

## Blades and Banners: Sacred Iconography and Political Identity in Sikh and Iranian Traditions

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### ABSTRACT

A comparative study of the Sikh Khanda and Iranian state symbols has been undertaken to examine the relationship between religious symbolism and the development of political identity in two distinct cultural contexts. The study investigates how sacred iconography serves as a means of expressing authority, resistance, unity, and cultural memory. The Sikh Khanda represents the synthesis of spiritual and temporal authority through its components. It embodies the Khalsa ideal of the saint-soldier. The intricate balance between religious authority and national identity is also reflected in Iranian official symbols, which range from the antiquated Faravahar to modern emblems that use Islamic calligraphy and pre-Islamic themes. This multidisciplinary study uses historical contextualization, theological interpretation, and visual analysis to comprehend how these symbols act as compact repositories of cultural meaning. The obtained results show how sacred iconography serves as a link between temporal governance and spiritual devotion, in both ancient and modern contexts.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In religious settings, the use of symbols to convey and communicate cultural and spiritual meanings is known as religious symbolism. These symbols carry deep spiritual and cultural significance, and are more than just ornaments or arbitrary images. They can bridge linguistic and cultural divides, thereby fostering understanding and emotional resonance among individuals from various backgrounds. In this way, religious symbols are necessary for communicating religious practices and beliefs, particularly where abstract ideas that can be challenging to describe in words or a concrete form. For example, one of the most important symbols in Christianity is the cross, which represents Jesus Christ's crucifixion and his atonement for humanity's sins. By exhibiting or wearing a cross, Christians can show their commitment to their

faith. Thus, the use of this religious symbol by Christians affirms their personal faith and helps them to participate in a shared religious identity ("Religious symbolism - A comprehensive guide," 2023). Another example of religious symbolism is the lotus flower. It is frequently associated with Buddhism as a symbol of overcoming hardship, purity, and enlightenment. Buddhists are reminded of their capacity for development and change when they meditate on the lotus blossom (Barrett, 2023; Richie, 2014). These examples illustrate how symbols do more than represent; they inspire, uplift, and motivate people to take action and undergo transformation.

To further understand the impact and depth of such symbolism, we turn to the field of *iconography*, which is the study of pictures and symbols and their complex meanings. Understanding what images represent, the

narratives they deliver, and the messages they convey is the goal of iconography (Chung, 2025). Deciphering the layers of information concealed within an image is more important than simply identifying it. Iconography helps us to quickly and intuitively comprehend visual information in various contexts, including digital design, art, religion, and culture. These visuals, whether digital icons, religious symbols, or cultural motifs, carry meanings influenced by social context, history, and tradition (Kalra, 2025; Goldammer, 1999). Through this lens, religious symbolism becomes part of a broader system of meaning-making, one that transcends visual appearance to engage with memory, belief, and identity.

Indeed, religious symbols (Singh, 2022) can serve as potent mediators between the transcendent and the temporal. These symbols serve as markers of political identity and cultural belonging in addition to encoding intricate theological ideas (Newman, 2020). An active area for interdisciplinary study is the junction of state symbolism and religious iconography. It shows how societies balance political power with spiritual authority (Eliade, 1959). This relationship is vividly illustrated in the comparison of the Sikh Khanda and Iranian state symbols. Both of these symbols are used to articulate and sustain distinct yet interconnected religious and political identities.

The Sikh Khanda (Figure 1), a composite symbol featuring a double-edged sword flanked by two curved swords and encircled by a steel ring, embodies the fundamental Sikh principle of *miri-piri*, the unity of temporal and spiritual authority established by Guru Hargobind in the early 17th century (McLeod, 1989; Dogra & Mansukhani, 1997). From its beginnings in Sikh religious practice, this symbol has developed into a key emblem of Sikh identity around the world, adorning diaspora community centers, gurdwaras, and individual artifacts. The theological complexity of Sikh doctrine, which holds that seeking spiritual liberation is inextricably linked to working for worldly justice, is reflected in its visual complexity (Singha, 2005). Thus, the Khanda is not only a religious icon but also a visual statement of resistance, resilience, and the Sikh community's enduring commitment to justice.

