Islam and Muslims in Britain,

A Guide for Non- Muslims

City of London Police

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POLICING THE SQUARE MILE

Islam and Muslims in Britain, a Guide for Non-Muslims

1 Introduction

1.1 Aims of this Document

There are many leaflets, web pages, books and other material that seek to introduce Islam as a religion either to explain it in a religious context or to seek to persuade readers to convert to Islam themselves. This one however seeks to explain Muslim practice and behaviour in a practical sense, for non-Muslims who need to accommodate or recognise normal Muslim practice

- in the contexts of integration of Muslims in a shared environment such as the workplace,
- when hosting community events which depend on the full participation of Muslims,
- in professionally intimate, invasive or antagonistic situations such as policing, where normal Muslim practice is susceptible to misinterpretation.

Therefore the content of this document attempts to be both succinct and comprehensive, and includes little by way of religious explanation, history or justification, but includes many practical details that are sometimes complex or are rather more earthy than polite over-dinner conversation (and are therefore often overlooked for being too intimate to mention). It also raises a number of miscellaneous points that are frequently misunderstood.

1.2 Differences among Muslims

Inevitably Muslims differ in their personal commitment to practice and differ between doctrinal and cultural traditions, and have differing knowledge about the correct practice of Islam. Therefore it is by no means the case that what is described herein is always observed in practice. However I have tried to be as objective and comprehensive as possible, so it is likely that readers will observe at least partial fulfilment of these practices among most Muslims rather than something significantly different to them. On the whole the Muslim community is far more aware of its religious beliefs and practices than most of the rest of British society is of their religious traditions, regardless of how much the individual Muslim *actually* practises. The extent to which individual Muslims are prepared to compromise the rigidities of their practice is a matter of conscience, so for many Muslims some of the issues raised here do not apply. However one should not suppose that other Muslims would also accept the same compromises. By definition, religious practice is a matter of conscience, and what is acceptable compromise for one may be objectionable to another.

It is often presumed that the Muslim community is a single entity, speaking with one voice and with clearly defined leadership. Indeed it is a point of religious principle among Muslims that the community is united and oblivious of ethnic or other divisions. Unfortunately in practice the very opposite is true. Local communities are subject to local, ethnic, doctrinal, political or other rivalries. It is important to be aware of these when dealing with individuals from a particular group or locality, and it is important to avoid situations where whole sub-sections of the Muslim community are overlooked because they are not represented by the individuals with whom contact is

made. Therefore the document highlights the factional aspect of the Muslim community even though the Muslim community tends to be very coy about its factionalism. Muslim readers may object to this emphasis, but the evidence of its pervasiveness becomes all too clear e.g. when in a masjid (i.e. a 'mosque' – throughout this document, the word *masjid* has been used instead of the meaningless word "mosque") someone has to be picked to stand in for the imam, or a new convert is confronted with rival claims to his attention. In spite of these factional difficulties it is generally conceded that Muslims in Britain are far and way the most organised and involved in society of any Muslim minority in Europe.

1.3 Integration

Muslims in Britain are extraordinarily well integrated … with each other! There are more diverse Muslims from more different countries and communities living together harmoniously in London than any other city in the world. A vital element of that integration among Muslims is the ability to project a distinct *Muslim* religious identity over and above any ethnic identity or culture. The problem for the wider community is that unlike food, fashion, sport, music, drugs, slang, humour or the arts, religion is indivisible and un-shareable. That is not to say that Muslims do not have a lot to discuss with Christians, Jews and Humanists – on the contrary Muslims now have a central place in religious debate in Britain. But invariably people define integration as the extent to which culture has been shared and absorbed, from popular entertainment to tastes in narcotics. Islam has become shareable in the narrow sense that most people in Britain now know something about it, and that conversion to Islam is not unusual, but it is not like an entertainment or cultural source from which people can take as they please. Therefore the only measure of integration of Muslims into wider society is the extent to which distinct Muslim practice is accepted by the latter.

1.4 More Information

This guide is a generalised view and in some cases it will be necessary to seek more specific advice, preferably from someone in the Muslim community with direct, local community knowledge, if that is possible.

While this guide describes a number of situations where normal Muslim practices may be misinterpreted, it does not address issues of political extremism, militancy or political violence. These areas are complex and subjective, so if the reader has concerns of that nature, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that expert guidance should be sought. The Metropolitan Police Special Branch Muslim Contact Unit provides assistance of exactly that kind.

A list of contactable organisations is included at the end, as is a glossary of non-English-language terms.

2 Essential Beliefs and Practice

2.1 Principle Beliefs

The following section describes the core beliefs of a Muslim as succinctly as possible – this section is intended simply to inform, neither to offend other beliefs nor to preach. While detailed beliefs may vary between sects, the core beliefs set down here are common to all Muslims. It is noteworthy that compared with most religions, especially in Western society, Muslims tend to know and can articulate their essential beliefs and practices reasonably well. Among Muslims, consciousness of religious beliefs and willingness to talk about them is generally taken for granted, whereas British social conventions make a taboo of discussing religious differences.

2.1.1 *Imaan* - Belief

The fundamental principle of Islam is that human beings and their universe are created by God, *Allah*; and the sole purpose of human life is to worship Allah, the Creator. The Muslim statement of faith is, "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and messenger." Anyone who believes this, is a Muslim. Since worshipping God, worshipping Allah, is the means of showing gratitude for having been created (the reward for which is eternal paradise), anyone who refuses to believe this is a Kafir, literally 'ungrateful'. To worship anything at all other than Allah Himself, such as idols, or created beings no matter how admirable, such as Jesus, or to bury oneself in worldly affairs, 'pass-times', distractions to avoid recognising one's fundamental duty to worship none else but The Creator Himself, is the height of ingratitude, for which the penalty, unfortunately, is eternal damnation. However there are concessions towards Jews and Christians as 'People of the Book', *Ahl-al-Kitab*, because they were the recipients of essentially the same message from God, which some among them accepted. It is a moot point whether these include present day Jews and Christians since they both reject the revelation given to Muhammad ﷺ and most Christians consciously worship Jesus as God.

2.1.2 *Risaalah* – Guidance

Human beings are created with free will and therefore choose whether or not to fulfil their duty to Allah. However human beings will only be rewarded for worshipping Allah if they do so in the manner that He commanded. Thus He gave revelation of His commands to each of a succession of men, *Nabis* and *Rasuls*, from Adam to Muhammad ﷺ, and including Jesus, Moses, Abraham and many others recognised in the Old Testament. Rasul translates to 'Messenger' and Nabi is usually translated as Prophet, but the English word prophet fails to convey the extremely high status attributed to them in Islam, as impeccably faultless guides and absolutely the best of creation.

The nature of divine guidance is in two forms, the revealed book, the Qur'an, and the example of the way of life of Muhammad ﷺ. The Qur'an was revealed by Gabriel (*Jibreel*) to Muhammad ﷺ over the course of 23 years of his life from forty to shortly before his demise. The Qur'anic text in Arabic is considered to be the uncreated Word of God, an attribute of Allah Himself. Patently the printed and bound book is 'created', but the words themselves and as recited from it have that Divine status. Thus the Qur'an as a book is much more significant to Muslims than individual Bible *books* are to Christians,

notwithstanding the importance of the Christian text, although that too has been translated and recompiled several times over. Respect for the Qur'an may more helpfully be compared with that for an undisputed relic of the True Cross or the Ark of the Covenant for example. This explains why mistreatment of the Qur'an is such a profound offence to Muslims. Indeed Islamic law does not permit the Arabic Qur'an to be handled by non-Muslims at all, even though it is easily obtained in bookshops and elsewhere. Taking an oath on the Qur'an is not a recognised Islamic practice, though there is no harm in it. A conscientious Muslim would be reluctant to pick up the Qur'an for this purpose if he or she did not have *wudhu*, the state of ritual cleanliness required for prayers, *Salaah*, and handling the Qur'an. A Muslim is expected to speak the truth anyway, so an affirmation in court rather than an oath on the Qur'an, should never be regarded as suspect.

The way of life of Muhammadﷺ is captured in many thousands of contemporaneous records, known as *Hadith*, covering all of what he did, approved of, disapproved of, and recommended. The Hadith also include similar records of his companions where their actions were also qualified by their knowledge of his teaching. The collected practice of Islam based on these sources is called the *Sunnah*, and Sunnis are those who claim to adhere to this whole. The religious law derived from the Qur'an and Hadith is called the *Shari'ah*. While much of the Qur'an is readable in its own right, it is nevertheless wrong to try to take translated statements from the Qur'an and assume they apply literally to a given circumstance. The Qur'an itself states that it is comprised of laws, guidance, reminders, allegories and esoteric parts, and every verse of the Qur'an was revealed in a context which is only understood from corresponding Hadith.

The way of life of Muhammadﷺ, the Sunnah, provides the model for every part of a Muslim's daily life, including routines when awaking, manner of dress, manner of eating, relations and duties with family, friends and neighbours, through to governance of the country. Practising Muslims endeavour to absorb as much of the Sunnah into their daily life as they can, though individuals may differ in what part of the Sunnah they give priority to.

2.1.3 *Akhirah* - Afterlife

The entire purpose of life in the world is to earn reward for the next world by worshipping Allah alone in the manner which He commanded and which was demonstrated by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allahﷺ. Consequently all actions are brought forth on the Day of Judgement to be measured against this criterion. The fundamental, unforgivable sin is to worship something other than Allah, but for all other sins there is a fixed term in Jahannum, the Fire, followed by a cleansing and entry into Jannah, the Garden. For those whose balance of good outweighs sin, entry into Paradise immediately follows Judgement. The measure of a good deed is in its intention and in its closeness to the Sunnah, the examples of Muhammadﷺ. For those who lived before his time, the equivalent holds true for their respective Prophets.

For those who hold to the faith, suffering and calamities in this world are to be exchanged for greater reward in the next, or to be offset against sins. Submission to the *hudood*, the Islamic criminal code and its punishments, ensures that the recipient will be free from the punishment of the sin in the

next world. Children are born sinless and remain so until they reach puberty. The insane are also sinless, and they and children are guaranteed Paradise if they die in these states.

2.1.4 'Fundamentalism'

The concept of Fundamentalism originated with Christians who were determined to stick to the literal text of the Bible or traditional religious opinion that contradicted the picture of the world emerging from natural sciences. It has since come to mean the concept of applying rigid religious doctrines to everyday life in any religion, so there are several aspects to fundamentalism to consider. These are: literalism in divine books, the relationship between religion and science in interpreting human experience, the impact of religious certainty on secular life, and the significance of religious moral absolutes in running society. The last one is only relevant to countries where religious political parties are influential, but the other three all impact on choices such as schools run on religious lines, community reactions to moral issues and inter-community tensions. Even the last one has significance when trying to tackle extremism. This document does not intend to tackle the deep philosophical questions these issues raise, but a few points may clarify issues in a Muslim context.

2.1.4.1 Literalism

Every Muslim by definition believes in the Qur'an in Arabic as the literal, unchangeable Word of God, so in this restricted sense every Muslim is a 'fundamentalist'. But even the Qur'an itself includes text within it that makes clear that its interpretation must be done in context, that many passages are allegorical and many have mystical, not literal meaning. Compared with other sacred texts the Qur'an's descriptions of the natural world do not contradict scientific conventions, e.g. "We made from water every living thing." (22:30) or the description of creation follows a sequence that is compatible with science. In Islamic belief, Allah is all-powerful and all-knowing, implying that every vibration of every sub-atomic particle is controlled by Allah; but everything has a *wasilah*, a material cause – illness is cured by Allah's power, but medicine, the wasilah, must be applied. Ultimately one might argue that evolution is the theory that describes the wasilah that Allah uses to bring about creation of human beings in a rational way (leaving aside Darwinists' *randomness* of genetic change). The differentiator, mankind's attribute of intelligent free-will, is a divine gift given first to Adam, the first Prophet. One might indeed argue that, but most Muslims prefer a much more traditional interpretation of creation of mankind and come down on the same side as less rational Christian fundamentalists.

2.1.4.2 Interpreting Human Experience

The essence of the Muslim concept of humanity is that humans are driven by desire for things that distract them from facing up to their ultimate fate which is to be confronted by Allah with their deeds. This innate *desire* may often *appear* positive and creative, but while directed away from its original purpose, namely desire to be reunited with the Creator, it is wasted on at best superficial, material things and at worst, lustful, destructive obsessions. The Islamic spiritual traditions, *tassawwuf* or Sufism, are intended to tune a human

being back onto that original desire for the Divine. For the 'fundamentalist', any indulgence in worldly distractions has to be curtailed not by rekindling the original desire itself as the Sufis claim to do (and which is a long, tiresome process), but by enforcing restrictions on the behaviour that leads to immorality or self-indulgence. (For the real Sufi, these restrictions are self-imposed.)

2.1.4.3 Religious Certainty

Every religion claims ultimate truth for itself, even when it fogs the issue by supposing even ultimate truth to be relative. Islam is a continuation of the absolute religions of the Jews and original Christians, and is completely immersed in the same certainties. Mercy, restraint and humanity are enjoined at every step of the Shari'ah and in the implementing of the Hudood, the penal code. For the fundamentalist, ultimately every error or excess of zeal in its application is warranted not only by its effect of purifying the community by example, but by increasing the degree of forgiveness and divine reward of the recipient – even more so if a judicial error is committed. But for most Muslims, passionate faith is tempered by survival in a hostile world.

2.1.4.4 Moral Absolutes in Running Society

'Fundamentalist' governments rarely exist for long, because all government requires continual adjustment and compromise between different interest groups. However running a country according to Shari'ah is a very attractive principle for dissident groups opposing authoritarian secularist regimes in many Muslim countries, because it provides a populist rallying call without challenging the integrity of the dissidents themselves. In practice it is exactly that integrity which is found wanting, especially among the bandwagon followers that join in any initial success. Most Muslims in Britain are acutely aware of repression that accompanies both the secularist and the fundamentalist regime that follows it, but many are inclined to romanticise about the possibilities for Islamic utopia.

The intense debate around these kinds of processes is a significant feature of London's Muslim sub-culture. This is incidentally a very lively and valued forum for debating every angle of politics of practically every Muslim country, and as such is a valuable and internationally influential resource that should be cultivated.

2.2 Principle Practices

There are four obligatory acts of worship as well as numerous supererogatory practices. These are the five daily prayers, fasting in *Ramadhaan*, the pilgrimage to Makkah ('Mecca'), and the poor-tax.

According to the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) all legal and religious obligations in Islam commence from the age of puberty. Before this age, children are exempt from any obligations. Those who are sick or infirm, pregnant or suckling women, and women in menstruation have fewer obligations in different ways according to the activity. People below specific levels of poverty also have dispensations from some costly acts, and travellers have dispensations from some time-consuming acts.

2.2.1 *Salaah* – Ritual Prayer

Salaah (in Arabic) or *Namaaz* (the Turkish and Urdu word) is the ritual five times a day prayers. Actually it is a formalised act of praise, as distinct from prayer in the sense of supplication or invocation, which latter has its equivalence in *Du'ah*. Salaah comprises of a specific combination of standing, reciting verses of the Qur'an, bowing, prostrating and sitting, all facing the Kaabah in Makkah. This direction is called the *Qiblah*.

Salaah is obligatory on every Muslim man and on every Muslim woman except when menstruating. The only valid reason for missing a Salaah in its proper time period is to save a life or when life is in danger. (There are even special forms of Salaah for the battlefield.)

The direction of Makkah ranges between 120 degrees 31 minutes from Grid North in Lowestoft, and 110 degrees 41 minutes at Lizard Point, and is 117 degrees 43 minutes from Grid North in Central London. Few people have instruments accurate enough to establish such precise bearings and therefore will settle for roughly East-South-East. (A common accessory is a 'Qiblah Compass', which points north of course, but a table of locations is used to identify the Qiblah bearing. By convention it is divided into 40 or 400 units and the Qiblah in London is about 264 units.)

2.2.1.1 Five Daily Prayers

The five daily salaah must be performed each during its allotted period. The periods are fixed in relation to sunrise, noon and sunset, and so in the UK vary enormously between summer and winter.

1. *Fajr* – From first light, i.e. the crack of dawn, to sunrise.
2. *Dhuhar* – From shortly after local noon, i.e. the true zenith, to a mid-afternoon time determined by a simple formula.
3. *Asr* – From the mid-afternoon time to about 15 minutes before sunset.
4. *Maghrieb* – From directly after sunset to the end of twilight but with strong preference for the time straight after sunset.
5. *'Esha* – From the end of twilight to first light, but with strong preference for a time before local midnight.

There is also extra salaah, *Tahajjud*, between midnight and first light that is strongly emphasised for the specially pious, and in Ramadhaan there is a long collective salaah, *Tarawih*, every evening after *'Esha*. There are also many optional salaahs that some observe.

The five times a day salaah is the only essential Muslim daily routine. Salaah times vary considerably between summer and winter. Men are expected to perform salaah in the masjid, so it is quite normal to find numbers of men hurrying to the masjid at perhaps 4.00 am in summer. The rest of the day is unremarkable, except in the month of Ramadhaan when there are many more people attending the masjid through the day and long periods of salaah in the evening.

2.2.1.2 Salaah Period Timing

The *Salaah* periods are based on "true" local time, so they vary not only from GMT or BST clock time, but also are about 1 minute later for every 10 miles westwards and spread over a longer day further north in summer and over a shorter day further north in winter. Nearly all masjids print and distribute local timetables with the Islamic calendar, and some Islamic organisations raise funds by publishing similar information. Timetables are also available on the web, e.g. www.muslimdirectory.co.uk/prayer_times.php and www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/features/prayer.

There are slight variations in the definition of salaah periods arising from differences among Islamic sources in the first few centuries of Islam. These differences impact in other subtle ways and the different practices are known as *madhabs*, or "schools of thought". The majority of Muslims in Britain are South Asian and the majority of Asians observe *Hanafi* practice. (Other *madhabs'* practices vary from Hanafi practice e.g. with an earlier start for Asr and Esha, and different rules for combining of Dhuhar with Asr, and Maghrieb with Esha.) The following table illustrates the variation in times in summer and winter that mark the salaah periods. Times are approximate and apply to London.

Salaah	*Fajr*		*Dhuhar*		*Asr*		*Maghrieb*		*Esha*	
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
Midsummer's day (BST)	03.03	04.43	13.13	18.40	18.41	21.07	21.27	22.46	22.47	03.03
Spring and Autumn Equinoxes (GMT)	04.20	05.58	12.18	16.16	16.17	18.00	18.18	19.38	19.39	04.20
Midwinter's day (GMT)	06.26	08.06	12.13	14.10	14.11	15.45	16.02	17.21	17.22	03.02

During summer time only the Dhuhar salaah falls inside normal working hours in Britain, but in winter time, Dhuhar, Asr and Maghrieb all fall due in the working day afternoon.

2.2.1.3 Facilities for Salaah

1. Wudhu - ritual washing

Prior to making salaah, one must have performed ritual washing, known as *Wudhu*. This involves washing the face, arms and feet as described in the section on Hygiene below.

2. Musalaah or Jai-namaaz – prayer mat

The place to pray must be clean in accordance with religious definitions, and this is usually achieved by use of a prayer mat. There is no other ceremonial significance to the prayer mat, which may be richly decorated or just a plain rush mat.

3. Sutra – a barrier

It is preferable to be able make one's salaah standing behind an arbitrary object that forms a symbolic barrier between the one praying and those

walking around. It is considered reprehensible to pass in front of someone performing salaah, and the Sutra barrier resolves difficulty this might cause.

4. Salaah performance

Salaah is broken down into units, called *Rakaah*. Each complete Salaah comprises of two, three or four Rakaah and may last from two to five minutes. Each of the five daily periods includes an obligatory and some supererogatory salaahs, so the actual overall time required is approximately as follows, but individuals will have their own preferred habits. Wudhu, ablution, may also require another five minutes prior to this time.

Salaah	Duration
Fajr	5 mins
Dhuhar	15 mins
Asr	10 mins
Maghrieb	10 mins
Esha	25 mins

While performing a salaah, the person praying is supposed to be wholly absorbed, oblivious of his surroundings. To acknowledge a greeting, for example, breaks the salaah. Thus for the two to five minutes duration of each salaah an individual will studiously ignore any attempts to catch his attention, no matter how blatant the attempts are, not out of obtuseness but out of religious duty.

5. Jamaat – Collective Salaah

Whenever two or more Muslims need to perform salaah they would normally expect to make a jamaat, with one as imam and the others lined up close together behind him. Maghrieb salaah in Jamaat is recited aloud, as are 'Esha and Fajr.

6. Location

Whenever they possibly can, men are expected to perform salaah in the masjid.

There is nothing intrinsic in the salaah that requires privacy or special quiet. On the contrary, culturally, men's salaah is exceptionally public. (Women's salaah *is* expected to be discreet and private.) However partly out of concern not to be mocked in a hostile environment, and partly influenced by the Anglo-Saxon reserve from expression of religious sentiment, many Muslims assume they should find a place tucked away.

An organisation can go a long way towards acknowledging Muslim requirements by having a dedicated prayer room or a multi-use room used routinely by convention for salaah. There may be a public mosque (properly a *masjid*) in the neighbourhood, but (i) few masjids have facilities for women, (ii) time to get there may be limited, (iii) some masjids are locked outside of their fixed Jamaat times.

Statues and pictures or portraits of people are forbidden in Islam, in abhorrence partly of aggrandisement and partly of idolatry. Therefore a location that has these features would not be acceptable for salaah. Ad hoc measures however might include covering them up or taking such features down temporarily.

