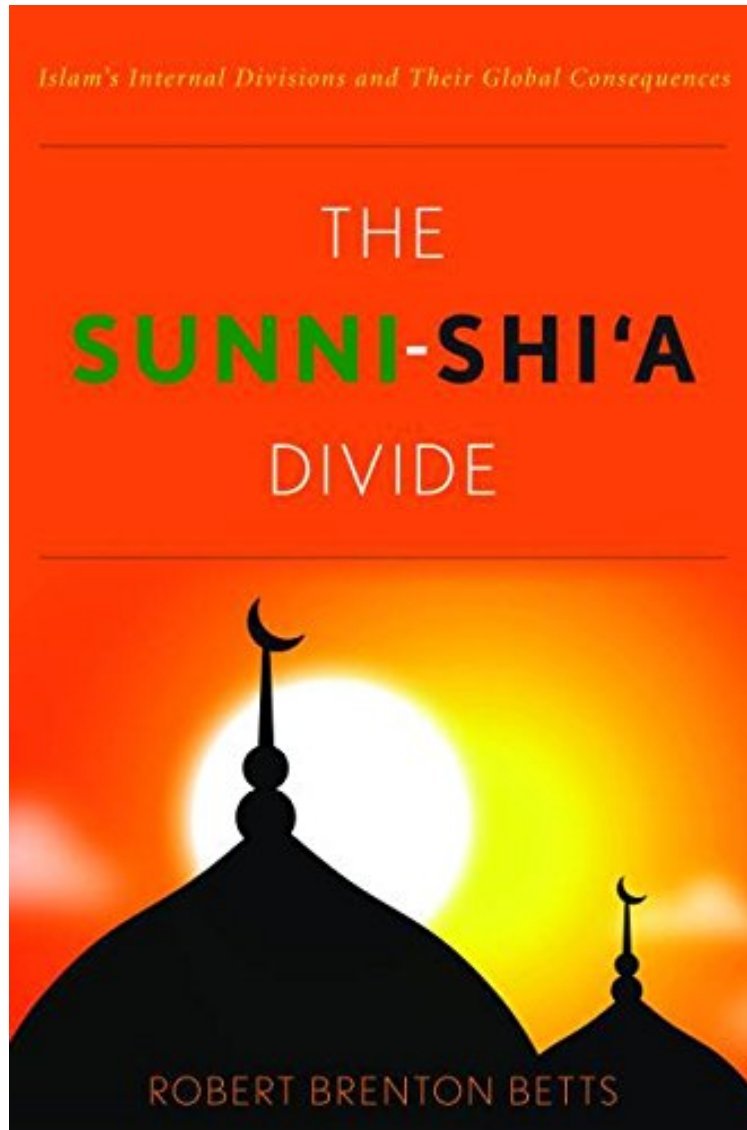


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The Sunni-Shi'a Divide: Islam's Internal Divisions and Their Global Consequences

Robert Brenton Betts

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0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is a great read! By Pamela B. Dr. Betts explains the ancient troubles as no one else can, being both a scholar of the region and having spent his working career there!

Until the attacks of September 11, 2001, few Americans knew anything about Islam, let alone about the distinctions between Sunni and Shia, the Sufi and Wahhabi, the origins of the Holy Quran and Sharia law, and the respect that all Muslims, even secular ones, harbor for the prophet Muhammad, his family, and Islamic traditions. In *The Sunni-Shia Divide* Robert Betts traces the tortuous history of Islam's sectarian divisions, emphasizing the most important one, the Shia departure from Sunni orthodoxy. Although the majority of Muslims remain faithful to the Sunni sect of Islam, approximately 15 percent subscribe to the Shia creed. As America's involvement in the Middle East drags on, Betts reiterates that policymakers, scholars, and laymen alike must understand the many faces of Islam, the internal forces in the United States that have brought us into these military conflicts, and the role of Israel in the region's escalating tensions. How the increasing hostility between the two main Islamic factions plays out on the world stage as Sunni Turkey, Shia Iran, and their allies vie for dominance is of major consequence for everyone, especially financially strapped Europe and the United States.

About the Author ROBERT BRENTON BETTS is a retired professor at the University of Balamand, Lebanon, and at the American University of Beirut. He holds a PhD in international relations and Middle East studies from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and is the author of three previously published books: *Christians in the Arab East: A Political Study* (John Knox Press, 1978), *The Druze* (Yale University Press, 1988), and *The Southern Portals of Byzantium* (Musical Times, 2009). He lives in Summerville, South Carolina.