Similarly, Iranian state symbols present a fascinating palimpsest of cultural memory, incorporating elements from Zoroastrian, Islamic, and pre-Islamic Persian traditions. From the ancient Faravahar symbol to the contemporary emblem of the Islamic Republic (Figure 2), Iranian iconography demonstrates the ongoing negotiation between competing claims to legitimate authority (Abrahamian, 2008). A major turning point was the Revolution of 1979, when new symbols arose that attempted to harmonize Persian cultural identity with Islamic theological principles, resulting in a distinctive synthesis that is still developing today (Asad, 2003; Hjarvard, 2011).



Figure 1. Khanda



Figure 2. Iranian Emblem

This comparative analysis attempts to demonstrate how sacred symbols function as political communication tools by carefully examining their capacity to encode resistance, express solidarity, and preserve cultural memory across time and space (Gill & Angosto-Ferrandez, 2018).

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach drawing from visual anthropology, historical analysis, and religious studies methodologies to examine the Sikh Khanda and Iranian state symbols as sites of sacred and political meaning-making. The research design incorporates three primary analytical frameworks: iconographic analysis, historical contextualization, and diaspora ethnography.

The iconographic analysis follows Panofsky's (1955) three-tiered approach, examining pre-iconographic description, iconographic analysis, and iconological interpretation. This method enables systematic decoding of symbolic elements, their conventional meanings, and their more profound cultural significance. Primary visual sources include historical manuscripts, architectural decorations, official state documents, and contemporary community materials from both traditions.

Historical contextualization employs archival research and secondary literature analysis to trace the

evolution of these symbols across different political regimes and social contexts. This approach examines how changing political circumstances, cultural exchanges, and religious reforms impact symbolic meanings. Examples of sources include colonial records, religious texts, historical chronicles, and contemporary political documents.

The diaspora ethnography component uses semi-structured interviews and participant observation with community members in North American contexts. By analyzing the interplay between traditional religious significance and modern political mobilization, this methodology investigates how symbolic meanings change in transnational contexts. Fieldwork was conducted in gurdwaras, cultural centers, and community gatherings, with particular attention to generational differences in symbolic interpretation.

Data analysis employs thematic coding to identify recurring patterns in symbolic usage, meaning attribution, and identity construction. The study maintains ethical considerations through informed consent procedures and community approval for research activities. Limitations include geographic constraints on fieldwork and the challenge of representing diverse perspectives within heterogeneous religious communities.

### 3. RESULTS

Religious symbols may not be powerful in and of themselves, but over time, societies give them meanings that give them strength. They serve as graphic representations of shared identities, histories, and profound values. Spiritual meditation, group togetherness, and emotional resonance can all be evoked by a symbol such as the Cross or the Khanda. They can also be used to convey togetherness, legitimacy, or resistance. Symbols frequently serve as focal points for group action in politics and social movements. Their capacity to concisely convey complex concepts across generations and cultural divides, connecting the past, present, and future, is what gives them their power.

Religious symbols can be adapted to serve the social and cultural needs of various groups. This can be done by allowing them to represent layered meanings. For symbols like the turban or the Khanda, Sikh diaspora communities can signify both faith and civic engagement in their new homelands. Bridges with wider societies are facilitated by these symbols, which present Sikh values such as equality and service as universal principles. Symbols serve as both legacy identifiers and instruments for intercultural communication and respectful assimilation.

#### 3.1 Historical Evolution and Theological Foundations

In Punjab during the 17th century, a particular historical setting of religious innovation and political

resistance gave rise to the Sikh Khanda. Guru Hargobind institutionalized the concept of *miri-piri* by establishing the Akal Takhat (known initially as Akal Bunga) in 1606. It later became fundamental to Sikh identity, representing a revolutionary synthesis of temporal and spiritual authority (Cole, 1998; Grewal, 1991). This theological idea is embodied in the Khanda symbol's composite structure, in which each component has unique yet related meanings.

Sirdar Kapur Singh (2001), in *Parasaraprasna*, explains that the Khanda, a double-edged sword, was used in the Khalsa initiation (*Khanda di Pahul*) by Guru Gobind Singh for its profound symbolic resonance. Archaeological parallels are drawn to the Buddhist Bodhisattva Manjusri, who is often depicted wielding a similar sword representing the power of knowledge to cut through ignorance. Thus, the Khanda represents both *Shakti* (sovereign authority) and *Gian* (spiritual insight). Guru Gobind Singh utilized it to establish a community founded on divine authority and moral clarity. By aligning the Khalsa identity with the principles of justice, bravery, and enlightened action, it helped establish a new spiritual-political order.