7. Travelling

When on a journey there are some concessions on Salaah. The rakaahs (units) of the obligatory salaah are halved, and less significance is placed on the non-obligatory Salaahs. Travellers may also "join together" Dhuhar and Asr Salaah and Maghrieb and 'Esha Salaah. Shi'a practice allows this joining together whether travelling or not, at the boundary time, i.e. late afternoon and the end of twilight. There are two different Shari'ah definitions of when someone qualifies for the traveller's concessions, i.e. the circumstances when an individual can apply these dispensations.

2.2.2 *Sawm* (Arabic) or *Roza* (Urdu) – Fasting

It is an obligation on all Muslims to fast in the month of Ramadhaan. The daily routine of fasting involves awaking to have enough time for breakfast before first light (which is as early as 3.03 am in midsummer in London, but 6.26 in midwinter), fasting without food or drink or ingested medication until immediately after sunset, and breaking the fast at that time. Then in the mid-evening there is a long period of extra Salaah, *Tarawih Salaah*, in which the entire Qur'an is recited over the 29 or 30 days of the month. It is highly recommended that Muslims read and recite as much of the Qur'an as they can individually during the month.

Fasting does not apply to anyone who is too sick to fast, or is on essential medication that is swallowed, injected or absorbed, or to women when menstruating, pregnant or suckling, or to travellers. Travellers may fast if it suits them. Those exempt must make up the missed fasts except those who are in a long term condition, who may instead feed a given number of the poor if they are able to afford it.

There are certain other days in the year in which optional fasts are routinely made, and some people keep habitual fasts every Monday and Thursday.

If any amount of food or drink is taken in genuine forgetfulness, fasting is not technically broken, even if it was a seven course meal! The fast merely resumes from the point where the error is remembered. There is no need to expel anything thus taken. However fasting is broken if anything, even something completely indigestible, is taken intentionally, e.g. a pebble, with the intention of mitigating hunger. There is an unsavoury habit of some to expectorate while fasting, though in fact swallowing saliva that is in the mouth does not break the fast.

Ramadhaan ends with the new moon of the following month and is followed by the feast day, Eid-ul-Fitr, literally the feast of fast-breaking.

2.2.3 *Zakaah* – Charity

Every Muslim who owns more than a certain Shari'ah-defined amount of property and savings above their routine needs, typically around £700 of

savings unused for a year or more, is required to pay 2½% as *Zakaat*, literally 'purification' of their wealth. The money must be distributed to Shari'ah-defined poor Muslims, those who have insufficient to be assured of their next meal.

Numerous charities and private initiatives exist to channel these funds for distribution to poor communities overseas. This activity is concentrated in Ramadhaan since any obligatory religious act is deemed many times more virtuous in that month.

2.2.4 *Hajj* – Pilgrimage

Any Muslim who has the means to do so and can support his family for the duration, must perform Hajj once in his life. Hajj requires a visit to Makkah (Mecca) and Arafat nearby, and invariably includes a number of days in Madinah 300 miles further north. Hajj occurs during the second week of the month of *Dhul-Hijjah* which is two months after Ramadhaan. Visits to Makkah and Madinah can be made at most other times too, but are not the Hajj. Any visit to Makkah must include specific rituals which are known as *Umrah* at other times than Hajj and are a subset of the Hajj rituals, but whereas Hajj covers five continuous days of activity, Umrah can take as little as a couple of hours. Umrah is not an obligation.

The Day of Hajj, on the plain of Arafat, is followed with the feast day of Eid-ul-Adha, literally the feast of sacrifice, in which an animal is slaughtered for each adult in the family, and its meat distributed to relatives, friends and the poor.

2.3 Ecumenicalism and Interfaith

Muslims have always been constantly preoccupied with ensuring that Islam retains its pristine state free of the influence of other religions. Efforts to this end include continual reminders that the Qur'an's Arabic text is immutable and translations are mere opinions of its meaning; all manner of precautions to ensure that performance of salaah is not inadvertently directed towards a symbol or person or portrait; and avoidance of bringing in to Islam ceremonies or celebrations that echo aspects of other religions that Islam rejects.

Thus for example, although Muslims believe as an article of faith, in the miraculous virgin birth of the *Prophet* Jesus, both the taking part in celebration of Christmas and celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are controversial issues (most Muslims would disdain the former; Deobandis and Salafis would strongly oppose the latter). The symbolism of Easter is of course anathema for Muslims but fundamental to Christianity. The Jewish Passover has been consciously incorporated into Islam albeit with deliberate changes. Hindu devotions being the very definition of idolatry from a Muslim perspective, it is inconceivable that Muslims could participate in a Hindu-inspired, religiously oriented gathering. A similar response would apply to Sikhs, except for the little known dispute between Sikhs and Muslims, namely that Muslims claim that the first two or three founders of Sikhi were actually Muslim missionaries sent to Hindus and that later generations of Sikhs half-reverted to Hinduism (hence perhaps the Sikhs' claim to be defenders of all religions and their respect for the Qur'an). While Jews, Muslims and Christians may converge on a common concept of

God the Creator, ambiguous terms like 'Lord' have for Muslims enough of a Christian resonance for many to assume that even in an ecumenical context this is too close for comfort to unintended polytheism (in this case implying worshipping Jesus).

Participation in ecumenical gatherings is always ultimately a personal choice for individual Muslims. People in position of religious authority have particular concern that a religious act involving another faith's traditions might be interpreted as an endorsement of the act, or worse, may make the participant vulnerable to accusations of weakness in his own practice, especially in the fractious atmosphere of the Muslim community where authority is weak.

As long as Muslims continue to see themselves as put upon, some Muslim figures will be uncomfortable with participating in activities that appear to drive them into positions of compromise by association with other groups with which strong disagreements exist, or that are recognised as having compromised way beyond a level that the Muslim figure's audience is ready for. Political sensitivities of the Muslim community are often very different to those of the wider British community, but often have an international context that local British sensibilities ignore. Therefore one should not be dismayed by the poor response from many Muslim representatives to ecumenical initiatives.

3 Islam's Place in the World and in Britain

3.1 Islam in the World

The heartland of Islam is Arabia and Palestine. Muhammadﷺ, the Messenger of Allah, was born in Makkah. His mother was from Madinah, 300 miles to the north. He lived for fifty-one years in Makkah and the remaining twelve years in Madinah. On the occasion of the Divine revelation which included the command for Muslims to perform the salaah five times a day, he was transported miraculously to Jerusalem, to the place of the al-Aqsa masjid, and from there an ascension through the heavens and back. For several years the *qiblah*, the prayer direction, was towards Jerusalem until revelation of verses of the Qur'an commanded him to turn right around and face the Kaabah in Makkah. Thus Makkah, Madinah and al-Aqsa in Jerusalem are the three most holy places of the Muslim world.

Islam spread over several centuries, westwards to cover North Africa and much of Spain, northwards to much of Central Europe and southern Russia, eastwards to include Indonesia and large parts of south-east China, and southwards to southern Africa.

The twenty largest Muslim-majority countries are listed below.

Country	Muslim Percentage	Muslim Population in 2003
Indonesia	88	194
Pakistan	97	145
Bangladesh	88	130
Turkey	100	71
Egypt	94	68
Nigeria	50	67
Iran	99	66
Ethiopia	50	35
Algeria	99	31
Morocco	99	30
Afghanistan	99	28
Sudan	73	28
Saudi Arabia	100	24
Iraq	97	23
Uzbekistan	88	23
Yemen	100	19
Tanzania	50	18
Syria	90	16
Malaysia	59	15

The twenty largest Muslim *minorities* in non-Muslim countries are listed below, Britain being 20th on the list. Figures in this and the preceding table are taken from "The World Factbook" published by the US Central Intelligence Agency, and, for consistency, have not been amended e.g. with better information about the UK.

Country	Muslim Percentage	Muslim Population in 2003

India	14	149.6
China	3	38.7
Russia	19	27.7
Kazakhstan	47	7.0
Kenya	20	6.3
Ghana	30	6.2
United States	2.1	6.0
France	10	6.0
Philippines	7	5.7
Congo	10	5.7
Uganda	16	4.1
Mozambique	20	3.5
Cameroon	22	3.5
Germany	3.7	3.1
Thailand	4	2.5
Malawi	20	2.3
Serbia & Montenegro	19	2.0
Myanmar	4	2.0
Zambia	15	1.6
United Kingdom	2.5	1.5

3.2 Principle Factions

90% of Muslims worldwide are Sunni, and about 10% are Shi'a. Other factions are subdivisions of these. Whereas definitions of Sunni and Shi'a are mutually exclusive, for most Muslims subdivisions below this level are informal and non-exclusive.

3.2.1 Shi'a

Shi-ism is concentrated in Iran and eastern Iraq, with very small pockets scattered between Iran and India, across Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, plus some of the Emirates in the Gulf.

Both Sunni and Shia traditions cover a wide spectrum of cultural practices and degrees of religious commitment. Shi'as differ from Sunnis over the leadership of the Muslim community following the demise of the Prophet. They consider the first three *Khalifas*, or 'representatives [of the Prophet]' to be usurpers, whereas Sunnis believe the three and the fourth, Ali, as well, to be his closest companions ranking in closeness as they did in succession. Since a large part of religious practice was transmitted by the three and their associates, Shi'as rejection of that practice accounts for substantial practical differences with Sunnis, made up for by Shi'as' much heavier reliance on inspired verdicts of later and more contemporary leaders, ayatullahs, for example, whose equivalent do not exist in Sunni Islam. Different Shi'a sects are rooted in disagreements as to how many and who were the true succession of imams with a claim on the legacy of the Prophet and his family.

3.2.2 Sunni

Sunnis believe the three and the fourth, Ali, as well, to be Prophet's closest companions ranking in closeness as they did in succession. Sunni Islamic practice is derived from the Qur'an and the practices of the Prophet and all his companions, which is the Sunnah. Theological differences among Sunnis

are very slight and subtle. The main variations among Sunnis arise from differences over the nature of Islamic mysticism and of Islamic authority, with ancient Sufi practices still extant over most of the non-Arab-speaking Muslim world. Religious reactions against many of the more ludicrous spiritual claims and political reactions against the weakness and corruption of Muslim rulers led to various reform movements in different parts of the world, chiefly in India in the mid nineteenth century and in the Arabian peninsula at the end of that century. Also strong Arab nationalist sentiments emerged in Egypt in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

3.2.3 Sunni – Deobandis and Bareilvis

In India, Sunni religious scholarship polarised between Deoband Madressah and Bareili Madressah. Both maintained orthodox practices, but the former emphasised adherence to dogma whereas the latter became much more charismatic. Deoband followers, *Deobandis*, instituted *Tabligh Jamaat*, a practice of sending small groups of men from masjid to masjid spending a few days staying at each one, and preaching according to a rigid formula that enables any moderately educated person to convey the essentials of Islam without worrying about straying into scholarly ground. The Tablighi movement is worldwide and has been particularly effective at establishing religious consciousness, mosques and madressas around Britain. Nevertheless the largest communities of Muslims in Britain are from areas of Punjab and Kashmir where the *Bareilvi* charismatic Sufi traditions are strongest. Both groups, indeed every Sunni faction, describe themselves as "*Ahl-as-Sunnah wa'l Jama'at*" i.e. adherents of the true Sunnah, and naturally, every other Sunni faction as deviated from it.

3.2.4 Sunni Arab Movements

The roots of a whole range of different Arab and Muslim revival movements from Arab socialism, secular nationalism and the Ba'ath movement, through to the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafism (literally returning to the roots) and movements to restore the *Khilafat* or Caliphate, can be traced back to Egypt in the 1870s. The secular movements among them have had less significance recently compared with when countries struggled for independence from colonial rule. However most of the religious-based movements have some presence among Arab-speaking communities in Britain and Europe today although the majority of Arabs in Western society are much more secular-inclined than Asian Muslims living in the West.

3.2.5 Sunni – 'Wahabbis'

In the Arabian peninsular there was a vicious struggle against Ottoman Turkish rule, culminating in the collapse of the Ottoman empire in 1924 and the formation of the state of Saudi Arabia. Detestation of any Turkish influence and the presumed corruption of Islam by external influences contributed to the formation of a very narrow definition of Sunni Islamic orthodoxy by the Saudis, commonly known as 'Wahabbi-ism' after its formulator in the 18th century, although the term Wahabbi-ism is resented and is usually used disparagingly against the Saudis and against many other groups sceptical of mystical practices in Islam.

3.2.6 Sunni – Maulana Maudoodi

Arab Muslim revival movements also stimulated similar political-oriented Muslim groups in the Indian sub-continent in the first half of the 20th century, in particular Jamaat Islami led by Maudoodi in Pakistan. This organisation plays a major role in Pakistani politics and is represented by a cluster of influential organisations including UK Islamic Mission and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester. Although their Islamic practice is almost indistinguishable from Deobandis and Bareilvis, they are far more inclined towards mainstream political activism than either of these more tradition-bound factions. They influence the main protagonists of the Muslim Council of Britain, although the MCB tries earnestly to be non-partisan.

3.2.7 Sunni – Salafi

Since the 1980s there has been an increasing awareness among Western Muslim youth of their identities as Muslims as distinct from their ethnic identities, which have become diffused in younger generations. As specifically Muslim issues have become topical, these have focussed youngsters' attention on Islam. At the same time, these generations have an inability to connect with the obscure factionalism of their parents, and they have available to them high quality literature in Western European languages that challenges conventional Islamic authority and propagates concepts about returning to the roots of Islam, the *Salaf*. These influences have combined to produce an influential and growing body of young Muslims who have adopted a spectrum of practices ranging widely from militant hostility to full participation in Western society, and coming under a broad umbrella generally known as Salafi-ism. Its relative accessibility also makes it attractive to many converts to Islam.

3.2.8 Extremists

It is vital to recognise that association with specific factions does ***not*** indicate inclination towards politically motivated violence – the few Muslims who have been implicated in violence of this kind have had a variety of religious and other influences including from mainstream Muslim groups – and conversely some of the most outspoken and challenging groups include members who are directly contribute to work to maintain the law and counter political violence.

It is also important to recognise and discount the fact that Muslim spokesmen may label groups as extremist or militant through ignorance or prejudice or due to antagonism between factions and even basic misunderstanding of what particular groups stand for. Similar ignorance exists among writers, journalists and other commentators outside the Muslim community who have often misconstrued derogatory claims about groups and individuals. There are very few dependable texts on the subject. Understanding and tackling extremism is a complex process. If it is thought to be an issue then expert help is strongly advised.

3.2.9 Factions and Fringe Movements

As is inevitable with any system of belief, individual adherents to different factions have different thresholds of tolerance of dissenters from their faction.

Willingness to accept and work with other Muslims varies considerably, and community initiatives may break down because of factional rivalries, e.g. if one group predominates in an initiative, others may ignore the initiative or hinder it or lobby against it.

3.2.9.1 Ahmadiyya and Nation of Islam

Over the centuries, groups have sprung up in different parts of the Muslim world that have had major differences with mainstream Islam. Some have disappeared again into obscurity; others such as the Baha'is and even the Sikhs, have explicitly parted company with Islam after a while. There is uniform agreement among all Muslims that two sects are entirely outside Islam although the two describe themselves as Muslims. One group is Ahmadiyya, which started in what is now Pakistan, but now has its world headquarters in Morden, south west London. The other is the American black separatist movement, Nation of Islam. Both sects have claims about prophethood, allegedly vested in Ghulam Mirza Ahmed of Qadian, and Elijah Muhammad respectively, that contradict fundamental tenets of Islam. Any attempt to put together a Muslim community activity that depends critically on either of these groups' participation is likely to meet serious objections. Brixton Mosque is a focal point of Afro-Caribbean converts to Islam, but has no connection with Nation of Islam.

3.2.9.2 Cults

Some concern has been raised about cults by policy makers tackling extremism. The well-defined nature of Islamic doctrines make it very difficult for any charismatic and unorthodox cults to form without being challenged at a very early stage, and the dynamism and interactivity between Muslims of different backgrounds, especially among the younger generations, would quickly raise those challenges. There is no evidence of the presence of bizarre cults at work in the Muslim community in Britain. Whether or not research that considers extremist militant groups as cults achieves anything useful is outside the scope of this document.

3.3 Muslim Groups in Britain and in London

3.3.1 Muslims in Britain

At least 98% of Muslims in Britain, and approximately 1300 or 96% of masjids or mosques, are Sunni, and about 2% are Shia, with 65 masjids. The majority of Sunni masjids broadly follow the principles of Deoband Madressah (circa 660 masjids) and about 400 others those of Bareilli Madressah. About 50 are Maudoodi-influenced and about 70 Asian-run masjids adhere to Salafi or similar principles.[2]

Of the remainder, approximately 12 are very large institutions with very substantial numbers of Arab-speaking worshippers, and another 12 or so are very small and makeshift Arab-run masjids. 4 are Turkish-language, 2 are run

[2] These figures are not publicly available since few masjids explicitly claim allegiance to particular factions and indeed most are utilised by all in the neighbourhood. The numbers are derived from first hand knowledge of the masjids or more subtle indicators of allegiance. In some cases organisations with clear affiliations have published lists of masjids who are directly affiliated or whose ethos shares their outlook.

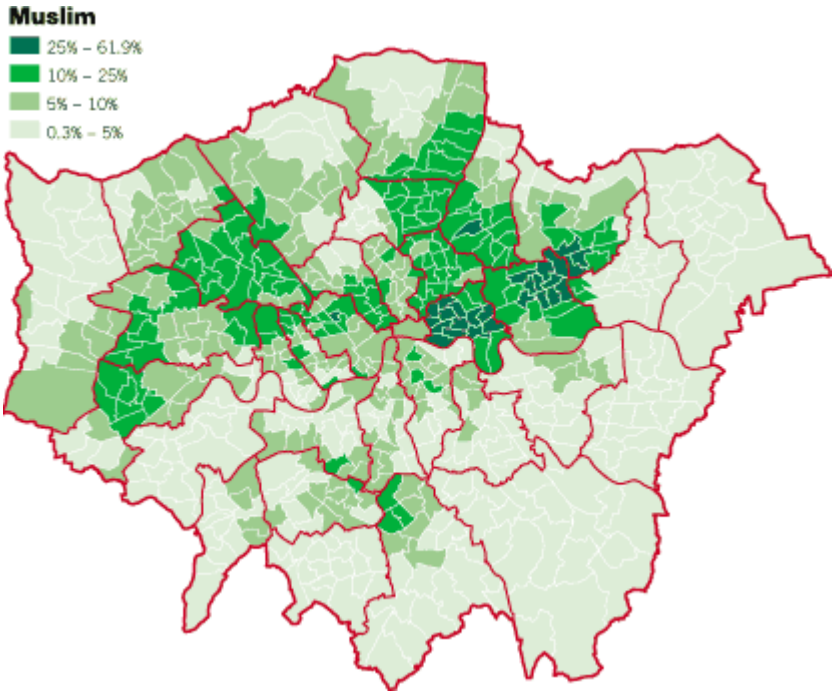
by Nigerians, 1 each by Indonesians, Malays and Brunei-ese, 3 by Guyanese and a couple by Iranians, 1 by black converts and 1 mainly by white converts.

Most universities have campus prayer rooms dedicated to university Muslim society members' use, supported from university union funds and led and managed as masjids by students.

Given the small numbers of Shias and Shia masjids, many Shias will use Sunni masjids, although the reverse is rarely true. Otherwise most Sunnis will use whichever masjid is convenient. The religious differences between the Deobandi, Bareilvi and Maudoodi-ist Sunni factions are subtle and very obscure, and in Britain only the most partisan followers of each will make a principle of boycotting the others' masjids. Indeed, most Muslims and most masjid committees downplay sectarian allegiances and many have insufficient knowledge even to be aware of the differences. However communities also tend to split into ethnically separate Gujerati, Pakistani and Bangladeshi masjids (although this too is always downplayed), subdividing into factional lines as well, so when engaging with the Muslim community it is important to make sure that the right coverage is achieved, therefore it is important to recognise the obstacles posed by factionalism and ethnic divisions.

3.3.2 Muslims in London

Using data derived from the 2001 Census, the Guardian deduced that "London's Muslim population of 607,083 people is probably the most diverse anywhere in the world, besides Mecca." Even the Meccan comparison is questionable, since residential and economic conditions are quite peculiar there.



Ethnicity and Religion (ordered by %)			
	Muslim		
London	**Muslim Pop'n**	**% of Total**	**Ranking of %**
Tower Hamlets	71389	36.4	1
Newham	59293	24.3	2
Waltham Forest	32902	15.1	3
Brent	32290	12.3	5
Ealing	31033	10.3	10
Redbridge	28487	11.9	6
Hackney	27908	13.8	4
Enfield	26306	9.6	11
Haringey	24371	11.3	9
Camden	22906	11.6	8
Westminster	21346	11.8	7
Hounslow	19378	9.1	12
Barnet	19373	6.2	18
Croydon	17642	5.3	22
Southwark	16774	6.9	16
Harrow	14915	7.2	15
Lambeth	14344	5.4	21
Islington	14259	8.1	14
Wandsworth	13529	5.2	23
Kensington and Chelsea	13364	8.4	13
Lewisham	11491	4.6	25
Hammersmith and Fulham	11314	6.8	17
Hillingdon	11258	4.6	24
Merton	10899	5.8	19
Greenwich	9199	4.3	27
Barking and Dagenham	7148	4.4	26
Kingston upon Thames	5777	3.9	28
Bromley	4926	1.7	31
Sutton	4103	2.3	29
Richmond upon Thames	3887	2.3	30
Bexley	3069	1.4	32
Havering	1800	0.8	33
City of London	403	5.6	20

Source: National Statistics website: www.statistics.gov.uk
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Faction	All UK Masjids	London Masjids	London congregations	Estimated London populations
Deobandi Masjids	660	170	60,000	144,000
Bareilvi Masjids	400	84	33,000	79,000
Maudoodi Masjids	50	12	4,000	10,000
Salafi Masjids	90	23	21,000	50,000
Arab-speaking	25	14	16,000	38,000
All Sunni Masjids	1300	290	240,000	576,000
Sunni population	98%	95%		576,000
All Shia Masjids	65	16	13,000	31,000
Shia population	2%	5%		31,000

Most of the smaller ethnic communities among Muslims in Britain are to be found in London. Thus 4 masjids in London are Turkish-language, 2 are run by Nigerians, 1 each by Indonesians, Malays and Brunei-ese, 3 by Guyanese and a couple by Iranians and 1 by black converts.

