by a totalitarian system.

- c. Can you name such a tale?
- d. Are there ways we can help rescue those in bondage to Islam?
- e. How do Proverbs 24:11 and 31:8 come into play here?
- f. How could we tie these Proverbs in with Matthew 28:19,20?

8. Do you think God cares about those under such totalitarian regimes which rely on mind control?

- How might he reach those people?

9. What occultic practices are common in the West?

- Might some of these be in your own life?

10. In this episode, which Islamic concepts and practices did Huda says come to disbelieve after coming into contact with the Bible? (select all she mentioned)

- The Qur'an taught much violence she felt was not of God
- The Qur'an teaches that we are God's slaves rather than children
- The Qur'an has many, many rules
- The Qur'an teaches God can hear us anywhere we pray, no matter what we wear



by Christian from Muslim, 2019  
Permission granted for personal and study group copying only