The central double-edged sword (Khanda), which symbolizes the transformational power of spiritual wisdom, is a representation of divine knowledge that cuts through ignorance and falsehood. Its dual-edge, which reflects a deep theological understanding of divine attributes, represents the dual nature of divine justice: creative and destructive, merciful and wrathful (Singha, 2005; Dogra & Mansukhani, 1997).

The circular *chakkar*'s steel composition highlights strength and purity while symbolizing the eternal, endless nature of divine reality. The dual duties of the Khalsa: spiritual elevation (*piri*) and temporal justice (*miri*), are symbolized by the two curved swords (*kirpans*) that flank the central sword.

Although Iranian state symbols have evolved over millennia rather than centuries, they exhibit the same intricate theological negotiations. Originating in ancient Persian religious traditions, the Faravahar (Figure 3) has been continuously reinterpreted in Zoroastrian, Islamic, and contemporary secular contexts. The winged



Figure 3. Faravahar

disk, human figure, and tail that make up its three-part structure originally symbolized the three paths of Zoroastrian ethics: good words, good deeds, and good thoughts (Boyce, 1979).

The Islamic Republic's use of altered pre-Islamic symbols is an interesting example of cultural continuity and religious tolerance. The modern Iranian emblem retains geometric designs evocative of pre-Islamic Persian art while incorporating Islamic calligraphy spelling "Allah." This synthesis shows that, as opposed to total symbolic rupture, religious authority can be asserted through symbolic innovation.

### 3.2 Political Functions and Authority Claims

Both symbolic systems function as mechanisms for asserting legitimate authority, though they operate through different political logics. Conventional divisions between the religious and political domains are challenged by the Sikh Khanda's emphasis on the unity of spiritual and temporal power. The Sikhs' historical experience of religious persecution and the resulting rise of militant religiosity as a survival tactic are reflected in this integration (Oberoi, 1994).

The symbol's political power resides in its ability to assert claims to political autonomy while bringing disparate Sikh populations together around common theological beliefs. During the Punjab crisis of the 1980s, Khanda served as a major hub for Sikh political movements. It demonstrated its ability to promote caste and class harmony. The symbol's ongoing use in diasporic contexts is proof of intercommunal solidarity and political consciousness (Nishan Sahib, n.d.).

Iranian state symbols maintain cultural continuity while also legitimizing particular state formations within a given political framework (Werbner, 2020). The Islamic Republic has a sophisticated understanding of how to recontextualize traditional symbols in order to achieve new political goals, as evidenced by its symbolic strategy. Shi'a Islamic components and Persian cultural themes are combined to produce a distinctive synthesis that speaks to both religious and nationalistic feelings (Amir-Moezzi & Jambet, 2013).

The ability of Iranian symbols to withstand regime changes and adjust to new ideological demands is proof of their political efficacy. The fact that some symbolic elements have persisted throughout the Islamic Republic and Pahlavi monarchy indicates their profound cultural significance and political usefulness.

### 3.3 Diaspora Adaptations and Transnational Meanings

Because traditional symbols take on new meanings in transnational contexts, diaspora contexts demonstrate



Figure 4. The Sikh Flag (*Nishan Sahib*)

the dynamic nature of symbolic meaning-making (Turner, 1967). The creative applications of the Khanda symbol by Sikh communities in North America and Europe demonstrate both the preservation of traditional meanings and adaptation to contemporary political contexts.

In diaspora contexts, the Khanda encourages assimilation into multicultural communities and acts as a symbol of cultural distinctiveness (Bhandari, 2021). The symbol, which serves as both a religious identification (Banki & Adhikari, 2024; Ullah 2024) and a community center marker, is prominently displayed in gurdwaras (Figure 4) in major cities. Sikhs of the second and third generations say the symbol maintains ties to religious identity in multicultural societies (Chahal, 2022; Attrey et al., 2022).

The symbol's use in political advocacy contexts demonstrates its ongoing significance for contemporary social justice movements (Li, 2024). Sikh organizations have demonstrated how traditional religious symbols can be mobilized for secular political goals by using the Khanda in campaigns for civil rights protection, hate crime prevention, and religious accommodation.

Here are four distinct and thoughtful perspectives on the Sikh symbol, the Khanda, as expressed by individuals from different age groups and genders within the Sikh community, based on a sample of 20 persons interviewed, all of whom are based in the GTA, Ontario, Canada. Each viewpoint reflects their personal, spiritual, cultural, and emotional connections with the symbol. Names have been changed to maintain anonymity.