Noting the total rejection of Qadianism from Islam by all except themselves, nevertheless the Qadiani/Ahmadiyya presence is significant, since London is their world headquarters. The majority of Qadiani practitioners are in south west London, and they have 8 meeting halls with total capacity of 4,100 and approximately 10,000 followers in London.

As explained in the previous section, it is important to consider the various Muslim factions when pursuing activity concerned with engagement with Muslim community organisations, because activity that perhaps unwittingly focuses on one faction or ethnic group within Islam may drive others away.

Ethnic groups in London are reasonably well recognised by most government bodies, but difficulties arise when ethnic identities are accorded more significance than religious affiliation and factionalism within religions. The main countries of origin among Muslims in London are Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, followed by Turkey/Cyprus, Algeria, Morocco, sub-Saharan West Africa, the Sahel or Horn of Africa, Egypt, Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore. This breakdown illustrates some of the problems in ensuring comprehensive representation. For example Muslims are a minority in India, but in Britain Indian Muslims are approximately equal in number to Hindus. However there are huge ethnic and cultural differences between Gujerati and Tamil Indian Muslims or Indian Muslims from Guyana, all of whom are present in London.

The Deobandi, Bareilvi and Maudoodi-ist Sunni factions are represented to some degree among the older generation of south Asian Muslims, Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, if not explicitly then at least by inclination. The younger generation often disdains these traditional factions and the barriers the factions set up, and they also resent the strong ethnic divisions of their elders. These are among the factors that turn many youth away from the mainstream Muslim community to seek more radical alternatives. However this disdain often creates further factions and new ‘breakaway’ masjids, in particular those following Salafi ideas.

4 The Mosque or *Masjid*

4.1 The Basics of a Mosque

The word Mosque comes from the French word 'mosqué' which is a crude rendering of the Egyptian dialect *masgid* derived from the original Arabic *masjid*, meaning a place for prostration. Masjid is the correct term, and 'mosque', while widely used, has no proper meaning.

The only fundamental requirement for a masjid is that it is 'religiously' clean, i.e. free from the contaminants whose presence require ritual purification, e.g. human or animal blood, urine, faecal matter, alcohol, animal matter not from halaal animals. This explains the requirement to remove shoes when entering the masjid so as not to bring anything off the street, and the need to use shoes in the lavatory area. Practically all masjids are equipped with facilities for ritual washing, *wudhu*, to prepare for salaah, though these can be as basic as a tap over a drain.

Given this minimalist definition of a masjid, there would be major difficulties in defining, regulating or enforcing closure of a masjid whose reputation is unsound. Presently councils apply planning permission rules and fire regulations governing use of a building for places of public assembly, but even these would not apply if the gatherings are small or infrequent and in what is effectively a private house.

There is usually joinery or masonry to form a *mehrab* or alcove at the front of the praying area. Its traditional purpose was to act as an amplifier of the imam's voice in salaah and as a sutra or barrier at the front of the jamaat. (See the notes on Salaah - Ritual Prayer.) The imam's position is marked by his own *musalaah* or prayer mat. Adjacent to the mehrab is a *mimbar*, or pulpit, from which the Friday *khutbah* or sermon is delivered. The Friday ritual requires a stand with at least three steps, but a simple chair will suffice as an absolute minimum for Friday. For ceremonial reasons, the Khutbah must be delivered in Arabic in a set pattern, but the tradition of delivering a preliminary talk (*bayaan or wyaz)* in the local language goes back to the earliest days of Islam.

Additional architectural features such as a dome or minaret make the building more distinctively Islamic but have no essential religious significance. Domes act to keep buildings cooler in hot climates and the minaret would have been used for the muezzin to broadcast the Adhaan, the call to prayer.

Unsurprisingly there are invariably many bookshelves of copies of the Qur'an in Arabic. Book size, text font and style may vary, but the Arabic text is always identical. Sometimes large collections of Qur'an recitation tapes are kept too and these should be treated with the same respect as the Qur'an book. Most of the book collections in masjids are decorative – Qur'ans will be used by a few people for recitation, but most of the books go untouched. People often offload unwanted collections of Islamic literature onto Masjid libraries, where they may remain undisturbed for years, especially if the literature looks Islamic but is in an unknown tongue. Very few non-Arabs can read Arabic other than the Qur'an itself, so many masjid users will treat such material as sacred literature without knowing its content. Therefore masjids cannot

reasonably be held accountable for the literature found within them unless it is prominent or clearly attributable.

4.2 Formal Worship

It is mandatory for each of the five obligatory salaah to be preceded by the *Adhaan* or call to prayer. This has to be recited in a loud voice from a raised place outside of the masjid area, traditionally from the top of a *minar* or tower, but the basic requirement can be just a single step off the ground just outside the prayer room itself and without amplification. Many of the more affluent masjids have set up CB radio transmitters with receiver-only devices available to neighbouring homes. There is no essential requirement for masjids to proclaim the adhaan from loudspeakers in public outside the masjid, but this would be a positive gesture where it is acceptable to the local community.

Most masjids are open for the five daily salaah of course, for each of which a *jamaat* or congregation will form at a fixed time, led by the regular imam. However, invariably only a very small number attend compared with Friday Juma'a salaah or in Ramadhaan or on the two Eid days. Thus normally there is no noticeable congestion and disturbance around a masjid, but most masjids are full on Friday lunchtimes and some are overflowing. Masjids are usually left open during the intervals between salaah, since attendees who will have missed the fixed time jamaat will still need to make their salaah alone or in ad hoc jamaats. However, individual masjids may restrict access during the longer intervals between salaah times to keep the buildings secure.

4.3 History of Mosques in Britain

Most British Muslim communities that evolved from the 1950s and 1960s started by making ad hoc arrangements for salaah, e.g. in the front room of someone's house. As families with children became established, typically a mother would extend the teaching of Qur'an recitation and mother-tongue from her own children to include those of other families. Families clubbed together to buy a small house to use regularly for salaah and teaching and would arrange to bring a moderately qualified imam from their home town to provide regular five times daily salaah, Friday Juma'a and Qur'an and mother-tongue teaching. They would support him with a meagre retainer from their Friday collections.

In time, bigger premises would be bought with accumulated savings, sometimes with land from the local authority, and sometimes including large contributions from successful local businessmen (but extremely rarely has this come from overseas donations or Islamic institutions). As the masjid attendees grow in number they include increasing numbers of people from other Muslim ethnic groups than the founders. As numbers grow, particular Muslim factions also become distinct. When dissenters reach a critical mass and it becomes practicable for them to support another masjid, they split off and establish another one, often nearby and usually with a more distinct ethnic or factional identity. Masjids continue to grow in this organic fashion so that for example in High Street North, East Ham, London, there are five masjids in 200 yards on the same street.

Masjids and Islamic community centres are usually named in some Islamically significant way, usually with an Arabic or Urdu phrase. As with all

representation of Arabic and other cursive script languages rendered in the English alphabet, spelling is approximate and arbitrary, since there is no direct phonetic correspondence between the alphabets. Therefore it is normal to find the same entity referred to by different names. For example "Masjid Talim-ul-Islam", "Edarat-e-Alimul Islam" and "Idara Taleem-ul-Islam" are all used in formal documents as names for the same actual premises, and in this case translate cumbersomely to "Knowledge of Islam Mosque" and "School of Knowledge of Islam".

4.4 Factions and Control

The Muslim community is very touchy about factionalism. No one wants to be the first to admit to its existence since unity is stressed in many Islamic sources, and every masjid will claim that they are not a faction, that all Muslims are welcome to use their masjid. In practice this is basically true – any Muslim can pray in any masjid without interference – but in every masjid there will be practices that are encouraged, others that are tolerated, and other practices that are obstructed. The imam himself is an employee of the management committee and they will inevitably have selected an imam who maintains their doctrines. (For all the protests that Muslims decry factionalism, the litmus test of factionalism in every masjid is when the congregation has to select someone to lead salaah when the imams are all absent. The dominant faction will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid giving anyone else the opportunity to take the imam's role.) The management committee will also control permission to users to arrange meetings, lectures and other activities and will invariably withhold permission from those who appear to be following a different doctrine. This is not simple awkwardness – among the older generations there are profound emotional ties to some of their traditions and they do not have the religious training needed to defend their traditions intellectually. They invested in their masjids in order to secure their traditions for their children to take up and they have genuine fears that rival doctrines seek to undermine this influence.

By the mid-1990s the Muslim generation that had grown up in Britain, had reached university in sufficient numbers to form viable religiously active Islamic societies on campus. Here for the first time they were away from the ethnic divisions, factions and mother-country traditions of their parents. They also mixed with Muslim overseas students from the Middle-East and Africa and found great disparities in their various practices, which they resolved by rejecting traditional Islamic scholarship in favour of their own searching of original sources. Thus salafi-ism, returning to the notional roots, the *salaf*, of Islam, became popular among younger Muslims who then found themselves in conflict with their elders that were holding tight control of the suburban and textile town British masjids. As the new student generation dispersed from Universities, and as Arab-language communities, e.g. Algerians, Moroccans and Somalis began to settle, new Salafi and other politically charged factions have started to make an impact, with increasing numbers of small Salafi masjids being set up.

4.5 Organisation

4.5.1 Openness can be Weakness

Some of the larger local mosques are managed in an open, democratic fashion instead of by enforcement of a rigid doctrinal position in the mosque's affairs. While one might hope for a correspondingly open, ecumenical approach to factionalism, unfortunately such mosques are treated as fair-game for influence and for recruitment by marginal factions and become scenes of bitter disputes. However most of the time the desire to maintain a polite public façade and avoid unpleasant confrontations pushes such activity and the efforts to counteract it, into furtive scheming and meetings out of the spotlight where it is difficult to manage.

4.5.2 Control and Growth

In any masjid the management committees and their imams are almost always determined to maintain exclusive control by their faction – they want to protect their material and moral investment in the mosque. The usual pattern of organic growth of the masjid is for the congregation to grow until a new factional or ethnically distinct, and discontent, group forms, then grows until a breakaway mosque becomes sustainable.

4.5.3 Defining Membership

Within the limitations of building security, all masjids are open to anyone as a matter of principle. Thus the only sense in which most worshippers are 'members' of a masjid is by habitual attendance. Most masjid management organisations are registered charities and are therefore required to have some form of constitutional governance, which implies some form of membership criteria. In practice, this can vary widely, in the most elaborate cases taking the form of a democratic structure in which would-be members are elected to join an electoral college fixed in number that then elects management committees, who in turn employ imams, teachers and caretakers. Often, the committee is appointed by an annual general meeting that is made up from whoever troubles to come to the venue. Because of the potential instability of this arrangement, many masjids make their meeting arrangements discreetly e.g. by word of mouth, and thus become very inaccessible, one of the many complaints of young Muslims about their elders.

4.5.4 Takeover Bids

No matter how open the controlling arrangements are, every masjid has to determine the geographical franchise of its members. This is invariably a problem because there are usually no natural boundaries. In the larger cities, habitual attendees could often choose from several masjids in the neighbourhood, not limited by any well defined boundary. The more openly democratically organised masjids often attract sustained attempts by disadvantaged factions to take over control by packing meetings. Power struggles of this kind have sometimes led to violent squabbles and sometimes to intervention by the Civil Courts or the Charity Commissioners or by reference to an independent local figure, e.g. a senior local police officer. Because of the difficulty in defining the franchise and the factional and ethnic aspects of how the masjid was founded and by whom, natural justice is not

always on the side of the majority. Note however that in spite of the obvious problems of the vulnerability of masjids to take-over, only in one case out of 1300 to 1400 masjids, that of North London Islamic Centre in Finsbury Park, has this kind of power struggle had sinister consequences, and in that case the main factors were not constitutional but a weak committee stuck without a trained imam for a significant period (they had sacked two), followed by sustained violent intimidation by the supporters of the ad hoc imam (Abu Hamza Al Masri).

4.6 Imams

4.6.1 Need for a Regular Imam

In the informal masjids set up in people's houses and before the size of the congregation has grown sufficient to employ an imam, the imam will be chosen from among those present at the time of each salaah, based on his knowledge of recitation of sufficient verses of the Qur'an and his reputation for piety. However this ad hoc arrangement can lead to bickering among the unschooled, and there still remains the needs of religious education for children or authoritative sermons on Fridays, so as soon as they can afford it, most places will seek to employ a full-time imam who meets their financial, ethnic and doctrinal constraints. Usually this means bringing someone from overseas.

4.6.2 Native Arabic Speakers

In the small number of Arab-run informal masjids the role of imam is merely an honorary courtesy, because many of the attendees will be able to act as imam for the prayers, having Arabic as their first language.

The 12 very large Arab-dominated institutions are very keen to honour their responsibilities to the community and many have management and imams that maintain good relations with the authorities. Each such large masjid has a few Arab mother tongue scholars employed as imams and teachers.

4.6.3 English Speaking

The Muslim community across the board recognises the importance of trained Islamic scholars who are eloquent in English, but pressure on them to employ individuals with basic knowledge of English actually makes the problem worse. Explanation of the contentious and subtle points of religion to disputatious youngsters (and elders too) requires careful and effective communication and therefore real competence in English to address the youth as well as mother-tongue to address the elders. Basic knowledge of English is more useless than no English because mediocre English skills merely bury the problem, and shortage of supply of imams with an English qualification and willing to work in the poor conditions of most masjids, leave masjids open to disputes and opportunities for unqualified trouble-makers to take over. The main factions (the Sunni sects - Deobandi, Bareilvi, Maudoodi, Salafi and the Shia sects) have accumulated enough resources to train imams adequately in Britain for the larger ethnic divisions, but graduates have only emerged very recently, and the smaller ethnic divisions are unrepresented.

4.6.4 Limited Incentives

However there are real obstacles in the way of young, British, would-be imams. There are no material incentives that lead anyone raised in Britain to choose this career and they cannot have expectations of British working conditions and wages. The vast majority of masjid budgets are very limited, and so the majority of imams are still obtained from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh and work in poor conditions at very low wages because that is all that is available. British-trained imams usually end up in junior positions in the larger mosques where there are often associated Muslim-oriented full-time schools where they can be more fully employed, or they take on other employment instead, typically in their family business.

4.7 Islamic Authority

Just as it is often supposed that the Muslim community is fairly homogeneous, so it is often supposed that religious authority is respected and applied hierarchically. This is not the case at all. There are two aspects to the problem, the principles of authority, and the practicalities of applying that authority.

The principle is that each new requirement for a religious ruling is ultimately referred to the Qur'an and the practice of the Messenger ﷺ and his companions. This is achieved by comparing the new requirement with whatever has gone before that has satisfied this condition and the task is performed by a *mufti*, i.e. someone who is qualified to make a *fatwa*. A fatwa is an individual religious judgement applicable to one case. The body of religious instructions that apply to an action, the *masa'il*, is produced through consensus among scholars across the whole Muslim community agreeing that particular rulings should apply generally and not just as individual fatwas in individual cases. Thus the Islamic equivalent of a judge's verdict does not become case law by legal precedent, but becomes something like statute-law through a forum for judges to make a consensus.

The practical difficulties are that (i) the Muslim communities are scattered around the world with no means of determining a common consensus, (ii) there are few places where the verdict of religious scholars is taken up and applied by the government, (iii) the entrenchment of factions prevents any consensus emerging across factional boundaries, and (iv) with factionalism and dispersal there is no longer an agreed standard or recognised qualification that demonstrates the required level of scholarship except within the most narrowly defined factions. With no formal network of authority at this level, and with numerous key source texts available in questionable and unqualified translation in print and on the web, and with innumerable web-sites that encourage readers to submit questions to 'Islamic authorities' that are completely unknown, there is a strong tendency for Muslims to make arbitrary decisions about right and wrong practice, which adds to the number of informal, local schisms.

In these literally anarchic conditions, individual Muslims may pick and choose the religious opinion that suits them, and they have little incentive to respect the opinion of the imam of their local masjid or scholars associated with any umbrella organisation such as the Muslim Council of Britain. Indeed, when news media report that some supposed supreme Muslim authority has issued a

ruling on some topical controversial subject, very few Muslims would even have noticed the report, even less have heard of the personality being cited.

As explained above, fatwas are religious judgements reached by Muftis, i.e. Muslim scholars with specific qualifications, and can apply to any subject in contention where a general religious ruling or practice does not exist. They are not 'death penalties', as is supposed following the Rushdie case; and they cannot be applied to the general case having been given for a specific case, at least not without much wider consultation. They cannot be given by unqualified individuals. Some militants make or are accused of making 'fatwas' to incite their followers to violent acts. This kind of rhetoric must not be confused with the studied approach to Islamic law interpretation of genuine Muftis.

4.8 Notices and Leaflets, Speakers and Events in the Masjid

4.8.1 Speakers and Events

Difficulties in effective management of masjids as described above, caused by uncommunicative management committees, anxiety to avoid confrontations with controversial or rival groups, or lack of confidence in tackling complex Islamic issues means that most masjids are very reluctant to allow events to be organised or speakers to be arranged except from a narrow range that are known to conform to the management committee's views.

4.8.2 Handbills in the Masjid

On the other hand the same factors make it difficult to control what literature is displayed or left to take away on the periphery of the masjid and provide an incentive for dissenters to do just that. Piles of flyers, handbills, newsletters and other publications will be found in the entrances to most masjids, and notices promoting various kinds of fringe groups and opportunities to learn about aspects of Islam will be pinned up on the notice-board by individuals. Few people in the masjid will know what significance the statements or the events advertised have, whether sinister or wholesome.

4.8.3 Leafleting outside the Masjid

Some Muslim organisations muster support by leafleting outside the masjid entrance, often to the annoyance of the masjid's management who usually assume they can do nothing about it. Generally speaking, the law allows wider latitude for collecting money for charitable purposes than for commercial or political ones, both of which are more closely regulated by licensing. 'Charitable purposes' means any charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purpose. It includes the relief of poverty and the advancement of religion or education at home or abroad, but it does not include collections to raise funds for a political party or for a political campaign, such as CND or animal liberation. However, the law relating to these subjects is confused and inconsistently applied.

Although there is no need to obtain a licence or certificate for handing out leaflets or collecting signatures for a petition, local bye-laws can be used to restrict leafleting from near specific buildings and there is a sign to this effect outside the masjid in Hartford Street SW1. A leaflet must have on it the name and address of the printer. The police may also move leafleters if they appear

to be causing an obstruction. It is an offence to hand out leaflets that are threatening, abusive or insulting or those that are intended to stir up racial hatred.

4.8.4 Respect for Sacred Text in Leaflets

Many Islamic leaflets contain quotations from the Qur'an or related religious text in Arabic. Recipients will not then normally throw the material away but horde it along with religious calendars, damaged prayer books and other Islamic material until they find some respectful way to dispose of it. The requirement is that no trace remains of Qur'anic text. Traditionally this is by casting it into a river, but modern inks do not dissolve and modern paper doesn't disintegrate easily. Nowadays incineration is more effective and most scholars agree that this is not disrespectful. However not many homes have a safe and suitable place where this can be done, and it would be a useful step for masjids to arrange this as a service, so the material does tend to accumulate, although it has not occurred to the management of any masjid to do so to date.

Possession of extremist Islamic literature has been a factor in several criminal cases, some of which have come to court. Defendants have successfully defended themselves by citing the fact that its distribution outside masjids is commonplace and the tradition of disposing of material with sacred text on it only when it can be done respectfully.

A further twist is that piles of literature left for people to take away will be removed in bulk by people who disagree with its content, but who are also faced with the same problem of respectful disposal. Thus individuals opposed to extremist views may be found in possession of stacks of controversial literature that appear to be ready for distribution when the individual's intent was precisely the opposite.

4.9 Umbrella Groups

Various attempts have been made to form national representative bodies for the Muslim community over the last three decades. None has been satisfactory because they either aim to be too general, bland and therefore ineffective, or they become associated with particular factions or ethnic divisions and rivals boycott them. This happens even when most such efforts have tried hard to be non-partisan. Because the organisation starts within a group of like-minded individuals and gains most support from their network it inevitably becomes seen to be partisan. Even though others join, as soon as there is a perception that one faction is making the running, more partisan members of other factions make a point of boycotting it.

There are probably around 3,000 Muslim organisations in Britain, of which about half are primarily involved with running masjids and community centres. The vast majority are locally focused organisations and probably about half are registered charities, although many of these have only trivial amounts of finances. Also many have tiny memberships and are short-lived. However a fair number can claim to act as umbrella organisations, mostly around specific issues.

Recognising that:

- imams and other masjid and madressah staff are invariably employees of local management committees, not of a hierarchical church-like structure,
- masjids are almost always funded and supported from the local neighbourhood, not from central or overseas organisations,
- and that affiliation of a masjid to an umbrella group involves no binding commitment, merely a recognition of common interest,

it will be understood that declarations, rulings, statements, even fatwas, issued by umbrella groups have only token significance. That is not to denigrate such declarations, but expectations should not be raised about impact of such declarations.

The following list of umbrella bodies is selected merely on those that have had a lot of public exposure over the years. Some of them are really quite insignificant and there are many more besides these.

4.9.1 Federation of Student Islamic Societies

FOSIS was founded in 1962 and is probably the only organisation to be relatively free of factionalism, whether intentional or not. It is confined to student Muslim societies, but these are the places where most of the significant changes in British Muslim society take place. FOSIS usually steers a moderate and reasoned course relative to the outspoken militancy of many Muslim student activists.

4.9.2 The Union of Muslim Organisations

The UMO was founded in 1970. It has always endeavoured to be as inclusive and therefore uncontroversial as possible. Correspondingly it has made little impact on the Muslim community. Its membership comprises of about 200 Muslim affiliated organisations, but the list is not published, and currently it does not have a web site. Its charity has a single trustee, its founder, and total annual expenditure of under £4,000.

4.9.3 The Islamic Party of Britain

The IPB was founded in the late 1980s and attracted a lot of attention through fielding significant numbers of candidates in the 1992 election. However it has never succeeded in maintaining the momentum and has all but disappeared. Its founders and continuing supporters are a very small clique of individuals and it never received serious endorsement from any significant Muslim organisation.

4.9.4 The Muslim Parliament

This was formed in 1992 and attempted to create a democratically representative body for British Muslims. Affiliate organisations were asked to submit representatives to join the MP. Inevitably most were self-selected and gravitated around those who had similar views to its founders on contemporary political issues and Shia-Sunni collaboration. The latter topic does not receive much enthusiasm among many Sunni Muslims, and with its founder's death, the MP is now largely defunct.

4.9.5 The Islamic Society of Britain

The ISB was founded in the mid 1990s and is an organisation of individuals rather than an umbrella body of organisations. It concentrates on family issues and aims specifically at the generations that have grown up in Britain. It has about 2000 members in essentially autonomous local groups, but its inception was largely stimulated by the Islamic Foundation, the Maudoodi-ist entity in Leicester.

4.9.6 The Muslim Council of Britain

This was founded in 1997 and lists over 400 organisations as affiliates. It has gained a great deal of prominence since 2001. Individual members are organised into a number of topical committees, though many of the committees have hardly met more than twice. Affiliation is by payment of a small annual fee. Among the factions, almost all of the 50 or so UKIM, Maudoodi-influenced masjids are members, about 10% of Deobandi masjids, and much smaller percentages of the other factions are members. Altogether about 175 masjids are members of MCB out of a little under 1400 masjids in the UK.

4.9.7 The Muslim Association of Britain

The MAB was founded in 1997 in order to raise the profile of Arab-speaking British Muslims that have settled mainly from the Middle East, especially the Levant more than North Africa. Membership includes individuals and affiliated organisations. Although it is not exclusive, the relatively small community which it seeks to serve is a constraint on its wider influence.

4.9.8 The British Muslim Forum

The BMF was founded in 2005 and has approximately 250 member organisations affiliated, of which nearly 200 are masjids. The majority of members are Bareilvi-inclined masjids. In spite of its larger representation among masjids, it is very loosely organised and initiates few activities.

4.10 Pictures, Photos, Posters and Symbols

In Sunni Islam there is strong reaction against the depiction of people and animals. This has roots in both the association of pictures and statues with idolatry and in its association with fame and pomposity, and although casual photographs my be a long way from such concepts, the reaction is reinforced by the declaration of Allah's Messenger ﷺ that 'Allah's curse is on the one making the picture and on the one whose picture is made'. Some scholars have refined the injunction to state that anything with eyes cannot be depicted.

Many Muslims will be reluctant to wear clothing and badges that depict faces, people or animals, e.g. as part of a uniform, though the facetious may argue that people do not object to coinage in their pockets for example.

Symbols can also raise sensitive issues. Muslim worship is not concerned simply with the proper intention of worshipping none but Allah, but Muslims are also anxious to avoid anything that could misrepresent the act of worship. This includes both the symbols of other religions and acts which could appear to be in imitation of other religions. Therefore e.g. depictions of symbols in multi-faith posters may limit the places where these could be displayed,

irrespective of sympathies towards ecumenicalism. However there is no sense in which members of other faiths themselves would not be welcome as guests in any masjid, regardless of their symbolic dress or tokens of faith.

The fact of the Union Flag being comprised of three Christian crosses, and the implications of saluting it, has so far escaped most people's attention, but no doubt will raise some interesting debates in due course. Some scholars have described saluting as a 'half takbeer' – a meaningless phrase in itself but which purports to compare saluting a senior human being with the raising of the hands to the head at the start of Salaah, "saluting" Allah Himself. The common Spanish/Latin and Arabic roots of the word 'salute' as a respectful greeting does rather underline the point.

4.11 Visitors

In principle all masjids are open to anyone to perform their Islamic duties at any time. Islam has always been an outward-looking, "evangelising" religion and therefore Muslims invariably welcome opportunities to invite others to the faith. Accordingly all masjids welcome visitors. However noting the basic and limited resources of the majority of masjids, it will be recognised that not all masjids have the means to accommodate visitors conveniently. Also, given the limited means of communication in English of many of the elders and imams, their lack of confidence in dealing with people from outside their community, having to deal with racially motivated hostility, and recurrence of problems with officialdom, e.g. council planning officials, visitors may be left feeling a little awkward, and their hosts may contrive a disproportionate amount of formality. Sometimes the communication problem has been so basic that an imam has supposed that a casual visitor's purpose had been to convert to Islam (a very basic ceremony in Arabic), and the visitor being none the wiser to this has been subjected to the conversion ritual and sent, none the wiser, on his way.

The larger masjids usually have some more regularised arrangements for receiving visitors and explaining Islam, Muslims and the masjid to visitors. This is because they may have a range of facilities and support of volunteers or several employees. Such places commonly provide for school parties too, and a few have regular public events that are aimed at propagating Islam. Even so, casual drop-in visitors can expect to be welcomed. The only word of caution is be aware of factionalists who may sense the opportunity to propagate their own views at odds with the rest of the congregation.

4.12 Conventions and Etiquettes in the Masjids

There are a number of practices and conventions that require clarification in visiting masjids or arranging events around the masjid.

4.12.1 Attire

Men's and women's dress should be modest and as far as possible respect the Islamic dress code which mandates that men's bodies must be covered at least from the navel to the knee, and women's bodies entirely except for the face and hands. The men's case is unlikely to present difficulties, and depending on the circumstances of the visit, common sense and normal conventions will be respected in the women's case.

While 'best clothes' are assumed for Muslims for Friday Juma'a salaah, in general little attention is paid to formal dress when visiting the masjid, since attending the masjid is a five-times daily routine. Indeed Muslim sartorial standards can fall as low as dressing-gowns for the very early hours of *fajr* salaah.

4.12.2 Separation of Men and Women

The five times daily salaah in congregation in the masjid is enjoined on men, not on women. Women's salaah *is* expected to be discreet and private and therefore performed at home. The majority of masjids make some provision for women, but most of these do so by allocating space only when specially asked for. Larger purpose-built masjids often have a gallery over the main masjid room, part or all of which is for women's use.

Accordingly, and depending on the circumstances of the visit, separate hosting arrangements may be made for women visitors, e.g. for larger parties or more formal visits. Casual visitors that include women can usually be accommodated. While the congregational salaah is in progress it is usually practical for male visitors to wait at the back of the masjid room itself, but not so for women to wait. Most masjids are extremely full on Friday Juma'a salaah and some small masjids have no ante-room or office at all, so they would have difficulty accommodating visitors at all at this time – indeed many have late-coming worshippers filling the doorways and flowing out into the street.

4.12.3 Shoes

Shoes are not permitted in the area of the masjid building in which salaah may take place. This will vary from building to building according to the arrangements of facilities in the premises, but there will almost always be a clear notice and racks for shoes at the point where this is required. Occasionally people take away the wrong shoes and occasionally ruffians slip in the open door to steal the shoes.

Shoes for use in the toilets are provided, usually slip-on plastic sandals. These should be used since otherwise contaminants would be brought into the praying area.

4.12.4 Photographs and Posters

As noted above, there is a strong aversion among more strictly practising Muslims to being photographed. Therefore one should not take photographs or video people in and around the masjid, and should ask permission before using individuals' photographs in other circumstances. Nevertheless some masjids have accepted the use of security video equipment, especially as masjids themselves are often the target of both petty and serious crime.

Public information posters, whether intended for the Muslim community or not, will not be displayed in masjids if they include pictures of people or animals.

4.13 Madressahs

Muslims are required to be able to read the Qur'an in Arabic to the best of their ability. Therefore almost every masjid also runs a *madressah* (school) to

teach young children to read Arabic script, recite the Qur'an correctly and learn the basic beliefs and practices of Islam. Madressah teachers are drawn from among the imams, volunteers and part-timers working for "pin-money". Children are started from as early an age as possible, three, four or five, and tend to drop away as they approach secondary school age. Some may continue for several years in order to memorise the entire Qur'an and thus become a *Hafiz*, which is a celebrated religious achievement.

Madressahs are often used to teach mother-tongue languages, so madressah teachers are required from the home country for this purpose.

Madressahs are usually run after school for one or two hours, typically between 5.00 pm and 7.00 pm. Some masjids organise a minibus to pick up and drop children. Teaching methods are very often rather traditional, by rote and often using mild corporal punishment. Awareness is slowly spreading that this is not lawful, but madressah teachers do not have any formal teaching qualifications and they and parents are mostly unaware of the legal position. Occasionally physical punishments do exceed even a traditional view of what can be considered safe, and there have been a very few prosecutions in recent years. It is almost unknown for masjids and madressahs to request Criminal Records Bureau checks on suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. The reasons are (i) ignorance of the availability of such checks, (ii) lack of funds to cover the CRB fee, and (iii) general belief that there is no problem of this nature – the 'mild corporal punishment' is accepted as normal, and cases of sexual abuse of children are either unknown or unreported.

4.14 Home and Overseas Education

There are a very small number of Muslim children who are "home educated". The legal position on home education, in which a family has 'opted out' of school, is quite straightforward, i.e. if a child is registered as attending a particular school, state or private, and does not attend, then truancy regulations apply. But if a child is not registered at a school, or has been 'de-registered' and the local education authority informed, it is perfectly lawful for the child to be educated at home (or outside the home) as long as the local authority is unable to demonstrate that the education received is inappropriate. In the words of the 1996 Education Act, 'The parents … shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education … either by regular attendance at school *or otherwise*'. Unfortunately many local authorities try to avoid addressing this issue by playing on the common belief that education *in school* is compulsory, to obstruct home educators.

This situation affects Muslims because a few families set aside from school the two, three or four years that is required for a child to become a *hafiz*, 'protector' or memoriser of the Qur'an, and achieve this highly prized religious status by learning at home or at a neighbourhood masjid's madressah. There is rarely anything irresponsible about this – most such families make some provision for maintaining the core of curriculum subjects as well, and most *hufaaz* achieve high academic standards afterwards, arguably as a result of the discipline of this training.

Many Muslim families are unaware of the benign legal position on home education, and as noted, local authorities frequently do not disavow them of

this. However some support organisations such as 'Education Otherwise' issue unofficial identity cards that confirm the child's status. Cultural and integration barriers mean that few Muslims are aware of support groups such as this.

Many, often quite young, children go overseas to study, cared for by the extended family, for a variety of reasons, (i) to achieve memorisation of the Qur'an, (ii) because of the frightful state of education in British schools (yes, many private schools in Pakistan do offer a higher standard of education than available from inner-city schools in Britain.), (iii) to inculcate in children traditional values of respect and deference that are much prized by their parents. Since 'madressah' simply means 'school' in Arabic/Urdu, and since nearly every one of tens of thousands of masjids in a Muslim country has its own madressah, it would be seriously mistaken to suppose that there is anything sinister about children and teenagers of primary and secondary school age travelling overseas for this purpose.

5 Muslim Routines and the Islamic Calendar

5.1 Calculation of the Islamic Calendar

The Islamic calendar was established from the year in which the Messenger of Allahﷺ arrived in Madinah after fleeing for his life from Makkah. This was the point at which a single Muslim community was established in accordance with Shari'ah law. This occurred in 622 of the Christian or Common Era (CE). (Muslims are averse to using the term AD, Anno Domini, because its reference to "our Lord" (i) refers to Jesus, respected but not as Christians do, and (ii) taken that "Lord" implies God, whereas to take as God anything other than the Creator Himself is the most fundamental sin in Islam.)

The Islamic calendar comprises twelve lunar months. Each lunar month is about 29.53 days and therefore the Islamic year is usually 11 days shorter than the solar or sidereal year of 365¼ days. (Leap years and the 0.1 days balance of the lunar year complicate this slightly.)

5.2 The Start of the New Month

In practice in Britain, determining the start of the new month is problematic and sometimes causes consternation, e.g. in not being able to set the day of an Eid holiday until the day before. In principle it is simple enough. After sunset on the 29th day of the preceding month the new moon is sought for. If not seen (because it is too 'young'), one more day is added to the month, making 30 days; and the day after that becomes the 1st of the following month by default. Within a couple of months the 29th-day new moon will be large enough to be visible and the month lengths even out to the average 29.53 days.

It is the new moon's astronomical nature that it is (i) an extremely thin crescent, being between a few minutes old to just under 24 hours old since being invisible, (ii) is very close in the sky to the set sun, so is obscured by light from the sun, and (iii) rises only a little way above the horizon so is only present for a few minutes. Added to that are the effect of Britain's high latitude, murky atmosphere and built-up townscape hiding the horizon, so it is exceptionally rare for the moon to be seen on the 29th of any month. Typically nobody troubles to look for the new moon except for the beginning and end of Ramadhaan and the beginning of Dhul-Hijjah. On failing to find it in Britain, different religious practices are preferred, differing by sect or by expediency. Various solutions are, to accept a reported sighting in the nearest Muslim country, or a sighting in any Muslim country, or a sighting in Saudi Arabia, or the 'add 1 day' rule is applied. The consequence is that different masjids will often end up fasting or arranging Eid on different days to each other.

5.3 The Muslim Year

5.3.1 Muharram

The first month of the year is Muharram, falling on or about 9th February 2006, then 30th January 2007, …, 19th August 2020, etc., coming 10 or 11 days earlier each sidereal year.

10th Muharram, Yaum-al-Ashura, has some significance for all Muslims. It corresponds to the Jewish Passover and is also celebrated for the same reason, honouring Moses, but is better known among Muslims for the anniversary of

the murder of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Messenger ﷺ. This is commemorated especially by Shias, who hold events on this day every year, especially public processions including gory acts of self-flagellation. Sunni Islam has deep disdain for this particular act, but commemorate Yaum-al-Ashura by fasting, themselves having high regard for Imam Hussain.

5.3.2 Rabi' al-awwal

12th Rabi' al-awwal (the third month) is recognised as the birthday of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, though the manner of its commemoration varies. The Bareilvi-influenced communities, and many of the more traditional communities, have major events including all-night programmes in the Masjid and street processions, Jalsas, on the day. However the Deobandi, "Wahabbi" and Salafi-influenced communities disdain specific commemoration, concerned to avoid association with Christmas and the deification of Jesus. They disassociate themselves entirely from street processions but may arrange low-key lectures on the life of Muhammad ﷺ around the 12th Rabi' al-awwal.

5.3.3 Shabaan

15th Shabaan (the eighth month) is also the subject of all-night programmes in the Masjid and a day of optional fasting, but is relatively low-key.

5.3.4 Ramadhaan

Ramadhaan is the 9th month and obligatory fasting commences the day following the sighting of the new moon marking the start of the month. It continues for 29 or 30 days until the new moon of Shawwal is sighted. The following day, the 1st of Shawwal is Eid-ul-Fitr, the feast of breaking the fast. Worship during Ramadhaan is said to be seventy times superior to other times, and the impact of getting up extra early to start the fast, the extra time at lunch time and the extra prayers in the evening mean that there is a strong motivation to practice more of both formal and informal worship in this month. Accordingly masjids are much fuller than other times, causing congestion problems in residential areas in the evenings, for example.

By 2010 Ramadhaan falls in midsummer, and fasts in Britain can be 18 to 19 hours long from 3am to 9.30pm, followed by a busy evening of salaah and food and little time for sleep before preparing for the next day. Many Muslims will aim to take a long period of leave at this time to accommodate the difficulty of fasting this long. Many take leave anyway especially in the latter part of Ramadhaan, either to travel to Makkah and Madinah for Umrah, or to make as much time as possible free for reciting the Qur'an in Ramadhaan. In Scotland in midsummer, twilight does not disappear so the Shari'ah conditions for the start of the fast at the crack of dawn cannot be applied. Therefore a fixed period is set for the start of the fast, based on other days when the conditions were met.

Zakaah, the poor tax, is mainly donated in this month, for the same reason, the increased virtue of good deeds in Ramadhaan, so considerable amounts of charity money are transferred overseas from Britain at this time, both privately and through Muslim charities.

It is an obligation on every masjid to sustain one or more men to stay permanently in the masjid during the last ten days of Ramadhaan, in *ihtikhaaf*,

a state of seclusion, in order to seek out *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, the "Night of Power" which is a spiritual experience that is expressed in the Qur'an. The rules governing ihtikhaaf are unusual. You are required to stay inside the masjid room itself continuously for the last ten days except for very brief exits for toilet and *wudhu*. While outside you may not speak to anyone or acknowledge them – if you do, the Sunnah of ihtikhaaf is broken.

5.3.5 Shawwal

Eid-ul-Fitr occurs on the 1st of Shawwal, the end of Ramadhaan and is the tenth month. Eid is celebrated with food, new clothes, food, Eid salaah, more food, family visits and more food, which is barely picked at after 30 days of fasting. Gifts of money are given by parents to children, nephews and nieces, cascading from generation to generation, leaving the youngest of the family flush and the eldest nearly destitute, at least for the day. Traditionally the Eid salaah takes place in a single gathering for the whole town, in a designated open air *Eid Gah* on the edge of the town, and this has been practiced by some communities in Britain while Eid has fallen in summertime. Otherwise every masjid makes its own Eid salaah. Eid salaah time is in the morning, from soon after sunrise through to late morning, and takes the form of two rakaahs of salaah followed by two sermons in Arabic, lasting about twenty minutes altogether. However pressure of numbers on Eid Day causes most masjids to organise three or four separate Eid salaahs at hourly intervals through the morning.

There is a worthy practice during the rest of the month of Shawwal to perform six more fasts. These are not obligatory, but it is disconcerting for non-Muslims to find their Muslim colleagues continuing to fast when they understood Ramadhaan had finished for the year! There are no special salaahs associated with this time.

5.3.6 Dhul-Hijjah

Dhul-Hijjah is the twelfth and final month of the Islamic calendar. Hajj, the Pilgrimage to Makkah, takes place in the second week of the month, and *Eid-ul-Adha*, the feast of sacrifice, falls on the 10th Dhul-Hijjah. Hajj travellers would have set off from home for Makkah and Madinah one, two or three weeks previously, and the main day of Hajj is *Yaum-ul-Arafat*, the 9th Dhul-Hijjah when pilgrims gather on the plain of Arafat near Makkah. There are no special practices on the 9th except for those performing Hajj.

On the 10th, Eid-ul-Adha is celebrated with Eid salaah in the morning, just as for Eid-ul-Fitr. However every adult who is not impoverished is required to sacrifice an animal, hence the name of the day meaning 'feast of sacrifice'. This *Qurbani* at home corresponds to a similar sacrifice made by Hajjis who by now are in Mina, between Arafat and Makkah. The formula for the sacrifice is that it should be a healthy adult sheep or goat for each person, or a cow or camel between seven people. One third should go to the poor, one third to friends and relatives and the rest for the family feast. Before the foot and mouth disease outbreaks in Britain it was common for men to descend on abattoirs after the Eid-ul-Adha salaah, because it is a worthy Sunnah act to perform the animal's slaughter oneself or at least witness it close at hand. Significant numbers of Muslims do hold official 'slaughterer's certificates'

from their local authorities and are legally permitted to perform the slaughter under the proper controlled conditions, and are much in demand on Eid day. However since the foot-and-mouth outbreak which brought tighter restrictions to access to abattoirs, and with Eid ul Adha falling in the short days of winter, it is currently unusual for people to go to witness the slaughtering of their *Qurbani* or *Udhiyah*. Instead, butchers are given orders for the meat a few days before, in the usual domestic manner. A number of Muslim charities offer a Qurbani service in which they collect the price of the animal and arrange for its slaughter and distribution of the meat in a poor Muslim country. Many families with overseas connections also make private arrangements by sending money abroad to pay for the local slaughter and distribution of meat to the poor.

5.4 The Muslim Week

Sunday is Yaum-al-Ahad, literally the first day or Day One, and Saturday is Yaum-as-Sabah, Day Seven, the Sabbath. However there is no tradition in Islam of a holy day of rest. (The Islamic scriptural interpretation of this concept is that the day of rest was a religious constraint on the Children of Israel, the Jews, to test their forbearance and penalise them for excesses.) Indeed the Christian concept of God resting on the seventh day is anathema to Muslims as the Almighty has no need for rest.