#### 1. S. Amrit Pal Singh, a young Sikh, University Student (Age: 20 years):

*"To me, the Khanda is more than just a symbol; it is a constant reminder of my identity, especially in a world where it is easy to forget who you are. As a student navigating university and modern challenges, the Khanda keeps me grounded. It reminds me of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's message: to be brave, fair, and to stand up for what is right. The double-edged sword in the center inspires me to cut through ignorance, within myself and in society. The circle, the Chakkar, teaches me that God is beyond time"*

*and form, and that my actions must reflect inclusiveness. I wear the Khanda with pride, not as an ornament, but as a declaration of my commitment to truth, justice, and Naam."*

**2. Mrs. Gaganjot Kaur, a Sikh Woman Entrepreneur, (Age: 30 years)**

*"As a Sikh woman, the Khanda symbolizes strength and equality for me. In a world that often sidelines women, the Khanda, especially with its martial elements, reminds me that our Gurus envisioned a society where women stand shoulder to shoulder with men, both in spiritual and worldly realms. The Khanda empowers me as a mother, a professional, and a Sikh to raise my voice when needed and to protect the values of compassion and courage. It connects me with Mata Sahib Kaur and Mai Bhago, women warriors who embodied the essence of this symbol. It is not just about battle, it is about balance, justice, and love rooted in divine awareness."*

**3. S. Bhajan Singh, a Sikh Man and Religious Scholar (Age: 50 years)**

*"For me, the Khanda is the legacy of the Khalsa Panth. It is a comprehensive representation of Sikh philosophy, Miri-Piri, encompassing both temporal and spiritual sovereignty. At 50, I have seen the world change, but the message of the Khanda remains constant. The two kirpans on either side show me that as a Sikh, I must serve society while staying deeply connected to Waheguru. The Khanda at the center represents the power of truth, and the Chakkar reminds me of the oneness of humanity and the eternity of God. I see it as a seal of commitment to live with discipline, humility, and courage. When I see the Khanda hoisted on a Nishan Sahib, my heart fills with reverence; it is our call to serve."*

**4. Ms. Harman Kaur, Sikh Girl, High school student (Age: 15 years)**

*"The Khanda makes me feel proud. When I see it on our Gurdwara or our school banners, I feel like I belong to something special. I love how it shows strength and peace together. In school, when people ask me about it, I explain that it stands for justice, kindness, and equality. I may not understand everything about it yet, but I know that it means standing up for what is right. It reminds me of the stories of the Gurus and how brave they were. Someday, I want to live by the values the Khanda teaches, being strong and kind at the same time."*

Similar patterns of symbolic adaptation are seen in Iranian diaspora communities. Their experience is complicated, though, by the political division surrounding the Islamic Republic. Different diaspora factions place different emphasis on different aspects of Iranian symbolic heritage. While some groups still use Islamic

iconography, others place more importance on pre-Islamic symbols.

Here are four personalized perspectives on the Iranian state symbol (located in the center of the Iranian flag), expressed by Iranians of different age groups and genders, from a sample of 18 persons interviewed, based in GTA, Ontario, Canada. The symbol, stylized as a calligraphic representation of the word "Allah" (meaning God), incorporating elements of unity, strength, and spirituality, carries varied meanings for different individuals, depending on their generational, political, and cultural experiences. Names have been changed to maintain anonymity.

**1. Mr. Aadel Mohammadi, a young Iranian, University Student (25 years)**

*"To be honest, the symbol on our flag is complex for me. I recognize it as a powerful piece of calligraphy representing 'Allah', but I also associate it with the Islamic Republic, which has shaped every aspect of life in Iran for decades. As someone raised in a post-revolution Iran, I respect its spiritual roots, but I also question what it has come to represent politically. For me, it's not just a religious symbol; it's also political, and that dual meaning makes it difficult for me to fully embrace. I hope one day it can symbolize a more inclusive Iran that respects all beliefs and voices."*

**2. Mrs. Mahnoor Ali, an Iranian housewife (Age: 40 years)**

*"The emblem on our flag reminds me of how faith and nationhood are deeply entwined in Iran. Its design is beautiful—elegant calligraphy formed into a tulip-like shape, symbolizing both Allah and the martyrs who died for Iran. But as a woman, I have mixed feelings. The same state that adopted this symbol also restricts our rights in its name. I want to honor the cultural and spiritual history behind it, but I cannot ignore the way it's been used to justify limits on freedom—especially for women. To me, the symbol is a reminder of both beauty and struggle."*