The Muslim day is measured from sunset to sunset. The day of religious significance is Yaum-al-Juma'a, from Thursday evening to Friday evening. Originally this was market day, hence Yaum-al-Juma'a means 'community day' or 'gathering day', and the main community salaah is of course the Juma'a salaah, after noon, and replacing Dhuhar salaah.

The most auspicious time for religious gatherings is usually Thursday evenings, this being part of the day of Juma'a, and therefore more rewarding.

On Friday mornings it is a Sunnah for men preparing for Juma'a, firstly to clip the nails, shorten the moustache and shave the armpits and pubic hair, then to have a ritual bath, a ghusl, and put on clean clothes, and to use *ittar*, oil-based perfume. Thus it is normal for Muslim men to have shaved private parts and to use perfume.

The format of Juma'a salaah is that the four Rakaahs of Dhuhar salaah are replaced by two Rakaahs of Juma'a, preceded by a Khutbah, or sermon, in two parts. The Khutbah is usually quite short, must be recited in Arabic and must contain some text of the Qur'an, to fulfil its religious requirements. Since the time when the first non-Arabic-speaking land came under Muslim control, it has been customary to provide a speech, a *bayaan* or *wyaz*, in the local language before the Khutbah itself, and this is the main opportunity for imams to communicate with the congregation. Increasingly the bayaans in British masjids are delivered in English, but a substantial proportion are still given in the formal language of the dominant population of the masjid, usually either Urdu or Bangla. Sometimes a brief and usually poorly presented translation is also provided in English.

6 Birth, Marriage and Death

6.1 Birth

Muslims consider *all* children to be born in a state of sinlessness; implicitly therefore they are perfect Muslims.

Immediately after birth the father recites the words of the Adhaan, the call to prayer, in the infant's ear. This is the only ceremonial element of child birth.

At seven days old, the baby's hair is shaved, weighed and discarded. A small amount of charity is disbursed by the parents equal in value to the baby's hair's weight in silver. One or two sheep are also bought from the butcher as sacrifices, with the meat being distributed to relatives, friends and the poor.

6.2 Abortion

Abortion is forbidden in Islam except where the mother's life is in danger. Even in this circumstance there are numerous cases, including in Britain, where a mother has voluntarily sacrificed her life for the sake of the baby.

The Qur'an has numerous verses which rail against female infanticide, which was an acceptable practice among the Arabs before Islam, but which make it highly topical for Indian and Chinese society today. Because of this very clear injunction, female infanticide or gender-specific abortion is not considered a problem among Muslims in the way it has become in the Hindu community. Traditional Asian culture, Muslim and non-Muslim, favours male children, so there will undoubtedly be families among the Muslim community that are drawn to gender-specific abortion, but the religious injunction is clear enough to be able to cite it to discourage this practice.

Non-destructive forms of contraception are permitted in Islam.

6.3 Male and Female Circumcision

Boys are circumcised, preferably at seven days old. A number of the many Muslim GPs make this service available for a nominal charge, so there is no reason for a family to resort to an unqualified practitioner. In UK law, male circumcision by a lay practitioner is legal although on occasions that have gone wrong, the lay practitioner has been prosecuted for related offences. The BMA states "The medical harms or benefits have not been unequivocally proven except to the extent that there are clear risks of harm if the procedure is done inexpertly. The Association has no policy on these issues." Their website (http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/malecircumcision2003) states,

- The welfare of child patients is paramount and doctors must act in the child's best interests.
- Children who are able to be express views about circumcision should be involved in the decision-making process.
- Consent for circumcision is valid only where the people (or person) giving consent have the authority to do so and understand the implications and risks.
- Both parents must give consent for non-therapeutic circumcision.

- Where people with parental responsibility for a child disagree about whether he should be circumcised, doctors should not circumcise the child without the leave of a court.
- As with all medical procedures, doctors must act in accordance with good clinical practice and provide adequate pain control and aftercare.
- Doctors must make accurate, contemporaneous notes of discussions, consent, the procedure and its aftercare.

It is normal for adult male converts to Islam to be advised to arrange their circumcision. The extent to which this advice is taken up is not known.

Female circumcision is not a feature of Islamic religious practice. It is a traditional practice among some African communities, Muslim and non-Muslim, especially around East Africa and the Horn of Africa, and some Arab communities, but very rare elsewhere in the Muslim community. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave explicit advice to be sparing in the operation, advice that is normally interpreted as his accepting but not recommending the practice.

6.4 Marriage

6.4.1 Marriage Partners

Once a child attains puberty, according to Shari'ah, he or she may marry. Marriageable age varies between countries, so it is not unknown for couples with one or both partners to be below the legal age for marriage in the UK to nevertheless have a legally recognised marriage abroad.

The Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was that he married Khadija when he was 25 and she 40. She died when he was 50. He remained alone for several years, but a succession of marriages took place in his last few years in Madinah. Each marriage, being a Sunnah, served the purpose of demonstrating that there are no unreasonable Islamic taboos in marriage. He married Ayesha when she attained puberty and Sawdah as an aging spinster. Umm Salmah had been widowed and Zaynab was divorced and also his first cousin. Umm Habibah was the daughter of one of his (at the time) greatest enemies and Safiyah was the daughter of a Jewish leader and who had been abused as a slave as well. The dispensation for a total of nine wives was a revelation from the Qur'an and exclusively for him, and served to bind warring communities together and change unreasonable taboos into worthy acts of Sunnah.

6.4.2 Marriage Rites

Marriage itself is a civil contract in Islam, not a religious rite. In Muslim countries it is very unusual for marriages to take place in the masjid, but since in Britain the masjid serves as a community centre, it is quite common for at least the groom's pledge, the *nikkah*, to be conducted in the masjid. The more substantial masjids have made arrangements for their imams to act as official marriage registrary officials.

Marriage customs naturally vary between Muslim communities, but the essential Islamic ingredients are the pledge or *nikkah*, a dowry (*mehr*) from the husband to the wife, and after consummation of the marriage, a feast

(*walimah*) given by the husband to the community to publicise the fact of the marriage. The nikkah involves the bride and groom separately giving agreement to the marriage and a pledge by the groom to maintain his wife properly. (By Islamic custom, a virgin bride is too shy to give her consent aloud, but were she not to consent, the Shari'ah would recognise her verbal refusal, in which case the nikkah cannot legitimately proceed.)

There is a practice recognised among some Shi'a of a temporary marriage, called *muta*. The man pronounces a declaration of fidelity for a temporary period to the woman. Sunni scholars do not accept that there is an Islamic source to validate this practice and therefore reject it.

6.4.3 Arranged Marriage Customs

Arranged marriages are very common in Muslim communities because of (i) restrictions on mixing between men and women, (ii) cultural traditions, especially matriarchal influence, and (iii) economic self-interest of the parents. Shari'ah law allows for the immediate dissolution of arranged marriages where either partner claims that it was against her or his will.

In some very close communities a nikkah is performed between children both as young as three or four. Consummation does not take place until after puberty (naturally, perhaps), and although the nikkah is valid, in this case it is essentially a family tradition that is being maintained. There is no record of any case in the UK where this situation has been misused or abused, and if in due course the partners are unwilling to complete the marriage, it would be dissolved as a matter of course.

6.4.4 Polygamy

Polygamy in the west is usually a serial and informal custom, practised secretly when not serial, and with a long and not very honourable history. Polygamy in Islam is confined to polygyny with four partners, i.e. one male and no more than four females.

English law does not recognise polygamy, and registering a second husband or wife is an offence. Home Office discretionary conventions may often permit entry to multiple wives of one husband where the wives have been married in accordance with the law of the country of origin, i.e. where polygamy is legitimate. English law certainly gives legal equivalence to British registered marriage of the overseas marriage certificate of the first wife. However there are a number of situations where the law is vague or untested, partly because *nikkah* alone and performed in Britain without registration does not constitute registered marriage although it does when performed overseas and recognised by law overseas. So a second wife, married by *nikkah* alone within the UK, is not legally married but has the status of 'common-law wife', whereas a second wife with a registered marriage in the UK will be legally married if the first wife was married legitimately by *nikkah* overseas and was overseas at the time of the second marriage. While polygamy among Muslims in Britain is rare, among those who practice it these two situations are quite common. Also common as a result is a lawful abuse of the situation such that wives in different countries may have no knowledge of each other.

Recent changes in marriage law now permit masjid officials to perform civil marriage registrations, so nikkah can be combined with registration. Thought might be given to giving civil partnership status to polygynous wives as a step towards regularising their otherwise vulnerable status.

6.4.5 Divorce

It is that a man can freely dispense with his wife merely by the pronouncement of "*Ta'alaq, Ta'alaq, Ta'alaq*" – 'I cast you off' repeated three times. However Islamic law is much more subtle and the pronouncement of "Tala'aq, tala'aq, tala'aq" in one instance is a grave sin in Shari'ah, even though divorce must still follow.

Firstly in Islam, although divorce is permissible, it is regarded as the most abhorrent of permissible acts. Therefore it is incumbent on anyone close to the family threatened by divorce, to do whatever they can to reconcile the couple or make reconciliation easier for them before a divorce is made.

There are four variations of divorce in Islam, three of which have approximate equivalents in English law and the fourth is the 'Ta'alaq'.

Firstly if the couple agree to divorce by mutual consent they can petition a *Qadi* (someone learned in Shari'ah to hear the case) to annul the marriage in front of two witnesses.

Secondly if one partner wishes but the other does not, he or she can still petition the Qadi for the same end. In this case the aggrieved party takes an oath that he or she has been betrayed by the partner, repeated three times, and the fourth time adds an oath that the aggrieved party him/herself deserves the punishment of the Fire if lying. The partner then repeats the same oaths against the instigating partner.

The third case is a *de facto* separation. If a couple have been living apart for at least two years and one partner has no intention of returning to the other, the other partner can action a divorce by petitioning a Qadi to annul the marriage unilaterally.

Finally the '*Ta'alaq*' divorce. The procedure is that the husband may pronounce one "*Ta'alaq*" to the wife. They must wait one month (equal in fact to the period between menses) before he pronounces the second "*Ta'alaq*". Meanwhile they must live in the same household as before without physical contact between them. Also the relatives and friends will now be on hand to try to bring about understanding and try for reconciliation. If there is any physical contact between the two, the marriage resumes unbroken. Otherwise, after the first month the husband pronounces a second "*Ta'alaq*" and similarly after 2 months the third Ta'alaq. When three monthly courses have passed in this way with no reconciliation, the divorce has been completed.

> "A divorce (Ta'alaq) is only permissible twice: after that the parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness." (Holy Qur'an, Surah Baqarah, v 229)

Marriage and divorce according to Shari'ah is intended to be as humane and fair as possible for both partners while maintaining the integrity of the family. In the context of the Islamic social structure in which men and women have

separate social lives, the degree of mutual support and co-operation among women and among men is usually high. This is why the role of relatives and friends is very significant.

6.4.6 Domestic Violence and Family Breakdown

Most ethnic communities among the Muslim population have very close family structures. This in itself should be a strong stabilising factor. However it is put under strain in poorer communities by the corrosive effects of racialism, unemployment and social deprivation, and in first-generation migrants by the need to maintain immediate family connections overseas.

It is probably fair to assert that overall, the Muslim population is no more prone to domestic violence than any other community in Britain, and that family breakdown is less common than in other communities. (The lack of statistics based on faith groups makes these assertions hard to prove or disprove.) However some ethnic groups within the Muslim community are very much more prone to domestic violence than others (though further work needs to be done before clearer advice can be given). In those groups where domestic violence is endemic, a multi-faceted approach needs to be taken. Direct intervention by the criminal justice system on an individual case may be proper and successful, but may then cause the more pervasive problems to be buried deeper in the community. A multi-faceted approach would include:

- education to raise awareness of the criminal nature of domestic violence in the ethnic language of the target group,
- involvement of the younger generation in campaigning on the issue, since among the younger generation there is less acceptance of the tolerance of 'traditions' of domestic violence,
- co-option of Muslim religious authorities, i.e. local imams and more notable figures that are respected by the target community, who can verify that Islamic practice is opposed to domestic violence,
- involvement of GPs and other health workers that serve the target community or who are ethnically rooted in it, to demonstrate that the effects of domestic violence aren't as well hidden as perpetrators suppose,
- involvement of relevant community bodies such as Muslim Women's Helpline, who for all their efforts, are little known among first generation migrants.

There is no correlation between any particular Islamic factor and proneness to domestic violence. It may be supposed that the existence of the Shari'ah Hudood penalty of death for adultery, and specific sanctions in certain Hadeeth of chastisement of wives for some misdemeanours might create an environment that leads to domestic violence. Apart from some cases of obsessive behaviour, those Muslim men who have a religious-based understanding of these sanctions are most likely to be aware of stringent conditions that go with them and exhortations towards compassion.

On the other hand most domestic violence is impulsive, not pseudo-judicial, and probably occurs as frequently in the Muslim community, practising or

knowledgeable or not, as the rest of the population. The Ta'alaq divorce has been described above, and it is noteworthy that a husband may declare a 'Ta'alaq' in the same circumstances as he may become violent. One could therefore consider the ta'alaq as an institutional safety-valve by which wives may become detached from their violent husbands before serious harm is caused. Obviously that is only part of the domestic violence issue, but knowledge of this factor might also assist in persuading religiously inclined victims that there is a decent way of ending a violent situation.

6.4.7 Arranged Marriage and Honour Crime

Arranged Marriage Revisited

Arranged marriage is common among Muslims because of the conscious restrictions on mixing between the sexes. Furthermore, close-knit and insular communities and extended-family structures also create the conditions in which arranged marriage becomes an acceptable norm. The stability of these communities also depends on arranged marriages because the marriage is not simply between the two individuals but sets up obligations between layers of in-laws. If a partner or a partner's family doesn't fulfil the expectations of the other side, whole extended family structures unravel. Extended families and traditional communities appear more insular, inward-looking and resistant to newcomers because their members suppose, with some justification, that marriage partners from outside the community are unaware of or unable to take part in all the tangled mutual obligations that their society expects of a marriage partner.

Marriage Outside the Clan

Nowadays there is much greater acceptance within the Muslim community of marriage across ethnic divisions, including with converts to Islam. From a purely religious perspective there is no question – from the outset Islam has been emphatically opposed to ethnic and racial distinction, even with explicit recommendations to marry away from ones own clan in preference to within it, and converts have always been held in high esteem. However in communities with traditional extended families, the mutual obligations described above are real obstacles and awareness of them still creates strong resistance to marriage to people outside the ethnic community or family clan.

Honour Crime

Most instances of violent crime that are nominally associated with family honour have their roots not, as is commonly supposed, in traditional pressures to maintain a certain status of the family, but in domestic power struggles, usually between father and daughter. In this respect they are the extended-family equivalent of 'tug of love' crimes of Western society, where young children are often the victims of one of their (usually estranged) parents. In Western families the tension that leads to murder in the family is usually between the spouses/partners, and involves issues of control of young children (usually in terms of parental access). The similarities are important – to assume that a father murders his daughter in order to save 'family honour' according to some mysterious oriental conviction, is to misunderstand the crime and potentially therefore to misapply justice as well as possibly misunderstand the criminology and possibly the evidence too. In extended,

insular families such as in those Muslim families which have strong first-generation clan traditions (not only Muslims of course), the tension shifts to the generations, and the most vulnerable fracture is between father and daughter. The issue is the same, control over family members, but the break is initiated by the adolescent or adult child, rather than by one partner as in the western equivalent. The issue of control typically concerns the father's loss of control over the daughter. This may be manifested by the child using cultural, ethnic or religious shifts as a tool, e.g. conversion to another religion, or more commonly, sexual relationship outside the ethnic group. Such 'tools' however are secondary to the issue of loss of control, because invariably where religion is the driving issue the family is not staunchly religious, or where sexual relations are the driving issue, if the same sexual mores were applied inside the ethnic group the matter would be resolved easily, or brushed over if it were a son rather than daughter in the relationship.

In short, what is popularly described as 'honour crime' usually has little to do with honour and status in the clan and a lot to do with parental insecurity and control over their children, the same factors as motivate family murders in Western society.

6.5 Gender Issues

6.5.1 Conduct Between the Sexes

Islam prescribes quite precise rules for conduct between the sexes, requiring that men and women do not mix together in ways that compromise their integrity. Given that this is one of the most acute differences between Muslim and non-Muslim society, it is not surprising that Muslims interpret this dictum in a wide range of ways, from maintaining total separation to cultivating token gestures of coyness.

Many Westerners' descriptions of their relations with the Muslim world have been couched in terms of the invariably male, Western observer's ability to gain access to Muslim females. Such writing should be seen not as a measure of Muslim oppression, but as an indicator of Western male chauvinism with its assumption that for men to observe women is a sign of progressiveness.

Muslim conduct, male and female alike, requires modesty – lowering the gaze is explicitly enjoined. It should not be supposed, but frequently is, that Muslim women lowering their gaze indicated their subservience and Muslim men looking away from women indicated their contempt. Patently this is not the case if the same conduct is interpreted with the supposed reactions reversed! On arriving at a Muslim house, men will notice that the women of the house disappear into a back room. The less frequently noted converse situation occurs just as often, where women guests arrive and the men of the house disappear into another room instead.

Western society regards as normal behaviour of men to be extra attentive to the opposite sex whether the attention is intended as chauvinistic or chivalrous. However in traditional Muslim society this is regarded as offensive to the woman herself. This can lead to some surprising reversals of etiquette. For example a man might step out to go through a door before a woman, because to stand waiting for her and hang around behind her is suggestive of an impolite degree of attention. A queue of Muslim men may be

pushed aside by a woman going to the front of the queue because it is demeaning for her to wait in the queue with many men's attention on her.

The author is unaware of any Islamic basis of the arrangement of the wife walking several paces behind the husband. While this conduct may be observed among a few Bangladeshi families in Britain it is unknown in the other Muslim communities.

When greeting a Muslim of the opposite gender it is not always acceptable to shake hands and not customary to do so in Muslim countries. There are differences of opinion among Islamic scholars; some practices prevalent in Arab and African countries state that skin contact with anyone of the opposite sex, outside of family, renders w*udhu* invalid, wudhu being the ritual washing required for Salaah. Other practices consider that this interpretation is wrong and that *wudhu* is unaffected.

6.5.2 Sexual Harassment

Muslims' interests are served by general trends against sexual harassment in the workplace. It must be recognised that conscientiously Muslim women are likely to be far more conscious of and less tolerant of offence than is the social norm. This situation is not one-sided because many non-Muslim male colleagues respond to the adoption of modest Islamic dress and unwillingness to mix socially with men, as a challenge. Some of them take up the challenge by being extra provocative towards Muslim women while still staying below the threshold at which non-Muslim women would consider making a formal complaint.

6.5.3 Homosexuality

Like most faiths that have the concept of external, objective morality, Islam is deeply antipathetic to homosexuality. This highlights the social conundrum of providing inclusivity for strongly held, opposing views, and this conundrum has not yet been worked out either by liberal Muslims or community institutions, and this document cannot offer a solution. People working with or for the Muslim community need to recognise that overt homosexuality will be a barrier to effective working. As long as homosexuality is not evident, the problem remains buried. Recently however there have been attempts by the homosexual community to attack the Muslim position, and this has resulted in provocative accusations of homophobia against Muslims. Muslims and non-Muslims alike have to keep this in context – Muslim law has strict penalties for possession, consumption and dealing in alcohol, yet Muslims are able to maintain acceptable relations with known alcohol users. Indeed a far more heinous crime than homosexuality or alcohol use is that of believing Jesus to be the Son of God, yet Muslims generally maintain benign relations with Christians.

Islam is at least consistent, in that, to Muslims, overtly sexual or lewd behaviour would be offensive whether heterosexual or homosexual. The distinctive physiological elements of homosexual relations are forbidden in Islam in heterosexual relationships as well, and all sexual relationships are forbidden outside of marriage.

Gender re-assignation is not recognised at all by Islam. Therefore any situation in which men and women are normally separate and which involve gender-re-assigned persons, would cause difficulties, as would any intrusive activity, e.g. body-searches or medical examination. For example a nominally female, genetically male, person would cause deep resentment by attempting to conduct any business with the women of a household.

6.6 Death

6.6.1 Dying

Up to the point of death relatives will gather around the dying person and recite verses of the Qur'an with the intention that the Divine reward of the reciting is added to the good deeds of the dying person. It is hoped that the last words on the lips of the dying are the Muslim statement of faith, confirming that he or she has indeed died as a believing Muslim.

There are a number of situations where sudden death of a practising Muslim is treated as *shaheed*, (i.e. equivalent to a martyr in battle) such as a violent accident, death under a collapsed wall or by drowning or by burning.

Miscarried fœtuses over four months into term should also be buried ceremonially.

Suicide is condemned by Islam – the Messenger of Allah ﷺ refused to perform the funeral of a suicide.

6.6.2 Speedy Burial

It is an Islamic tradition to bury the body (or *mayat*) as quickly as possible after death, with a strong emphasis on it being done the same day. Muslim graveyards always have one freshly dug grave ready. Delay in burial can cause families a lot of extra grief.

6.6.3 Respect for the Corpse

Interference with the corpse is deeply resented – Muslim belief is that the corpse, while inert, is nevertheless sensitive in that particular tribulations of the afterlife start immediately after death and are received as much magnified versions of bodily pain of the living. Therefore miss-handling of the corpse, or incisions whether for medical reasons or not, are profoundly disturbing to the bereaved family. This particularly includes post-mortems, and Muslim families will always do their utmost to avoid a post-mortem. If aware of this, there are often steps that medical staff can take in the last stages of someone's life to ensure that medical records are complete enough to avoid a post-mortem. When a body is repatriated by air, deep incisions are made in the corpse that prevent problems caused by air pressure changes, but not many families are aware of this in advance and are often deeply distressed by the state of the corpse when they receive it after a flight.

6.6.4 Preparation for Burial

When the body is made available for the funeral, unless it is a shaheed, it is given a ritual all-over wash equivalent to a *Ghusl* (see below), and dressed in a *kaffan* of five plain cloths comprising a crude shirt and lower wrap, a head covering, and two sheets to wrap the whole body, plus a third for a woman's

body. Rules concerning separation of the sexes apply to the corpse as well, so include who is allowed to wash or see the corpse uncovered. Aside from this there are no cultural taboos over seeing the dead body or remaining with it.

Larger, purpose-built masjids often have a room with a genuine or makeshift mortuary table set up to perform the Ghusl. This facility is normally available for any Muslim family who needs it. They also have volunteers assigned to be ready to assist with most of the funeral arrangements. Some masjids also run their own hearse and 'private ambulance' to recover the body from the mortuary.

6.6.5 Funeral Prayer

The Islamic funeral or *Janazah* is extremely simple and is over in a couple of minutes. The prepared, dressed body is placed in front of the rows of the congregation, and the imam and the congregation recite silently certain prayers from among those recited in the every-day salaah (but not the words or actions of praise of Allah, Qur'an recitation, the bowing and prostration, because worship is for Allah alone). The funeral can take place anywhere decent, but is usually done in or around the masjid. There is a slight technicality – the body must not be placed in front of people making normal salaah because there must be no suggestion that they are worshipping it, bowing to it etc.

Following the Janazah, the body is taken straight to the burial ground. There is great reward for carrying the body, but carrying the body invariably descends into undignified commotion as scores of people try to arrange themselves so as to have the body passed on to their shoulders. This can be quite alarming for non-Muslim guests, and Muslim communities could benefit from making more disciplined arrangements. There is no special sense of slowing the journey of the hearse.

6.6.6 Burial

Islamic burial rites stipulate the shape and size of the grave – this does not conflict with local authority requirements. Wooden coffins are not used in Islam – the cloth kaffan is sufficient. Some local authorities permit this, but others insist on a wooden coffin. The body must be arranged to lie on its side, with the chest facing the Qiblah, i.e. towards Makkah. When a wooden coffin is used, sometimes a clod of earth from the dug grave is placed inside the coffin as a token of burial directly in the earth. Only men are permitted to be present at and perform the burial itself, the assumption being that women will be too distraught. The burial party may be quite large and will expect to fill the grave with earth themselves, often by hand as this is considered more respectful than using a shovel.

6.6.7 Cremation

Cremation is forbidden in Islam. If someone has died in a fire, they are Shaheed, but the body must not be damaged further before burial. Cremation amounts to total desecration of the body. Complications have sometimes arisen with converts to Islam who have died, when their non-Muslim relatives anticipate a cremation. Muslim friends of the deceased have then struggled hard to persuade the relatives to allow a normal burial.

6.6.8 Organ Donation

Religious opinion on donation of organs after death is generally that this amounts to damage to the corpse and is therefore discouraged, even though there is no religious objection to receiving and therefore benefiting from transplanted tissue in medicine. Muslim medical students are faced with contradictory moral choices in their course when entering those parts requiring dissection of donated bodies.

6.6.9 Blood Donation

Donation of tissue from a living person does not raise these moral dilemmas, and donation of blood can be considered a Sunnah, in that the traditional treatment of cupping, medical blood-letting, was recommended by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and that acts such as blood donation, which save a life, count as eternal charity.

6.6.10 Mourning

Following death, there is a specific mourning period of forty days. The point of its specificity is that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade anyone to think ill of a widow or widower who remarried soon after the spouse's death, and he stipulated that forty days is a minimum decent interval before remarrying. Similarly he criticised people who overindulge in the pity of mourning by prolonging it. Custom has then led to the fortieth day after death as being the culmination of mourning, marked with special gatherings of friends and family on that day, usually to complete the collective recitation of the Qur'an.

7 Integration and Friction

7.1 Dress Codes

7.1.1 First Impressions

All human beings define who they are in society by their choice of clothes. Social conventions narrow the range of options people have, and deviation from the conventions attracts extra attention, whether the deviation is self-imposed, the habit of another society or imposed by another custom. Since clothes communicate the crucial 'first impression', people often react to unconventional clothes as an antagonistic or challenging statement, and apply whatever prejudice and stereotype they have in their minds, no matter how far-fetched it is. A person could speak like a Glaswegian, have an estate in Cheshire and a career as a judge, but people's assumptions about him or her will be formed by the clothes they see him in. For many, when they see someone in distinctly Islamic clothes, their only reference point is a demeaning tabloid cartoon or a newsreel of some far-away violent conflict.

7.1.2 Choices for Muslims

Muslims have three conflicting choices in dress, to follow non-Muslim conventions and fashions, including 'rebellious' ones, to follow cultural customs that create ethnic identities but which are not much less Islamic, or to adopt a clearly Islamic identity. Many of the younger generation grown up in Britain, reject the ethnic conventions of their parents' generations and the loss of Islamic identity of Western fashion. Instead they fashion a distinctly Islamic but ethnically nondescript identity out of the range of options available to them. It is the "distinctly Islamic" aspect that is important for them yet it is the same aspect that makes others assume that they have failed to integrate. Ironically it is because they have integrated that they have discarded the clothes of their ethnic identities, but criticism that they have failed to integrate comes from those who cannot distinguish between ethnic tradition and Islamic assertion. People choose distinctively Islamic clothes because they want to be recognised as Muslims *in the wider community.*

Problems arise because whatever other measure of integration is used, every religion is exclusive – you can't 'be' two different religions, no matter how generously disposed you are towards other religions (including secularism), so wearing distinctively Islamic clothes immediately marks you out as 'other'.

7.1.3 Authentic Muslim Identity

7.1.3.1 Preamble

It is obvious from the preceding paragraphs and from the controversy it arouses, that Islamic dress is an extremely important issue. The following sections are intended to show that a pragmatic approach should be adopted. For all the controversy that surrounds it, and efforts to accommodate it in uniforms and the workplace, there is no generally agreed single proper dress accepted by all Muslims themselves. The least desirable outcome for all is where a particular Muslim organisation or an external non-Muslim body such as a court is asked to define Islamic dress – it cannot do so in undisputed

terms, and the former will inevitably include its own ethnic and factional prejudices in the decision.

Most arguments against Islamic dress *per se* are specious; for example there is no general reason why loose and long clothes should be more of a safety hazard than tight, restrictive ones. Likewise the argument that multiple standards of dress induces rivalry ignores common sense – everyone knows that degrees of piety and sincerity are not defined by clothing but by more profound senses.

Examples of a pragmatic approach include minor adaptations to uniforms so that they can include token features of Islamic dress; organisations with a corporate uniform can provide cloth using the corporate colours to allow members to prepare their own clothes from it. Specialist protective clothing is provided for in the Shari'ah by virtue of common sense and analogy with armour.

Just as in everything else to do with selecting a level of religious practice to adopt, individual Muslims claim a whole spectrum of requirements for Islamic dress according to their conscience and their enthusiasm. The spectrum for men ranges from 'no difference at all' to copycat Arab costumes, and for women, from Islamo-chic little headscarf to full face veiled, full length black burqa.

7.1.3.2 Principles

The Islamic principles of dress are that a man must cover from his navel to his knee at all times, and a woman must cover everything except her face and hands. How that translates into practice depends on interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ invariably wore a lower garment called an *izhar* identical in style to a sarong. This is rarely seen on the street in Britain, except for older generation Bangladeshi men. Besides izhar, his companions also wore a *salwar*, or *shalwar*, a loose, very full cotton trouser as maintained typically by Pakistanis. His upper garment was a *qamees*, which is a shirt split at the sides and which came to the midpoint of his calves, with open sleeves down to his hands. His head was covered with a simple hat wrapped in an *imamah*, the Islamic-styled turban. He had a thick woollen over-garment called a *Jubbah*, a word nowadays used for the long Arab-style cotton full length shirt because it has the same cut. None of his garments was allowed to fall below the ankle. He and all his companions kept at least a fist-length of beard and trimmed his moustache to no more than the length of a rice grain (not long-grain rice).

The Qur'an commanded his wives to receive male visitors from behind a *hijab*, literally a screen or curtain (rather than the new use of the word hijab to mean a scarf). Hadeeth record how the Muslim women of the time covered themselves entirely with a sheet large enough to take two together, and the Prophet's wife Ayesha commanded that when she be taken to her funeral, the cloth should be arranged so as not even to reveal her height.

7.1.3.3 Men's Practice

Clearly few Muslims adopt these original examples, but to salve their consciences they make various interpretations of the principles. The sarong-

like *izhar* is so closely tied to ethnic identities of aging Bangladeshis that pride defeats almost any attempt by anyone else to wear it, except perhaps Indonesians and East Africans in private. Shalwar approximates to trousers sufficiently to convince most people that trousers are acceptable, though their origins are quite different. Most men will accept the Qamees, though young Asians are troubled about looking too much like their ethnically-encumbered parents, so they often prefer the modern Arab shirt since Arabs have more kudos than Asians. (Many Arabs regard Asians as miserable servants and ignorant of Islam, so there is little incentive for status-conscious young Asian Muslims to prolong the humiliation.)

Any headgear is decidedly unfashionable for young Muslim males unless it is a uniform nondescript hood or a Mark 1 reversed baseball cap, though Arab-style scarves have their place. The Imamah is altogether too conspicuous for all but those totally impervious to public opinion. Many young Muslims take comfort in a Hadeeth in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ *took off* his imamah and used it as a *sutra* to pray behind. For them the taking off is a technicality, they prefer the more advanced stage of not having it there at all.

The beard is a special subject in its own right. Sayyadina Muhammad ﷺ never cut his beard and commanded his followers to grow their beards long and shorten their moustaches, as an explicit religious duty. Some among them trimmed their beards to a generous fist's length, which was acceptable. In modern times, just as it is possible to find a supposed Islamic religious authority who will accept almost any deviation, so such authorities can be found with token stubble or even no beard at all. There was reputedly a Turkish imam in Paris who kept a woollen 'beard' that he attached to lead the salaah! For the sincere, practising Muslim, a beard is often the first, most conspicuous and most enduring sign of his devotion, and therefore it is highly symbolic among Muslims. Even if a youth or man is unable to grow a full beard, the fact of not cutting or shaving it gives it equivalent religious status. There have been cases in schools where Muslim youths have been ordered to shave their emerging beards, where the school authorities have failed to accept its religious significance at that early stage. In a military context, Queen's Regulations also have explicit beard-related instructions which conflict with Muslim religious requirements.

Recognising the importance of clothing to communicate a message, many young Muslims seek protection in attitudes, posture and clothing that suggests belligerence through for example adopting militant-chic, camouflage styles. This must not be mistaken for genuine militancy, instead the exemplars are rather like the harmless hoverfly that looks like a wasp. On the other hand, dressing in accordance with the Sunnah is seen as a distraction from "the real struggle" both for militants and for militant-chic hoverflies. A young Muslim man in white or black imamah, long beard and long qamees is far more likely to be a devotional Sufi mystic than a fan of 'Usama bin Laden.

Muslim scholars do agree that it is not permitted to wear the symbolic clothing of another religion. While archbishops' mitres have not been in the High Streets recently, as to whether the injunction includes the evangelist's pin-stripe suit is debateable. (Ironically the original Hebrew mitre was an eight-metre long roll of cloth, not dissimilar to an imamah.) It is believed by some

Muslims that to wear a tie is reprehensible as it symbolises a Christian cross. However sartorial history does not support this – it is more likely to be the pronouncement of a challenged imam who cannot find persuasive arguments to encourage his followers to wear Sunnah dress so he resorts to 'bogeyman' arguments against the alternative.

In short, Muslim men may pass off more or less anything as Islamic dress, and few of the more popular choices have any relationship with the Sunnah. This makes it hard for those men who do choose to follow the Sunnah closely to justify their choice by reference to the practice of other Muslims or the pronouncements of scholars.

7.1.3.4 Women's Practice

Just as with men, women's practice ranges from dress rooted in ethnicity, through token gestures of Islamic identity, to the full Sunnah. Unlike men, there are no specific examples from the Sunnah that describe the type and style of women's clothes, other than the general requirement of being loose, and covering all except hands and face, or being fully covered under a veil and burqa-equivalent..

There is an assumption made by many observers that Muslim women in Britain who wear a long burqa or similar coat, and those who veil their faces as well, do so because they are forced to do so by their parents or husbands. The precise opposite is closer to the truth. Younger generations of Muslim women reject the ethnic traditions of their parents, so those who are conscientious Muslims strive to assert their Muslim identity instead of their ethnic identity – e.g. British Muslim, not British Bangladeshi. They do so by adopting strictly Islamic dress and veiling their faces (the face veil is usually referred to as a *niqaab*). Meanwhile their own mothers wouldn't be seen dead in a burqa. For first generation settlers it carries a stigma of backward villagers, not fashionable progressives in the big Western city. Some older generation women prefer to maintain their ethnic traditions, whether it is sari and scarf, shalwar-kameez and dupatta, long skirt, blouse and scarf or similar. Other older generation women tried to integrate by adapting western clothes such as trouser-suits when ethnic clothes were the target of racial abuse and workplace prejudice, or reserved for self-conscious dressing up.

Organisations that have tried to accommodate Muslim dress have often been tripped up by failing to recognise that Muslims cover diverse ethnicities. For example some schools have allowed shalwar kameez to be incorporated in the uniform code, but have failed to recognise that for stricter Muslim families this is only for indoors, or that some Arab girls and even some Bangladeshis would feel humiliated wearing Pakistani-style clothes.

A vexed issue concerns identity verification and veiled faces.. Clearly this is not easy to resolve. In the ports of those Muslim countries that respect Islamic practice (some are openly contemptuous of it), separate facilities are provided for men and women. UK Immigration will also provide women to check veiled women's passports, but they are not always present and travellers can be delayed for a long time waiting for a woman to appear.

For men and for women, any interference with clothing would be considered an assault, e.g. lifting or removing a face veil, scarf, imamah or other Islamic-style of headgear, unless done voluntarily.

7.2 Racial and Religious Harassment

7.2.1 Everyday Harassment

Muslim racial identity is as varied as the rest of society. However Muslim dress code is distinctive, so inevitably many Muslims are, and feel, conspicuous. As explained in the previous section, nowadays many Muslims make a clear distinction between ethnic and religious identity, expressed most clearly in the way they dress. While routine racial harassment is on the decline as society becomes more comfortable with multi-ethnic communities, that often serves to make Muslims more conspicuous and more likely to be targeted for routine harassment. Most harassment goes unreported because perpetrators are extraordinarily difficult either to confront or to take action against. Yet these incidents are the most corrosive aspects of poor race, religion and ethnicity integration because they reinforce on a daily basis the notion of not belonging, of not being on the same terms as everyone else. A typical example might be a verbal assault in which words sound ambiguously like abuse, shouted out by a passenger in a commercial van, driving past, with no obvious witnesses. The abuse carries no material loss or direct threat of injury, and even if basic details are recorded, the time wasted waiting for a police response and the obviously poor prospects of a resolution all contribute to make the crime unchallengeable. Such incidents are literally everyday life for anyone in a visibly distinct and disadvantaged minority.

7.2.2 Reporting Minor Incidents

Mechanisms exist for reporting minor incidents, e.g. via the internet and through distributing reporting forms to the local Muslim community. Some work of this nature has already been attempted by the Muslim Safety Forum and the Metropolitan Police, but there are limitations in what has been done. The forms might serve merely to record incidents of low-level crime and there should be no expectation of a direct follow-up. However accumulation of a body of such material, from which hot spots can be identified, or even sufficient detail for individual persistent behaviour can be identified, could allow local police to target resources accordingly.

7.2.3 Vehicle-based Minor Incidents

The majority of petty abuse incidents occur from vehicles, obviously because the vehicle provides security for the perpetrator. The DVLA has made available on the internet basic details of the registration state of vehicles queriable by their type and registration number. Anecdotal evidence shows that a significant number of harassment incidents from cars involve cars that are unlicensed. This suggests there may be follow-on benefits from addressing low-level harassment since there is already a recognised association between unlicensed vehicles and other kinds of offences.

7.2.4 Encouraging Witnesses

One aspect of the disempowerment felt by Muslim victims and recognised by perpetrators, is the reluctance of witnesses to become involved. This occurs

(as in all cases) partly through apathy and inertia, and also partly due to clannishness by which people assume that other members of the targeted community will help if help is really needed (racialism through inertia, in effect). But it is also partly due to the failure by ordinary people, unaffected by racialism or Islamophobia, to recognise the insidiousness of the otherwise petty crime. A campaign is needed to encourage people who are not directly affected, to make a stand against petty harassment, to report incidents even when the victim doesn't, and to challenge trivial instances of racialism, xenophobia and religion-based abuse and discrimination.

7.3 Stop-and-Search

7.3.1 Humiliation

All stop-and-search incidents are humiliating and a cause for resentment, unless perhaps the target is a conventionally-dressed, white, English middle-class, middle-aged, male professional stopped among similar socially secure people. Searches are de-stigmatised only if they are applied uniformly to everyone or through a well-defined, visibly randomising process.

7.3.2 Profiling is Counter-productive

Regardless of claims that profiling is not used to identify targets for stops, profiling is inevitable, but profiling is also worthless, at least if it isn't supported by specific intelligence. It has already been noted above that normal Muslim appearance is intentionally distinctive, so any Muslim involved in an sinister activity that could be intercepted by stop-and-search would be pretty stupid not to make his or her appearance inconspicuous, or at least not distinctively Muslim. Furthermore the huge ethnic diversity of Muslims, including significant numbers of black and white converts, makes it very difficult to apply an ethnic or appearance-related profile to targets, e.g. based on skin complexion. On top of that, the Muslims that have been associated with the kinds of activities that stop-and-search is intended to disrupt, have included a disproportionately large number of converts and people of a generally European or Afro-Caribbean appearance. In short, regardless of the ethics of profiling, ethnic or appearance-related profiling is likely to be counter-productive from a practical policing perspective.

7.3.3 Stop-and-Search Opportunities and Costs

Systematic stop-and-search activities, such as followed the 7/7/05 London bombings, involves an enormous amount of police resource for minimal gain, but if approached differently could have considerable fringe benefits. The following anecdote illustrates the issue. "My local railway station has been patrolled by the same four or five police officers and PCSOs for nearly four weeks now, yet none of them have made any attempt to engage in any informal way with any of the people who attract their attention among the ethnically and religiously distinct people who use the station daily. This is a huge opportunity squandered. There has been an enormous wave of revulsion at the violence of the bombings and a deep-felt anxiety to contribute, and this would have been a brilliant opportunity for thousands of police in London to get to know individuals in the minority community better. We all spend a few minutes waiting for the train and we now have a topical subject on which to start a conversation. Individual police officers have no particular reason to

assume hostility towards them from ordinary travelling Muslims. Using this opportunity to strike up a friendly relationship over a number of days (i) could encourage a better, more personalised relationship with the police, (ii) could give the minority person an opportunity to demonstrate his integrity to the officer, and (iii) could demonstrate to other people around that he deserves to be on the same footing as everyone else, not an object of suspicion." It would also provide local police officers with an opportunity to understand better who the Muslim members of the local community actually are. Furthermore, the anecdote continues, "I suddenly felt a lot more vulnerable than previously. The search was an affront to my dignity, regardless of the necessity of the policy and regardless of the fact that I had no complaint about the manner in which it was done. Had anyone been present who could have exploited my discomfiture, for example, had a group of racialist youths been present, their boldness would have been succoured by my exposure and by my humiliation at being a police target. Meanwhile my moral disadvantage and the wound to my pride would have made it far more difficult for me to turn to the police for assistance if I had been subject to abuse afterwards. Indeed I felt it much more likely that I would have reacted violently as a response to any subsequent abuse."

7.3.4 Stop and Search Protocols

There are significant differences in the way in which different powers of stop and search are used. These differences have helped to cause confusion about people's rights and expectations. Under Terrorism legislation searches can be carried out for specific items of any people in a designated area. "The police officer should tell you:

- that you must wait to be searched;
- what law they are using and your rights;
- their name;
- the station they work at;
- why they chose you;
- what they are looking for; and
- that you have a right to be given a form straightaway showing details of the stop and search."

However anecdotal evidence suggests that only 'what they are looking for' was told to people stopped and searched at railway stations following the 7th July bombings.

"You should not be stopped or searched just because of:

- your age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or faith;
- [skin colour, age, hairstyle,] the way you look or dress, the language you speak; or
- because you have committed a crime in the past."

Of these, the first two are clearly contradicted by 'profiled' targeting of stops.

"The police will ask you for your name, address and date of birth. You do not have to give this information if you don't want to, unless the police say they are reporting you for an offence. If this is the case you could be arrested if you don't tell them.

"You will also be asked to say what your ethnic background is from a list of the national census categories which the officer will show to you. You do not have to say what it is if you don't want to. But this information is used to show if the police are stopping or searching people just because of their race or ethnicity." The National Census categories make no distinction between religious identities yet these latter are emphatically the identities used to select people for stop and search under counter-terrorism operations. On the other hand at the time of a Muslim-related anti-terrorism stop-and-search, to be asked explicitly what religion you are would be bluntly inflammatory.