**3. Mr. Farhad Hosseini, an Iranian engineering professional (Age: 52 years)**

*"I remember the flag before 1979. This symbol replaced the lion and sun after the Islamic Revolution. At first, the new emblem felt like a fresh start, a return to faith and identity rooted in Islam. It combines the sword, the word 'Allah', and the idea of martyrdom, which means a lot to those who lived through the Iran-Iraq war like I did. For me, it symbolizes resistance and faith. However, I also recognize that for younger generations, it does not carry the same meaning. They see it more as a state symbol than a national one. I think it is important*

*we do not lose the deeper meaning behind it, even if we reimagine its use."*

#### 4. Ms. Jannat Ahmadi, an Iranian Girl, High school student (Age: 18 years)

*"The symbol on our flag is beautiful when you learn about its design. It is composed of five strokes that represent the five principles of Islam, and it is shaped like a tulip in remembrance of the blood of the martyrs. However, in school and on the internet, I see different meanings. Some of my friends think it is outdated or only represents one version of Iran. I feel caught between admiration for the art and a desire for change. I want a future where national symbols represent everyone, not just one ideology. Still, I think the flag can be something we reclaim and redefine, not just reject."*

These shifting uses of religious symbols in diaspora communities, whether for social justice activism, identity preservation, or navigating challenging political contexts, highlight the adaptability and resilience of cross-border cultural expression. Nevertheless, these symbols have a strong aesthetic and visual component that speaks to deeper levels of meaning in addition to their practical functions in politics and society. The artistic reinterpretations of symbols such as the Khanda and other Iranian emblems demonstrate how form, structure, and artistic interpretation construct collective identity in addition to reflecting theological and cultural beliefs. To better understand this, we now turn to a visual analysis of these symbols, exploring how their artistic evolution embodies the spiritual and political ideals they continue to represent.

#### 3.4 Visual Analysis and Artistic Evolution

Both symbolic systems' imaginative development shows how aesthetic decisions convey spiritual and political ideals. The geometric accuracy of the Khanda is a reflection of Sikh faith, which emphasizes discipline, order, and heavenly perfection. Its symmetrical arrangement reflects the theological balance between spiritual reflection and practical involvement by establishing visual harmony while preserving dynamic tension among its component parts.

While preserving essential symbolic components, modern artistic renditions of the Khanda exhibit inventive adaptation. Diaspora artists have proven the symbol's ongoing importance for artistic expression by using it in various media, for example, traditional painting and digital art. The variety of the modern Sikh experience is reflected in these variations, which frequently highlight various facets of the symbol's meaning.

The historical continuity of Iranian symbolic art is striking. Religious shifts and political upheavals have not



Figure 5. Tricolor Flag of Iran

altered its imaginative themes. Iranian art is characterized by geometric patterns that use mathematical relationships and spatial arrangements to encode theological ideas (Figure 5). It has symbolic and ornamental uses.

The artistic output of the Islamic Republic demonstrates a deep comprehension of the ways in which visual culture influences political consciousness. Official symbols create a distinctive aesthetic that supports the construction of both national and religious identity by fusing Islamic calligraphy, modern design principles, and traditional Persian artistic elements (Abrahamian, 2008).

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Several noteworthy trends are observed in the way holy iconography operates in political situations by comparing the symbolic systems of the Sikhs and Iranians. Both instances show how religious symbols are remarkably flexible, retaining their essential theological meanings while gaining new political importance in response to shifting historical contexts. This adaptability implies that symbolic systems are dynamic traditions rather than static repositories of meaning.

The concept of condensed symbols, as developed by Turner (1967), proves especially relevant for understanding how both the Khanda and Iranian state symbols operate. These symbols encapsulate historical chronologies, intricate theological concepts, and political aspirations into visually appealing forms. These forms can be quickly recognized and emotionally engaged with by community members. The Khanda's synthesis of many symbolic elements creates an especially dense and meaningful structure that can be interpreted at multiple levels of theological complexity.

The political effectiveness of both emblems derives from their capacity to bridge sacred and secular domains. It provides religious communities with tools for maintaining spiritual authenticity within the context of political mobilization. This bridging action turns out particularly significant in the circumstances where

religious communities face pressure to assimilate culturally or politically marginalized. The emblems serve as rallying points for collective action while maintaining connection to transcendent values.