7.3.5 Search – What You May Expect to Find

On a number of occasions search incidents have caused consternation because the police officers concerned were unaware of what constituted normal Muslim habits. The following list identifies items that might normally be found on Muslims and that have perfectly normal explanations.

- Ittar – It is conventional for Muslim men to carry a small bottle of oil-based perfume. Using it and giving it as a gift is a *Sunnah*.
- Miswak – Miswak, Sawaak or tooth-stick is a straight piece of fibrous root, about the size of a finger, used for cleaning the teeth at frequent intervals, especially when making *Wudhu*(*qv*).
- Bottle – A discreetly carried plastic bottle such as a shampoo bottle is sometimes used to make up for the absence of *Istinjah* facilities (*qv*), i.e. washing the private parts in a stream of water after toilet.
- Tasbeeh – a chaplet or rosary of beads is commonly carried to practice for *Dhikr*, meditation on the name of Allah.
- Taweez – a coded form of a few verses of the Qur'an on a small piece of paper, wrapped up and sealed inside a cloth package about the size of a tea bag, and usually hung round the neck. It would be extremely discourteous to unwrap this.
- Qur'an – If carried, the Qur'an will usually be kept in a protective bag, enabling it to be handled without *wudhu* (*qv*). It is extremely disrespectful to handle the Qur'an directly or open it to read without *wudhu.*
- Leaflets – Elsewhere this document describes how numerous leaflets are distributed in the vicinity of masjids. Regardless of the content of the leaflet, if a Muslim thinks there may be sacred text in it such as a quotation from the Qur'an, he or she will be careful not to throw it away and may carry it for a considerable time before finding a respectful way of disposing of it, whether or not it has incriminating statements on it and whether or not he agrees with its sentiments.
- Shaven armpits – an intimate search will reveal that Muslim men *and* women habitually shave the hair from their armpits and private parts. This is not an indicator of some ritual purification in readiness for a dastardly act!
- Stone – When travelling, it can sometimes be difficult to make *wudhu* (*qv*). In certain situations an acceptable alternative is to make

tayyamum, by rubbing hands, face and arms on a clean, sandy or stone surface. Sometimes a fist-sized rock or smooth piece of clay is carried in luggage to achieve this.

- Rucksack and sleeping bag – One large mainstream Muslim organisation, Tablighi Jamaat, sends small groups from masjid to masjid to preach, staying at one for 2 or 3 nights before moving on to another. Each member will invariably carry a pack with sleeping bag and personal effects and they may be travelling very late or very early depending on convenient intervals between salaah times.

7.4 Muslims and Jews

Muslim-Jewish relations are notoriously strained. Although there are several reasons for this, the obvious, overwhelming one concerns the Palestinians. For most of the time since 1947 the Palestinian struggle has been essentially a secular and Arab issue, but the Israeli occupation of all of Jerusalem made it a *cause célèbre* of the whole Islamic world, because of Israeli restrictions on access to Masjid al Aqsa, one of the three holy sanctuaries of Islam.

Islam is rooted in the same tradition as Judaism. There are far more aspects of Islam and Judaism that are held in common than in conflict. It is for exactly this reason that (i) the Jews feature extensively in the Qur'an and (ii) Jewish responses to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were critical in shaping Islam's relationship with the Jews. The Qur'an includes passages which explicitly exhorted the Jews to accept Islam, passages to be recited verbatim to them, which they would recognise. For the benefit of Muslims, it also cites extensively from their history to illustrate righteous and wrongful behaviour and the consequences of both, as a warning and example to Muslims of those that preceded them.

Many Jews converted to Islam during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and many did not. Among the latter, many rebelled against or undermined his rule when he was appointed by the people of Madinah to rule them. Those who converted to Islam were quickly absorbed into the heterogeneous Muslim society (including one who was married to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ) and, quite properly, little attention was then given to their origins. However the net result is that the early conflicts with Jews and the examples of misconduct in the Qur'an are the ones that Muslims are most conscious of.

Before the foundation of Israel, there were many Jewish communities that were well established in the heart of Arab Muslim societies, and some of these remain. However most have gone and memories of harmony have faded quickly in the continuous war over the land of Palestine. Many non-Arab Muslim communities, especially Asians, have no direct experience of living alongside Jews at all. In these countries, and in modern times in most Arab countries too, the only Muslim image of Jews is entirely negative. In a few more complex countries, e.g. South Africa, Muslim minorities and Jewish minorities have learnt to respect each other, and the Jewish community was recognised by Muslims for its strong stand against Apartheid. But for most Muslims, anti-Zionist, anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish sentiments are indistinguishable from each other. Without the direct heritage of the infamy

of the Second World War in Europe, few Muslims have automatic revulsion for Hitler and Nazism, and some express equanimity. In the Indian sub-continent, equanimity towards Nazism is quite normal, being a far-off, European problem and one which led indirectly to their independence.

There is an enormous gap to cross before a more sophisticated relationship between Muslims and Jews can be expected. The gap means that anti-Jewish feelings among Muslims is largely unchallenged. Currently, even Interfaith principles barely protect liberal Muslim leaders from being compromised by sharing a platform with Jewish leaders. The problem needs to be handled carefully and systematically because of its pervasiveness, and needs constructive participation from all sides, each community, their generations, and institutions affected. Noting that there are significant numbers of British Jews who are at least uncomfortable with Israeli actions against Palestinians, that historically there have been stable relations between Jewish and Muslim communities, and that a lot of anti-Jewish sentiment stems from complete isolation from Jewish communities, some attempt could be made to whittle away at this potential target of extremism by carefully managed dialogue, e.g. through the use of Jewish converts to Islam and of orthodox scholars as intermediaries from those with knowledge of their common heritage.

There are some converts to Islam who vocalise the level of anti-Jewish sentiment that one would otherwise only expect from neo-Nazi groups in the UK. A few of these are indeed rooted in extreme right-wing ideas. Others, more typical of some Muslim militants, have built up a following by using endemic anti-Jewish sentiment and emotions stirred by the oppression of Palestinians. The implications are that there are two separate problems, (i) to tackle the extremist rabble-rousers and (ii) to tackle the idea that this kind of racialism is 'normal'.

7.5 Jihad

7.5.1 Definition

Jihad or *mujahida* in Arabic means 'struggle', 'the act of struggling'. It has precisely the same range of direct and abstract associations as the English word 'struggle', e.g. to apply oneself to overcome a difficulty, to fight, a power struggle, class struggle etc. The Arabic word '*qatila*' is the word that literally means to fight or wage war. Within Islamic practice, Jihad means both to fight *for Islam* militarily and to struggle against the personal and spiritual obstacles that hold one back from the fullest practise of Islam.

7.5.2 A 'Just' War

It is not the purpose of this document to justify the extent to which military campaigns occupied much of early Islam, but it is necessary to state that in their proper historical context these campaigns were a proper part of Islamic history. Islam has a concept of a 'just war' in much the same way as Christianity does, with the difference that it is explicit in Islam from the earliest times. The differences between the situation of Islam and that of Christianity in modern times highlights important factors in understanding support for militant jihad among many Muslims. Firstly Christian churches have been relegated to a background role among powerful countries and are used to give moral endorsement ('a just war') to governments' military

adventures. Islam on the other hand is a potent force set in opposition to oppressive governments in weak countries, and is used to give moral endorsement to violent anti-government action. Very few Christian communities are having to struggle to assert their identity or existence, whereas many Muslim ones are. So for Christian groups, questions of a 'just war' nowadays turn on the morality of governments currently waging war, allowing Christians the luxury of anti-militant, moral high ground.

7.5.3 Ambiguity of Western Support

By contrast, for Muslim groups, questions of a 'just war', justification for jihad, turn on the morality of supporting communities in desperate plights by militant action against repressive forces of law and order. Hence jihad becomes equated with underground movements and terrorism instead of legitimate struggles for honourable ends. The situation has made more complex for Muslim movements because of shifting and contradictory policies among Western countries, favouring repressive regimes in Muslim countries with Western sympathies, e.g. in Algeria, or cultivating anti-Soviet groups in the Cold War era and then dumping them e.g. in Afghanistan, or by attempts to contain an unviable entity e.g. Yugoslavia. Many of the more recent and therefore less well established ethnic communities among Muslims in Britain are refugees from conflicts such as these, and discussion of violent struggle is discussion about their everyday experiences before coming to Britain and remains the everyday experience of their relatives left behind. Proper, legitimate channels need to exist to channel their preoccupations through, but currently there is much debate and little understanding about struggles around the Muslim world, so it is extremely difficult for anyone to define what is a proper channel and what is unacceptable support for terrorism.

7.5.4 Legal and Illegal Activity

It is obvious that Muslim extremists have already and will continue to exploit struggles against oppression to draw attention to themselves, to win supporters and to increase tensions for their own purposes. It is also increasingly clear that impressionable youngsters from well-settled families unaffected by these struggles, are drawn to dramatic claims, and sometimes to dramatic acts, that take them into terrorism and related activities. If it not clear what constitutes legitimate channels for those people who are directly affected to express their support for a popular Islamic cause, it is even less clear for those on the fringes such as extremists and disaffected youngsters, never mind moderates wanting to campaign for justice and human rights. And if it so unclear among the supporters of a Muslim campaign, it is likely to be deeply opaque to non-Muslims.

In short, while some forms of expression of support for militant jihad are clearly illegal, others are not clearly illegal, some are legal and some are historical reality. If the reader has matters of concern around issues such as these, it is imperative that specialist advice be sought.

7.5.5 Moral Examples in Muslim History

Many masjids have books of collections of anecdotal tales from the early history of Islam, such as "Teachings of Islam" or "Fazail-e-Amal" by Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya. Many of the anecdotes concern examples of chivalry

or self-sacrifice expressed in jihad by the founders of Islam, in the sequence of battles in which the opponents of Islam sought to crush it at its inception, or occasions in which they ill-treated Muslim captives and converts from among them. These events are all taken from the body of Hadeeth literature, the formalised historical records of the roots of Islam, and are widely known and recounted. They are not a source of encouraging militancy among Muslims, rather they are comparable to many of the stories of tribulations of Christian saints. Indeed the Tablighi Jamaat movement which makes most use of the particular books cited, is spurned by militants who disdain its introspectiveness and timorousness.

7.5.6 Religious Positions on Militancy

Most Muslims when drawn on the issue of militancy will state that Islam is a religion of peace, that Islam means 'Peace'. This is undoubtedly true, save for the need for Muslims to defend themselves and the ultimate need to protect the holy sanctuaries of Islam (which include Masjid al Aqsa next to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem). 'Salaam' actually means peace and 'Islam' means 'Submission' [to the will of Allah], the sense of which is that one only truly believes in Allah when one accepts one's fate in His Hands – then one is at peace with oneself.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated after the battle of Tabuk, the last significant military campaign of his life, in which the Byzantines were defeated in a bloodless victory, "The little jihad is over – the great jihad has begun." He explained that, "The great jihad is the struggle against one's self" by which is meant the struggle against base and selfish desires. He repeated this exhortation in his sermon when performing Hajj a few months before the end of his life, "The Mujahid is he who fights against his self and subdues it to the obedience of Allah."

One of the scholars most respected by many of the more militant young Muslims is Shaykh Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz bin Baaz. He published a response to recent acts of terrorism including the following quotations from the Qur'an, translated here: 'Allah said: "O you who believe! Fulfil your obligations." The unjust killing of a human being in Islam is forbidden. Allah said: "And kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden except for a just cause." Corruption on earth is considered a major sin in Islam. Allah said: "And of mankind there is he whose speech may please you in this worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most quarrelsome of the opponents. And when he turns away from you, his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle, and Allah likes not mischief. And when it is said to him 'Fear Allah,' he is led by arrogance to more crime. So enough for him is Hell, and worst indeed is that place to rest.'"

8 Work, Food, Drink and Social Etiquettes

8.1 Alcohol

An astonishing amount of social interaction takes place in British society around alcohol. Not only are informal networks in the workplace created in the pub, but most other gatherings which seek to build teams and organisations are lubricated with alcohol. It may be thought that in common with other non-drinkers, Muslims can simply participate merely with non-alcoholic refreshment, but there are problems on several levels.

Firstly in Islam, alcohol is considered dirty in itself. Although it has valid surgical uses, it is otherwise treated as an impurity that needs to be cleansed from the body or clothing. This is extremely awkward where drinks are handed around, spilt or mixed with non-alcoholic drinks.

Secondly whether or not Muslims are visibly conspicuous, they feel particularly exposed in pubs and clubs, where the general ambience is towards breaking down of inhibitions. Muslim experience of lowering inhibitions among drinkers, is of increased racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia among some participants.

Thirdly, there is a corresponding lowering of sexual inhibitions among drinkers, and Muslim sensitivities about sexual propriety are ignored by drunken colleagues as well as strangers. Sometimes Muslim propriety is directly challenged – awkward people, men and women, with alcoholically lowered inhibitions, believe it is appropriate to challenge the specific inhibitions of Muslims and goad them into a lower, more "integrated" standard of sexual behaviour. This is not restricted to conspicuous, conscientious Muslims, but affects anyone who is known to come from a Muslim background. It can be direct or surreptitious e.g. spiking soft drinks with alcohol would be considered amusing by many non-Muslims and outrageous by Muslims.

Quite reasonable Muslim reluctance to participate in activities in which alcohol is used, causes a major obstacle to Muslim participation in informal networks in the workplace, but it also limits the extent of Muslim involvement in many other aspects of life, e.g. in the local neighbourhood, in community, social, leisure and sports organisations and activities as well, because many of these activities are punctuated by alcohol use.

8.2 Halaal Food

Halaal is an Arabic word meaning 'lawful', and is used as a collective word to describe the Muslim diet. The opposite, 'prohibited' is *haraam.*

Food that is halaal includes:-

- All fruit, vegetables and vegetable products except those mixed with alcohol.
- All fish and fish products, except those that are amphibious. Thus many crustaceans – crab, lobster, shrimp and prawns are haraam, prohibited. (There are different opinions among Muslim scholars over some shellfish, however.)

- Meat or meat product which has come from an animal that has been slaughtered halaal, ie with its jugular veins cut through (and not its spinal cord) while conscious and not sick. There are restrictions on which animals are lawful to be slaughtered, basically herbivorous ones, but not some beasts of burden such as horses. It is forbidden to eat omnivorous animals such as pigs, dogs and other scavengers or carnivorous animals, regardless of how they are slaughtered.
- Dairy products are halaal, provided they contain no 'dead animal' content that has not come from a halaal source. Thus fresh milk and butter are invariably halaal, but cheese may have been made with rennet from a haraam, prohibited, source, eg the stomach of a calf that had been killed with a bolt or by electrocution, though vegetarian cheese or rennet is nowadays widely available and quite acceptable.
- Eggs are halaal, as long as they have also been cooked in a halaal substance.

Anything that is marked 'Suitable for Vegetarians' is halaal except if it contains alcohol, even if the alcohol has been boiled out by cooking. However vinegar is halaal even though its manufacture required fermentation of alcohol.

Cooking of halaal (lawful) food in a haraam substance makes the food haraam. For example, if a piece of fish or an egg is cooked in vegetable oil, but the vegetable oil had previously been used to cook non-halaal meat or something with such meat in it, the vegetable oil would become haraam, as would the fish or egg cooked in it. Obviously this is just as true for eggs fried in a pan in which bacon has been cooked, unless preceded by thorough cleaning of the pan and use of oil free of bacon fat. Similarly, halaal food becomes haraam when it is prepared with an implement or on a surface that is contaminated with haraam substances, e.g. when the same knife or cutting block is used to prepare both halaal meat and haraam without being thoroughly cleaned in between.

The required degree of cleanliness of implements contaminated with haraam substances is achieved by normal cleaning to remove all trace of the impurity, followed by thorough rinsing under *running* water.

Many ready-prepared and catering food products have animal based ingredients, some of which are obscure. Obviously away from Muslim countries, these are certain to be from haraam sources, so the product itself becomes haraam. Common examples are gelatine, stock, suet, fat-based emulsifiers and cochineal. These can appear in sweets, soups, glazes, puddings, sauces etc.

There are no restrictions on how or when halaal food is eaten or what item is eaten mixed with what.

8.3 Halaal Slaughtering

The supply of halaal meat raises a number of controversies. Firstly there are differing opinions as to whether stunning an animal before slaughter is acceptable, because (i) the animal is then sick and it is not permitted to slaughter a sick animal for food, and (ii) in its stunned state the loss of blood is

not fast enough to kill the animal quickly or ensure that it is sufficiently clean of blood when dead. An unstunned and halaal-slaughtered sheep or cow will almost always be dead and still within six seconds, whereas a bolt-gun-slaughtered animal whether stunned or not, may return to consciousness even while being rendered because a critical part of the brain has not been destroyed by the bolt.

Secondly when being slaughtered, the slaughterer must pronounce the formula, 'Bismillah wa Allahu Akbar' – With the Name of Allah and Allah is Great'. There are a number of large scale producers of meat that claim to sell a halaal product where the pronouncement is made by tape loop playing in the background, or where the knife is engraved with the words, neither of which is acceptable. Some high throughput poultry suppliers slaughter so fast that many animals have their spinal cord cut – this is not halaal.

Thirdly, there is a much greater retail supply of halaal meat than slaughterhouse supply. A TV documentary exposé demonstrated that many butchers purporting to sell halaal meat were not in fact doing so, and that five times more 'halaal' meat was sold than actually produced.

Various attempts have been made by the Muslim community to regulate the production and supply of halaal meat, but with limited success due to the huge resources this entails if it is to be effective.

It may be thought that Indian restaurants are a source of halaal food, since the vast majority are run by Bangladeshi Muslims, but the extra cost of halaal meat and narrow profit margins mean that only those catering expressly for a Muslim market are likely to be halaal. What the consequences are for habitués of Indian restaurants, in which neither the cooks nor the waiters have ever tasted the food they serve, are left for conjecture.

8.4 Eating

Traditional Muslim practices are determined by the Sunnah. The Sunnah for eating is quite elaborate, but the most conspicuous features are sitting at a cloth spread on a clean, shoe-free floor or on a platform a few inches off the floor, washing hands immediately before and after eating, and eating and drinking with the washed right hand, not the left. As with everything else there are differing degrees of knowledge and willingness to practice among Muslims, but anyone invited to a practising Muslim household should anticipate this sort of arrangement.

8.5 Visiting Muslim Homes and Families

Most of the points of etiquette associated with visiting Muslim homes has been covered in detail elsewhere already. It will be normal to leave one's shoes in the hallway, but to use the slippers provided at the entrance to the bathroom and toilet. Men and women are entertained separately if the guests are outside the family. Meals are often laid out on a cloth on the carpet, and hands washed just before eating, often by passing around a jug poured into a bowl if a washstand is not nearby. It is normal to eat using the hands, so hands need to be washed afterwards as well, of course. Religion is a normal topic of conversation; it is not considered intrusive to ask about religious issues nor particularly impolite to discuss them, even heatedly.

Parents continue to share their house with at least one of their married children and expect to be maintained by their children and grandchildren in their old age. Many such extended families would consider it shameful for their parents not to be thus catered for, even where this makes the family home cramped. It is quite common for two married brothers to continue to share the same house with their parents where this is practical.

8.6 Work

Issues concerned with facilities for salaah and other religious observances, food, dress, gender conduct, holidays, washing facilities, etc are covered extensively elsewhere in this document.

The Shari'ah forbids Muslims to receive or pay or do accounting of interest, except that where an interest-based debt has been incurred it has to be paid. However given the extreme difficulty of acquiring property without a mortgage, most home-owning Muslim families have ignored the injunction. Therefore they have been similarly uninhibited about careers in banking and accounting that are based on the money market and interest. However as awareness has grown in recent years and as some formulae have been devised by which some banks can offer "Shari'ah-based" mortgages, many more Muslims have looked to ways of avoiding involvement in interest-based business. This disadvantages Muslim employees who are thus unable to benefit from company contributory pension schemes, corporate home purchase plans and other similar employment benefits. It also means that conscientious Muslims avoid jobs and careers in banking and finance.

Employees who work for clients of their employee may be placed in awkward positions where they are asked to serve clients in banking and finance, or alcohol, or a few other areas where the subject of the client's business is clearly contrary to Islamic principles.

8.7 Humour, Islamophobia and Racialism

Conscientious Muslims are not noted for raucous humour and indeed Muslim ethics set much worth in a carefully restrained sense of humour. This section is no exception.

Unrestrained hilarity depends either on surprise or ridicule, and is invariably the luxury of the secure, well-established majority and its butt is the weak, insecure minority singled out for humiliation in circumstances where it cannot answer back. That is why much humour is racialist or xenophobic. Self-effacing and ironic humour exists where the target is one's self or one's own community, and is humorous because the person acknowledges some awkward or embarrassing aspect of one's self or one's own community. Therefore self-effacing and ironic humour often reinforces the inferior position of the weak, insecure minority. When the majority community uses ironic humour, the humour serves to acknowledge that something is wrong or perhaps hypocritical, without doing anything to change the situation.

Surprise as a feature of humour depends on an appropriate knowledge of what to expect. If you know something well, the surprise hangs on a subtle change to what you expect. If you don't know the people well, if you only have general, stereotypical ideas about the subject or the people, the humorous element depends on a twist to the stereotype and plays those aspects up – it

depends on prejudged notions about the people, i.e. racialist or xenophobic or Islamophobic notions in peoples minds.

In consequence Muslims are beset on several fronts – ethical reluctance to indulge in humiliation, defensiveness of an embattled minority, and reaction to reinforcement of racialist stereotypes. Only when members of the Muslim community are in a strong and culturally secure position will it be possible to make jokes at Muslims' expense, causing offence perhaps, but without causing real harm.

All the above features were present in the Danish cartoons affair. A children's publisher had unwittingly run into Muslim religious sensibilities about representing sacred figures, and a newspaper with a clear policy of antipathy towards Danish Muslims sought to mock these sensibilities by inviting satirists to provide 'alternatives', none of which had either any satirical merit nor the remotest suitability for any children's book. Although the main focus of Muslim protest was on the depiction of sacred figures at all, the purpose of the satire in the first place was racially-motivated and Islamophobic ridicule of the weak and small Muslim community in Denmark by using denigrating caricatures of stereotype Muslim figures. At least no one in the world can now claim ignorance of the Islamic injunction against representing the figure of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in any way. Orthodox Sunni Islam applies the same restriction to any of the Prophets or the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ and is extremely averse to display of any pictures of human beings. See 4.10 Pictures, Photos, Posters and Symbols for a fuller explanation.

9 Hygiene

9.1 *Wudhu* – Washing before prayer

Prior to making Salaah or handling the Qur'an, one must have performed ritual washing, known as *Wudhu*. This involves washing the hands, mouth, nasal passage, face, forearms, wiping the head, and washing the feet. This can be achieved in most wash basins, but sometimes only with difficulty, e.g. where timer taps have to be held down, or where taps are very close to the edge of the basin, or are very hot and very cold. Also non-Muslims are put out by nose-washing and foot washing. Therefore if an organisation is considering dedicated Salaah facilities e.g. for its Muslim employees, it would be beneficial to provide dedicated Wudhu facilities to complement the Salaah facilities.

Wudhu remains intact until broken by the acts of passing urine, stool or rectal wind, flowing of blood from a cut, sleeping and a few obscurer technicalities. It then has to be made again before Salaah can be made. It is also broken along with the general state of ritual cleanliness, *Ghusl*, by sexual and menstrual discharge, contact with a dog's saliva, and touching a wet dog's coat.

9.2 *Ghusl* – Ritual Bathing

Ghusl means an all-over bath or shower. By bath is meant a bucket-bath, i.e. in either case, shower or bath, it implies that clean, soap-free water must be run over the whole body and drained. Soaking in one's own bathwater is un-Islamic, and revolts most Muslims. The requirements to complete a Ghusl include the actions of making Wudhu and the washing to the root of every hair.

As noted above, Ghusl is an obligation necessitated by sexual and menstrual discharge whether or not after intercourse, contact with a dog's saliva, and touching a wet dog's coat. It is performed as a non-obligatory 'ceremonial' act in preparation for Juma'a and Eid Salaahs.

Material items that are similarly contaminated must be cleaned of the physical impurity and then washed three times under clean running water before they can be used.

9.3 Dogs, Sniffer Dogs and Guide Dogs

It can be seen from the requirements of *Ghusl* above, that Muslims and dogs do not mix well. When police dogs are used in any kind of intervention involving Muslims, their homes or their masjids, enormous offence and trouble can be caused. For example the soiling of carpets through contact with dogs, or from even the possibility of dog mess being brought in on shoes, will require large quantities of carpet to be cleaned of the physical impurity and then washed three times under clean running water before they can be used again, or just as likely replaced completely. This is regardless of how clean the dog is deemed to be per se.

There is no intrinsic difference between a guide dog and any other dog, so Muslims cannot make exception for guide dogs. There is no conceivable situation involving a blind or visually impaired person with a guide dog in which the dog cannot be left outside Muslim premises and all the needs of the

blind person be met by other people. Indeed being aware of the difficulties, Muslims would invariably feel duty bound to assist. Problems can arise in the workplace where a blind person with a guide dog is working alongside a Muslim. This situation requires a clear understanding of the religious obligation on the Muslim to account for the awkward manoeuvrings of the Muslim to avoid contact with the dog. Of course, guide dogs are invariably well-behaved so the problem is far less acute than that with pet dogs who expect to be petted, a situation which most Muslims would regard with astonishment if they hadn't already made the cultural adjustment.

Sniffer dogs are in use at airports, trained to detect drugs. The dog is trained to nuzzle right into a suspect bag. In situations like this, where dogs are used close to ordinary people and their possessions, some thought is required. Obviously if a criminal offence is being committed the perpetrator has little to complain about as long as a reasonable procedure is followed. However since there exists the possibility of a mistake or an innocent explanation or the involvement of someone else or their luggage, the procedure should allow for the dog to be held back once it has indicated some suspicious find, a clear explanation given, and the opportunity for the person involved himself or an official to go through the contents of the bag. In the circumstances it would be reasonable to keep the dog at hand to draw attention to individual suspiciously scented items, but restrained at a distance as long as there was reasonable basis for doubt. The author has witnessed the situation and it is clear that the dog will often pick up a suspicious scent from several metres away.

What is also lacking at airports is any explanation to travellers what is taking place. It is usual merely to have the sniffer dog wandering around the Customs passage unimpeded, with no explanation whatever, and this causes extreme consternation to Muslim travellers. Once a traveller has been contaminated by dog-related impurity, it can be a long time for before it is possible for him or her to make a *Ghusl* and resume religious obligations such as salaah. Travellers often carry sacred items such as the Qur'an itself, and interference in this way from a dog would provoke a very strong reaction from most Muslims.

Male and female Muslim travellers often carry significant amounts of *attar*, oil-based perfumes, for themselves or as souvenirs or as the most preferred gift. (To make a gift of attar is a Sunnah.) Some forms of attar are diluted with benzene-based compounds, but none are diluted with oil or acetone. It is understood that one of the 7 July 2005 bombers returned from the USA with large quantities of acetone peroxide-based cosmetics – these kind of cosmetics do not have a religious significance, unlike large-ish quantities of attar, so to find them in large quantities would be highly significant.

9.4 *Istinjah* – Washing the private parts

On using the toilet, Muslims wash away urine or faecal matter with clean running water. This is called *Istinjah*. It is usually achieved with a large pot with no handle, usually with a teapot-shaped spout, called a *lota*, *shattaf* or *bodna*, and used like a bidet, though far more manageable than the latter. WC provision for Muslims should include a lota and a source of clean running water, preferably in the cubicle itself.

Given the strong emphasis on personal hygiene, it should be no surprise that men's upright urinals are unacceptable to Muslims. For the uninitiated, it may be necessary to explain that these furnishings provide the user's lower half with a fine, evenly distributed spray of impurity from his own and his neighbour's business and serve only to confirm Muslims in their belief in a more advanced lifestyle.

10 Arabic Language, Personal and Organisation Names

10.1 Personal Names

Almost all Muslim male names have some religious root or significance. Names are either taken from the Prophets or the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ or adapted from virtuous adjectives used in the Qur'an or from the word 'Abd' (meaning servant) joined to one of the divine attributes of Allah, e.g. Abdullah or Abdur-Rahman, since a servant of Allah is superior in virtue to one who does not serve Allah.

Muslim female names have similar sources but are far more likely to include dialect or other language adjectives and attributes with less specifically religious connotations.

Because of the religious associations of most Muslim names, nicknames derived from them or contractions or substitution with a similar English sounding name or word can cause offence either to the bearer of the name or to other Muslims. Thus 'Abdul' could be construed as offensive as in "Servant!". Many compound names such as Abdur-Rahman or Shams-ud-Deen or Abdul-Qayoom or Sayf ud-Din are broken down in English to make a conventional English surname out of Rahman or Deen or Qayoom or Uddin, the latter rendered meaningless.

There are no comprehensive conventions for personal name, surname order: most will place a family name at the end, but many will place it at the front. There is no fixed convention about taking the father's surname – the father's other name might be taken instead, or no connection may be made. Unmarried women may take an honorific title as a surname – Begum, meaning 'lady', is common among Pakistani and Bangladeshi women for example. A place of origin or of association may be added, almost always at the end: al-Masri means 'the Egyptian'. In Arab culture and that of the early generations of Muslims, it is a mark of respect to refer to someone as father of their child, e.g. Abu Moosa, or 'father' of a virtuous practice, e.g. Abu Hanifa.

10.2 Titles

There are few formal titles in Islam or Arabic. Shaykh simply means a gentleman, a pious man, an old man, or a polite form of address. Contrary to the belief of popular English media you can't 'qualify' as a shaykh. As mentioned elsewhere, whoever leads the salaah is 'Imam', but he could be a different person every time, and by extension, 'imam' could be used as a courtesy title to describe any leading figure. Maulana or Mullah or Maulvi is used among South Asian communities for the imam and teacher. Usually it does imply a recognised qualification, but doesn't necessarily, often simply used as a term of respect for a pious man. Respect for the older generation is one persistent virtue among Muslims, exemplified by a surprising number of 'aunties' and 'uncles' someone appears to have.

Haji or Al Hajj is used by some as an honorific title for someone who has performed the Hajj, especially if he is highly respected in the community. Hafiz (protector) is used as the title of anyone who has memorised the entire Arabic text of the Qur'an. A Qari is someone specially trained in the recitation of the Qur'an. A Qadi is a judge or registrar under Islamic law. A

Mufti is someone sufficiently qualified in Islamic law to give fatwas or legal rulings, each one for a specific case.

While the term 'priest' or 'minister of religion' may suit the needs of application forms, it is problematic in ordinary use, (i) because some masjids do not have a regular, appointed imam and (ii) because 'priest' conventionally suggests an intermediary as in High Church Christianity, and Islam categorically rejects that concept – ultimately every person is his own priest, and in principle every Muslim ought to be able to perform all the ceremonies for himself.

10.3 Spelling and Pronunciation

Almost every Arabic and Islamic name is spelt identically *in the characters* of the Arabic language, regardless of the country concerned, but rendering the same name in European language characters is almost completely arbitrary. The difficulties in getting a standard spelling cover e.g. conventions such as 'Moslem' for 'Muslim'; basic literacy in the European language; different European accents, e.g. 'Rachid' or 'Rasheed'; different Arabic accents, e.g. the 'j'-sound rendered as 'g'-sound in Egyptian; lack of comparable letter combinations for some sounds, e.g. غ is a very hard, rolled 'r' but for English readers it is often written as 'gh'; use of double letters or capitals to show emphasised Arabic letters and apostrophes to show glottal stops. As a result the same name in Arabic can be written dozens of different ways in English and dozens more in say French. Furthermore for someone who is e.g. a native of an Arabic country, official records of his or her name will be in Arabic so it may be of little concern in the first instance exactly how the name is written down in another language. The result is extreme difficulty in matching names. It is also possible that when someone provides different renderings of the same name, this may cause unjustifiable concern or suspicion. Also names that have perfectly ordinary connotations to Muslims may be associated with more dramatic things by those unfamiliar with them, e.g. *Jamaat Islami* simply means, 'the Muslim community', but is the name of a major established political party in Pakistan and the name of a reputedly terrorist body in Indonesia, though conventions on spelling differ, e.g. 'Jemaah Islamiyah' for the latter.

11 Further Information, Contacts

11.1 Masjids and Muslim Businesses

Oft repeated warnings about partial and sectarian information apply especially strongly to this section. Most local masjids will be willing to provide basic information about Islam and the local Muslim community, though the smaller and less well organised ones may have difficulty presenting the information coherently and may be prone to ethnic or factional partiality. The internet has several masjid directories, though the information and addresses they contain need to be verified because some of them are open to anyone to submit data and others reproduce lists that are thirty years old.

One such is Tijara Pages, 17 Osborne Avenue, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 2HJ runs

> http://www.tijarapages.com/
>
> "Tijara Pages provides Muslim businesses with a platform to advertise their products and services. Muslim consumers can then simply search for the business they are looking for, either by business name, category or location. "

Similarly Sala@m Database, 336 Pinner Road, Harrow, London, HA1 4LB runs

> http://www.salaam.co.uk/

Muslim Directory prints and distributes a resources handbook for free approximately every year.

> http://www.muslimdirectory.co.uk/
>
> "The Muslim Directory is the principal resource and essential guide to businesses and services for the 1.8 million strong Muslim community residing in the UK. For the past 10 years this unique annual presentation has been a constant source of reference and assistance to countless individuals, organisations and institutions."

11.2 Muslim Community Resources

There is an enormous number of organisations that purport to provide support of various kinds to the Muslim community. Many of them are listed in the pages and web pages of the organisations listed above. While some are dependable and professional, many of them are questionable, many are one-person hobby-horses and many are defunct. Organisations that deal specifically with the kind of topical issues this document describes include:

Muslim Safety Forum

> 020 8840 4840
>
> info@muslimsafetyforum.org
>
> "The MSF is the key advisory body for the Police Service and has signed a working protocol with the Metropolitan Police to build better police / community relations. It has been advising the police on matters of safety and security from the Muslim perspective for over four years now. … It meets on a monthly basis with senior representatives of

ACPO and the MPS, the MPA, Home Office and the IPCC amongst others."

Muslim Youth Helpline

www.myh.org.uk

080 8808 2008

help@myh.org.uk

"The Muslim Youth Helpline is a confidential helpline for young Muslims. All our helpline workers are young people trained to help you whatever problem or difficulty you face. Young Muslims contact the Muslim Youth Helpline about a wide range of issues. Some people are going through desperate situations, whilst others are feeling lonely or confused. Common problems that many young people talk about are drugs, feeling depressed, family and friendships as well as issues related to sexuality."

Muslim Women's Helpline

http://www.mwhl.org/

020 8904 8193 or 020 8908 6715

"The Muslim Women's Helpline aims to provide any Muslim girl or woman in a crisis with a free, confidential listening service and referral to Islamic consultants, plus practical help and information where required."

Islamic Human Rights Commission

www.ihrc.org

"The Islamic Human Rights Commission is an independent, not-for-profit, campaign, research and advocacy organization based in London, UK . We foster links and work in partnership with different organizations from all backgrounds, to campaign for justice for all peoples regardless of their racial, confessional or political background."

11.3 Government Resources

Muslim Contact Unit, Metropolitan Police, New Scotland Yard

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriages Unit

020 7008 0151

"The Forced Marriage Unit sees around 250 cases a year. "There used to be confusion between forced and arranged marriages," explains a member of unit staff. "They were seen as being part of a certain culture. But that's changing now. Forced marriage is not a religious or cultural issue - it is a global human rights abuse". Forced marriage means just that - where a victim (one was 13 years old) is told they have to get married and they don't want to."

12 Glossary

The following is a list of Arabic, Urdu and dialect words used in this guide and a brief definition. Where appropriate, a fuller explanation is given in the guide itself. Note that spelling in English of Arabic and Urdu words is quite arbitrary so one may find many variations, e.g. alternatives of ‘q’ and ‘k’, ‘s’ and ‘z’, use of apostrophes or hyphens for glottal stops, accents or double letters for elongated vowels, vocalised or un-vocalised word endings, the definitive article ‘al’ with or without the literal ‘l’ replaced by phonetic ‘s’, ‘d’, ‘t’, ‘r’ etc.

ﷺ *salallahu alayhi wa salaam*	Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him – an epithet invariably applied in respect whenever the name or title of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is mentioned.
adhaan	the call to prayer
ahl-al-Kitab	the People of the Book - Christians and Jews
ahl-as-Sunnah	the People of the Sunnah - the followers of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions
akhirah	the afterlife
Allah	the name of God the Creator
'asr	the late afternoon period, the third prayer of the day
bayaans	peeches
bismillah	'With the name of Allah'
bodna, lota or shattaf	vessel used to wash the private parts
burqa	lady's garment to cover the body
deen	the religion, the faith
dhikr	remembrance (of Allah) – meditation
dhuhar	the early afternoon period, the second prayer of the day
dhul-Hijjah	a month of the Islamic calendar
du'ah	prayer as in supplication
dupatta	a lady's thin scarf
’eid	feast day
’eid-gah	open place set aside for performing Eid-day prayers
’Eid-ul-adha	feast of the day of scarifice
’Eid-ul-fitr	feast of the ending of the fast
’esha	the late evening period, the fifth prayer of the day
fajr	the period before sunrise, the first prayer of the day
fatwas	religious rulings in individual cases
ghusl	ritual bath
hadeeth or hadith	a 'tradition', i.e. a record of the sayings and actions of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions
hafiz, pl. hufaaz	someone who has memorised the entire Qur'an recital
Haji	someone who has performed the Hajj to Makkah
Hajj	the pilgrimmage to Makkah
halaal	lawful, usually refering to permissible food
Hanafi	ritual practice in accordance with the Hanafi 'school'
haraam	forbidden by Islam
hijab	literally a screen, used nowadays to refer to any kind of Muslim lady's scarf
hudood	the Islamic penal code
’ihtikhaaf	seclusion for 10 days in Ramadhaan
imaan	faith, belief
imam	whoever leads a congregational prayer
imamah	turban
istinjah	washing the private parts after toilet

ittar or attar	oil-based scent
izhar	sarong-like cloth
Jahannum	Hell
jai-namaaz, musalaah	prayer mat
jalsas	religious street marches
jama'at	community, congregation, party of travelling preachers
janazah	funeral prayer
Jannah	Paradise, the Garden
Jibreel	the angel Gabriel
jihad, mujahid, mujahidah	struggle
jubbah	a man's long coat or shirt
juma'a	the main Friday prayer
Kaabah	the temple of Abraham in Makkah
kaffan	cloths used to wrap corpse for burial
kafir	a non-Muslim, literally an ungrateful
kameez or qamees	long shirt down to the calves
khilafat	Muslim leadership, literally 'representative [of the Prophet ﷺ]'
khutbah	Arabic speech forming part of Juma'a ritual
madhab	system of juridical and religious practice
Madinah	the city in which the Prophet ﷺ is buried and the first Muslim community was established
madressah	(in Arabic) any school, generally a religious school
maghrieb	sunset, the fourth prayer of the day
Makkah	Mecca, the city in which the Prophet ﷺ was born
masjid	mosque
Masjid-al-Aqsa	'the farthest mosque' - the masjid next to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem
mas'lah, pl. masail	a point of religious practice or a legal point
maulana, maulvi, mullah	religious teacher, paid imam
mayat	corpse
mehr	dowry
mehrab	alcove at the front of the masjid
mimbar	steps making a pulpit
Mina	valley outside Makkah
minar	tower, light, minaret
miswak, sawaak	root used for cleaning teeth
Moosa	Moses
muezzin	the man who makes the call to prayer
mufti	a religious scholar qualified to give fatwas
Muhammad ﷺ	the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ
Muharram	a month of the Islamic calendar
muta	Shi'a temporary marriage
nabi	a prophet
namaaz	ritual prayers
nikkah	marriage
niqaab	face veil
qadi	judge
qamees, kamiz, kameez	long shirt down to the calves
qari	reciter of Qur'an
qatila	to fight
qiblah	the direction towards the Kaabah in Makkah
Qur'an	the revelation of Allah's Word to Muhammad ﷺ
qurbani, udhiyah	sacrificed animal
Rabbi-al-awwal	a month of the Islamic calendar
Rabi' al Awwal	a month of the Islamic calendar

rakaah	bowing, a unit of ritual prayer
Ramadhaan	the fasting month
*rasul, Rasulullah*ﷺ	messenger, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allahﷺ
risaalah	the Message
roza, sawm	fasting
salaah, namaaz	ritual prayers
salaam	peace, greeting
salwar, shalwar	Pakistani-style lower garment
sawm, roza	fasting
sayyadina	our chief', nobleman
Shabaan	a month of the Islamic calendar
shaheed	a martyr
shalwar-kameez	long shirt and big trousers
shari'ah	Islamic law
shattaf, lota, bodna	vessel used to wash the private parts
Shawwal	a month of the Islamic calendar
shaykh	gentleman, scholar, leader
sufism, tassawwuf	Islamic mysticism and self-purification
sunnah	the practice of Muhammadﷺ
Sunnis	those who follow the practice of Muhammadﷺ and his companions
surah	a chapter of the Qur'an
sutra	a barrier in front of someone praying
ta'alaq	divorce, literally 'I break off from you'
tabligh	preaching to Muslims
tahajjud	extra salaah in the last part of the night before the crack of dawn
takbeer	pronouncement of 'Allahu akbar', Allah is Great
tarawih	extra salaah in Ramadhaan
tasbeeh	chaplet used for Dhikr of Allah
tassawwuf, Sufism	Islamic mysticism and self-purification
taweez	Qur'anic verse on paper sealed up and worn on the person
tayyamum	cleaning before salaah, alternative to Wudhu when water cannot be found
udhiyah, qurbani	sacrificed animal
Umrah	ritual at Makkah outside of Hajj time
walimah	feast to proclaim completion of a wedding
wasilah	means by which Allah's power is manifested in the world
wudhu	ritual washing prior to salaah
wyaz	speech in the language of the congregation
yaum	day
yaum-al-Ashura	10th day of Muharram
yaum-al-Jumaa	Friday
yaum-ul-Arafat	Day of Arafat, part of Hajj
zakaah, zakaat	obligatory tax on wealth for relief of the poor

13 Index

Needs comprehensive index covering euphemisms, synonyms etc.

Currently about 600 items have been identified but index table needs to be composed when layout is finalised, as page numbering will shift considerably. Auto-indexing is not recommended because of the number of euphemisms and synonyms, and because of very different contexts.