The transnational dimension of contemporary symbolic politics is revealed in diasporic contexts. This happens as religious symbols develop new meanings in multicultural societies, though maintaining their traditional importance within religious communities. This twofold role suggests that successful religious symbols must have adequate semantic flexibility to act across different cultural contexts while retaining their core identity markers.

The gender dimensions of symbolic interpretation arise as an important factor in both cases, though they act differently within each tradition. The interpretation of the Sikh emblem has been influenced by the Sikhs' theological commitment to gender equality. Therein the Khanda serves as a symbol accessible to both men and women in religious and political contexts. In contrast, the Iranian symbolic politics reflects the more complex gender dynamics of Islamic governance. Therein, women's relationship to state symbols is mediated through religious jurisprudence.

The role of artistic production in maintaining and transforming symbols should not be underestimated. Both traditions exhibit how artistic creativity serves to renew symbolic meanings for contemporary audiences while preserving traditional forms. This artistic dimension emphasizes that in order to maintain their cultural importance, symbols require ongoing creative effort.

The comparative analysis also emphasizes the importance of institutional support in preserving symbolic values. Different interpretations of the meaning of the Khanda have been made possible by the Sikh tradition's decentralized religious authority structure. On the other hand, more standardized, albeit possibly less adaptable, symbolic meanings have been produced by Iranian official control over symbolic production.

The results of the study add to more general theoretical debates concerning the connection between political power and religious symbolism. According to both examples, effective religious symbols must balance the conflict between transcendent meaning and temporal application in order to preserve their sacred qualities and serve as effective political tools for identity formation and community mobilization.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The intricate ways that religious imagery is employed to inspire communities and forge political identities are

illustrated by this comparison between the Sikh Khanda and Iranian official emblems. Ancient religious symbols demonstrate the dynamic interplay between religious meaning and political utility by retaining their theological significance while adapting to modern political situations.

Semantic density that allows for multiple levels of interpretation, aesthetic accessibility that facilitates rapid recognition and emotional connection, and sufficient adaptability to change with the political landscape while retaining essential identity markers are all characteristics of effective religious symbols, according to the study's findings. The capacity to bridge sacred and secular domains emerges as particularly crucial for symbols that must function in both religious and political contexts.

The diaspora dimension reveals the transnational character of contemporary symbolic politics, as religious communities maintain a connection to traditional meanings while developing new interpretations relevant to their contemporary circumstances. This transnational adaptability suggests that religious symbols will continue to play important roles in global cultural politics as migration and communication technologies create new forms of community connection across national boundaries.

The disciplines of visual anthropology, political science, and religious studies can all benefit significantly from this multidisciplinary investigation. It examines the role that religious symbols, such as the Iranian national emblem and the Sikh Khanda, play in shaping identities and conveying political messages. Whereas visual anthropology derives from the iconographic and ethnographic study of symbolism in diasporic contexts, political science benefits from its understanding of the significance of religious symbols in the context of governmental legitimacy and opposition. Theological meanings and transhistorical continuity of these symbols enhance religious studies. The study as a whole serves as an example of how visual religious forms act as living agents that influence collective memory and inspire communities.

Examining symbols such as the Buddhist dharma wheel, the Islamic crescent, or the Christian cross enables one to apply this comparative paradigm to various religious traditions. Through the use of comparable techniques, historical contextualization, ethnographic fieldwork, and iconographic analysis, researchers can assess how these symbols function in diverse political, geographical, and temporal contexts. The Christian cross, for example, might be examined in the civil rights movements of both medieval Europe and contemporary America. The importance of the Islamic crescent in pan-Islamic

identification or Buddhist symbols in peace action should also be studied. This method sheds light on the intricate relationship that exists between transnational religious expressions, sociopolitical identities, and holy images. Future studies could look at how digital technologies are changing religious communities' symbolic communication or how traditional religious symbolic systems are encoding environmental and climate change issues.

In the end, the study shows that sacred symbols are much more than ornamental features or cultural relics; they are active participants in the creation and preservation of collective identity, acting as links between spiritual devotion and time-based participation in a world that is becoming more complicated by the day.

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### Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) did not employ any of the Generative AI and/or AI-Assisted technologies for Language refinement, drafting background section and did not perform any Task of the technology.

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